

FACT: THE PHARAOH WAS A GOD ON EARTH

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS believed that their pharaoh was the god Horus, son of Re, the sun god. When a pharaoh died he was united with the sun and a new Horus ruled on earth. The prosperity of Egypt, its wonderful yearly flood, its superiority to all other nations (in Egyptian eyes) proved that this was so.

Being a god, there was nothing, in theory, which the pharaoh could not do. He was head of the government and high priest of every temple. In practice, officials did most of the work, in his name.

Pharaoh Facts:

The title Pharaoh ('Great House') described the king's majesty.

When a pharaoh died, Re's divinity (and the kingship of Egypt) was passed on through the pharaoh's eldest daughter. Whoever claimed the throne married her to confirm his right to rule, even if he were her brother.

A woman could be pharaoh, but this was most unusual. Queen Hatshepsut ruled c1478-1469 BC.