

## **The Diplomatic Role of the Royal Women in ancient Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

Continuing in believing in the idea that our present is an extension of our past, and by searching in the ancient Egyptian history of Egypt which provides an overall view of the nation in good times and in bad. The study tried to emphasize the vital diplomatic role of the ancient Egyptian woman such as Queen Hatshepsut, Tiye, Nefertiti, Nefertari, and many other queens had also diplomatic role. One of them applied the sisterhood exactly like the brotherhood between kings, another queen ruled and took decision with her husband and the other depicted herself on the walls as a victorious on her enemy.

**Keywords:** Royal wives and mothers, Foreigner wives, Interior diplomacy.

### **Introduction**

In ancient Egypt a woman was accorded a relatively high social status. As in any country, at any period of time, mothers of families exercised a degree of authority in the home and commanded a special place in society at large.<sup>1</sup> "The ancient Egyptian women in general were able to exert a certain amount of influence outside the domestic sphere ". This was largely due to the fact that all landed property was passed down through the female line from mother to daughter<sup>2</sup>, the reason for such a rule seems to have been based on the assumption that one can be certain only of who one's mother is. Maternity is a matter of fact; paternity is a matter of opinion. The economic independence that was given to the Egyptian women together with their legal status of being equal with men under the law ensured that they enjoyed a<sup>3</sup> "fair amount of social freedom. They went about freely with faces unveiled, unlike the women of ancient Greece".<sup>4</sup>

In the scenes of feasting found decorating the walls of the New Kingdom, the guests at the feast (fig. 1) are both male and female (married guests sit in pairs on fine chairs).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Watterson Barbara, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, Amberley Publishing, British Library, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Mehler Stephen S., *The Land of Osiris: An Introduction to Khemitology*, Adventures Unlimited Press, UK, 2002, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Watterson Barbara, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, Amberley Publishing, British Library, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Royer Diana, *A Critical Study of the Works of Nawal El Saadawi, Egyptian Writer and Activist*, Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001, p. 39.


<sup>5</sup> Watterson Barbara, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, Amberley Publishing, British Library, 2013.

Exactly like we see in any formal party of today applying the exact steps of etiquette and protocol of sitting a man then a woman, then a man and also in the second register we can see the young girls are sitting beside each other, which is the top of diplomacy. All that confirm the idea the thesis was trying to prove which is “our present is an extension of our past”.

### **1- Royal Wives and Mothers**

It is important to note that the strong activity of a queen did not require weakness on the part of the king.<sup>6</sup> Although the king was the supreme agent of diplomacy throughout the Ancient Near East, we should not forget the role of the queen. During the reign of Akhenaton, his mother Tiye received correspondence from Tushratta of Mittani asking her to intercede with her son. Even Rameses II adapted the Hittite practice of involving the queen in royal correspondence in parallel to the role of the Hittite queen Puduhepa<sup>7</sup>, married to king Hattusili III<sup>8</sup> as part of diplomatic negotiations.<sup>9</sup>

#### **a. -Tiye as a Royal Wife**

Tiye  (1398 BC – 1338 BC) is generally remembered as the “commoner queen” of ancient Egypt (fig. 2). She was not born of a king<sup>10</sup> and was the daughter of Yuya and Tjuyu.<sup>11</sup> Amenhotep is known to have had many wives. The most important of them all is undoubtedly Queen Tiye and she is depicted on many monuments.<sup>12</sup> When Tiye took on the role of Amenhotep III’s head Queen, Tiye became her husband’s trusted adviser and confidant and considered also to be a co-ruler rather than a passive Queen.

Being wise, intelligent, strong, and fierce, she was able to gain the respect of foreign dignitaries. Foreign leaders were willing to deal directly through her. Queen Tiye not only played a dominant diplomatic role, but also fulfilled the role as the Kings divine partner. Most of the reliefs from the reign of Amenhotep III consist of the royal couple together. Tiye is consistently represented as the same size as Amenhotep III, (fig. 3), a feature not seen before in the New Kingdom art. This leads historians to believe that Tiye was a pivotal figure in the implementation of Egyptian diplomacy and politics.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Solvang Elna, *A Woman's Place is in the House: Royal Women of Judah and Their Involvement in the House of David*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 349, Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, London, 2003, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Creasman Pearce Paul and Wilkinson Richard H., *Pharaoh's Land and Beyond: Ancient Egypt and Its Neighbors*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 82-84.

<sup>8</sup> Barisas Judith & Heinrich Otten, *Puduhepa, Eine hethitische Königin in ihren Textzeugnissen*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*(JAOS), Vol. 99, No. 2, pp. 386-388.

