

Egypt's Golden Empires

Episode 1: The Warrior Pharaohs

Narrator, Keith David: For over 3,000 years a story has lain hidden beneath the sands of Egypt. A story we are only now beginning to reclaim. It is a story of a time we call The New Kingdom. It left us the greatest treasures of the ancient world: an extraordinary legacy in papyrus, stone and gold. But behind these treasures lies an epic tale of real people: people like Ramesses the Great, Tutankhamen the Boy King and one of the most beautiful and powerful women of the ancient world, Queen Nefertiti. It is a story brought to life by their own words, and those of the ordinary men and women who have changed the course of history. In eye witness accounts soldiers ascribe the birth of an empire forged on the battle field. Pharaohs record how they created their own legends and became the richest rulers in the world. And ancient craftsmen reveal how they turned Egypt's unimaginable wealth into tombs, temples and treasures. They tell how, in the end, they would be forced to destroy the very tombs they had built. This is the story of the rise and fall of Egypt's Golden Empire.

Narrator: Over a thousand years after the Pyramids were built, the greatest chapter in Egypt's history was just beginning. The New Kingdom was to become an explosion of creativity, wealth and power. It would be the envy of civilisations to come. The Greeks, the Romans, Napoleon, all would look for inspiration – to the men and women who built the first empire in recorded history. Yet the golden age might never have happened. In 1560 BC, Egypt was in crisis for the first time in history. The kingdom of the ancient pyramid builders was now occupied and divided. Egypt was on the verge of extinction. In the north, a foreign king had invaded and declared himself pharaoh. His people, the Hyksos, now occupied the rich Nile Delta. To the south, the warlike Nubians threatened the last remnants of Egypt.

Dr Zahi Hawass, Under Secretary of State, Giza Pyramids: The invasion of Egypt by the Hyksos was a shock. This was the first time that a strange people entered Egypt –and lived – for 150 years.

Narrator: The Egyptian royal line and its city Thebes had fallen on hard times. But one local family was determined to revive Egypt's former glory: the King of Thebes and his two sons, the young princes, Kamose and his brother Ahmose. The fate not only of their capital Thebes, but Egypt itself lay in their hands.

Dr Stephen Harvey, University of Memphis: Essentially it was a time of great trial for the traditional ruling family of Egypt. The country was no longer a super power. In a sense, Arhmose and Kamose had become minor princes, and there was a feeling that Egypt, as it had been known for the past 1,500 years, could cease to exist.

Narrator: The hatred of Kamose and Ahmose toward the Hyksos was personal. Their father tried to rebel against the invaders in the north and paid a terrible price. Three-and-a half-thousand years later, his corpse still bears witness to his brutal slaughter at the hands of the enemy.

Dr Stephen Harvey: The face is grizzly, partly because it wasn't well preserved, and there are many axe marks all over the head. There must have been a struggle and it must have been fairly bloody.

Narrator: Traditionally, Egyptians viewed foreigners as primitive and barbaric. For young Kamose,, the death of his father at the hands of the Hyksos must have been humiliating as well as tragic.

Prof. David O'Connor, New York University: In the ideology of the Egyptians, the foreigner is the inherent enemy, the inherent inferior, over whom the Egyptians had been given divine power by the deities.

Nicole Douek, London University: They are described as, "that vile foe, people who are beyond the pale. Foreigners are dirt under the feet of the pharaoh."

Narrator: Images of foreigners were carved on footstools so Egyptians could show their superiority by literally trampling on them. Nubians, Libyans, Asiatics, were depicted as ugly savages, not worthy of placing a foot on Egyptian sand. But now, northern Egypt and even the pyramids stood on land governed by foreigners.

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Dr Zahi Hawass: This was the worst thing to the mind of the Egyptian. The Pyramid to Ahmose and Kamose was a kind of a reminder: "Kill them, we need the glory of Egypt to come back." This gave them the power to unite, to defeat those strange people and send them away from Egypt.

