

# Hatshepsut

In Egypt, most pharaohs were men. Fathers usually passed on their throne to the firstborn son of their favored wife. However, Hatshepsut was the first of a few exceptions. She was an ambitious woman who ruled Egypt for twenty years. In a society where the leaders had always been male, how did this happen?

Hatshepsut ruled during the eighteenth dynasty. She was the daughter of Tuthmose I. When her father died, her half-brother, Tuthmose II was declared the new pharaoh. As was the custom, Tuthmose II needed to marry a woman of royal blood and he chose Hatshepsut. Shortly after their wedding, he realized Hatshepsut's ambition was to make herself pharaoh. In order to prevent her becoming too powerful, he named his son, Tuthmose III, his child by one of his lesser wives, to be the heir to the throne. However, Tuthmose II died a few short years after becoming pharaoh. This gave Hatshepsut the opportunity she needed to take control.

At first, she ruled with Tuthmose III as co-regent. The young pharaoh was just a boy and Hatshepsut used his youth to her advantage. She began by announcing that the gods had spoken to her and given her the power and the full right to become pharaoh. In addition, she had herself declared as the wife of the Egyptian god Amun, stating that the god had visited her and proclaimed his love for her. Gradually, Hatshepsut took on the role of pharaoh. She began to dress in the clothing of a man. She wore a false beard and dropped the female ending "t" from her name. She gained the favor of the priests of Amun by granting them great power. Finally, this determined woman took over the throne of Egypt, even gaining the acceptance of the people.

Hatshepsut's reign brought great economic advancements for Egypt. She expanded trade routes. She sent explorers to East Africa. They returned with great riches such as gold, ebony, ivory, and exotic animals. She had great obelisks built to commemorate her reign. The Temple at Karnak received many renovations, making her priests very happy.

Hatshepsut's greatest achievement is the Mortuary Temple at Deir el-Bahri. It is built in the cliffs of the valley near the Peak of the Thebes. The temple had grand gardens and many sphinxes with the face of Hatshepsut on the entranceway and halls of this magnificent structure.

During Hatshepsut's reign, Tuthmose III, grew to be a man and married Hatshepsut's daughter. We are not sure how he dethroned Hatshepsut, but we know he was her successor. Many of Hatshepsut's buildings were destroyed or damaged such as the walls of her mortuary and her obelisks. Most likely, there were hard feelings between Hatshepsut and Tuthmose III. No matter what happened to her, Hatshepsut was able to rule Egypt for twenty years as the first female pharaoh. She left behind a great legacy in this ancient land.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the typical Egyptian Pharaoh.
2. How were Thutmose II and Hatshepsut related?
3. Why did Thutmose II name Thutmose III as his successor?
4. How did Hatshepsut begin to take on the role of pharaoh?
5. How did she gain the acceptance of the priests?
6. How did Hatshepsut hide the fact that she was a woman?
7. Name three things that Hatshepsut did as pharaoh?
8. What was her greatest accomplishment as pharaoh?
9. What happened to Hatshepsut after 20 years of ruling?
10. Who did Thutmose III marry?
11. What happened to most of Hatshepsut's buildings and obelisks?
12. What was most likely the cause of her things being destroyed?