



The oval enclosing the hieroglyphs that make up a royal name is called a cartouche. This one contains the name of King Tutthmosis III.

Famous pharaohs

THE KING was not only the most powerful and important man in Egypt – he was thought to be a god. He was know as the pharaoh – a word which derives from a respectful way of referring to the king by describing him as the “great house” (per-ao), meaning the palace where he lived. The Queen of Egypt could also be seen as a

goddess but was usually given the title of “Great Royal Wife” – only rarely did women rule Egypt in their own right. There was an effective system of training a prince to become a pharaoh, involving him becoming an expert sportsman and potential war leader. Often the ruling pharaoh would adopt his heir as “co-regent” to enable a smooth take-over when he died. Princes sometimes had to wait a long time. One pharaoh holds the record for the longest reign we know for any monarch. Pepy II came to the throne when he was six years old. He was still king of Egypt 94 years later when he was 100. It is quite remarkable in Egypt’s long history that we have only a few references to pharaohs being assassinated, usually as a result of a plot in the court to put a prince who was not the true heir on to the throne.

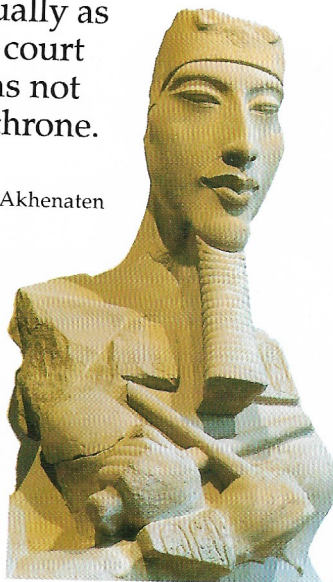
ARMLESS QUEEN
This statue shows a queen of Egypt around 700 B.C. Her arms were attached separately but have been lost, as has her crown of plumes.



Osiris, God of the Underworld



Akhenaten



HATSHEPSUT
This determined woman ruled Egypt for about 20 years. She was supposed to be regent for her young stepson, but took over the reins of government. She wore the pharaoh’s crown and royal ceremonial beard. In this sculpture she wears the crown of Upper Egypt with the cobra goddess.

AKHENATEN AND NEFERTITI
In Akhenaten’s reign the traditional Egyptian gods were banished - only the sun-god was worshipped. To break the links with other gods, Akhenaten founded a new capital city and closed the temples of other gods. Queen Nefertiti helped her husband set up the cult of the sun-god Aten and probably ruled with him. After their death Tutankhamun and his successors restored the old gods. The names of Akhenaten and Nefertiti became hated and were removed from inscriptions and their temples were torn down.

Nefertiti

