

Passage #2 Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs

The Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt were the supreme leaders of the land. They were like kings or emperors. They ruled both upper and lower Egypt and were both the political and religious leader. The Pharaoh was often thought of as one of the gods.

The name Pharaoh comes from a word meaning "great house" describing a palace or kingdom. The Pharaoh's wife, or Queen of Egypt, was also considered a powerful ruler. She was called "the Great Royal Wife". Sometimes women became the rulers and were called Pharaoh, but it was generally men. The son of the current Pharaoh would inherit the title and would often go through training, so he could be a good leader.

Historians divide up the timeline of Ancient Egyptian history by the dynasties of the Pharaohs. A dynasty was when one family maintained power, handing down the throne to an heir. There are generally considered to be 31 dynasties over the 3000 years of Ancient Egyptian history.

There were many great Pharaohs throughout the history of Ancient Egypt. Here are some of the more famous ones:

Akhenaten - Akhenaten was famous for saying there was only one god, the sun god. He ruled with his wife, Nefertiti, and they closed many of the temples to other gods. He was the father of the famous King Tut.

Hatshepsut - A lady Pharaoh, Hatshepsut was originally regent for her son, but she took on the power of Pharaoh. She also dressed like the Pharaoh to reinforce her power including the crown and ceremonial beard. Many consider her to be not only the greatest woman Pharaoh, but one of the greatest Pharaohs in the history of Egypt.

Tutankhamun - Often called King Tut today, Tutankhamun is largely famous today because much of his tomb remained intact and we have one of the greatest Egyptian treasures from his rule. He became Pharaoh at the age of 9. He tried to bring back the gods that his father had banished.

Amenhotep III - Amenhotep III ruled for 39 years of great prosperity. He brought Egypt to its peak of power. During his rule the country was at peace and he was able to enlarge many cities and construct temples.

Ramses II - Often called Ramses the Great, he ruled Egypt for 67 years. He is famous today because he built more statues and monuments than any other Pharaoh.

Cleopatra VII - Cleopatra VII is often considered the last Pharaoh of Egypt. She maintained power by making alliances with famous Romans such as Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.