



Ancient Egypt: The Egypt of Ramses II (Volume 5)

By T. D. van Basteen

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Ramses the Great

In all of Egypt's long and storied history, Ramses the Great stands out as one of the best known and successful of all. Ruling the country for some 67 years, Ramses II ruled over Egypt during a time of stability and prosperity. His rule was marked by economic prosperity, successful military campaigns, and impressive building projects. He wanted from the very beginnings of his long reign, to ensure that his legacy was sealed, literally in stone, and that reminders of his rule were so ubiquitous that he would not be forgotten. In this, like many other elements of his kingship, he was highly successful and he has gone down in history as a legendary ruler.

Ramses II came to power at a young age. As co-regent with his father, he learned the proverbial ropes of leading the nation and leading a military. When he ascended to the throne, it became very clear that he was an incredibly passionate warrior. He has a long-standing military tradition going back many generations in his family, so being an active, successful campaigner was a vital part of his kingship. Some of the battles were undertaken to subdue untenable populations, others were to gain more wealth and power for the nation. Perhaps the most famous of all his military campaigns were his various battles against Egypt's dreaded foe, the Hittites.

He was also incredibly passionate about women. One of his enduring legacies is his success with the women of his time. We know of many principal wives, concubines, and errant women. It is said that he fathered close to 200 children in his lifetime. Nefertari was his first principal wife and the best known. So favored was Nefertari, Ramses the Great had an intricate and beautiful temple erected in her honor next to his stunning construction at Abu Simbel. Nefertari may have been the favorite, but we know that he had close to ten other principal wives, with whom he fathered many children, as well as concubines and other various women he may have conquered in his time.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Losing sense of time through television and technology, many seem to have forgotten about our ancestors and how the world has been shaped to what it is today. T.D. van Basten has set the tone for historical coverage and is admired by many for his exceptional passion, vivid descriptions and storytelling.

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