



Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh

By Joyce A. Tyldesley

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Egypt's Queen?or, as she would prefer to be remembered, King?Hatchepsut ruled over an age of peace, prosperity, and remarkable architectural achievement (c. 1490 b.c.). Had she been born a man, her reign would almost certainly have been remembered for its stable government, successful trade missions, and the construction of one of the most beautiful structures in the world?the Deir el-Bahri temple at Luxor. After her death, however, her name and image were viciously attacked, her monuments destroyed or usurped, her place in history systematically obliterated. At last, in this dazzling work of archaeological and historical sleuthing, Joyce Tyldesley rescues this intriguing figure from more than two thousand years of oblivion and finally restores the female pharaoh to her rightful prominence as the first woman in recorded history to rule a nation.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Egyptian Queen Hatchepsut, who died in 1482 B.C. after more than 20 years of peaceful rule, proclaimed herself pharaoh during her reign. She depicted herself, in temple paintings, as a man who hunted, fished and even sported the pharaoh's hallmark false beard. Was she, then, as many historians have speculated, a cross-dresser or merely power-hungry and eager to outshine the half-brother whom she married, King Tuthmosis II? There's absolutely no evidence to suggest she "came out" as a transvestite, concludes English archeologist Tyldesley, and the fact that Hatchepsut retained her female name "suggests that she did not see herself as wholly, or even partially, male." In this highly conjectural biography, Hatchepsut emerges as a conformist queen consort who, once her husband died, blossomed as a pragmatic ruler, bringing Egypt an oasis of stable government, impressive architectural restoration and adventurous foreign trade and exploration from Phoenicia to Sinai. This biography will be of interest primarily to specialists. Illustrated.

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From Kirkus Reviews

An absorbing scholarly biography, based on a meticulous review of the archaeological record, of a remarkable woman who ruled as pharaoh for 20 years in Egypt's Eighteenth Dynasty (c. 1490 b.c.). Although an important pharaoh whose rule was notable for internal order and other significant achievements, Hatchepsut has suffered, Tyldesley (Archaeology/Liverpool Univ.) argues, from an unjust obscurity, born mostly from her enemies' determined efforts to obliterate her memory and from a consequent paucity of archaeological evidence about her. The daughter of Tuthmosis I and widowed by her half-brother and husband, Tuthmosis II, Hatchepsut became queen regent for the infant Tuthmosis III, whose mother was a member of the royal harem. As Tyldesley relates, Hatchepsut was a model regent at first, but in the seventh year of the reign she became pharaoh, assuming the title King of Egypt (there was no term for queen) and taking on the symbolic masculine aspects of her role, including the traditional false beard. Tyldesley contends that, contrary to a common interpretation, Hatchepsut's behavior was not that of an obsessed power-grabber, but of a typical pharaoh; she allowed Tuthmosis III to obtain the traditional pharaonic military education, she ruled with him as co-regent, and her long rule was characterized by economic prosperity and extensive monument-building, the traditional preoccupations of New Kingdom monarchs. Tyldesley argues that evidence of military conquest during Hatchepsut's reign is slender and questionable, but asserts that there were solid achievements in the realms of trade and exploration. The author speculates on the relationship between the queen and Senenmut, one of several brilliant administrators who made her reign possible. Finally, Tyldesley concludes that Hatchepsut died a natural death (in contrast to arguments that Tuthmosis III orchestrated her death). Tyldesley works closely from surviving texts and fragmentary monuments to recreate vividly an outstanding woman of the ancient past. -- *Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

About the Author

Joyce Tyldesley, holder of a doctorate from Oxford University, is Honorary Research Fellow at the School of Archaeology, Classics, and Oriental Studies at Liverpool University, England. She is the author of **Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh** and **Daughters of Isis: Women of Ancient Egypt**.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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