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| Rare Ancient Egyptian Queen Tiy (Tiye) Bust Figure, Dynasty 18, ca.1355 BC LARGE  Rare Ancient Egyptian Queen Tiy (Tiye) Bust Figure, Dynasty 18, ca.1355 BC |

**Tiye** (c. 1398 BC – 1338 BC, also spelled **Taia**, **Tiy** and **Tiyi**) was the daughter of [Yuya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuya) and [Tjuyu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tjuyu). She became the [Great Royal Wife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Royal_Wife) of the [Egyptian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egypt) [pharaoh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharaoh) [Amenhotep III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amenhotep_III). She was the mother of [Akhenaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhenaten) and grandmother of [Tutankhamun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tutankhamun). Her mummy was identified as "The Elder Lady" found in the tomb of Amenhotep II ([KV35](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KV35)) in 2010.



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## Family and early life

Tiye's father, [Yuya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuya), was a non-royal, wealthy landowner from the Upper Egyptian town of [Akhmim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhmim),[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006115-1) where he served as a [priest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priest) and superintendent of oxen or commander of the chariotry.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-2) Tiye's mother, [Tjuyu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tjuyu), was involved in many religious cults, as her different titles attested (*Singer of Hathor*, *Chief of the Entertainers* of both [Amun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amun) and [Min](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Min_(god))...),[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006116-3) which suggests that she was a member of the royal family.

Egyptologists have suggested that Tiye's father, Yuya, was of foreign origin due to the features of his mummy and the many different spellings of his name, which might imply it was a non-Egyptian name in origin.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline19985-4) Some suggest that the queen's strong political and unconventional religious views might have been due not just to a strong character, but to foreign descent.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006116-3)

Tiye also had a brother, [Anen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anen), who was Second Prophet of [Amun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amun).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline19985-6-5) [Ay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ay), a successor of [Tutankhamun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tutankhamun) as pharaoh after the latter's death, is believed to be yet another brother of Tiye; despite no clear date or monument confirming a link between the two, [Egyptologists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptology) presume this by Ay's origins, also from Akhmin, because he is known to have built a chapel dedicated to the local god Min there, and because he inherited most of the titles that Tiye's father, Yuya, held at the court of Amenhotep III during his lifetime.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006116-3)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-6)

Tiye was married to Amenhotep III by the second year of his reign. He had been born of a secondary wife of his father and needed a stronger tie to the royal lineage.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline19985-4) He appears to have been crowned while still a child, perhaps between the ages of six to twelve. They had at least seven, possibly more children:

1) [Sitamun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sitamun) – The eldest daughter, who was elevated to the position of Great Royal Wife around year 30 of her father's reign.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006121-7)

2) [Isis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iset_(daughter_of_Amenhotep_III)) – Also elevated to the position of Great Royal Wife.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006121-7)

3) [Henuttaneb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henuttaneb) – Not known to have been elevated to Queenship, though her name does appear in a Cartouche at least once.

4) [Nebetah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebetah) – Sometimes thought to have been renamed Baketaten during her brother's reign.

5) [Crown Prince Thutmose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thutmose_(prince)) – Crown Prince and High Priest of Ptah, pre-deceasing his father.

6) [Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhenaten) – Succeeded his father as pharaoh, husband of Queen [Nefertiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nefertiti), father of [Ankhesenamun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankhesenamun), who married [Tutankhamun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tutankhamun).

7) [Smenkhkare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smenkhkare) – traditionally seen as one of [Akhenaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhenaten)'s immediate successors, today some Egyptologists such as Aidan Dodson believe he was the immediate predecessor of [Neferneferuaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neferneferuaten) and a junior co-regent of Akhenaten who did not have an independent reign.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-8) Sometimes identified with the mummy from [KV55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KV55), and therefore Tutankhamun's father.

8) [The Younger Lady](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Younger_Lady) from [KV35](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KV35) – A daughter of Amenhotep III and Tiye, mother of Tutankhamun and sister-wife of KV55. Presumably one of the already-known daughters of Amenhotep III and Tiye.

9) [Beketaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beketaten) – Sometimes thought to be Queen Tiye's daughter, usually based on a stelae with Baketaten seated next to Tiye at dinner with [Akhenaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhenaten) and [Nefertiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nefertiti).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006115-1)

## Monuments

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Queen_Tiy_N2312_E25493_mp3h8764.jpg)

Queen Tiye, whose husband, [Amenhotep III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amenhotep_III), may have been depicted to her right in this broken statue

Her husband devoted a number of [shrines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrines) to her and constructed a [temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple) dedicated to her in [Sedeinga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sedeinga) in [Nubia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nubia) where she was worshipped as a form of the goddess [Hathor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hathor)-[Tefnut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tefnut).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline19986-9) He also had an artificial lake built for her in his Year 12.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-10) On the [colossal statue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colossal_statue_of_Amenhotep_III_and_Tiye) now in the Egyptian Museum she is of equal height with her husband. As the American Egyptologists David O'Connor and Eric Cline note:

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| **“** | The unprecedented thing about Tiyi. ... is not where she came from but what she became. No previous queen ever figured so prominently in her husband's lifetime. Tiyi regularly appeared besides Amenhotep III in statuary, tomb and temple reliefs, and stelae while her name is paired with his on numerous small objects, such as vessels and jewelry, not to mention the large commemorative scarabs, where her name regularly follows his in the dateline. New elements in her portraiture, such as the addition of cows' horns and sun disks—attributes of the goddess [Hathor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hathor)—to her headdress, and her representation in the form of a sphinx—an image formerly reserved for the king—emphasize her role as the king's divine, as well as earthly partner. Amenhotep III built a temple to her in Sedeinga in northern [Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan), where she was worshiped as a form of Hathor ... The temple at Sedeinga was the pendant to Amenhotep III's own, larger temple at Soleb, fifteen kilometres to the south (an arrangement followed a century later by Ramses II at [Abu Simbel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Simbel), where there are likewise two temples, the larger southern temple dedicated to the king, and the smaller, northern temple dedicated to the queen, [Nefertiry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nefertari), as Hathor).[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline19986-7-11) | **”** |

