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## AMARNA: PRIVATE AND ROYAL TOMBS

### العمارنة: المقابر الملكية ومقابر الأفراد

*Janne Arp-Neumann*

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## AMARNA: PRIVATE AND ROYAL TOMBS

## العمارنة: المقابر الملكية ومقابر الأفراد

Janne Arp-Neumann

Amarna: private und königliche Gräber

Amarna: tombes privées et royales

*The monumental tombs of el-Amarna (also Tell el-Amarna) were constructed for members of the elite and for the royal family. They are considered to be a main source for the study of the history, religion, and art of the so-called "Amarna Period." All tombs are located on the east bank of the Nile. The private rock-cut tombs are located in the crescent of foothills and cliffs east of the ancient city. They are decorated with reliefs and inscriptions, and among the texts, the "hymns to the Aten" are of special interest. Special features include columned halls and statues of the tomb owners. The Royal Tombs were constructed in remote wadis behind the cliffs, descending from the ground floor and featuring pillared halls. They too are decorated with reliefs and inscriptions, but suffered much more from destruction than the private tombs. Due to the comparatively short period of occupation of the city, most of the monumental tombs were not completed, and supposedly not many of them had been used for burial.*

شيدت المقابر الأثرية في العمارنة (يعرف أيضا بتل العمارنة) لطبقة النخبة والعائلة المالكة. حيث تعتبر المصدر الرئيسي لدراسة التاريخ والدين والفن خلال فترة العمارنة. تقع جميع المقابر على الضفة الشرقية لنهر النيل. مقابر الأفراد المنحوتة في الصخر تقع في منطقة المنحدرات الصخرية شرق المدينة القديمة. وهي مزينة بمناظر ونقوش ، ومن بين النصوص ، تحظى "ترانيم آتون" بأهمية خاصة. ولتلك المقابر ميزات خاصة حيث تشمل على قاعات أعمدة وتماثيل لأصحاب المقابر. أما المقابر الملكية فقد شيدت في الأودية البعيدة خلف المنحدرات الصخرية، تنحدر تحت الأرض وتضم قاعات ذات أعمدة. أيضًا هي مزينة بالمناظر والنقوش ، لكنها عانت من الدمار بشكل أكبر من مقابر الأفراد. ونظراً لفقر فترة شغل المدينة ، لم يتم الانتهاء من معظم المقابر الأثرية ، ولم يتم استخدام الكثير منها للدفن.

**T**he private monumental tombs at el-Amarna (also "Tell el-Amarna") lie in the crescent of foothills and cliffs east of the ancient city of Akhetaten (see Stevens 2016 for the etymology of the names of the city and its broader territory and for discussion of the non-elite cemeteries). They comprise north and south groupings. The North Tombs are located toward the north end of the crescent, in proximity to the modern village of *el-Til*. The South Tombs are located toward the crescent's south end, in the vicinity

of the modern village of *el-Hag Qandiil* (fig. 1; Davies 1903: 1; 1906: 7, fn. 1). A central wadi, *Wadi Abu Hasab el-Babri* (variously called the Royal Wadi, *Darb el-Hamzawi* and *Darb el-Malek*), discharges into the bay of Amarna, midway between the two groups, and extends eastward to the Royal Tombs behind the cliffs (Martin 1974: 1-2). The private tombs in the north are hewn horizontally into the high cliff face, whereas those in the south are hewn downward into the low foothills.

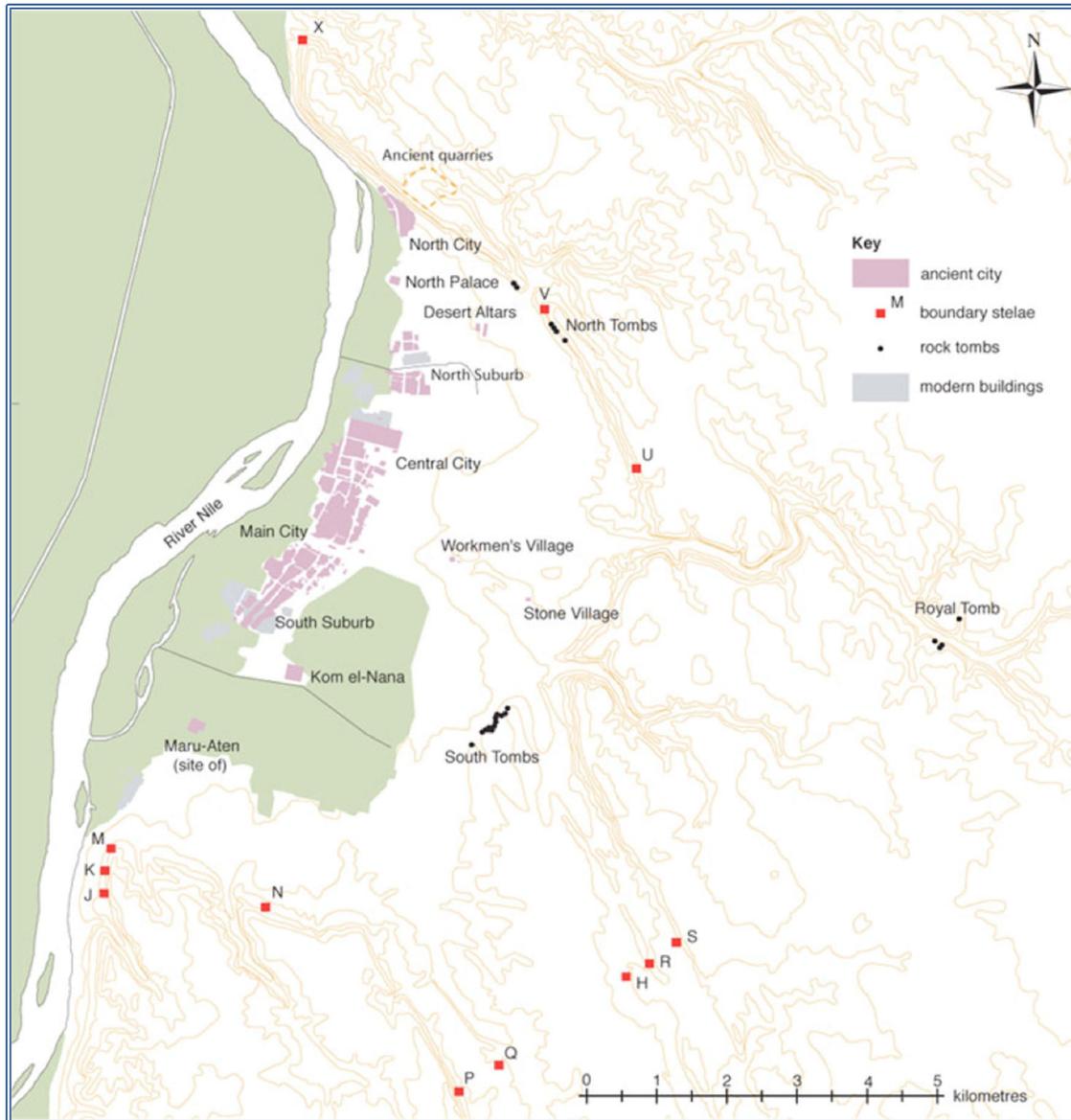


Figure 1. Map of el-Amarna.

The necropolis is referred to as “Mountain of the East” (*dw wbnw*) in inscriptions in the private monumental tombs and also in the first set in the chain of Boundary Stelae that mark the site. The tombs are variously referred to as “the place of favor” (*st/spꜣt ḥswt*) and “the place of the favorites” (*st/spꜣt ḥsyw*); in one instance they are referred to as “the place of justification” (*ḥwt nt mꜣꜥ ḥrw*) (Murnane and van Siclen III 1993; Murnane 1995; Arp 2012).

In modern times, a total of 50 monumental structures at el-Amarna have been assigned consecutive numbers designating them as tombs. Twenty-five structures in the combined northern and southern necropolis of private tombs bear the numerical designations TA 01 to TA 25—“TA” referring to either “Tombs of Amarna” (e.g., Arp 2012) or to “Tell el-Amarna” (Dodson 2018 – 2019)—while twenty were assigned the addition of an alphabetic sub-categorization (for example, TA 01A). Five structures in the necropolis of Royal

Tombs bear the numbers TA 26 to TA 30. Alternatively, Marion Hesse has introduced a designation system that numbers the tombs with the abbreviation “AT” (“Amarna Tomb”), from AT 1 to AT 45 (2013: 7). Hesse’s system was meant to overcome the differentiation between decorated and undecorated, or smaller and larger, tombs. But there are in fact clusters of tombs perceivable, and this additional information is addressed with the subordinate numbers in the conventional system. Another difficulty with Hesse’s system is its retention of the numbering of the Royal Tombs as numbers 26 to 30, though they are designated with the abbreviation “KVA” (“Kings Valley Amarna,” Hesse 2013: 6).

The northern necropolis (fig. 2) comprises 18 tombs, numbered as follows from north to south:

TA 01A	Rudu
TA 01B	no name
TA 01	Huya
TA 02	Meryra II
TA 03 A	no name
TA 03 B	no name
TA 03 C	no name
TA 03 D	no name
TA 03 E	no name
TA 03 F	no name
TA 03	Ahmes
TA 04	Meryra I
TA 05	Pentu
TA 06 A	no name
TA 06 B	no name
TA 06 C	no name
TA 06 D	no name
TA 06	Panehesy

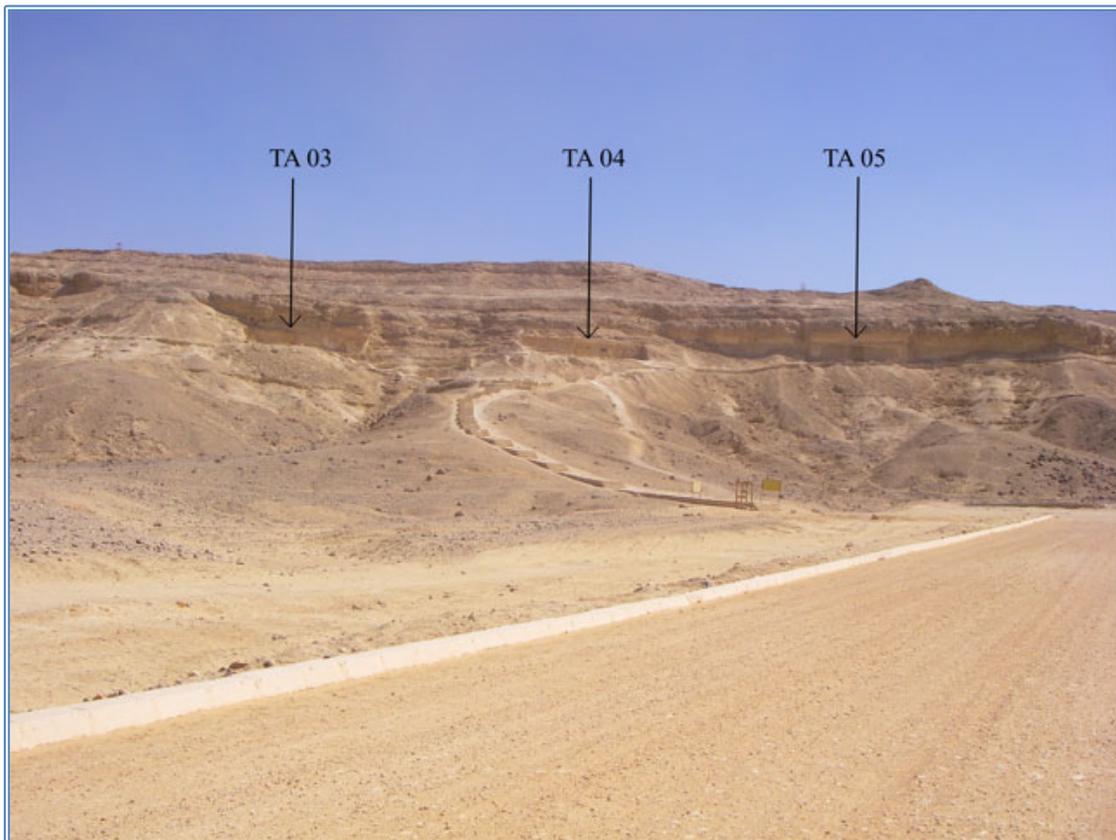


Figure 2. The northern necropolis of el-Amarna: TA 03, TA 04, and TA 05. View to the northeast.

