

# Senenmut

di Antonio CRASTO

## Who was Senenmut?

His family, perhaps original of the southern region of Upper Egypt, left the city of Iunu *shema* / Ermont, "the Heliopolis of the South", about 30 km south of Waset / Thebes, to live and serve on the court perhaps at the time of Thutmose I (1531-1518 BC) <sup>1</sup>.

The young Senenmut was a son of *kep*, the school of the palace, where he showed great intellectual capacities. We know that later he participated in military expeditions led by Thutmose I in the land of Kush / Nubia against the Nehesyu and his behavior in battle earned him the honor of the *menefert* bracelet.



Portrait of Senenmut, and one of his titles

Become a faithful servant of Thutmose I, he gained more and more importance, obtaining prestigious positions and, at the birth of the daughter of Princess Hatshepsut, that one prestigious of tutor of the child.

With the assumption of power by Hatshepsut (1515-1493 BC), first as Chief wife of Thutmose II (1518-1515 BC), and then as a stepmother and guardian of Thutmose III (1515-1460 BC) and, finally, how effective co-regent of the very young Pharaoh, Senenmut assumed increasing importance, taking several positions of great prestige, including:

- Head of the Dual House of gold;
- Head of the garden of Amen;
- Head of the fields of Amen;
- Priest of the boat of Amen, *Userhat*;
- Intendant of Amen;
- Intendant of real daughter Neferura;
- Head of the flocks of Amen

becoming, in practice, the grise eminence of the royal house.



However, there are some uncertainties, which color the life of the great personage with an aura of mystery and that suggest that not everything has yet been discovered.

## Possible explanation of the name

Even its name raises many concerns.

Egyptologists interpret the hieroglyphics found in its many monuments as Senmut or Senenmut, so as to assume two different forms of writing or even two different personages, which have practically the same position as tutor to the daughter of Hatshepsut.

The two names obviously have a different meaning:

	Senenmut (Sn - n - mut), "mother's brother, uncle"
	Senmut (S - n - mut), "man's mother"

and do not seem to have an acceptable symbolism the reference to a baby, nor it comprises the relationship with the mother figure.

They could be corroborated only as nicknames places to illustrious personage by the young princess entrusted to him.

In this case Senenmut could mean that the princess saw him as a brother, perhaps adoptive of mother, while Senmut could assume a reference to the condition of lovers of Senmut and Hatshepsut.

The two interpretations seem rather forced and, however, in any case would be related to advanced age of the personage and would not have to explain why it was deleted and forgotten the name he certainly had at birth.


It is considered necessary to assume a new interpretation of names, more realistic and linked to a possible symbolism, assigned at birth.

The fact that the young man was a son of Kep, despite the presence of a family of non-noble origins, leads us to hypothesize that the child can be found and adopted when he was child.

It is conceivable that, for some unknown reason, his real parents will be released of the newborn leaving him near the palace. He may have been found by the young daughters of Ahmes and Thutmose, sister and brother in law of the pharaoh Amenhotep I (1552-1531 BC).

The existence of an Amenhotep <sup>2</sup> "First son of Thutmose I", but for which you know the real parents, leads us to imagine that this Amenhotep was just the foundling and Ahmes, as she had done at the time of birth of daughter Hatshepsut, has imposed to him a symbolic nickname, pertaining to the time of discovery.

It is therefore possible that the baby has been called:

	Sendyenmut (S - nd - y - n - mut), "man saved by her mother:" and that after has been deleted the reference to the rescue, eliminating the hieroglyphs E15 (nd) e C21 (y) and leaving the enigmatic expression S - n - mut "the man of the mother".
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The presence of the family of the young foundling leads us to assume that, after adoption, this has been traced and that it has lived at court, serving as grateful servants of pharaoh, perhaps on condition of the secret of the saving.

The possibility that the name Senmut is a transformation of the former Sendyenmut makes us credible the hypothesis that the third name Senenmut is a nickname given by the daughter of Hatshepsut to her tutor, adoptive brother of the mother.

The child would have crippled the name of "Uncle" and would replace the reference to his mother (of the uncle) with that of her mother (of Neferura), thus changing Senmut (man of the mother) in Senenmut (her mother's brother, uncle).