Narrator: With his father dead, his land divided, Kamose was determined to defeat the Hyksos. His actual words have survived, carved on a large stone. Kamose bluntly states his intention to destroy the enemies to the north and south of Egypt.

Reconstruction voiceover: "What power can I claim to have, when I'm stuck between an Asiatic and a Nubian? Each of them has a piece of Egypt too, and shares the land with me. My aim is to liberate Egypt and crush the Asiatics."

Narrator: But Kamose could not fight alone. He had to get his people behind him first, and as the stela shows, most leaders did not object to living in a divided Egypt.

Reconstruction voiceover: "We are satisfied with our share of Egypt. The best fields are ours to cultivate, grain is still being sent to our swine, and our herds have never been seized."

Dr Stephen Harvey: Not everyone would have been upset with the Hyksos rule. I'm sure times were good for lots of Egyptians under the Hyksos rulers. What then would rally the forces? What would get people going?

Narrator: The Hyksos soon gave the people of Egypt good reason to be alarmed. On a remote desert road far from Thebes, Hyksos messengers raced south on a secret mission.

Dr Stephen Harvey: Hyksos messengers were carrying this letter, which must have been a rolled up piece of papyrus with a mud seal on it. They were going through the desert, probably at high speeds, and Kamose's spies must have intercepted these messengers.

Narrator: Kamose's men had captured a messenger from the Hyksos king. The letter he was carrying was addressed to Egypt's other enemy, the King of Nubia. It was an invitation to unite and conquer what was left of Egypt.

Reconstruction voiceover: "Come north, there is no need to worry, Kamose is busy with me here. We'll divide the towns of Egypt between us, and Nubia will rejoice."

Narrator: The Hyksos were inviting the Nubians to join them in a plot to converge on Egypt and destroy Kamose.

Dr Stephen Harvey: We can think perhaps of the United States. It would really be as if Canada and Mexico were pressing against the US and talking about invading.

Narrator: Kamose knew it was time to fight.

Nicole Douek: The Hyksos were certainly not backward people. They came from the area of the Levant where towns are fortified, where the weapons of war are, if anything, more advanced than the weapons of the Egyptians. These are fighting people.

Narrator: Arkose, still only a young boy watched from the sidelines as his brother Kamose prepared his army for the fight.

Nicole Douek: Kamose and his brother Arkose would become the liberators, the freedom fighters. They would become the initiators of the greatest period of Egyptian history.

Narrator: 20 year old Kamose set off leading his troops north, into Hyksos territory.

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Reconstruction Voiceover: My might army went before me like a blast of fire.

Narrator: Kamose and his army soon came across a fortified Hyksos town. Kamose was now face to face with his foe.

Reconstruction Voiceover: When the next day dawned I swooped down on him like a falcon. My breath was tightened, I had already defeated him. I demolished his defences, killed his men.

Narrator: Kamose recorded the capture of the town with unconcealed delight.

Reconstruction Voiceover: My soldiers were like lions after the kill. As they carried off cattle and slaves, wine, fat and honey, gleefully dividing the loot.

Narrator: The Egyptian army now headed towards their ultimate goal, Avaris the Hyksos capital. Kamose felt confident that victory was in his grasp.

Nicole Douek: He taunts the King of the Hyksos and shouts to him, that he's a coward, that he is no good, that he's going to vanquish him.

Narrator: But Kamose would not sack Avaris. The records do not say what happened to it, but on the verge of expelling the Hyksos from Egypt Kamose died. Egypt's hopes now rested on the shoulders of his 10 year old brother Ahmoses. Although his mother has lost both her husband and eldest son to the Hyksos, she now groomed Ahmoses to continue the war of liberation they had begun.

Dr Stephen Harvey: Ahmoses would have been learning the ways of battle, and his mother and courtiers would have been training him to become a great military leader, and he had the example of Kamose to follow. So he's got to get it right, not only for his own case but because the nation depends on it.

