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WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY

Real women across the Ancient World

*Edited by Stephanie Lynn Budin and
Jean MacIntosh Turfa*

First published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa
business*

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-80836-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-62142-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon, UK



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

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WOMEN IN AMARNA

Legendary royals, forgotten elite, unknown populace?

Katharina Zimm

Amararna (short for Tell el-Amarna or El-Amarna) is the modern Arabic name for the site called Akhetaten – the *Horizon of the [sun disc] Aten* – during the second half of the 18th Dynasty of the Egyptian New Kingdom.¹ Akhetaten was the newly founded capital of Egypt under Akhenaten/Amenhotep IV and at least one immediate successor² during parts of the so-called Amarna Period, which is now defined as covering the reigns from Amenhotep III until Horemhab (1393–1298 bc).³ It was situated in Middle Egypt, nearly equidistant to Memphis and Thebes.

Akhenaten set out to build a new religious capital in an empty desert plain in Middle Egypt as a fitting religious landscape for his revolutionary ideas. An estimated 20,000 or more believers in his changes followed the king. Not even 20 years later, this city was abandoned by its inhabitants, stripped bare of most of the portable goods, and partially dismantled. Akhenaten and his successors were deemed heretics and non-persons, and were deleted from the annals. What seemed a tragedy at the time in fact is a blessing for modern archaeologists, as what was left of this city when the inhabitants moved away preserved “Egypt in microcosm.”⁴ The specifics of Amarna are different from the also oft cited – but somewhat atypical – workmen’s village, Deir el-Medina in Thebes-West (see Sweeney, this volume), as the inhabitants of Amarna represented the full spectrum of Egyptian society. Archaeological excavations in Amarna over the last 100 years have produced evidence on a par with Deir el-Medina, but incorporating a wider range of demographic groups. Much has been written and debated regarding the religious changes during the Amarna Period.⁵ This chapter, however, is specifically concerned with the role of women in this exceptional city and the question of whether the status of women was different from or representative of the life of women during New Kingdom Egypt. There are certainly indications that religious changes might have transformed the position of women during this period. Did the disappearance of most of the goddesses during this period change the perception of women as the former were seen as ideal women?

Royal women of Amarna

Owing to the better evidence base and the interest sparked by modern reception, it seems logical to start with the royal women of Amarna: Tiye and Nefereferuaten-Nefertiti in particular. As scholars, we are dependent on the existing body of evidence: the archaeological,

representational-iconographic and textual sources creating and reaffirming our interpretations.⁶ Throughout Egyptian history, the religious, royal and mortuary spheres provided the most durable sources, due to the use of longer lasting materials or the location in desert areas instead of the flood plains; by contrast, the material culture representing daily life is more perishable.

The outstanding status of the royal women of Amarna should be seen in the tradition of the royal women of the late 17th and early 18th Dynasties, who were standing "at the centre of power".⁷ These royal women – mostly sister-wives – were reliable partners of the absent kings, who guaranteed a rule in the spirit of the dynasty.⁸ Depictions like Nefertiti smiting enemies⁹ or the Amarna princesses being present in ritual scenes¹⁰ prove the general accepted role of these women.

Tiye – preparing the female power in Amarna

The line of the Amarna royal women¹¹ begins with the exceptional queen Tiye (also spelled Tiye or Tiy), remembered as the "commoner queen" due to her non-royal birth.¹² The names of her parents were publically announced on the base of a series of 56 known commemorative scarabs.¹³ This series is widely called *marriage scarabs*, although it is more likely that they celebrate the status of queen Tiye rather than the occasion of a wedding, as there is no mention of anything about marriage or a regnal year in the text.¹⁴ After giving the fivefold titular of Amenhotep III, Tiye is introduced:

[t]he Great Royal Wife Tiy, may she live. The name of her father is Yuya, the name of her mother is Thuya. She is the wife of a mighty king whose southern boundary is to Karoy, whose northern [boundary] is at Naharin.

(Kozloff 2012: 100)

To mention the parentage – especially as it refers to an elite, but non-royal provincial family – is unparalleled in Egyptian history, as is the phrase regarding the boundaries of Egypt which had reached their greatest extension at this time.¹⁵ For the most part we do not know the filiation of many royal women and so could argue that a number of them were of non-royal descent; even so, the specific stress on the parents remains exceptional. These scarabs have been found throughout the Mediterranean, in modern Jordan and Syria in the north and Sudan in the south.¹⁶ These presentations could only have one goal: to stress the importance of this queen and mark her as being equal with her husband.¹⁷

As mentioned in a series of 123 *lion-hunt scarabs*,¹⁸ Tiye was married to Nebmaatre Amenhotep, today known as Amenhotep III, already in his second regnal year at the assumed age of under 10.¹⁹ As his principal wife, she was part of the reinterpretation of the state religion towards the sun cult, taking active part in the scenes of the jubilee and offering scenes.²⁰ She is even to be seen as a model for queens during the Ramesside Period, in particular Nefertiti, the principal queen of Ramesses II, who has recently been described a "Ramesside copy of Tiye",²¹ referring to the specific role both queens had complementing the divine kingship represented by their husbands.