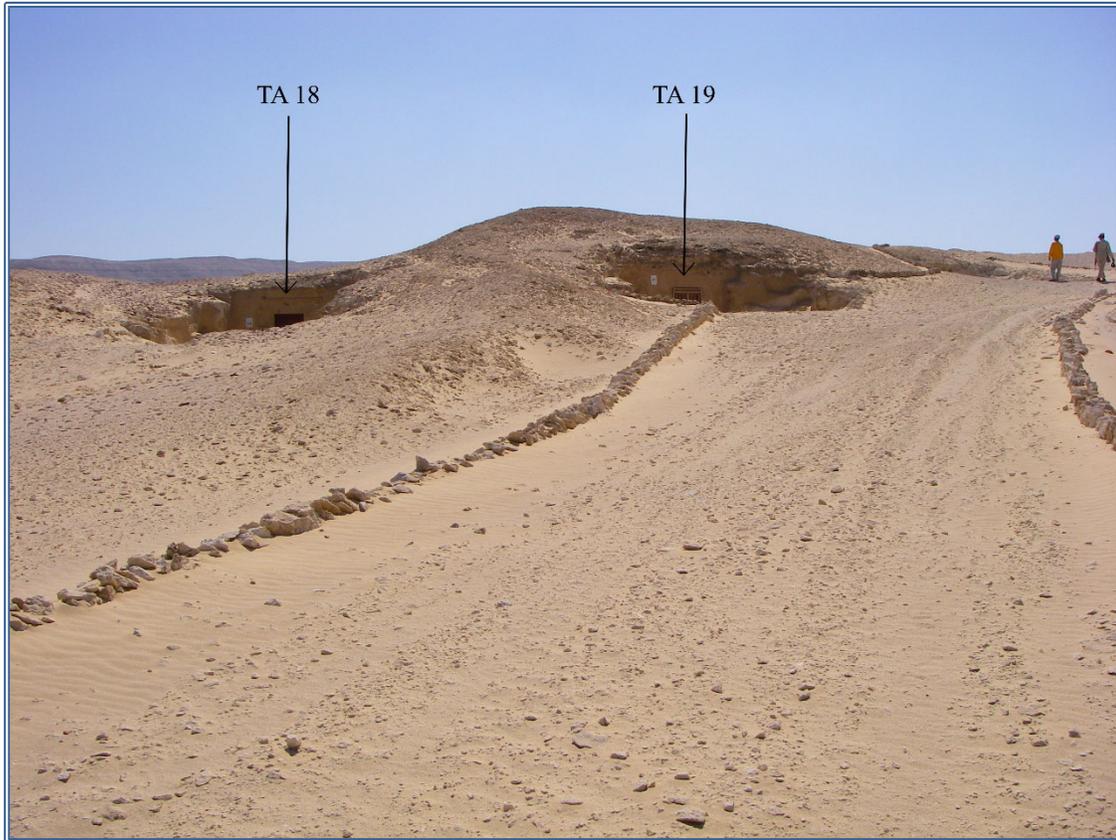


Figure 3. The southern necropolis of el-Amarna: TA 18 and TA 19. View to the southeast.

The southern group (fig. 3) comprises 27 tombs, numbered as follows from north to south:

TA 07	Parennefer
TA 07 A	no name
TA 07 B	no name
TA 07 C	no name
TA 08	Tutu
TA 09 A	no name
TA 09 B	no name
TA 09 C	no name
TA 09	Mahu
TA 10	Apy
TA 11	Rames
TA 12	Nekht-Pa-Aten
TA 13	Nefer-Kheperu-Her-Sekheper
TA 14	May
TA 15	Suti
TA 16	no name
TA 17	no name
TA 18	no name
TA 19	Sutau
TA 20	no name

TA 21	no name
TA 22	no name
TA 23	Any
TA 24	Pa-Aten-em-Heb
TA 24 A	no name
TA 25	Ay and Tiy
TA 25 A	no name

The five structures in the royal necropolis (see Figure 1 above) are rock-cut, constructed by hewing into the wadi's bed and proceeding downwards. TA 27 designates a large structure on the south side of the Royal Wadi, about 3-4 km past the cliffs of the private tombs. Behind it, TA 28 and TA 29 were cut into a smaller wadi branching off to the south. TA 26, known as the tomb of Akhenaten, was set into yet another, smaller wadi, branching northward off the main wadi. A second tomb, TA 30, was also begun here.

A ritual complex known as the "Desert Altars," as well as the structures at the site of Kom el-Nana (see Figure 1 above), are thought

to have been places for the cultic maintenance of the private monumental tombs (Stevens 2016: 4; Williamson 2017).

### *Significance*

The monumental tombs of el-Amarna are sources for the study of Amarna religion (e.g., Bickel 2003; Hesse 2013; compare Williamson 2015: 6), Amarna art (Laboury 2011), Amarna history, especially the questions of coregencies (Williamson 2015: 4, 9) and successions to the throne (Manassa Darnell 2015), the role of women (Arnold 1996; Zinn 2016), and the reconstruction of the site's temple architecture (Stevens 2016: 3, Schlüter 2009).

The construction of monumental tombs at el-Amarna was announced in the first set of Boundary Stelae. These earliest stelae, K, X, and M, comprise the so-called “Earlier Proclamation” of Akhenaten’s regnal year 5 (Murnane and van Siclen III 1993). In this text, on Stela K, three members of the royal family (Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and princess Meritaten), the Mnevis bull, and certain priests (the “Greatest of Seers” and the “God’s Fathers of the Aten”) were designated as beneficiaries of tombs to be constructed. The text that follows this passage is unfortunately severely damaged. Wolfgang Helck (1958: 1975) proposed a reconstruction of the hieroglyphs, in which *wrw nb(w)* (“all functionaries”) and *rmt nb* (“everybody”) are also included as recipients of future tombs. William Murnane and Charles Van Siclen III re-collated the texts in 1993, and in their synopsis, the corresponding part to this lacuna on Stela X includes *hm ntr*-priests (Murnane and Van Siclen III 1993: 26 and 41). Consequently we can consider, at present, that only priestly titles are named with certainty in the Earlier Proclamation. The tomb-owner designations in the Boundary Stelae do not fully coincide with the archaeological evidence, however. Starting with the Mnevis bull, it needs to be pointed out that structures for cultic sustaining, mummifying, and burying the bull have not as yet been identified on site (Porcier 2006). In the Royal Tombs TA 26, 28, and 29, there are hints at the preparation of burials for more—and differently grouped—family members than are mentioned in the text. TA

26, for example, is considered the actual burial place of Akhenaten, the dowager queen Tiy, and the princesses Neferneferura, Setepenra, and Meketaten (Gabolde 1998: 136-138). Kiya and Baketaten were possibly entombed in TA 28 (Gabolde and Dunsmore 2004: 33), and TA 29 was provided for Nefertiti and Meritaten (Kemp 2016: 6 and 8). Finally, the private tombs attest to a much wider range of titles than that given in the text of the Boundary Stelae. In addition to the priestly titles, tomb owners bear the designations of officials in the military and civil services, in the temple and royal economies, and in the service of the households of the royal family (see Table 1; compare Hari 1976, Murnane 1995, and Arp 2012).

The fact that the construction of at least 45 private monumental tombs had been planned correlates with the 130 to 240 higher-ranking officials that we estimate to have been present at el-Amarna (Kemp 1998: 314). Theban tombs datable to the early reign of Akhenaten are rare (Kampp 1996: 146 dates nine tombs to a period overlapping with the reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten, but only TT 188, that of Parennefer, was begun during Amenhotep IV’s reign; and *passim* for further information about the individual tombs). Recent research has yielded more insight into the monumental tombs built and used during the Amarna Period at Saqqara (Zivie 1990, 2007, 2009, 2013; Gessler-Löhr 2012; Raven and van Walsem 2014; Staring 2016; and see Raven’s forthcoming monograph).

The monumental private tombs at el-Amarna were planned and constructed for select individuals who qualified as members of a contemporaneous elite group. Moreover, they were abandoned before having been expanded and re-used by the next generation. The private necropolis therefore provides pertinent material for analyses of relations between the features of tomb layout and the social status of the tomb owners (Arp 2012). Significantly, tombs in an advanced state of completion were owned by individuals holding offices in the service of the royal family, i.e., TA 01 (Huya), TA 02 (Meryra II), TA 03 (Ahmes), and TA 05 (Pentu); in the temples,

i.e., TA 04 (Meryra I) and TA 06 (Panehesy); and also in law enforcement, as exemplified by the tomb of the local chief of police, TA 09 (Mahu). In contrast, TA 12 (Nekht-Pa-Aten), the tomb of a vizier, the most important person in the state administration, or TA 19 (Sutau), the tomb of the “Overseer of the Treasury of the Lord of the Two Lands,” another prominent office, were both left in a very early stage of construction. Apart from these clear differences in the progress of construction, every private tomb at el-Amarna has its own particularities. As a new approach to the study of (inter)relations between the social status of tomb owners and the location, layout, and decoration of their tombs, Norbert Elias’s *Figurationsanalyse* was applied to the data of this necropolis (Arp 2012: 175-193). This method aids our understanding of why it is virtually impossible to discern a fixed hierarchy among the group by comparing the tombs. According to Elias, the absence of an obvious hierarchy was a typical mechanism kings employed for controlling a newly organized court society.

Regarding gender as another social dimension of the necropolis, el-Amarna does not differ from other necropoleis in that most of its monumental private tombs were assigned to male officials, who included in their burial places members of their households and families. One tomb, however, differs in this respect and has been proposed (Arp 2012: 96-102) to be a double tomb—TA 25, co-owned by Ay and Tiy. The female tomb-owner, Tiy, is represented in all the places where a tomb owner’s figures, names, and titles usually appear. She bore titles linking her to the royal couple and is never referred to in a relationship of dependence on the male tomb-owner, Ay (ibid.: 100). The fact that she was indeed the male tomb-owner’s wife is not even supplied on the walls of the tomb but rather derives from other sources (ibid.: 99). The so-called “Great Hymn to the Aten” on the right (west) side of the entrance is singularly written above the figures of both the male and the female owner (ibid.: 101). Moreover, the exceptional dimensions and the quantity of columns in the tomb can be seen in connection with it being a double tomb and should not be explained

solely with reference to Ay’s social status (Schaden 1977; Manassa Darnell 2015: 2-3).

In studies of the Amarna Period, special aspects of the wall decoration of the monumental tombs have received strong interest and focus. Table 2 gives an overview of the themes depicted in the tombs. Recurrent motifs present the royal family offering to the Aten; sitting with food and drink; moving between palaces and temples; rewarding the tomb owners, often but not always from a window of appearance; and receiving tributes. The tomb owners are depicted performing the functions of their offices and accepting rewards given by the royal family. An important observation to be made is, therefore, that the figure of the king features prominently on the walls of the private tombs of el-Amarna (compare Arp 2009; 2012: 109-110), with one exception: TA 09, the tomb of Mahu. Here, representations of Mahu are more frequent than those of the king; additionally, Mahu is depicted in an unusually large size (Davies 1906: 12-18, XIV-XXIX, XL-XLII). Mahu was the “Captain of the Medjaw of Akhetaten” and is depicted ensuring security at the city’s borders, where, for example, criminals were to be prosecuted. He is shown in close contact with the vizier, but not with the king in person (compare Tables 1 and 2). Likewise he is not depicted attending to the king in the palaces and temples, as are the other tomb owners whose titles relate to these places and functions. He is, however, the only tomb owner depicted in the act of offering to the Aten: he is represented kneeling, on his own, outside the temple, before tables and stands piled with offerings, in a gesture of adoration (Davies 1906: X, XVII, XIX; compare Bickel 2003: 34-37). It is a well-known concept in Egyptian art that the size and prominence of the figures in wall decoration are determined by their relevance and social status (the so-called *Bedeutungsmaßstab*: see Verbovsek 2015: 145). Following this concept, figures of tomb owners are shown in subordinate roles whenever the king’s figure is present on the walls of their tombs, and the king is depicted on the walls wherever the tomb-owners’ actions are related to the king’s actions. The observation of the predominant king should

therefore not be interpreted in a negative light but should rather be considered as evidence that those tomb-owners' relationships with the king were quite close (Arp 2012).