Narrator: After 10 years of preparation Ahmoses was ready to take on the Hyksos. It would be his greatest test. The consequences would determine the rest of Egyptian history. Only 1 eye witness account remains of this critical moment. It lies in the tomb of a soldier who fought in Ahmoses's army against the Hyksos. The story inscribed on the walls of his tomb, his role in the battle against the Hyksos is the only written record of what would be the decisive battle for Egypt.

Reconstruction Voiceover: Let me speak to you and tell you the honours I received. How I was decorated with gold. During the siege of Avaris, the king noticed me fighting bravely on foot, and promoted me. We took Avaris. I carried off 4 people there. A man and 3 women, and his majesty let me keep them as slaves.

Narrator: These few words of an old man are the only record of the historic defeat of the Hyksos by Ahmoses's army. Ahmoses returned victorious to Thebes. He presented his ceremonial axe to his mother as a symbol of his great victory. The work his father and brother had begun, he had finally completed.

Dr Zahi Hawass: He actually dismissed the Hyksos. His father and grandfather and his brother didn't, but this time he actually succeeded to expel the Hyksos away from Egypt.

Narrator: Ahmoses was no longer merely the King of Thebes. He was now Pharaoh of a united Egypt.

Nicole Douek: The reunification of Egypt is crucial. It means a new beginning. It means that Egypt is back to where it should be as a unified land under the rule of one king, one Pharaoh.

Dr Stephen Harvey: It's a seminal moment, it's a beginning moment. There is some time around maybe 1520 is the opening act in the new kingdom.

Narrator: Ahmoses attributed his victories to one source, the God, Amun-Re, a mysterious God, who's name means "The Hidden One". In the darkest recesses of the Temple of Thebes the God spoke to

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Ahmoses.

Reconstruction Voiceover: Oh my son Ahmoses, I am the father, I set terror in the northlands, even unto Avaris, and the Hyksos are slain beneath my feet.

Narrator: The Egyptians were so in awe about Ahmoses's victory over the Hyksos, that the Pharaoh himself was worshipped as a God.

Dr Zahi Hawass: Ahmoses, he was a hero. In the eyes of everyone they were smiling, calling his name, building a chapel for him, asking God to protect him because he is God.

Narrator: But Ahmoses's ambition went beyond uniting Egypt. He wanted gold to build Egypt into a powerful nation. He headed south with his army to Nubia. Some of the richest goldmines in the ancient world were controlled by the powerful Nubian King from his capital here at Kerma. In a series of battles Ahmoses's army crushed the Nubians. Once again Ahmoses was victorious. After 25 years on the throne Ahmoses died, but his legacy would live on, to ensure that foreigners would never rule his country again, he had pushed Egypt's borders beyond the Saini desert in the north and deep into Nubia in the south. The warrior Pharaoh had laid the foundations of an empire.

Dr Zahi Hawass: It was the beginning of the light of day. It was the beginning of the sun that dries. It was the beginning of the pyramids to come back, it was the beginning of the glory of Egypt, that's why we called it the Golden Age.

Narrator: Ahmoses had spent his life securing peace for Egypt. Now Egypt could be rebuilt, and Thebes, the religious capital could flourish. One Pharaoh in particular Hatshepsut transformed the city, constructing beautiful temples as well as the strange new obelisks that towered over them. Weighing over 300 tons, and standing 30 metres tall, obelisks were cut from a single piece of granite. Building and erecting these stone spires was a spectacular achievement that still puzzles engineers today. Obelisks became the defining monuments of the New Kingdom. Bold and innovative, they have been emulated around the world ever since. But the obelisks also represented a mystery. For years archeologists have known that obelisks were built during Hatshepsut's reign but this name was missing from the list of kings on these temple walls, the official records. It was as if Hatshepsut had never existed. It remained a mystery for 3,000 years.

