



Paths to Immortality: Female Burial Diadems of Old Kingdom Egypt

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Paths to Immortality: Female Burial Diadems of Old Kingdom Egypt

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A Thesis in the Field of Religion

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Abstract

The design and symbolism of the *akh*, *ankh*, central carnelian stone, papyrus umbels and lotus flowers on the Old Kingdom "Boston" Diadem discovered as part of the 1927 Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston expedition connect iconographically to two additional full diadems and three sets of fragments also discovered at the Giza Necropolis during the 20th century, and are telling evidence of afterlife potential accorded to elite, non-royal women of Fifth Dynasty Egypt. As a starting point, this thesis explores the symbolic meaning of the royal crown, particularly the uraeus diadem and the inherent, genderless unity implied, along with an overview of extant female diadems discovered with or adjacent to ancient Egyptian burials. The Pyramid Texts assisting Old Kingdom queens at death are noted for similar afterlife possibilities as those accorded to kings, towards becoming a star or star-like and following the way of Osiris in the *Duat*. The archaeological finds for six non-uraeus diadems and fragments discovered in the Old Kingdom Giza Necropolis, iconographically related, are fully described along with click-beetle necklaces and fragments associated with these burials of, presumably, elite but non-royal individuals. The *sšd* fillet is considered in the context of funerary texts for its initiatory significance and sacred function as preparation for the afterlife journey. The relationship of the House of Life (*per ankh*) during the Old Kingdom to the scribal deities Seshat and Thoth and, potentially, to elite women as well as men of the Old Kingdom is described and evidenced. The tombs of Meresankh III and Hetepheres I are considered for the possible

connection of these queens to various deities and to the House of Life via iconography and inscriptions. Particularly, the finds of click beetle necklaces and beads emblematic of the goddess Neith as "Opener-of-the-Ways" towards resurrection during the afterlife journey, connect even further the elite women's burials at Giza with their queenly predecessors, and are catalogued here for the first time. Notably, many priestesses or "prophetesses," typically of Neith and Hathor, were found buried in Giza tombs in conjunction with men titled as scribes, craftsmen and priests and often shown wearing the leopard-skin garment characteristic of Seshat, and potentially were all affiliated with the House of Life. Even while women's cultic roles diminished over the course of the Old Kingdom and beyond, a persisting connection to Hathor, Neith, Thoth and Seshat, deities considered already quite ancient at this time, evidenced potential ties to the enigmatic House of Life for the female diadem-wearers buried at Giza. The symbolism of these iconographically-related burial fillets implies the belief that to become an immortal *akh* was the aspiration and considered possible for numerous, unnamed Old Kingdom women, buried in mastaba tombs at Giza.

Frontispiece



Frontispiece Image: “Boston” Diadem, Giza Necropolis, Old Kingdom

Author’s photo taken at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, February 9, 2024

Author's Biographical Sketch

Lisa R. Lubarr received her B.A in Fine Arts at Amherst College, and her M.F.A. in Painting at Boston University. Research, writing and illustrating for a historical novel, originally focused on the lives of female scholars of late 10th century CE Cordoba in the caliphate of al-Hakam II, and on female philosophers and theurgists in Roman Egypt and Neoplatonic Athens in the early 5th century CE, began a 15-year journey of discovery into the Ancient and Medieval Mediterranean world. Numerous trips to Greece, as well as to museums in the US, UK, France, Italy, and Spain, were interspersed between courses in religion and painting projects inspired by studies of women and mythology. The research on women of Old Kingdom Egypt and the afterlife combines the author's interests in ancient Religion, Art History, Archaeology, Philosophy, Archaeoastronomy and Metaphysics.

Author's Note: with more opportunity I would have included chapters on ancient Mesopotamia and Greece, however the Egyptian research surprised and enlightened me every step of the way with its boundless offerings from a world and worldview rich in meaning and symbolism, and I am truly fortunate.

Dedication

This Master's Thesis is dedicated to my overwhelmingly inspiring husband, Josh Lubarr, without whose tireless support and constant encouragement over many years of study and research, this finishing-line would not have been crossed! It is also dedicated to my extraordinary children, Sophia and Sam, for all of our wild museum adventures, ancient site visits and late nights along the way; to my mother's artistic and spiritual nature and profound influence; to my father's laugh; and to my teachers and friends who lift me up and show me what is possible, and what matters.

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I gratefully acknowledge the many scholars who have inspired and assisted me since my first classes at Harvard Divinity School, Harvard FAS, and Harvard Extension School when I merely wished to learn more about ancient Greek and Egyptian religions! To Kimberley Patton and Charles Stang at HDS, whose classes were *always* transporting, to the late David Mitten and his storehouse of ancient knowledge and artifacts, I am so thankful that I could be part of your worlds! I also wish to thank Michael McCormick, without whose enduring flexibility and spirit of discovery in the Harvard History Department, I could never have come this far. Additional and great thanks go to Nicholas Picardo, formerly of the Harvard Giza Project, for his thoughtful and timely assistance on this thesis research, to Lawrence Berman at the Boston MFA for unlocking stored treasures and advising me on the Old Kingdom, for Christine Lilyquist's kind input on Metropolitan Museum objects, for Sidney Babcock's incredible exhibit tour at the Morgan Library, and to Jacquelyn Williamson who provoked my fascination for the study of Ancient Egyptian women ten years ago as a Visiting Lecturer at Harvard. Finally, I would like to thank Stephen Shoemaker, Collier Brown, and Trudi Pires at Harvard DCE for their thoughtful and patient support on research methods and intricacies, my colleagues at the Association for the Study of Women and Mythology, and my husband for his constant companionship and support traversing dirt roads and mountain paths and olive groves in Greece in search of the mysterious and precious past.

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Chapter I.

Introduction: Ancient Egyptian Crowns and Diadems

Ancient Mediterranean and Mesopotamian afterlife beliefs, particularly the Egyptian conception that a human being can become an *akh* after the death of the physical body (somewhat akin to becoming a star in the starry realm), confound most contemporary notions of preparation required in life and during the funerary process to achieve immortality, *and* what the nature, quality, meaning and purpose of this immortality may be. In the millennia spanning the Bronze Age through Late Antiquity, elaborate burial headdresses formed part of rituals bridging material and spiritual realities. I propose that female diadems uncovered from early Egyptian history have notable symbolic features – perhaps also amuletic and alchemic – which were intended to assist in this transition to another state of being, as both physical and metaphysical aids. Specifically, I wish to consider whether the possibilities for immortal life were believed to be as potent and realizable for women as they were for men, particularly during the Old Kingdom period which spanned approximately 2649 – 2130 BCE, even if this afterlife equivalence may have varied or changed over place and time in the ancient Mediterranean world.¹

This thesis will focus primarily on a close reading of three female burial circlets uncovered in the Giza Necropolis of Old Kingdom Egypt and dating approximately to the

¹ Tara Prakash, "Egypt in the Old Kingdom (ca. 2649–2130 B.C.)," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 13, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/oking/hd_oking.htm.

Fifth Dynasty (spanning roughly 2465-2323 BCE) and what they reveal about the women who wore them.² I will argue that they provide evidence of connection to the enigmatic House of Life (*per ankh*) and its training in order to prepare initiates for the afterlife journey (including, potentially, women during the Old Kingdom and prior) and which also allied these individuals with associated cult practices and teachings – related to Thoth and Seshat, Hathor and Neith, in particular – towards following in the way of Osiris in the stellar realm. As such, they would have been part of a larger tradition, including even Fourth Dynasty Queens Hetepheres I, Hetepheres II, Meresankh III and other elite women (royal and non-royal) of these two dynasties and beyond.

Iconography of Royal Crowns and Uraeus Diadems

No formal royal crowns worn projecting above the head are known to have survived from ancient Egypt.³ It is considered that they may have been constructed from perishable materials, such as leather, plant forms of some kind, fabric, feathers and perhaps horn; all that is known related to these crowns stems from pictorial, sculptural and textual evidence.⁴ The design and symbolism of the (many) forms of royal crowns – worn by male and female rulers – has been studied extensively. Sandra Collier described representations of the Egyptian king from the 1st to 30th dynasties “wearing more than two hundred variations on eight types of crowns” whose introduction over time

² Prakash, “Egypt in the Old Kingdom (ca. 2649–2130 B.C.).”

³ Katja Goebis, “Crowns,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780195102345.001.0001/acref-9780195102345-e-0162>.

⁴ Sandra A. Collier, “The Crowns of Pharaoh: Their Development and Significance in Ancient Egyptian Kingship” (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1996), 4–5, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304277921?pq-origsite=primo>.

“coincides with the appearance of features of kingship.”⁵ According to Katja Goebis (who finds, instead, ten basic forms of Egyptian royal headdress plus variations) these “crowns symbolize the connection of earthly and divine rule” and actually “belong to the sun god Re or some other deity” – they are bestowed by the gods during the ruler’s coronation and their height points toward the heavens, where it “pierces the sky” in ancient text, such as attested at Queen Hatshepsut’s crowning before the god Amun.⁶ Goebis particularly studied the significance of crowns as described in funerary texts (predominantly the Pyramid and Coffin Texts) and how they both symbolize pharaonic “ascent to the sky and rebirth” and actually endow the deceased ruler “with divine attributes such as radiance” and so “both liken him to the gods of the sky and impart to him authority over them.”⁷ Even the derivation of the term for crowns – *h’w* – “describes both the rising of celestial bodies and the king’s assumption of the throne and crowns,” pointing to “the cosmic character of kingship and of the crowns associated with it.”⁸ Goebis’ detailed study focused on the enigmatic *wrrt* Crown, the White Crown of Upper Egypt, the Red Crown of Lower Egypt, and the combined Double Crown first found represented in the First Dynasty and which symbolized rulership “over the entire country.”⁹ Many of her textual findings relate the radiance of the moon in the night sky (ascribed to Thoth) with the White Crown, and the fiery redness of the sun at dawn (ascribed to Re) to the Red Crown, such that the full night/day cycle – and the deceased ruler’s afterlife within this cosmic round either as star or in the entourage of the sungod –

⁵ Collier, xii–xiii.

⁶ Goebis, “Crowns.”

⁷ Goebis.

⁸ Katja Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature: Royalty, Rebirth, and Destruction*, Griffith Institute Monographs (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2008), 24.

⁹ Goebis, “Crowns.”

are notably connected. Additionally, the tutelary crown goddesses Wadjet (of Lower Egypt, and associated with the Eye of Re, depicted as the protective cobra), and Nekhbet (of Upper Egypt, depicted as the mothering vulture), known together as the “Two Ladies” (variously two snakes or snake and vulture) who protected a unified Egypt, became affixed at the forehead in many royal depictions, *and* are intimately connected in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts to the Red and White Crowns such that “crown and goddess are interchangeable in most texts.”¹⁰ Goebis explicates here the radiance of the White Crown as allowing the deceased ruler to be seen, and the Red Crown as protecting him in the way it protects Horus. Further, “the combined Double Crown ... or its two constituent goddesses, realize the deceased’s ascent by raising him up to his mother Nut [the sky-goddess]” where “becoming a *ba* and *akh* with the help of the two crown(-goddess)es, are the same as being transformed into a ‘living star’ who can reside among other stellar beings.”¹¹ She further notes that the crown goddesses function as mothers of the deceased king, literally suckling him with divine milk and enabling him to “grow up” as a stellar entity, to *rise* as a star, after being cleansed in the area of the cosmos called the Field of Rushes, and having been “clad in light or luminous materials” according to the Pyramid Texts.¹²

According to Goebis, other forms of royal crowns over time included the Double Feathers crown, the *atef*-crown, the triple *atef* or *hmhm* crown, the *nemes*, the *khat* or *afnet*, the *seshe*d circlet (*sšd* or *mdh*), the Cap Crown, the Blue Crown, and the Amun Crown, with a further large proliferation of types in the Graeco-Roman Period.¹³

¹⁰ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 175.

¹¹ Goebis, 178.

¹² Goebis, 185.

¹³ Goebis, “Crowns;” Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 24.

Significantly for this study: circlets or diadems bearing a single *uraeus* (cobra) adorning the forehead of the ruler appear in the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom periods either on headband alone or in combination with a *nemes* or “kerchief” style headdress and are shown on royal women as early as the Sixth dynasty.¹⁴ Beginning in the New Kingdom and the reign of Ahmose I (18th Dynasty), royal women were depicted iconographically wearing a headdress with double uraeus, with “subsidiary” royal women at times shown wearing a headdress with a gazelle or gazelles substituted for the cobra(s).¹⁵ The cobra uraeus is also closely identified with a myth in which the god Re sends out his eye on a mission, and returning to find another eye had grown in its place becomes angry, at which point Re places this original eye as serpent/uraeus on his forehead as symbol of solar power and governance of the entire world.¹⁶

According to R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz in his decades-long study of the New Kingdom Temple of Luxor, the symbolism of the royal diadem (formed as a circlet) with uraeus projecting from center forehead is a *step* in the evolution of the divine ruler, while the royal *crown* signifies the culmination of this process. He describes that “Egyptian figurations carefully indicate – with a headband, crown, diadem, or joint – a demarcation line for the top of the cranium, thus separating the crown of the skull.”¹⁷ According to Schwaller de Lubicz, the crown of the skull, the “skullcap,” contains “the part of the brain that governs all personal reactions and decisions” and which “requires comparison, as opposed to the Ancient Egyptians’ ‘intelligence of the heart,’ which gives the direct

¹⁴ Goebis, “Crowns.”

¹⁵ Goebis.

¹⁶ R. A. Schwaller de Lubicz, *The Temple of Man: Apet of the South at Luxor* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1998) 1:439.

¹⁷ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:433.

concept without the necessity of comparison by opposition.”¹⁸ This is the seat of ordinary human reason via “the scission of consciousness into affirmation and negation” as anatomically observed in the separated functions of the hemispheric lobes of the brain.¹⁹ The *symbolic* separation of the skullcap at the line of demarcation depicts man as “susceptible of being divinely inspired, acting in the absence of all personal will.”²⁰ Yet Schwaller de Lubicz describes both “prenatural” man, executing divine impulse, and man who has “developed his consciousness to utmost perfection” – having utilized reason towards this end, so that his becoming an instrument of divine will is conscious and not blind.²¹ He then goes on to describe the diadem discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamen (see fig. 1):

The circle is divided, from front to back, by the undulation of the serpent, which represents the separation of the cranial hemisphere into two parts. On his forehead the king wears the Egyptian raised cobra and the vulture’s head, animal symbols of the two principal functions, organically characterized by the pituitary body and the pineal gland (the third eye represented in Buddhism by a ruby or a diamond). These two primordial and essential glands are independent of the dualizing encephalon and therefore free from psychological judgment. Their importance is underlined by these symbols, and their activity is accentuated through the de-emphasis of personal judgment. The king, girded with the diadem, is enthroned as a superhuman being, the guide of his people, instituted by the grace of God – and not as a man. It is regrettable for this king if, as head of state, he obeys his personal judgments, and it is unfortunate for the people who accept such a man. The royal principle is sacred provided not only that the imposition of the diadem be a symbolic gesture, but that this king be naturally gifted, or educated to acquire this gift of “abstraction” or “mastery of the ego.”²²

¹⁸ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:434.

¹⁹ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:435.

²⁰ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:434.

²¹ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:436.

²² Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:438–39.



Figure 1. Diadem of Tutankhamun, 18th Dynasty, New Kingdom²³

From the Tomb of Tutankhamun (KV62), Valley of the Kings, West Thebes and now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 60684, <https://i0.wp.com/egypt-museum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Diadem-of-King-Tutankhamn-3.jpg?ssl=1>.

The diadem is thus a *stage*, symbolically, of the Pharaoh's development, and is the *measurement* where the demarcation line on the head "varies according to each individual" by their own proportions or anatomical ratios, and so its sizing and placement

²³ Note also that John Anthony West considers that combining the vulture and cobra on this diadem symbolizes "both the geographical union of Upper and Lower Egypt, and the spiritual union of the faculties of discrimination or intellect (the cobra) and assimilation (the vulture)." See John Anthony West, *Serpent in the Sky: The High Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*, Subsequent edition (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1993), 35.

are unique to each man or woman.²⁴ This is fascinating in terms of what each individual must attain to or become in order *not* to “judge against the divine will.”²⁵ Additionally, Schwaller de Lubicz likens the human skullcap to the terrestrial skullcap of the earth, such that the human fontanelle (surrounded by the terrestrial diadem) is akin to the North Pole cap, the “magnetic place of absorption of cosmic energy, the Archaeus that gives life, but it also becomes the place where bodies, the corporeal part of life, come to die. Several old traditions can be linked to this fact, such as the gesture of benediction by laying the hands on the head” (see fig. 2).²⁶

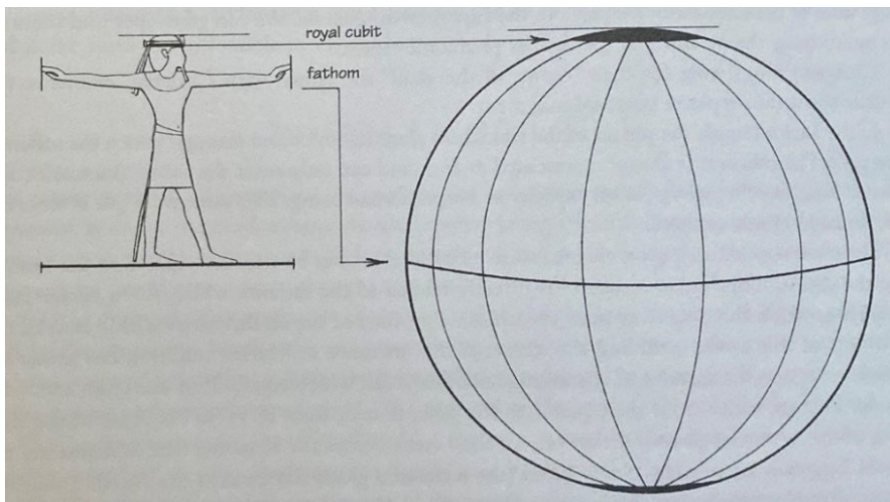


Figure 2. Schwaller de Lubicz’s “Man standing on the equatorial plateau”

Image from R. A. Schwaller de Lubicz, The Temple of Man: Apet of the South at Luxor (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1998), 1:440.

²⁴ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:438.

²⁵ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:438.

²⁶ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:440.

He adds later that the royal diadem relates to the “coronal circle that surrounds – underlines – this skullcap. ... This diadem symbolizes the crown of wisdom, that is to say, the continual animation of the centers of higher life in the head. Its circuit ends at the central point in the forehead, symbolized in Egypt by the frontal uraeus. When the Egyptians speak of channels in the human body, they are referring not only to physical channels (nerves and vessels) but also to circuits of energy.”²⁷ Katja Goebis describes that in *funerary* practice, the symbolism of the diadem with uraeus also includes that you are luminous, radiant (if a light-body or *akh*); if you are equipped with radiance, you are effective as is the sun (Re).²⁸

According to Goebis, “snakes are seen as symbols of rebirth and regeneration due to their capacity to shed their skin cyclically and appear ‘rejuvenated.’”²⁹ For other scholars, the uraeus, the rising cobra, is considered the female principle/force which is conjoined with the male principle within a unified (and therefore genderless or pre-gender) godhead. Alison Roberts describes the goddess Hathor as “the venomous cobra coiled around the head [of both the sun god Re and of the Egyptian king] rearing up on his brow as an irritable, dangerous presence in the realm, breathing flames against his enemies.”³⁰ She is *also* the “Eye of Re,” the *iret* eye, “agent of the god’s activity, since *iret* in Egyptian means ‘doer’” and as such, “instrument of divine energy and power.”³¹ According to Lana Troy, this is a complex relationship, where Hathor is also identified as the solar disc of Re, a “uterine space” or vehicle in which Re’s child Horus “rides across

²⁷ Schwaller de Lubicz, 1:442–43.

²⁸ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 12–14.

²⁹ Goebis, 182.

³⁰ Alison Roberts, *Hathor Rising: The Power of the Goddess in Ancient Egypt* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1997), 8.

³¹ Roberts, 9.

the heaven” as well as Re’s eye, which bears within it “the image of the god.”³² Troy finds in the various myths which describe the dualism of the uraeus and eye – and how Hathor and Re *function* – the prerequisites for regeneration, where the “creative potential of opposition” is necessary. She believes that “the original unity of the pre-creation state” is expressed in the *composite* of male and female elements, *behind which* lies an “androgynous” creator, Atum as “He-She” as described in a Coffin Text of the First Intermediate-Middle Kingdom period.³³ In the vast interplay of male and female elements, Troy considers the Heliopolitan Ennead (“the Nine”), which includes in this case the Ogdoad or Eight of four pairs (Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, Osiris and Isis, Seth and Nephthys) *plus* the One, Atum, from which originated these complementary pairs – *this Ennead in its entirety* – as the feminine attribute of Atum, as *psdt*, “the shining one.”³⁴ The Ennead *mediates* as does the God’s eye, and cosmic “gender” relates to *function*. Troy’s findings lead her to conclude that the kingship was “inherently androgynous.” Further, “the status of the royal women of ancient Egypt originates in the perception of a unity which transcends the boundaries of gender differentiation. Dualistic elements, which threaten in their manifestation as the opposition of life and death, are transformed into the affirmative means of life’s continuity in the interactive union of male and female.”³⁵ This unity, *above* masculine and feminine (active and receptive) functions – perhaps to fulfill the human potential to be/live “in the image of God” – may relate to what it means to become an *akh* after the death of the physical body. And as

³² Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, Boreas: Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations No. 14 (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1986), 22–23.

³³ Troy, 15–16.

³⁴ Troy, 147.

³⁵ Troy, 150.

such, *is irrespective of gender* when embodied on earth. This, I suggest, is a key to understanding certain funerary headpieces.

Extant Female Royal Diadems: Uraeus Form

We can turn now to royal headwear as worn *in life* by women and also at times included with burial, bearing in mind that a diadem with uraeus signified that you have power, you have become effective. As noted above, some later queens are represented in imagery wearing a diadem with *double* uraeus during their lifetimes – for example, Queen Tiye in the 18th dynasty. In the Old Kingdom Pyramid Text of Queen Neith, the two uraei are called Horus’ eyes which would become her two *kas* and protect and lead her as two “Great of Magic” crowns.³⁶ A silver diadem with double uraei from the 17th dynasty (c. 1580-1550 BCE) came to light in a private collection in Britain in 1996 (see fig. 3); it is presumed to have been crafted for a queen (possibly Mentuhotep) or other female royal and potentially for funerary use only as there is no sign of wear (and it is strikingly similar to another diadem considered to have belonged to 17th Dynasty King Nubkheperre Intef, which is currently in Leiden, see fig. 4).³⁷

³⁶ James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 2nd ed. Writings from the Ancient World, No. 38 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 307.

³⁷ Nicholas Reeves, “A Newly-Discovered Royal Diadem of the Second Intermediate Period,” *Minerva: The International Review of Ancient Art & Archaeology* 7, no. 2 (1996): 47-8, https://www.academia.edu/7410052/A_Newly_Discovered_Royal_Diadem_of_the_Second_Intermediate_Period_1996.



Figure 3. Newly-Discovered 17th Dynasty Diadem, Second Intermediate Period

From a British private collection, sold at Christie's in 2015: an Egyptian silver royal diadem, Second Intermediate Period, 17th Dynasty, circa 1580-1550 BC, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5882256>.



Figure 4. 17th Dynasty Diadem associated with Nubkheperre Intef

Currently in Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (Registration No. AO. 11a); from Wikimedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/01/17th_Dynasty_Crown_%28Nubkheperre_Intef%29.jpg

A most stunning example of a uraeus diadem worn by a woman is the headdress of Princess Sithathoryunet, found in a jewelry cache adjacent to the burial and not on the deceased's head, and presumably worn during lifetime along with a wig covered in gold tubing (see figs. 5 and 6). The inlaid rosettes around the diadem's circlet alternate four lotus flowers which meet in the center with four lily pads in the spaces between them – both highly symbolic water-flowers associated with rebirth in ancient Egypt.³⁸ Shelley Burian found, in her study of the rosette's use during dynastic Egypt (figuring on numerous diadems), that “the earliest distinctly Egyptian rosettes are those found on the fourth dynasty limestone statue group of Prince Rahotep and his wife Nofret from Meidum, placed on the headband of Nofret.”³⁹ Burian determined that the rosette symbol was “used as a floral form of the sun, an incarnation of the power of Re that could be used by both royal and non-royal Egyptians.”⁴⁰ Susan Brind-Morrow adds to this, in her study of the Pyramid Texts, “the Egyptian conceit that stars are blossoming,” and that “the green fields,” the celestial rushes, are where “stars blossom out of the dark” – and so we can extend this symbolism of the flower to both sun and to all stars, understanding that the radial symmetry of the rosette is a key feature as well.⁴¹ Additionally, the eight-pointed rosette or star was considered a symbol of the Sumerian goddess Inanna (and associated with the planet Venus) – the Assyrian Ishtar – and was also used frequently in

³⁸ H. E. Winlock, “Three Egyptian Gold Circlets,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 28, no. 9 (1933): 158, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3255422>.

³⁹ Shelley Alice Burian, “Flowers of Re: The Floral Origins and Solar Significance of Rosettes in Egyptian Art,” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2016), 8, <https://etd.library.emory.edu/concern/etds/fb494872c?locale=en>.

⁴⁰ Burian, 2.

⁴¹ Susan Brind Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind: Unlocking the Pyramid Texts* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 195.

relationship to female deities in Minoan and later Greek civilizations, and this planetary (and gendered) association figured along with the solar and stellar symbolism.⁴²

Sithathoryunet's diadem was part of the famous "Lahun" Treasure of the 12th Dynasty discovered by Flinders Petrie and Guy Brunton in 1914 in a hidden niche that prior tomb looters had missed:



Figure 5. Diadem of Sithathoryunet, 12th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom and Detail

Images from Egypt Museum, "Diadem of Princess Sithathoriunet," July 23, 2022, <https://egypt-museum.com/diadem-of-princess-sithathoriunet/>.

⁴² Marianna Ridderstad, *Evidence of Minoan Astronomy and Calendrical Practices* (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2009), 7, <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/0910/0910.4801.pdf>.



Figure 6. Potential Wig/Gold Tube Reconstructions (Sithathoryunet)

*Two possible wig and gold tube bead reconstructions, from “Large Wig Rings of Sithathoryunet, Middle Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 13, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545518>, and Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewelry of the Dynastic Period, Rev. and abridged ed.* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), Plate 20.*

From these examples, limited as they are, the symbolic *potency* inherent in the uraeus diadem enhances male *and female*, high-ranking/royal wearers. For women, the field of this potency was given additional expression in the cascading hair ornaments, which (depending on the orientation) *also* appeared like stars in the sky against the dark-haired wig. These were worn *in life* – life on this plane being a training ground for the *afterlife*, life in the *Duat*.

Other Forms of Headdress Discovered With or Adjacent to Burial

We have examples of other kinds of diadems and circlets worn during the lifetime by royal wives and daughters, which differed symbolically from the uraeus diadem and the royal crowns, and were buried not on but adjacent to their owners. The most elaborate examples are from the Middle Kingdom, the Second Intermediate Period, and the New Kingdom. Here, from the burial of Thutmosis III's foreign wives during the New Kingdom (18th Dynasty), where the gazelles are related to the goddess Hathor and yet used in the doubling format consistent with royal women's headwear during later periods, a gold diadem laden with rosettes (see fig. 7):



Figure 7. Diadem with Gazelle Heads, 18th Dynasty, New Kingdom and Detail

From "Diadem with a Pair of Gazelle Heads," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 13, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/553269>, and author's photo of detail taken December 31, 2022 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

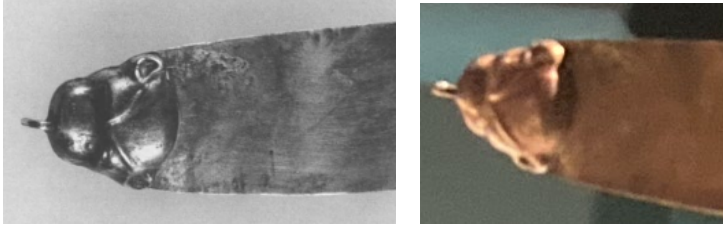


Figure 8. Leopard Details on Gazelle Diadem

*From Christine Lilyquist, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 156, and author's photo of detail taken December 31, 2022 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*

Note the feline heads at the back ends (with rings for tying on the diadem), which according to Christine Lilyquist are leopards (per Winlock) or alternately panthers (see fig. 8).⁴³ The rosettes have twelve petals made of alternating carnelian and light and darker blue glass, with a carnelian disc at center.⁴⁴ Another example is a Cap headdress worn by one of the wives of Thutmose III, with skull plate and hanging rows of rosettes like currents of stars (see fig. 9); it shows probable wear use during the lifetime given repairs made. The skull plate was originally incrustated with semiprecious stones and glass and would have been very heavy to wear.