<sup>9</sup> Creasman Pearce Paul and Wilkinson Richard H., *Pharaoh's Land and Beyond: Ancient Egypt and Its Neighbors*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>10</sup> Arnold Dorothea, Lyn Green, and James Allen, *The Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty from Ancient Egypt*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Tyldesley Joyce, *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt*, New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 2006, pp. 115-116.

<sup>12</sup> Dodson & Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Roberts Peter, *HSC Ancient History: Book I*, Glebe, N.S.W.: Pascal Press, 2006, p. 186.

She continued to play an active role in foreign relations and was the first Egyptian queen to have her name recorded on official acts.<sup>14</sup> Queen Tiye was far from the typical Queen. She involved herself in her husband's diplomatic affairs, including government and foreign interactions. Due to Queen Tiye's efforts in continuing the peace between Foreign Nations, International Leaders would now directly address her if they had any concerns about threats to the peace or enquiries into plots against peace.

The first example of relevant textual records is a scarab from Amenhotep III's reign that was distributed throughout Egypt and supposedly celebrated his marriage to a Mitanni princess, Gilu-Hepa, even though she is barely mentioned in the inscription.<sup>15</sup> The text goes as follows:

Year 10 under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the lord of the ritual, Nembâre, the chosen of Ra, the son of Ra, Amunhotp Hikawase, granted life, and of the great wife of the king, Tiye, may she live...The wonders which were brought back to his majesty, were the daughter of Šuttarna, the king of Naharin, Giluhepa, and the chief women of her harem, three hundred and seventeen women.<sup>16</sup>

While further discussion of this passage is included in the analysis section of this paper, it is imperative to note that Tiye was mentioned first in an inscription meant to celebrate the arrival of a foreign princess. Diplomatic marriages were meant to effectively unite the two lands and signified the completion or maintenance of alliances.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, one might expect that this event would entail a large celebration, or at least a scarab where Gilu-Hepa is given due prominence. Since the latter, at least, does not seem to have occurred and Tiye was given precedence instead, it seems like Amenhotep III's Great Royal Wife was a relevant figure in the diplomatic alliance alongside her husband.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, her participation in international affairs became even more undeniable after Amenhotep III died and his son, Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaten became pharaoh<sup>19</sup> as we will see in her role as a royal mother.

### **b. Tiye as a Royal Mother**

Tiye continued to be mentioned in the Amarna letters and in inscriptions as queen and beloved of the king. Amarna letter EA 26, which is addressed to Tiye, dates to the reign of Akhenaten.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Tyldesley Joyce A., *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt*, p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> Bryan Betsy M., "The Egyptian Perspective on Mitanni", *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000, p. 81.

<sup>16</sup> Schulman, "Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom" in *JNES* Vol. 38, No. 3, 1979, p. 192.

<sup>17</sup> Podany Amanda H., *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 217.

<sup>18</sup> Bryan Betsy M., op-cit, p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> Moran William, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, p. 84.



<sup>20</sup> O'Connor David & Cline Eric H., *Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998, p. 23.

These Amarna Letters (EA 26) include one instance when Tušratta, the Mittani king, addressed Tiye directly.<sup>21</sup> Two more letters (EA 27 & EA 28) from the same king include a characterization of Tiye as knowledgeable about the diplomatic developments of her husband's reign: "Tiye, your mother, knows all the words that I spoke with your father. No one else knows them. You must ask Tiye, your mother, about them so she can tell you".<sup>22</sup>

The Mitanni king's words attest that Tiye must have been present when the letters were read aloud by foreign messengers, since she seems to have known all of the details; this demonstrates how involved she was in the diplomatic process.<sup>23</sup> Queen Tiye was worrying about the bonds which her husband had established with Mitanni should remain intact in the reign of her son Akhenaton. A new king meant that a new pact had to be concluded with Tushratta, and Tiye wanted to be sure that there was no interruption in the new diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Summoning the Mitannian ambassador Keliya, she delivered to him her own personal message to take back to his master. In this message she reminded Tushratta of the bonds of affection which had united her husband with Tushratta's father Shuttarna II –bonds which had been maintained with Tushratta himself after his father's death. That was reflected in the embassies which Amenhotep had kept sending to Mitanni. She called upon Tushratta to follow this example: 'Do not forget your love for Mimmureya (Amenhotep)', she urged him, 'but have even greater love for Naphurreya (Akhenaton) keep on sending embassies of joy, one after the other. Do not cut them off'. Tushratta was quick to reassure her. 'I will never forget my love for your husband, he declared. And as for Naphurreya, your son, my love for him will be ten times greater!'<sup>24</sup>