Outside Egypt, Amenhotep III built a temple to Tiye at Sedeinga in northern Sudan²² as a complement to his own, larger temple at Soleb.²³ There, both were depicted deified; Tiye was associated with the goddess Hathor.²⁴ This identification established her role as the divine female counterpart of the king elevated beyond the usual supporting role of queens to a position within the concept of divine kingship.²⁵ This is also verified by a variety of statuary, reliefs and stelae where she appears at the side of Amenhotep.²⁶

Royal representations – of both the king and the queen – are always symbolic and codified demonstrations of power which need to be read and understood. When we see Tiye being incorporated in imagery which is usually preserved for the king, this indicates her specific religious and political role. Tiye is depicted standing behind her husband in offering scenes, during the Sed-festival (Egyptian Heb Sed,²⁷ a jubilee – celebrated usually in regnal year 30 for the first time, then in shorter intervals), or during the smiting of the enemy or in family scenes.²⁸ She also can be shown sitting on the throne, either on her own or next to Amenhotep, in the so-called kiosk scenes where both are watching festivities or rituals, banquet scenes or family scenes.²⁹ Of special interest are the offering scenes, the attendance of the Sed-festival, the participation during the ritual of *smiting of the enemy* as well as her depiction as a sphinx. Offering scenes are very formulaic. The (divine) king appears in front of a god or goddess to whom he offered goods and from whom he will in return receive help in the upkeep of the right order (Maat). Sporadically, the king might be accompanied by the king's mother or the king's wife. Tiye is not only shown accompanying the king as priestess – holding a sistrum (a musical instrument of the percussion family) and a menat (a necklace consisting of a counterpoise), both used by priestesses in religious ceremonies – but also grasping the Year-staff (a notched palm-branch).³⁰ The latter connects her with the goddess Seshat who grants regnal years and jubilees to the king, determines his titular and authorises the annals.³¹ This sufficiently constitutes Tiye's connection to one of the oldest kingly rituals – the Sed-festival which is unprecedented in Egyptian royal iconography.

In line with the deification of her husband, Tiye took an active part in rejuvenation and regeneration at the ceremonies during the Sed-festival in the last decade of reign of Amenhotep III. Standing behind her husband, she was the female complement to the king and guarantee, like him, the potency of the ritual.³² She received an adjusted iconography and was thereafter depicted with the double feather crown with horns and sun disk both in relief as well as in statuary; the new crown replaced the simple double feather crown typical for royal women from the beginning of the New Kingdom.³³ By wearing this crown with sun disk and horns, Tiye is associated with Hathor and Maat whose attribute it was traditionally.³⁴ One example can be seen in the tomb of the Royal Scribe Kheruef (TT192),³⁵ where Tiye is depicted standing behind her husband who is sitting in the jubilee tent on a cuboid srx-block-throne with a protective falcon replacing the backrest,³⁶ together with Hathor settled on a simple srx-throne.³⁷ Even though she is depicted standing and not sitting like the king and the goddess and as such is marked as being passive, she is included in the important scene in an elevated position within the kiosk. Tiye also keeps this specific crown when depicted in Amarna. One example can be seen in the tomb of Huyia Overseer of the Royal Harem and of the Treasuries, Steward of the Great Royal Wife Tiye (Amarna Tomb 1),³⁸ where Tiye is sitting at the banquet with Akhenaten and Nefertiti.³⁹ Also on the wooden shrine with gold foil from the mysterious tomb KV 55,⁴⁰ Tiye is depicted wearing this crown, which led the first excavator to the wrong conclusion that she was the tomb owner.⁴¹ On the back panel we see her standing behind her scratched-out son, Akhenaten, offering an aromatic substance.⁴²

In the tomb of Kheruef (TT192) we also see Tiye seated in a kiosk behind Amenhotep III receiving gifts on the occasion of the third jubilee (Figure 18.1).⁴³ While Amenhotep III sits again on a srx-block-throne with a protective falcon replacing the backrest, Tiye sits this time on a lion-throne decorated with lion heads, captives, sphinx, usually interpreted as male attributes and being male.⁴⁴ However, in this case the lion heads, sphinx, and the captives depicted beneath this throne are rendered female.⁴⁵ The striding sphinx on the side of the throne is trampling an enemy, a variant of the kingly iconography of the *smiting of the enemy*. Even if it is not clear whether we see a male or female enemy, the sphinx is clearly

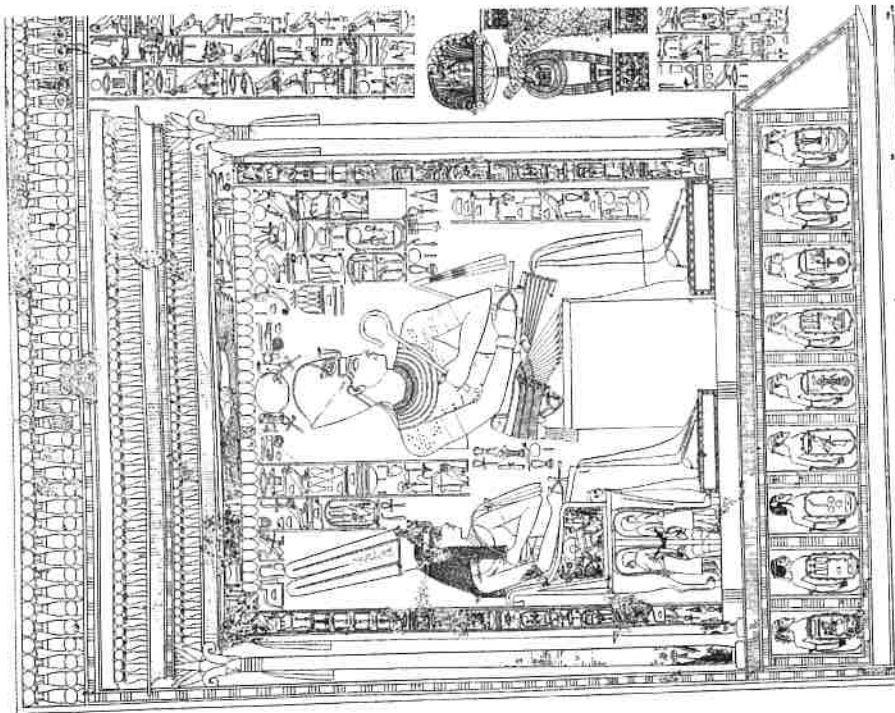


Figure 18.1 Tiye and Amenhotep III receiving gifts on the occasion of his third jubilee (Epigraphic Survey 1980; pl. 49). (Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.)

