

Pharaoh



Figure 1: A huge statue of the pharaoh Ramses II stands at the temple of Luxor in Egypt.

Introduction

The rulers of ancient Egypt were called pharaohs. The word pharaoh means “great house.” It originally described the royal palace but later described the rulers themselves.

Role

Pharaohs were absolute, or all-powerful, rulers. They made laws, controlled the land and its resources, and maintained an army. Assistants called viziers and other officials helped pharaohs to govern. Pharaohs were also religious leaders. In fact, Egyptians worshipped their pharaohs as gods.

Burial

When pharaohs died, their bodies were preserved as mummies. Egyptians then buried the mummies in tombs, sometimes in or under pyramids. They buried treasures along with the mummies. Egyptians believed that pharaohs lived on as gods in the afterlife.

Famous Pharaohs

One of the best-known pharaohs is Tutankhamen. He ruled in the 1300s B.C., from about age 8 until he died 10 years later. Archaeologists found his tomb in 1922. In addition to his mummy, there was a gold mask of the pharaoh’s face, jewelry, furniture, weapons, and other treasures buried in the tomb.

In the 1200s B.C. Ramses II ruled as pharaoh for about 67 years. He fought many successful wars. He also ordered many temples and statues to be built. Giant statues of Ramses II survive in Egypt today.

Ancient Egypt also had some female pharaohs. Many of them ruled with their husbands or for their young sons. Hatshepsut, however, ruled on her own as a pharaoh in the 1400s B.C. Cleopatra is probably the most famous woman ruler of Egypt. Part of a line of pharaohs from Macedonia, she ruled from 51 to 30 B.C. After her death the Roman Empire took over Egypt, and the rule of the pharaohs ended.

Nonfiction Article (Reading Level 1)
Lexile Measure: 780L

Cite (MLF Format)

"Pharaoh." *Britannica School*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 5 Aug. 2019.
school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/pharaoh/400147. Accessed 30 Sep. 2019.

Cite (APA Format)

Pharaoh. (2019). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from
<https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/pharaoh/400147>