### **c. Nefertiti**

Nfr nfrw itn  Nfr.ti.ti,  (figs 4a &b) which means Beautiful are the Beauties of Aten, the Beautiful one has come<sup>25</sup> this is the meaning of the name of Nefertiti (1370 – c. 1330 BC) who was an Egyptian queen and the Great Royal Wife (chief consort) of the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten.<sup>26</sup> According to Peter Roberts, the origin of Nefertiti is unknown. It is agreed by modern commentators that she was a Mitannian princess and was most likely married to Akhenaton as a result of diplomacy.

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<sup>21</sup> Moran William, *The Amarna Letters*, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> Moran William, *The Amarna Letters*, P. 91.

<sup>23</sup> Podany Amanda H., *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 204.

<sup>24</sup> Bryce Trevor, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age*, Routledge: London/New York, 2004, p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> Grajetzki, *Ancient Egyptian Queens: A Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, Golden House Publications, London, 2005.



<sup>26</sup> Freed R.E. & S D'Auria, YJ Markowitz, *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*", Museum of Fine Arts, Leiden, 1999.

We can see in fig. 5, Nefertiti unlike queens before her is depicted with her husband as an equal, in most depictions, she is shown wearing the attire usually only reserved for a pharaoh as well as being shown as the same height and size as her husband.

She is also believed to have been Akhenaten's co-regent during the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. Evidence that leads to this conclusion shows that Nefertiti changed her name to include the name of the God Aten, Nefer-neferu-aten was added to her name Nefertiti usually followed by beloved of Akhenaten. Nefertiti's name was also written in double cartouche a manner used for pharaohs this also symbolises her power, although this identification is a matter of ongoing debate.<sup>27</sup> In examinations of scenes from Karnak it has been discovered that Nefertiti played a role in military life in Ancient Egypt. Nefertiti's role as a warrior is also shown in the relief (fig. 6) which decorates the back wall of the cabin of her royal barge shows Nefertiti wearing the blue warrior crown usually only worn by the pharaoh himself and smiting the enemies.<sup>28</sup>

She also helped Tutankhamun to succeed her dead husband and let him marry her daughter Ankhesenamun. Some scholars believe that Nefertiti ruled briefly as Neferneferuaten after her husband's death and before the accession of Tutankhamun, although this identification is a matter of ongoing debate.<sup>29</sup>

#### **d. Ankhesenamun**

Her name during the lifetime of her father king Akhenaton was  anḥ s n imn meaning Living for Amun and her name transferred after the death of her father to be  anḥ s n pa itn means Living for Aten.

Within her first marriage, Ankhesenamun would have witnessed the reign of a somewhat controversial king in her father, the one who turned Egyptian policies and religious system upside down.<sup>30</sup> After her father's death Ankhesenamun married her half-brother Tutankhamun,<sup>31</sup> who had never been close to Ankhesenamun, she was older than him, and never seemed to show the joy of living the other daughters of Nefertiti did. Now it seemed she was to be his queen, his great royal wife.

As Tutankhamun's mother was not royal, his sister Ankhesenpaaten, daughter of both Akhenaton and Nefertiti, and indeed carrying extra status by having been married to the king, her father, would give his claim to the throne unshakable legitimacy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Roberts Peter, *HSC Ancient History: Book I*, Pascal Press, 2006, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Capel Anne, *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt*, Hudson Hills Press, New York, 1996, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> Dodson Aidan, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*, The American University in Cairo Press, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Reeves Nicholas, *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Dodson Aidan & Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, p. 148.

<sup>32</sup> Caldecott Moyra, *Tutankhamun and the Daughter of Ra*, UK: Bladud Books, 2004, p. 4.