⁴³ Christine Lilyquist, *The Tomb of Three Foreign Wives of Tuthmosis III* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 155. The alternate designation “panther” came from email correspondence with Christine Lilyquist on February 18, 2023. Leopards are, in any case, part of the “panther” species.

⁴⁴ Alix Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, Methuen's Handbooks of Archaeology (London: Methuen, 1971), 116.



Figure 9. Cap Headdress and Skull Plate Detail, 18th Dynasty, New Kingdom

From “Ensemble of Rosettes, New Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 13, 2024, and Stephanie J. Harris, “Decoding Ancient Egyptian Diadems: Symbolism and Iconography as a Means of Interpreting Feminine Identity,” (master’s thesis, University of South Africa, 2018), 220, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Decoding-ancient-Egyptian-diadems%3A-symbolism-and-as-Harris/9233cd60fec906c7ad5bdc41236f243c74650ce6>.

Another headdress with symbolic gazelles along with a stag (noting that antlers were ancient symbols of regeneration as they shed and re-grow annually), from the Second Intermediate c. 1648 – 1540 BC / Hyksos Period, was also discovered presumably near and not on the burial (see fig. 10). Interspersed with the animal heads are elements that are simultaneously stars and flowers:



Figure 10. Diadem of Second Intermediate (Hyksos) Period

From “Headband with Heads of Gazelles and a Stag Between Stars or Flowers, Second Intermediate Period,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 13, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544073>.

Additional circlets of various forms have been discovered in caches of jewelry buried in areas adjacent to royal women, but not on the head of the deceased individuals. For example, Princess Khnumet’s diadems from the 12th Dynasty (Middle Kingdom), where the first includes an unusual tree, possibly a date-palm, with gold leaves and beaded “fruit,” atop a band of stylized cloisonné flowers, probably lotuses or lilies, attached to solar-like circular rosettes with carnelian centers (see fig. 11).⁴⁵ The second diadem is particularly stellar in symbolism, with delicate gold wires connecting numerous small *five*-pointed flowers (like the Egyptian hieroglyph for star) and larger papyrus quatrefoils with turquoise petals and again with carnelian centers (see also fig. 11).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Wilkinson, 71.

⁴⁶ Wilkinson, 70–71.



Figure 11. Diadems of Princess Khnumet, 12th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom

Two diadems of Princess Khnumet, from “Gold Diadem of Princess Khenmet,” Egypt Museum, August 11, 2022, <https://egypt-museum.com/gold-diadem-of-princess-khenmet/>, and “Diadem of Princess Khenmet,” Egypt Museum, August 13, 2022, <https://egypt-museum.com/diadem-of-princess-khenmet/>.

Additionally found in a cache of jewelry, a diadem of the daughter of Seti II and Queen Tausret of the 19th Dynasty (New Kingdom) appearing both floral with its 16 ten-petaled gold and red-gold blossoms with domed centers, *and* like a cosmic round of suns (see fig. 12):⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Carol Andrews, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery* (London: British Museum Publications, 1990), 22.



Figure 12. Diadem of Princess, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom

*Two views of diadem for daughter of King Seti II and Queen Tausret, from “Ancient Egyptian Jewellery by Yasmin Soliman,” April 20, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/ancientegyptianjewellerywithyasminsoliman/photos/pcb.421171285346628/421171242013299/?type=3&theater>, and Emad Soly, “The Ancient Egypt: KV56: The Gold Tomb & KV58: The Chariot Tomb, Part 36,” *The Ancient Egypt (blog)*, May 15, 2017, <https://the-ancient-pharaohs.blogspot.com/2017/05/kv56-gold-tomb-kv58-chariot-tomb-part-36.html>.*

These intricately designed (and symbolic) headdresses were worn during the lifetime, potentially for public religious festivals, and were interred as “grave goods” at death, most likely as related to afterlife beliefs.

Mummification processes began their practice in Predynastic Egypt, were certainly on the rise during the Old Kingdom and then increased greatly over time, and this may be a reason that diadems, circlets, or other head ornamentation were not included on the body (for the most part), but were instead painted onto the often-numerous coffins as time progressed. V.G. Callender notes that “true” mummification in Fourth Dynasty Egypt was “mainly reserved for members of the royal family,” and non-royal burials exhibit instead “plastering the corpse in an effort to stop decay, sometimes with bandages and lime plaster, sometimes with linen and resin” and typically leaving

only bones over time (evidenced for the Old Kingdom burial photos shown below).⁴⁸ Much later, during the Graeco-Roman period, “crowns of justification” were found beneath the mummification wrappings. Medical imaging revealed a “Crown of Justification” on a female mummy made of wrapped rushes, dating to the Ptolemaic Period – probably located outside several layers of linen on the head and *underneath* the painted mask of linen cardboard (see fig. 13).



Figure 13. Medical Imaging of Female Mummy Head, Ptolemaic Period

Image from “View into the Mummy’s Head,” VOXEL-MAN, accessed January 13, 2024, <https://www.voxel-man.com/gallery/virtual-mummy/head/>.

In this case, and for others, plant-based materials, including papyrus and palm (sometimes with bronze insets) were formed into simple circular headbands. At the

⁴⁸ V.G. Callender, “The Burial of Women in the Old Kingdom,” *Ancient History Resources for Teachers* 25, no. 1 (1995): 3.

Boston Museum of Fine Arts, a funerary crown of papyrus and bronze from the late period (possibly 4th century CE, Roman Egypt) is another example (here, for a male) of the persistence of the idea found in the New Kingdom Book of the Dead of the (variously translated) “chaplet of victory” where the deceased is crowned – in triumph over death like Osiris (see fig. 14).

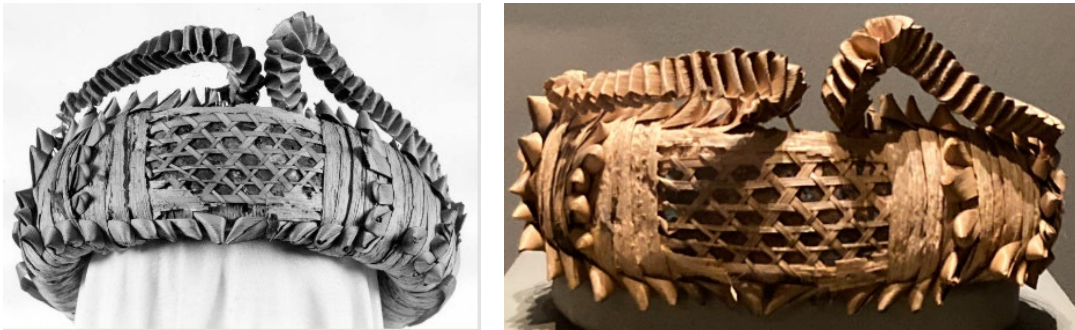


Figure 14. Funerary Crown, Late Period (Roman Egypt)

Two views of Late Period funerary crown, from “Funerary Crown,” MFA Boston, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/148418/funerary-crown>, and author’s photo taken at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on May 10, 2023.

According to E.A. Wallis Budge, Chapter 19 of this funerary text reads, “Thy father Tem hath woven for thee a beautiful chaplet of victory [to be placed] on [thy] living brow, O thou who lovest the gods, and thou shalt live for ever” with the rubric, “this chapter shall be recited over the divine chaplet which is laid upon the face of the deceased.”⁴⁹ And in Thomas George Allen’s English translation, Chapter 19 of the Book

⁴⁹ E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: an English Translation of the Chapters, Hymns, etc., of the Theban Recension, with Introduction, Notes, etc.* (Chicago; London: Open Court Pub.; K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1901), 1:124-7, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.tz1tyv&seq=230>.

of the Dead reads, “Thy Father Atum binds for thee this beautiful wreath of vindication on this thy brow. Live, beloved of the Gods; mayest thou live forever.”⁵⁰

Additionally in this time period (from the 4th century – 1st century BCE), there are examples of a “hypocephalus” placed under the head of the deceased. This round, planar form, made variously of bronze, cartonnage, linen or other textile, which shape “emulates the sun’s disc” acted as “funerary amulet,” having on its surface inscriptions and iconography related to afterlife beliefs, primarily from spell 162 and from supplementary chapters of the *Book of the Dead*.⁵¹ Only 158 examples are known, from burials of priests and their families in Thebes, Akhmim, and Memphis, including discovery underneath female mummy heads.

Other headpieces that *were* discovered on the heads of buried women include a predynastic (Naqada IID, c. 3300 BCE) beaded piece from Abydos composed of a turquoise, garnet, and malachite strand interspersed with (4) four-stranded gold helix-like designs made of minute gold beads (see fig. 15). This piece would have been tied around the woman’s head and appears to have been placed over a linen veil of some kind.⁵²

⁵⁰ Thomas George Allen and Elizabeth Blaisdell Hauser, *The Book of the Dead, or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization No. 37 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 34.

⁵¹ Tamás Mekis, *The Hypocephalus: An Ancient Egyptian Funerary Amulet* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020), 146–47, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvrxq07z>.

⁵² “Diadem,” The British Museum, accessed April 22, 2023, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA37532.



Figure 15. Predynastic Diadem, Naqada IID Period

From “Diadem,” *The British Museum*, accessed April 22, 2023, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA37532.

This find highlights that even in predynastic times there was significance for burial headwear for women and this *may* have been both symbolic and alchemic/amuletic. And, exceptionally in terms of 20th century discoveries, a mummified woman of the Middle Kingdom, late 12th – early 13th Dynasty (c. 1800 BCE) named Senebtisi was found within three coffins at Lisht, with a circlet in place on her head created by three strands of gold looped wire joined at front center (in what might be a stylized double uraeus⁵³) where reconstructions depict the burial with long wig and 98 rosette hair ornaments cascading down her locks, possibly in fourteen rows of seven (see fig. 16).⁵⁴ We can only speculate on the significance, and note again that rosettes are considered stellar symbols and associated particularly with women, and so Senebtisi was certainly *surrounded by stars* at

⁵³ “Diadem of Senebtisi, Middle Kingdom,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544229>.

⁵⁴ Winlock, “Three Egyptian Gold Circlets,” 157.

death from this perspective. *Everything* related to life as preparation for entry into the *afterlife*.



Figure 16. Diadem and Rosettes of Senebtisi, 12th-13th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom

Views of diadem and potential wig reconstruction with rosettes, from “Diadem of Senebtisi, Middle Kingdom,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544229>, and <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/588634613820983474/>, accessed January 27, 2024.

Chapter II.

Egyptian Afterlife Beliefs

Ancient Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife can be studied in various ways; for the Old Kingdom, the Pyramid Texts are the primary extant inscriptions to consider, providing a frame of reference for the diadems and fragments which will be discussed in Chapter III.

The Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts

The Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts, first discovered in 1880 and continuing to be revealed, have been found in six kings' and now six queens' tombs at Saqqara where the most recent pyramid tomb, of (presumably) Teti's wife Queen Neith, was discovered in 2010 and whose funerary temple, obelisk, and name were announced in January 2021⁵⁵ and further revealed in late 2022.⁵⁶ These pyramid tombs contain elaborate hieroglyphic texts carved into the stone walls, in various states of preservation; they span from the late 5th Dynasty (with the tomb of King Unis/Unas), to the 6th dynasty, although Allen and others also include an 8th Dynasty tomb on this list (see table 1).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ahmed Shawkat, "4,200-Year-Old Queen's Identity among Remarkable New Finds in Egypt," *CBS News*, January 19, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/saqqara-tomb-egypt-4000-year-old-queen-neit-id-remarkable-archaeology-discoveries/>.

⁵⁶ Jennifer Nalewicki, "Hundreds of Mummies and Pyramid of an Unknown Queen Unearthed at Saqqara," *Live Science*, November 16, 2022, <https://www.livescience.com/ancient-egypt-mummies-tombs-king-tut>.

⁵⁷ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 1.

Table 1. Royal Tombs at Saqqara with Pyramid Texts

Queens listed with asterisk:

Tomb “Owner”	Dynasty	Royal Status
Unas	Dynasty V	Ruled c. 2353–2323 BCE
Teti	Dynasty VI	Ruled c. 2323–2291 BCE
Neith* (Inscriptions unpublished)	Dynasty VI	Wife of Teti (?) Discovered in 2010, name announced in 2021
Pepi I	Dynasty VI	Ruled c. 2289–2255 BCE
Ankhesenpepi II*	Dynasty VI	Wife of Pepi I
Merenre I	Dynasty VI	Ruled c. 2255–2246 BCE
Pepi II	Dynasty VI	Ruled c. 2246–2152 BCE
Neith*	Dynasty VI	Wife of Pepi II
Iput II*	Dynasty VI	Wife of Pepi II
Wedjebetni*	Dynasty VI	Wife of Pepi II
Behenu*	Dynasty VI	Probable wife of Pepi II
Qakare Ibi	Dynasty VIII	Ruled c. 2109–2107 BCE



*Sources: “Pyramid Texts,” Wikipedia, accessed January 1, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramid_Texts, supplemented by Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 1.*

The Pyramid Texts provide detailed instructions for the afterlife journey of the deceased – the earliest known form in Egypt for the “utterances” which aid the transfiguration to eternal existence – and which subsequently formed the basis for the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom and the Books of the Dead of the New Kingdom, and as such informed all related manuals of the spirit such as the late antique *Hermetica*.⁵⁸ According to Katja Goebis and James Allen (among others), the Pyramid Texts appear to be based on an earlier corpus of material which is not (currently) extant.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 2–3. See also Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 1–2.

⁵⁹ Goebis, 2. See also Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 4–5.

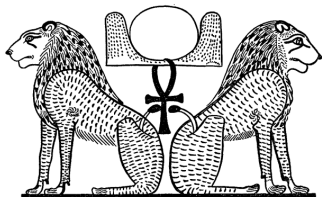
Denigrated as “spells” in earlier scholarship, the Pyramid Texts are now understood as a bible, of sorts, with recent scholars bringing to light the esoteric depths and poetic brilliance at the heart of these most ancient prescriptions, prayers, invoked rituals, guides, and clarion call towards transcendence. The hieroglyphs contain instructions and concepts for what a king or a queen can become in the afterlife, *if fully deified*. These include: to become a constellation – for example, Osiris becomes the constellation we call “Orion,” and for the deceased to join him in some fashion in the *Duat* of Osiris; to become a star, whether within Orion or whether akin to Sothis (Sirius) as Horus reborn, or as the morning star, the Lone star, or one of the “untiring” or “imperishable” circumpolar stars; to enter the entourage accompanying the solar god Re as he travels daily in his solar barque; to become a luminous *akh* in the *akhet* (somewhat equivalent to the place of the horizon, or variably, just below the eastern horizon) and thus participate in the rising solar light at dawn.⁶⁰ According to Goebis, it is not useful to separate these

⁶⁰ Stephanie Harris notes that “the *akhet* in Gardiner’s hieroglyphic list (N27 ) is written as the ideogram as in 3ḥt ‘horizon’. It shows the two peaks of the ‘mountain’ glyph, with the solar disk appearing between them as the sun appeared/ disappeared. ...In the New Kingdom, Hor-em-akhet ‘Horus in the Horizon’ was the god of both the rising and setting sun and often represented either as a falcon or a child. The pyramids of Khufu and Khafra were also identified as twin peaks and thus the horizon.” See Stephanie J. Harris, “Decoding Ancient Egyptian Diadems: Symbolism and Iconography as a Means of Interpreting Feminine Identity,” (master’s thesis, University of South Africa, 2018), 144. Richard H. Wilkinson comments on this topography, where the Great Sphinx at Giza between two mountainous pyramids “was viewed as a literal ‘Horus in the Horizon’ during the New Kingdom.” He further describes the east-west axis for each Egyptian temple, and that “the two towers which flanked its entrance may well have signified the two peaks of the horizon between which the sun rose. In an inscription at Edfu, the pylon towers are, in fact, specifically referred to as the goddesses Isis and Nephthys ‘...who raise up the sun god who shines on the horizon.’ The statue of the sun god was thus sometimes displayed to the people from the terrace between the towers, and the term for this ‘appearance’ *khai* was the same as that used for the rising of the sun over the horizon.” As the horizon “embraced the idea of both sunrise and sunset,” it “was sometimes represented with the twin lions of ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow,’ a double lion deity who guarded both ends of the day, or a leonine sphinx.” He also notes that the curved Egyptian headrest “could imitate the *akhet* in its form and symbolism, for the sleeper’s head rises from it like the sun from the horizon.” See Richard H. Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 158-9. The New Kingdom (19th Dynasty) sarcophagus of Khonsu contains this vivid image, as will be notable during the later discussion of the per ankh  and the *akh-ankh-akh* positioning and symbolism on the female

out, to categorize them, or to consider these descriptions a hierarchy of possible fates. Rather, she proposes that the stellar destiny and the solar destiny must be considered one and the same. “The conception of the night sky as the inverse of the day sky, and its stellar denizens as substitutes or deputies of the sungod, is clearly present and widespread in the Pyramid Texts. ... Invisible stars may propel the solar barque and are in the entourage of the sungod, while the birth of stars in the evening is the counterpart to that of the sungod in the morning, and thus represent the ‘other side’ of the daily repeated recreation of the cosmos.”⁶¹ A part of this conjoined iconography is the *complementary* idea that the goddess Nut overarches sky and earth, swallowing the sun at dusk and giving birth to it at dawn, and doing likewise for the stars, swallowing them at dawnlight and birthing them each nightfall, in the cosmic cycle of continuous renewal.⁶² In *his* explication of the conjunction of Osiris and Re in the Pyramid Texts, Allen describes Osiris as the “force of new life” which enables the Sun’s rebirth at dawn each day:

Osiris himself was envisioned as a mummy lying in the depths of the netherworld, the region through which the sun was thought to pass at night. In the middle of the night, the Sun merged with Osiris’ body; through this union the Sun received the power of new life while Osiris was reborn in the Sun.... Like the Sun, each person’s *ba* [comparable to the Western notion of the soul] was seen as passing through the night of death before coming to life again with the sunrise. As with the Sun, this daily rebirth was made possible through union with Osiris: ... the *ba* merged with its individualized Osiris, its mummified body lying in the tomb, and

burial diadems and fragments discovered at Giza; illustration from Natacha Rambova, “The Symbolism of the Papryi,” in Alexandre Piankoff, *Mythological Papryi* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 33.



⁶¹ Goebis, 5–6.

⁶² Goebis, 7–8.

through that union was reunited with its *ka* [the individual's life force which came from its creator] and became capable of renewed life.⁶³

In the *ba* reuniting with its *ka*, “the resultant spiritual entity was often known as an *akh*: literally, an ‘effective’ being” and “was capable of living eternally.”⁶⁴ According to Allen, the function of the Pyramid Texts was to enable this process, and so these and “all ancient Egyptian funerary literature” were known literally as “*akh*-makers” or “*akh*ifiers.”⁶⁵ The *akh* was also associated with light and luminosity, and is often rendered in English as “spirit” or “spirit-state,” a form of the deceased that is “equipped with radiance (like the sungod).”⁶⁶

Images of the Pyramid Tomb of Unas reveal the overarching interior gables covered in five-pointed stars (see fig. 17), suggesting graphically this possible stellar-oriented afterlife (without which, it was considered that the *ba* continued to exist but was considered one of “the dead”⁶⁷):

⁶³ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 7–8. I have italicized Egyptian terms here and elsewhere.

⁶⁴ Allen, 8.

⁶⁵ Allen, 8.

⁶⁶ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 12–16.

⁶⁷ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 8.



Figure 17. Ceiling of Pyramid Tomb of Unas, 5th Dynasty, Old Kingdom

Image from “The Magical Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara,” *The Not So Innocents Abroad*, December 23, 2019, <https://www.thenotsoinnocentsabroad.com/blog/the-magical-pyramid-of-unas-at-saqqara>.

Allen describes how the layout of the inscribed texts for the kings’ pyramids with their multiple chambers and corridor walls and their specific architectural plan represent “both a womb and birth canal, and a miniature version of the passage from the *Duat* through the *Akhet* and into the sky” in the *conjoined* iconography of Nut’s womb and the sun’s nightly (cyclic) journey.⁶⁸ While the queens’ pyramid tombs at Saqqara were

⁶⁸ Allen, 31.

designed differently, where, for example, a “more modest plan” shows a single burial chamber (without antechamber) with a flat rather than peaked interior ceiling, extant hieroglyphic inscriptions (particularly for the largely intact tomb of Pepi II’s wife Neith) reveal that these queens were accorded the same texts, and therefore the *same possibilities*, as were kings.⁶⁹ The stone-carved hieroglyphs on the walls of chamber and passage for another two queens of Pepi II who were also accorded pyramids (Iput II and Wedjebetni) are not well preserved. However, the tomb of Pepi II’s wife Neith (who was *also* the daughter of a king, Pepi I, as is made clear in the inscriptions on the two small obelisks flanking the complex’s enclosure) gives ample evidence that Neith could, like the other rulers buried in the Memphite necropolis, become an imperishable one: “I am a star who belongs to the sky among the gods” is particular for this tomb.⁷⁰ In the “insignia ritual,” “Osiris Neith” is given first a headband, then a single eye of Horus for her forehead (noted as a uraeus/cobra) and then both of Horus’ eye pupils to see with and to become her two *kas* as double *uraei*, leading and protecting her as two “Great of Magic crowns” in the multiple meanings that underlay this symbolism.⁷¹ In further text that is similar but not identical to that found in the kings’ tombs, all the gods of the Nile Valley and Delta are to become Neith’s brothers and escorts, accorded her by Geb; additionally, Neith is “the most controlling god of all the gods,” appearing as “Dual King” who has “control of all the gods and their *kas* as well.”⁷² “You are the one Osiris has placed on his throne that you might lead the westerners and become *akh* at the fore of the gods.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Allen, 301.

⁷⁰ Allen, 304–5.

⁷¹ Allen, 306–7.

⁷² Allen, 311.

⁷³ Allen, 313.

Neith's body is re-assembled, given its mind, cleansed and has "acquired the crown as a sole star who wipes out opponents."⁷⁴ The sky's door has been opened for Neith, and she is instructed to "ascend to the sky amongst the stars in the sky" where she will "stand up at the fore of the Imperishable Stars" with the "Pale Crown that is atop your shoulders that of Thoth."⁷⁵ She has "not really died," but will "live fully amongst them, the imperishable akhs."⁷⁶

Additionally, Neith will "bestrew the sky as a star, shining to them as a god, permanent at the fore of the sky as Horus of the *Duat*."⁷⁷ Further in this apparent hierarchy of being: "Your flesh has been born to life, and you live more than the stars live in their life."⁷⁸ Again, Neith's elevated status among eternal beings is described, "as the *Ba* at the fore of the living and the controlling power at the fore of the *akhs*," seated on her "chair of ebony as the Sun at the fore of the Ennead."⁷⁹ Like the sun, "the sky's two reedfloats are set for me, that I might go on high from east to west to the midst of my brothers the gods. Orion [Osiris] is my brother, Sothis [Sirius/Isis] is my sister, and I sit between them in this world forever."⁸⁰

The text within the pyramid tombs of Queens Iput II and Wedjebetni, along with that found in the pyramid of Pepi I's wife, Queen Ankhnes-Pepi II, while fragmentary, reveal a similar corpus of instructions for ascent.⁸¹ The inscriptions for Queen Wedjebetni are particularly interesting, as she is instructed for how to "live among the

⁷⁴ Allen, 314.

⁷⁵ Allen, 315.

⁷⁶ Allen, 317.

⁷⁷ Allen, 317.

⁷⁸ Allen, 319.

⁷⁹ Allen, 319–20.

⁸⁰ Allen, 323.

⁸¹ Allen, 325–26.

Ennead” (the nine great deities worshipped at Heliopolis), and additionally is told “your mother Seshat has come to you laughing [...]”⁸² This queen, Wedjetbetni, another daughter of Pepi I, had an unusual tomb complex, as the secondary enclosure around her pyramid contained small chambers with courtyards, one for each of a family line of priests and their kin who by this honor (according to Mark Lehner) could “share the endowment of her funerary estate, just as she had a share of Pepi II’s,” by being buried close to his tomb.⁸³ Why was she considered a daughter of the goddess Seshat, and who were these priests who were clearly so important to her? These questions may be elucidated, once we turn to the discussion of the House of Life.


I would also posit that where gender is *not* transferred in the inscriptions to the equivalent of female hieroglyphic forms, we cannot rationalize this as sloppy or lazy copying of more ancient text (*as has been done*), but to awareness that the queenly path to divination is the *same* as the kingly path – and is that of Osiris, with Horus as son, initiate, and successor in this Way. For example, Neith’s inscriptions read: “Hey, Father! Hey, Sun! Now, that which you said – ‘Oh for a son, *akh*, manifest, *ba*, esteemed, and in control, with long arms and wide stride’ – here am I, I am your son; here am I, I am Neith. I have become *akh*, manifest, *ba*, esteemed, and in control.”⁸⁴ And, as I will further suggest, both women and men were trained in the House of Life to this end, and to be Priestess of Thoth and Priestess of Hathor were complementary roles for a fate that transcended gender as did Atum.

⁸² Allen, 326.

⁸³ Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 3, <http://archive.org/details/completepyramids0000lehn>.

⁸⁴ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 322.

Afterlife Preparation and Hierarchy

It is notable that all of the subsequent Coffin Texts and Books of the Dead, based on the *same* material as found in the Pyramid Texts, were included in *non-royal* burials and became increasingly widespread over time. A stellar afterlife was clearly deemed possible for men and women other than the King or Queen as time progressed, and this may have been true during the Old Kingdom as well and we simply do not have remaining evidence. Or do we? Did one need a stone-chambered pyramid tomb covered with instructions in order to achieve this afterlife potential? Were subsequent practices a devolution of understanding in claiming this possibility for non-royal (and, as time progressed, even non-elite individuals) or was it *always* considered possible for any man or woman *with the proper instructions* to journey to eternal life in the *Duat*? The *Duat* is sometimes represented hieroglyphically simply as a five-pointed star within a circle:  ⁸⁵ Did one need to be trained for this journey during one's lifetime on earth and then *reminded* at death by these inscriptions, these gods' words? And so, was the inherent potential to become a radiant *akh* based more on whether you had access to the training required during life, and only secondarily on the hieroglyphic instructions surrounding your body at death (or were both equally necessary)? If training was required, did this come from the wisdom (gods' words) carefully protected and transmitted by priests (and priestesses) associated with the House(s) of Life and the gods Thoth and Seshat, or (in the Old Kingdom) via the priests at Heliopolis – or were these traditions, in essence, one and the same? These are key inquiries, even if the answers are not readily apparent and by no means certain.

⁸⁵ Raymond O. Faulkner and Boris Jegerovic, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2017), 382, <http://archive.org/details/pj1425.f3>.

A related question: were there hierarchies of possibility in the eternal afterlife? Does Schwaller de Lubicz' theory regarding stages of development for the royal consciousness and will (first the diadem with uraeus, then the crown) imply that to become an effective *akh* is not the same as to become (for example) Orion or Sothis, or to enter the entourage of Re? The Pyramid Texts within Neith's tomb at Saqqara imply that the queen could become *foremost* among *akhs* and gods. These are questions to hold in mind, once we delve further into Old Kingdom iconography.