The extensive texts in the private tombs (Murnane 1995; cf. the transcriptions and translations given by the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*) also emphasize that being in the king's vicinity was of great importance to the tomb owners, who expressed their wishes to be as close to the king as possible and indeed claimed to have heard his teachings.

The most characteristic trait of the funerary sources of el-Amarna is the "total absence of the mythological" (Ockinga 2008: 34). Neither the god Osiris nor any deity other than the Aten are mentioned or shown in any of the monumental tombs. Rather, tomb decoration, especially the texts on the doorways of the private tombs, invokes the king and the Aten (in the form of the sun disk) on behalf of the dead. Devotion to the god was mediated via the king (Ockinga 2008: 31), but the Aten was also addressed directly in the inscriptions of several tombs: TA 04 (Meryra I), TA 05 (Pentu), TA 06 (Panehesy), TA 08 (Tutu), TA 09 (Mahu), TA 14 (May), and TA 25 (Ay and Tiy). As mentioned above, the deity was also—exceptionally—shown being addressed directly in one instance in the wall decoration of Mahu's tomb (TA 09).

The term *dwꜣt*, signifying a place of the dead in Egyptian afterlife conceptions, is mentioned in three of the private tombs (to Boyo Ockinga's listing [2008: 31-32] of tombs TA 04 [Meryra I] and TA 25 [Ay and Tiy], add TA 15 [Suti]; see Arp 2012: 83). More often a temple, palace, or the tomb itself is mentioned as a place for the dead to find commemoration, blessings, and offerings. Ockinga, in fact, proposed to consider the term *dwꜣt* in the texts of Amarna as a reference to the tomb (2008: 32), yet in the hymn to the Aten in TA 25 (Ay and Tiy), it is also mentioned as the place of the Nile's creation.

Depictions of the afterlife known from the royal tombs in the Theban Valley of the Kings are missing from el-Amarna's Royal Tomb TA 26, as far as can be judged from its deplorable

state of preservation. There are also no substantial texts preserved in this tomb, and the strong focus on the burial ritual in the wall decoration is exceptional in comparison with other Egyptian royal tombs.

### *Historical Context*

In addition to Akhenaten, two kings are named and depicted in the decoration of the private tombs of el-Amarna: Amenhotep III (and Queen Tiy) in the tomb of Huya (TA 01) (Davies 1905b), and Semenkharu (and Queen Meritaten) in the tomb of Meryra II (TA 02) (Murnane 1995: 209; Manassa Darnell 2015; Williamson 2015). The individuals who are assumed to have been buried in the Royal Tombs at el-Amarna are discussed below (for the general historical context of the period, see Williamson 2015).

King Tutankhamun, who presumably began his reign at el-Amarna and then transferred his administration to Thebes, is known with certainty to have been buried in tomb KV 62 in the Theban Valley of the Kings. Recently, Nicholas Reeves put forth the argument that KV 62 had been constructed and used for Nefertiti's burial, and that her burial chambers were to this day hidden behind neatly closed walls (Reeves 2015). Reeves's argument is based on a 3D-scan of the walls, showing fine lines that looked like possible traces of a doorway. Ground-penetrating radar tests executed by a team from the Polytechnic University of Turin, however, disproved the existence of hidden chambers (Sambuelli et al. 2019: 9; contrarily Reeves 2019).

After the site's brief period of occupation, the tombs were abandoned. Certain types of damage to the decoration—especially Akhenaten's names and figures in the North Tombs (see Davies 1906: 19) and in Royal Tomb TA 26, especially on the main axis and pillared hall, including the sarcophagus (see Martin 1989)—were most probably executed in the Ramesside Period, when *talatat* blocks were taken from the city to be used for construction works at other sites (Stevens 2016: 4).

In the Late Period, the accessible rooms of the tombs were used as places to deposit mummies and burial objects (Davies 1903, 1905 a and b, 1906, 1908 a and b). Visitors, presumably mercenaries, left graffiti with their names, datable to the second century BCE (Davies 1905b: 34-37). In the Late Roman and Byzantine Periods, about 2,000 years after the abandonment of the city, several North Tombs and their surroundings served as dwelling places. The damage done to the statues of some of the tombs might be seen in relation to this phase of inhabitation (see Arp 2012: 47), and the long, narrow pits dug into the ground of some rooms most probably are the remains of looms (Pyke, Stevens, and Sigl 2008; Sigl 2011). TA 06 (Panehesy) was used as a Coptic church, but Gillian Pyke notes that only slight intrusion took place there: practical structures for daily life were installed and only the east wall was plastered over (Pyke 2014: 150). The South Tombs and the Royal Tombs were not reused by Copts, presumably because they had become filled with sand by the Coptic Period.

### *Private Monumental Tombs*

#### **Excavation and research history.**

The North Tombs were first documented in 1824 by John Gardner Wilkinson, who described them briefly in his *Materia Hieroglyphica* (1828: 21-22). Wilkinson provided more detailed information, along with images, in many of his later writings, among them his multi-volumed *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1837 - 1841, and later editions). Robert Hay visited the tombs between 1829 and 1834; his documentation, now in the British Library, is referenced as Hay MS 29814, fs. 20-60. Nestor L'Hôte visited the private necropolis in 1839 and published documentation the following year (L'Hôte 1840: 53-78). In 1843 and 1845, Carl Richard Lepsius visited the private necropolis, publishing a volume of plates in his *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Lepsius 1849-1858, Section 3, Vol. 6: pls. 91-111). The corresponding volume of text, edited by Edouard Naville, with Ludwig Borchardt, Kurt Sethe, and Walter Wreszinski, awaited publication until 1904 (Lepsius 1897 - 1913, Vol. 2: 130-149). In 1883 more extensive

archaeological campaigns were initiated in the private necropolis by Gaston Maspero (published in Bouriant 1884; compare Davies 1903: 5; Driaux 2016). In 1890 the private tombs suffered vandalism when thieves attempting to steal parts of the reliefs damaged them severely (Bouriant, Legrain, and Jéquier 1903: 107). Between 1893 and 1894, the French mission to the private necropolis was carried out by Urbain Bouriant, Georges Legrain and Gustave Jéquier. Their work focused on the South Tombs, the results awaiting publication, by Émile Gaston Chassinat, until 1903 (Bouriant, Legrain, and Jéquier 1903). Meanwhile, Norman de Garis Davies received the concession for the private necropolis and conducted fieldwork there between 1901 and 1907. His work, published between 1903 and 1908, constitutes six volumes of the *Archaeological Survey of Egypt* series (Davies 1903, 1905a and b, 1906, 1908a and b); incorporating all preceding documentation, it remains the standard publication on the monumental private tombs of el-Amarna to this day.

#### **Features.**

The quality of the limestone at el-Amarna is generally not very suitable for tomb-cutting, and therefore much work and preparation were needed to gain smooth surfaces. Large quantities of flint nodules had to be removed from the limestone, leaving behind holes that needed to be covered with plaster. Consequently, much of the relief decoration was executed in plaster, the carving and frequently the modeling of which was executed while the plaster was still wet (see Arp 2012: 16). This method helped create the rounded and smoothed outlines of the figures that characterize the style of art in these tombs in contrast to the style of reliefs found on the *talatat*. The high volume of plaster used, however, also increased the tomb decoration's vulnerability to destruction from *damnatio memoriae*, modern vandalism, and natural decay.

The private monumental tombs of el-Amarna are in varying stages of completion (compare Figures 12 and 13). The most extensive structures encompass a forecourt, a facade, up to three walkable rooms, up to six

statue chambers, and up to two staircases or shafts leading down to the burial chambers. In general, the forecourts were not finished (figs. 4-7) and the completion of no more than two rooms was achieved. Many structures are recognizable as the beginnings of tomb construction but do not allow further conclusions about their plans (TA 01A and TA 01B, TA 03A, TA 03D, TA 03E, TA 06A, TA 06B, TA 06C, TA 06D, TA 07A, TA 07B, TA 09A, TA 09B, TA 09C, TA 17, TA 24, TA 24A, and TA 25A).



Figure 4. North Tomb TA 04 (of Meryra I): view from below of forecourt and facade.

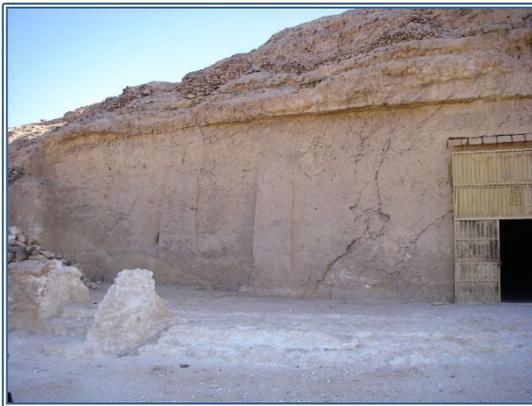


Figure 5. North Tomb TA 04 (of Meryra I): view from forecourt of left side of facade, with modern metal door.

The rock-cut tombs were created by excavating the forecourts, facades (of up to five meters high and, on average, nine meters wide), and inner rooms into the cliffs. In the northern group a natural terrace abridged those construction works, whereas in the southern group the facades were created by first cutting away 5 to 11 meters of the rock slope.

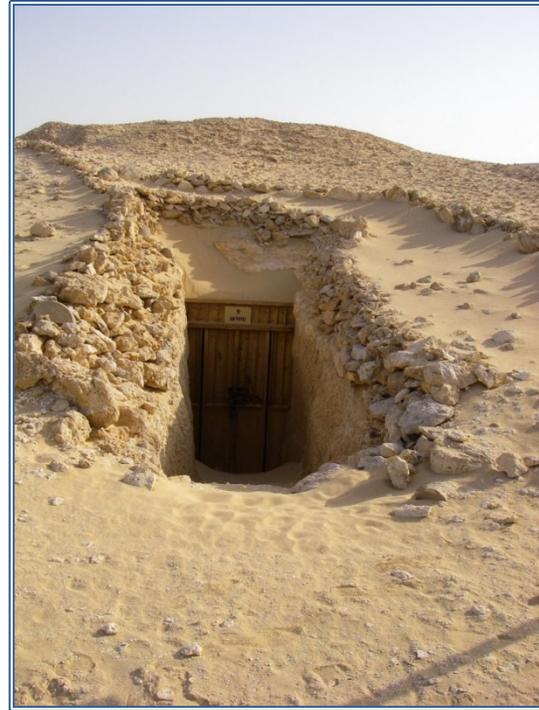


Figure 6. South Tomb TA 09 (of Mahu): the forecourt and facade have not been excavated.



Figure 7. South Tomb TA 08 (of Tutu): forecourt and facade partly excavated.

The facades, meaning the walls next to the doorframes, appear to have been treated to achieve a flat surface, ready, perhaps, to be decorated at a later phase of construction. But TA 07 (Parennefer) is the only tomb that actually received a decorated facade: the walls bear reliefs depicting Akhenaten and his family offering to the Aten, accompanied by their retinue (Davies 1908b: pl. II). TA 04 (Meryra I)

shows an exceptional form of the facade, recalling a pylon with flagpoles (see fig. 5; Arp 2012: 39). In some tombs niches were cut into the facades: TA 02 (Meryra II), TA 03 (Ahmes), TA 04 (Meryra I), TA 05 (Pentu), TA 06 (Panehesy). The tomb of Any (TA 23) shows that these niches may have held stelae (see Davies 1908a: 9, XXI-XXIII; Steindorff 1896; Arp 2012: 108).

