

ANCIENT HISTORY: *EGYPT*

Hatshepsut

The reign of Hatshepsut as the sixth pharaoh of New Kingdom Egypt has aroused much controversy; however her impact and influence on this period of time is undeniable. Hatshepsut's contributions to the eighteenth dynasty and the continuation of New Kingdom Egypt argue her case for inclusion in the upcoming book entitled "The Ten Greatest Pharaohs of All Time". As ruler, Hatshepsut created a legacy that centred on the military, foreign policy and buildings. It was through these key aspects of her rule that Hatshepsut was able to deliver wealth, prosperity, stability and growth to the Egyptian people, which has often been an unsuccessful goal of pharaohs previous and subsequent to her.

As the oldest child of Thutmose I and his Great Wife, Queen Ahmose, Hatshepsut was surrounded by some of the most significant and influential royal figures. As part of this royal family Hatshepsut held three different roles as demonstrated by her titles; "King's Daughter", "King's Great Wife" and Pharaoh. It is unique for a female to hold all three titles at some point; however most unusual is Pharaoh due to her gender. Hatshepsut's gender made her reign as pharaoh controversial and fascinating thus providing reasons why she should be included in the upcoming book. Despite Hatshepsut's royal bloodline, she was not the next heir to the throne. Thutmose III however, was only a young child and therefore Hatshepsut became regent until he was able to govern the empire independently. Although, this did not occur as Hatshepsut and Thutmose III entered into co-regency whereby the power was shared, enabling both Pharaoh's to impact and influence New Kingdom Egypt. As pharaoh, Hatshepsut commissioned various innovative building programs, foreign policy changes, and military campaigns. These were key aspects of a pharaoh's rule; however Hatshepsut's gender makes these aspects significantly more important and influential.

The motives behind Hatshepsut's ascendancy to the throne are constantly debated. Given the instability associated with a change in pharaoh, the sole rule of young Thutmose III would have placed Egypt at risk. This strengthens the argument that the co-regency was to protect New Kingdom Egypt and as a result of this, Hatshepsut should be engraved in history as the pharaoh who saved the New Kingdom. Hatshepsut's acquisition of power is also fascinating and emphasises her importance as pharaoh. The divine birth relief at Deir-el-Bahri stresses Hatshepsut's ancestry and relationship to Amun which aimed to legitimise her rule. Dr Zahi Hawass furthers this point by arguing that "when Hatshepsut took the kingship, she had to create a new history of her divine birth from the god, which could be shown on her temples in order to convince the people that she was chosen by the god". This idea is reinforced by the coronation inscription in which Thutmose I describes Hatshepsut as "his only legitimate successor" as stated by Pamela Bradley. Hatshepsut's use of the coronation inscription stressed the importance of a royal blood line in the continuation of a dynasty and therefore, she enabled the continuation of the eighteenth dynasty by obtaining the kingship in this way.

Throughout her reign, Hatshepsut used the divine birth and coronation inscriptions as propaganda which greatly impact upon religion. These inscriptions were related to the god Amun and therefore, their use heightened his power and the power of the priesthood. Amun's involvement in these inscriptions demonstrated the religious power of the chief god and his growing political power. The political power of Amun increased as Hatshepsut appealed her right to the throne by claiming divine birth. This emphasises Amun's and the priesthood's influence in choosing the next pharaoh. The appointment of trusted officials to positions of power within the priesthood is another religious impact of Hatshepsut's reign. Hatshepsut clearly noticed the increasing power of Amun and thus implemented her most trusted official, Senenmut as the Chief Steward of Amun. This enabled Hatshepsut to maintain some control over the priesthood and therefore influence their decisions and operation. Hence, during the reign of Hatshepsut, the Amun priesthood gained unprecedented power, thus demonstrating Hatshepsut's impact on religion.

As the power of the Amun Priesthood grew, Hatshepsut ensured that all Gods were respected which intended to maintain the balance of Ma'at, a major goal of all New Kingdom Egypt pharaohs. In the Speos Artemidos inscription Hatshepsut speaks of rebuilding the temple of the Lady of Cusae and re-consecrating the temples of Thoth among others. Devotion to other Gods is also shown at Deir-el-Bahri where Hatshepsut constructed sanctuaries for Hathor and Anubis. Hatshepsut's intention to maintain the balance of Ma'at in Egypt was one of the single most important goals of a New Kingdom Egypt Pharaoh. Despite Hatshepsut's best efforts to maintain this balance, the patriarchal society that is New Kingdom Egypt deemed that the presence of the woman on the throne was a disruption to Ma'at. This provides reasoning for why many of Hatshepsut's buildings have been defaced and why her name was removed from many of her achievements, thus arguing her case for inclusion in the upcoming book due to the gender bias she has faced throughout history.