In the ninth year of his reign, at about the age of eighteen, Tutankhamun died suddenly, leaving Ankhesenamun alone without an heir at about age twenty-one and she was more than likely pressured to marry Aye, who may have even been another relative by blood—her grandfather<sup>33</sup>, or he was just a vizier. There is supportive evidence that his bride may have resisted the idea of their marriage. A letter has been discovered where Ankhsenamun asks the Hittites' ruler, who oversaw a kingdom which was at war with Egypt, to send one of his sons to marry her because she is afraid to marry of her servants a reference to the Grand Vizier Aye. Actually there were many reasons for Ankhsenamun not to accept the marriage of Aye:

- He was very old and she was so youthful.
- She considered him as one of her servants as stated in her letter.
- Above all she was afraid of considering the popular-but not widely accepted-theory that Aye had a hand in her husband's death<sup>34</sup> whose murder has long been understood to be the work of General Horemheb, possibly with the support or collusion of the vizier named Aye.<sup>35</sup>

But a CT scan taken in 2005 shows that Akhenaton had badly broken his leg shortly before his death, and that the leg had become infected. DNA analysis conducted in 2010 showed the presence of malaria in his system. It is believed that these two conditions, Malaria and Leiomyoma, combined, led to his death.<sup>36</sup> Ankhsenamun was left with no other alternative than to marry Aye who was at least 40 years older than her. A blue-glass finger ring has since been found containing both Ankhsenamun and Aye's engraved names. This is further evidence that this marriage took place after Tutankhamun's death. Shortly thereafter, Ankhsenamun disappears from history and even in Aye's tomb there is no evidence that she was the main wife.<sup>37</sup>

Ankhsenamun contribution and changing role throughout her reign wasn't as obvious as other queens such Tiye or Nefertiti, although her letter to the Hittites shows a powerful piece of evidence to how respected queens were. They were listened to and worshiped as goddesses.

#### **e. Nefertari**

Her name  Nefertari (fig. 7) Meritmut, *Nfrt jrj mrjt n Mwt*, means Beautiful companion, beloved of Mut.<sup>38</sup> We can conclude from the position of the two cartouches beside each other, the great status of Nefertari for her husband.

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<sup>33</sup> El Mahdy Christine, *Tutankhamun*, St Griffin's Press, 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Brier Bob, *the Murder of Tutankhamen*, Berkeley Trade, 1999.

<sup>35</sup> Scarre C. & Fagan B. M., *Ancient Civilizations*, 3rd ed., New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Roberts Michelle (2010-02-16). "'Malaria' killed King Tutankhamun". BBC News.

<sup>37</sup> King Michael, Cooper Gregory, *Who Killed King Tut? Using Modern Forensics to Solve a 3300-Year-Old Mystery*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004, p. 195.

<sup>38</sup> Kitchen Kenneth A., *Ramesside Inscriptions*, Translated and Annotated Translations: Ramesses II, His Contemporaries (Ramesside Inscriptions Translations), Vol. III, Wiley-Blackwell, 2001.

She was highly educated and able to both read and write hieroglyphs, a very rare skill at the time. She used these skills in her diplomatic work, corresponding with other prominent royalties of the time.<sup>39</sup>

### **I. Nefertari applied the diplomacy sisterhood:**

Nefertari's prominence at court is further supported by cuneiform tablets from the Hittite city of Hattusas (today Boghazkoy, Turkey), containing Nefertari's correspondence with the king Hattusili III and his wife Puduhepa. She is mentioned in the letters as Naptera. Nefertari is known to have sent gifts to Puduhepaas (fig. 8) (referred to as "one of the most influential women known from the Ancient Near East")<sup>40</sup>, and used to call her "sister", like the kings do and call themselves "brothers" as we read in the following letter from Queen Nefertari to queen Pudukhepa:

The great Queen Naptera (Nefertari) of the land of Egypt speaks thus: 'Speak to my sister Puduhepa, the Great Queen of the Hatti land. I, your sister, (also) be well!! May your country be well. Now, I have learned that you, my sister, have written to me asking after my health. You have written to me because of the good friendship and brotherly relationship between your brother, the king of Egypt, The Great and the Storm God will bring about peace, and he will make the brotherly relationship between the Egyptian king, the Great King, and his brother, the Hatti King, the Great King, last forever... See, I have sent you a gift, in order to greet you, my sister....'<sup>41</sup>

### **f. Tausert**

Once a truly forgotten queen, whose name meant nothing in comparison to Hatshepsut for example, recent research has led to a greater understanding of the diplomatic role of a woman who ruled her country first as chief queen of the pharaoh Sethy II, then as regent during the reign of his young son Siptah and finally as a pharaoh in her own rights for several years after the death of Siptah.

The origin of queen Tausert are quite unclear; she did not bear the title of king's daughter and was possibly of non royal blood, but during her reign Tausret seemed to stress her relationship to her famous predecessor Ramesses II, probably she may have been his granddaughter. Her royal cartouche names "Daughter of Re, Lady of Ta-merit, Twosret of Mut" (fig. 9) were carefully created as those of Ramesses II with some of the elements changed only slightly to make them feminine.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Dodson Aidan & Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Barisas Judith, *Puduhepa. Eine hethitische Königin in ihren Textzeugnissen* by Heinrich Otten, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 99, No. 2, 1979, pp. 386-388.