marked as being Tiye, as the inscription in front of her reads: "The principal wife of the king, beloved of him, Tiye, may she live, be enduring and youthful every day."⁴⁶ Her role as active *destructrice of the enemy*⁴⁷ is marked by the words "Trampling every foreign country" written behind the sphinx.⁴⁸ The closest parallel is the depiction of Tiye as striding lion sphinx on the supraporte of her temple at Sedeinga in Nubia, showing her with an unidentified crown which nevertheless resembles the later flat-topped crown of Nefertiti.⁴⁹ Tiye as sphinx is also shown on a now lost ivory inlay displaying two female sphinxes facing each other with three cartouches between them.⁵⁰ The left one gives the name of Tiye. The most-quoted depiction of this queen as sphinx⁵¹ on the carnelian bracelet plaque in the Metropolitan Museum New

York,⁵² however, is now known to have been wrongly assigned to her, being the typos of a Syrian sphinx.⁵³

Politically, she was dubbed as the counselor of the wider Amarna Period by modern scholars,⁵⁴ especially due to her political and diplomatic roles. In the Amarna Letter EA29 Tušratta, the king of Mitanni, writes to Akhenaten:

[T]he principal [and favourite] wife of Nimmureya (i.e. Nebmaatre Amenhotep), your father, knows all the words of Nimmureya, your father, that [he would write [to] me over and <ov>er. It is Teye, your mother, whom you must ask about all of them: [what] your father [would write over and over], the words that he would speak with me over and over.

(Moran 1992: 92)

Nefertiti – the public figure

The most famous and best known female in Amarna is undoubtedly Nefereferuaten-Nefertiti, the wife of pharaoh, Akhenaten/Amenhotep IV. Her fame started when her famous bust – now in the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung Staatliche Museen zu Berlin⁵⁵ – was discovered in the workshop of the artist Thutmose in Amarna on 6 December 1912.⁵⁶ Akhenaten and Nefertiti created the new religion – now referred to as Amarna religion – as well as built the new capital Akhetaten (Amarna). We have to understand Nefertiti twofold: as a characteristic queen of the 18th Dynasty following many leads established by her predecessors, but also as a unique personality of Egyptian history. Despite the sheer abundance of sources and the clear impression she gives as a queen, we do not know much about her as a real woman or an historical person.⁵⁷ We should recognise her as an *icon*,⁵⁸ being omnipresent in her pictures, statuary and constant mention of her name. She was a *public figure* at her time, as she is again today. What can be traced is the historiography of a (female) ruler, but not the historical facts concerning the real woman behind the image. The guesswork already appears in relation to her name and basic dates. She is depicted at the coronation of Amenhotep IV; but nothing earlier is known.

Her full name used during her lifetime is Nefereferuaten-Nefertiti (*nfr-nfr.w-jtn nfr.t-tj* – *Perfect/beautiful are the beauties of Aten, the beautiful has come*) which reads like the programmatic names kings usually receive at coronation. The pronunciation of her name might have sounded like Nafeta,⁵⁹ but we do not even know if this was her birth name. Her name might show a connection to Hathor as does the representation with the double feather crown (with or without horns and sundisc) as already worn by Tiye.⁶⁰ Hathor as the prototype of the feminine is always connected with queenship in Ancient Egypt.⁶¹ She is mythologically interpreted as the mother of the king⁶² with Re/Amun-Re as the father.⁶³ Especially in the temples of the New Kingdom she is depicted suckling the king.⁶⁴ As mother of the king and therefore mother of Horus, she can also be addressed as Isis. Wearing the double feather crown identifies Nefertiti, and other queens therefore, as Hathor and Isis.⁶⁵

Nefertiti perfected the image of the queen as part of the concept of divine kingship so much that she could even be depicted on her own without the king. As such she is an intrinsic part of and responsible for aspects of the new religion, a quality that usually only the pharaoh will have. Examples are already found at the beginning of Akhenaten's reign. Within the four temples Akhenaten built in Karnak, Nefertiti is depicted more often than the king himself, either alone, with her oldest daughter, or her husband.⁶⁶ She also features prominently in the texts on the boundary stelae. These stelae, bearing long inscriptions, encircle the area of the new

capital and express the religious and political agenda. It becomes clear that certain areas of the town are dedicated to Nefertiti.⁶⁷ Her religious-ritualistic role overlaps with the one of the king. This is especially obvious in the *smiting of the enemy* scenes.⁶⁸ Another role beyond the usual queenly one is the equation with several goddesses: besides being equivalent to Hathor and Isis, she is also identified with Maat⁶⁹ and Tefnut.⁷⁰ As the latter, she is placed within the newly formed divine triad of Aten as the creator god, with Akhenaten as Shu and herself as Tefnut, the first generation of gods.⁷¹