In 1903 British archeologist Howard Carter was working in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings. Sifting through the sand Carter came across a tomb and on it the name of the Pharaoh Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut had been wiped from historical records for a very simple reason. This remarkable Pharaoh was a woman. Early in her life Hatshepsut had been an ordinary queen. When her husband died her stepson Tuthmosis came to the throne, but he was too young to rule alone, so Hatshepsut ruled as co-regent. This was not exceptional. What was shocking was her next step. Hatshepsut declared herself Pharaoh.

Nicole Douek: Hatshepsut must have been an extraordinary woman. She found herself the most important ruler of the time. The next ruler to come to the throne Tuthmosis the Third was only a small child, so she took action, and from being a Regent she had herself proclaimed not Queen, but King of Egypt. What drives her? Is it ambition or is it politically the right thing to do at that time?

Prof. David O'Connor: She saw the opportunity and she seized it. And it was the desire for power. She saw that this system of female Regents could be turned into securing full power for a senior woman of the Royal Family like herself.

Narrator: Only two women had been Pharaoh before Hatshepsut and both had failed to rule for long. But this did not deter her. She believed Egypt could be persuaded to accept a woman on the throne. After all, women in Egypt were held in high regard compared with other cultures at the time, as ancient texts reveal.

Reconstruction Voiceover: I hereby make my Will for my wife. I leave her all of the property which I inherited.

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Reconstruction Voiceover: Don't give your wife grief at home when you know that she's in control. Never say "Where is it, find it for me", when she has put something where it's supposed to be. "Keep your eyes open but keep your mouth shut". If you appreciate her qualities.

John Ray, Cambridge University: You were better off as a woman in ancient Egypt than in most ancient societies. But it was very difficult for them to branch out independently, have their own careers, it was still a man's world. Egyptian women were known as "Lady of the House", or if you like "Housewife". Hatshepsut is no housewife.

Narrator: Despite the rights women possessed at the time, Egyptians struggled with the idea of a female Pharaoh. It went against the natural order of life. A concept Egyptians described as Maat.

Prof. David O'Connor: Maat meant the order of the whole cosmos. The way the Universe was constructed. Egypt's place in the cosmos. Relationships with foreigners, and Egypt were part of that. Foreigners are inferior, Egypt is superior and dominant, and the King should be male.

Dr Zahi Hawass: She knew that she had no right to the throne and the Egyptian would never accept that.

Narrator: Hatshepsut's need to legitimise her role as Pharaoh would dominate her entire reign. First she turned to her ancestry. Hatshepsut stressed the fact that she was the daughter of a King.

John Ray: Hatshepsut can be seen as the Queen Elizabeth the First of ancient Egypt. And one of the strongest features in her life is her relationship with her father. She may be a woman, she may be somebody who's claim to the throne was rather shaky, but do not ever forget that she was the daughter of Tuthmosis the First. Queen Elizabeth used to interview ambassadors underneath a portrait of Henry the Eighth. The message was the same, "I am my father's daughter".

Narrator: Hatshepsut even put words into her dead father's mouth, claiming he had publicly appointed her as his successor.

Reconstruction Voiceover: "This is my daughter, Hatshepsut, I hereby appoint her in my place. She alone will sit on my majestic throne. Listen to her commands, and work together on whatever she orders".

Narrator: But she went further. On her temple walls she carved the tale of how the God Amen took on her father's appearance and made love to her mother. Hatshepsut was not only the daughter of a Pharaoh now she was the daughter of a God. Hatshepsut personally embraced her sexuality revelling in descriptions of her own beauty.

Reconstruction Voiceover: Her body was covered with the finest incense, her scent was a divine shower. Her skin glittered like the stars. The look of her was more beautiful than anything.

Narrator: But Hatshepsut was Pharaoh and the Pharaoh had to be male, so she had herself depicted with a male body, a male kilt and the false beard of a Pharaoh on her chin. Hatshepsut had to carefully choose who to trust at Court.