<sup>41</sup> Kitchen K.A., *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, The King of Egypt*, Aris & Phillips, 1983.

<sup>42</sup> Clayton Peter A., *Chronicle of the Pharaohs: The Reign-by-reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt*, Thames and Hudson: London, 2006, p.158

We cannot deny that she made a very diplomatic and wise decision by taking the throne from Siptah:


First of all Siptah was a weak and ineffectual monarch who left few monuments and who was soon forgotten after his early death. His weakness may have had a purely physical cause of examination of his preserved mummy, which has one distorted foot and an atrophied lower leg suggests that he suffered either from a club foot or more likely the aftereffects of childhood polio. Throughout his short reign Siptah was guided and controlled by his forceful stepmother, who gradually took over the role of consort and joint ruler.



Tausert rule Egypt for a number of years (from 1200 or 1209 B.C to 1185 B.C) far from being a transient pretender to the throne, she has been universally accepted as ruler, and there is no question that her rule embraced all of Egypt.<sup>43</sup> The end of Tausret's reign is shrouded in mystery, and we do not know whether she was deposed or indeed whether she died a natural death. She was succeeded by pharaoh Sethnakht, the founder of the 20th Dynasty.

## **2. Foreigner Wives**

Tyldesley said that "There is no record of an actual title of secondary wife being used, but it is clear that these foreign princesses –who with one exception were not accorded the superior rank of king's great wife –were not classed as simple concubines of the king."<sup>44</sup> But I do not completely agree with him as there were many exceptions as we will see later. The treatment of foreign wives received depended on the circumstances; Daughters of minor rulers disappeared in the harem, where at times hundreds of wives lived; but princesses of important powers must have been given more prominent positions.

### **a. Kiya**

Much has been romanticized about Akhenaton and Nefertiti, but *Kiya* , another spouse of Akhenaton, remains less well-known. She was publicly revealed as one of Akhenaten's harem-women in 1959. And it is now believed that she was more than just a secondary wife at Akhenaton's court.

Considering her name (Kiya) <sup>45</sup> Kiyah, a name that is almost the exact equivalent of Khyiah (Eve). The Egyptian name, Kiyah, is said to have been derived from *kia*  meaning monkey. Thus the bible's "lively animal" who was called Khiya (Eve), may well have been the pet name for Akhenaton's second wife, Khiya and the daughter of Aye.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Wilkinson Richard, *Tausret: Forgotten Queen and Pharaoh of Egypt*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Tyldesley Joyce, *Daughters of Isis: Women of Ancient Egypt*, London: Penguin, 1995, chapter 6.6.

<sup>45</sup> Bennett & Eyma, *A Delta-man in Yebu*, Occasional Volume of the Egyptologists' Electronic Forum, Universal-Publishers, 2003, p. 51.


<sup>46</sup> Ellis Ralph, Scota, *Egyptian Queen of the Scots: The legendary royal founder of Scotland revealed*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Edfu Books: UK, 2010, p. 59.



It may also be a pet name of Nefrtiti herself as the few images we do have for Khia (fig. 10) show that she looked rather similar to Nefertiti, but also this is not a definitely proof that both Khia and Nefertiti were the same person, and it is not too surprising, since to become Akhenaton's favorite wife, she would have to have been a close bloodline relative of the Amarna Dynasty. After a few years in the old Pharaoh's harem, she was put into that of his son. During the reign of Akhenaten, relations between Egypt and Mitanni soured, as one Amarna Letter tells us (Armana Letter EA 29), and it is likely that Kiya paid the price for these diplomatic upheavals.

Dr. Zahi Hawas emphasis that Queen Kiya disappeared at about the time of Tutankhamun's birth, so if she was his mother, she may have died in childbirth<sup>47</sup> during the eleventh year of the pharaoh's reign while others suggest that she died while giving birth to a second child (a daughter)<sup>48</sup>, and after Kiya disappears, Nefertiti rises to new power, perhaps as Akhenaten's co-regent. Which deny the theory that both Nefertiti and Kiya was the same person.<sup>49</sup>

### **b. Iset Ta-Hemdjert**

Iset Ta-Hemdjert or Isis Ta-Hemdjert  and we can see her name in fig. 11.<sup>50</sup> She is simply called Isis in her tomb and was an Ancient Egyptian queen of the twentieth dynasty; the Great Royal Wife of Ramesses III and the Royal Mother of Ramesses VI. What scholars need to comprehend is that throughout history when two empires make pledges of brotherhood and peace, they also signify this pledge in blood by unifying royal families via arranged marriages and mixed blood children who carry the DNA of both empires. Hence, they all become one new tribe, a new people, and yes, a new dynasty which we can clearly see in the Twentieth Dynasty of the New Kingdom of ancient Egypt.