Her role as icon is powerful, but what can we say about the person? Until 2012, it was assumed that Nefertiti disappeared around the 14th regnal year of Akhenaten, possibly because of death due to bubonic plague or accident, or falling out of grace and being expelled.⁷² Her last known image was found in room 7 (with a parallel scene in room α) of the Royal Tomb in Amarna (No. 26) and shows the royal couple grieving for the death of their daughter, Maketaten (see also Feucht, this volume).⁷³ As this event can be established for or after the 13th regnal year,⁷⁴ it was assumed that Nefertiti vanished in year 14. With the discovery of a hieratic text written in red ochre in the quarry of Dayr Abu Hinnis, 10 km north of Amarna, it is now established that Nefertiti was still alive during the 16th regnal year, indicating that she was at Akhenaten's side towards the end of his life, whose last proven evidence comes from his 17th regnal year.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, this will not help to determine the exact time or cause of her death nor the exact succession at the end of the Amarna Period.⁷⁶

From representations in temples, tombs and the boundary stelae of Amarna, it seems certain that she gave birth to six daughters. She and Akhenaten are also discussed as the parents of Tutankhamun.⁷⁷ Her own filiation is controversial: she was proposed to be the Mitanni princess Taduhepa, one of the foreign princesses married to Amenhotep III. A different theory places her as daughter of Amenhotep III with either Tiye or a minor wife as mother. The problem here lies in the absence of any title as *daughter of the king*, which would be expected in this case.⁷⁸ On the other hand, with the clear identification of the mummies of Yuya and Thuya – Tiye's parents – and their proven genetic relation to the mummies KV 35 EL (accepted as Tiye) and KV 35 YL (assumed Nefertiti) as well as the genetic kin of the latter to each other, Tiye and Nefertiti should be seen either as mother and daughter (more realistically) or sisters.⁷⁹ In both cases, Nefertiti and Akhenaten would be relatives.

The elite: the royal nurses

As the elite left enough evidence in equipping their houses and tombs, there are sufficient data to trace the real women among the elite of Amarna. Another source is their representations in tombs, as the typical decorated Egyptian tomb shows the (mostly) male tomb owner with his supportive wife enjoying activities with him or mourning him on her own.⁸⁰ Even though these are to be seen as a representation of an idealised society, it might still be possible to draw some conclusions from them as they reflect the relationship between the sexes and therefore gender roles. New Kingdom women who were not connected to the royal family did not have their own decorated tombs. During the Amarna Period, the wives of high officials are usually not depicted in their husbands' tombs.⁸¹ As we do not have tombs of the lower elite, it is difficult to assess if this was a general trend.

More easily traceable are the elite women connected with the royal household. One of them is Tiye (also spelled Tiy), wife of Ay, the later pharaoh. Her name is similarly spelled to the one of queen Tiye, but is differentiated in the transcription by Egyptologists. In the tomb of Ay,⁸² she is mentioned as Nefertiti's wet nurse.⁸³ The titles of royal wet nurses and tutors only seem to appear during the 18th Dynasty.⁸⁴ A representation of this fact might also be

established on a relief found at Hermopolis⁸⁵ which shows the upper body of presumably two female figures, with the younger one sitting on the lap of the older. Being an example of the later Amarna art style, the figures were identified as Tiye with Nefertiti as a charge sitting on her lap.⁸⁶ We have to understand Tiye as one of the most influential women in personal matters: significant for the real Nefertiti whom we do not know. She also appears prominently in the tomb of Ay which was the largest and finest among the non-royal tombs.⁸⁷ Tiye is even kneeling in the entryway together with her husband before the text of the Aten hymn⁸⁸ and has therefore an unrivalled and unusually direct access to Aten; connection to the sun god was more typically mediated by the king. She is all the more receiving the *Gold of Honour/Volour* herself and in addition to her husband,⁸⁹ which equally shows her elevated position, as do her titles "praised of the Good God, great nurse, who nurtured the goddess, royal ornament" or, more specifically, "praised of the Good God, nurse of the Great Royal Wife Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti".⁹⁰ Both titles show the very special relationship of Tiye to her nursing as a special honour.⁹¹ As this tomb is dated to the first half of Akhenaten's reign,⁹² it is quite unlikely that the above mentioned Hermopolis relief would come from there. Her filiation is equally as mysterious as Nefertiti's: she might have come from Akhmin like her husband Ay who was possibly related to Tiye's parents.⁹³

Another important woman was Tia, the nurse of princess Ankhesenpaaten, one of the daughters of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, the later wife of Tutankhamun. She is known from a *talatat* – small blocks of about 55 × 25 × 25 cm used only during the Amarna Period in order to quickly and efficiently construct the new temples and palaces – found in Amarna or Hermopolis, now in the Metropolitan Museum New York.⁹⁴ This block shows two scenes with an adult figure on the left, also differently discussed as being either one of the senior princesses⁹⁵ or the king himself,⁹⁶ and a smaller figure with the side lock of youth to the right. The inscription behind the figure on the left says "nurse of the king's daughter Ankhesenpaaten, Tia". It is interesting that this person is characterised as an adolescent, but at the same time offering or waiting on a member of the royal family. Both would mark her rank.

A further high-ranking woman is Maia (or Maya), the wet nurse of Tutankhamun.⁹⁷ Her tomb was found in Saqqara, as many of the high officials of the late Amarna Period. Alain Zivie tried to equate her with the king's daughter and wife of Semenkhkare, Meritaten, but this seems not very likely.⁹⁸ Beyond their profession and rank as wet nurse, these women stay hidden in a way similar to royal women.