John Ray: Hatshepsut is a woman trying to be a king. She inherited a Court from her father but she replaces them with people that she herself has chosen, and it's in their interest to keep their patron, even if that patron is a woman, in place. They know that if she goes they go.

Narrator: One of the Pharaoh's favourite courtiers was a man named Senenmut. He had started life as a commoner, but his rise to power had been meteoric, sparking rumours about the nature of his relationship with Hatshepsut. Senenmut was promoted from the army into the royal household. Hatshepsut even entrusted him with raising her won daughter. But it was as her chief architect that Senenmut did the most for his Pharaoh. He had been responsible for the creation of Hatshepsut's giant obelisks. Now she entrusted him with her most ambitious plan. The building of her mortuary temple. The temple would be Hatshepsut's ultimate attempt to prove herself worthy of the title of Pharaoh. It was one of the most lavish

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and monumental buildings of the ancient world, Deir el Bahri. Below the great temple an additional tomb had been carved out of the rock. Halfway down the corridor is a drawing of the owner of the tomb, and next to it a name, Senenmut. The tomb's position so close to Hatshepsut's temple may simply have been the ultimate reward for a loyal architect. But perhaps it was an reflection of the intimacy between Hatshepsut and her favourite courtier.

John Ray: There was speculation at the time that Senenmut was Hatshepsut's lover, and a series of graffiti in a tomb near the temple of Deir el Bahri make it fairly clear that the person who wrote the graffiti thought that that was what they were up to. This is a problem that female rulers tend to get. They pick up salacious views of what they're doing. I suspect that's unlikely. It's too dangerous a game for Senenmut to be playing. I suspect the relationship was one of mutual respect, and not going beyond the boundaries of that respect.

Narrator: But while the inner temple harboured private secrets the outer walls of Deir el Bahri became a place for propaganda and self aggrandizement. Carved reliefs boast the crowning achievement of her reign. An unusual and bold military adventure. Every Pharaoh was expected to prove himself on the battlefield, but Hatshepsut's army was under the control of her stepson, Tuthmosis. Tuthmosis was acutely aware that the throne was rightfully his.

John Ray: Like Elizabeth the First of England she doesn't trust the army. She's got a problem. If she sends the army out to extend the empire, if it loses she will be blamed and will almost certainly lose power. What happens on the other hand if it wins, the generals in charge of the victorious army are likely to turn round and say, "see we can achieve victory we don't need this Queen upstart on the throne". So Tuthmosis and his army represents a major problem for Hatshepsut.

Narrator: The Pharaoh devises an ingenious plan that would not only keep Tuthmosis and his army occupied, but would also enhance her status. She commanded her soldiers to prepare for an epic trading mission to a place where no Egyptian had been for over 500 years. The land of Punt. As well as keeping her stepson busy Punt offered Hatshepsut the promise of exotic goods, above all incense.

Dr Stephen Harvey: Incense was a very important part of Egypt's foreign relations. The Egyptians valued incense tremendously. The elite liked to perfume their environment, but even more importantly when you released incense in a temple the God or the Goddess actually embodied themselves in the incense. So what you were smelling wasn't just the incense it was the aroma of her deity.

Narrator: In the 9th year of her reign, the Pharaoh launched the expedition to Punt. An epic quest for the rarest treasures of the ancient world.

John Ray: State management was the essence of this trip. It was a huge piece of theatre. It was a huge piece of propaganda, to show that Hatshepsut can deliver the exotic, the unusual, the divine. It also creates work for an unemployed army. It's a feat that they can talk about to their grandchildren, that they can say we did, under the famous Queen Hatshepsut.

Narrator: The walls of Hatshepsut's temple proclaimed the mission to have been a triumphant success. The reliefs depicted the exotic treasures her soldiers brought back to her.

Reconstruction Voiceover: Look, they are returning and they have brought something truly amazing. Trees heavy with fresh incense ready to plant. Ebonine, precious ivory, baboons, monkeys and dogs, countless Leopold skins, even slaves and children. Nothing like this has ever happened to another king of Egypt.

