



▲ Pharaoh Ramses II defeating Egypt's enemies

Map Skills

- 1 **Region** Using the scale bar, measure the distance from the southern tip of the Egyptian empire to the northern tip.
- 2 **Place** What countries other than Egypt did the empire include?

Two Great Rulers

Egypt's great pharaohs were powerful figures who shaped its history. Hatshepsut and Ramses II were two famous New Kingdom pharaohs.

Hatshepsut In the story at the beginning of this chapter, you learned about Hatshepsut, one of the few women to rule Egypt. She was the daughter of one pharaoh and the wife of another. When her husband died, he left a son who was too young to rule. So Hatshepsut decided to make herself Egypt's new pharaoh.

Some Egyptians did not want to bow to a woman. To gain their support, Hatshepsut carried out all of the rituals expected of a king. Her statues showed

her dressed as a king. She even wore the false beard that was a symbol of the pharaoh's power. Although she was a woman, most Egyptians came to accept her rule:

“ [T]he god's wife Hatshepsut executed the affairs of the Two Lands according to her counsels. Egypt worked for her, head bowed . . . ”

—From “The 18th Dynasty Before the Amarna Period,” by Betsy M. Bryan, in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*

Hatshepsut's rule was peaceful. Hatshepsut built Egypt's wealth and power through trade. She sent traders by sea to a land called Punt in East Africa. They returned with precious wood, ivory, gold, and perfumes. Hatshepsut recorded the story of their journey on the stone walls of an enormous temple that she built.

Ramses II Ramses II, who ruled about 200 years after Hatshepsut, was a different kind of pharaoh. What Hatshepsut had tried to do through trade, Ramses chose to do through war. He spent the first half of his time as pharaoh fighting in Canaan and Syria, in the Fertile Crescent.

In 1275 B.C., Ramses II led his army against the powerful Hittites. The two armies fought in a place called Kadesh in present-day Syria. In fact, Ramses II lost many soldiers to the Hittites in the battle of Kadesh. He later made peace with the Hittites by agreeing on a border.

Ramses II was a great builder. During his reign, he built more monuments than any other pharaoh.

Reading Check How did Hatshepsut gain power?