Goebs describes in particular the *wrrt* crown, which she differentiates from the White Crown, contrary to other scholars, but which she notes is sometimes associated with the Double Crown in the Pyramid Texts. "In the funerary texts the [*wrrt*] crown is the symbol of the luminous outer appearance, which the deceased and reborn king acquires when he is transfigured as a star."⁸⁶ She notes rituals where crown and unguent (ointment) are placed on the deceased's head and render him "equipped with the form of Osiris" and bring about his rebirth as a divine being; she theorizes that it is "plausible that the [*wrrt*] crown itself belongs to the divine physique, which needs to be completed and perfected in order to ensure perpetual life." Goebs notes that Pyramid Text 637 implies that "the crown also distinguishes [the deceased] from the other *akhs*" given that he becomes "more of an *akh*-spirit thereby than the *akh*-spirits."⁸⁷ Further, she states that while *deities* which appear with this crown are male whenever gender is noted, "this male association did not, however, prevent the female royal or non-royal deceased from using

⁸⁶ Goebs, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 40.

⁸⁷ Goebs, 38.

spells mentioning this crown in the selection of funerary texts inscribed on the walls of her tomb or coffin in order to secure her celestial afterlife.”⁸⁸

Later in time, we see that Queen Ahmose-Nefertari (New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty), who bore the title god’s wife of Amun, was *akhified* in the *akhet* and was then worshipped as a deity along with her son, Amenhotep I, in the Theban region for approximately 400 years – although the iconography (per Dr. Yasmin El Shazly, ARCE, in her guest lecture at Harvard on April 18, 2023) shows that these two royal *akhs* are lower in status than other great gods such as Anubis and Osiris. She considers these deified New Kingdom royals revered at the craftsmen village of Deir el-Medina in numerous tombs to be more akin to saints: intercessors and intermediaries between the tomb’s human deceased and the older gods, invoking their help on behalf of the tomb’s owner, and finds here a *hierarchy* of being represented in numerous images via the primacy of place given iconographically (depictions of deities further to the left being higher in status, for example).⁸⁹

Understanding the many symbolic aspects of the diadem and crown for the afterlife journey, what this may imply about hierarchy of being, tracing funerary beliefs and burials for Old Kingdom queens, and exploring and noting the forms of extant and

⁸⁸ Goebis, 35.

⁸⁹ Note here that beings we associate with Egyptian gods are *possibly* listed as human kings per the New Kingdom “Royal Canon of Turin” (a copy of another non-extant original list) where (for example) Osiris in Column 1 is the “Dual King” (who reigns following two names lost in lacuna and then Geb), and who is *not* specifically noted as a god or mythical being. Osiris is then followed by Kings Set, Horus, Thoth, Maat, and Haroeris (Horus the Elder), with the following possible summation of further fragments: “a total of 9 kings reigned from King Ra to King Haroeris.” See Peter Lundström, “Turin King List: Column 1,” v. 4.1 2011-2024, <https://pharaoh.se/ancient-egypt/kinglist/turin/column-1/>, translating and commenting on the hieroglyphic fragments as published in Alan H. Gardiner and Museo di antichità, *The Royal Canon of Turin* (Oxford: printed for the Griffith Institute at the University by V. Ridler, 1959), 15. Ryholt considers these to be God Kings, followed by Demigod/Spirit Kings, followed by Historical (Human) Kings. See Kim Ryholt, “The Turin King-List,” *Ägypten Und Levante* 14 (2004): 139.

primarily royal female headdresses found on or with the body, provides the needed background to understand three elite women's burial circlets with very different iconography than that already explored and to pursue why they may have been so unusual and religiously significant.

Chapter III.

Old Kingdom Diadems from the Giza Necropolis

Given the relative absence of evidence, what particularly stands out, for finds of headdresses found *in situ* –on the head– for women’s burials, are three Old Kingdom headbands discovered in the Giza cemetery complex (see fig. 18), which are quite connected in their iconography and also distinct from all headpieces described above. These unique headdresses are not royal diadems with uraeus (or gazelles), nor are they royal crowns, but appear to have been a significant part of the burial apparatus accorded to elite but potentially non-royal women, who yet may have been wives of officials given the social status of those accorded burial in the Giza necropolis. I will argue that their potential roles as Priestesses of Hathor and/or Thoth comes through clearly in their headpieces and relate to potent afterlife beliefs, and what was believed possible for a woman other than the Queen during Old Kingdom Egypt.

Archaeological Context: Circlets and Fragments

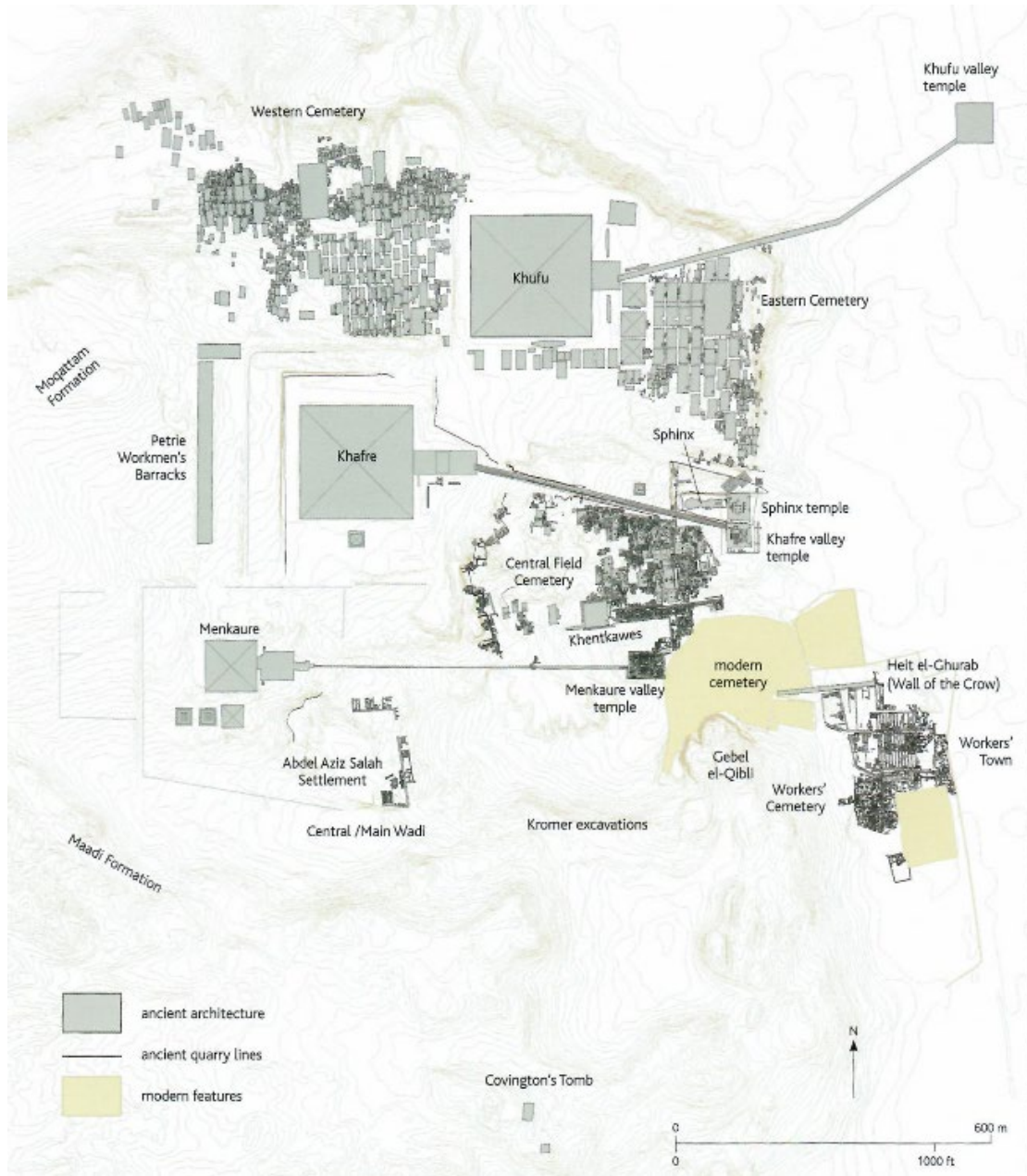


Figure 18. Map of Giza Necropolis showing Western, Eastern, and Central Cemeteries

*Mastaba tombs surround the large pyramids of Khufu and Khafre at Giza. From Mark Lehner, *Giza and the Pyramids: The Definitive History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 10 (map image not yet uploaded to Digital Giza website).*

These three circlets were all discovered on or adjacent to the skulls of females interred in either stone sarcophagus or wooden coffins (or both), inside mastaba-style burial chambers which came to light in early 20th century excavations at Giza. The Old Kingdom circlets are approximately dated to the 5th Dynasty (c. 2513 – 2374 BCE⁹⁰) and were described in connection to their similar iconography, find locations, and dating in February 1946 by Dows Dunham in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* Vol. 44, No. 255.⁹¹ The mummified skeletal remains for the burials had been disturbed and were found in various states of decay. These finds were located in different areas of the large Giza Necropolis (Central, Eastern, and Western Cemeteries), figured above. Additionally, two painted plaster rosettes found in fragments, presumably from a destroyed headband, were found inside a wooden coffin in another Giza necropolis shaft from this time period, and are in the collection of the Boston MFA but were not included in Dunham's article. Related ornaments were *also* discovered in fragmentary condition in two other shafts, made of bronze in one instance and of stucco and gold leaf in the other, the latter attested only by illustration. All three sets of fragments were discovered in various mastaba pits in the Western Cemetery. The elements for all six full or partial (presumable) diadem-pieces can illuminate via symbolism, material design and head placement the cosmic, spiritual possibilities accorded to women at this time, for life beyond the death of the physical body.

The following are descriptions and images for these six diadems or fragments with *akh*, *ankh*, and papyrus umbels (*or* floral motifs similar to front roundel on G 8887

⁹⁰ Donald B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), endpage.

⁹¹ Dows Dunham, "An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom," *Bulletin - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 44, no. 255 (1946): 23–29.

circlet), identified by their Giza Tomb/Shaft location and by a naming convention to distinguish the finds:

“Cairo” Diadem, G 8887 Shaft 294 (Central Cemetery), Selim Hassan (Bey) Excavation, 1931, currently located in Grand Egyptian Museum, Cairo, discovered on the skull of an adult female skeleton inside stone sarcophagus: intact circlet, 24.6 cm, gold with red carnelian inlay; Old Kingdom, Dynasty 5; band would have been tied on (see figs. 20 and 21).⁹² Also found with this burial: blue and black faience beads, cylinder and ring, from a dress or network; lotus drop beads from network, nine copper pendant lotus ornaments with gold foil covering; copper headband covered with gold leaf; necklace with hieroglyph and bracelets; alabaster headrest; two bull femurs and skeleton of small bird/probably a goose with hoofs to the west.⁹³ Notably, 50 gold click beetle pendants were discovered, strung on gold wire (see fig. 22).⁹⁴ The diadem/circlet was described as follows by the excavator: “the design consists of four umbels of lotus. The inlay is of red carnelian. The design of each of the two other discs consists of two open papyrus flowers which meet together with a circular bead of carnelian. On each flower rests the ‘*ikhw*’ [*akh*] bird holding with its beak one of the flower's ends.”⁹⁵ Note the pelvis width for this female skeleton, as will become relevant later (see fig. 19):

⁹² Hassan Selim, *Excavations At Giza, Vol. 2 (1930-1931)* (Cairo: Government Press, 1936), 149.

⁹³ Selim, 148–49.

⁹⁴ Digital Giza, "Headband and Necklaces," accessed January 5, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/54876/full/>.

⁹⁵ Selim, *Excavations At Giza*, 149.



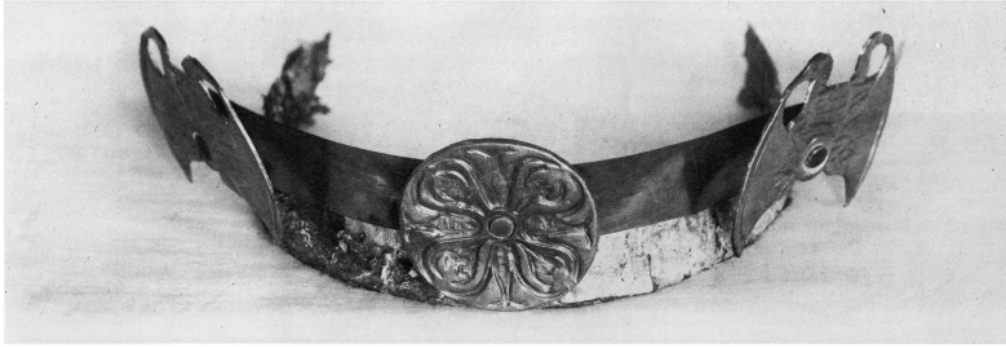
Figure 19. Female Skeleton with Diadem, Giza Tomb G 8887 Shaft 294

Excavation photo from Hassan Selim, Excavations At Giza, Vol. 2 (1930-1931), Egyptian University (Cairo: Government Press, 1936), Plate L.



Figure 20. Color Images of “Cairo” Diadem

*Images from “Old Kingdom Diadem of Gold,” Ancient Egypt and Archaeology Web Site, accessed January 11, 2024, <https://www.ancient-egypt.co.uk/cairo%20museum/cm,%20gold/pages/Old%20Kingdom%20diadem%20of%20gold.htm>, and Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs*, Plate 4.*



MASTABA OF SHAFT 194
(1) and (2) Gold diadem mounted on a second copper diadem with golden leaves.

Figure 21. Excavation Photos, “Cairo” Diadem

Published excavation photos from Selim, Excavations At Giza, Plate LI.

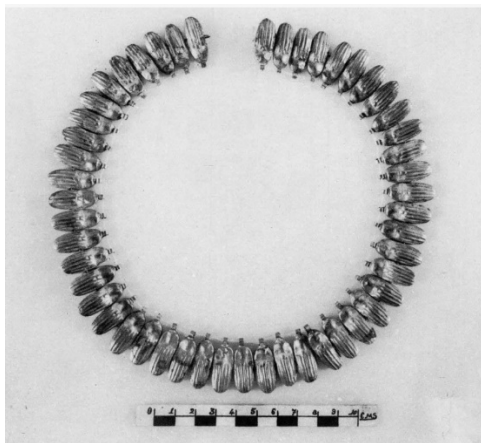


Figure 22. Click Beetle Necklace found with “Cairo” Diadem Burial

Excavation photo from Selim, Excavations At Giza, Plate LII, and color image from Aldred, Jewels of the Pharaohs, Plate 5.

“Boston” Diadem, G 7143 Shaft B (Eastern Cemetery) Harvard-Boston MFA George Reisner Expedition, 1927, currently located in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, discovered around skull in wooden coffin: reconstructed circlet with left ornament a modern replacement, 18.5 cm, copper, gold leaf, cloth, gesso, paint, carnelian; found along with copper bands and two bracelets and considered female burial; Old Kingdom, Dynasty 5; full circle (see figs. 24 and 25).⁹⁶ Attached at center front, left, and right to the copper band, the three ornaments were “covered with thin cloth, layer of gesso, and gold leaf.”⁹⁷ They were described by Dows Dunham, former curator of Egyptian Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, in this way:

Two opposed papyrus umbels have a carnelian disc at their junction. These flower-like elements are not blossoms in the botanical sense, though often erroneously so called. Rising from this disc is an *ankh*, the hieroglyphic sign for life, and sitting on each of the two papyri is the bird called *akh*, the crested ibis. The two birds face each other and have their long beaks crossed over the loop of the *ankh*. In addition, the larger central ornament has a further floral element pendent from the central disc. This is too conventionalized to be identified; it consists of a five-petalled campani-form flower flanked on each side by a closed bud, the whole filling the space below and between the papyrus blossom.⁹⁸

The excavation photo shows that the left ornament was missing at time of discovery, and the current form is a modern reproduction (see fig. 23):

⁹⁶ MFA Boston, “Diadem,” accessed January 11, 2024, <http://collections.mfa.org/objects/147991/diadem>.

⁹⁷ Digital Giza, “Jewelry: Copper and Gold Crown,” accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/16146/full/>.

⁹⁸ Dunham, “An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom,” *Bulletin - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 44, no. 255 (1946): XLIV.24-25.



Figure 23. Excavation Photo, “Boston” Diadem

From “Jewelry: Copper and Gold Crown,” Digital Giza, accessed January 12, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/16146/full/>.

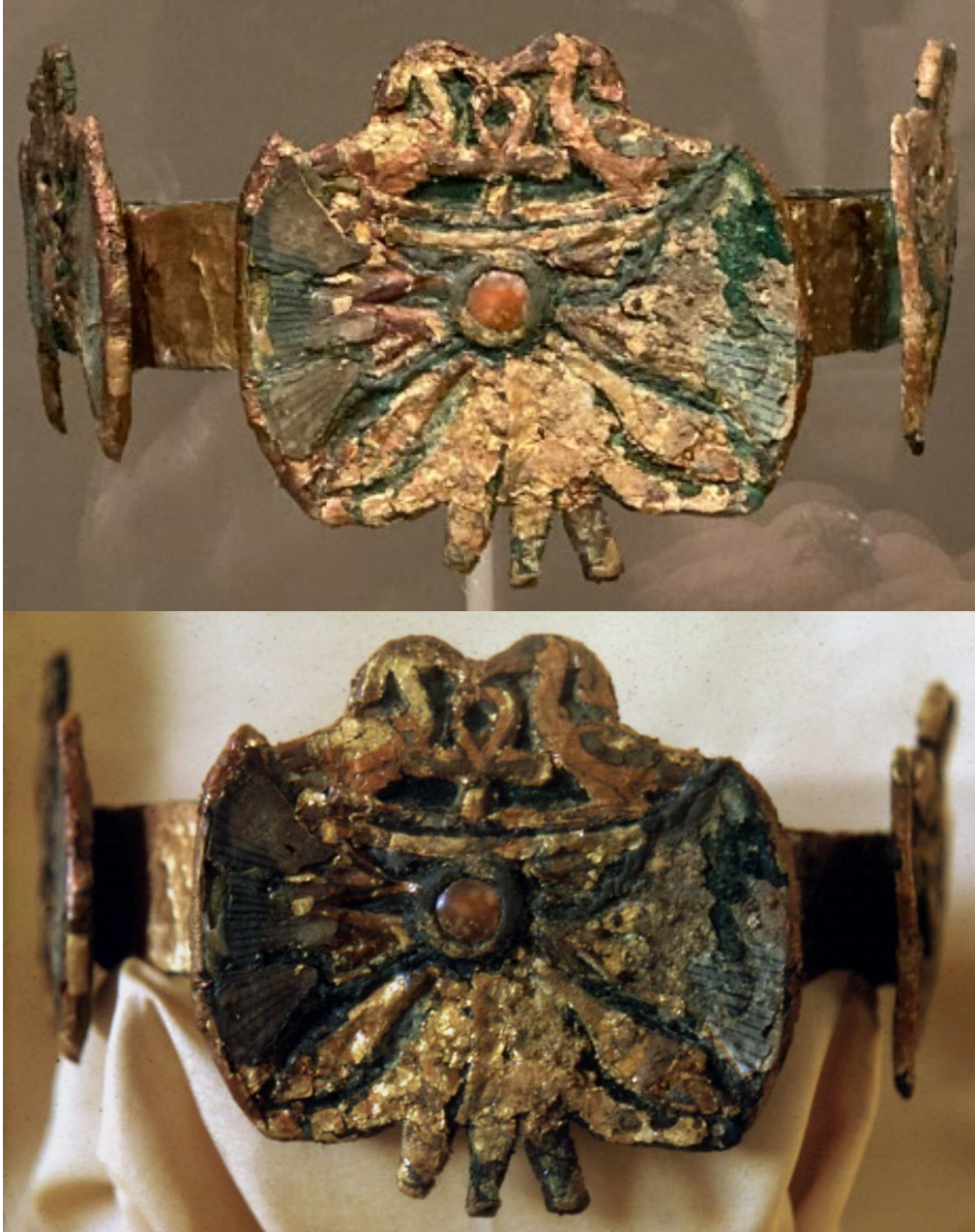


Figure 24. "Boston" Diadem, Front View

Two views in different lighting, author's photo taken at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on February 5, 2023, and image from "Object(s) Photograph: Site: Giza; View: G 7143," Digital Giza, accessed January 13, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/photos/52360/full/>.



Figure 25. "Boston" Diadem, Side View

Showing original ornament on right side of head; side ornaments lack lower lotus image. Author's photo taken at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston on February 5, 2023.

Also found with this burial: fragments of gold leaf covering beetle-shaped pendants inside the wooden coffin; note the striation for the beetle body (see figs. 26 and 27):

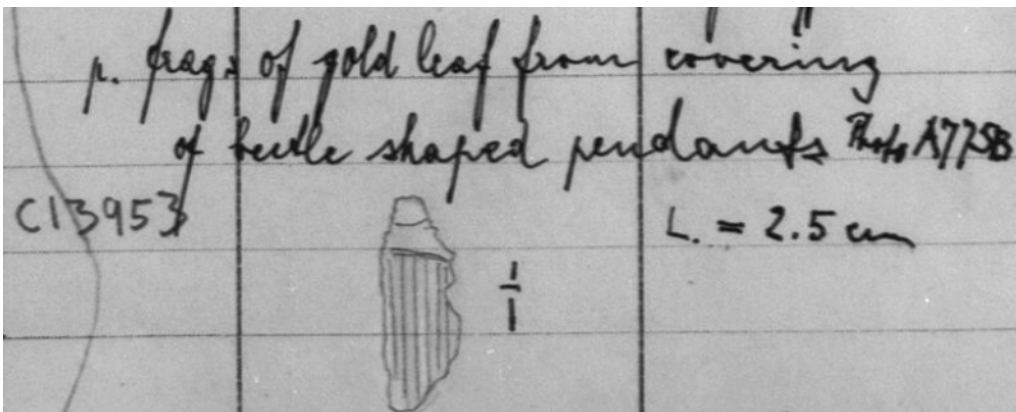


Figure 26. Click Beetle Fragment, Excavation Register Entry, Tomb G 7143 B

Harvard-MFA Expedition, 2/9/27 Register Entry, fragment discovered with "Boston" Diadem burial, from "Jewelry Element: Fragments of Gold Foil from Beetle-Shaped Pendants," Digital Giza, accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/16153/full/>.

Photo of the fragments here (small items, central, near top) along with additional copper bands found with this burial:

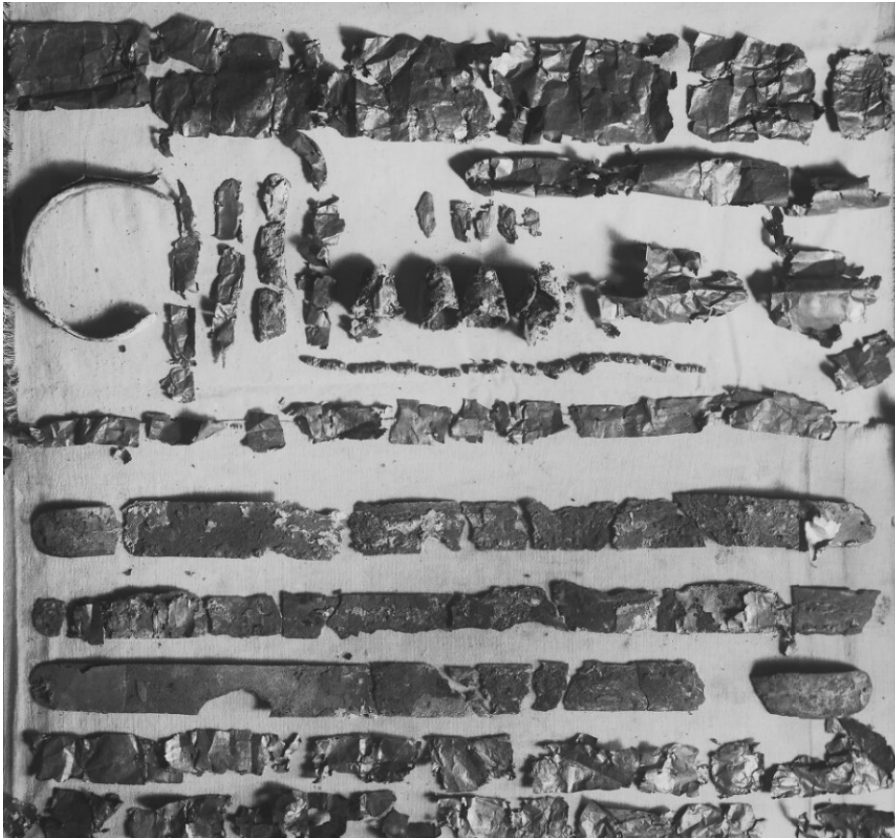


Figure 27. Excavation Photo, Gold Foil Fragments from Click Beetle Pendants

Image from "Jewelry Element: Fragments of Gold Foil from Beetle-Shaped Pendants" Digital Giza.

“Leipzig” Diadem, D 208 Shaft 9 (Western Cemetery; near G 4000 field), Georg Steindorff Expedition, 1903, currently located in Egyptian Museum, University of Leipzig, discovered in area of head and headrest on decomposed female skeleton: intact circlet, 21.5 cm, copper, wood, and gold leaf; central roundel original and side roundels

are modern reproductions; possibly Dynasty 5; band would have been tied on (see figs. 28 and 29).⁹⁹ Described on museum website as:

Copper circlet that was covered with gold leaf. A wooden rosette [stuccoed] ... was either covered with gold leaf or painted. It shows three open papyrus cones grouped sideways and downwards around the middle, each standing at right angles to one another. ... The combination of the opened papyrus umbels with the depiction of the crested ibis and the *ankh* sign place the diadem in the area of the idea of regeneration and the bliss of the deceased. It cannot be determined with certainty whether the diadem was only made for grave furnishings or was worn on special occasions during life.¹⁰⁰



Figure 28. Excavation Photos, “Leipzig” Diadem

Front and back views, from “Diadem, Leipzig ÄMU 2500,” The Giza Project, accessed January 6, 2024, http://www.giza-projekt.org/Funde/UL_2500/UL_2500.html.

⁹⁹ The Giza Project, “Diadem, Leipzig ÄMU 2500,” accessed January 6, 2024, http://www.giza-projekt.org/Funde/UL_2500/UL_2500.html.

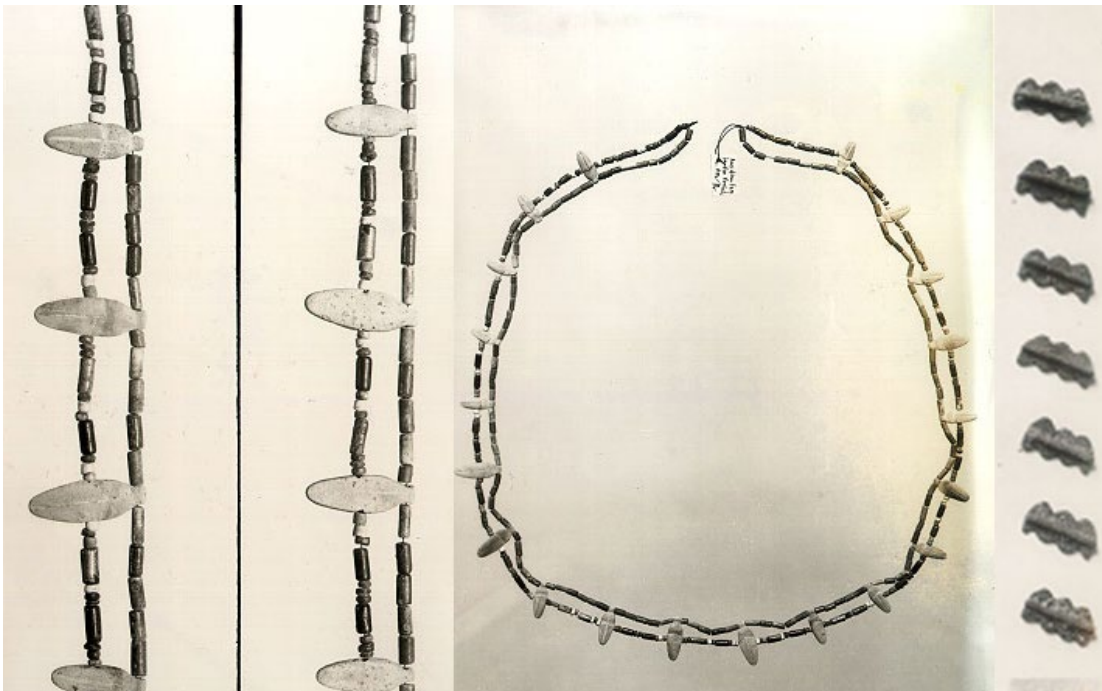
¹⁰⁰ “Diadem, Leipzig ÄMU 2500.”



