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Catherine M. Andronik, Joseph Daniel Fiedler. *Hatshepsut: His Majesty, Herself.* New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001. 40 pp. Ages 10-14. $17.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-689-82562-0.

Reviewed by Ronald J. Leprohon (Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto)
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One can only rejoice when a book is written about one of the great figures of ancient Africa. This is especially true when that figure happens to be a strong woman who had the courage to stand up to a patriarchal society and claim her place on the throne of her country, refusing to step aside to allow her stepson–a mere child at the time–to reign as king. Thus did Queen Hatshpesut lay her claim to fame, and go on to have a successful reign of over twenty years as true Pharaoh of Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty in the fifteenth century BCE.

The author, a library media specialist who has written a number of books dealing with various legendary and historical figures from King Arthur to P. T. Barnum, has set up her book nicely by beginning with a timeline of the history of Egypt and establishing her subject within that time frame. Her chapters are one to two pages long and are all accompanied by fine illustrations depicting the actions described in the text.

The narrative begins with the historical background into which Hatshepsut was born–a time when warrior kings had ousted foreign invaders from Egyptian soil–and here I must point out the apt description of the word dynasty as "an ancestral line" (p. 10). The concept of a dynasty is often misunderstood by readers and this short explanation should go a long way to helping teachers define the term for their students. This is followed by Hatshepsut's childhood and upbringing as the daughter of King Tuthmosis I and Queen Ahmose, his chief queen (an ancient Egyptian king had one chief queen along with a number of other, minor, wives). When Hatshepsut's brothers born to Queen Ahmose (and therefore the obvious heirs to the throne) died early, a son from a minor queen became Pharaoh Tuthmosis II, and he also married his half-sister Hatshepsut. This was a customary habit based on the mythological story of Osiris and Isis, brothers and sisters who were also husband and wife, and on the basic principle of keeping the wealth and the power concentrated within a single family.

Within eight years, Tuthmosis II had died, leaving Egypt with a succession problem. He and Hatshepsut had only produced one daughter, Princess Neferure, and thus the likely heir became Prince Tuthmosis, born to Tuthmosis II and a minor queen named Isis. However, Prince Tuthmosis happened to be very young at the time and thus when he became Pharaoh Tuthmosis III, his stepmother Hatshepsut acted as regent for him. Again, the author helps her young readers with an appropriate description of a regent as "an adult who could take control of the country" (p. 16). And this is where Hatshepsut made her move.

Unwilling to simply act as regent, she gradually took over more and more of the royal responsibilities until she actually had herself crowned as pharaoh. The fact of having a woman on the throne of Egypt was not unprecedented, since there is possible evidence for a queen acting as full ruler at the end of the Sixth Dynasty–Queen Nitocris–and incontestable evidence for Queen Sobeknofru at the end of the Twelfth Dynasty. The latter was the daughter of the last great ruler of that dynasty and she reigned successfully, albeit briefly. However, history has not been kind to either of these queens, perhaps because of the brevity of their reigns, and thus we turn to Hatshepsut for that particular role model. Here, we should temper the author's assertions that neither Nitocris nor Sobeknofru "ruled … well", since there is no evidence for this, and that "neither had had the audacity to proclaim herself pharaoh" (p. 20). Sobeknofru certainly took on the full royal titulary and insignia and ruled as proper "king of Egypt."

>From there, the book takes us through Hatshepsut's reign with a number of chapters on her building projects. The most famous of these was her mortuary temple on the west bank at Thebes at a site called Deir el Bahari, but her building program at the temple of Karnak in Thebes proper where she erected obelisks is also mentioned. Another important event in her reign is the famous expedition she commissioned to the land of Punt–perhaps

modern-day Somalia or Ethiopia, although it has been located as far inland as eastern Sudan–in quest of incense and myrrh and other east African products. There is also a chapter on one of her most distinguished officials, the High Steward Senenmut. Here, the author threads carefully through the oft-repeated assertion that "Some people, in fact, think that Senenmut may have been more than Hatshepsut's advisor" (p. 29). Such salacious, and totally unfounded, remarks might perhaps have been left out of a book that, after all, aims to take itself seriously.

The last few chapters deal with the end of Hatshepsut's life, her burial place in the Valley of the Kings, the desecration of many of her monuments under the reign of her successor Tuthmosis III, and her overall legacy. A short bibliography and a useful addendum on "Places to look for Hatshepsut" (p. 40) close the book. Readers who live in the New York (especially) and Boston areas will be delighted to find out that they can see some of Hatshepsut's monuments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts, respectively. I cannot help a shameless "plug" for an institution in my own city, and thus one could add that the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto has a full cast of the reliefs of the Punt expedition, which is one of the museum's most popular attractions.