Narrator: The scribes who accompanied the army carefully recorded the wonders of that exotic land. Houses on stilts, giraffes and strange tropical trees. Along with the flora and fauna the queen of Punt was depicted as a huge fat woman. These reliefs are regarded as the first antopological study in history. The expedition to Punt did more than legitimise Hatshepsut's position as Pharaoh. It set her apart as the Pharaoh who had opened Egypt and reached out to foreign lands.

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Nicole Douek: Under her reign you really have the explosion of wealth, of power, of vision in a way. It's a great reign.

Narrator: After 22 years on the throne, Hatshepsut died. She hoped that her obelisks towering over Karnak would forever remind the world of her greatness, but she had stolen the name of Pharaoh from her stepson, and for this he would make her pay. Tuthmosis the 3rd rightful heir to the throne was 25 years old and ready to claim his inheritance.

Reconstruction Voiceover: Amen opened the gates and I flew up to heaven as a divine hawk. He gave me his strength and his might.

Narrator: Tuthmosis quickly reconnected himself with the line of warrior Pharaohs, Ahmoses and Kamose. It would be as if his stepmother had never reigned. Tuthmosis would make sure of that. Tuthmosis had her obelisks bricked up and ordered that Hatshepsut's name and image be carefully removed from every corner of Egypt.

John Ray: Tuthmosis the 3rd is saying we don't need the memory of this female ruler, this interlude in the history of Egypt as an imperial power.

Narrator: Even Hatshepsut's beautiful temple was defaced.

Prof. David O'Connor: It would be like it was in the days when it was being built and decorated, but in reverse. The scaffolding would be up, there would be hundreds of workmen scurrying around, busily chipping away at the walls to organise the defacing of the royal image of Hatshepsut, was suddenly a major bureaucratic task. And if there was anything the ancient Egyptians liked it was a major bureaucratic task. So I'm sure this was some high official's acme of his career.

Narrator: All evidence of Hatshepsut's reign was destroyed.

Prof. David O'Connor: If you erase someone's image from their mortuary monument, you are in effect erasing them from continuing existence in the after life. And for any Egyptian royal or otherwise, that's total disaster, and so by defacing a monument like that you're saying, no you don't have eternity.

Narrator: With her name erased throughout Egypt, and excluded from all the lists of kings, it was as if Hatshepsut had never existed. The death of a Pharaoh was always a time for neighbouring nations to test the resolve of a new successor. Now a coalition of Middle Eastern princes moved south and gathered in the city of Magido, threatening Egyptian trade and influence in the region. Perhaps his enemies thought Tuthmosis would be weak. If so they had made a terrible mistake. Tuthmosis had waited over 20 years for this moment. He intended not just to push back these warlike rulers, but to take over their countries. Tuthmosis was planning what no Egyptian Pharaoh had ever dreamed of, to build an empire.

Prof. David O'Connor: The strategy was hammer, hammer hammer, hammer, hammer. He realised that in order to build up a secure basis of power in the Eastern Mediterranean, that is was going to take a great military effort. That it was going to take many many campaigns, and so that's what he did.

Narrator: To increase the size of his army Tuthmosis launched a huge recruiting campaign. Soldiers were enlisted, either voluntarily, or by force.

Prof. David O'Connor: They had to be armed, and we know there were these great armouries filled with weapons, and shields and things of this kind and every soldier was given his gear, his kit.

Narrator: Finally before great divisions of the powerful Egyptian army, headed north, across the scorching Sinai desert. They moved boldly up the Mediterranean coast.

Prof. David O'Connor: The Egyptian on the move would be an impressive affair. The leadership was quite

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interested in maintaining the movement of the army as something that had considerable visual impact. And it was partly to impress the enemy. They would be hearing, what is the Egyptian army like, does it look intimidating? Is it straggling? Is it not well organised? What was also very important for the army that it should have a sense of itself as a very well organised entity with very high spirit.