Figure 29. "Leipzig" Diadem, Front View

From "Diadem, Leipzig ÄMU 2500."

Also found, a necklace with 20 click beetle pendants and blue, green and black beads made of faience, discovered inside the coffin (see fig. 30, below and next page):



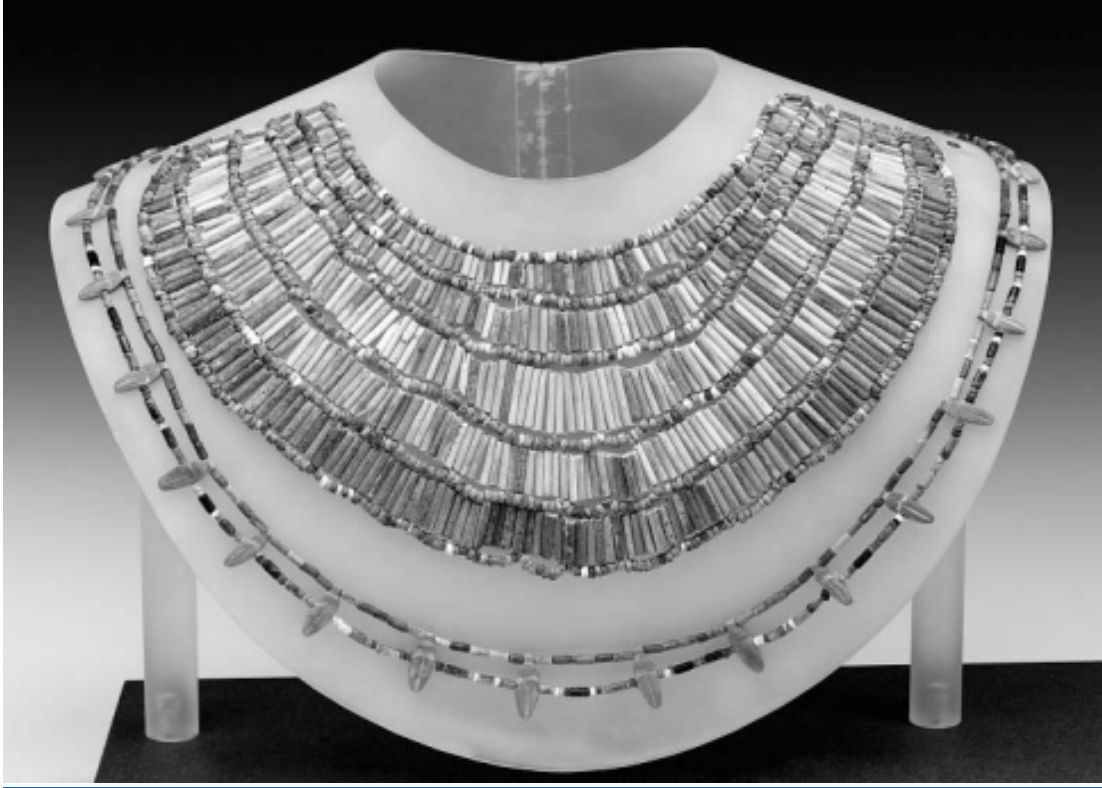


Figure 30. Click Beetle Necklace found with “Leipzig” Diadem

*From “ÄMUL 3770,” The Giza Project, accessed January 6, 2024, http://www.giza-projekt.org/Funde/UL_3770/UL_3770.html and Heike Wilde, “Grabbeigaben und ihre symbolische Bedeutung anhand eines Konvolutes aus Giza (Mastaba D 208),” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische sprache und altertumskunde* 140 no. 2 (2013): Table XXVIII (shown along with broadcollar found in Tomb D 208 Shaft 4).*

The beetles here are without the same striated detailing as on the gold necklace from G 8887. Additionally found: in the larger multi-grave tomb for Neferihy (considered “owner” of D 208), a seated scribe statue in serdab inscribed for Neferihy (see fig. 31).

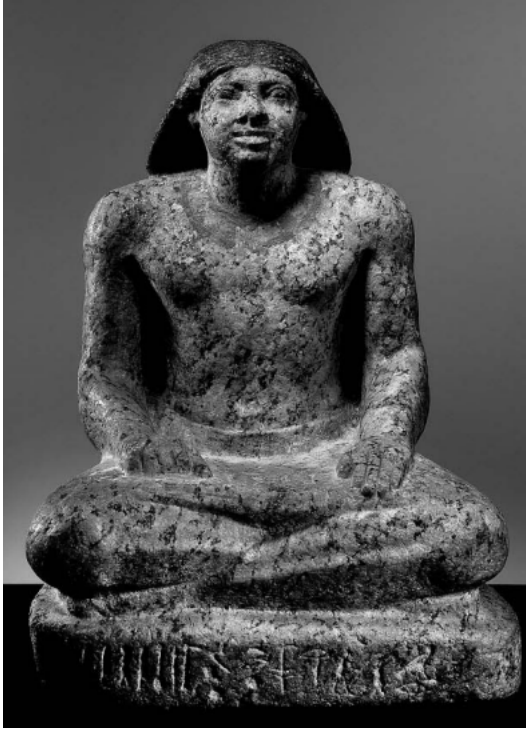


Figure 31. Seated Scribe Statue, for Tomb “Owner” Neferihy, D 208

From Heike Wilde, “Grabbeigaben und ihre symbolische Bedeutung anhand eines Konvolutes aus Giza (Mastaba D 208),” Zeitschrift für ägyptische sprache und altertumskunde 140 no. 2 (2013): Table XXVII.

“Boston” Plaster Fragments, G 2416 Shaft D III (Western Cemetery), Harvard-Boston MFA Expedition, 1913, currently located in storage at Boston MFA, discovered in partially decayed and collapsed wooden coffin, size of coffin at bottom 1.63 x 0.485 meters: considered “fragments of rosettes from destroyed headband,” cloth, plaster, paint; probably 5th Dynasty (see figs. 35, 36, and 37).¹⁰¹ Perhaps length of coffin (5.25 feet) implies female burial but unknown (see fig. 34). Also (and unusually) found with this

¹⁰¹ MFA Boston, “Head Band,” accessed January 11, 2024, <http://collections.mfa.org/objects/452166/head-band>.

mummy: cloth with very thin plaster painted to depict eyes, noted below to be painted with brown irises, black pupils, and red outlines and with gray eyebrows; possible additional evidence, by appearance, for female burial. These would have been her afterlife “eyes” affording her the ability to see again (see figs. 32 and 33):

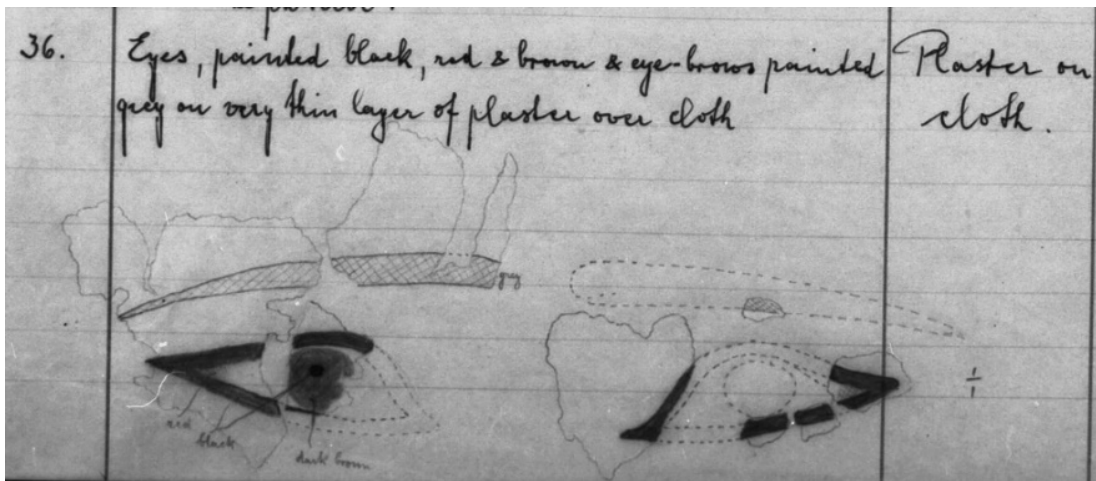


Figure 32. Painted Eyes on Cloth, Excavation Registry, July 1936

Illustration for design on cloth accompanying “Boston” Plaster Fragments in G 2416 Shaft D III, from “Eyes Painted on Thin Layer of Plaster over Cloth,” Digital Giza, accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23475/full/>.



Figure 33. Painted Eyes on Cloth, Color Image

From author's photo taken at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston on May 10, 2023



Figure 34. G 2416 D III Coffin Remains, Excavation Photo

Mummy with wrappings in collapsed wood coffin, G 2416 D III, from "Wood Coffin," Digital Giza, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23427/full/>.

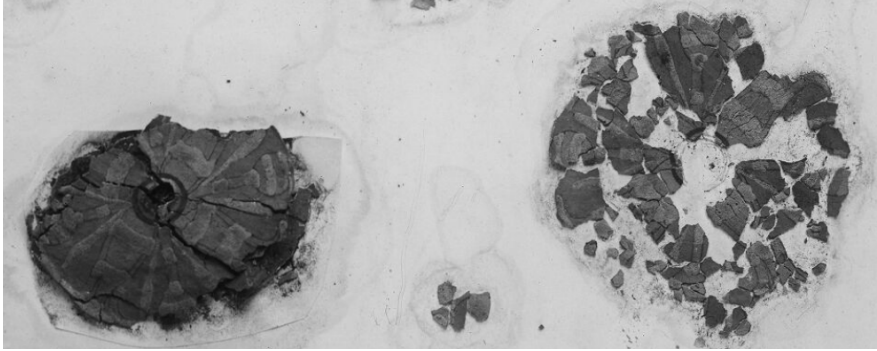


Figure 35. “Boston” Plaster Fragments, Excavation Photo

Detail of Harvard-MFA Expedition photo, from “Fragments of Plaster Rosettes,” Digital Giza, from <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23478/full/>.



Figure 36. Illustration of Plaster Rosette Fragment, Excavation Register

Harvard-MFA Excavation Register, from <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23478/full/>.

Figure 36 shows the excavation register’s diagram noting the colors of the fragments (July 1936): blue and green flowers (now faded) on lighter background; tips of unopened flower buds appear to be labeled “red,” and red paint in central circle (still visible in recent photos, see fig. 37 below).



Figure 37. "Boston" Plaster Fragments, Color Photos

Images of objects stored at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Expedition Catalogue MFA No. 36-7-37), author's photos taken May 10, 2023 with the assistance of Lawrence Berman, Chair, Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East.

Found also with this burial inside the wood coffin: two carnelian barrel beads and numerous faience beads (circular and tubular): black, blue, and faded green glazed cylinders; black, white, red-brown, blue, green glazed rings.¹⁰²

“Boston” Bronze Fragments, G 6028 Shaft F (Western Cemetery) Harvard-Boston MFA Reisner Expedition, 1925, located at Boston MFA, discovered in the sand inside the coffin along with broken foot and leg bones: bronze fragments of what appears to be diadem ornaments of this same type (see figs. 38 and 39); potentially 5th Dynasty (not attested):¹⁰³

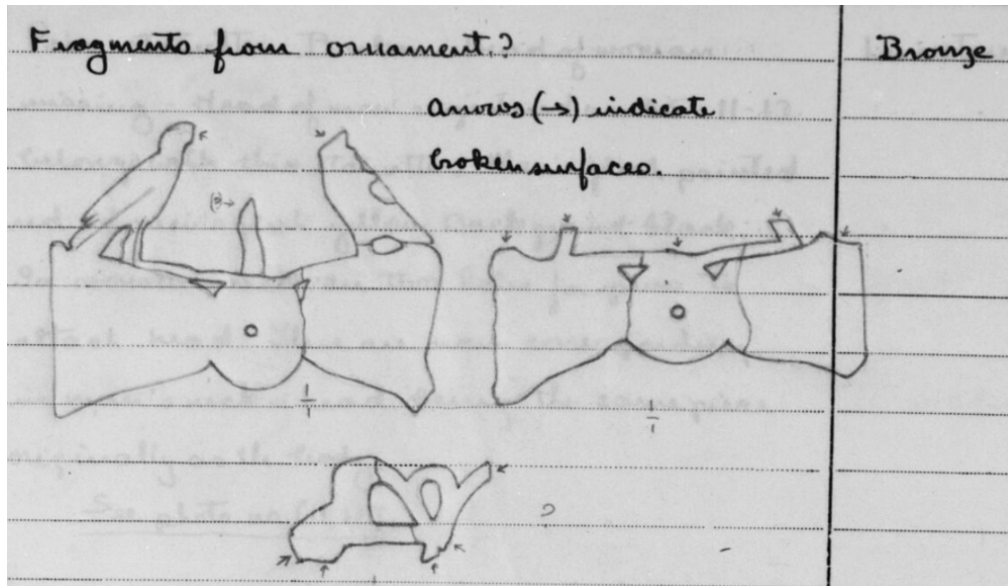


Figure 38. “Boston” Bronze Fragments, Excavation Illustration

Harvard-MFA Expedition Register Entry, December 1925, from “Fragments of Bronze Diadem,” Digital Giza, accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/12116/full/>.

¹⁰² Digital Giza, “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23468/full/>.

¹⁰³ Digital Giza, “Fragments of Bronze Diadem,” accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/12116/full/>.



Figure 39. “Boston” Bronze Fragments, MFA Boston Color Photo

MFA Boston collection photo, accession number 25.2900, bronze fragments described as “might be diadem similar to one in Old Kingdom gallery” although perhaps mistakenly labeled “two hawks facing each other and perched on top of [lotus] blossoms,” from “Diadem Fragments (?)” MFA Boston, accessed January 14, 2024, <http://collections.mfa.org/objects/406068/diadem-fragments->.

Also found in G 6028 Shaft F: various faience beads as noted here in the excavation report, with cylinders in both blue and purplish black, and rings in blue (see fig. 40):

3 cylinder beads. Blue glaze	Faience	L. 8 ⁵ - .7 D. 2 ⁵
2 cylinder beads. Purplish black	"	L. 9 .7 ⁵ D. 2 ²⁵ .2 ⁵
29 ring beads. Blue glaze		D. 1.3

Figure 40. Faience Beads, G 6028 Shaft F, Excavation Register

Harvard-MFA Expedition Register Entry, December 1925, from "Jewelry Element: Faience Bead," Digital Giza, accessed January 12, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/12098/full/>.

"Cairo" Stucco Fragments, Uninscribed Mastaba "B" Shaft 42 (far Western Cemetery, 500 meters west of G 2000), Abu Bakr Excavation, 1949-50, discovered with probable male skeleton: stucco with gold leaf fragments; potentially Dynasty 4-5. Skeleton considered male according to Dr. F. Abadir's osteological analysis in approximately 1950 (yet biological gender not certain without updated analyses; is pelvis wide enough to be female? See fig. 41). Height of about 1.60 meters (5.25 feet). Has "kyphosis (hunch-back) of the spine" per collapse of two vertebrae.



Figure 41. Skeleton, Uninscribed Mastaba "B" Shaft 42, Excavation Photo

Photo from Abu Bakr excavation, image from Abdel-Moneim Abu-Bakr, "Excavations at Giza 1949-50" (Cairo: Government Press, 1953), Plate XLII.A.

The photo does not lend itself well to analysis of the pelvis, although certainly this could indeed be a male skeleton per the contemporary diagram below (see fig. 42):

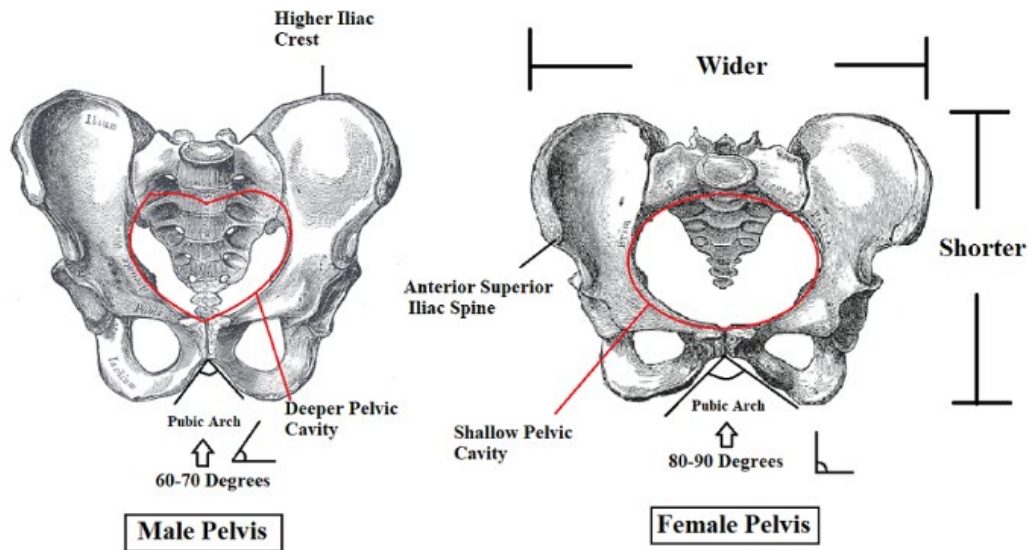


Figure 42. Diagram Comparing Male and Female Pelvis Size and Shape

From “Male vs Female Pelvis,” *RegisteredNurseRN.com* with Nurse Sarah, December 3, 2019, <https://www.registerednursern.com/male-vs-female-pelvis/>.

This burial also included gold leaf probably used as covering for the fingertips (found near the hands) and similarly found near the toes. Small beads were scattered within the sarcophagus as well, which were not further described or photographed.¹⁰⁴ The sarcophagus was hewn out of the rock chamber and “down to the level of the floor of the chamber,” with skeleton on its side facing east. Fragments “of a disintegrated headband” were discovered “underneath and around the skull” and were “made of stucco and coated

¹⁰⁴ Abdel-Moneim Abu-Bakr, *Excavations at Giza 1949-50* (Cairo: Government Press, 1953), 85, https://gizamedia.rc.fas.harvard.edu/images/MFA-images/Giza/GizaImage/full/library/abu-bakr_giza.pdf.

with thin leaves of gold” (see fig. 43). Two of (presumably) three roundels were preserved; drawings in black ink still visible “and show two papyrus flowers, with the sign of life ‘*nh* (*ankh*) between.”¹⁰⁵ Note in the images that the *ankh* symbol *also* appears (unusually) below the papyrus umbels, but otherwise the fragments are quite consistent with the iconography of the three full circlets:

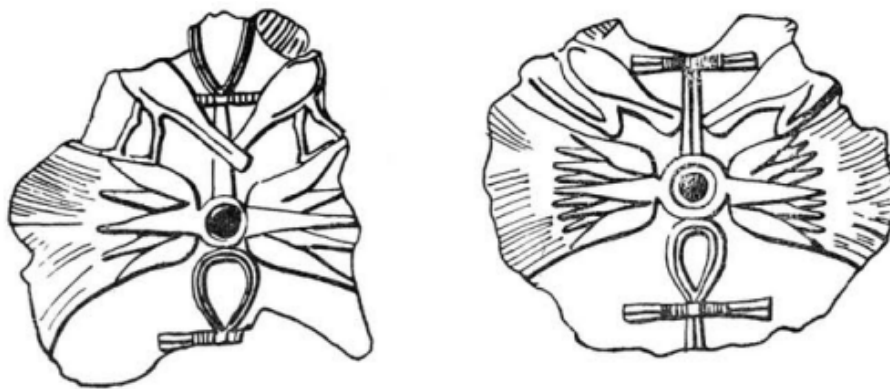


Figure 43. “Cairo” Stucco Fragments, Excavation Illustration

As there are no (known) photos, this excavation illustration provides the only available image for the “Cairo” stucco fragments discovered with the skeleton in Uninscribed Mastaba “B” Shaft 42, from Abu Bakr, “Excavations at Giza 1949-50,” 84, accessed via https://gizamedia.rc.fas.harvard.edu/images/MFA-images/Giza/GizaImage/full/library/abu-bakr_giza.pdf.

The findings above detail the *archaeological* contexts for these symbolically-related diadems and fragments discovered at the Giza Necropolis by numerous, global teams of researchers during the course of the 20th century and it will be useful now to turn to the ancient *textual* contexts.

¹⁰⁵ Abu-Bakr, *Excavations at Giza, 1949-1950*, 84.

Textual Context: *sšd* and *mdh* Headbands

There is mention in the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts, the Book(s) of the Dead and other ancient Egyptian texts of two forms of headdress which were not considered crowns or (royal) diadems. These headband forms are transliterated as the *sšd* and the *wšhw* or *mdh*. Egyptologist /Philologist Alan Gardiner’s famed 20th century sign list includes the following for the *sšd* which he describes as a “headband” or “garland” (see fig. 44):

𓄠 band of string or linen Det. bind, exx. 𓄠𓄠𓄠 *sšd* ‘head-band’; 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠 *rnš* ‘garland’; 𓄠𓄠𓄠 *fb*, ‘loose’, whence 𓄠¹ *fb* ‘depart’; from the last, phon. det. in 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠 *rw Fnšw* ‘Phoenician lands’. Det. papyrus-books, exx. 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠 *šfdw* ‘papyrus’; 𓄠𓄠𓄠 *sun* ‘deed’. Phon. or phon. det. *rk* (from *rk* ‘bind on’) in 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠 *rk* ‘swear’; 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠 var. 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠 *rkj* ‘last day’ of the month (§ 264).
¹ *Sinai* 90, 16; see GARD. *Sin.* 20.

Figure 44. Gardiner Hieroglyphic Transliteration and Translation for *sšd* Headband

From Alan Henderson Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs, 3rd ed., rev. (London: Published on behalf of the Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, by Oxford University Press, 1957), 523.

According to Daniel Selden, this “looped thread” determinative has connotations for “tying/untying actions” which is relevant (as discussed later; see fig. 45):¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Daniel Selden, *Hieroglyphic Egyptian: an Introduction to the Language and Literature of the Middle Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 546.

















 looped thread **Det.** for *ʿrq* “to dress/bind,” *fh* “to loosen,” *sšd* “headband,” and other terms related to tying/untying actions. Also, for *šfdw* “papyrus scroll,” *smn* “document,” and other terms related to documentation.

Figure 45. Selden Hieroglyphic Transliteration and Translation for *sšd* Headband

From Daniel Selden, Hieroglyphic Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Literature of the Middle Kingdom, 2nd ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 546.

sšd when used with other determinatives, also means (variously) thunderbolt, flash, and window, and so carries with it a connotation of bright light or luminosity.¹⁰⁷

Gardiner’s sign list includes this description of the *wšhw* or *mdh* as a “wreath” or “fillet” – and note that the image is of a circlet that is also tied in some fashion (see fig. 46).

 band of cloth as fillet Ideo. or det. wreath, exx.    ¹ *wšhw* ‘wreath’;  ² var.  var. O.K.   ³ *mdh* ‘fillet’. From this last, phon. *mdh* (*mdh*) in   ⁴ *mdh*, var.   ⁵ *mdh*, ‘hew’ and the related noun  ⁶ varr.  ⁷  ⁸ *mdh(w)* ‘carpenter’, ‘shipwright’.

¹ Brit. Mus. 826. ² Brit. Mus. 828, in this and the ex. quoted under 3 often wrongly translated ‘girdle’. ³ *Urk.* i. 98, 12, in the phrase *fr mdh* as above n. 2.
⁴ *Urk.* iv. 56, 13. ⁵ *Urk.* iv. 778, 14. Sim. *mdh*, *ib.* 707, 14. ⁶ Cairo 588.
⁷ Cairo 20441. ⁸ Brit. Mus. 223.

Figure 46. Gardiner Hieroglyphic Transliteration and Translation for *wšhw* or *mdh*

From Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 505.

¹⁰⁷ Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Printed for the Griffith Institute at the University Press, 1962), 249.

Selden lists the *w3hw* / *mdh* determinative in this way (see fig. 47):¹⁰⁸

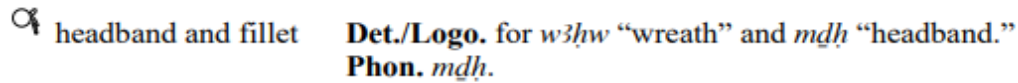


Figure 47. Selden Hieroglyphic Transliteration and Translation for *w3hw* or *mdh*

From Selden, *Hieroglyphic Egyptian*, 2nd ed., 536.

In her dissertation on royal Egyptian crowns, Sandra Collier considers the *sšd* circlet as particularly associated with Osiris (and is often-depicted along with the god's *atef* (*3tf*) a feathered white crown closely associated with Osiris and the mortuary cult) and comments that "it signifies regeneration in the next world through light [Re] and air [Shu]."¹⁰⁹ She finds the *sšd* also associated with the double feathers crown (*swty*) and Horus, particularly as relates to the Horus-Osiris "renewal of life" cycle.¹¹⁰ Additionally, Collier writes that when the deceased was designated as an Osiris, he was sometimes called *sšd.y* "the one with the *sšd* fillet."¹¹¹ She also notes that "as far back as the Old Kingdom, Isis and Nephthys are shown wearing 'fillets' at funeral ceremonies," and that Bruyere has described that the *sšd* when viewed from above resembles the *ankh* sign.¹¹² Collier describes that the New Kingdom Book of Gates relates the laying in place of a fillet to the transmission of royal power in the *Sed* (jubilee/periodic rejuvenation) Festival

¹⁰⁸ Selden, *Hieroglyphic Egyptian*, 536.

¹⁰⁹ Collier, "The Crowns of Pharaoh," 65.

¹¹⁰ Collier, 66.

¹¹¹ Collier, 66.

¹¹² Collier, 65.

of the king, quoting from Erik Hornung's Book of Gates translations: "The *sšd* restores me. I am powerful in the ka chapel which is in the earth" and "The one Horus has made for his father Osiris: to transfigure him, to restore for him the *sšd*" or alternately "in order that the *sšd* shine for him." Collier concludes that the *sšd* in combination with the *3tf* and *swty* crowns signify "the eternity of kingship through the death of the old king (Osiris – *3tf*) and the birth of the new king (Horus – *swty*) through the function of regeneration (*sšd*)."¹¹³

For the various forms of the fillet (*sšd*, *w3ḥw*, *mdḥ*), in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts we find in Utterance 466:

O King, you are this great star, the companion of Orion, who traverses the sky with Orion, who navigates the Netherworld with Osiris; you ascend from the east of the sky, being renewed at your due season and rejuvenated at your due time. The sky has borne you with Orion, the year has put a fillet on you with Osiris, hands have been given to you, the dance has gone down to you, a food-offering is given to you, the Great Mooring-post cries out to you as (to) Osiris in his suffering. O King, navigate and arrive, but beware of the Great Lake!¹¹⁴

Here, it is stated that the deceased Pharaoh, as well as perhaps Osiris (unclear via translation), has had a fillet (*sšd*) put (tied?) on by the "year" (from Faulkner's English translation of Sethe's version of the hieroglyphic text (see fig. 48):

¹¹³ Collier, 66–67.

¹¹⁴ Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Special ed. (New York: Oxford University Press; Sandpiper Books, 1998), 155.

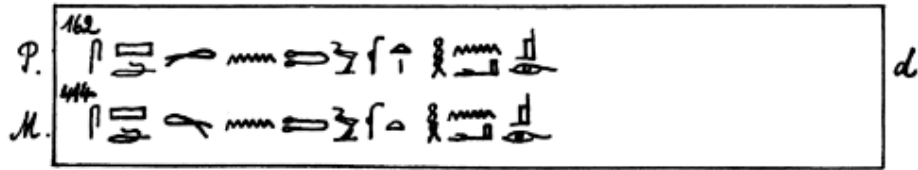


Figure 48. Hieroglyphs from Line of Pyramid Text Utterance 466

Sethe's list of hieroglyphic variations of line of Pyramid Text Utterance 466 (as numbered by Faulkner), from Die Altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte Nach Den Papierabdrücken Und Photographien Des Berliner Museums, Neu Hrsg. Und Erläutert von Kurt Sethe, Vol. 1 (Unknown Place: Hinrich, 1908-22), 493, accessed August 2, 2023, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b000804111?urlappend=%3Bseq=1>.