Hatshepsut's need to legitimise her reign is accounted for by her gender as a female on the throne was almost unheard of and therefore, the Egyptian people required convincing that she was similar to other pharaohs. A common historiographical issue that faces Hatshepsut in modern times is the gender bias against her. This accounts for why she has been previously overlooked and argues why she should be included in the upcoming book "The Ten Greatest Pharaohs of All Time". Throughout her life, Hatshepsut commissioned the construction of various statues of herself and other buildings. Most significant of these is her mortuary temple, Deir-el-Bahri which demonstrates revolutionary architectural design. By studying her statues, an evolution of self portrayal is shown from female to male, accounted for by her desire to be deemed equal to other pharaohs despite her gender. In the Red Granite statue with a Royal Headdress, Hatshepsut is shown completely as a woman, dressed in a Queen's attire. More controversial of the statues is the Red Granite Sphinx of Hatshepsut where there is no ambiguity about her being male as she is shown as pharaoh and protector of Egypt. Another intriguing figure is the Warrior Pharaoh Statue. This statue depicts her in the typical warrior pharaoh pose, thus demonstrating Hatshepsut's military abilities while continuing the importance of a warrior pharaoh image during this time period.

Hatshepsut's military efforts formed a significant part of her highly successful foreign policy which impacted greatly on New Kingdom Egypt. According to modern historians such as Gardiner, Hatshepsut's reign "had been barren of any military enterprise except an unimportant raid into Nubia". However, according to a relief at Deir-el-Bahri, during this "unimportant" raid to the Nubian area, the Kushites were "slaughtered" and "overthrown" by Hatshepsut and her army. Another inscription demonstrating Hatshepsut as an active warrior pharaoh is the Speos Artemidos. This refers to Hatshepsut as "the sole one of Horus darting fire against my enemies" and that her might causes the "foreign countries to bow down". By being militarily active, Hatshepsut stabilised the Egyptian empire which laid a platform for future growth and prosperity of the empire.

Hatshepsut's foreign policy also greatly impacted upon Egypt and its surroundings in relation to her trading ventures. More specifically, this refers to her voyage to Punt. Punt is believed to be located on the coast of Africa near the Red Sea and has ties with Egypt dating back to the Old Kingdom which were re-established by Hatshepsut. At Deir-el-Bahri and in the Speos Artemidos inscription, the logistics, purpose and result of the trading expedition are outlined. The purposes were to trade with the natives and thus acquire goods that Egypt was unable to produce domestically. As stated by A.J. Koutsoukis, Hatshepsut returned with a "fabulous cargo of gold, ebony, animal skins... and living myrrh trees". The reintroduction of these items and the continuation of trade boosted the Egyptian economy, providing wealth and prosperity for the Egyptian people. Hence, Egypt's growing wealth through Hatshepsut's foreign policy is arguably the most significant impact of her reign as it allowed for the construction of her elaborate buildings of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III and further expanses in following years.

The controversy and fascination associated with Hatshepsut's reign also relates to her relationship with her stepson Thutmose III. Thutmose III came to the throne at a young age making Hatshepsut his regent. This occurred until a state of co-regency was established when he was sixteen years old. Many historians have argued that during the co-regency, Thutmose III was mentored by

Hatshepsut, accounting for his prominence and influence as pharaoh. Along with Hatshepsut's foreign policy, this could arguably be the greatest influence of Hatshepsut's reign. Thutmose III was a brilliant pharaoh in the key aspects of religion, building and military possibly because of the mentoring and training he received from Hatshepsut. During the co-regency, it is believed that Thutmose III led the army into Nubia twice and there are also reliefs at Karnak showing him making offerings to Amun with Hatshepsut. Hence, through activities performed by Thutmose III during the co-regency, it can be concluded that Hatshepsut was mentoring him and therefore greatly influenced the great pharaoh Thutmose III became.

The reign of Hatshepsut has aroused much controversy both past and present although her impact and influence on New Kingdom Egypt is irrefutable. The presence of a female on the throne is almost unheard of and thus creates historiographical issues such as gender bias which account for her being overlooked as a great pharaoh. The influence and impact of Hatshepsut as ruler centred on the key aspects of foreign policy, building and religion which are common for all New Kingdom pharaohs. Despite these core aspects of leadership being similar, the way in which Hatshepsut administered them was revolutionary for this period of time, thus arguing her case for inclusion in the upcoming book "The Ten Greatest Pharaohs of all Time".