In general, the tombs of el-Amarna feature two different types of rooms (see Figures 12 and 13): square or oblong-rectangular rooms with columned halls, and oblong-rectangular rooms without columns. Room sizes vary depending on the choice of forms and combinations thereof: The columned halls in the North Tombs range from approximately 35 to 70 square meters in size, whereas the columned halls in the South Tombs range from 70 to 115 square meters (an exception is TA 25, the tomb of Ay and Tiy, which measures about 200 square meters), the oblong-rectangular rooms without columns in both groups ranging from 10 to 35 square meters. It should be noted that the North Tombs generally have two small rooms, while the South Tombs generally have one large room, and that South Tomb TA 25 has one room equal in size to two large rooms. There is an exceptional type of room found only in TA 04 (Meryra I): a small square room without columns, referred to as an “antechamber” by Davies (Davies 1903: 10).

Inside the tombs, construction work started from the ceiling downwards to floor level (fig. 8), and as soon as the surfaces of walls and columns had been created they were often decorated before the floor had been reached. The height of the rooms was about four meters; therefore this procedure enabled the sculptors to work without applying scaffolding. There are, however, many cases where finished columns did not receive any decoration, and the reason for this might be that the specialized workmen were not always available when needed because of the grand scheme of work in the city as a whole.

The columns were designed in the form of closed papyrus bundles. They stand on round bases, those close to the entrance axis sometimes bearing decorated tablets, and each

column terminates at the top in a square abacus bearing inscriptions. The architraves and other areas of the ceilings bear inscriptions and painted patterns.

TA 23 (Any) is the only tomb in the necropolis with a portico (Davies 1908a: 6 and Hesse 2013), yet comparative analysis suggests that the layout was not planned this way (Arp 2012: 92-94, 108). The portico was apparently the consequence of a change of plans due to the sequence of construction works: the columns were likely meant to have been part of a columned hall, but the ceiling was too thin to allow for the hall’s completion.



Figure 8. Interior of South Tomb TA 13 (of Nefer-Kheperu-Her-Sekheper).

TA 08 (Tutu) presents an exceptional architectural feature with short, fence-like walls between the rear row of columns (Davies 1908b: XII, XIV, XXXVI). Also exceptional is a ramp in TA 16 (no name), reminiscent of ramps leading up to altars depicted in the wall decoration of other tombs (e.g., Davies 1908a: VI-VII; Shaw 1994).

Statues of the tomb owners seem to have been a feature intended for all the tombs at el-Amarna, but were executed only rarely and

preserved in only four instances: TA 01 (Huya), TA 03 (Ahmes), TA 11 (Rames), and TA 23 (Any) (fig. 9; compare Arp 2012: 20-102). The reason for this might be their placement, which was usually in a chamber at the end of the main axis of a tomb or at the sides of the large columned halls. These statue chambers were rarely finished before the construction work ended (fig. 10). Two statues appear to have been removed, from TA 05 (Pentu) and TA 06 (Panehesy), respectively.

It is apparent that wall reliefs had been colored and the ceilings, painted with patterns. The holes in a wall of TA 08 (Tutu) may have been installations for hanging decoration (Arp 2012: 17).

The choice of content in tomb decoration at el-Amarna depended on space and context: The walls, ceilings, columns, stelae (e.g., in TA 09, of Mahu), and frames and thicknesses of doorways were decorated with images and hieroglyphic texts. The framing and

composition of the scenes was described as *tableau* by Jan Assmann, a term intended to highlight that the scenes focused, frame by frame, upon one specific place at a time (Assmann 1975: 312). The scenes display the residents of el-Amarna in action, and their actions developing in time and space (compare Table 2). The royal family is depicted with great frequency, always beneath the sun disk, making offerings to the Aten, sitting together with food and drink, receiving tributes, and moving between the palaces and temples of el-Amarna. The places and situations shown in the scenes of each tomb always relate to the titles of the tomb owners (compare Table 1), and in these scenes the tomb owners are always present, playing their roles in reference to the royal family. For example, the two tombs showing the reception of tributes are both owned by holders of the title *jmj-r pr-ḥd* (“Overseer of the Treasury”): TA 01 (Huya) and TA 02 (Meryra II).



Figure 9. Left: statue in the tomb of Ahmes (TA 03). Right: statue in the tomb of Any (TA 23).

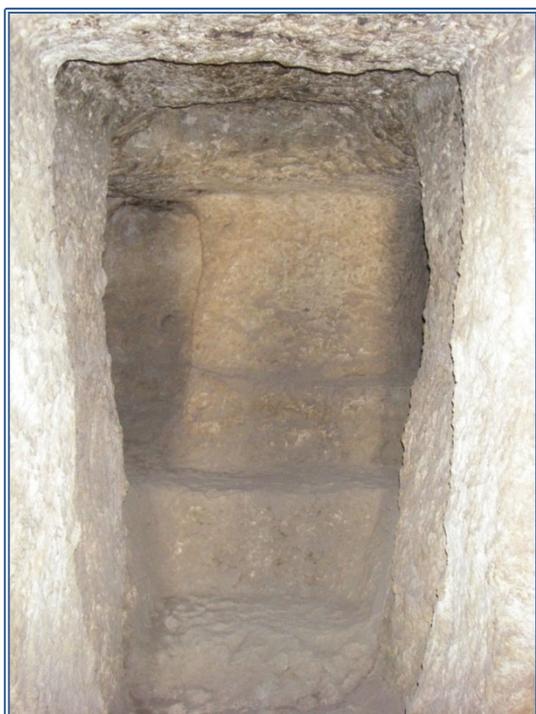


Figure 10. Unfinished statue-chamber in TA 02 (of Meryra II).

The royal family is shown being served with drinks and food in the tombs of holders of the titles *jmj-r pr* (“Steward”) and *hrj-tp nsw/jmj-hnt* (“Chamberlain”): TA 01 (Huya), 02 (Meryra II), and 05 (Pentu). Similarly, the royal offering to the Aten in the temple is most prominently depicted in the tombs of holders of priestly titles—TA 04 (Meryra I) and 06 (Panehesy)—but not in the tomb of the chief of police, TA 09 (Mahu), where the tomb owner is shown offering on his own outside the temple. Another important and recurring theme is that of the tomb owners receiving honors for their services (Binder 2008).

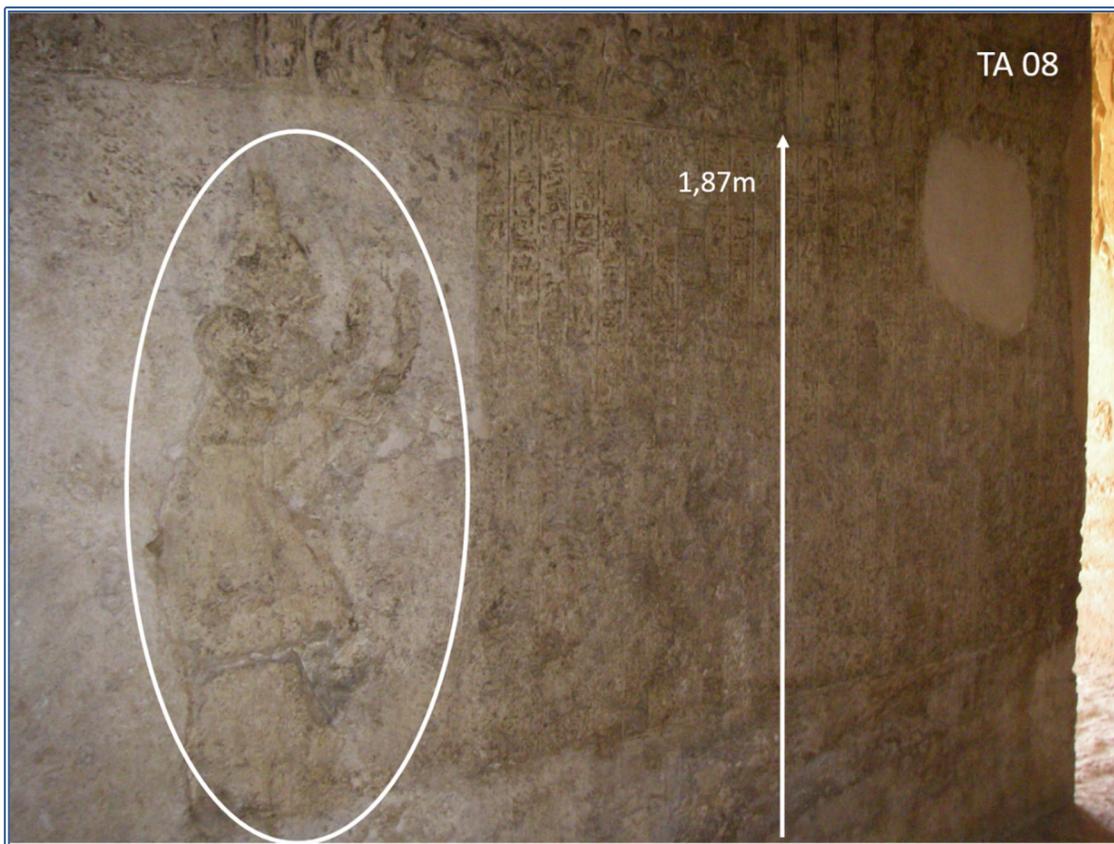


Figure 11. Biographical text accompanied by a depiction of Tutu (circled) in his tomb, TA 08.

Wall decoration in statue chambers is rare, due to the untimely abandonment of work in the necropolis, as exemplified in TA 01 (Huya), TA 06 (Panehesy), and TA 23 (Any) (Arp 2012: 108-109). The reliefs on all walls of the statue chamber of TA 01 feature a priest wearing a leopard skin (compare Rummel 2008: 144) performing a ritual in front of the mummy; a funerary procession; funerary equipment; and mourners (Davies 1905b: XXII-XXIV). The wall decoration of the statue chambers of both TA 06 (Panehesy) and TA 23 (Any) show offering-table scenes, i.e., offerings presented to the tomb owners and their families (Davies 1905a: XXIII and 1908a: IX and XX).

Wall reliefs contain hieroglyphic captions, names and titles, diverse speeches, and other forms of communication. The most extensive biographical account is given in TA 08 (Tutu) (see Murnane 1995: 196), accompanied by an almost life-sized depiction of the tomb owner (fig. 11).

Stelae, columns, and doorways bear representations and identifications (names and titles) of the Aten and the royal family, and of the tomb owners, members of their families, and dependents. The doorways and ceilings bear longer texts, including hymns to the Aten or to certain aspects of the sun (setting, rising), laudations, offering formulae, appeals to the royal family and the god, and addresses to visitors. The hymns to the Aten are usually inscribed on the thicknesses of the doorways and, in only one instance (TA 09, of Mahu), on two stelae inside the cult chambers (Arp 2012: 69).

TA 16 (no name) stands out with regard to decoration, because a large hall with 12 columns, and two statue chambers on the side, was constructed to a comparatively high degree of completion, but it does not bear any decoration at all (see Arp 2012: 84-85, 121). TA 23 (of Any) is an additional noticeable case: while the entrance is decorated in the standard relief, all inner rooms are decorated in painting (ibid.: 93).

Due to the short period of time the court resided at el-Amarna (about 12 years), most of

the monumental tombs were not used for the burial of their designated owners. Only one of the private tombs, TA 23 (Any), bears hints of having been the site of funerary practices. No private coffins or funerary papyri are known from the site. The known private shabtis retained the so-called Osirid form (Martin 1986), which, according to Boyo Ockinga, must rather be regarded as mummiform, since the god Osiris was not depicted at el-Amarna (Ockinga 2008: 32).

#### Development and construction.

Davies pointed out that the new, didactic name for the deity (“Aten”) had been used more often in the North Tombs than in the South Tombs, and that the queen’s sister was only represented in the South Tombs (Davies 1906: 8, fn. 2). On the basis of these observations he suggested that the South Tombs were the first to be constructed and that the workers subsequently removed to the northern site after they had ascertained the deplorable quality of the stone. It seems unlikely, however, that the quality of the stone would have gone undetected before serious work on the southern monumental tombs had begun. Neither can differences in decorative motifs enlighten us on the chronology of tomb construction other than to confirm the diverse sequences of construction and decoration. Today it is generally accepted that the work started and ended at both sites at the same time.

