The proscription of Hatshepsut’s monuments was a program largely implemented by Thutmose III. The question of how we view these alterations and what they mean is hotly debated. Closer examination of the proscription reveals some interesting details about Thutmose III’s motivation for these changes: to rewrite the kingship out of Hatshepsut’s history, create his own legacy, secure the throne for his successor and eliminate the power of the title God’s Wife.

The campaign to modify Hatshepsut’s monuments had a number of variations in terms of method and yielded outcomes. Hatshepsut justified her claim to the throne by promoting the ‘big lie’; this was that she had received the throne through legitimate inheritance from her fathers, Thutmose I and Amun. Her divine birth story described her as the actual daughter of Thutmose I/Amun, specifically procreated as a daughter who would be king. This myth discounted the reign of Thutmose II who had been the legitimate heir of Thutmose I. This story highlights the great weakness in her claim to the throne; she was in fact not an heir and therefore she should not have been king. Together these two stories created the illusion she was an heir, not once but twice. Hatshepsut’s buildings were designed to either promote the ‘big lie’ or describe her as a king performing in an ideal manner. Thutmose III’s modifications were aimed at her propaganda in particular with the intention of putting her ‘back in her place.’ Monuments that reinforced her relationship with Thutmose I were a prime target.

Thutmose III’s policy towards her buildings also changed over time. Initially he completed some of her programs; he finished Chapel Rouge, decorating the upper registers with his own themes. He also fulfilled her wishes to be buried with her father Thutmose I in KV 20; two programs he later reversed. The major phase of remodelling began after year 42 when Thutmose III’s campaigning finished.

The question must be asked, did Thutmose III ever intend to completely wipe Hatshepsut from the historical page? In the light of closer examination I would say certainly not.

**Djeser Djeseru modifications by Thutmose III**

There are distinct differences in the way the reliefs and statues were treated during the proscription at Djeser Djeseru. Essentially the statues were destroyed and the reliefs were erased. The process of relief erasure was a three stage process if it had ever been completed.

1. Raise reliefs was cut back using wide chisels and then smaller chisels were used to take off as much of the original as possible.
2. Background was smoothed.
3. A new scene was drafted in, cut and repainted.

At Djeser Djeseru the efforts to erase Hatshepsut’s name in the reliefs were short lived and incomplete. Roth states,

...some canonical images showing her as a male king were left intact and simply reidentified as Thutmose II or one of his forebears, more often they were completely erased or replaced with an image of an offering stand.¹

The images in the innermost sanctuaries were more thoroughly erased. However, those on the outer porticos, such as those concerning the divine birth, Punt expedition and transportation of obelisks, were only cut down in a preliminary manner and not replaced. The images and text can still be read even after the preliminary erasure, showing that the work was not followed through to completion. Most images were not recarved. When Hatshepsut’s name was replaced with another king it was rarely Thutmose III; usually it was Thutmose II, sometimes Thutmose I. Dorman states that whatever the reason for his modifications, Thutmose III never intended to claim Hatshepsut’s monuments as his own.²

Originally there were more than one hundred brightly painted statues which adorned the terraces and temple at Djeser Djeseru. All were removed, broken up and
thrown into one of the two quarries located at the site. Even the huge Osiride statues of Hatshepsut, originally part of the pillars on the upper terrace, were painstakingly cut away, removed and dumped into the pit. The uraeus was specifically targeted before the statue was broken up and discarded. Clearly the intention was that the statues were not to be reused by another pharaoh. Why destroy the statues but reuse the images in relief? Dorman suggests that perhaps, statues made for her funerary monuments had such personal associations with Hatshepsut or were so closely tied to the ritual ceremonies of her mortuary cult that they could not be attributed to other rulers.3