Further evidence of elite, non-royal women might be found in the material culture. In the deposits of art work within the estate of the sculptor, Thutmose, excavators unearthed not only the famous bust of Nefertiti⁹⁹ but also at least five gypsum plaster heads of non-royal women of any age,¹⁰⁰ as well as stone heads¹⁰¹ not clearly identifiable as one of the Amarna queens or princesses. Even though the latter material seems to be more appropriate for a royal setting due to its value, these objects have not enough features shared with the iconography for the royal women and might therefore also be interpreted as members of the elite. Such of slightly lower ranks than the aforementioned wet nurses are to be seen in the many *talatat*s preserved: we are shown women bowing down during processions,¹⁰² female members of the royal entourage,¹⁰³ female musicians¹⁰⁴ and attendants.¹⁰⁵

The unknown populace: lost or traceable?

Until recently, Amarna was understood as a royal city. It is to the credit of Barry Kemp and his team to have established Amarna as a *City of People*, too.¹⁰⁶ In addition to the inner city, we are now able to see the outlying villages, isolated settlements on opposite sides

of the low plateau.¹⁰⁷ The workmen's village, a parallel to Deir el-Medina in Thebes,¹⁰⁸ is one of them.¹⁰⁹

The main problem for our knowledge of ancient Egyptian society lies in the separation of *elite* and *lower classes*. Boundaries are fluid. We could argue that as soon as we have traces of these lower-class women, they should be counted as belonging to the (lower) elite as they were able to afford to leave material traces behind. Should we therefore count the remains of the painted plaster wall showing a woman together with her husband found in the main chapel of the workmen's village (Figure 18.2)¹¹⁰ as belonging to the elite or not? Numerous painted fragments on white gypsums were found and restored since the excavation in the 1980s.¹¹¹

The woman is clearly dressed for a special occasion with a wig, a broad collar, the white dress, flower garland and the funerary cone. The whole scene resembles more the reliefs in the early 18th-Dynasty Theban tombs than official Amarna art, except the eyes. This could mean that the artists working for the lower classes did not adapt to or were not initiated into the new art style. In particular, the presentation of the funerary cone could also express a kind of independence or self-confidence, as the funerary sphere was not expressed in the royal sphere, but clearly here.

Another face of Amarna, in the literal sense, is the small head broken from a small statue, which probably served as a private icon, showing maybe a revered deceased relative.¹¹² It was

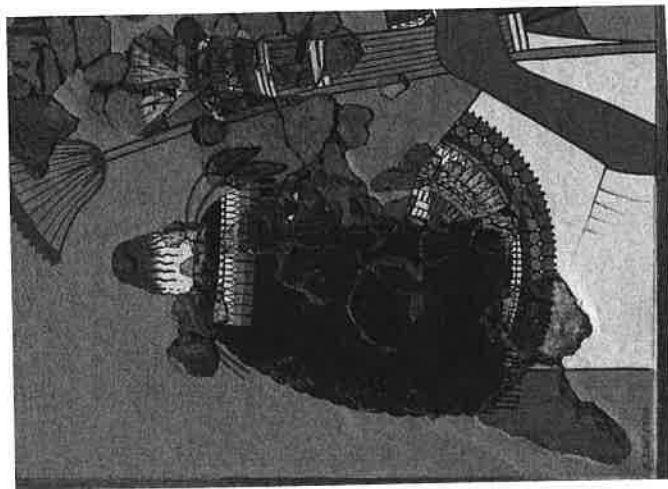


Figure 18.2 Woman dressed for a special occasion, fragments from the Main Chapel at the Workmen's Village. (Photo by B. Kemp, restored by F. Weatherhead; © Barry Kemp.)

found in a lower-class private house (T36.68) in the North Suburb, where houses are more closely set than in other parts of the city. The question remains as to who is represented by this little statuette. The discussion ranges from royals to non-royals, from a female to a male. The statuette wears a wig popular among royal women, the so-called Nubian wig.¹¹³ However, this wig is also worn by male officials. The red skin colour, usually attributed to males in Egyptian art, was no longer a reliable indicator of sex in the Amarna Period. Nefertiti's bust presents a traditional male colour, as does the plaster fresco showing the princesses sitting in front of their father¹¹⁴ and other depictions of royal women.¹¹⁵ Also, non-royal women have a darker skin colour, as the above mentioned talatat showing the nurse Tia or private stelae are likely to show.¹¹⁶ It would therefore be possible that this little statuette shows a revered female who may have been worshipped in a private home.

A non-royal scene of a squatting woman suckling a child from Amarna is to be found in the British Museum (Figure 18.3).¹¹⁷ The placement of this scene, which looks like an artist's sketch, into the non-royal sphere seems to be marked by the complete absence of regalia and iconography and the indicating inscriptions. Therefore, it is even more difficult to establish whether this woman is the mother or a nurse. Nevertheless, the importance of childbirth and breastfeeding highlights the significance of fertility for the ancient Egyptian society.

Another source group which could help to trace real women in Amarna, is the sphere of private religion. Some of these objects have a very clear connection to women. Among the group of ostraca showing private individuals, we see females in adoration, playing instruments, or handling children, but maybe also in pornographic scenes.¹¹⁸ Women are worshipping goddesses like Taweret on stelae,¹¹⁹ or are depicted nursing children as figurines or plaques¹²⁰ (see also BM EA 15973 below). Such evidence allows the discussion of the role of women, but does not offer facts about a particular individual. Again, the boundaries between lower elite and populace are fluid.



Figure 18.3 Limestone decorated with a sunk relief representation of a squatting woman suckling a child (British Museum EA 15973). (© The Trustees of the British Museum.)