Allen's translation reads:

Ho, Pepi! You are the big star that is Orion's companion, who travels the sky with Orion and rows the Duat with Osiris. You emerge in the eastern side of the sky, renewed at your proper season and rejuvenated in your time, Nut having given you birth with Orion, the year having put your headband on you with Osiris. Arms are given for you, drumming (feet) go down for you, you are given a repast, and the Great Mooring-Post screams for you as (for) Osiris in his activity. Ho, Pepi! Row and reach (the sky, but) beware of the Great Lake!¹¹⁵

Here, to be renewed and rejuvenated in your proper season and time, is conjoined with receiving (from the year) the *sšd* headband.

A notable passage in the (predominantly) Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts (which, as noted earlier, came out of the Pyramid Text tradition, were primarily found on coffins for elite men and women, and performed a similar afterlife function), CT 1030 as translated by Raymond Faulkner reads:

See, its starry sky is in *Ön*, the sun-folk are in Kher-aha because its thousand gods are born, because their fillets (*sšd.f*) are bound on, because their oars are grasped. I will go with them aboard the lotus-bark at the

¹¹⁵ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 128.

dockyard of the gods. I will take possession of the bark with lotus-leaves on her ends, I will ascend in her to the sky, I will navigate in her in company with Re, I will navigate in her with Mgf-ib, I will act as pilot in her to the polar region of the sky, to the stairway of the bark of Mercury.¹¹⁶

Here it is notable that the fillet is bound onto each of the “thousand gods” associated with the solar barque of Re. This is clearly a relevant aspect of preparation for those who have already been “born” as gods and who are part of the retinue accompanying Re on his daily circuit. CT 1030 is also part of the “Book of Two Ways,” a series of texts (roughly Coffin Texts ranging 1029 – 1130) recorded “on the bottoms of Middle Kingdom coffins from el Barsha” and which “the ancient Egyptians clearly treated ... as a book with a beginning and an end.”¹¹⁷ Leonard Lesko’s translations of two versions of CT 1030 from this set of coffins, begin *instead* with “The starry host is in Heliopolis, the sun people in Babylon, because of the birth of its thousand gods to him who has bound on his headband and has grasped his steering oar” (version A), with the variation “O you who have given birth to a thousand gods, who have bound on your headband and who have hewn your steering oar” (version B).¹¹⁸ As this is the “spell for sailing in the great bark of Re,” we discover that Re has bound on his own headband (and Faulkner mentions by footnote that *sšd.f* is singular “but English demands the plural”).¹¹⁹ We discover via Lesko that the deceased’s hope is to join (or variously, pass by without being destroyed) the “entourage of flame”, which is “that which is around Re, that which is bound together around him” (CT 1033)¹²⁰ CT 1128 further describes this entourage of flame: “The entourage which

¹¹⁶ Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Modern Egyptology Series (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1973), 3:128.

¹¹⁷ Leonard H. Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 17:134.

¹¹⁸ Lesko, 13.

¹¹⁹ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3:128.

¹²⁰ Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 16.

is on the prow: Isis, Seth, and Horus. The entourage which is on the stern: Authoritative-utterance [Hu], Perception [Sia], and Re.”¹²¹ Here, Re’s binding on of the *sšd* fillet appears part of the preparation or requirements for steering the solar bark – for embarking on the daily circuit of the heavens.

Another quite relevant passage comes from Pyramid Text Utterance 519, one of the “ferryman” texts, which Faulkner translates as:

I have gone down upon the sea; bow your head and bend down your arm, O sea! These are they whom Nut bore, who have gone down upon you with their garlands on their heads and their garlands of the *ib*-tree at their throats, who make green the *Nt*-crowns of the canals of the Field of Offerings for Isis the Great, who tied on the fillet in Chemmis when she brought her loin-cloth and burnt incense before her son Horus the young child, that he might cross the earth on his white sandals and go to see his father Osiris.¹²²

Allen’s translation of the same passage is as follows:

I have descended onto the Great Green. Bow your head, bend down your arms, Great Green! These are Nut’s children who go down on you, with their wreaths at their head and their wreaths of halfa-grass at their neck, who make verdant the Red Crowns and the Field of Rest’s canals for great Isis – she who tied the headband on her son Horus as a young boy in Akhbit, using her dress and censuring before him so that he might cross the land in his white sandals and go to see his father Osiris.¹²³

It becomes apparent that *one needs the fillet for the journey*, whether by Re’s solar bark, or by “crossing the earth” to Osiris. Near the ending of CT 1130 (also considered CT 1031), Lesko translates, “as for any person who knows this spell, he will be like Re in the east of the sky, like Osiris in the midst of the underworld (*Duat*),” even while he notes that different versions of other coffin texts emphasize *either* piloting the solar bark, or

¹²¹ Lesko, 128.

¹²² Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 193.

¹²³ Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 166.

reaching the mansion of Osiris.¹²⁴ We are back to the conjoined afterlife connotations of solar and stellar journeys as considered by Goebis and others.

Connection to the *per ankh*

In the much later Graeco-Roman-era text studied primarily from the 1960's to the present, and first published as "The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth" in 2005, a subsequent (2014) version by Richard Jasnow and Karl-Theodor Zauzich translates the following passages, from the ritual of entering into the "Chamber of Darkness."

(Disciple): "May I awaken in the Chamber of Darkness, the character of the Ibis leading him. [I am] the one who hears in the Chamber of Darkness, in the shrines of the Spirits. [I] wish to bark among the dogs of Shai (Seshat), the great one. [The wish of my heart] is that which brought me (here). May I be one with the youths!" (Master): "...He said, 'Who are you? What is that which you have sought? Who, who is the one who created/tied your fillet?'" (Disciple): "I am The-one-who-loves-knowledge, the one who has sought the craft of the mouth. The Ibis (Thoth) is the one who bound me up that I may comprehend it."¹²⁵



Footnotes explicate this as a kind of "coming of age" ceremony with Thoth tying the fillet on the head of the disciple of the House of Life (Chamber of Darkness).

The meaning appears to be, as in the Pyramid Texts, the preparation or initiation of the disciple/youth/young Horus for the path to the knowledge of immortality (the way of Osiris; the way taught within the House of Life as will be explicated later). The tying on of the fillet (Isis for her son Horus / Thoth for his disciple) relates directly to this initiation, in other words, and refers in my estimation to more than merely "coming of age." Later in the Book of Thoth, *Shentait*-Shai appears again, and the footnotes describe

¹²⁴ Lesko, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways*, 131–35.

¹²⁵ Richard Jasnow, *Conversations in the House of Life: A New Translation of the Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 59.

her as *Isis-Seshat*, a single goddess figure – another common to both the Pyramid Text (519) and the Book of Thoth text. One must become/be Horus in this life, walk in the way of Osiris as trained by those in the House of Life, in order to become as Osiris, eternally alive and identified with Orion or in this region or *Duat* as a star or like a star.

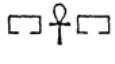
What was the enigmatic “House of Life?” Alan Gardiner’s 1938 article describes that the hieroglyphs  and  both represent/spell the *pr-‘nh* – the “*per ankh*” or House of Life which existed at many sites (including Abydos, Memphis, Akhmim, Hermopolis, Amarna, Edfu) and where extant textual evidence dates back to the 3rd millennium BCE.¹²⁶ These Houses of Life span from the Old Kingdom through to Ptolemaic and potentially to the Roman period, with fragments of the Book of Thoth dating as late as the 2nd century CE and therefore considered still crucial to copy.¹²⁷ According to Jasnow and Zauzich, “such a composition as the Book of Thoth would have been copied, read, and discussed by a very small circle of priestly scribes, probably all of whom would have been connected with the House of Life.”¹²⁸ They posit a “double function” for the House of Life, which included both scribal training and activity and daily cult ritual for Osiris (both of which would have required initiation by senior priests), and *beyond this*, the possibility that the *per ankh* was, on the one hand, a tangible place with active personnel, and alternatively that it represented a “symbolic ideal rather than a physical entity.”¹²⁹




¹²⁶ Alan H. Gardiner, “The House of Life,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24, no. 2 (1938): 158–60, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3854786>.

¹²⁷ Richard Jasnow and Karl-Theodor Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth II: Revised Transliteration and Translation, New Fragments, and Material for Future Study* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2021), 31–46.

¹²⁸ Jasnow, *Conversations in the House of Life*, 45.

¹²⁹ Jasnow, 43.

While evidence is scant for the Old Kingdom and even for the Middle Kingdom, the House of Life is mentioned in a royal decree dated to the reign of Pepi II in the 6th Dynasty, in epithets from the 5th and 12th dynasties (and beyond), and even – in the New Kingdom – in the form of physical remains (a brick bearing the stamp  was found at 18th dynasty Amarna).¹³⁰ Gardiner also lists numerous named scribes “of the House of Life” and scribes “of the sacred book(s) in the House of Life.”¹³¹ The most notable passage describing the House of Life is found in the Ptolemaic-era “Papyrus Salt 825”:

As for the House of Life, it shall be in Abydos. Build it in four bodies, the inner body being of covered reeds (?). As for the four ’s and the  – as for the ‘*nhy*’ (“the living one”), he is Osiris, and as for the four ’s (they are) Isis, Nephthys, Horus and Thoth, Isis being on one side and Nephthys on the other; Horus on one (side) and Thoth on the other. These are the four sides. Geb is its ground (*i.e.* floor) and Nut its heaven (*i.e.* ceiling). The hidden one who rests within it is the Great God. The four outer bodies consist of a stone that contains two wings, and its lower part (*i.e.* its floor?) is sand, and its outside has severally four doors, one south, one north, one west, and one east. It shall be very hidden and very large. It shall not be known, nor shall it be seen; but the sun shall look upon its mystery. The people who enter into it are the staff of Re and the scribes of the House of Life. The people who are in it, the *fkty*-priest is Shu, the slaughterer (*hnty*) is Horus who slays the rebels for his father Osiris, and the scribe of the sacred books is Thoth, and it is he who will recite the (ritual) glorifications in the course of every day, unseen, unheard. Hale of mouths, and secret of body and mouths, they are far removed from sudden cutting-off. No Asiatic shall enter into it; he shall not see it. Thou art very far removed. The books that are in it are the emanations (*b3w*) of Re wherewith to keep alive this god and to overthrow his enemies. As for the staff of the House of Life who are in it, they are the followers of Re protecting his son Osiris every day.¹³²

¹³⁰ Alan H. Gardiner, “The House of Life,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24, no. 2 (1938): 160–61, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3854786>.

¹³¹ Gardiner, “The House of Life,” 161–64.

¹³² Gardiner, 168.

Here, what seems to be described is no physical structure, but a metaphysical construct where the living God's words – the emanations of Re – are the prime source of force, meaning, life itself. Gardiner posits here the “belief that the primary purpose of literary composition was to maintain life, whether that of the gods, of the king, or of mankind generally.¹³³ Other inscriptions associate the House of Life with the god Thoth *and* the goddess Seshat as well. For example, at Edfu is found “Seshat of Lower Egypt, the lady of plans, the lady of writings in the House of Life,” and at Philae, “Seshat the great who presides at the House of Life.”¹³⁴ As Gardiner notes, Isis, Horus, and Khnum [the creator-god] were also connected with the *per ankh*, and yet,

Osiris may possibly have occupied a central position in the conception of the House of Life. If, as I have conjectured, the name of that institution referred to the power of divinely inspired writings to vivify that which was dead, no fitter object to benefit by their potency could have been found than Osiris himself, he being the prototype and pattern of all the dead. No doubt Books of the Dead of which hundreds are found in our museums were characteristic products of the House of Life. On its medical side the House of Life naturally had a vivifying function ... and magic possessed a similar aim.¹³⁵

¹³³ Gardiner, 168. He further notes that “the connection of the $\square \text{𓂏} \square$ with magic and medicine points in the same direction, and it must not be forgotten that the inscriptions on temples and tombs had an indubitable vivifying purpose, even if proofs of the fact are rare and ill-defined. When a learned scribe wrote a religious book, it was more than a mere book that he created or served as the instrument for creating. The book was an ‘emanation’ or ‘soul’ of Re, the creator-god.... How far back this conception goes we do not know for certain, but it seems likely that it was very ancient. The scribes who wrote in the ‘House of Life’ were ‘followers’ or ‘servants’ of Re, embodying in their compositions that creative power to maintain life which was his. Books were thus inspired, they were ‘sacred (lit. god’s) books’ and we recall also the term ‘god’s words.’ Was it Egypt that first put the notion of the Word of God into the heart of Man?”

¹³⁴ Gardiner, 174; Philippe Derchain, *Le papyrus Salt 825 (B. M. 10051) rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1965), 38.

¹³⁵ Gardiner, 178.

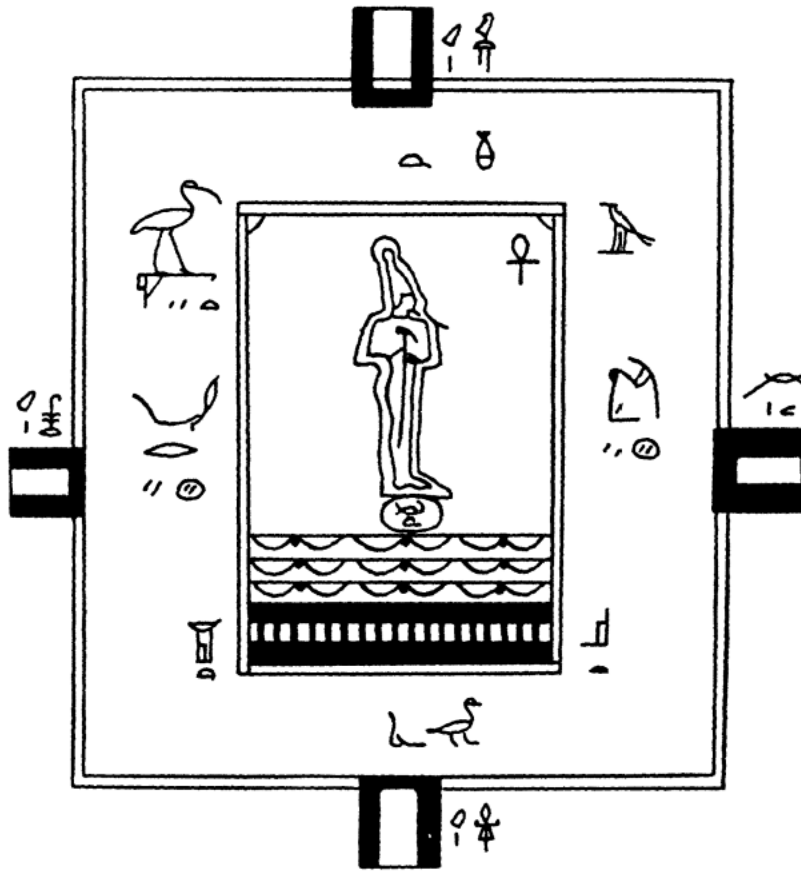


Figure 49. Diagram of the House of Life from Papyrus Salt 825

From Gardiner, "The House of Life," 1938, 169.

And here it is imperative to note the diagram from Papyrus Salt 825 which illustrates the passage, and where the House of Life and the Way of Osiris as the model for the Way of a human being for 𓂏 , eternal life in the *Duat*, is visibly represented (see fig. 49). In this context, we can also consider the hieroglyph translated as "nether chamber in tomb" by Faulkner, literally *Duat* room: 𓂏 .¹³⁶ The Graeco-Egyptian era

¹³⁶ Faulkner and Jegerovic, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 382.

illustration in Papyrus Salt 825 helps to explain the references in the Book of Thoth to the House of Life as the “Chamber of Darkness” (according to Jasnow and Zauzich, this being its “secret” or esoteric name) given its “underworldly connotations” and “Osirian aspects.”¹³⁷ In this house, Thoth as “sacred scribe” is the instrument for the god’s words, and the training ground – kept invisible from those not privy to this Way – enables a “disciple” to inhabit his or her own inner sanctum surrounded by Isis, Nephthys, Horus and Thoth, with Geb under foot and Nut above, and to participate in the cosmic cycle or regeneration while alive on earth in preparation for becoming an *akh* – an effective, luminous spirit – in the afterlife. The *akh* is depicted hieroglyphically as the ibis (symbolic of Thoth) *with crest* – the haloed, transfigured, disciple-become-master-of-the-ego and able to be illuminated by light and power by Re. Here I am proposing that the disciple/scribe (become one of the “staff” of the House of Life, whose fillet has been tied on by Thoth in symbolic affirmation of this preparatory step) is pursuing the knowledge gained by Thoth on the path to become Osiris-like – as attested in the Pyramid Texts extant for the royal afterlife journey, where the King and the Queen are *each* instructed and invoked in their tombs, another form of chamber of darkness, for the afterlife possibility to become *as Osiris*, a luminous being in the starry *Duat*.¹³⁸ And that, as the

¹³⁷ Jasnow, *Conversations in the House of Life*, 43–44.

¹³⁸ It is also possible, in my estimation, that Gardiner’s translation of the hieratic and Middle Egyptian Westcar Papyrus (*P. Berlin* 3033, dated variously to the 18th through 16th centuries BCE) *also* refers to *metaphysical* “chambers,” akin to light-bodies, which an individual being needed to enter or inhabit in order to become Osiris-like at the time of his or her death (when he/she entered the *akhet*). The papyrus describes Cheops’ delight in Djedi given that he “‘knew the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth,’ for Cheops himself ‘had spent (much) time in searching for the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth in order to make the like thereof for his horizon.’” Here, Khufu (Cheops), the supposed builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza (or perhaps, he who modified an already-existing structure), seeks wisdom from Djedi, a renowned wonder-worker of life-renewing miracles. Alan H. Gardiner, “The Secret Chambers of the Sanctuary of Thoth,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 11 (1925): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030751332501100102>.

disciples follow Thoth they *also* follow Seshat, as these were a male/female pairing with similar (although not identical) roles as sacred scribes affiliated with the House of Life. According to Wainwright, “Seshat was a variant of Nephthys, an ancient sky-goddess, who seems to have been concerned with the kingship, and was called ‘She who reckoneth the life-period, Lady of Years, Lady of Fate,’” titles quite similar to those accorded to Seshat – a *notable* connection given the Papyrus Salt passage.¹³⁹ According to myth, Isis and Nephthys literally reconstitute and regenerate the body of Osiris – usually depicted between the two goddesses – after his pieces have been scattered by Seth;¹⁴⁰ priestesses impersonating these goddesses would mourn (literally, wail) for Osiris in the House of Osiris in annual re-enactments, *and* during the Old Kingdom and beyond would accompany the body of the *newly*-deceased individual in sacred procession to the embalmer’s workshop and (afterwards) to the tomb, performing ceremonies.¹⁴¹ What we can’t see here is that the tradition was already fully formed in early dynastic and probably even pre-dynastic Egypt and that women’s roles in the Old Kingdom potentially exhibit hints of a prominence that was already beginning to decline. Women’s roles in the Middle and New Kingdoms were mainly in relationship to the cult of Hathor; in the Old Kingdom there were, notably, priestesses of Thoth along with male priests of Thoth *and* there are named male officials who were priests of Seshat at this time, so therefore also an active cult. Dagmar Budde lists names of priests of Seshat spanning from the Third Dynasty through the Sixth Dynasty, discovered in tomb sites at Saqqara and Giza, and

¹³⁹ G.A. Wainwright, “Seshat and the Pharaoh,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 26 (1941): 39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3854519>.

¹⁴⁰ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, 36.

¹⁴¹ Aylward M. Blackman, “On the Position of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 7, no. 1/2 (1921): 27–28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3853813>.

further in time named priests under Sesostris I (Twelfth Dynasty), Psammetich II (26th Dynasty), and during the Late period (c. 713-332 BCE).¹⁴² A.H. Wilkinson notes that “a temple foundation ceremony involving a priest of Seshat is recorded on the Palermo Stone for year x+7 of Den’s reign” [Den was a First Dynasty king].¹⁴³ Giza Tomb G 2120 contained a fragmentary stele for a lector priest named Seshat-sekhentiu (dated mid to late Fourth Dynasty, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts) where additional titles were not preserved, but his name in any case honors the goddess.¹⁴⁴ Niuserre’s Fifth Dynasty sun temple has images of a priest in procession with Seshat’s standard during the *Sed* Festival (see fig. 50):

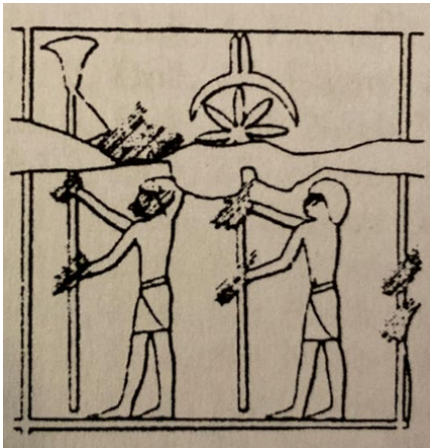


Figure 50. Illustration of *Sed* Festival Procession Relief, Sun Temple of Niuserre

From Budde, Die Göttin Seschat, 342, after von Bissing and Kees, Das Re-Heiligtum II: Die kleine Festdarstellung, pl. 7.

¹⁴² Dagmar Budde, *Die Göttin Seschat* (Leipzig: H. Votke, 2000), 326–28.

¹⁴³ Toby Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London: New York: Routledge, 1999), 294.

¹⁴⁴ Digital Giza, “Seshatsekhentiu (G 2120),” accessed January 9, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/ancientpeople/1868/full/>.

Jan Assmann posits that “the initiation of priests into certain cults was the prototype for the initiation of the deceased into the world beyond.”¹⁴⁵ Was the cult of Thoth during the Old Kingdom the same as, or at least connected closely with, the House of Life? Were women *also* included as disciples or cult staff of some kind in these enigmatic disciplines that may or may not in the Old Kingdom have had physical locations as they did later at (for example) Amarna and perhaps at Edfu? All three of the non-fragmentary Old Kingdom women’s circlets show a pair of crested ibises, and two of them include the *ankh* symbol between the *akhs* – as appears the case for two of the sets of fragments as well.

There are many extant images of Seshat – one of whose roles was to measure and record the king’s reigning life (his sanctity to rule coming from the gods) and so determining the timing for the *Heb-Sed* (or *Sed*) festival, variously considered as occurring at each 30th year of reign or perhaps far more frequently.¹⁴⁶ This was a rejuvenation ceremony of some kind where the king’s potency via his connection to the gods was renewed and re-vivified – *accorded life*. In imagery we see Seshat with the *ankh*. She records the time of the king’s life on a special wooden stick which recalls the year putting on a fillet (see fig. 51).

¹⁴⁵ Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 200.

¹⁴⁶ Jeremy Naydler, *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: The Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt*, 85; Robert Bauval, *The Egypt Code* (London: Century, 2006), 60-66 (and positing every 7 years to accord with Seshat’s headdress symbol).

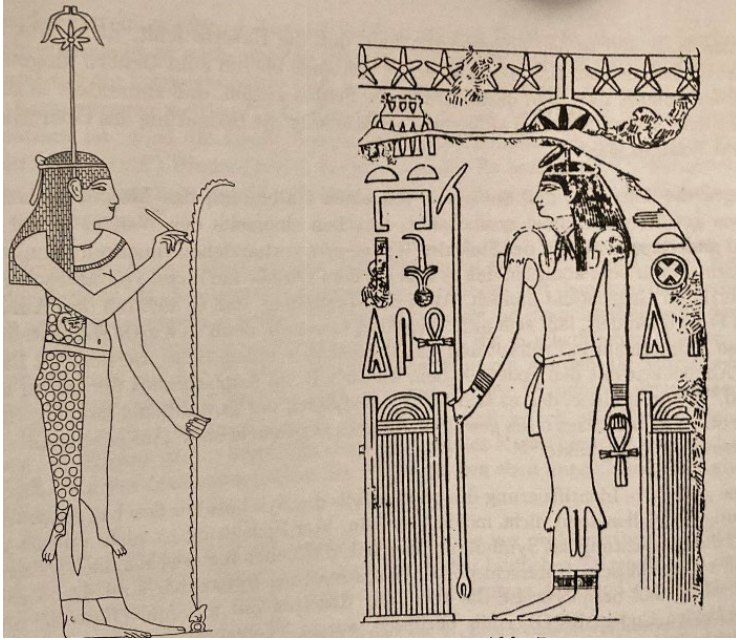


Figure 51. Seshat with Palm Stick, *Ankh*, and Leopard-Skin Garment

Illustrated reliefs from Dagmar Budde, Die Göttin Seschat (Leipzig: H. Votke, 2000), 50.

Seshat's headdress, in its oldest known versions shown as a 7-pointed flower *over which* a double feather tops the month symbol – later modified to appear like inverted double horns – was atop a rod or stem in the place of an eighth petal, and this connected the star-like flower to the headband which (notably) was tied around her head (see fig. 52).

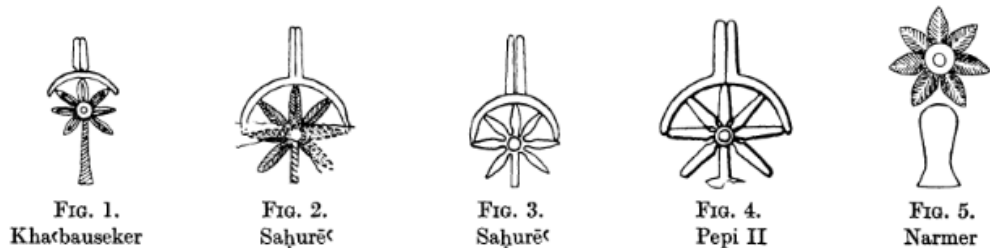


Figure 52. Seshat's Symbol in Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Images

From G. A. Wainwright, "Seshat and the Pharaoh," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 26 (1941): 31, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3854519>.

Wainwright's figure shows early depictions of her symbol where we see clearly the *petals* of a flower, and its *circular* center, so akin to the Old Kingdom fragment in the Boston MFA and the gold circular ornament of the "Leipzig" circlet (and similar also to the central stones of the *ankh/akh*/papyrus designs on the side ornaments for the Boston MFA circlet and to all three sets of fragments); could we consider these women's headdresses at Giza, with (in two cases) eight alternating bud/flower blooms, as connected in any way with Seshat's symbol?¹⁴⁷ Wainwright notes that on the Palermo Stone, Seshat's priest is called "the servant of the flower."¹⁴⁸

Images of Seshat (whose name actually means "female scribe") and Thoth show their related scribal function in naming and recording the individual's life (perhaps later related to being entered into the Book of Life in Jewish tradition) where they perform this duty together or separately (see fig. 53). According to Wainwright, "she records the royal name at birth and writes 'on the sacred tree' and marks the life-period of the king on a

¹⁴⁷ A challenge here is that the spiral stem shown clearly in the *earliest* (3rd dynasty) example and a 5th dynasty example could not be likened to an eighth petal.

¹⁴⁸ Wainwright, "Seshat and the Pharaoh," 31.

palm-stick.”¹⁴⁹ In the image below, from Ramesses II’s temple in Luxor (New Kingdom), Atum, Seshat and Thoth are pictured inscribing the king’s name and the years of his reign on the sacred *isd* or Persea tree during a *Sed* Festival, assuring him hundreds of thousands of years of life. This tree was intimately connected with Heliopolis and the cult of Atum (who became Re) dating to predynastic times, and considered the sacred location of the creation mound from which the first being arose from the primeval waters of Nun (also related to the Bennu bird and renewal). “Egyptian cosmology mentions that at the beginning of the world, the sacred *isd* tree (tree of life) unfolded itself upon the appearance of the sun god. The leaves of the god set down the names and years of the kings of Egypt to serve their annals.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Wainwright, 32.

¹⁵⁰ Tarneem Bayoumy, “Some Remarks on the iSd Tree, the Sacred Tree of Heliopolis,” *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality* 18, no. 3 (June 1, 2020): 8–10, <https://doi.org/10.21608/jaauth.2020.35733.1043>.