The vicious attacks on the statues at Djeser Djeseru certainly contrast the careful efforts made on her other monuments. The inscriptions on the statues were left intact contrasting to the erasure of the relief images and cartouches. Arnold states that this indicates that this ‘demonstrates the complexity of the historical developments behind the acts of violence perpetrated against Hatshepsut’s memory’.4 The main difference was that the reliefs were being recycled and the statues were not. The feminine endings of words in the text were also hacked off to make them into masculine pronouns which matched the new king’s inserted name. The fact the statues were destroyed but their inscriptions left intact shows that they were never intended to be viewed or used again. By burying a number of them under the causeway of his own mortuary temple, Thutmose III must have been satisfied that they were gone and forgotten forever. This was the case until Winlock retrieved them during excavations conducted on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum of Art between 1922 and 1928.

The Hathor chapel located within the Hatshepsut temple was preserved and remained in use long after Thutmose III’s mortuary chapel had been abandoned. Strangely, Thutmose III allowed some images of Hatshepsut to remain (such as her suckling from the Hathor cow goddess). Other images, such as Hatshepsut standing under the cow’s chin, were erased. The cartouches above the goddess have been erased but those below were preserved.

Djeser Djeseru housed the mortuary cult of not only Hatshepsut but her father Thutmose I. Thutmose III eradicated both of these but he created a new chapel for Thutmose I as part of his own mortuary temple.5 Thutmose I’s body was extracted from KV 20, (his tomb that he shared with Hatshepsut) and given a new one located in close proximity to Thutmose III’s. This had the obvious benefit of reducing Hatshepsut’s relationship with Thutmose I whilst reinforcing his own claim to the throne.

Dorman states,

The abandonment of the proscription of Hatshepsut seems to have occurred during the reign of Amenhotep II, who completed the redecoration of the eighth pylon in his own name but evidently felt little necessity to renew or revise the partly erased scenes at Deir el Bahari.6

This indicates that one of the primary motives for the changes was to secure the claim to the throne for Thutmose’s successor Amenhotep II, who like his father came to the throne at a young age. Dorman suggests

There may have been another contender for the throne apart from the young Amenhotep II, maybe from Hatshepsut’s regal line.7 There is no evidence that conclusively proves this; possibly it simply ensured that Amenhotep II’s claim remained uncontested. The only possible challenger appears to be Neferure, but she is not definitively found in the ancient records after year 11 so it seems unlikely. Ann Macy Roth also stated

By attacking images of Hatshepsut as king and thus magically denying her kingship, Thutmose deposed of a legitimate alternative to the Thutmosid line and facilitated his son’s succession to the throne of Egypt. The fact the erasure disappeared suddenly, perhaps upon the coronation of Amenhotep II, suggests that the motive for the erasures had disappeared once his kingship had been assured.8

Hatshepsut’s proscription cannot be described as straightforward damnatio memoriae, an attempt to erase all traces of a person’s existence to destroy their afterlife. Many of Hatshepsut’s representations as Queen were never touched.9 There no evidence that her burial in KV 20 was desecrated, except for the fact that Thutmose I was moved out.

The fact that reliefs of Hatshepsut as a queen remained untouched indicates that this role was not the problem.
It presented no threat to the Thutmosid claim therefore it was allowed. However, she was denied her kingly mortuary cult as this was certainly not part of the job benefit of being a queen during the early New Kingdom. One could go as far to suggest that Thutmose III’s intention was that her mortuary cult would cease at Djeser Djeseru. By removing the statues and images of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III assumed ownership of the site. By placing his own mortuary complex above hers, Thutmose III intended that it would be his cult that was the focus of all the religious activities in the Valley. Her temple became a place where his forefather’s names were preserved.

Thus, the Valley was transformed be a place that reinforced Thutmose III’s claim to the throne and his achievements. Unfortunately his mortuary temple Djeser Akhet has not survived in a decent condition, and his records have been lost at this site. Ironically, it is Hatshepsut’s temple that has been restored and once again her statues adorn the temple in all their magnificence. One can almost imagine Thutmose III boiling in his eternity if he knew what the site looked like today!