Architectural layouts of private residences are often used as evidence for the status of woman in Amarna. While it is certain that house size is a prime indicator of status in Amarna,¹²¹ the ascription of specific spaces to women and the conclusions that have been drawn from such spaces about the status of women are at least questionable. The assumption that specific spaces in the house¹²² are exclusively dedicated to women is impossible to prove. The fact that some excavators dubbed some rooms of the Amarna houses as *Women's Rooms*¹²³ is the result of orientalist understandings of women prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, rather than based on evidence. Egyptian women were not shut off in a kind of harem. Hence, the idea of segregation based on gender is in my view anachronistic. A similar mistake was made in interpreting the so-called *birth beds* in the first or central rooms of the Deir el-Medina or Amarna houses. These elevated structures were classified as *birth beds* due to scenes of women nursing a child or Bes on them without discussion of practicalities of this space being in a main room and too small to give birth. New research classifies them as house altars.¹²⁴ There is no sufficient evidence suggesting specific women's spaces within the house. This could be interpreted as shared usage of space by all inhabitants irrespective of gender. This equality is supported by the fact that women could own property, as proved at Deir el-Medina.¹²⁵

Equally difficult is the differentiation between the burials at the South Tombs Cemetery in Amarna,¹²⁶ which was very adequately titled as "a cemetery of forgotten souls"¹²⁷ where more than 3,000 people might have been buried.¹²⁸ This cemetery lies in a desert valley behind the South Tombs.¹²⁹ The pits are dug into the sand without showing a common direction.¹³⁰ The demographic stratigraphy is not yet fully available.

The understanding of Amarna as a *City of People* and especially the South Tombs Cemetery also reveals a darker side. Here, the excavators found only a few artefacts despite the bones. The latter, buried there most likely over a period of only 15 years,¹³¹ introduces us to a fragment of the actual population, people who might have been related or known to each other.¹³² The examination of the bones revealed inadequate nutrition, injuries and short lives. Poor people were very short due to malnutrition and had compression fractures of the spine due to bearing heavy loads.¹³³ Of this sample, 70 per cent died before the age of 35.¹³⁴ These quite gruesome facts seem to correlate with the weak health of Tutankhamun as a feature of this time. For the 2012 season, 41 skeletons were analysed of which 22 could be sexed: 13 (32 per cent) adult males and 9 (22 per cent) adult females suggest more males in the cemetery.¹³⁵ The bioarchaeological data show a huge rate of workload-related physical conditions and traumas – revealing the hardship the builders of Amarna faced – with no difference between male and female health.¹³⁶ The skeletal pathology found in most adults, young adults and teenagers of both sexes is spinal arthritis.¹³⁷

Most of the 234 bodies already excavated¹³⁸ were buried wrapped in cloth and rolled up in mats without traces of mummification.¹³⁹ This would indicate a cemetery of the populace. However, the South Tombs Cemetery represents a large cross-section of the social hierarchy congruent to the settlement patterns found in Amarna. All but the very highest social classes lived and were interred beside one another.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, the excavators also found wooden coffins in the shape of a human figure, a number of them even decorated.¹⁴¹ If we classify them as elite burials we would expect that these coffins would follow the funerary art of this time. One coffin, however, seems to depict a canine-headed god as a strong exception of the religious iconography of the Amarna Period.¹⁴² One woman aged 25–30 was buried with a hollow cone of a pale, quite brittle wax-like substance which reminded the excavator of the Kingdom funerary cones often depicted during the New Kingdom.¹⁴³ They are also to be seen in Amarna elite tombs, as Tey is shown wearing one in Amarna Tomb 25 (Ay).¹⁴⁴

The marvellous outcome of this survey for the topic of this chapter is the fact that the team generated facial reconstructions of some of the individuals, so that we can now look into the faces of the real women of Amarna.¹⁴⁵ One woman was between 40 and 50 at the time of her death and 161–162 cm tall. She had survived a blow to her head during her lifetime, had broken her left upper arm which had healed but with a shortened length, and was buried face down with her long hair plait preserved. Thus, in the end, it is a poorer woman who enables us to meet face-to-face with the women in Amarna.

List of abbreviations

- PM I.1 = Porter, B. and Moss, R. L. B. (1970) *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings I.1: The Theban Necropolis, Private Tombs*. Oxford, UK: Griffith Institute.
- PM I.2 = Porter, B. and Moss, R. L. B. (1964) *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings I.1: The Theban Necropolis, Royal Tombs and Smaller Cemeteries*. Oxford, UK: Griffith Institute.
- PM IV = Porter, B. and Moss, R. L. B. (1968) *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings IV: Lower and Middle Egypt (Delta and Cairo to Asyut)*. Oxford, UK: Griffith Institute.
- PM VII = Porter, B. and Moss, R. L. B. (1975) *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings VII: Nubia, the Desert, and Outside Egypt*. Oxford, UK: Griffith Institute.

Notes

- 1 PM IV, 192–238.
- 2 For a discussion of the succession problem and further literature, see Allen 2009; Labouri 2010: 329–357.
- 3 Kemp 2012: 304.
- 4 Kemp 1989: 261.
- 5 For an overview and further literature, see Assmann 2012; Allen 1996; Krauss 2000; Hornung 1999: 19–60, 72–104; Redford 1984: 137–181; Labouri 2010: 93–327.
- 6 Robins 1993: 12.
- 7 Schoske 2008: 188.
- 8 Tyldesley 2006: 80.
- 9 Zinn 2015: 41–48. Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Inv. Nr. 64.521 und 63.260 (Zinn 2015: 41, fn. 60); for the Theban talatats see Zinn 2015: 45, fn. 70.
- 10 Ashmolean Museum, Oxford 1893. 1–41[71] (Arnold 1996c: 23, fig. 15).
- 11 Green 1996, 1988: 391–441 and 501–560.
- 12 Bayer 2014: 3–4.
- 13 Kozloff 2012: 100.
- 14 Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 67–68.
- 15 Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 68.
- 16 Kozloff 2012: 100.
- 17 O'Connor and Cline 2001: 6.
- 18 Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 67.
- 19 Bayer 2014: 3.
- 20 Bayer 2014: [XXVI], 393–398, 390–392.
- 21 Bayer 2014: [1].
- 22 PM VII, 166–167.
- 23 O'Connor and Cline 2001: 6. PM VII, 169–172.
- 24 Schoske 2008: 188. O'Connor and Cline 2001: 6.