Narrator: Led by the Pharaoh Tuthmosis himself 20,000 men marched towards Megiddo. At the end of every day when the troops made camp, the Pharaoh's scribes recorded the army's latest achievements. They were the first war correspondents in history.

Nicole Douek: He has scribes write down in a day book, all the events that take place. When they start, where they start marching, where they set up camp. How many troops there are, how much they need to eat. All the actual day to day life of an army on the move.

Reconstruction Voiceover: 4th month of winter, Day 25. His Majesty passed the fortress of Sile on his first victorious campaign to crush the people who were assaulting Egypt's borders.

Narrator: Back in Egypt their accounts were recorded on the walls of the Karnak temple. The faces of foreigners bear the names of all the cities conquered by Tuthmosis. Here the word Israel is recorded for the 1st time in history. The scribal records also include intimate details of what it was like to be a soldier in Pharaoh's army 3,000 years ago.

Reconstruction Voiceover: The tress I lie under at night have nothing to eat on them. Sand flies keep biting me and sucking my veins dry. I'm hobbling about like a cripple because I have to go everywhere on foot. Tell Amen to bring me back alive from this hell hole, where I have been abandoned.

Narrator: Tuthmosis and his soldiers had finally arrived at their ultimate goal. Beyond their camp, behind the mountain lay Megiddo.

Nicole Douek: This is the town in the Levant where all the princes of the area have gathered, and if you managed to conquer this fortress town, then you have pretty well conquered the whole area. In the words of Tuthmosis the 3rd, the capture of Megiddo is the capture of a thousand cities.

Narrator: On the 16th day of the 1st month of summer, 1456 BC, the 25 year old Pharaoh stood on the Carmel ridge and faced one of the greatest dilemmas in Middle eastern warfare. The great fortress of Megiddo lay before him. 3 paths led to the city, 2 were long but safer routes. The 3rd path was the quickest, but it was also the most dangerous, since Tuthmosis men would have to go in single file. Tuthmosis called a council of war. He later recorded how his generals were firmly against taking the dangerous path.

Reconstruction Voiceover: They said to his majesty: "How will it be to go on this road which becomes narrow when it is reported that the enemies are waiting there beyond. There are 2 other roads here, do not make us go on that difficult road".

Narrator: Ultimately the last word fell to the young Pharaoh. His generals and men would have to live and perhaps die by his decision.

Dr Zahi Hawass: The enemy expect Tuthmosis the 3rd to come from the easy road. They are waiting for him there. They never thought that the army of Tuthmosis the 3rd will come from the left side, and take this narrow, impossible road. But he said go, that is the road to victory.

Narrator: Suddenly as Tuthmosis had planned the Egyptian army appeared among the enemy. In Megiddo there was panic. The enemy army rushed out of the city to take on the Egyptians.

Dr Stephen Harvey: There would have been twanking noisy dust. The snow and the noise and the whinnying of the horse, it would just be this wild melee in all this blinding dust, with enemy soldiers looming up in front of you, just as frightened and angry as you are.

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Reconstruction Voiceover: His Majesty set out on his electrum chariot dressed in his battle gear, strong armed like Horus the Lord, his father Amen strengthening his arms.

Narrator: The Egyptians forced the enemy to flee, back within the walls of Megiddo.

Prof. David O'Connor: The enemy kings are galloping back to the city and having to abandon their wonderful golden and silver chariots, because the city has closed its gates. The city is not going to open its gates while the Egyptian army is out there, and these kings have to be hauled up the city walls in knotted garments that the people have let down.

It was a complete rout, the enemy crumpled completely before the Egyptian attack.

Narrator: But on the verge of victory Tuthmosis plan went wrong.

Prof. David O'Connor: He wanted his forces to continue immediately to the city and take the city. But the Egyptian troops stopped to plunder the enemy dead and the enemy camp. He can't stop it. The army is going to plunder and he can't get them to stop it.