#### Comparison of North and South Tombs.

Hesse proposed a typology for the tombs of both groups, analyzing their components and finding seven different types of combinations of those components, plus one category of tombs that were *nicht zuzuordnen* (unassignable) (Hesse 2013). However, since many of the tombs at el-Amarna are not even in a state that safely allows ascribing them to a type, this method of typology has not been found useful (e.g. Arp 2012). It is interesting to note that the tombs are remarkably diverse—and this diversity needs to be taken into account when analyzing them.

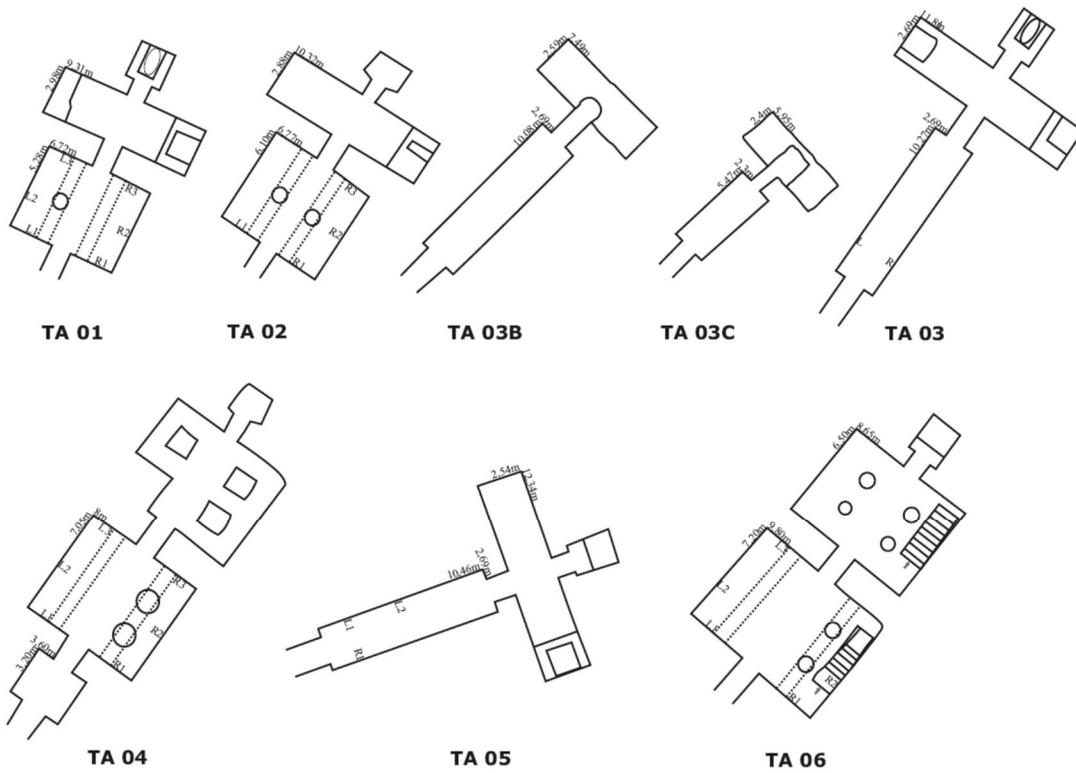


Figure 12. All North Tombs whose layouts can be discerned; representations are to scale and oriented North (up).

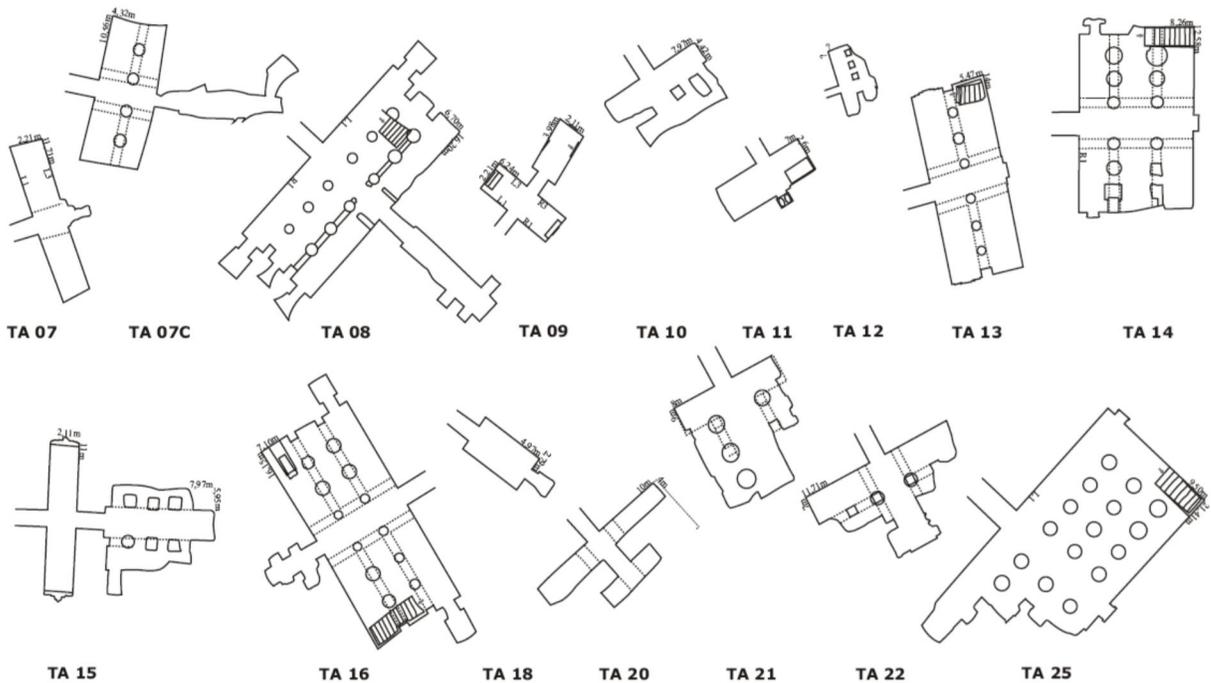


Figure 13. All South Tombs whose layouts can be discerned; representations are to scale and oriented North (up).

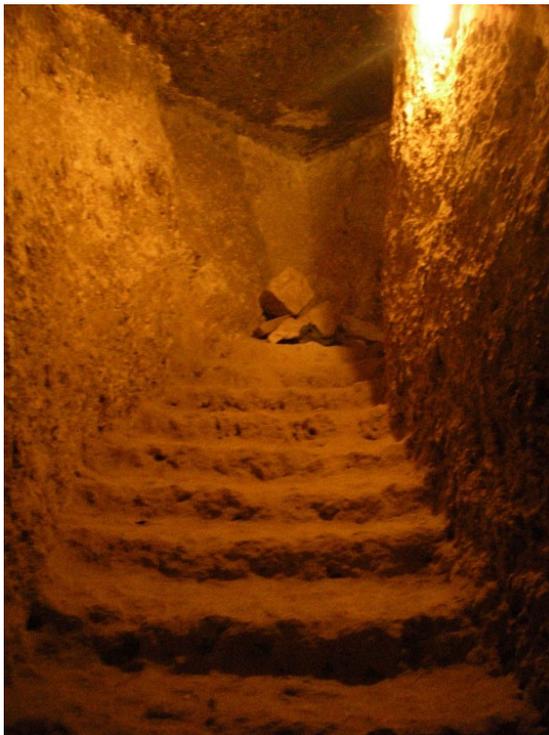
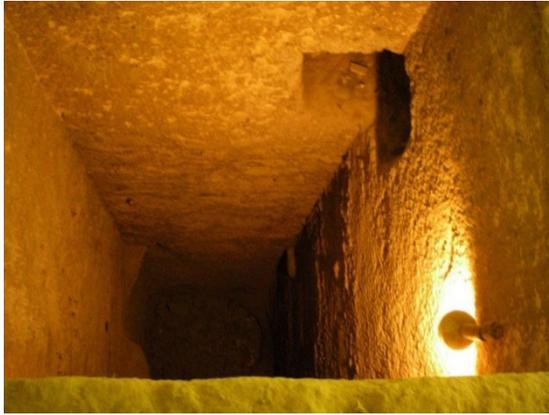


Figure 14. Top: A shaft in TA 03 (of Ahmes).  
Bottom: A stairway leading down to the burial chambers in TA 06 (of Panehesy).

Figures 12 and 13 show the diverse layout and decoration of the tombs, yet it is apparent that common rules were followed in their construction (see Arp 2012). The orientation of the main axis of each tomb was determined by its location. In the North the axis is aligned northeast. In the South it is southeast-aligned, though with variations, since the southern foothills offered various sides favorable for the construction of the tombs.

The North Tombs (fig. 12) were planned to comprise two rooms on the main axis and a statue chamber at the end. The two rooms were either columned halls with a maximum of four columns per room or oblong-rectangular rooms without columns. In eight tombs that allow conclusions about their planned layout to be drawn, those two types were combined in the following way (see fig. 12): Two tombs have two columned-halls in a row (TA 04 and TA 06); two tombs have first a columned hall and, transverse to this, an oblong rectangular room (TA 01 and TA 02); four tombs have two successive oblong-rectangular rooms, the first extending on the main axis, the second transverse to it (TA 03B, TA 03C, TA 03, and TA 05). In all North Tombs with decorated interior walls (in Figure 12 the decorated walls are designated “L1,” “L2,” “L3,” “R1,” “R2,” and “R3,” meaning the first, second, and third decorated wall to the left [L] or right [R] of the main axis), the decoration was only executed on the walls of the first room, while the second room shows no hints of having been prepared for any decoration, regardless of whether the statue chamber had been decorated. In the North Tombs a shaft generally leads from the second room down to the burial chamber (fig. 14). In one instance, TA 06 (the tomb of Panehesy), a stairway was constructed to lead to the place of interment.

In the southern group (fig. 13), 16 tombs are in a state of preservation that allows us to draw conclusions about their layout. Ten of these show an oblong-rectangular columned hall, transverse to the main axis and exhibiting up to 24 columns (e.g., TA 25, of Ay and Tiy), but generally featuring only two to three columns in a row in a maximum of three rows (e.g., TA 07C, TA 08, TA 13, TA 14, TA 16, TA 22). In four tombs, oblong-rectangular rooms without columns constitute first rooms, also transverse to the main axis (TA 07, TA 09, TA 11, and TA 15). Only two tombs show rooms oriented along the main axis (TA 18 and TA 21).

In the South Tombs, statue chambers were generally planned to extend to the sides between the rows of columns (e.g., TA 08, TA 14, TA 16), but also at the end of the main axis

(e.g., TA 11). In the tombs with oblong-rectangular columned halls transverse to the axis of the entrance, e.g., TA 08 (Tutu), TA 13 (Nefer-Kheperu-Her-Sekheper), TA 14 (May), TA 16 (no name), and TA 25 (Ay and Tiy), the access to the burial chamber is always a staircase, starting from the ground and virtually hidden between the columns. Wall decoration in these tombs, e.g., TA 08 (Tutu), TA 14 (May), and TA 25 (Ay and Tiy), is always restricted to the inner walls on both sides of the entrance (designated “L1” and “R1” in Figure 13, meaning, as above, the first decorated wall to the left [L] or right [R]).

In one South Tomb, TA 09 (of Mahu), a staircase descends from the second of two oblong-rectangular rooms without columns, the first room perpendicular to the main axis, the second room extending along the main axis. The walls of the first room are decorated, while the walls of the second room are not.

The comparative analysis of these various individual combinations of features common to both groups, North and South, brought to light that there is a system of arrangement of wall decoration in relation to the access to the burial chamber (Arp 2012: 120-124): These two elements are always spatially separated, either in different rooms or by means of a staircase descending from the ground between columns, while only the entrance wall is decorated.