And that what really happened in the case of Queen Isis, we have never before that the son of a foreign wife succeeded the throne in ancient Egypt but it really happened when Ramesses III died, his son Ramesses VI from her succeeded the throne and became the pharaoh.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, a new kingdom with new blood and tribal alliances will always bring out the jealousy and envy of other family members who may not be born of this same blood alliance. This jealousy and envy would later end in the murder of the last Great Pharaohs of the Twentieth Kingdom, Ramesses III, in a plot by his wife and son who had brutally murdered Ramesses III in cold blood in an attempt to steal the throne from this new brotherhood.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Hawass Zahi, *Tutankhamun: The Mystery of the Boy King*, Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2005, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup> Stephens, Autumn, Vicki Leon, and Seale Ballenger, *Hell's Belles and Wild Women*, Quality Paperback Book Club: New York, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>49</sup> National Geographic Society, *National Geographic: Pharaohs of the Sun*, Vol. 199, No. 4, National Geographic Society, 2001, p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> Dodson Aidan & Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, p. 192.

<sup>51</sup> Dodson Aidan & Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 186-187.

<sup>52</sup> Breasted James H., *Ancient Records of Egypt*, pp. 446-450

The principal figure behind the plot was one of the pharaoh's secondary wives, Tiye, who hoped to put her son Pentawere on the throne instead of the heir Ramesses IV. The plot was apparently successful in causing the death of the pharaoh, but failed in its main objective of establishing Pentawere on the throne.<sup>53</sup>

### **c. Ladice**

Ladice was the daughter of the fifth Greek Cyrenaean king Battus III. She was born and raised in Cyrene. After 548 BC, she married pharaoh Amasis II as his fourth wife.<sup>54</sup>

Before Ladice's marriage with Amasis took place, her father made an alliance with the pharaoh to protect Cyrenaica from the local Libyan population and its aristocracy. Amasis, as a token of his goodwill and friendship with Battus, wanted to marry a Greek woman from Cyrenaica and Battus allowed him to select any woman whom he wanted to marry. Amasis chose Battus' daughter Ladice and get married in Cyrene.

When Ladice married Amasis, she became a member of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty of Egypt. Ladice is not well known in ancient Egyptian history and her name has not been found on any monuments from the time. Nor is she mentioned on any Egyptian inscriptions from the period. However, her marriage to Amasis encouraged cultural and trade interactions between Egypt and its neighbors in the Mediterranean.<sup>55</sup>

## **3. The Interior Diplomacy**

In the Egyptian world view the king created Egypt by uniting the south and the north. Thus the king was in charge of controlling chaos and thwarting rebellion within Egypt's boundaries<sup>56</sup> which was the main mean of diplomacy in general but we cannot forget that the interior peace inside a country was top of diplomacy because if we want to achieve the international diplomacy we must have first an interior diplomacy which really existed in ancient Egypt and we will take the reign of Hatshepsut and her stepson as an example.

### **a. The Diplomacy between Hatshepsut and her Stepson**

Pharaoh Hatshepsut enjoyed a peaceful and prosperous reign<sup>57</sup>, she protected Egypt's borders and masterminded a highly profitable trading mission to the mysterious land of Punt a place located somewhere on the northeast coast of Africa achieving the main concept of diplomacy which we discussed in the first chapter.

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<sup>53</sup> Redford Susan, *The Harem Conspiracy: The Murder of Ramesses III*, Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008, p. XXIV.

<sup>54</sup> Morkot Robert, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Greece*, Penguin Books, London, 1996.

<sup>55</sup> Cirino Zheng, *Ladice (Cyrenaean Princess)*, CIV, 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Anthony Flora Brooke, *Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: Theban Tomb Paintings from the Early Eighteenth Dynasty*, London, UK; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> Lamb Aimee, *Hatshepsut Pharaoh Queen*, BookBaby, 2014.

Some scholars keep mentioning that her monuments would be defaced after her death, apparently by her co-ruler and step-son Thutmose III. But the research does not completely agree with them as her exist beautiful temple at Deir el Bahari is a great witness. Moreover both Hatshepsut and Thutmose III adopted a high degree of diplomacy with each other; she raised him to be a king and after he became sole monarch, he did not try to erase the memory of Hatshepsut, or even destroying any of the monuments which bore her name or effigy as we will see in the following lines.