Obelisks
Hatshepsut is credited with erecting two pairs of obelisks at Karnak. The first pair was ordered by Thutmose II but erected by Hatshepsut in his festival hall in front of Pylon 4. The obelisks stood in front of Thutmose I’s but stood taller than his. Hatshepsut decorated the upper tips with her new name and title then entirely covered them entirely in gold foil. Indeed, the texts on them are subtle and not easily read; this may be the reason why they were not modified by Thutmose III.

The second pair of obelisks was subject to Thutmose III’s attention. Hatshepsut had ordered them to celebrate their joint Heb-Sed in year 16. This was timed to happen 30 years after the death of Thutmose I, once again reinforcing her claim to the throne. The obelisks stood 30 metres high and they were positioned in the Wadjet Hall of Thutmose I. According to Tyldesley, ‘The new obelisks were erected in the hypostyle hall of Thutmose I – its roof and pillars being removed for the occasion. In addition, ‘she demolished a gateway built by Thutmose II, she ruined her father’s hypostyle hall by removing its wooden roof and erecting a pair of obelisks in the now-open space, although she claims in mitigation that Thutmose I himself ordered her to make this alteration’. It not surprising that Hatshepsut chose to erect her obelisks in front of Thutmose I’s pylons; normal practice would dictate placement in front of her own pylon.

Instead all her obelisk focus was near the two pylons belonging to Thutmose I. Why then didn’t Thutmose III simply remove the offending obelisks like he did with Chapel Rouge? Tyldesly states that the obelisks were not simply decoration they, ...

...were cult objects...dedicated to the god by the king...they were also regarding as living
beings; obelisks were given personal names, and offerings were made to them.\textsuperscript{12}

This explains why Thutmose III could not dismantle the obelisks. If this were achieved he would risk offending the Cult of Amun. Instead, Hatshepsut’s second pair of obelisks was obscured by boxing in the base and rebuilding of the roof. The base covers were decorated with Thutmose III’s military annals reinforcing his relationship with Thutmose I and his military achievements.

\textbf{Pylon 8}

Hatshepsut developed a new north-south axis at Karnak to emphasise the link between Karnak house of Amun and its new subsidiary temple developed by Hatshepsut, known as Luxor temple. Thutmose III implemented a new grand design concerning the north-south axis; he built his own Pylon 7 with obelisks between Hatshepsut’s Pylon 8 and the main axis. This served to obscure the view of her pylon. Hatshepsut’s name on her pylon was erased and replaced with the name of Amenhotep II. Thutmose III balanced out the new axis by enclosing it with walls and by adding a large sacred lake to the east of the new pylons.\textsuperscript{13} The whole effect is aesthetically pleasing, successful also because it simultaneously reduced the impact of Hatshepsut’s influence whilst magnifying his own.

So the proscription of Hatshepsut’s monuments was more than just a program to write Hatshepsut’s kingship out of the historical record; the campaign was also concerned with preserving Thutmose III’s own legacy and reinforcing the Thutmosid line. One gets a sense that he was ‘putting her back in her place’ by eradicating the privileges that she should not have attained. The destruction of the statues and relief images at Djeser Djeseru reveals that he intended to abolish her mortuary cult. No statues, no images – surely that means no mortuary cult! Thutmose III was also concerned with the power of the God’s Wife so plans were implemented to nullify this role. Despite the destruction, the campaign was well planned, designed and implemented, again revealing the qualities which are generally ascribed to Thutmose III. Hatshepsut’s omission from the king’s lists of Dynasty 19 proves that his efforts to remove her from the immediate historical records were achieved.

\textbf{Endnotes}

13. Digital Karnak. dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/.

\textbf{References}


\textit{Digital Karnak} (website), dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig_1.Positions_of_obelisks_and_pylons_of_Hatshepsut_and_Thutmose_III_at_Karnak_temple.png}
\caption{Fig. 1. Positions of obelisks and pylons of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III at Karnak temple.}
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