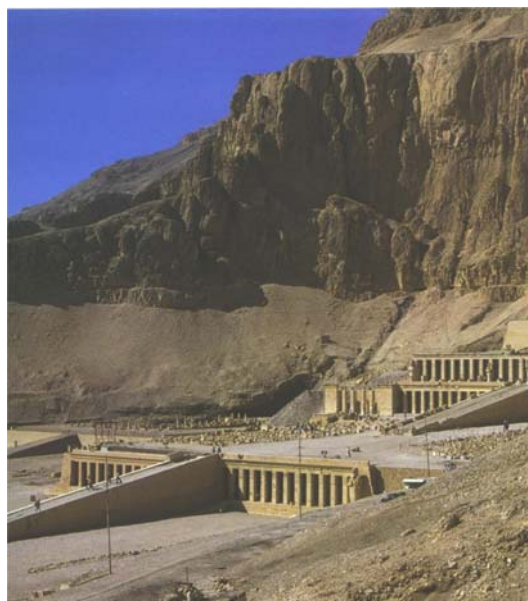
The new name, wanted by the princess, would have been written just by changing a single hieroglyph, the E20 (arrowhead) instead of the simple F15 (bolt) and we believe that it has been adopted by the illustrious personage, in the light its increasingly strong sentimental bond with the Queen.

### Senenmut, the architect

The role that definitely gave fame to Senenmut is surely that of architect.

He designed many monuments and temples, creating innovative works as the first example of peripteral temple, rectangular temple surrounded on four sides by long colonnades.

The work, however, that enhanced its creative capacity and give him the glory forever, is the beautiful temple of millions of years of the Queen, the *Geser Geseru* "the wonder of wonders", produced at Deir el-Bahari, near the



Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari

temple of pharaoh of 11th dynasty, Montuhotep II.

At the foot of the high cliffs of sandstone was built a temple, highly innovative, consists essentially of three terraces of different sizes, connected by two long staircases. The complex was a set prospectively elegant, destined to be surrounded by a forest of rare plants, including those precious of incense brought to Waset / Thebes as a result of the expedition in the land of Punt, the land of the god Amen.

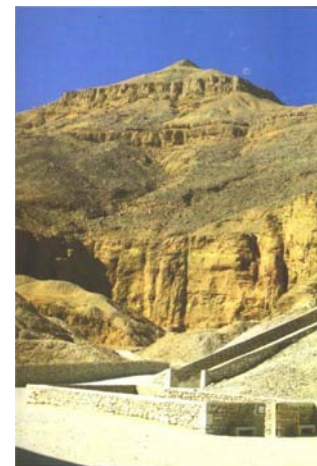
The temple of pharaoh-woman is the exaltation of the Jubilee renewal and rebirth in heaven. In the three terraces, Hatshepsut and her architect friend have tried to give a representation of the spiritual evolution of life. It moves from the earthly deeds (the first two terraces) to the spiritual for the heavenly life (last terrace), which is not visible prospectively from the first courtyard, as to underline the lack of spirituality during the earthly life of a common mortal<sup>3</sup>. The impression is that it represents the transition from the life of the Crown Prince (the first courtyard) to the elected pharaonic life (second terrace) to arrive, finally, at the solemnity of the *sancta sanctorum* (last terrace).

The latter would be placed inside the mountain, sacred to the great heavenly mother Hathor, the mountain that accidentally had the top as a natural pyramid-shaped (*Ta dehenet*).

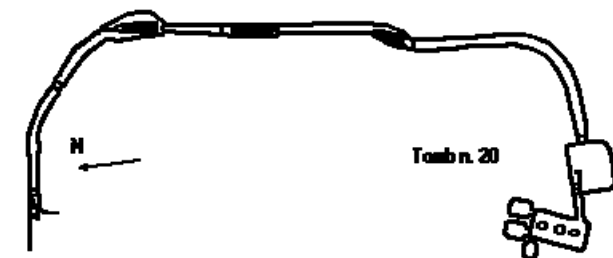
Once again, he was emphasizing the symbolism of the pyramid, its connection between heaven and earth, but, in the particular case of the natural pyramid of Waset / Thebes, it was trying to bring the burials in the kingdom of Hathor, the sacred cow, after generating symbolically the kings of Egypt, would have given them a new life in heaven.