In the year 1479 B.C, following the death of Thutmose II, his son of the same name came to power. He was only a few years old when he assumed control of the government. For this reason his stepmother Hatshepsut was named regent. From the first reign year of her step-son, Hatshepsut became the most important decision maker in the court, since Thutmose was still far too young to lead the decision making process but he adopted the diplomacy style with her during her life and after her death. Around the seventh year of his reign, Hatshepsut crowned herself king. According to some scholars, it is unclear what compelled her to take this radical step but it is very clear that Thutmose was still very young to rule a great kingdom like Egypt, so she was the regent till he grown up and be able to rule. And it must be remembered that Thutmose both in dress, titles, and proportions appears as an equal beside Hatshepsut which is very clear in figure 12.<sup>58</sup>

The sandstone stele (fig. 13) was erected at the behest of Queen Hatshepsut to commemorate improvement and restoration works in West Thebes is a live example of the protocol she applied with him. The scene depicts the queen with a blue crown, in the act of offering two globular vases to the god Amon-Ra. She is accompanied by her nephew, the future pharaoh Thutmose III, who wears the white crown of Upper Egypt.

Her treatment of her stepson, Thutmose III was instructive. While the boy-king lived he was a permanent threat to her reign yet, while an accidental death would have been easy to arrange, she took no steps to remove him. Moreover, she had him trained as a soldier.<sup>59</sup> It seems that Hatshepsut did not fear Thutmose winning the trust of the army and seizing power. Presumably, she felt that he had no reason to hate her.

The thesis believes that her actions were entirely acceptable. She had not deposed her stepson, merely created old fashioned co-regency, possibly in response to some national emergency. The co-regency, or joint reign, had been a feature of Middle Kingdom royal life, when an older king would associate himself with the more junior partner who would share the state rituals and learn his trade.

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<sup>58</sup> Lloyd Alan, *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, , p. 110.

<sup>59</sup> Redford, D. B., *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt: Seven Studies*, Toronto, 1967.

As her intended successor, Thutmose had only to wait for his throne; no one could have foreseen that she would reign for over two decades. Thutmose spent his childhood and adolescence preparing for the future. He was educated as a scribe and priest, developing a life-long love of literature and history, and then entered the army. By the time of Hatshepsut's death, he had risen to the rank of Commander in Chief and had enjoyed a short, victorious campaign in the Levant.<sup>60</sup>

What can be concluded from this tangled tale is that we should perhaps rethink our assumptions. Hatshepsut did not fear Thutmose; instead of killing him, she raised him as her successor. Thutmose may not have hated Hatshepsut. Initially he may even have been grateful to her, as she had protected his land while training him for greatness. But, as he grew older and looked back over his life, his perspective would shift. Would Egypt's most successful general, a stickler for tradition, have wished to be associated with a woman co-regent, even a woman as strong as Hatshepsut?<sup>61</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Royal Women, such as Queen Hatshepsut, Tiye, Nefertiti, Nefertari, and many other queens had also diplomatic role. One of them applied the system of sisterhood exactly like the brotherhood system between kings, another queen ruled and took decision with her husband and the other depicted herself on the walls as a victorious on her enemy.

Also the great diplomacy relation between, both Hatshepsut and her step son Thutmose III adopted the diplomacy and protocol with each other and she did not kill him or prevented him from the throne when he become in suitable age, a relation which we can see in the royal kingdoms of the world of today either in Jordan, England or any other kingdom.

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<sup>60</sup> Grimal N., *A History of Ancient Egypt*, Translated by I. Shaw, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

<sup>61</sup> Tyldesley Joyce, *Hatshepsut*, pp. 94-95.

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**Figures**



Fig.1- A feast for Nebamun, and married guests sit in pairs on fine chairs, the tomb-chapel of Nebamun, Thebes, Egypt, 18th Dynasty

After: Yvonne Buskens, contrib., the British Museum, E37986.



Fig.2- Fragmentary funerary mask of Queen Tiye, 18th Dynasty, circa 1345 B.C., New Kingdom.

After: the researcher from the Ägyptisches Museum(the Altes Museum) collection in Berlin



Fig. 3- Amenhotep III and his queen Tiye (the Egyptian museum)

After: researcher( Amal Nadi)



Fig. 4a- Nefertiti Bust in Neues Museum, Berlin, Germany

After: the researcher (Amal Nadi)



Fig.4b- Limestone column fragment showing a cartouche of Nefertiti, Reign of Akhenaten.