The exceptions to this rule support the system as well: The orientation of TA 16 (no name) in the southern group is unique, its main axis aligned southwest (see fig. 13); TA 11 (Rames) comprises only one room without columns; and the layout of TA 23 (Any) was modified from a planned columned hall to an oblong-rectangular room without columns as a first room. All three tombs show no preparations for wall decoration in the rooms that would have given access to the burial chamber.

The layout in both groups of the el-Amarna necropolis can therefore be described as follows: The flow of access past the wall decoration, and continuing in the direction of the burial chamber, generally forms a doubly

reversed “L” (figs. 15 and 16). When the plans of all the tombs are compared, the orientation of this L changes only slightly, whereas the orientation of the entrance axes changes significantly due to the different geographical circumstances in the North and South. TA 01 (Huya) and TA 25 (Ay and Tiy)—the most extreme examples of the necropolis—show very different layouts, but since they share the L-arrangement, the statue chamber, wall decoration, and access to the burial chamber are nearly congruent.

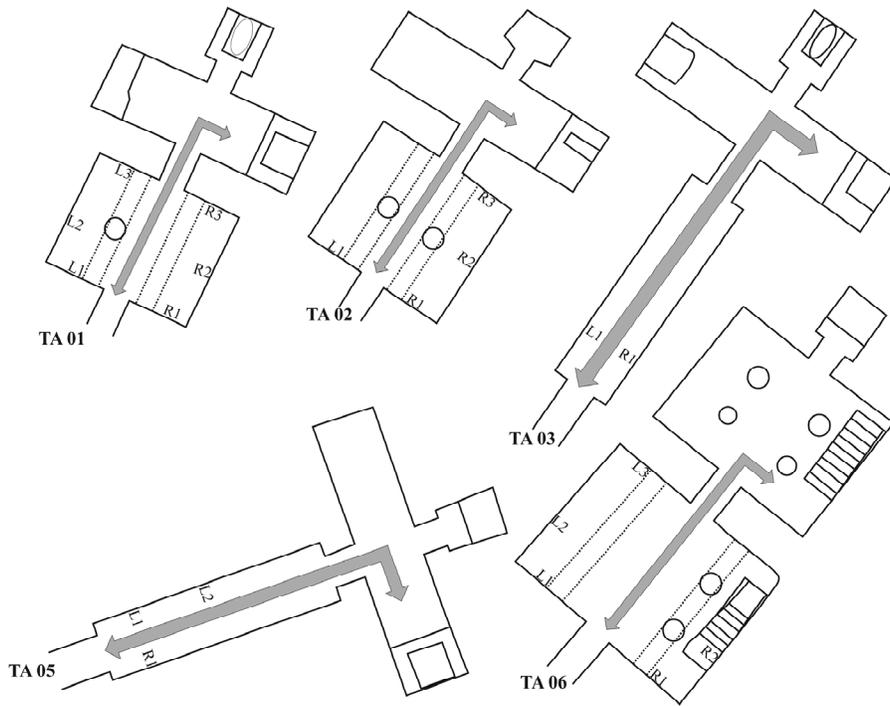


Figure 15. Comparison of layouts of the North Tombs, to scale and oriented North (up).

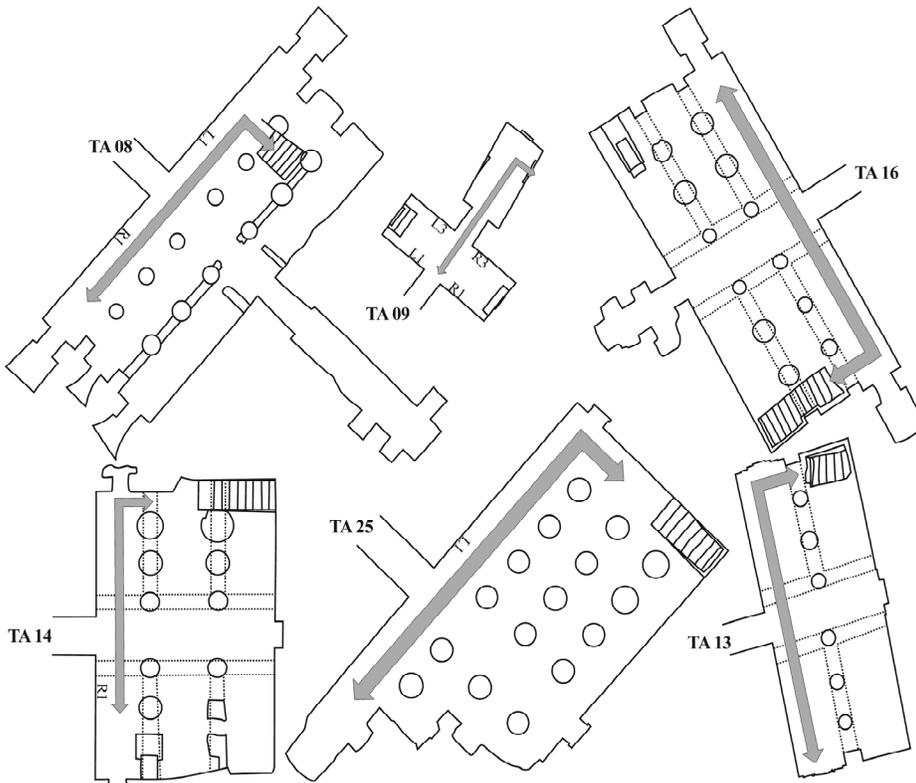


Figure 16. Comparison of layouts of the South Tombs, to scale and oriented North (up).

*Royal Tombs*

**Excavation and research history.**

The Royal Wadi of el-Amarna was discovered in the early 1880s by local villagers and secretly exploited. Reliefs and objects were mutilated and removed, to be sold in portable sizes. Via the antiquities market, jewelry items supposedly from TA 26 came to Liverpool and Edinburgh. Alessandro Barsanti began systematic excavations in 1891 (published in Barsanti 1894). In 1894, Urbain Bouriant took over the direction of works, with an epigraphic focus. His insights were published in 1903, supported by Georges Legrain and Gustave Jéquier (Bouriant, Legrain, and Jéquier 1903). John Pendlebury re-examined TA 26 in 1931 (Pendlebury 1931). In 1934, illicit work again took place in the Royal Wadi. The reliefs in TA 26 were severely destroyed, and on the

antiquities market appeared objects that hinted at the existence of an unknown tomb with equipment, but in 1934 and 1935 the Antiquities Service, along with Pendlebury, searched for it without success.

In 1974, after having published the objects from Royal Tomb TA 26 (discussed below), Geoffrey Martin conducted fieldwork in the Royal Wadi in 1980 and 1982 (published in 1984). Together with Aly el-Khouly he undertook further fieldwork in 1984, which was published in 1987 (El-Khouly and Martin 1987). Between 1999 and 2006, the wadi was re-examined by Marc Gabolde (Gabolde 2007).

Occasional flash floods have always been a problem in the Royal Wadi, as they have been in other wadis in Egypt, accelerating the natural decay of the tombs (Zaid, Zaghloul, and Ghanem 2013).

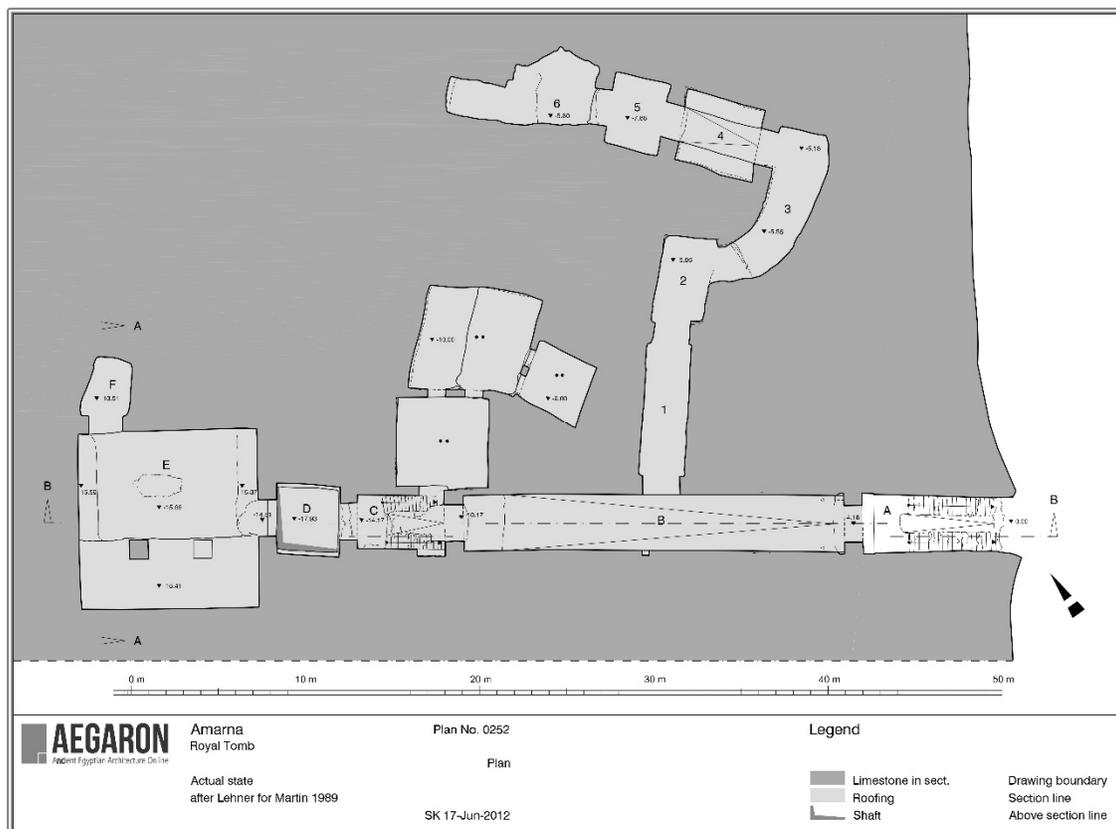


Figure 17. Plan of the Royal Tomb TA 26.

TA 26: Features.

Royal Tomb TA 26, also known as the tomb of Akhenaten, has suffered from ancient and modern intrusion and vandalism to a degree that reconstruction of the wall decoration and of the funerary objects is a matter of guesswork (Martin 1989). The funerary installations and objects were also systematically and meticulously destroyed (see Martin 1974 and 1989).

The layout of the tomb (fig. 17) is different from that of earlier and later Theban royal tombs, while its main axis and individual aspects are comparable (Martin 1989: 8; Dodson 2018 – 2019: 47-48). According to Aidan Dodson, up to seven sepulchral units might have been planned to be included in this one tomb (2018). It is known that WV 22, the tomb of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten’s immediate predecessor, also provided for the burial of at least the queen and possibly one princess (ibid.: 48). The entrance of TA 26 is a spacious stairway (A) of 20 steps with a central slide leading westward toward the entrance doorway. A descending corridor (B) is followed by another, steeper stairway (C), with 16-18 roughly hewn steps and a central slide. Along the axis are a shaft room (“D” in Martin 1989, but “well-chamber E” in more recent contributions, e.g., Dodson 2018 – 2019) and a large (20 square meters), square, pillared hall (“E” in Martin 1989; “J” more recently, as above), with two of the original four pillars remaining on the south side and, on the north side, a plinth on the floor for the sarcophagus. The plinth is located a bit off-axis but is oriented in the same direction. An opening to an unfinished room (F) was hewn into the western end of the pillared hall’s north wall.

Earlier royal tombs of New Kingdom date featured a right-angled turn in the main axis and a hall with six pillars as the burial chamber. Dodson argues that the straight axis of TA 26, which many scholars have assumed to have had theological significance (compare Roehrig 2016: 196 and Wilkinson and Weeks 2016 *passim*), might not have been intended as such and that, rather, a right-angled turn and possibly also a six-pillared-hall had been



Figure 18. The pink granite sarcophagus ascribed to Akhenaten, reconstructed from fragments.



Figure 19. Akhenaten’s sarcophagus: detail of corner, with female royal figure as protectress.

planned but not executed due to the lack of time (Dodson 2018 – 2019: 49).