In view of this vision regenerative the couple Hatshepsut - Senenmut gave rise to the creation of a new cemetery at the foot of the sacred mountain, which would see the new kings placed in the bowels of Hathor, thus obtaining by the sacred cow Hathor the heavenly resurrection.

The need to find a place not well-established and controllable led the inauguration of the famous Valley of the Kings, located in the same



Sacred mountain



KV 20 – tomb of Hatshepsut

area of Deir el-Bahari, but in the opposite side of the sacred mountain. The queen began to dig her great tomb, whose plan was that the burial chamber was built in the depths of the mountain, closer to the *sancta sanctorum* of the near temple.

This desire could not be satisfied, despite the long corridor that forwarded to several tens of meters inside the sacred mountain and it proved impossible with the means then available

### Senenmut, the theologian

The innovations made during the reign of Hatshepsut were certainly dictated or at least the result of collaboration of the brilliant architect and friend Senenmut.

In addition to the uniqueness of the temple of millions of years, the inauguration of the new cemetery and the almost new statues cube appeared some innovations in the theology of the priests of Amen at Karnak, almost certainly inspired by the Grand Superintendent of Amen, Senenmut.

It then seemed to take the most important worship of the goddess Hathor, the goddess associated in some way to the bull fertilizer.



Statue cube of Senenmut and Neferura

## ***The Bull***

The figure of the holy bull was definitely born in pre-dynastic age and was almost certainly associated with the solar theophany of the celestial Taurus, the zodiacal constellation that, at that time, saw the sun rise at the Spring Equinox which behind the fiery celestial bull.

The generating capacity of the bull was associated with the figure of pharaoh, whose line was thus assured of his being "bull fertilizer."

This figure, linked to the generating capacity of the pharaoh, was extended to the need, for the land of Egypt, to be fertilized by the great river Nile, associated to the sacred bull, Apis.

Around 2000 BC the constellation of Taurus left his equinoctial witness to the nearby constellation of Aries and, coincidentally, the new pharaohs of Waset / Thebes of the 11th and 12th dynasty began to consecrate images of rams and sphinxes with ram's head.

At the same time, the priests of Waset / Thebes brought a decisive change to their theology and, to justify images of aries, was gradually introduced the figure always more important of a new god, the god Amen with the ram's head.

Since this was a new god, Amen was called "the hidden" and it was imagined that he, as a new gift of the Nile, had arrived with the sacred water from the land where born the great river in the land of Punt, the region south of Nubia.

I assumed that this change of zodiacal constellation and sun god, Amen instead of or in addition to Ra, was not painless, but it was the source or at least a religious motive for a long and serious secession of the nomes of the Lower Egitto <sup>4</sup>.

The end of the Middle Kingdom did not find any justification. Egyptologists do not understand why the prestigious 12th dynasty is ended so ingloriously, giving way to collateral dynasties and, finally, to the traumatic invasion of Delta and Egypt by Asian invaders, the Hyksos.

I believe that, because of a severe famine, the rich nomes of Delta feel the need to separate themselves from the rest of Egypt and their governors were opposed to religious changes dictated by the priests of Waset / Thebes, and have not accepted the downgrading of the zodiacal bull.

The action would bring the secessionist governors to find some support in some populations of the Near East, and I mentioned that this was the period described in the Bible, the arrival in Egypt of Joseph and the tribe of his father, Jacob.

Only this peculiar coincidence can give, in fact, a valid explanation to the verses of the Bible, where the young Joseph advised his father to deny at the pharaoh to being a breeder of sheep (ram) and to declare, however, they were always breeders of bovine (bull).

According to the Bible rams were, in fact, an abomination to the pharaoh, who would, however, welcome the worship of the bull.

Only a secessionist governor, a pharaoh of the lands of the Delta would see in such a manner the different figure of farmer and their solar symbolism.