- 25 Troy 2008.
- 26 Tiye in group statues: English Private Collection (Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 170–171, catalogue no. 13), Louvre, Paris N 2312 +E 25493 (Bayer 2014: pl. 3b–d) and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 21.2802; (Kozloff and Bryan 1992: 175–177, catalogue no. 15; Bayer 2014: pl. 44 a–b). Relief (temple): Sedeinga and Soleb (Bayer 2014: pl. 48–54); Relief (tombs): especially TT192 – Kheruef, royal scribe and steward to Queen Tiye (Bayer 2014: pl. 59–64); Stelae (royal): Kom el-Hetan (Bayer 2014: pl. 70); Stelae (private): British Museum, London EA 834 (Bayer 2014: pl. 73b).
- 27 Hornung and Staehelin 1974, 2006.
- 28 Bayer 2014: 387.
- 29 Bayer 2014: 388.
- 30 Borchardt 1911: 18, fig. 24 (wooden stela, Amenhotep III and Tiye before Amun and Mut); 22, fig. 30 (box inlay, ivory).
- 31 Budde 2000: 113–141.
- 32 Bayer 2014: 399.
- 33 Althoff 2009: 12–13.
- 34 Althoff 2009: 13; Bayer 2014: 424.
- 35 PM 1.1, 299(6).
- 36 Kuhlmann 2011: 6 and fig. 7.
- 37 West portico, south of doorway, northernmost scene (Epigraphic Survey 1980: pl. 26). The sun-disc is hacked out, but the cow horns are clearly visible.
- 38 PM IV 211–212. Huya's titles were 'Overseer of the Royal Harim and of the Treasuries, and Steward of the Great Royal Wife, Tiye'.
- 39 PM IV 211(4).
- 40 PM 1.2, 565–566.
- 41 PM 1.2, 566. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, IdE 57175. Davis 1908: p. 32–33; Bayer 2014: pl. 80–81.
- 42 Bayer 2014: 335.
- 43 PM 1.1, 299(8): West portico, north of doorway, southernmost scene (Epigraphic Survey 1980: pl. 48–49, scene overview on pl. 47).
- 44 Kuhlmann 2011: fig. 8.
- 45 Epigraphic Survey 1980: pl. 52A.
- 46 Epigraphic Survey 1980: 55.
- 47 Roth 2002: 26 ('aktive Feindvernichter').
- 48 Epigraphic Survey 1980: 55.
- 49 Bayer 2014: 202–207, pl. 51.
- 50 Bayer 2014: 322–324, pl. 76.
- 51 Arnold 1996a: 107, fig. 102; Kozloff 2012: 191, fig. 39.
- 52 MMA 26.7.1342.
- 53 Roth 2002: 43–49, fig. 10; Bayer 2014: 377–379.
- 54 Schoske 2008: 190.
- 55 AM 21300.
- 56 Jung 2012: 421.
- 57 This conundrum is explained in more detail in Zinn 2015.
- 58 Troy 2002.
- 59 Fecht 1960.
- 60 Zinn 2015: 29–30.
- 61 Troy 1986: 53–72.
- 62 Troy 1986: 54–55.
- 63 Naville 1901: pl. CVI.
- 64 Naville 1901: pl. CV (Hatshepsut as king).
- 65 Althoff 2009: 69–72.
- 66 Samson 1977: esp. 88.
- 67 Mumane and Van Stien 1993: 40–41.
- 68 Zinn 2015: 41–48. Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Inv. Nr. 64.521 und 63.260 (Zinn 2015: 41, fn. 60); for the Theban talatets see Zinn 2015: 45, fn. 70.
- 69 Zinn 2015: 48–49.
- 70 See ring Metropolitan Museum, New York, MMA 26.7.767.
- 71 See representation like the altar Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin ÄM 14145. Cruz-Uribe 1995: esp. 17.
- 72 Zinn 2015: 31, fn. 23.
- 73 PM IV 236(8) – room α – PM IV 236(12)–(13) – room γ. Martin 1989: pl. 63–64. For the plan of the complete suite of the burial of Maketaten, see Freed *et al.* 1999: 167, fig. 127.
- 74 Green 1988: 11 and 138, fn. 33.
- 75 Van der Perre 2012, 2014: 70–75 (with facsimile, transcription and translation).
- 76 Van der Perre 2014: 77–102.
- 77 Zinn 2015: 33, fn. 29.
- 78 Zinn 2015: 33–34. For royal women incorporated into the concept of divine kingship, see Zinn 2015: 35–39.
- 79 Hawass *et al.* 2010: 638–647, esp. 641, fig. 2.
- 80 Roth 1999: 37–38.
- 81 Roehrig 1990: 264–265.
- 82 PM IV 228–230. Southern group of Amarna tombs, number 25.
- 83 PM IV 228(1)–(2); Davies 1908: pl. 24.
- 84 Roehrig 1990: [1]; Budin 2011: 107–113.
- 85 Musée du Louvre, Paris E 27.150. Arnold 1996a: 92, fig. 82 (here attributed to show Meretaten sitting on her mother Nefertiti's lap), discussed at p. 91.
- 86 Desroches-Noblecourt 1978.
- 87 Davies 1908: 16.
- 88 PM IV 228(5); Davies 1908: 25, 39.
- 89 PM IV 229(6)–(8); Davies 1908: pl. 29.
- 90 Roehrig 1990: 263–264.
- 91 Roehrig 1990: 2.
- 92 Roehrig 1990: 263.
- 93 Roehrig 1990: 265.
- 94 Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York 1985.328.5, formerly Schimmel collection; Aldred 1973: 196, fig. 129.
- 95 Aldred 1973: 196.
- 96 <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/544674?=&imgno=0&tabname=label> (accessed 21 June 2015).
- 97 Sakkara, tomb Bub. 1.20 (Zivie 2009).
- 98 Zivie 2009: 111–113.
- 99 Arnold 1996b: 64–66, figs. 58 and 60.
- 100 Arnold 1996b: 46.
- 101 Arnold 1996b: 49.
- 102 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 62.501.
- 103 Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1985.328.10.
- 104 Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1985.328.12.
- 105 Grieving scene, Royal Tomb, Amarna (No. 26), Room γ, Wall A and B (Martin 1989: pl. 63–68).
- 106 Kemp 2012, esp. 154–196.
- 107 Kemp 2012: 190.
- 108 Kemp 2012: 191.
- 109 Kemp 1987: 30–35, outline plan on 31, fig. 3.
- 110 I thank Barry Kemp for sending me this photo. For the whole restored scene, see Kemp 2012: [278], pl. 44. For an overview of the workmen's village and the location of the main chapel, see Kemp 2012: 192, fig. 530.
- 111 Kemp 1987: 32.
- 112 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: MMA 31.114.1, available at <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/544685> (accessed 21 June 2015).
- 113 Althoff 2009: 14; Arnold 1996c: 37–38.
- 114 Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1893.1–41 (267).
- 115 Freed *et al.* 1999: 220–223.
- 116 San Diego Museum of Man, San Diego, 14881.
- 117 EA 15973.
- 118 Stevens 2006: 157–159.
- 119 Stevens 2006: 144 and fig. II.5.19.
- 120 Stevens 2006: 92–93.