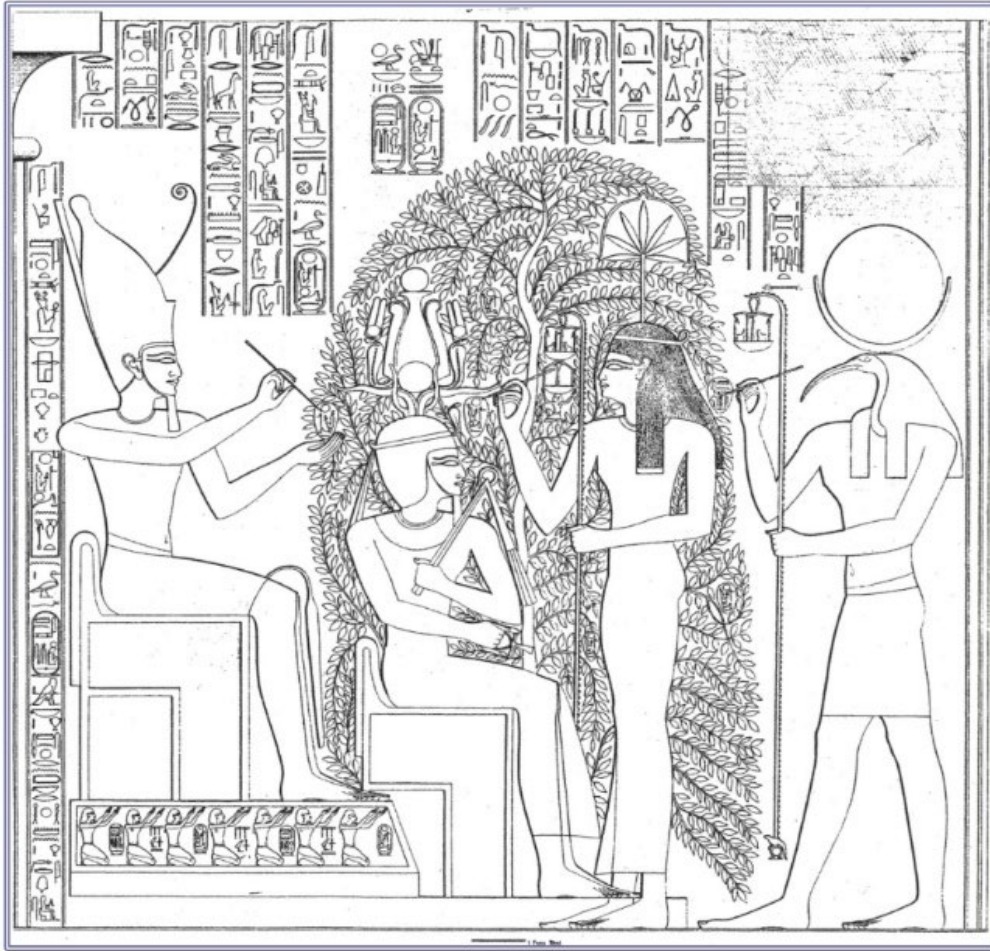


Figure 53. Seshat, Thoth, and Atum Inscribing the King's Name and Reign

Illustration from Martin A. Stadler, "Thoth," UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, no. 1 (July 11, 2012): 5, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2xj8c3qg>.

In *Shamanic Wisdom of the Pyramid Texts*, Jeremy Naydler proposes that the Old Kingdom pyramids of the 3rd to 6th dynasties were not constructed as mortuary tombs, but were built for the *Sed* festival of the living Pharaoh associated with each individual pyramid. In his estimation, "at the center of the *Sed* festival were initiatory rites in which the king went through an Osiris identification, 'died,' and was reborn" and that the

Pyramid Texts can be understood in this context just as easily as in funerary cult.¹⁵¹ Here, he connects the mystical and secret rites of initiation in the *Sed* festival with the later Eleusinian Mysteries, and Platonic and Hermetic writings.¹⁵² Naydler suggests that during the *Sed* festival, the king as “mediator” between the visible and invisible worlds harmonized this relationship for the benefit of all Egypt – performing a ritual communion with the gods of Egypt made present in their statues gathered together for this purpose.¹⁵³ In Naydler’s consideration, humans in the Old Kingdom understood reality differently than we do, and the *Duat* was a “subtle” and “deeply interior realm” where the essential forms of being exist, the “vital spiritual kernel” that causes all life in the outer, “manifest” world.¹⁵⁴ So the *Duat*, the so-called “realm of the dead,” was not a place in the sky or underworld, but “an ever present factor of life, interpenetrating the world of the living.”¹⁵⁵ In the *Sed* festival, the king has a “visionary encounter” with twelve gods and is reborn in the spirit realm to his “mother” (“usually being Nut, Sekhmet, or Isis in her celestial form as Sothis”), allowing rejuvenation on multiple levels.¹⁵⁶ His double coronation during the *Sed* (perhaps before and after the “secret rites”) was especially symbolic. According to Naydler, “the crowning itself was a cosmic event that was regarded as accomplishing the union of the Above and the Below, thereby infusing the earth with the fructifying energies of the spirit realm.”¹⁵⁷ He highlights an image of

¹⁵¹ Jeremy Naydler, *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: The Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2005), 322–23.

¹⁵² Naydler, 120–21.

¹⁵³ Naydler, 84–85.

¹⁵⁴ Naydler, 83–84.

¹⁵⁵ Naydler, 83.

¹⁵⁶ Naydler, 121.

¹⁵⁷ Naydler, 88.

Seshat embracing King Sneferu (4th Dynasty) during the *Sed* festival at the valley temple of the Bent Pyramid at Dahshur (see fig. 54):

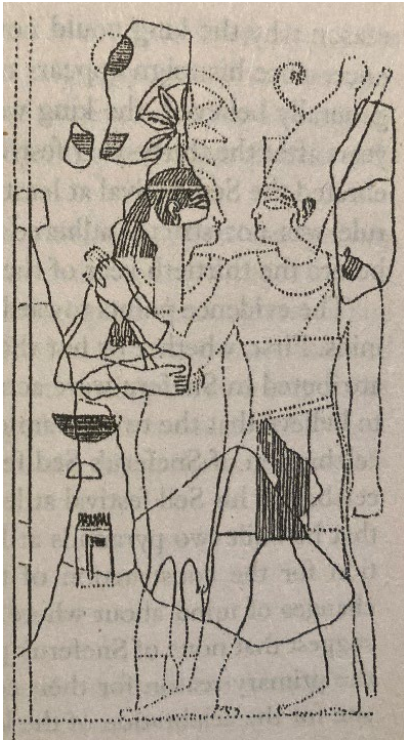


Figure 54. Seshat and King Sneferu at *Sed* Festival

From Jeremy Naydler, *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: The Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2005), 101.

Here can we also witness the intimate connection with the spiritual realm at the heart of this ceremony? They gaze face to face, her flower/star and his double crown aligned, equal in stature if the reconstruction is accurate. Life flows between them ... was the *per ankh* – the House of Life – behind all of this? In the Pyramid Texts, the king becomes Osiris – must he experience this before death in order to rise from the *akhet* as a living

akh after death? The later Greek Eleusinian mysteries (which were variously considered to have come from Egypt), called for a different (and more blessed) fate in the afterlife and a different relationship to death via mystical experiences and by coming face to face with the goddesses Demeter and Persephone after the reenactment of the daughter's return from the underworld. In the "chamber of darkness" that was the Telesterion at Eleusis, this reciprocal gaze was for the benefit of humanity and the gods.¹⁵⁸

In inscriptions, Seshat grants to various kings "many *Sed*-festivals;" at Edfu as she marks the measuring palm stick: "I notch the command of the Lord of Eternity; I notch thy kingship to the eternity of Re and the years of Atum in wearing the double crown."¹⁵⁹ According to G. A. Wainwright, her palm-stick 'regularly ends in 100,000 and 'infinity.'"¹⁶⁰ He writes that her position degraded, for "in the beginning she had been a great goddess with a full worship carried on by her priest and other officials, and celebrated with festivals and had been a goddess with whose name people formed their own."¹⁶⁰ The spots on her characteristic leopard-skin dress were depicted at times like stars in the night sky or the *Duat*, here as carved on a colossal statue of Ramesses II at Luxor (see fig. 55):

¹⁵⁸ Referencing arguments presented in the author's Harvard Extension School *CLAS E-206* final paper, "Death, Re-birth, and Epiphany at Eleusis," Spring 2015.

¹⁵⁹ Wainwright, "Seshat and the Pharaoh," 35.

¹⁶⁰ Wainwright, 32.

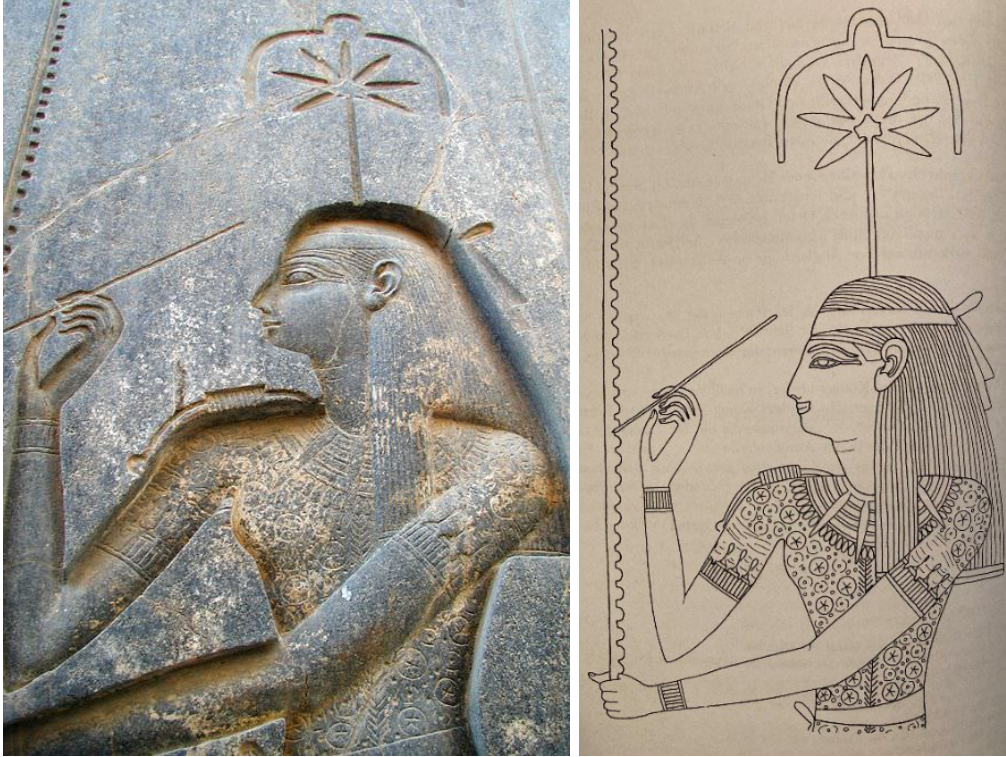


Figure 55. Image of Seshat at Luxor (Relief Photo and Illustration)

From “6055.Jpg (500×667),” *World History Encyclopedia*, accessed January 14, 2024, <https://www.worldhistory.org/uploads/images/6055.jpg?v=1636033504>, and Budde, *Die Göttin Seschat*, 28.

Her priests are also shown wearing this leopard-skin garb, as did the *sem*-priests – notably in the life-rejuvenating Opening the Mouth Ceremony performed on mummified individuals and in the ritual sacrifice of the bull.¹⁶¹ It is speculated that *sem*-priests may have been shamans prior to the First Dynasty; also, that they may have been the keepers of ritual texts during the First Dynasty before this role was transferred to the lector-priest during the Second Dynasty¹⁶² and so perhaps in very early days, these *sem*-priests were

¹⁶¹ Wainwright, 37.

¹⁶² Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, 273.

connected with the House of Life *and* Seshat.¹⁶³ The goddess' earliest named priest, Khabawsokar (Third Dynasty), was notably also involved in the cult of Anubis and so was related to life-to-physical-death transitions;¹⁶⁴ he is depicted wearing the *Sah*-collar which included a jackal (symbol of Anubis, considered son of Nephthys), six *ankh* signs and six *shen* signs, symbolizing in turn eternal life and eternal protection (see fig. 56):¹⁶⁵

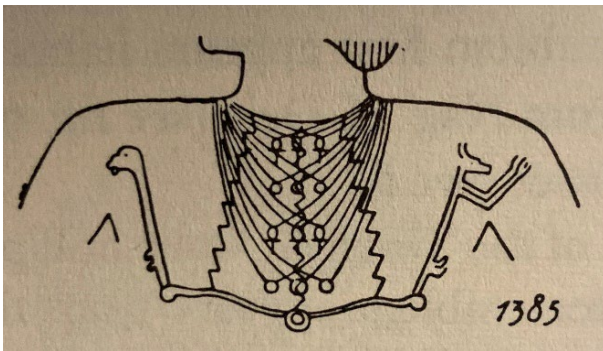


Figure 56. *Sah*-collar of Khabawsokar

Illustration from Alix Wilkinson, Ancient Egyptian Jewellery, Methuen's Handbooks of Archaeology (London: Methuen, 1971), 36.

On the slab stela from tomb G 1201 at Giza of Wepemnofret from the late 4th Dynasty, his listed titles include: “Commander of the king’s scribes, priest of Seshat, foremost of the archive(s) of the keeper of the king’s property, priest of the souls of Pe, priest of the northern Horus, priest of Anubis, overseer of fishers, great one of the Tens of

¹⁶³ Philippe Derchain also notes that *fkty* priests playing the role of Shu in the *per ankh* rites described in Papyrus Salt 825 were shown elsewhere with the leopard/panther-skin garment and were thus similar to the *sem*-priests, were mentioned as early as the Coffin Texts, and were noted to wear a lock of hair made of real lapis lazuli. See Philippe Derchain, *Le papyrus Salt 825 (B. M. 10051). rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte*, 73-75.

¹⁶⁴ Wainwright, “Seshat and the Pharaoh,” 36.

¹⁶⁵ Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 36.

Upper Egypt, heka-priest of Mehyt, priest of Heqet, *ht*-priest of Ha, king's son.”¹⁶⁶ Given his titles, can we posit that this prince may have been intimately connected with the House of Life? Here, Wepemnofret is shown wearing the leopard-skin garb (although the painted spots have faded), *and* we find a fine color depiction of the hieroglyphic symbol for Seshat (far right), further below the color-palette-and-reed sign for scribe (see fig. 57):



Figure 57. Slab Stela of Wepemnofret, Giza Tomb G 1201

From Peter Der Manuelian, Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis, Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt 7 (New Haven, CT: Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University, 2003), 2.

¹⁶⁶ Peter Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis* (New Haven, CT: Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University, 2003), 32.

We can also recall here that Seshat was named as Sixth Dynasty Queen Wedjebetni's mother in her pyramid tomb and that this queen was surrounded by priests and their kin in her burial complex. Following the Old Kingdom dynasties, Seshat's role began to diminish whereas that of Thoth retained (and even increased in) prominence.

Seshat is also connected with the "stretching the cord" ceremony where temples and other sacred sites were situated on earth via astral alignments, and this association is quite ancient. One of her epithets can be found in a Pyramid Text associating her with the goddess Nephthys in a "resurrection" text for the deceased king: "Nephthys has collected all your members for you in this her name of 'Seshat, Lady of Builders.'"¹⁶⁷ According to Schwaller de Lubicz, "the texts concerning the foundation of the temples affirm that the ritual of 'stretching the cord' (ascertaining the four angles of the temple) is carried out after sighting the circumpolar stars, hence defining a precise orientation at a given date."¹⁶⁸ This could include, of course, the construction of pyramids such as those at and near Giza. Robert Bauval's "Orion Correlation Theory" began by mapping the three stars of Orion's Belt to near-perfect alignment with the three Great Pyramids at Giza, and then expanded this research to include an even greater geographical mapping for all of the Memphite pyramids in the "as above, so below" worldview, to stars of Orion and Taurus and as they precede the rising of Sirius (Isis):

It was Bauval's contention that the part of the Milky Way which interested the Egyptians most was the region that runs from the star Sirius along the constellation of Orion on up towards Taurus. This region of the sky seemed to correspond, in the Egyptian mind at least, to the area of the Memphite necropolis, that is to say the span of Old Kingdom burial grounds stretching along the west bank of the Nile from Dahshur to Giza and down to Abu Ruwash. At the centre of this area was Giza; this, he

¹⁶⁷ Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 119.

¹⁶⁸ R. A. Schwaller de Lubicz, *Sacred Science: The King of Pharaonic Theocracy* (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1982), 285.

determined, was the earthly equivalent of Rostau ... the gateway to the Duat or underworld.¹⁶⁹

Further, Bauval continued prior research on the shafts of the Great Pyramid at Giza and determined that the angled shaft of the King's Chamber corresponded in ancient times (with dates debated) to the passage of Orion's belt star Al Nitak, and that of the Queen's Chamber similarly aligned with the passage of Sirius, thus affording passageway for the deceased King to this realm of the sky.¹⁷⁰ In pharaonic Egypt, Orion was depicted not as a hunter, but as *Sahu*, the Far Strider, leader of the 36 *baku* or decan stars, who turns to face Sirius (Isis) rather than towards the Taurean bull constellation.¹⁷¹ There are many concepts here, which can only be touched on briefly. Essentially: if the Giza necropolis was part of a long-term plan to conjoin the stars above with the earth and metaphysically to conjoin the subtle and physical realms, then what part did the elite women of Memphis play during the Old Kingdom? Important clues can be found in the tombs of Hetepheres I and Meresankh III in the Giza Necropolis.

¹⁶⁹ Adrian Gilbert, *Signs in the Sky: The Astrological & Archaeological Evidence for the Birth of a New Age* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 65.

¹⁷⁰ Andrew Collins, "Orion: The Eternal Rise of the Sky Hunter," n.d., 2–5, accessed January 15, 2024, https://www.academia.edu/8436435/Orion_The_Eternal_Rise_of_the_Sky_Hunter.

¹⁷¹ Collins, 2.

Chapter IV.

Women of the Old Kingdom

How would the three (primarily intact) burial headdresses which appear to be *sšd* or *mdh* rather than crowns or uraeus diadems found in the Giza necropolis connect specifically to afterlife possibilities for these individual non-queen and *likely* non-royal women? Returning briefly to the three Giza circlets and three sets of related fragments, it will be helpful to note the central elements for each, which we will circle back to later in this discussion. Details of the key iconographic features, photos and diagrams are highlighted below (see fig. 58).

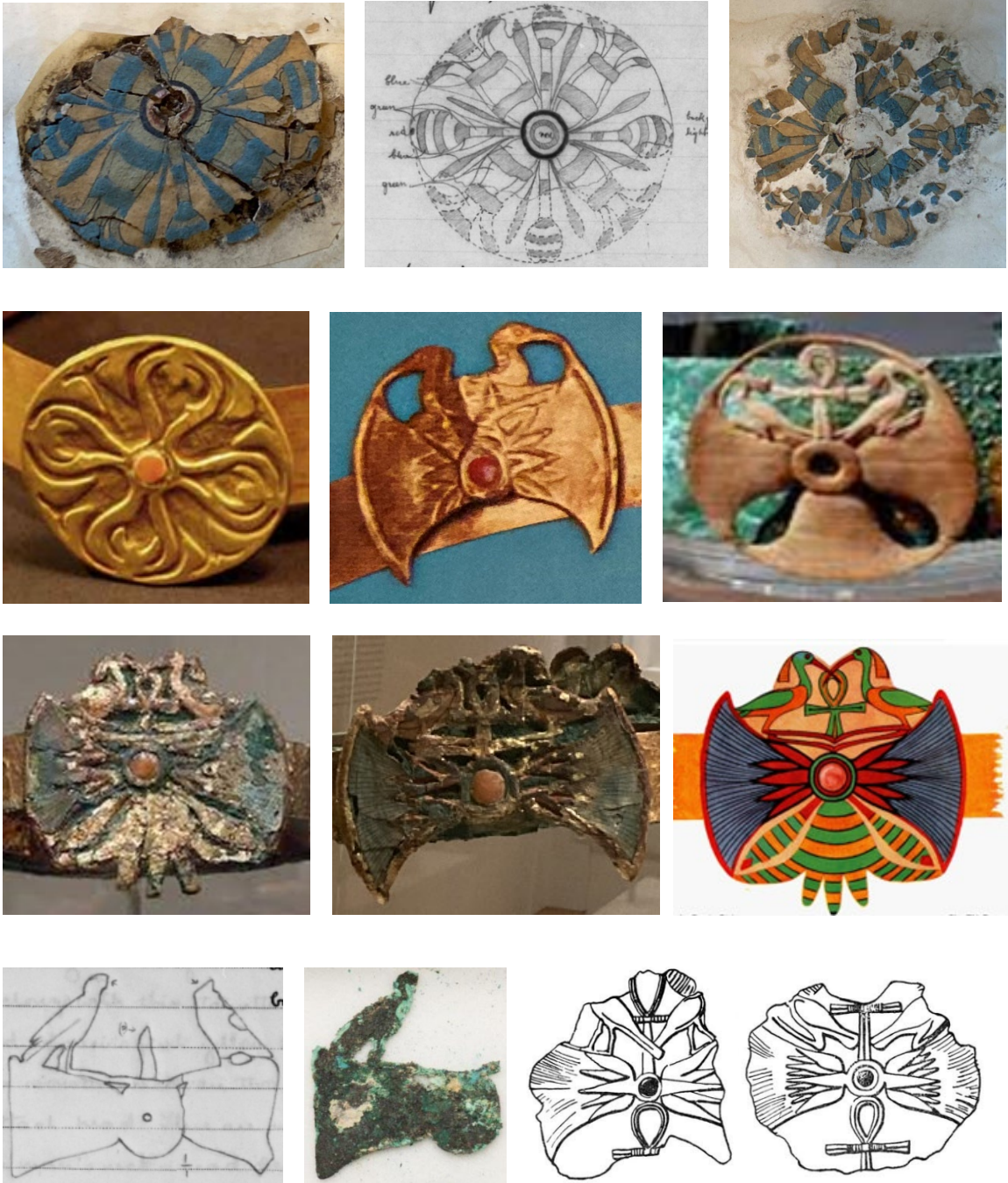


Figure 58. Images of Roundels from Giza Diadems and Fragments

Images and details from Figures 20, 24, 25, 29, 36, 37, 38, 39, 43, 105.

Old Kingdom Giza Tombs of Queens Meresankh III and Hetepheres I

In a February 1946 article for the *Bulletin* of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, titled, “An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom,” Dows Dunham compares the composition of the three full headbands (not including mention of any of the fragments), and cites their relationship to images of circlets worn by Princess Nofret (Meidum, 4th Dynasty) and Queen Meresankh III (Giza, 4th Dynasty), and as shown in the tomb of the official Mereruka (Saqqara, 6th Dynasty). Images of Nofret’s statue are below, shown wearing the wesekh broad collar as well (see fig. 59); studying the Old Kingdom, Burian considers these “the earliest distinctly Egyptian rosettes.”¹⁷²



Figure 59. Statue of Nofret with Rosette Circlet

Images from the Egypt Museum, Cairo (March 29, 2016), located at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C3%84gyptisches_Museum_Kairo_2016-03-29_Rahotep_Nofret_04.jpg, and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nofret#/media/File:%C3%84gyptisches_Museum_Kairo_2016-03-29_Nofret_03.jpg.

¹⁷² Burian, “Flowers of Re,” 8.

And the additional images below are from Dows Dunham, *Bulletin of the MFA* (February, 1946):

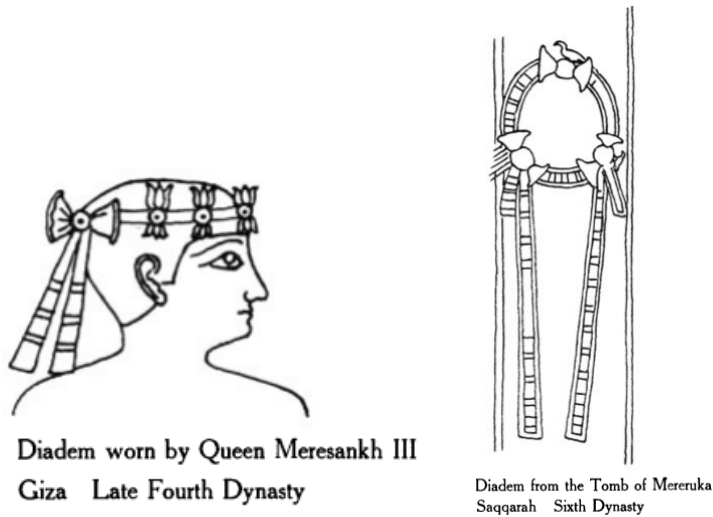


Figure 60. Diadem Illustrations from Tombs of Meresankh III and Mereruka

From Dows Dunham, "An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom," *Bulletin - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 44, no. 255 (1946): XLIV, 28.

Clearly, Nofret's circlet bears strong resemblance to our three Giza fillets, where Dunham considers the painted imagery as *representing* three-dimensional units affixed to an actual headpiece worn in life by this 4th Dynasty princess (wife of Prince Rahotep, a son of King Sneferu); as well, he presents the headpiece depicted in Mereruka's tomb with its "papyri and birds very like our piece," from a "scene showing metal-workers engaged in the manufacture of personal ornaments."¹⁷³ Even more significant, arguably,

¹⁷³ Dunham, "An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom," *Bulletin - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 44, no. 255 (1946): XLIV, 27.

is the connection to the image found in the burial chamber of Queen Meresankh III (see fig. 60).

Tomb of Meresankh III

The image of the circlet worn by Meresankh III, as noted by Dunham and depicted on the walls of her chapel/tomb (G7530-7540) at Giza's Eastern Cemetery, is part of a ritual scene extending (I would posit) beyond the use of the "boatman's circlet" as described by H.E. Winlock in his 1933 article for *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*. Winlock's account of the origin of the boatmen's circlet related to oarsmen traditionally putting wet water lilies through a headband (*tapes*) during boating tournaments in honor of the great nobles, prompting the elite to copy them when fishing, although using instead for their headbands gold and inlaid semiprecious stones. However, this is only one part of the iconography related to Meresankh's floral, tied headband and the ritual she is shown actively participating in while in a marsh boat.¹⁷⁴ Elite use of the "boatman's circlet" most certainly has religious significance which I will describe below. But first: who was Queen Meresankh III, and why is she so relevant to the three (or perhaps five or six) unnamed women who lived in subsequent decades and were buried with headbands so strikingly similar?¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Winlock, "Three Egyptian Gold Circlets," 159.

¹⁷⁵ Heike Wilde additionally notes: "The gilded head ring with motifs formed from crested ibis, papyrus umbels and ankh signs as decorative discs differs significantly from iconographic representations of worn diadems of the ship's ring type. Depictions of the diadem decorated with flowers, which is usually rendered in a simpler way, are mainly shown in the context of the sojourn in the swamps; sometimes in connection with provision (when receiving the gifts), at the sacrificial table, occasionally at the same time inhaling the scent from a jar of ointment (men) or standing by a flower (women)." Heike Wilde, "Grabbeigaben und ihre symbolische Bedeutung anhand eines Konvolutes aus Giza (Mastaba D 208)," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische sprache und altertumskunde* 140 no. 2 (2013): 178 (German translated via Google Translate).

A 4th Dynasty queen, Meresankh III was the daughter of Queen Hetepheres II, who embraces her on a beautiful standing sculpture currently in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (discovered in the tomb of Meresankh III; 23 3/8 inches high, see fig. 61):



Figure 61. Statue of Hetepheres II and Meresankh III

From "Pair Statue of Queens Hetepheres II and Meresankh III," MFA Boston, accessed January 12, 2024, <http://collections.mfa.org/objects/147324/pair-statue-of-queens-hetepheres-ii-and-meresankh-iii>, and detail from author's photograph taken at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston on October 19, 2023.