The Israelites lived so in the light of ancient cults of the bull and integrated their religious beliefs, mainly addressed to the worship of the moon god, with those dictated by the theology of the pharaohs of the Delta, which, on the other hand, had to endure the influence of other Asian cultures and, in particular, those of the invaders, the Asian Hyksos.

## ***The sacred cow***

It is possible that at this time has made its way the sanctity of the sacred generating cows. Inspired by the myth of the goddess Hathor, that as a celestial cow raised in the sky the Sun Ra, the figure of the sacred cow, Hathor was so opposed to that of the fertilizer bull. The goddess would have generated symbolically the new pharaoh and would have fed with her milk.

It must not have been a coincidence that in the Bible Joseph interprets a strange dream of pharaoh concerning seven fat cows and seven lean cows, whose correct interpretation saw a period of wealth of the agriculture followed by a period of famine, seven



Temple of Hatshepsut, the sacred cow

years as the famine that had challenged the 2nd dynasty, described by Djoser and reported at a later date on the Famine Stele.

The seven sacred cows were so associated with the fertilizer bull, the river Nile, and symbolized and protected from then the fertility of the Egyptian land.

The regained dominion over Egypt by the pharaohs of Waset / Thebes of the 18th dynasty saw the union of the cults typically Theban with those associated with Lower Egypt and the theological peace led to the syncretic deity Amen-Ra, while the fertilizing bull Apis, initially associated to the god Ptah, was linked to the seven sacred cows.

It is very likely that these changes have been dictated by the pacifying desire of the various priesthood centers, but it appears that an important role was played by the common religious beliefs of Hatshepsut and Senenmut.

This important theological transformation led to some underestimation of the cult of Osiris. The heavenly rebirth would no longer be connected to the divine judgment of the court of Osiris, but to the regenerative capacity of Hathor.

It must have been not a coincidence that Hatshepsut did not build any new temple in the holy city of *Abdw / Abydos* and that the figure of Osiris has been almost forgotten in the temple of Deir el-Bahari, to make way for Anubis, god of mummification.

Even this aspect of the new theology may have been affected by the period of cultural overlap with Asian populations. The antagonism between the Hyksos and the kings of *Waset / Thebes*, had confirmed the antagonism between the solar theophanies, Aries against Taurus, and gave more

importance to the figure of Seth, because this was a memory of Asian cult of Baal, but especially in contraposition of dynastic cult of Osiris.



Book of Dead – chapter 128

## Theogamy

It is likely that Senenmut was the inspirer of a stratagem, elaborate to give a royal value to Hatshepsut, daughter, Chief wife and regent respectively of Thutmose I, II and III.

The princess Hatshepsut must have suffered a terrible disappointment, as she had been initially chosen by her father Thutmose I as Crown Princess. Being the eldest daughter of the Chief wife Ahmes and being the three sons of the concubine Mutnefert with poor health, the pharaoh had brought with him the young princess to know the lands of Lower Egypt recently released.

For some unknown reason, however, the succession was taken by her half-brother Thutmose II, who at the end of the reign of his father had married the most enterprising princess.

Seems acceptable the hypothesis that Thutmose I have considered the possibility that the crowning of a princess could have created, in the presence of siblings, a conflict between the two factions. He considered safer to marry the two brothers and to crown the fragile Thutmose II, confident that the ambitious daughter would find a way to govern.

At the death of Thutmose II it was repeated the dilemma of succession: to crown the daughter of the Chief wife, Neferura, or put on the throne, the young son of the concubine Isis, Thutmose III.

We know that the reason of state did tip the balance for the coronation of the heir male and that the princess Neferura had to be satisfied, as it was for the mother, of a marriage with the brother.

Given the age of the child Thutmose III, the regency was assumed by his stepmother Hatshepsut, which, however, after 6/7 years of regency preferred to take the titles to be sovereign and start so an abnormal co-regency, or rather a kingdom in the margins with stepson.

To justify this choice to the people and the priests was designed, for the first time in Egypt, a theogamy, the generation of Hatshepsut by carnal union between mother Ahmes and the god Amen.