Nicole Douek: They don't do a head count in ancient Egypt, they do a hand count. They cut the hands off, they pile them up in whole mound and then they count them one at a time. A pretty gory business but I suppose it's not quite as horrid as cutting their heads off.

Narrator: Each enemy hand was worth its weight in gold, but in their plundering Tuthmosis's army had given the enemy time to gather safely behind the city walls. The Egyptians had no choice but to surround Megiddo and wait.

Prof. David O'Connor: He did not have to conduct an attack on the city because by setting up the stockade he signalled that he intended to starve them out. Not attack them and try and take the city by storm.

Narrator: For the next 7 months while the princes in Megiddo slowly starved, Tuthmosis and his army raided the surrounding countryside. Finally Megiddo surrendered. Hundreds of years later, when the writer of the Book of Revelations spoke of the last battle of Domesday, he would set it here in Megiddo. He would call it "Armageddon". The Pharaoh returned in triumph to Thebes. Megiddo and all its wealth now belonged to Tuthmosis. On the walls of Karnak temple, his scribes recorded the staggering scale of the booty they had captured.

Reconstruction Voiceover: Living prisoners 340. Chariots of his wretched army 892. Cows 1.929. Male and female slaves and their children 1.796. Walking sticks with human heads 3.

Narrator: The war booty and tribute that poured into Thebes would make it one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. In a stroke of genius the Pharaoh also brought back the children of the defeated princes, to indoctrinate them in the ways of Egypt.

John Ray: They would grow up in an Egyptian school. They'd learn Egyptian. It was rather like what the British did in India, by taking the children of the Maharajas and bringing them back to public schools in England. That way the princes became semi Egyptian.

Prof. David O'Connor: But at the same time of course they were hostages to their father's good behaviour and as their father aged, they were sent back to replace him, now thoroughly infiltrated with Egyptian attitudes.

Narrator: In Nubia Tuthmosis went one step further. He appointed a viceroy to rule over Nubia. The Viceroy was called Overseer of the Gold Countries. He secured Egypt's lifeline. All the gold the Pharaoh needed to rule his empire.

Dr Zahi Hawass: Tuthmosis III established that empire and he gave this empire the leadership. He gave the empire how the empire became to be strong. How he controlled the south at the 6th cataract, and

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Egypt's Golden Empires

controlled the eastern area, and Syria, Palestine and the area in Iraq in the whole world, was under Thebes. Under his control.

Narrator: For all these successes Tuthmosis pledged thanks to one God, Amen-Re. The Pharaoh's first task on returning from Megido was solemn. The King approached the inner sanctuary. Alone Tuthmosis made offerings to the God he credited with his victory. The God who granted him an empire. According to Tuthmosis the God spoke to him.

Reconstruction Voiceover: I gave you valour and victory over all lands. I set your might, your fear in every country, that you may lead the living forever.

Narrator: Stepping back the king cast sand on the floor to obscure his footprints and ensure no one else entered the God's presence. Tuthmosis could return into the light with the blessing of Amen, for his new empire. Only 100 years earlier Egypt had been on the verge of extinction, but by the end of Tuthmosis's reign, Egypt controlled Nubia, the Syrian and Lebanese coasts, and parts of Israel and Palestine.

Nicole Douek: Egyptians moved into territories that they never thought they probably would reach at all. It is an enormous empire, it's the biggest empire that has ever been conquered, and it is ruled by one king. And the wealth of the world arrived in Egypt, and receiving it is the King of Egypt. He is the richest man in the world at that time. He is the ruler of the greatest empire.

John Ray: It was the beginning. It was a first attempt to create a unified whole from among nations of different faiths, different traditions, different languages. That concept had not been realised before in history.

Narrator: The Egyptian empire as born. The question now was: "What the Pharaoh would do with his Empire of Gold?"

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