Meresankh III was granddaughter to King Khufu (Cheops), considered builder of the "Great Pyramid" at Giza, and was the wife of King Khafre, known as the builder of the adjacent pyramid and who is generally considered to have developed the cemeteries surrounding the large pyramids. Meresankh's burial at Giza was significant and *quite unusual*: for example, the astonishing group of ten large standing female statues, rock-

cut, who face forward in a horizontal row and whose identity is unknown; the focus on women and fewer references to pharaohs of the family – none at all to former husband King Khafre, although there is a large image of her father Prince Kawab; and many more features, some of which will be described below.¹⁷⁶

Meresankh III's 4th Dynasty tomb at Giza was discovered by the joint Boston Museum of Fine Arts – Harvard University Expedition led by George Andrew Reisner in 1927 and was extensively published by Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson in 1974. They highlight its “extensive use of statuary cut in the tomb walls,” (there are numerous sculpted images in addition to the ten women) and its relief scenes, “their extraordinary preservation and vivid colors, and the technical achievement and artistry of the sculptors and painters, the names of two of which have survived in the relief representations themselves.”¹⁷⁷ The tomb's chapel is very unusually placed *beneath* the large mastaba, as a subterranean chamber cut from the rock and reached by a pair of descending stairs. Meresankh III's tomb had been plundered long before 1927: her black granite sarcophagus was found, but without its inner coffins and without its burial goods. Meresankh's mummified body had been disturbed, leaving only bones and wrappings – certainly no diadem, jewelry or amulets, as black-and-white photos vividly reveal.¹⁷⁸

Researchers believe that she was approximately in her 50's at the time of death, and

¹⁷⁶ Useful digital and video tours of this tomb can be found at Mused's “Tomb of Queen Meresankh III (G7530-7540),” <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=d42fuVA21To>, and at Curtis Ryan Woodside's “Private Visit of Queen Meresankh's Tomb at Giza,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddnXTv7Q9VQ>.

¹⁷⁷ Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G7530-7540*, Giza Mastabas; v. 1 (Boston: Dept. of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1974), 1. https://gizamedia.rc.fas.harvard.edu/images/MFA-images/Giza/GizaImage/full/library/giza_mastabas/giza_mastabas_1/giza_mastabas_1.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Mused: Digital Giza, “Skeleton of Queen Meresankh III,” accessed August 5, 2023, <https://giza.mused.org/en/items/148454/skeleton-of-queen-meresankh-iii>.

suffered from Silent Sinus Syndrome.¹⁷⁹ Her stone sarcophagus had been prepared in advance for her mother, Queen Hetepheres II, who – presumably at the sudden death of her daughter – had the inscription changed.¹⁸⁰ Meresankh III is named in the tomb’s inscriptions as a Priestess of Thoth and a Priestess of Hathor, both of which are *very relevant* in relationship to the Old Kingdom circlets, as will become clear below.

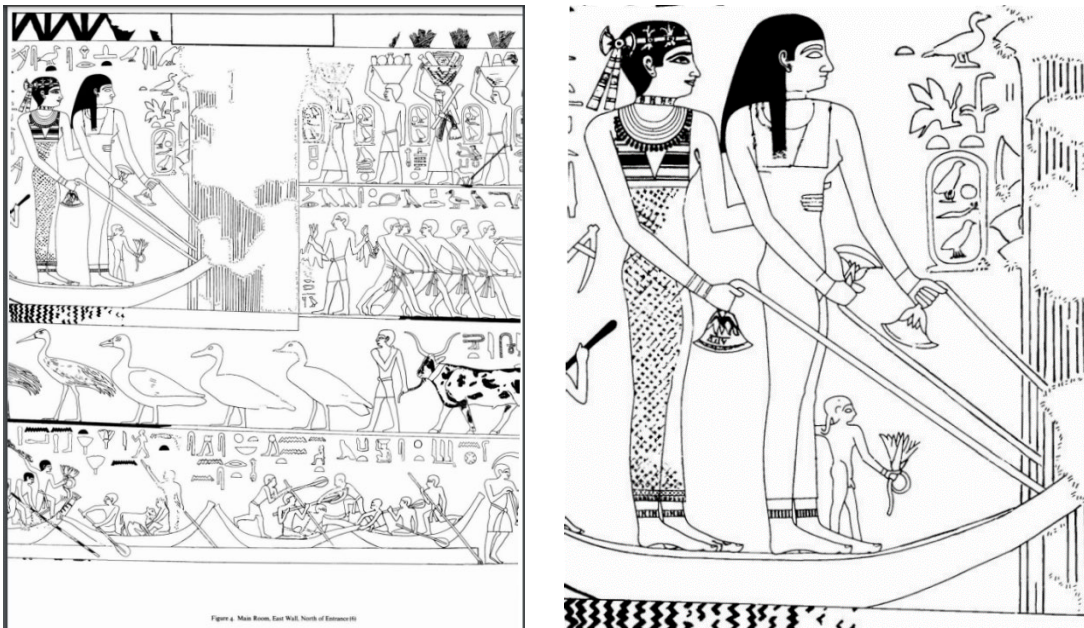


Figure 62. Illustration of Marsh Scene with Detail, Tomb of Meresankh III

From Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G7530-7540, Giza Mastabas; v. 1 (Boston: Dept. of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1974), Figure 4.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Habicht et al., "Queen Meresankh III – the Oldest Case of Bilateral Silent Sinus Syndrome (c. 2630/20 - 2587 BC)?," *Anthropologie (Brno)* 56, no. 2 (2018): 103-114, <https://doi.org/10.26720/anthro.17.09.25.2>.

¹⁸⁰ Mused: Digital Giza, "Black Granite Sarcophagus and Lid of Meresankh III," accessed August 5, 2023, <https://giza.mused.org/en/items/147039/black-granite-sarcophagus-and-lid-of-meresankh-iii>.



Figure 63. Meresankh III and Hetepheres II, Marsh Scene

From "The Tomb of Queen Meresankh III," Mused: Digital Giza, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://giza.mused.org/en/items/506/the-tomb-of-queen-meresankh-iii>.



Figure 64. Detail of Meresankh III and Hetepheres II, Marsh Scene

Close-up image from Curtis Ryan Woodside's video, "Private Visit of Queen Meresankh's Tomb at Giza," from Secrets of Giza (Full Documentary), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddnXTv7Q9VQ>.

In the elaborate painted reliefs found on the upper level, Meresankh III is shown on the east wall of the large chamber with her mother, enacting part of a ritual affiliated with the goddess Hathor called "Plucking Papyrus" (see figs. 62, 63, and 64). The hieroglyphic inscription for this scene is translated, "She pulls papyrus, for Hathor in the marshland, with her mother. They see every good thing, which is in the marsh." Except that what is translated as "she pulls" is *seshes.s*, like *sesheset (ssst)*, the naos sistrum, an instrument shaken/played for Hathor, which hieroglyph also means "plucking" and relates to the sound made which was pleasing to the goddess, and which, according to Emily Teeter, "was equated with the rustling sound that papyrus made in the marsh."¹⁸¹ Teeter shows these examples of ritual images from baked clay votives found at Medinet

¹⁸¹ Janet H. Johnson and Emily Teeter, *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2009), 30.

Habu (from the Third Intermediate Period) of women plucking papyrus for the goddess
(see fig. 65):



Figure 65. Plucking Papyrus for Hathor, Votive Images, Third Intermediate Period

Illustrations of "Votive Beds," Medinet Habu, Third Intermediate Period (Angela Altenhofen) from Janet H. Johnson and Emily Teeter, The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt, Oriental Institute Museum Publications; No. 29 (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2009), 30 and 74.

So the naos sistrum, a most sacred instrument used for centuries, probably millennia -- whose form implies that vibration emanates from the innermost sanctuary of the divine (the “holy of holies”) – as played for the goddess Hathor was likened to the sound of the papyrus rustling in the marsh; they were quite vividly connected here. In her tomb, Meresankh III as a *Priestess* of Hathor is thus shown *performing ritual*; women were accorded the sacred Priestess title in the Old Kingdom (including royal and elite women, and priest’s daughters) and yet this formal designation diminished over time as the “role of women in the cult became progressively more restricted.”¹⁸² Titles instead for female *musician* or *chantress* for Hathor prevailed in all later periods and this form of service remained for dynastic Egypt the primary cult role for women. So, in this scene where Meresankh III (and not her mother) wears a circlet with flowers or other water-plant forms coming out of the headband, and where the bow at the back of the head appears like the two papyrus umbels (with sun between them) found on the Old Kingdom circlets in question, and is enacting a very specific ritual, the religious import extends beyond the imitation of a “boatman’s circlet” and into the realm of Hathor and all that this implied. And Meresankh III’s headband is tied on.

The marsh was a potent symbolic setting, as evidenced in the Old Kingdom and beyond. Iconography includes: the primordial mound of creation as it emerges from the primeval waters (Nun); what a boat journey implied: the waters of the Nile below mirroring the waters of the Milky Way galactic pathway above with the solar barque crossing the heavens; the imagery of the “Field of Reeds” or “Field of Rushes” in the southern or eastern sky; the myth of Osiris and Isis where she hides in the marshland

¹⁸² Serge Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt*, New ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 67.

from Seth and there gives birth to Horus.¹⁸³ Susan Brind-Morrow recounts that at death the (infant) soul rises from the garden (earth) to heaven through the Field of Rushes (the eastern stars at dawn) where Orion's three-starred belt are the three wise men who presage this birth.¹⁸⁴ Birds rise up out of the marsh as the sun rises, renewing life – as do the *akhs* – the crested *ibis*, a marsh bird – arise from the earth (the mound of creation/marsh) and ascend to the sky/light/*akhet*/stars as light bodies with Orion (*sakh*) as, literally, “he who makes the light body.”¹⁸⁵ The imagery of the central and side elements of the Old Kingdom circlets take on greater meaning in this light – especially as the crested ibises are rising up from papyrus blossoms in the red sun of dawn to renewed life (the *ankh*).

Also in Meresankh III's tomb: a painted relief showing craftsmen making “spirit statues” of Meresankh (see fig. 66).

¹⁸³ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 11.

¹⁸⁴ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 37–38.

¹⁸⁵ Morrow, 91.

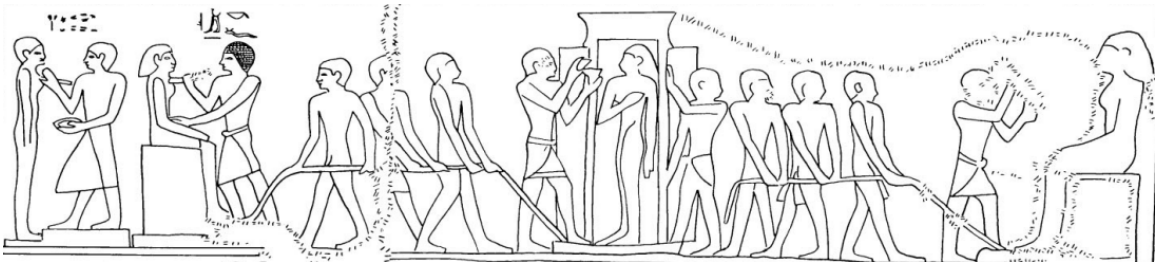


Figure 66. Artisans Crafting Statues, Relief and Illustration, Tomb of Meresankh III

Reliefs in Main Room, East Wall, image from Curtis Ryan Woodside’s video, “Private Visit of Queen Meresankh’s Tomb at Giza,” and illustration from Dunham and Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G7530-7540, Figure 5.

Aylward Blackman writes that the *Sed* festival was related to making statues and performing the Opening the Mouth rite on them, this “taking place in the House of Gold.”¹⁸⁶ While Blackman refers to Ptolemaic Edfu and statues of the gods kept in a

¹⁸⁶ Blackman, “On the Position of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy,” 8–9.

“House of Gold,” Philippe Derchain also describes a House of Life at Denderah which had a House of Gold. Shannon Grimes summarizes Derchain’s research: in “a goldsmith’s *atelier*, called the “House of Gold” ... initiated priests finished making the cult statues and performed the “opening of the mouth” ceremonies that rendered the statues capable of receiving divine presence. The deities that preside over this House of Gold are Thoth and his consort, Seshat; their images, along with other gods and depictions of the mystery of the birth of statues, are among the many engravings on the chamber walls.”¹⁸⁷ Grimes, along with Derchain, finds here the “origins of alchemy.”¹⁸⁸ Additionally, Khnum, considered “Lord of the House of Life” in the Middle Kingdom and possibly earlier, was a creator god, fashioning human bodies on a potter’s wheel; seven genies (or “builder gods”) – his hypostases – are said to “equip the House of Life with holy (*or secret*) things” at Edfu, where “the decoration of the temple-walls is attributed to the ‘great artificers of the House of Life.’”¹⁸⁹ Also interesting in this argument: according to Wilkinson, the goldsmith’s workshop and the embalmer’s workshop had the same name: *is n k3.t*.¹⁹⁰ And Blackman mentions for the 4th dynasty the *mrt*, a priestess especially connected with the *Sed* festival and in connection with another priestess called the *s3dt* (the transliteration for *Sed*).¹⁹¹ So clearly women are active in the *Sed* festivals in the Old Kingdom – but did their roles extend beyond music? Much later in time, Zosimus of Panopolis’ alchemic student Theosebia was referred to as a priestess, which could be the continuation of a longer standing tradition for women’s esoteric roles

¹⁸⁷ Shannon Grimes, *Becoming Gold: Zosimos of Panopolis and the Alchemical Arts in Roman Egypt*, (Auckland: Rubedo Press, 2018), 84.

¹⁸⁸ Grimes, 84.

¹⁸⁹ Gardiner, “The House of Life,” 160-178.

¹⁹⁰ Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 2–3.

¹⁹¹ Blackman, “On the Position of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy,” 8–9.

and not an innovation of the Graeco-Roman era.¹⁹² So here I posit that the depiction in Meresankh III's tomb of artisans and goldsmiths at work creating sacred images of the deceased could possibly be connected with the House of Life as well or that these "artisans and craftsmen" were in any case under its "supervision" as noted generally by Grimes.¹⁹³

It is also notable that numerous funerary priest/scribes are depicted in the tomb (two are named as Khemetnu and Khemetnu the Younger) – one of whom is reading sacred writings to Meresankh (see fig. 67) – and recall that she was a Priestess of Thoth as well as of Hathor. Grimes considered the priests of the House of Life as "scholar-scribes who worked in annexes that housed temple libraries and scriptorium."¹⁹⁴ A Ptolemaic stela for king's scribe Petearpokrates includes in its inscription,

O all ye priests who penetrate into the words of god and are skilled in writings, ye who are enlightened in the House of Life and have discovered the ways (?) of the gods, who have penetrated into the archives of the Library and can interpret the mysteries of the Emanations of Re, who are skilled in the work of the Ancestors and who open up (?) the heart of what is upon the wall, ye who carve the tomb(s) and who interpret the mysteries
...¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Grimes, *Becoming Gold*, 101.

¹⁹³ Grimes, 72.

¹⁹⁴ Grimes, 71–72.

¹⁹⁵ Alan H. Gardiner, "The House of Life," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24, no. 2 (1938): 172–73, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3854786>.



Figure 67. Scribe Reciting Sacred Text to Meresankh III

Relief image from “The Tomb of Queen Meresankh III,” Mused: Digital Giza, <https://giza.mused.org/en/items/506/the-tomb-of-queen-meresankh-iii>.

The Digital Giza project also notes the following:

Unlike in other tombs, the artists that created the Tomb of Meresankh left depictions of who they were. In the south end of the tomb, we have a rare insight into the names of the artists that carved and painted these walls. Here workmen are polishing the black granite sarcophagus that Meresankh was buried in (see fig. 68). Above two of the men is an inscription that reads, ‘the sculptor, Yenkaḥ.’ Similarly, on a nearby wall, there is a carving of a man seen painting a statue and his inscription reads, ‘the painter, Raḥay.’ Underneath, there are six male statues carved, seated like scribes beneath the reliefs and paintings on the wall. These were likely meant to represent the priests that performed the burial rituals for Meresankh.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Mused: Digital Giza, “The Excavation and Artifacts in the Tomb of Queen Meresankh III,” accessed January 3, 2024, <https://giza.mused.org/en/stories/144/the-excavation-and-artifacts-in-the-tomb-of-queen-meresankh-iii>.

Note here that the scribes/priests are positioned underneath the artists (see fig. 69)! Are we seeing a depiction of the personnel of the House of Life?

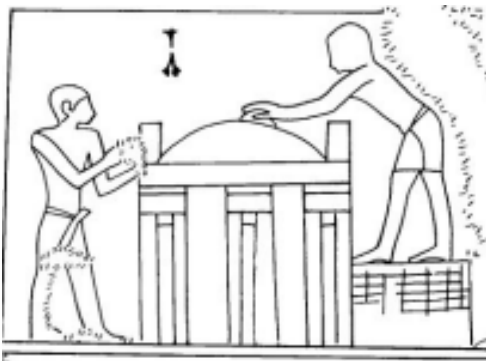


Figure 68. Sculptors Polishing Sarcophagus, Tomb of Meresankh III

Photo and illustration of named sculptor and associate polishing stone sarcophagus of Meresankh III, relief from Main Room, East Wall of her tomb, from Reisner, "The Tomb of Meresankh, a Great-Granddaughter of Queen Hetep-Heres I and Sneferuw," 72, and Dunham and Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G7530-7540, Figure 5.

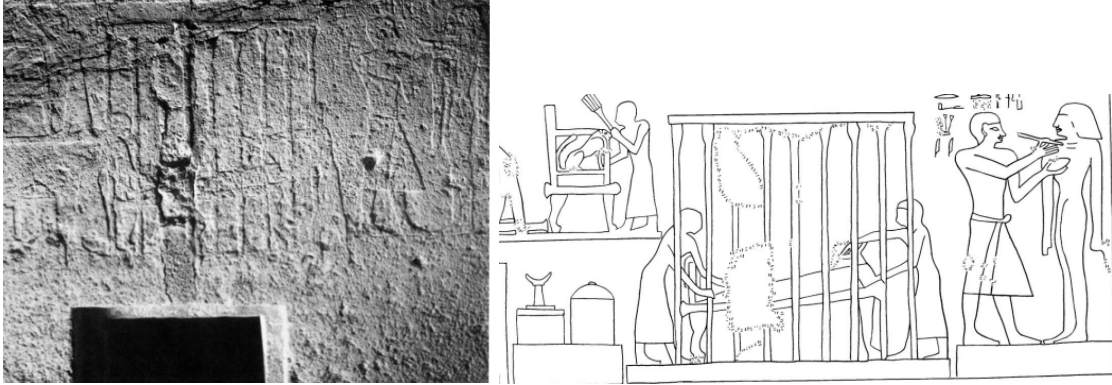


Figure 69. Artisans and Scribes, Tomb of Meresankh III

*Main Room, South Wall of tomb, named artist paints spirit statue of Meresankh III, beneath which are six unnamed sculpted scribes (known by seated cross-legged scribal position). From Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G7530-7540, Plate IX and Figure 8*, and color photo from “Interior-of-the-Tomb-of-Meresankh-III.Jpg (1144×804),” Egypt Museum, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://i0.wp.com/egypt-museum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Interior-of-the-Tomb-of-Meresankh-III.jpg?ssl=1>.*

And Meresankh III is shown in leopard skin in more than one place – which is Seshat’s garb (here as the central figure to the right of her mother) with the characteristic animal head as part of the garment design (see fig. 70).



Figure 70. Meresankh III in Leopard-Skin Garment

Main Room, West Wall, image from “Who Was Queen Meresankh III?,” Mused: Digital Giza, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://giza.mused.org/en/stories/82/who-was-queen-meresankh-iii>.

And again she figures in this beautiful reproduction (see fig. 71) of the main (upper) chambers of the tomb, which family-members and all others would have visited to ensure

offerings and cultic ritual for the deceased and her afterlife (here, Meresankh III is pictured in numerous images, also notably wearing the *wesekh* or *usekh* broad collar):



Figure 71. Reproduction of Main Room, Tomb of Meresankh III

From the Harvard University Giza Project, "5.15_Meresankh-Sunlight.Jpeg (1873×1042)," accessed January 11, 2024, https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/5.15_Meresankh-sunlight.jpeg.

We do find on another Old Kingdom (mid-Fourth Dynasty) stele Princess Nefertiabet (possibly Khufu's daughter, which could make her Hetepheres II's sister or half-sister) wearing leopard skin as well, here from Giza Tomb G 1225 (see fig. 72).



Figure 72. Stele of Princess Nefertiabet, from Giza Tomb G 1225

From Der Manuelian, Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis, 12.

Are all of these women connected to both Seshat and Thoth? Priests of Seshat are named in Dynasties 4, 5, and 6 *at Giza*¹⁹⁷ and Boylan lists male priests of Thoth in the 3rd and 5th dynasties as well as a “Temple of Thoth” in the 3rd dynasty and a “House of Thoth” in the 4th dynasty.¹⁹⁸ Was the “House” or “Temple” of Thoth at this time, the same as or related to the House of Life? If we look at the symbols $\square \text{𓆎} \square$ and the *akh-akh* from the Old Kingdom circlet emblems, do we find a relationship or

¹⁹⁷ Budde, *Die Göttin Seshat*, 326–28.

¹⁹⁸ Patrick Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1922), 148.

coincidence? Were Meresankh III and her female forbears in Memphis part of a House of Life tradition? Other considerations: a number of scholars believe Thoth to have been a human being (as was Osiris) who became deified – this is like the ibis crested or crowned (haloed with light) and become a luminous *akh*. Disciples or scribes of Thoth and the House of Life were considered “ibises” according to Jasnow and Zauzich in their translation and interpretation of the Graeco-Roman period Book of Thoth¹⁹⁹. Could women become also ibises or even the embodiment of Seshat rather than Thoth (the way that Hathor’s priestesses in the sun-temple at Heliopolis “impersonated” the goddess and were also called Hathors)?²⁰⁰ The identification of human with god/goddess, as their representatives in the physical world – not only in their service but akin to the divine being and following their path to understanding and continued life, as the king aspired to become Osiris in the Pyramid Texts and beyond – was common. Vandier posits that the “stretching the cord” ceremony was enacted at the temple foundation site by the king or by priests taking his place, *and* by a woman playing the role of Seshat -- probably the queen when the king was present.²⁰¹ Edwards writes that a fragmentary relief from Niuserre’s Fifth Dynasty sun temple depicting this same ceremony, shows “a priestess impersonating the goddess Seshat.”²⁰²

Meresankh III and her mother Hetepheres II were also named “Priestess of Bapef,” as were another daughter of Khufu and *her* daughter, Khamerenebty I and II, and Queen Khantkaus (all Fourth Dynasty). Bapef was a deity whose name and iconography

¹⁹⁹ Jasnow, *Conversations in the House of Life*, 62.

²⁰⁰ Blackman, “On the Position of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy,” 14, 23.

²⁰¹ Jacques Vandier, *Manuel d’archéologie égyptienne* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1952), 663.

²⁰² I.E.S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt, Rev. ed.* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 249.

refers to the ram and the soul, and to the perilous afterlife journey.²⁰³ Hetepheres II and a few other royal women including Khamerenebty I and II also held the title “Priestess of Tjasep (Tjasepef),” another little-known god associated with the bull (possibly, of heaven) and with celestial re-birth; these appear to be ancient deities, as was Seshat, and these sacral titles disappeared after the Fifth Dynasty.²⁰⁴ To note here as well: Khamerenebty I and II were *also* Priestesses of Thoth, a title attested for five royal women of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties only.²⁰⁵ Notably, Blackman considers the hieroglyphs typically translated as “priestess” (*hmt-ntr*), to mean instead “prophetess” for women of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, and that this designation refers to Hetepheres II and Meresankh III for all of their priestly roles (including as “prophetess” for Hathor, Thoth, Neith, even King Kheops for Hetepheres II), as well as for *numerous* other women at this time who were particularly in the service of Hathor and Neith.²⁰⁶ The word “prophetess” certainly carries a different connotation than that of “priestess,” implying the role of vehicle or instrument for the words and wishes of the deity, rather than merely in service and performing ritual for the divine being. Of further note, the title “prophet of Thoth-dwelling-in-the-House-of-Life,” was accorded to Ptolemaic era king’s scribe Imhotep, quite interesting in this connection even if much later in time.²⁰⁷

Then, there are the fascinating rock-cut sculptures of women in Meresankh III’s tomb – pairs of women flanking a doorway hold hands or embrace (considered by

²⁰³ Mohammed Refaat, “The Deity Bapef(y) in Ancient Egyptian Religion,” *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists* 7, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 78–91, <https://doi.org/10.21608/jguaa2.2022.122011.1094>.

²⁰⁴ J.F. Borghouts, “The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348,” (PhD Diss., Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden: Brill, 1971), 30.

²⁰⁵ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, 187.

²⁰⁶ Blackman, “On the Position of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy,” 24.

²⁰⁷ Alan H. Gardiner, “The House of Life,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24, no. 2 (1938): 172, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3854786>.

Reisner to be mother and daughter “or alternately only Meresankh”), while ten women of different statures line the back wall (see figs. 73, 74, and 75).²⁰⁸

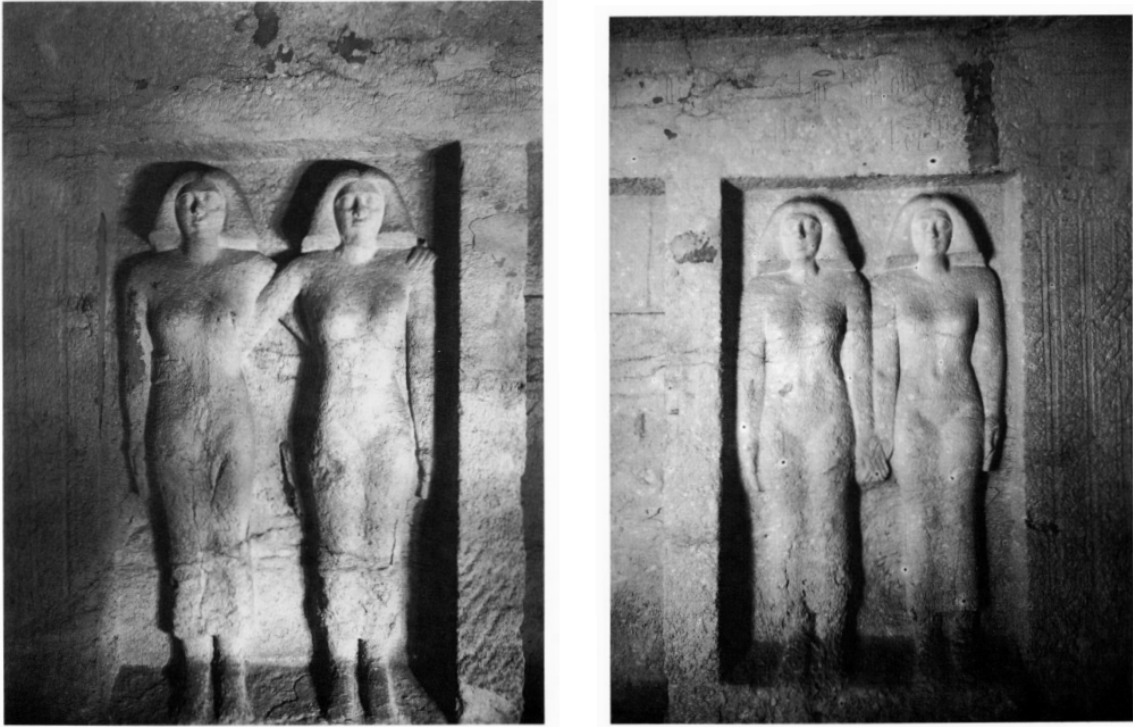


Figure 73. Rock-Cut Sculpture Pairs, Tomb of Meresankh III

Adjacent pairs in West Room, West Wall, from Dunham and Simpson, “The Mastaba of Queen Merysankh III,” Plate XI.

²⁰⁸ George Andrew Reisner, “The Tomb of Meresankh, a Great-Granddaughter of Queen Hetep-Heres I and Sneferuw,” *Bulletin - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 25, no. 151 (1927): 68.



Figure 74. Rock-Cut Sculptures of Ten Unnamed Women, Tomb of Meresankh III

Located in North Room, North Wall, image from Dunham and Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G7530-7540, Plate VI.