Of a sarcophagus, which is assumed to have stood on the plinth of the pillared hall (E or J), only fragments remained (Martin 1974: 13-30). These are of pink granite and are now reconstructed to a rectangular form with a lid of gray granite (Raven 1994:16-18). The

sarcophagus is ascribed to Akhenaten and today stands next to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (figs. 18, 19).

Two suites of rooms branch off the northern side of the main axis, firstly from corridor B (unfinished oblong rooms 1-6) and secondly from stairway C (quasi-square rooms *alpha* to *gamma*). The succession of rooms 1-6 changes directions two times (first east, then west), with room 3 being a curved corridor. The axis of the succession of the quasi-square rooms *alpha* to *gamma* bends once (from *beta* to *gamma*), orthogonally to the east. Fragments of a red granite sarcophagus were found in *alpha* (Martin 1989: 28). Additionally, four small niches were cut into the four walls of room *alpha*; these supposedly had been used as depositories for objects used in the course of funerary rituals (Martin 1989: 27-28).

Room D is the first in the sequence of rooms on the main axis to have been decorated. The contents of this decoration, as far as it is still recognizable, are stylized representations of floral bouquets and depictions of the royal family worshipping the Aten. In room E/J, the pillars and the short walls next to the doorways also bear traces of the royal family offering to the Aten and of stylized floral bouquets. The southern wall (B) of room E/J has remains of a mourning scene: A female figure with a sash stands in an open canopied shrine decorated with a frieze of uraei, while the royal couple stands in front of the shrine with offerings. The individual mourned is assumed to be the dowager Queen Tiy, while the mourning queen is identified as Nefertiti by her characteristic crown (Martin 1989: 24). It is noteworthy that two female figures carrying funerary furnishings are by their attire interpreted as princesses (ibid.: 25). The opposite, northern wall (E) of room E shows traces of another mourning scene, but neither the person mourned, nor the mourners, are identifiable. Martin proposes the individual mourned to have been Akhenaten, since this scene is closest to the sarcophagus, which he supposes to have been the king's (ibid.: 26).

The relief decoration of the sarcophagus, as far as it can be judged from the fragments, is singular in its depiction of Nefertiti in place of

the protective deities at the corners, and of the sun disk with its descending rays on all four sides and at the corners above the figure of the queen, and of cartouches in the spaces underneath the rays and between the figures. The lid was reconstructed by Maarten Raven to bear one central sun disk at the head with rays descending to approximately three quarters of its expanse, the quarter at the foot-end covered with cartouches (Raven 1994:16-18).

The decoration of room *alpha* was carved into the rock and is preserved to an unusually high extent. The scenes on the eastern and western walls (continued on three of the shorter walls next to the doorways) each show the royal family worshipping the Aten, the sun disk supposedly rising on the one side and setting on the other. The scenes are embedded amidst depictions of temple structures surrounded by a huge entourage that includes foreigners. In the eastern scene, in which the sun disk is displayed atop mountains, ostriches or bustards, gazelles, and desert hares are shown loping uphill. This motif reads like a non-textual rendering of the hymn to the Aten, and Martin considers it a substitution for the books of the underworld known from the Theban Valley of the Kings (Martin 1989: 28 and 32). Unfortunately, scholars' early copies are inaccurate according to Martin, and the walls of the room have suffered further damage over time (ibid.: 28). There is evidence of ancient reworking on both walls to convert the style of the figures from the earlier to the later Amarna style (compare Laboury 2011) and to add one or more figures of princesses (Martin 1989: 30 and 34).

The decoration of the short wall to the right of the entrance to room *alpha* shows, as does the pillared hall, a mourning scene (possibly two) in two registers. This example, however, is of special interest since it is assumed to illustrate, and thereby commemorate, the actual cause of death of princess Meketaten, who is theorized to have died in childbirth (Martin 1989: 37-38; Gabolde 1998: 118-124; van Dijk 2009; contrarily, Arp 2013 and Dodson 2018 – 2019).

All the representations of the sun disk in this tomb are cut deeply into the rock and are

clearly recognizable as such, even in places of almost complete destruction of the decoration.

The remaining inscriptions in the tomb (including the sarcophagus fragments) give the names, titles, and epithets of the Aten and of the royal family (Amenhotep III, Queen Tiy, Akhenaten, Nefertiti, princesses Meritaten, Meketaten, Ankhesenpaaten, Neferneferura, Setepenra, and perhaps Akhenaten's second wife, Kiya, cf. Martin 1974: 26-29 and 1989: 26). Herbert Fairman's supposition of a predominance of Nefertiti's name in the tomb is disproved by Martin who consequently argues against the identification of the tomb as being hers (Thomas 1966: 88-89 in Martin 1989: 26-27). There is no evidence of a hymn to the Aten having been written on any wall of the royal tomb, but the depiction in the *alpha* room of animals rejoicing in the sun's rays might be a figurative rendering of the text, as mentioned above (Martin 1989: 22 and 26).

Several objects recovered from TA 26 hint that the tomb had been the site of funerary practices. Like the private shabtis, the royal shabtis of el-Amarna also retained the so-called Osirid form (Martin 1974: 41), or rather, mummiform, as mentioned above (Ockinga 2008: 32).

Several more funerary objects, including a gilded coffin, a gilded wooden shrine, and canopic jars—all of which can be ascribed to members of the royal family—have been found in a tomb in the Theban Valley of the Kings (KV 55). These objects, as well as a

mummy in KV 35, called the “Elder Lady,” are considered evidence that the respective el-Amarna burials had been disturbed and relocated to Thebes (Williamson 2015: 8 and 10).

#### *Other Tombs in the Royal Wadi*

In addition to Royal Tomb TA 26, four other tombs were found in the Royal Wadi: TA 27, TA 28, TA 29, and TA 30. TA 30 was left unfinished after a descending stairway of eight steps and a descending corridor were cut. It was most probably used as an embalmer's cache (Gabolde 2016). Next to TA 26, a tomb was only begun and was not included in our system of consecutive numbering.

TA 27 is more or less in the same state of completion as TA 30, showing, however, a longer stairway, with 20 steps and a central slide. TA 28 has a simple stairway similar to that of TA 30, but also the addition of a small room on the left, next to a second stairway. TA 29 has the longest extension in this group, with four descending corridors following a simple stairway with eleven steps.

TA 28 and TA 29 appear to have been intended for other members of the royal family, but there is not enough evidence for us to identify them (Gabolde and Dunsmore 2004: 33 proposed Kiya and Baketaten; Kemp 2016: 6 and 8 proposed Nefertiti and Meritaten). In 2005, Marc Gabolde found fragments of a pink granite sarcophagus in TA 29 (Gabolde 2007: 766).

**Table 1. Tomb owner’s names, titles and epithets.**

No. <sup>1</sup>	Owner <sup>2</sup>	Translation <sup>3</sup>	Transcription <sup>4</sup>
TA 01A (North)	Rudu	Favorite of Waenra	<i>ḥsy n W<sup>c</sup>-n-R<sup>c</sup></i>
TA 01 (North)	Huya	Steward of the Great Royal Wife Tiy	<i>jmj-r pr n ḥmt-nsw wrt Tjy</i>
		Superintendent of the Royal Harim	<i>jmj-r jpt-nsw</i>
		Overseer of the Treasury	<i>jmj-r pr-ḥd</i>
		Overseer of the Two Treasuries of the Great Royal Wife	<i>jmj-r prwj-ḥd n ḥmt-nsw wrt</i>
		Standard Bearer of the Troop of “Aten Appears for Him”	<i>tʒj-sryt n pʒ sʒw n ḥʕj.n.f-Jtn</i>
		Standard Bearer of the Troop of Young Soldiers “Aten Appears for Him”	<i>tʒj-sryt n pʒ sʒw n mgʒw ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n.f-Jtn</i>
		Favorite of Waenra	<i>ḥsy n W<sup>c</sup>-n-R<sup>c</sup></i>
		Companion of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jrj-rdwj n nb tʒwj</i>
TA 02 (North)	Meryra II	Royal Scribe	<i>sš-nsw</i>
		Steward	<i>jmj-r pr</i>
		Overseer of the Royal Harim of the Great Royal Wife Neferneferu-Aten Nefertiti	<i>jmj-r jpt-nsw n ḥmt-nsw ʕʒt Nfr-nfrw-Jtn-Nfirt-jytj</i>
		Overseer of the Treasury	<i>jmj-r pr-ḥd</i>
		Favorite of Aten	<i>ḥsy n Jtn</i>
TA 03 (North)	Ahmes	Steward of Akhenaten	<i>jmj-r pr n pr ʒḥ-n-Jtn</i>
		True Scribe of the King	<i>sš-nsw mʒ<sup>c</sup></i>
		Overseer of the <i>myt</i> -hall of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r rwyt n nb tʒwj</i>
		Fan bearer on the Right Hand of the King	<i>tʒj-ḥw ḥr wnmj nsw</i>
		Seal bearer of the King of Lower Egypt	<i>ḥtmj-bjtj</i>
		Only friend	<i>smr-w<sup>c</sup>tj</i>
		Companion of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jrj-rdwj n nb tʒwj</i>
		Favorite of the Good God	<i>ḥsy n ntr-nfr</i>
		Greatest One of the Great Ones	<i>wr wrw</i>
		First of the Friends	<i>tpj n smrw</i>
TA 04 (North)	Meryra I	High Priest of the Aten in Akhetaten	<i>wr-mʒʒ n pʒ Jtn m pr Jtn m ʒḥt-Jtn</i>
		Fan Bearer on the Right Hand of the King	<i>tʒj-ḥw ḥr wnmj nsw</i>

<sup>1</sup> Tomb numbers after Arp (2012); tombs are listed from north to south.

<sup>2</sup> Name of tomb owner after Davies (1903, 1905 a and b, 1906, 1908 a and b).

<sup>3</sup> Translation of tomb owner’s titles and epithets after Lesko and Switalski Lesko (2002 – 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Transcription of tomb owner’s titles and epithets after Lesko and Switalski Lesko (2002 – 2004); sequence determined by frequency and proximity to the name.

		Seal Bearer of the King of Lower Egypt	<i>ḥtmj-bjtj</i>
		Hereditary Noble and Prince	<i>r-p<sup>c</sup>t ḥzjt-<sup>c</sup></i>
		Only Friend	<i>smr-w<sup>c</sup>tj</i>
		Favorite of His Lord	<i>ḥsy n nb.f</i>
		(Only/Great) Favorite of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>(w<sup>c</sup>) ḥsy (ḥz) n nb t3wj</i>
		King's Acquaintance	<i>rh-nsw</i>
		Beloved of His Lord	<i>mrr-nb.f</i>
		Unique Excellent One	<i>w<sup>c</sup>-jkr</i>
TA 05	Pentu	Chief of Physicians	<i>wr-swnw</i>
(North)		Royal Scribe	<i>ss-nsw</i>
		Royal Chamberlain	<i>hrj-tp nsw</i>
		Chamberlain	<i>jmj-ḥnt</i>
		Chief Servant of the Aten in the Temple of the Aten in Akhetaten	<i>b3k tpj n Jtn m t3 ḥwt p3 Jtn m 3ḥt-Jtn</i>
		Seal Bearer of the King of Lower Egypt	<i>ḥtmj-bjtj</i>
		Favorite of the Good God	<i>ḥsy n ntr-nfr</i>
		Greatest One of the Great Ones	<i>wr wrw</i>
		First Nobleman of the Only Friends	<i>šr tpj n smrw-w<sup>c</sup>tyw</i>
		Companion of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jrj-rdwj n nb t3wj</i>
		Only Friend	<i>smr-w<sup>c</sup>tj</i>
TA 06	Panhesy	Chief Servant of the Aten (in the House of the Aten in Akhetaten)	<i>b3k tpj n Jtn (m pr Jtn m 3ḥt-Jtn)</i>
(North)		Servant of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>b3k n nb t3wj</i>
		Second Prophet of the Lord of the Two Lands Neferkheperura-Waenra	<i>ḥm-ntr sn-nw n nb t3wj Nfr-hprw-R<sup>c</sup>-W<sup>c</sup>-n-R<sup>c</sup></i>
		Seal Bearer of the King of Lower Egypt	<i>ḥtmj-bjtj</i>
		Overseer of the Double Granary of the Aten in Akhetaten	<i>jmj-r šnwtj (n) p3 Jtn m 3ḥt(-Jtn)</i>
		Overseer of the Cattle of the Aten in Akhetaten	<i>jmj-r jḥw n p3 Jtn m 3ḥt(-Jtn)</i>
		(Great) Favorite of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>ḥsy (ḥz) n nb t3wj</i>
		Favorite of the Good God	<i>ḥsy n ntr-nfr</i>
		Favorite of His Lord	<i>ḥsy n nb.f</i>
		King's Acquaintance	<i>rh-nsw</i>
TA 07	Parennefer	Royal Butler	<i>wb3-nsw</i>
(South)		One with Pure Hands	<i>w<sup>c</sup>b ḥwj</i>
		Servant of the King	<i>ḥm-nsw</i>
		Favorite of the Good God	<i>ḥsy n ntr-nfr</i>
TA 08	Tutu	Chamberlain of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-ḥnt n nb t3wj</i>
(South)		Overseer of All Workshops of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r ḥmwt nbt n nb t3wj</i>
		Overseer of All Work of His Majesty	<i>jmj-r k3t nbt n ḥm.f</i>
		Overseer of Silver and Gold of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r ḥd nbw n nb t3wj</i>