After: The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

<https://commons.wikimedia.23/5/2019>





Fig. 5- Nefertiti depicted with her husband Akhenaten as an equal

After: Freed R.E., S D'Auria, YJ Markowitz, "*Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*", Museum of Fine Arts, Leiden, 1999.



Figure 6- Nefertiti smiting the enemy

After: Capel Anne, *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt*, Hudson Hills Press, New York, 1996, P. 112.



Fig. 7- Alabaster 'Pilgrim bottle' with Gold mountings and incised with blue cartouches of Rameses II (Usermaatra Setepenra) and Queen Nefertari.

After: Thebes, Egypt. The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London.



Fig. 8- Nefertari depicted at Luxor sent gifts to Puduḥepa.

After : <https://en.wikipedia.org> 10/6/2019



Fig. 9- Foundation plaque bearing the double cartouches of Queen Twosret.  
"Daughter of Re, Lady of Ta-merit, Twosret of Mut"

After: by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin, the mortuary temple of Twosret (Tawesret, Tausret) at Thebes, Egypt. 19th Dynasty, the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London. <https://commons.wikimedia>. 10/6/2019



Fig. 10- an improved version of Queen Kiya.

After: Ellis Ralph, Scot, *Egyptian Queen of the Scots: The legendary royal founder of Scotland revealed*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Edfu Books: UK, 2010, p. 59.

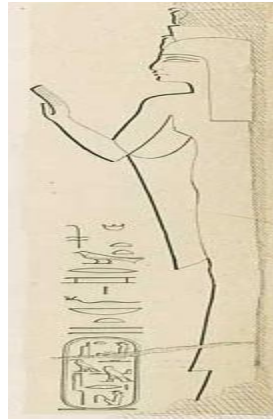


Fig. 11- Queen Isis-ta Hemdjert in Karnak

After: Demas Martha, Agnew Neville, Valley of the Queens Assessment Report: A Collaborative Project of the Getty Conservation Institute and the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Volume 1, Los Angeles, CA: Getty Conservation Institute, 2012, p. 71



Fig. 12- Thutmose both in dress, titles, and proportions appears as an equal beside Hatshepsut, Red Chapel, Karnak

After: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/463497> 14/ 4/ 2019



Figure 13c- Stele of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (The stela entered the Vatican in 1819)

After: (Vatican Museums, Room I. Epigraphic Artifacts) from <http://www.museivaticani>. 20/3/2019

## الدور الدبلوماسي للمرأة الملكية في مصر القديمة

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### الملخص العربي

مع استمرار الإيمان بفكرة أن حاضرننا هو امتداد لماضينا ومع البحث في التاريخ المصري القديم الذي يوفر نظرة شاملة عن الأمة في جميع المواقف سهلة كانت أو صعبة، حاولت الدراسة إظهار الدور الدبلوماسي للمرأة المصرية القديمة مثل الملكة حتشبسوت، تي، نفرتيتي ونفرتاري. فقد طبقت إحداهن مبدأ الأختية كأحد مظاهر الدبلوماسية وجلست الأخرى بجوار زوجها على العرش وشاركته اتخاذ القرارات وظهرت إحداهن على النقوش الجدارية بمظهر المحارب الذي يهزم أعداءه. و إظهار الدور الدبلوماسي المهم للملكة تي سواء أثناء حياة زوجها أو بعد وفاته في الوقوف بجانب ابنها إخناتون وتبادل الرسائل الدبلوماسية مع حكام الممالك الأخرى لمحاولة إصلاح الأوضاع الدبلوماسية التي تدهورت أثناء حكم ابنها. وأيضا دور المرأة في الزواج الدبلوماسي وتأثيره على السلطة وكيف أن نفرتاري شجعت زوجها على الزواج من غيرها ليوطد علاقتة بالممالك الأخرى. أظهر البحث العلاقة الدبلوماسية بين حتشبسوت وتحتمس الثالث واتباعهم للبروتوكول في تعاملاتهم مع بعض فلم تحرض على قتله بل منحته الفرصة لكي يتدرب على فنون الحكم إلى أن أصبح في سن مناسب لحكم مصر وهذه العلاقة مازالت مطبقة في ممالك العصر الحالي سواء العربي أو الأجنبي.

**الكلمات الدالة:** المرأة الملكية، الدور الدبلوماسي، مصر القديمة.