Herewith a few general remarks on some of the more positive features of the book. The author must be congratulated for actually quoting some of the ancient texts, using J. H. Breasted's *Ancient Records of Egypt* (New York, 1906). Although out of date by now, these translations are still quite useful and will hopefully give readers a taste for some of what the ancient Egyptians themselves said about their own accomplishments. Also particularly helpful are the various guides to pronunciations of ancient Egyptian names (e.g., the royal name "tooth-MOE-sis" [p. 8]) and toponyms (e.g., the above mentioned Deir el Bahri, which is rendered as "DARE el-BAH-ree" [p. 6]), as well as the fact that the names of various ancient buildings are given. For example, Hatshepsut called her mortuary temple Djeser-Djeseru, or "Holy of Holies." This naming of buildings was accepted custom in ancient Egypt, and the fact should be noted.

A few small errors can be pointed out. For example, on page 4, Tuthmosis is the Greek version of Egyptian "Djehutymose," not "Thutmose," if one wishes to be precise. In the chronological chart, change "Hykso's rule" to "Hyksos' rule."

On page 6, the assertion that Hatshepsut was "ancient Egypt's only successful female king" might confuse some readers who will immediately question their teacher about Queen Cleopatra and her own rule.

On page 8, I do not wish to simply sound "politically correct," but I wonder whether a statement like "She…made herself beautiful despite the prominent nose she'd inherited from her father's side of the family" was necessary, as the size of Hatshepsut's nose seems to be a value judgment on the author's part.

On pages 10-11, a more serious lapse has occurred. The old, and now discredited, theory that the royal descent came through the female line is brought out to explain why Hatshepsut's father Tuthmosis I had to marry Queen Ahmose–who used to be described as the preceding king's daughter–to claim the throne. Although the original research questioning this theory is found in an obscure scholarly journal published in Germany, the author of this research, Gay Robins, has repeated her findings in her popular book *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 26-27. Robins showed that, although Queen Ahmose was given the titles of "King's Wife" and "King's Mother," she is never actually said to be "King's Daughter." Thus we must be careful with some of those old theories and examine the evidence more closely. Perhaps this might be an interesting point to bring up for discussion with young students: archaeologists, much like detectives, must look at the evidence very carefully before pronouncing themselves.

On page 16, given that Hatshepsut was the wife of King Tuthmosis II and that Prince Tuthmosis, who would eventually become King Tuthmosis III, was also the son of Tuthmosis II, albeit from a minor queen, we should not refer to Hatshepsut as Tuthmosis III's "aunt." Rather, she should be called his stepmother.

On page 26, given that Punt, as the author rightly points out and as mentioned above, was probably situated in the Ethiopia-Somalia region, we should not say it was "probably somewhere in southern Africa." Perhaps "eastern Africa" might have been more accurate.

On page 27, the reliefs of the Punt expedition are not quite "on the interior walls of Djeser- Dejseru." Rather, the reliefs are on one of the exterior courts in the southern half of the middle (of three) terrace.

On page 30, the author surely meant that, at 97 feet high, one of Hatshepsut's obelisks remains the tallest *obelisk* still standing in Egypt today, not "the tallest monument in Egypt." At 450 feet high, the Great Pyramid still retains that distinction.

On page 32, the description of Hatshepsut's burial place in the Valley of the Kings repeats old and now revised information. She did not have KV 20 (which stands

for "King's Valley [tomb no.] 20") built for herself, all along planning to have her father's "mummy moved to her own tomb" Rather, KV 20 has now been shown to have been excavated during the reign of Tuthmosis I for his own burial place, with Hatshepsut having herself buried in it alongside her father once she had become pharaoh. This is because the tomb she had originally planned for herself in the Valley of the Kings was made for a King's Wife, not a full pharaoh. Later, in Tuthmosis III's reign, the latter had KV 38 excavated, and the body of Tuthmosis I was moved there, while Hatshepsut's body was left in KV 20. Like the previously discussed royal descent issue, this information first appeared in a scholarly journal that is not easily accessible, but the information can now readily be found in in a popular book, Nicholas Reeves' *The Complete Valley of the Kings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), pp. 91-96.

On page 34, the statement that Tuthmosis III started his desecration of Hatshepsut's monuments "some time after [the beginning of his reign]" is a little misleading. Tuthmosis III waited twenty years before he started dismantling and defiling her monuments. Additionally, the fact that he built a wall around her obelisks at the temple of Karnak "to try to hide" her work is also somewhat misleading. This sort of "building over" was common practice, and, again to be fair to all concerned, Hatshepsut herself demolished a full gateway built by her husband Tuthmosis II to accommodate her own building program. Still at Karnak, she also ruined the design of her father Tuthmosis I's hall of columns by removing its roof to fit in her obelisks. Across the river, at western Thebes, she dismantled a sanctuary of King Amenhotep I and Queen Ahmose Nefertari which stood in the path of the road leading to her mortuary temple at Deir el Bahri (see J. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: the Female Pharaoh* [New York: Viking, 1996], pp. 158-59). It is easy to get emotional about one's subject, but one should still look at all the facts and try to remain objective, however difficult that may be.

All right, enough of this picky stuff. I don't wish to end my review on a negative note, which it doesn't deserve. Well written, with a narrative that flows nicely, and beautifully illustrated, the book is a splendid introduction to one of the great female figures of the ancient world. It should engender (no pun intended) much discussion in classrooms on the role of women in ancient Egypt, as well as on female rulers in general. It will serve its purpose well.

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