Hatshepsut that already boasted the title of "Daughter of God", Thutmose I, presented herself

as the carnal daughter of the greatest god of Waset / Thebes and as such entitled to the highest honors, to the throne of Egypt. The new pharaoh became more and ideally considered her reign since she was appointed Crown Princess, so she can anticipate much her first Jubilee (around the 15th year of the reign instead of the traditional 30 years).

Theogamy also seems a legacy of cultural contributions of Asians, which, unlike the Egyptians had in their tradition the union of divinity with the sacred priestesses of the temple.

This abnormal presence of two kings of Upper and Lower Egypt brought the royal scribes to replace in many documents their names by the term *Per-aa* "the Upper House", a term which was later taken to identify the figure of the sovereign. This fact brought the Jews to call the king of Egypt with the name "Pharaoh," clearly a deformation and translation in their language of two hieroglyphs *Per-aa*.

## Senenmut, the jew

We have seen that the strangeness of the name or nickname given to the newborn, by his family that seems to be purely Egyptian, and the fact that the child has been brought up in the school of *kep*, leads us to consider the possibility that the child was actually a foundling, perhaps left at the door of the royal house.

It is possible that the meaning of the hypothetical first nickname, "man saved by his mother" could be linked to the sacrifice of the mother, the fact that the mother has preferred to save her son and give it to the royal family.

Some aspects of the Senenmut's life, with various associations to the culture of the Asian people of Lower Egypt, lead us to consider realistic a different interpretation of the origins of the illustrious personage, considering the possibility that:

- his family was of Jewish origin and that parents have feared for the life of the newborn as a result of the order, issued by the pharaoh, to killing all Jewish male newborns;
- his family, recalling the legendary rescue of the great king Sargon of Akkad, has groped felt able to give new life to their baby, placing it within a basket tarred and directing it towards the princesses, Hatshepsut and Neferubity, who were bathing with their handmaidens , near the banks of some channel of the Nile;
- the baby was brought to court and, given the desire of the princesses, has been adopted by Ahmes and Thutmose;
- Ahmes has imposed at the newborn, as well as the Egyptian name Amenhotep, a nickname meaning "little boy saved by his mother";
- the family of the child has been located and, for reasons of state, has been forced to change their names and their customs;
- after, the nickname was changed to remove any reference to the rescue, which could somehow reveal the embarrassing secret of the newborn;
- the child has been brought up in the school of *kep* and his family have served at court;
- the young person has demonstrated uncommon intelligence and was soon appreciated in studies and then as a brilliant strategist on the battlefield;
- he have taken on responsibilities more and more important to get that certainly most prestigious of tutor of the daughter of Hatshepsut, Neferura;
- he has changed, as an adult, his nickname Senmut to Senenmut, both to please the daughter of Hatshepsut as to demonstrate a stronger link with the savior and adoptive sister;
- after the death of sickly pharaoh Thutmose II, the fraternal friendship with the queen was transformed into tender affection and almost certainly in love for each other;
- after the death of Neferura, he had "deleted" his nickname repeating the old Egyptian name Amenhotep.

The members of his Jewish family would have changed their original names in those of the Egyptian tradition: Ramose (father), Hatnefer (mother), Sazehuty (maternal grandmother), Minhotep, Amenemhat and Païri (brothers) and Rahotep and Neferether (sisters). The memory of the old Semitic names can be caught by the nickname of his mother, Titutiu / Tiutiu.

Senenmut has not hidden his origins. He passed the names of parents and arranged to create a family tomb in Sheikh Abdel Gurna (TT 71), where he buried his mother, and perhaps, on

this occasion, he move the bodies of the father and six unknown people (three women and three children), perhaps some of his closest relatives. The memory of the rescue from the waters of the Nile, however, seems to permeate the sentence given by the Senenmut:

"I am one who is out of the flood and to whom was given the Flood by which I hold on the Nile."

The gods had allowed its navigation on the sacred waters of the Nile and his rescue in the arms of the princess. He had gained so much power that it seems as lord of the Flood, Lord of the fortunes of Egypt.

The family of Senmut / Senenmut would remain faithfully close to the royal family, but it is conceivable that he secretly maintained the memory of the Jewish traditions.