## Influence at court

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:QueenTiyFuneraryMask-AltesMuseum-Berlin.png)

Fragmentary funerary mask of Queen Tiye - in the [Ägyptisches Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%84gyptisches_Museum) collection in [Berlin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin)

Tiye wielded a great deal of power during both her husband’s and son’s reigns. Amenhotep III became a fine sportsman, a lover of outdoor life, and a great statesman. He often had to consider claims for Egypt's gold and requests for his royal daughters in marriage from foreign kings such as [Tushratta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tushratta) of Mitanni and [Kadashman-Enlil I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadashman-Enlil_I) of Babylon. The royal lineage was carried by the women of Ancient Egypt and marriage to one would have been a path to the throne for their progeny. Tiye became her husband’s trusted adviser and confidant. 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. She continued to play an active role in foreign relations and was the first Egyptian queen to have her name recorded on official acts.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTETyldesley2006118-12)

Tiye may have continued to advise her son, Akhenaten, when he took the throne. Her son’s correspondence with [Tushratta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tushratta), the king of [Mitanni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitanni), speaks highly of the political influence she wielded at court. In Amarna letter **EA 26**, Tushratta, king to [Mitanni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitanni), corresponded directly with Tiye to reminisce about the good relations he enjoyed with her then deceased husband and extended his wish to continue on friendly terms with her son, Akhenaten.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-13)

Amenhotep III died in Year 38 or Year 39 of his reign (1353 BC/1350 BC) and was buried in the [Valley of the Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valley_of_the_Kings) in [WV22](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WV22); however, Tiye is known to have outlived him for as many as twelve years. Tiye continued to be mentioned in the [Amarna letters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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. She is known to have had a house at Akhetaten (Amarna), Akhenaten's new capital and is shown on the walls of the tomb of Huya – a "steward in the house of the king's mother, the great royal wife [Tiyi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiy)" – depicted at a dinner table with Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and their family and then being escorted by the king to her *sunshade*.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline199823-14) In an inscription approximately dated to November 21 of Year 12 of Akhenaten's reign (1338 BC), both she and her granddaughter [Meketaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meketaten) are mentioned for the last time. They are thought to have died shortly after that date. This information is corrorborated by the fact that the shrine which Akhenaten created for her—which was later found transported from Amarna to tomb [KV55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KV55) in Thebes—bore the later form of the Aten's name which was only used after Year 9 of this pharaoh's reign.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-15)

If Tiye died soon after Year 12 of Akhenaten's reign (1338 BC), this would place her birth around 1398 BC, her marriage to Amenhotep III at the age of eleven or twelve, and her becoming a widow at the age of forty-eight to forty-nine. Suggestions of a co-regency between Amenhotep III and his son Akhenaten lasting for up to twelve years continue, but most scholars today, either accept a brief co-regency lasting no more than one year at the most,[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye" \l "cite_note-16) or no co-regency at all.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEO'ConnorCline199823-14)

## Burial and mummy

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:TheElderLady-61070-FrontView-PlateXCVII-TheRoyalMummies-1912.gif)

The mummy of Queen Tiye, now in the [Egyptian Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Museum)

Tiye is believed to have been originally buried in Akhenaten's royal tomb at [Amarna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amarna) alongside her son and granddaughter, [Meketaten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meketaten), as a fragment from the tomb not long ago was identified as being from her [sarcophagus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarcophagus). Her gilded [burial shrine](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Burial_shrine&action=edit&redlink=1) (showing her with Akhenaten) ended up in [KV55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KV55) while [shabtis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shabti) belonging to her were found in [Amenhotep III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amenhotep_III)'s [WV22](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WV22) tomb.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDodsonHilton2004157-17)

Her mummified remains were found adjacent to two other mummies in an opposite side chamber of [Amenhotep II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amenhotep_II) in [KV35](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KV35) by [Victor Loret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Loret) in 1898. The two other mummies were a young boy who died at around the age of ten, thought to be [Webensenu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webensenu) or Prince Thutmose and another, younger unknown woman. All three were found together, lying naked side-by-side and unidentified in a small antechamber of the tomb. The younger unknown woman had been extensively damaged by grave robbers, her chest and face smashed in. This was an extremely callous act, as a damaged mummy could not enter the afterlife. [[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-pmid20159872-18) At first, researchers were unable to identify both female mummies and they were instead given names with Tiye being labelled as the 'Elder Lady' while the other woman was '[The Younger Lady](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Younger_Lady_(mummy))'. Several researchers argued that the Elder Lady was Queen Tiye. Some noted that miniature coffins inscribed with her name were found at the tomb of her grandson, [Tutankhamun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tutankhamun), as memento from a beloved grandmother.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDodsonHilton2004157-17) There were also some scholars who were skeptical about this theory such as British scholars Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, who once stated that "it seems very unlikely that her mummy could be the so-called 'Elder Lady' in the tomb of Amenhotep II."[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDodsonHilton2004157-17)

By 2010, [DNA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DNA) analysis, sponsored by the Secretary General of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities [Zahi Hawass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zahi_Hawass), was able to formally identify the Elder Lady to be Queen Tiye. Also, the strands of her hair found inside Tutankhamun's tomb matched the DNA of the Elder Lady.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiye#cite_note-autogenerated640-19)

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