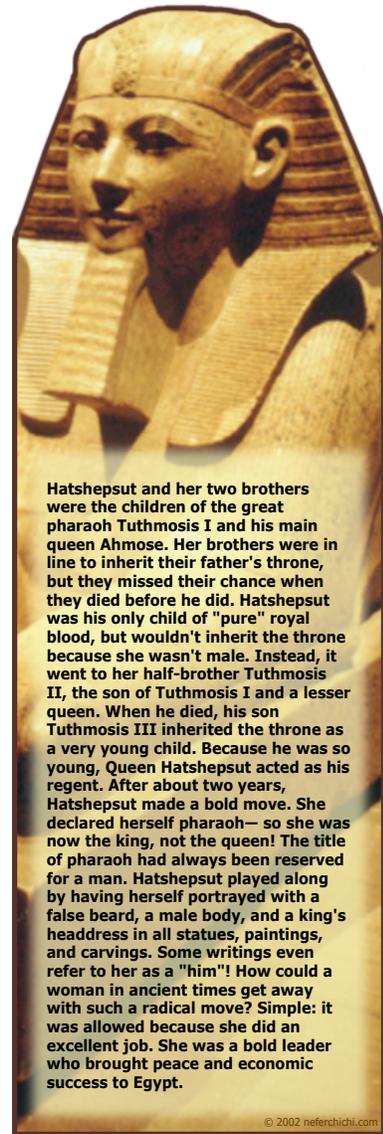


Ramses II is often called "Ramses the Great," a title he certainly deserved. He reigned for 67 years, until his death at the age of 96. He had around 200 wives, 100 sons, and 60 daughters. During his lifetime, he raided the Libyans and Nubians and attacked the Syrians nearly half a dozen times. To celebrate his own greatness, Ramses built more monuments and temples than any other pharaoh. He added on to the temples at Luxor and Karnak, he finished some of his father's building projects, and had several mortuary temples for himself constructed. His most impressive project was his temple at Abu Simbel in northern Nubia. This huge temple was carved right into the face of a cliff. Its most noticeable feature is the four colossal statues of Ramses at the front. Each one is 60 feet tall... and they are sitting down, not standing up!

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Hatshepsut and her two brothers were the children of the great pharaoh Tuthmosis I and his main queen Ahmose. Her brothers were in line to inherit their father's throne, but they missed their chance when they died before he did. Hatshepsut was his only child of "pure" royal blood, but wouldn't inherit the throne because she wasn't male. Instead, it went to her half-brother Tuthmosis II, the son of Tuthmosis I and a lesser queen. When he died, his son Tuthmosis III inherited the throne as a very young child. Because he was so young, Queen Hatshepsut acted as his regent. After about two years, Hatshepsut made a bold move. She declared herself pharaoh— so she was now the king, not the queen! The title of pharaoh had always been reserved for a man. Hatshepsut played along by having herself portrayed with a false beard, a male body, and a king's headdress in all statues, paintings, and carvings. Some writings even refer to her as a "him"! How could a woman in ancient times get away with such a radical move? Simple: it was allowed because she did an excellent job. She was a bold leader who brought peace and economic success to Egypt.

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