They would thus be justified some important anomalies in the archaeological finds relating to this important personage. Some aspects of Senenmut's life leave, in fact, suggests that his real family did not have Egyptian origins.

The possibility that the illustrious personage of the court of Hatshepsut had jew blood would then some justification for some references to the culture of the Hyksos and in particular:

- the tendency to overlook the god Osiris;
- the particular vision of the figure of Bull, linked to the fertilizing power of the Nile;
- the association with the bull Apis to the seven sacred cows, symbolizing the welfare of Egypt;
- the writing the name of the father before that of the mother;
- the homage led to Senenmut and his family by personages not Egyptians, perhaps Cretan, who surely had contact with the Hyksos rulers.

### Senenmut ancestor of Moses

These considerations lead me to believe that Senenmut can find some reference to the biblical figure of Moses.

In my book I considered the possibility that the Bible has merged, for simplicity, in some patriarchs the figure of various personages.

Not otherwise realistic high age assigned to the ancestors of Moses. He would, in fact, descended from Jacob by three people who have lived all over one hundred and thirty years.

It is possible however that the figure of Moses has collected in itself some personages, that the child saved in the Nile is not coincident with the personage of the Exodus and that the biblical personage has packed in him the two features.

In this regard, there must be not a chance that the true personage of the Exodus, identified in my book with Ramose, vizier of Amenhotep III and IV, had the same name given of Senenmut's father.

The idea of not belonging to the Egyptian culture could also be justified by the fact that Senenmut has never married nor we know the names of its possible children. This strange situation for an Egyptian man can also be explained by assuming that the friendship between Hatshepsut and her adopted brother has gradually transformed into a deeper feeling.

After the death of Thutmose II, the young widow would be emotionally closer to his adopted brother, but their relationship had to be kept hidden.

It is therefore possible that some of their children have been reared secretly, in the school of *kep* and it seems that this was the case of the young Maiherpri, brought up with great care of the queen and of which curiously the names of the parents haven't been handed down.



Valley of the Nobles - Tomb of Ramose

## Maiherpri

In 1899, the Egyptologist Victor Loret discovered in the Valley of the Kings a small tomb hewn out for the burial of the young Maiherpri. His tomb (KV 36) was sacked and the precious objects, including jewelry and amulets hidden in the wrappings of the mummy, had been stolen. The burial returned, however, in addition to the mummy, some objects of great interest, including three sarcophagi, a long papyrus of about 17 meters with reported 26 of the main chapters of the Book of the Dead and various items belonging to the deceased, as the collars of two dogs and a full hunting equipment, clearly of Nubian origin.

The found documents speak of a "son of *kep*", one of youngs, usually of high rank, trained to school of the palace together with the principles of the royal house.

During the eighteenth dynasty was customary to take hostage the children of foreign princes defeated in battle, to reduce them to the Egyptian culture and religion, so that they can one day be put on the throne of vassal states.

It does not seem to be the case of Maiherpri, because this practice seems to be later and because normally these "sons of *kep*" maintained emotional ties with their families, without to keep secret their origins.

The fact that there has been found no record of his parents has somehow crisis the Egyptologists, giving way to a series of conjectures, more or less well founded.

According to the Egyptologist Noblecourt, the meaning of the name "brave on the battlefield" and quite dark complexion of the mummy would seem to suggest a Nubian origin and a probable descent from a prince defeated in battle, while the strange lack of reporting of the name of the parents and the clear references to queen Hatshepsut would think of a secret son of the queen, had probably by her faithful counselor Senenmut.

The descent of Senenmut from the Hebrew, seems supported by the fact that Maiherpri had not been circumcised, contrary to Egyptian custom. Other suggestions of a possible Jewish origin seem to be able to draw from the strange arrangement of a handful of barley under the left armpit of the mummy and the fact that the wooden sarcophagus, made as a modern plywood, had been tarred inside and external, according to custom not known in Egypt, perhaps in memory of the wicker basket that had allowed the baby father the navigation on the Nile.