- 121 Crocker 1985: 52.
- 122 Kleinke 2007: 70–72.
- 123 Crocker 1985: 60.
- 124 Kolsida 2006; Kleinke 2007: esp. 75; Kemp 2012: 245, fig. 7.16.
- 125 Toivari-Vitala 2001: 96–138.
- 126 Kemp 2012: 256–263.
- 127 Dabbs and Zabecki 2014.
- 128 Kemp 2012: 227.
- 129 Kemp 2012: 257, fig. 7.26.
- 130 Kemp 2012: 256–257.
- 131 Zabecki and Rose 2010: 9.
- 132 Kemp 2012: 227.
- 133 Kemp 2012: 227.
- 134 Kemp 2012: 228 and chart 6.33.
- 135 Rose and Dabbs 2012: [2].
- 136 Dabbs and Zabecki 2014: 234.
- 137 Zabecki and Rose 2010: 7.
- 138 Until 2010. Dabbs and Zabecki 2014: 223.
- 139 Kemp 2012: 260.
- 140 Dabbs and Zabecki 2014: 217.
- 141 Kemp 2012: 260–261, figs. 7.33 and 7.34.
- 142 Kemp 2012: 261–262.
- 143 Individual 150 (154 < 13132 >), Notes 2010: 3.
- 144 Davies 1908: p. 1.
- 145 South Tombs Cemetery, individual 114, Kemp 2012: 225, fig. 6.32 and Rose *et al.* 2009: 5.

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19

THE ROLE OF EGYPT'S
DYNASTIC QUEENS

Joyce Tyldesley

Egypt's dynastic period stretched from the unification of the country in approximately 3100 BCE to the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE. Throughout this long period, Egypt was ruled by a succession of near-divine kings who served as the only conduit between the people and their gods. Although the role of the king evolved through time, the underlying premise remained constant: with a king on the throne, the gods were content and Egypt was safe from the chaos that constantly threatened to overwhelm both the land and its people. Egyptologists have long recognised the complex political and ritual role played by the Egyptian king. They have been far slower to recognise the equally complex role allocated to the queens who stood by his side (Troy 1986: 1–2).

Recognising the queen

In ancient Egypt, all royal titles stressed the relationship of the individual to the king (Robins 1993: 21). So *hemet-nesu*, a title that was used from the 4th Dynasty onwards and which we routinely translate as “queen” – a word that in English may indicate either a queen consort or a queen regnant – actually means “King's Wife”. Other important royal women bore the titles “King's Daughter”, “King's Sister” and “King's Mother” and, as all these titles were cumulative, a dowager queen was often a “King's Daughter, King's Wife, King's Mother” (Dodson and Hilton 2004: 26–34; important female titles have been listed by Grajetzki 2005: 99–106). Only at the end of the dynastic age did the Greek-speaking Ptolemies use the more specific word *basilissa*, or “queen” (Ashton 2003: 2). These queens, being heavily influenced by their Macedonian heritage, will not be discussed here.

As all of Egypt's kings were polygamous, and as any woman who was, or had been, married to a king could call herself King's Wife, the title was used simultaneously by a wide range of women. Not all wives were of equal status. The most important were the consorts: the queens who stood alongside the king on formal occasions. The consort was distinguished by an increasingly wide range of titles, most notably “King's Great Wife”, which came into use during the 12th Dynasty, and from the Middle Kingdom onwards, by the use of the oval cartouche drawn around her name (Tyldesley 2006: 16).