		Overseer of the Treasury of the Aten in the House of Aten in Akhetaten	<i>jmj-r pr-ḥd n p3 Jtn m pr Jtn m 3ḥt-Jtn</i>
		Overseer of the District	<i>jmj-r w</i>
		Chief Attendant of Neferkheperura-Waenra in the <i>wj3</i> -bark	<i>b3k tpj n Nfr-ḥprw-R<sup>c</sup>-W<sup>c</sup>-n-R<sup>c</sup> m wj3</i>
		Favorite of the Good God	<i>ḥsy n ntr nfr</i>
TA 09 (South)	Mahu	Captain of the Medjaw of Akhetaten	<i>ḥrj-Md3w n 3ḥt-Jtn</i>
TA 10 (South)	Apy	Steward	<i>jmj-r pr</i>
		Royal Scribe	<i>sš-nsw</i>
TA 11 (South)	Rames	Royal Scribe	<i>sš-nsw</i>
		General of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r mš<sup>c</sup> n nb t3wj</i>
		Steward of the House of Nebmaatira	<i>jmj-r pr n pr nb-m3<sup>c</sup>t-R<sup>c</sup></i>
TA 12 (South)	Nekht-Pa-Aten	Vizier	<i>ṯ3tj</i>
		Seal Bearer of the King of Lower Egypt	<i>ḥtmṯj-bjtj</i>
		Hereditary Noble and Prince	<i>r-p<sup>c</sup>t ḥ3tj-<sup>c</sup></i>
TA 13 (South)	Nefer-Kheperu-Her-Sekheper	Mayor of Akhetaten	<i>ḥ3tj-<sup>c</sup> n 3ḥt-Jtn</i>
TA 14 (South)	May	True Scribe of the King	<i>sš-nsw m3<sup>c</sup></i>
		General of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r mš<sup>c</sup> n nb t3wj</i>
		Fan Bearer on the Right Hand of the King	<i>ṯ3j-ḥw ḥr wnmj nsw</i>
		Steward of the House of Sehetep-Aten	<i>jmj-r pr n Sḥtp-Jtn</i>
		Overseer of All Work of the King	<i>jmj-r k3t nbt n nsw</i>
		Steward of the House of Waenra in Heliopolis	<i>jmj-r pr W<sup>c</sup>-n-R<sup>c</sup> m Jwnw</i>
		Overseer of the Cattle of the House of Ra in Heliopolis	<i>jmj-r jḥw n pr R<sup>c</sup> m Jwnw</i>
		Scribe of Recruits	<i>sš nfrw</i>
		Seal Bearer of the King of Lower Egypt	<i>ḥtmṯj-bjtj</i>
		Hereditary Noble and Prince	<i>r-p<sup>c</sup>t ḥ3tj-<sup>c</sup></i>
		Favorite of the good God	<i>ḥsy n ntr nfr</i>
		Favorite of the King	<i>ḥsy n nsw</i>
		Only Friend	<i>smr-w<sup>c</sup>tj</i>
Companion	<i>jrj-rdwj</i>		
Follower of the King	<i>šmsw nsw</i>		
TA 15 (South)	Suti	Standard Bearer of the Guild of Neferkheperura Waenra	<i>ṯ3j-sryt n p3 s3 n Nfr-ḥprw-R<sup>c</sup> W<sup>c</sup>-n-R<sup>c</sup></i>
TA 19 (South)	Sutau	Overseer of the Treasury of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r pr-ḥd n nb t3wj</i>
		Favorite	<i>ḥsy</i>
TA 23 (South)	Any	True Scribe of the King	<i>sš-nsw m3<sup>c</sup></i>
		Steward	<i>jmj-r pr</i>
		Scribe of the Offering-Table of the Lord of the Two Lands in the House of the Aten in Akhetaten	<i>sš ḥ3wt n nb t3wj m pr Jtn m 3ḥt-Jtn</i>

		Steward of the Estate of Aakheperura	<i>jmj-r pr ʕz-hprw-Rʕ</i>
		King's Acquaintance	<i>rh-nsw</i>
		Favorite	<i>hsy</i>
TA 24 (South)	Pa-Aten-em- Heb	Royal Scribe	<i>ss-nsw</i>
		General of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r mšʕ n nb t3wj</i>
		Steward of the House of the Lord of the Two Lands	<i>jmj-r pr n nb t3wj</i>
		Overseer of Work in Akhetaten	<i>jmj-r k3t m 3ht-Jtn</i>
TA 25 (South)	Ay	God's Father	<i>jt-ntr</i>
		True Scribe of the King	<i>ss-nsw m3ʕ</i>
		Fan Bearer on the Right Hand of the King	<i>t3j-hw hr wnmj nsw</i>
		Overseer of All the Horses of His Majesty	<i>jmj-r ssmwt nb n hm.f</i>
	Tiy	Favorite of the Good God	<i>hsy n ntr-nfr</i>
		(Great) Nurse of the Great Royal Wife Neferneferu-Aten Nefertiti	<i>mnʕt (ʕ3t) nt hmt-nsw wrt Nfr-nfrw-Jtn-Nfrt-jytj</i>
		Favorite (woman) of the Good God	<i>hsyt n ntr-nfr</i>
		King's Ornament	<i>hkrt-nsw</i>

**Table 2. Themes of the wall decoration in the tombs.**

<b>Tomb</b> (see Table 1)	<b>First wall to the left (L1)</b>	<b>First wall to the right (R1)</b>	<b>Second wall to the left (L2)</b>	<b>Second wall to the right (R2)</b>	<b>Third wall to the left (L3)</b>	<b>Third wall to the right (R3)</b>
Huya, TA 01 (North)	Royal family sitting with drinks. Tomb owner exercising office.	Royal family sitting with food. Tomb owner exercising office.	Royal family moving by palanquin from palace to reception of tributes.	Royal family moving by foot to temple. Tomb owner exercising office.	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance. Tomb owner exercising office.	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance. Tomb owner exercising office.
Meryra II, TA 02 (North)	Royal family sitting with drinks.	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance.	-	Royal family at reception of tributes.	-	Reward of tomb owner.
Ahmes, TA 03 (North)	Royal family moving by chariot to temple. Royal family sitting with food.	Royal family (?)	-	-	-	-
Meryra I, TA 04 (North)	Reward of tomb owner through	Royal family offering to Aten.	Royal family moving by chariot to	Royal family offering to	(Continuation from L2:) Royal family	(Continuation from R2:)

	window of appearance.	Tomb owner exercising office.	temple (continued on L3).	Aten in temple. Tomb owner exercising office. Reward of tomb owner (continued on R3).	moving by chariot to temple.	Royal family offering to Aten in temple. Tomb owner exercising office. Reward of tomb owner.
Pentu, TA 05 (North)	Royal family visiting temple. Reward of tomb owner in temple.	Royal family sitting with drinks. Reward of tomb owner in palace.	Reward of tomb owner in temple.	-	-	-
Panehesy, TA 06 (North)	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance.	Royal family offering to Aten. Tomb owner exercising office.	Royal family offering to Aten in temple.	Royal family moving by chariot.	Royal family offering to Aten. Tomb owner exercising office.	-
Parennefer, TA 07 (South)	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance.	-	-	-	Tomb owner exercising office.	-
Tutu, TA 08 (South)	Reward of tomb owner in palace.	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance.	-	-	-	-
Mahu, TA 09 (South)	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance. Tomb owner offering to Aten outside of temple. (continued on L3).	Tomb owner exercising office.	Stela with hymn to the Aten.	Stela with hymn to the Aten.	(Continuation from L1:) Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance. Tomb owner offering to Aten.	Royal family moving by chariot. Tomb owner exercising office.
May, TA 14 (South)	-	Reward of tomb owner.	-	-	-	-
Ay and Tiy, TA 25 (South)	Reward of tomb owner through window of appearance.	-	-	-	-	-

## *Bibliographic Notes*

The literature on topics related to the Amarna Period is extensive, but basic contributions to the study of the monumental tombs are comparatively rare. The six volumes of the Archaeological Survey of Egypt series published by Norman de Garis Davies (1903 – 1908b, reprinted in 2004 with a foreword by Barry Kemp), are still the standard reference work for details on the figurative and textual decoration of the private monumental tombs of el-Amarna. In 2007 further fieldwork was conducted to revise architectural details of the private tombs. The data was used for a social analysis of the necropolis as a “figuration” (Arp 2012). Another study (Hesse 2013) analyzed published data, focusing on segments of the tombs and their different combinations, yielding a typology comprising seven types plus one category *nicht zuzuordnen* (unassignable) for 45 structures. Concerning the Royal Tombs, the above-cited works of Geoffrey Martin (1974 and 1989) give a good overview, while further information and interpretation is dispersed through diverse contributions (most importantly Gabolde 1998, 2007, 2016; Gabolde and Dunsmore 2004; more recently Dodson 2018 – 2019). Maj Sandman offered a collection of the inscriptions from the period, including those from the tombs, in one volume (1938). Murnane published translations of the texts for a wider audience (1995), while the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* gives transcriptions and allows a more detailed analysis. Robert Hari collected prosopographical data from individuals dating to the Amarna Period (1976).

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- Figure 2. The northern necropolis of el-Amarna: TA 03, TA 04, and TA 05. View to the northeast. (Photograph by the author.)
- Figure 3. The southern necropolis of el-Amarna: TA 18 and TA 19. View to the southeast. (Photograph by the author.)
- Figure 4. North Tomb TA 04 (of Meryra I): view from below of forecourt and facade. (Photograph by the author.)
- Figure 5. North Tomb TA 04 (of Meryra I): view from forecourt of left side of facade, with modern metal door. (Photograph by the author.)
- Figure 6. South Tomb TA 09 (of Mahu): the forecourt and facade have not been excavated. (Photograph by the author.)
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- Figure 12. All North Tombs whose layouts can be discerned; representations are to scale and oriented North (up). (Drawing by the author.)

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- Figure 14. Left: A shaft in TA 03 (of Ahmes). Right: A stairway leading down to the burial chambers in TA 06 (of Panehesy). (Photographs by the author.)
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- Figure 17. Plan of the Royal Tomb TA 26. (Courtesy of the [Aegaron Project](#).)
- Figure 18. The pink granite sarcophagus ascribed to Akhenaten, reconstructed from fragments. (Photo by JMCC1 under Creative Commons license [CC BY-SA 3.0](#) via Wikimedia Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Akhenaten\\_s0711.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Akhenaten_s0711.jpg).)
- Figure 19. Akhenaten's sarcophagus: detail of corner, with female royal figure as protectress. (Courtesy of François Maresquier, [www.meretsegerbooks.com](http://www.meretsegerbooks.com).)

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