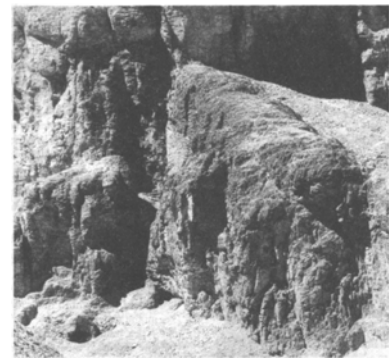
The baby, possibly born during the first year of the reign of the queen, was brought to the school of the *kep* and may have been a classmate of games and almost the same age with pharaoh Thutmose III. He, perhaps the first in Egyptian history, received the title of "flabellum bearer at the right of the King", a title that will compete only to persons of high rank and that in practice describe the figure of the closest collaborator and adviser of the sovereign.

It is possible that Maiherpri, despite his age, has participated in several military campaigns of Thutmose III and that the full equipment archer (quiver, leather bracelets and necklace), found in the tomb, was a personal spoils of war, but it is much more likely that

the precious trophy have belonged to his father, Senenmut, which, as already mentioned, had distinguished himself as a young man in battle, during the military campaigns in Nubia of Thutmose I, as well as could be a gift of the Queen, her personal trophy won during her military campaign against the Iuntyu of Nubia.

The dark color of its representations must not be taken as evidence of its likely Nubian origin, as done by some Egyptologists, because all the dead were represented with this colorful, which should indicate that they belong to the world of darkness.

The testimony of the religious beliefs of Maiherpri we are offered, as well as from the exemplar



Valley of the Kings - entrance to the tomb of Maiherpri



Tomb of Maherpri – Declaration of innocence



of the Book of the Dead, with the beautiful description of the seven sacred cows, from the previously mentioned papyrus containing, among other things, the long list of 42 "declarations of innocence" which, together with 42 "negative declarations", the *Ka* of the deceased would have had to act to exonerate himself, in front of the 42 heavenly deities, at the time of judgment, which would take place immediately after his death.

### Possible descent

It is possible that the royal couple has conceived other children and that those, who were more fortunate, have survived their parents and have carried on the tradition of prominent Jews personages who lived in the court, with tasks of great value.

Their identification is not easy, but it is believed that a thorough study of the leading figures of the court and some, albeit weak, evidence may justify the following working hypothesis:

Ramose (I)	husband of Hatnefer and father of the following children: newborn Senenmut (M), Minhotep (M), Amenemhat (M), Pairi (M), Iahotep (F), Neferether (F)
Newborn Senenmut	son of Ramose (I) and Hatnefer; adopted by Ahmes and Thutmose I, who gave it the name Amenhotep and the nickname Sendyenmut "saved by his mother"; discovered his Jewish origin, the nickname was changed to Senmut; he was appointed tutor to the daughter of Hatshepsut and the nickname was changed to Senenmut; after the death of Neferura, the nickname is eliminated and it remains the only name Amenhotep; children: Maiherpri (1st child) and Minmose (2nd child);
Minmose	becomes, like his father, superintendent of public works; participates in the wars in Nubia and Syria with Thutmose III; tax collector; superintendent of the prophets of the temple; children: Ptahmose (1st child); Merymose (2nd child - Viceroy in Nubia);
Ptahmose	vizier of Amenhotep III; high priest; child or grandchild: Ramose II;
Ramose (II)	son of Heby (father) and Ipuia (mother); vizier of Amenhotep III and IV; quarrels with Amenhotep IV and flees to Midian; changed its name to Moses; returned to Egypt after the likely death of Akhenaten; realizes the Exodus of the Jews in 1385 BC during the reign of Smenkhkara.

### Damnatio memoriae

Egyptologists have tried to explain why almost all the representations of the pharaoh woman and her brilliant architect have been found thoroughly hammered.

It has long been assumed that the ordered the vandal action, for to erase the memory of the two personages, was Thutmose III, for resentment kept hidden during the regency and the collateral reign of his stepmother.

This possibility, however, seems contradicted by the archaeological evidence that see:

- Senenmut eclipsed by Waset / Thebes, in the last years of the reign of Hatshepsut, and his tomb at Deir el-Bahari, subject to possible vandalism, closed;
- a possible resurgence of Senenmut at Waset / Thebes after the death of Hatshepsut;
- a collaboration of Senenmut during the reign in solitary of Thutmose III.

