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Ramses the great and the gold of the pharaohs at Houston museum of natural science



The ghostly figure of Queen Nefertari, Great Royal wife of Ramses II beckons us into a spectacular new exhibition at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Other artefacts include golden masks, sarcophagi, animal mummies, jewellery, amulets, and treasures from the tomb.

An exhibition combining digital technology and precious relics

So who was the pharaoh that the exhibition is dedicated to? “Ramses II is considered to be **the greatest king to ever rule Egypt**,” Dr. Zahi Hawass, the former Egyptian minister of antiquities says.

Multimedia and digital technology features prominently in the exhibition, including drone footage showing some of **Egypt**'s most iconic locations. An HD projection screen shows panoramic views of the ancient sites, as well as an introduction into the life of **Ramses and the discovery of his mummified remains** in the 19th century.



Credit to Houston Museum of Natural Science

The exhibition has **181 Egyptian artefacts** and covers important points in Ramses' reign. These include his military victories, such as a re-creation of Ramses' triumph at **the Battle of Kadesh**, perhaps the largest chariot battle ever fought.

“Visitors will not only walk among priceless relics of the great pharaoh but also **experience the sights and sounds of the time through a cutting-edge virtual reality experience**,” said **Ron Tan**, CEO of Cityneon Holdings, one of the co-partners of the exhibition.



Houston Museum of Natural Science

The story continues with the 1881 re-discovery of a mummy cache in a hidden tomb, where the body of Ramses was found amongst a number of long-lost royal mummies.

“It is vital that Egypt share our historic treasures in exhibitions such as this,” said **Dr Mostafa Waziri**, Egypt’s secretary-general of the supreme council of antiquities.

After a six-month run at Houston, the exhibition will transfer to **San Francisco**'s De Young Museum and then on to the Castle Hall in **Massachusetts**. From there, **it will arrive in Paris** and on then for **London**, before a final showing in **Sydney** for January 2025.

Life in times of Ramses the Great

Ramses II (c1303-1213 BCE) ruled **during the 19th dynasty of Egypt** in the New Kingdom period. He was renowned for his building campaign of impressive cities, temples and monuments.

His military campaigns included in **Syria**, the Levant, **Nubia** and most notably for the Battle of Kadesh. The conflict is reportedly one of the earliest pitched battle in recorded history. It was the largest chariot battle ever fought, **involving up to 6,000 chariots**.

Ramses II lived **a surprisingly long life for an ancient Egyptian**, probably dying in his **90th year**. His mummy is well preserved, and we have an account from [Gaston Maspero](#), who was the first to reveal the features of the great pharaoh.

He wrote: "on the temples there are a few sparse hairs, but at the poll the hair is quite thick, forming smooth, straight locks about five centimetres in length. White at the time of death, and possibly auburn during life, they have been dyed a light red by the spices (**henna**) used in embalming...the moustache and beard are thin."

"The hairs are white, like those of the head and eyebrows...the skin is of earthy brown, splotched with black... the face of the mummy gives a fair idea of the face of the living king."

Written by Fiona Keating



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