Hatshepsut's Impact On Egyptian History

In the Eighteenth Dynasty (1492-1479 B.C.E), Thutmose’s son died at an early age. Since this was so unexpected, they believed it would result in a catastrophe. However, this unfortunate death began one of the most memorable and exceptional reigns in all of Egyptian history. The role of Pharaoh was passed on to his sister and wife, Hatshepsut, who was also a powerful ruler. Although it might seem strange to us in modern times, Hatshepsut was only 12 years old when she became a wife. She started out as a glorified helper but quickly became well respected and was promoted to “co-ruler of Egypt.” Interestingly, she decides to spend the majority of her reign as a man when depicting statues, capturing images, or writing stories. Therefore, she was easily forgotten and looked past by the “scholars until the 19th Century.” Hatshepsut’s reign started with her childhood and rise to power, her overall reign as Pharaoh, and the legacy she left as the first full empowered female Pharaoh in Egypt.

Hatshepsut’s early life consisted of being the oldest of three daughters. She was the offspring of Thutmose I and his wife and queen, Ahmose. Hatshepsut also grew up with a half brother from her father named Thutmose II. After their father's sudden death, Hatshepsut and Thutmose II decided to get married for traditional purposes when she was only 12 years old. Shortly, after this marriage took place she was promoted to the role of “God’s Wife of Amun.” During this time in Egypt that was the second-highest position a woman could ever have behind the Queen. This job would only start as a celebratory title for the woman or a mere assistant to the priests. However, if she was well liked by the priests, they would quickly become influential enough to “dictate policy.” Hatshepsut was also temporarily acting like Thutmose III’s regent. Regent means that she had to take control of generic settings and assets connected with someone or something involving Egypt. Subsequently, after seven long years of being a regent for Thutmose III, Hatshepsut officially changed her own title and gave all the powers of a Pharaoh to herself. Even though she probably loved the opportunity to be a pharaoh, she mainly took this job because she was threatened by another family that they would never let her stepson become King when he was finally eligible to.

After finally declaring herself the first female pharaoh, Hatshepsut had to prove to the citizens that she was capable of fulfilling her duties and roles as their Pharaoh. She understood the doubts people would have on this sudden change of leadership, so she decides to find some credibility. Hatshepsut uses her royal background to make her seem more of a reliable ruler. She deceives everyone by declaring that “her father had appointed her his successor.” When people finally started to accept her as their leader she wanted to change her appearance when she was posing for paintings because she wanted to relate more to their past leaders and former role models. This lead her to be illustrated as a male with a long beard and a strong body, except for when she was taking images for herself. Rumors began in the beginning about Hatsepsut and her chief minister, Senenmut, because he was supporting her in votes and also may have been romantically involved with her. “Her numerous inscriptions, monuments, and temples all demonstrate how unprecedented her reign was.” This quote is really powerful because it shows us how important this reign was for Hatshepsut because no woman had ever ruled the country altogether as pharaoh. She was very diligent in keeping with the traditional projects of an average Pharaoh such as building new things and controlling the military crusades and fighting. Hatshepsut’s most memorable creation was the temple at Deir el-Bahri,

which is now thought of as an architectural monument from early Egypt civilization. This specific temple was built next to the Nile River. It had a ramp attachment that ran through trees and pools all the way to the terrace. The land of Punt provided these trees, which are now fossilized tree stumps that can still be seen in the backyard of Deir el-Bahri to this day. The bottom patio was supported by columns and ramps that led up to the balcony, which was an architectural miracle. She even decorated the temple with tasteful statues, paintings, and cliffs that were carved with engravings. This temple was such a famous landmark that numerous pharaohs after Hatshepsut wished to be buried next to this historic wonder. Valley of the Kings was the official name of this land.. In addition to the temple, she also increased the countries overall wealth by trading and mining ivory, ebony, gold, leopard skins and incense. Her main connection to these treasures was in Punt, which was an isolated and obscure land they had to travel to. Hatshepsut’s comprehensive empire was so successful that the majority of Egyptian museums all have some artifacts from her time of leadership.

Unfortunately, Hatshepsut’s reign came to an end when she passed away in about 1458 BC. She would have been about 45 and she was buried in the Valley of the Kings that she started. She had made a last wish that her father’s sarcophagus could be found and reburied next to her in the tomb so they could be with each other in the after life. After her death, Thutmose III took over as Pharaoh and lead for thirty more years. He was a powerful leader who was also smart and cared more for the countries needs before their own just like his stepmother, Hatshepsut. Near the end of Thutmose III’s time as Pharaoh, he found several pieces of evidence that prove Hatshepsut’s reign before him. He found many statues and paintings of her dressed like the other Kings to destroy and abolish the divergence in male and female rulers. For some reason she also wished to obliterate her example as a female to others to further herself from “male succession.” One explanation for Hatshepsut’s desire to hide her gender is because a pharaoh's top priority is to maintain harmony, but a woman taking over a man's position would’ve mixed up that harmony. To all of the citizens, the pharaoh was supposed to display a strong example of what people should want to be. Although, Tuthmose III was afraid that if other people tried to go against tradition like she did, then the tradition would be broken. The Egyptians during this time were very moderate and did not like to change how things had always been. Therefore, having a female pharaoh was against everyone's morals at first until they accepted her of being a dependable ruler. Because of Hatshepsut’s strong efforts to hide her reign from the future, no one found out about it until 1822, which is when scholars could finally translate the hieroglyphics on the back walls of the temple she had built. Hatshepsut’s sarcophagus was found around 1903 by Howard Carter but it was unfortunately empty. However, in 2005 there was a new and improved search team that found her mummy, which is now placed in an Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

In conclusion, Hatshepsut’s overall impact on Egyptian History will still live on for many more generations. Even though she was forgotten for many centuries, she is continuously growing her legacy and claiming her spot as one of the most important Egyptian Pharaohs of all time. She left us with numerous wonders to preserve and multiple legacies to continue sharing with others throughout history. Hatshepsut was the perfect choice to take on the role of the very first full empowered female Pharaoh in all of Egypt.