The first two notes seem to suggest that Senenmut has fallen out of favor for some reason, and, in this sense, it is possible that he was exiled for treason. It is possible, however, that, as said, he has given up, after the death of Neferura, the nickname given to him by his adopted

mother and has resumed its old name Amenhotep. It seems, in fact, not realistic that Senenmut has given up work with Hatshepsut and has assigned the task of erecting the two great obelisks in the Iunut of Karnak Temple to a certain Amenhotep.

The fact that the astronomical ceiling of his grave has been plastered and this was closed before his burial, leads us to hypothesize that Amenhotep / Senenmut has left Waset / Thebes, after the death of Hatshepsut, and wanted to erase the theological secrets, naively written in the grave.

It is therefore likely that he lived the last years of his life in Nubia, in the region of Jebel Silsilah area of major sandstone quarries, but above all a place of some graves dug on either side of the Nile, from which the earthly soul of the dead, their *ka*, had the opportunity to spend eternity in worship of the sacred river.

It is therefore very likely that the cenotaph dug by Senenmut, the "out of the flood," has become his real tomb, but it is also possible that he dug a new grave, perhaps that of a Amenhotep vizier at Jebel Silsilah, also this subjected to a vandal action of erasing of the memory.

The action of destruction of images of Hatshepsut and Senenmut, including those of Gebel Silsilah, seems to be initiated under Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten and continued under subsequent restorer pharaohs.

This archaeological finding seems to contradict the further hypothesis postulated by Noblecourt, which would see the orderer of the vandal actions in the priests of Abydos, dissatisfied with the renewal and heretical actions of pharaoh woman.

The loss of religious power and their minor importance does not seem sufficient to justify the serious vandalism, nor it understand how they could have avoided the control of the priests of Amen at Karnak, certainly loyal to the queen.

Instead, it seems valid the possibility that the first vandalic phase can, in a certain way, be due to the severe tiff, mentioned in the Bible, between Akhenaten and his vizier Ramose.

The argument would take place, most likely, to the opposition of the vizier against the hard work to which the Jews were subjected in the construction of the new capital, Akhenaton.

In this regard, it is certain that the vizier was not buried in the Valley of the Nobles at Waset / Thebes and that he did not follow the pharaoh into new capital.

His disappearance seems associable, as the Bible say, to Moses flight from Egypt for fear of the punishment of pharaoh.

Akhenaten was so shaken by the action of his vizier to try a deep hatred for all Jews and especially its predecessor of eighteenth dynasty, who first brought them to court and that had made, of Senenmut and his descendants , very important people.

This deep hatred would have started a meticulous work of clearing the memory of Hatshepsut and Senenmut. The hatred of the queen and her beloved Jew had exasperated after the setback suffered during the Exodus from Egypt. Shame it had to be equal to that suffered by the invasion of Hyksos, with which the Jews were almost certainly allies and for which they were subjected in slavery.

Once resolved the issues, related to theological transformation wanted by Akhenaton, the restorer pharaohs: Horemheb, Ramesse I, Seti I and Ramesse II, carried on that action of clearing of the memory both to the pharaohs somehow connected with the heresy of Aten: Akhenaten, Smenkhkara, Tutankhaten / amen and Ay, and towards the more distant ancestor, Hatshepsut and her lover, guilty of having given the first space at court to a baby Jew and, albeit unintentionally, caused the big blow of the leak of an entire people and the ignominious death of pharaoh Smenkhkara during its pursuit.

The work avenger was finally completed with the removal of their names from monuments and the various annals, the various wall tables of Abydos, Saqqara and Karnak.

Only the research work of the Ptolemaic historian Manetho (3rd century BC) put in some way remedy to this erasure of historical memory, recalling that at the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty had reigned a queen, Amessis / Amensis, even if the confusion of the few data found, could have led to reverse the reign of Pharaohs Amenhotep I and Thutmose I, not to mention the ephemeral Thutmose II, and to consider, finally, Thutmose III son and not stepson of the queen.

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