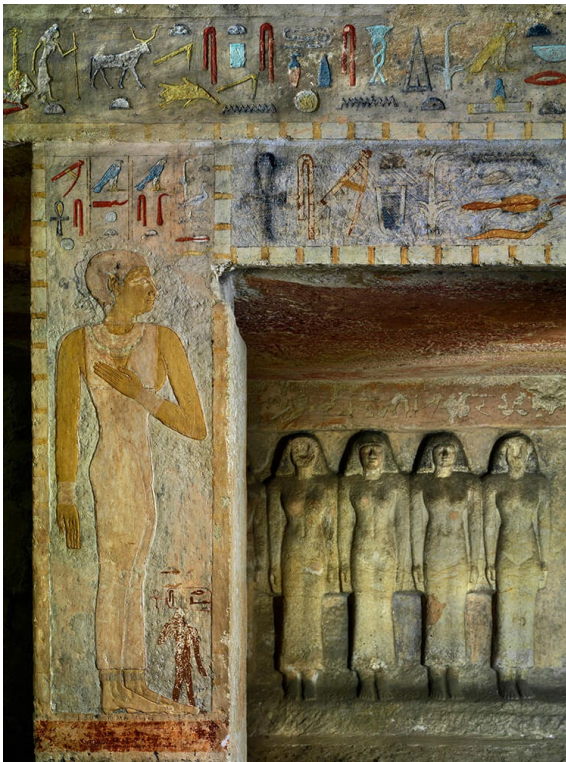


Figure 75. Main Chamber of Tomb of Meresankh III with View to North Room

Images from Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt, <https://egy monuments.gov.eg/monuments/tomb-of-queen-meresankh-iii/> and Egypt Museum, <https://i0.wp.com/egypt-museum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Tomb-Chapel-of-Queen-Meresankh-III-1.jpg?ssl=1>.

The identities of all of these women are *unknown* – it is speculated that they may be members of the ancestry/lineage of Meresankh. Could they have been connected instead by cult activity or other religious association? The impression, perhaps, is more of a college of women bound together spiritually – with the youngest (smallest) then, in training by the elders.

For other evidence, we can turn to Hetepheres I. One commentator thinks that this is an image (see fig. 76) in Meresankh III's tomb depicting Hetepheres I, her great grandmother and mother of Khufu (and *not* Hetepheres II), leading Meresankh III into the next life, shown unusually here with “hair painted a bright yellow with fine red horizontal lines,”²⁰⁹ although this is an outlying scholarly argument and the image is considered to be Hetepheres II by Harvard scholar Peter Der Manuelian.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Reisner, “The Tomb of Meresankh, a Great-Granddaughter of Queen Hetep-Heres I and Sneferuw,” 66.

²¹⁰ Peter Der Manuelian, “Blond Hair in the Tomb of Meresankh?,” *Classical Inquiries*, August 19, 2015, <https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/blond-hair-in-the-tomb-of-meresankh/>.



Figure 76. Hetepheres II with Blonde Hair or Wig (Possibly Hetepheres I)

Detail from Main Room, West Wall, image from <https://www.facebook.com/GwyllmArt/photos/a.430641330459496/1483575458499406/?type=3>.

Tomb of Hetepheres I

In 1925 the Harvard-MFA Reisner team discovered a tomb at Giza for Hetepheres I, possibly an ancient re-burial following plundering of the original. The Digital Giza project describes that Hetepheres I was “wife of King Snefru, founder of Egypt’s Fourth Dynasty, and mother of King Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid. Her burial was hidden in a secret chamber (labeled G 7000 X) nearly 90 feet underground, and contained beautiful pieces of gilded and inlaid wooden furniture, silver jewelry, and a large alabaster sarcophagus that was found to be mysteriously empty.”²¹¹

²¹¹ Digital Giza, “Hetepheres I (G 7000 X),” accessed January 3, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/ancientpeople/75/full/>.



Figure 77. Harvard Digital Giza Project Reproduction of Hetepheres I

From “Avatar Model: Hetepheres I,” Digital Giza, accessed January 4, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/photos/94286/full/>.

Here the Harvard Digital Giza Project imagines Hetepheres I wearing the “Boston Diadem” (see fig. 77)!

In Hetepheres I’s tomb, numerous butterfly bracelets (silver with inlay) in a jewelry box (reconstructed), symbolized the “transformation and regeneration” inherent in this particular imagery, and note also the stunning red and orange solar symbolism of the inlaid circular carnelian stones between the insects (see figs. 78 and 79):²¹²

²¹² Vazrick Nazari and Linda Evans, “Butterflies of Ancient Egypt,” *The Journal of the Lepidopterists’ Society* 69, no. 4 (December 2015): 258, <https://doi.org/10.18473/lepi.69i4.a2>.



Figure 78. Silver Inlaid Butterfly Bracelets, Tomb of Hetepheres I²¹³

Image from World News Today, “The Mystery of Queen Hetepheres I’s Silver Bracelets: A Look into Ancient Egyptian Trade and Sophisticated Craftsmanship,” May 2, 2023, <https://www.world-today-news.com/the-mystery-of-queen-hetepheres-is-silver-bracelets-a-look-into-ancient-egyptian-trade-and-sophisticated-craftsmanship/>.

²¹³ New research published in June 2023 sources the silver ore used to create these bracelets in the Cyclades, Greece, providing evidence of trade networks during Old Kingdom Egypt. See Karin Sowada et al., “Analyses of Queen Hetepheres’ Bracelets from Her Celebrated Tomb in Giza Reveals New Information on Silver, Metallurgy and Trade in Old Kingdom Egypt, c. 2600 BC.” *Journal of Archaeological Science, Reports* 49 (2023): 103978, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2023.103978>.



Figure 79. Bracelets of Hetepheres I, Cairo Museum and MFA Boston

Top image from "Silver Bracelets of Queen Hetepheres I," Egypt Museum, August 3, 2022, <https://egypt-museum.com/bracelets-of-queen-hetepheres/>, bottom images from author's photos taken at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston on May 10, 2023 and February 9, 2024.

One of Hetepheres I's reconstructed armchairs had papyrus plant decoration, marsh-like and "emblematic of Hathor"²¹⁴ (see fig. 80, top left) and the other armchair reconstructed by Peter Der Manuelian's team at the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East (along with additional colleagues) also contains potent symbolism, including Horus as falcon god and six emblems of the goddess Neith (see fig. 80, right and following page).



²¹⁴ Peter Der Manuelian, "The Lost Throne of Queen Hetepheres from Giza: An Archaeological Experiment in Visualization and Fabrication," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 53 (2017): 19, <https://doi.org/10.5913/jarce.53.2017.a001>.



Figure 80. Reconstructed Chairs of Hetepheres I

From “*Armchair-of-Queen-Hetepheres-I.jpg (690×867)*,” *Egypt Museum*, accessed January 5, 2024, <https://i0.wp.com/egypt-museum.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Armchair-of-Queen-Hetepheres-I.jpg?ssl=1>, “*Reproduction Chair of Queen Hetepheres*” 3D Model by P. Manuelian, <https://sketchfab.com/models/9512f5248d5148f6b49220c8827073d5/embed?autostart=1>, and “*Recreating the Throne of Egyptian Queen Hetepheres*,” *Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East*, accessed January 5, 2024, <https://hmane.harvard.edu/recreating-throne-of-egyptian-queen-hetepheres>.

Neith, a goddess whose origins go back “as least to the Protodynastic and Early Dynastic periods if not earlier” was quite prominent during the Old Kingdom and numerous queen’s names refer to her prior to and during the First Dynasty as well as during the Sixth Dynasty.²¹⁵ Additionally, Henry George Fischer describes that during the Old Kingdom (spanning the Fourth through Eighth Dynasties) “a great many women were *hmt-ntr*-priestesses [or prophetesses] of Hathor, or of Hathor and Neith, both of whom had cults in the Memphite area.”²¹⁶ For example, as found within tomb G 5150 at Giza: Meretites and Hepetka (late 4th or early-mid 5th Dynasty) were each named as

²¹⁵ Susan T. Hollis, *Five Egyptian Goddesses: Their Possible Beginnings, Actions, and Relationships in the Third Millennium BCE* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 8.

²¹⁶ Henry George Fischer, *Egyptian Women of the Old Kingdom and of the Heracleopolitan Period* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), 12.

priestess of Neith and priestess of Hathor.²¹⁷ They were probably both wives of Seshathetep Heti (a king's son, embalmer of Anubis, lector-priest, overseer of all royal works, opener of the mouth, priest of Seshmetet, scribe of the divine book, among numerous other titles), and who was *also* shown wearing the leopard skin.²¹⁸ Khenti (also late 4th or early-mid 5th Dynasty) was also a priestess of Neith and priestess of Hathor, and is here shown with her husband Nesutnefer from Giza tomb 4970, where he wears the leopard garb as well (see fig. 81).²¹⁹

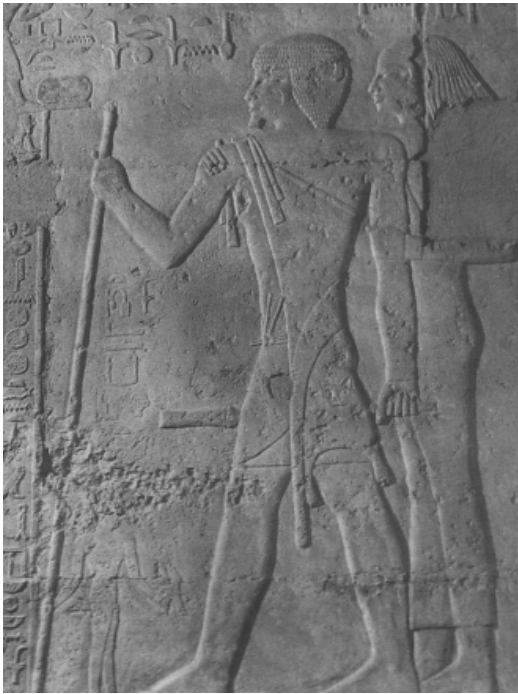


Figure 81. Khenti and Nesutnefer, Relief from Giza Tomb 4970

Image from Kanawati, Tombs at Giza, 2, Plate 20.

²¹⁷ Naguib Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza; v.2: Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080)*, The Australian Centre for Egyptology 18 (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2002), 13.

²¹⁸ Digital Giza, "G 5150," accessed July 30, 2023, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/536/full/>.

²¹⁹ Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza*. 2, 33.

In another Giza Tomb, G 4710 (dated to late Fourth Dynasty to Fifth Dynasty), Setju is also depicted with the leopard skin and his titles include “master of reversion-offerings in the Mansion of Life,” which seems to refer to the House of Life; he is also called “secretary of the House of Morning” (see fig. 82):²²⁰



Figure 82. Setju in Leopard-Skin Garment, Relief from Giza Tomb 4710

Image from George Andrew Reisner, A History of the Giza Necropolis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), Plate 75.

²²⁰ Digital Giza, “Setju (G 4710),” accessed January 7, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/ancientpeople/1872/full/>.

A slab stela inscribed for Setju (but found displaced in tomb G 2352 Pit B) includes these additional titles: “craftsman of the royal scribes, craftsman of Mehit, priest of Seshat,” which furthers the House of Life connection.²²¹ His wife Nebuhetep was a priestess of Hathor, and a priestess of Neith “Opener-of-the-Ways.”²²² This epithet for Neith was found in numerous female tombs at Giza (Priestesses of Neith: Khakhenmet in G 3093, Khenut Inti in G 3008, Baru in G 2009, Hemetre in G 5550, Henutsen in G 5080, Nebuhetep in G 4710, Meti in G 2415, Khentkaus in unnumbered mastaba, Hemetre in G 1151, Hetepheres in G 5170, Tjeset in G 4561, Djefatka in G 4520; many of these women were also accorded the title “Priestess of Hathor Mistress-of-the-Sycamore” and whose husbands were palace officials, priests, overseers of singing and the like). “Opener-of-the-Ways” refers to Neith’s role in the journey to the afterlife – the same epithet was given to the jackal-god Wepwawet (Upuaut) who played a similar role at death, as did Anubis; the connotation appears closely connected to stellar afterlife possibilities and how Neith facilitated this process. The (later) 11th Dynasty, First Intermediate Period “Book of the Two Ways,” considered the oldest example of “Guides to the Beyond” found painted on coffins, has actual maps through many dangerous regions for the perilous afterlife journey, literally showing two “ways” to proceed.²²³ Additionally, Neith watched over the deceased and protected the four sons of Horus (as related to the canopic jars) along with three other goddesses: Isis, Nephthys, and Serqet.²²⁴

²²¹ Digital Giza, “Setju (in G 2352),” accessed July 30, 2023, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/ancientpeople/653/full/>.

²²² Digital Giza, “G 4710,” accessed January 7, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/1107/full/>.

²²³ Wilhelm Bonacker, “The Egyptian ‘Book of the Two Ways,’” *Imago Mundi* 7 (1950): 5–14.

²²⁴ Crystalinks, “Neith,” accessed January 8, 2024, <https://www.crystalinks.com/neith.html>.

Neith and the Click Beetle

Emblems of Neith included a “bilobate” or two-lobed symbol of (arguably) a spinning distaff (she was connected to weaving), with crossed arrows and a single streamer hanging down, and symbols of the *Agrypnus notodonta* Latr., known as the “click beetle,” both of which are depicted on this palette fragment of a model temple for Neith, probably from Abydos and dated to Naqada III/First Dynasty (see fig. 83):

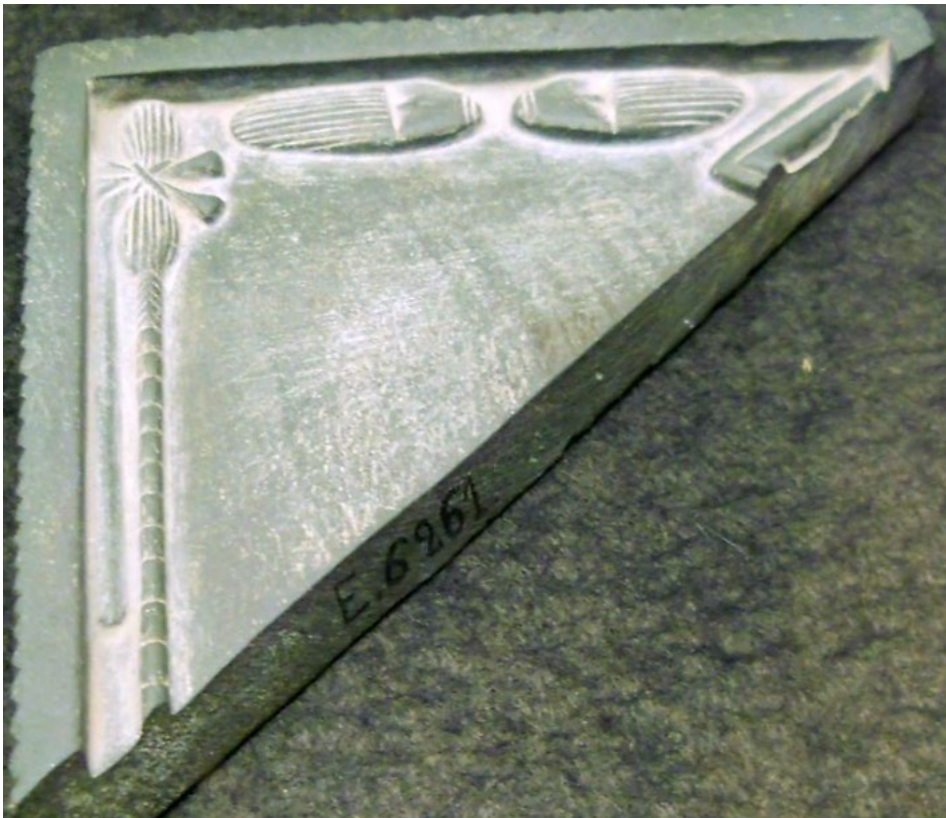


Figure 83. Palette Fragment with Neith Symbol, First Dynasty

Image from Francis Lankester, Broken Palette with “Neith Symbol,” Brussels, January 28, 2011, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lankester2/5395595695/>.

Note that Queen Mer-Neith's First Dynasty tomb stele at Abydos shows the goddess' symbol without striations; Hendrickx considers the bilobate to show two beetle ovals rather than either a distaff or, as also variously proposed, a shield or bag, however the derivation of the symbol remains contested (see fig. 84):²²⁵



Figure 84. Queen Mer-Neith's Tomb Stele with Neith Symbol, First Dynasty

Image from "Merneith_stele.Jpg (1463×2045)," Wikimedia, accessed January 5, 2024, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b3/Merneith_stele.jpg.

The bilobate symbol is clearly represented on the Harvard-reconstructed second chair of Hetepheres I, here shown again via diagram and with double rather than single streamers on the backside (see fig. 85):

²²⁵ Stan Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects in Brussels and the Origin of the Bilobate Cult-Sign of Neith," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 82 (1996): 40, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3822112>.

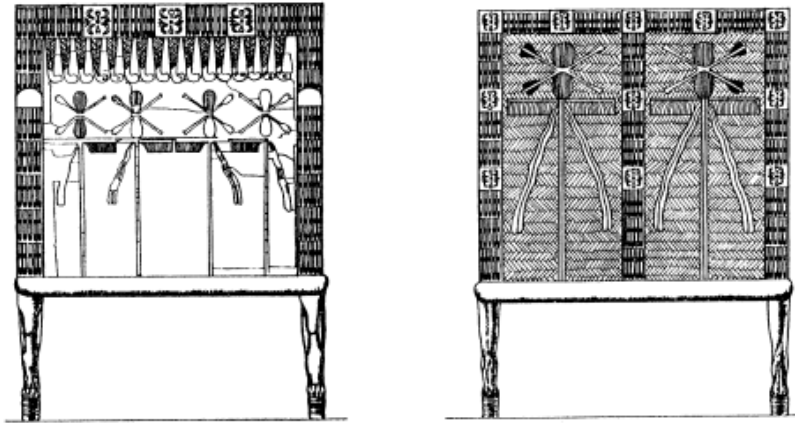


Figure 85. Hetepheres I Chair with Neith Symbol

Image from Stan Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects in Brussels and the Origin of the Bilobate Cult-Sign of Neith," The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 82 (1996): 34, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3822112>.

Ancient faience beetles were originally inlaid on the back of this chair, according to Der Manuelian and per this photo from the original inlays in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (see fig. 86):

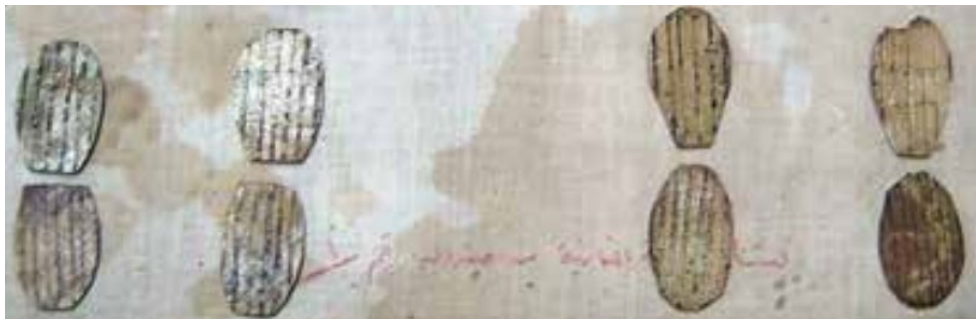


Figure 86. Original Click Beetle Faience Inlays, Chair of Hetepheres I

Image from Peter Der Manuelian, "The Lost Throne of Queen Hetepheres from Giza: An Archaeological Experiment in Visualization and Fabrication," Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt 53 (2017): 45, <https://doi.org/10.5913/jarce.53.2017.a001>.

The symbol also appears as a “beetle-shaped pin” on Hetepheres I’s bed canopy, also discovered in Tomb G 7000 X and reconstructed (see fig. 87):

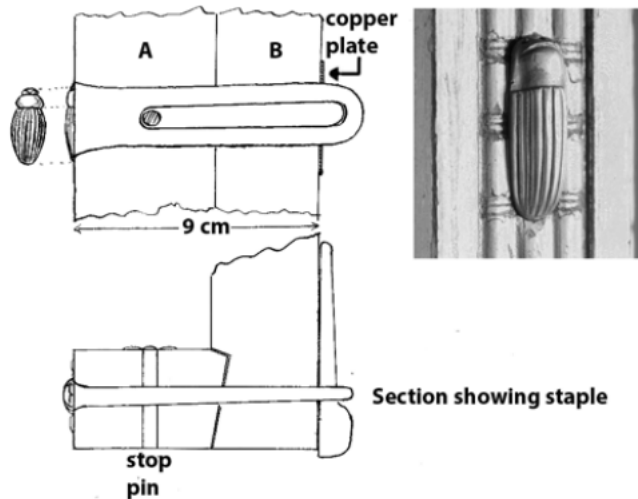


Figure 87. Click Beetle-Shaped Pin, Bed Canopy of Hetepheres I

Image from Der Manuelian, “The Lost Throne of Queen Hetepheres from Giza,” 44.

Stan Hendrickx relates use of this early symbol to the “protective character of the goddess Neith,” as demonstrated on the chair, on a beetle-shaped and inscribed golden capsule from a First Dynasty tomb at Naga ed-Deir (see fig. 88), and as found on an alabaster vase at Djoser’s Third Dynasty *Heb-Sed* pavilion at Saqqara, along with the numerous theophorous Queen’s names referring to the goddess (Ka-Neith, Neith-hetep, Her-Neith, Meret- or Mer-Neith, Neith).²²⁶

²²⁶ Hendrickx, 40.

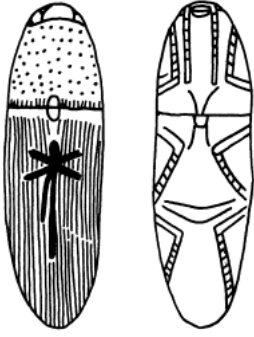


Figure 88. Click Beetle-Shaped Golden Capsule with Neith Symbol, First Dynasty

Image from Hendrickx, "Two Protodynastic Objects in Brussels and the Origin of the Bilobate Cult-Sign of Neith," 33.

According to Der Manuelian, Neith was *highly* revered during the Old Kingdom, and was connected to the annual Nile inundation and to resurrection. He particularly highlights the Neith symbolism of the click beetle on the reconstructed chair, where this creature “jumps to avoid the rising waters of the Nile” and where the clicking sound was associated with locking and sealing shut (the beetle images also appear on door latches and canopy carved posts at this time with this function, pictured above).²²⁷

Quite notably, *all three* Old Kingdom intact circlets were found along with click beetle jewelry. The gold “Cairo” circlet discovered by Selim Hassan on the body of the deceased woman, was found with a necklace made of 50 gold oval click beetles as described in Chapter III and imaged again here (see fig. 89):

²²⁷ Der Manuelian, “The Lost Throne of Queen Hetepheres from Giza,” 16.

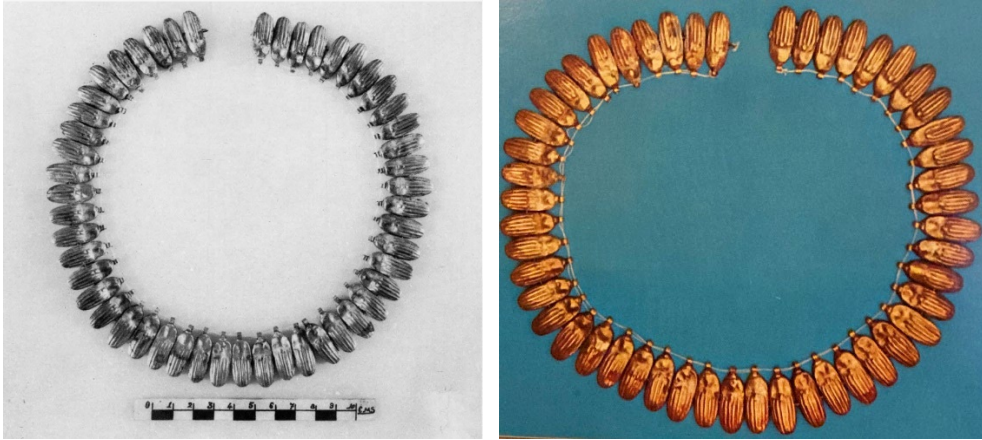


Figure 89. Click Beetle Necklace found with “Cairo” Diadem Burial

Excavation photo from Selim, “Excavations At Giza (1930-1931),” Plate LII, and color image from Aldred, Jewels of the Pharaohs, Plate 5.

Accompanying the Reisner Harvard-MFA “Boston” circlet, were click beetle-shaped pendants with fragments of gold leaf, also discovered inside the wooden coffin; note again the striation for the beetle body (see fig. 90):

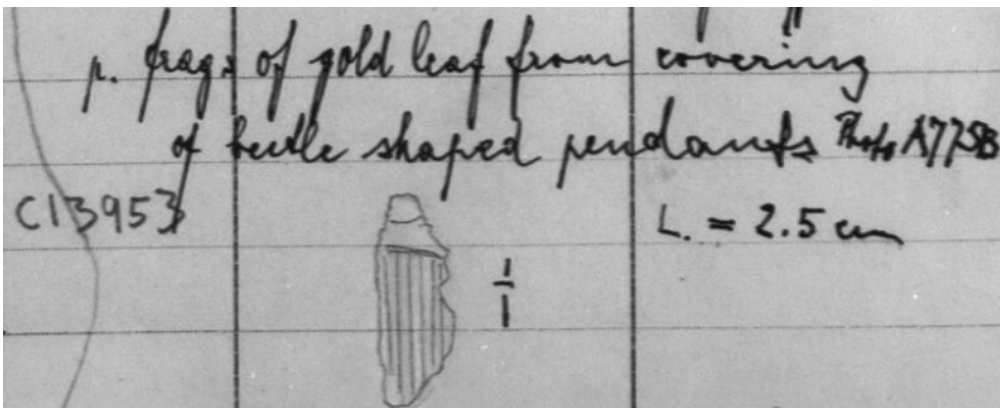


Figure 90. Click Beetle-Shaped Fragments found with “Boston” Diadem Burial

Image from “Jewelry Element: Fragments of Gold Foil from Beetle-Shaped Pendants,” Digital Giza, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/16153/full/>.

Along with the Steindorff “Leipzig” circlet, this necklace with 20 click beetle pendants and blue, green and black beads made of faience, was discovered inside the coffin, as noted above (apparently without the striated bodies, see fig. 91):

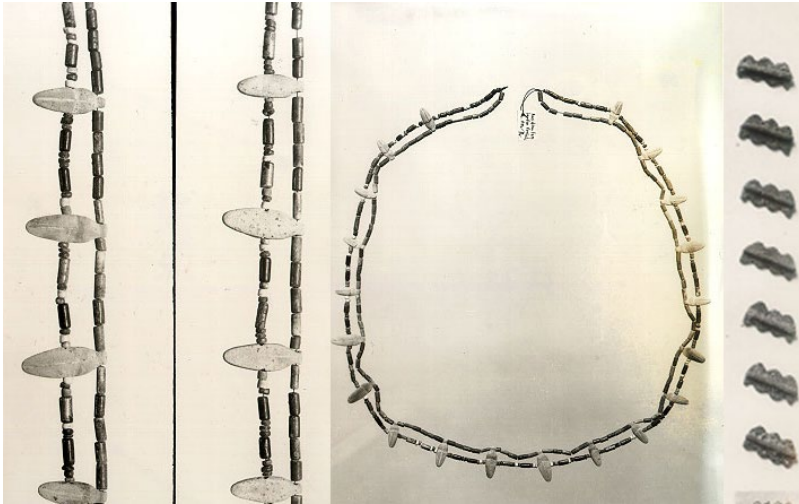


Figure 91. Click Beetle Necklace found with “Leipzig” Diadem Burial

Image from “ÄMUL 3770,” The Giza Project, accessed January 6, 2024, http://www.giza-projekt.org/Funde/UL_3770/UL_3770.html.

For the Boston plaster rosette fragments: as noted, the following were also discovered inside the wooden burial coffin: two carnelian barrel beads and numerous faience beads (circular and tubular): black, blue, and faded green glazed cylinders; black, white, red-brown, blue, green glazed rings (see fig. 92).²²⁸ The cylinder beads were the same colors, shape, and material (faience) as those found on the click beetle necklace with the diadem located currently in Leipzig (from G D208 shaft 9).

²²⁸ Digital Giza, “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23468/full/>.

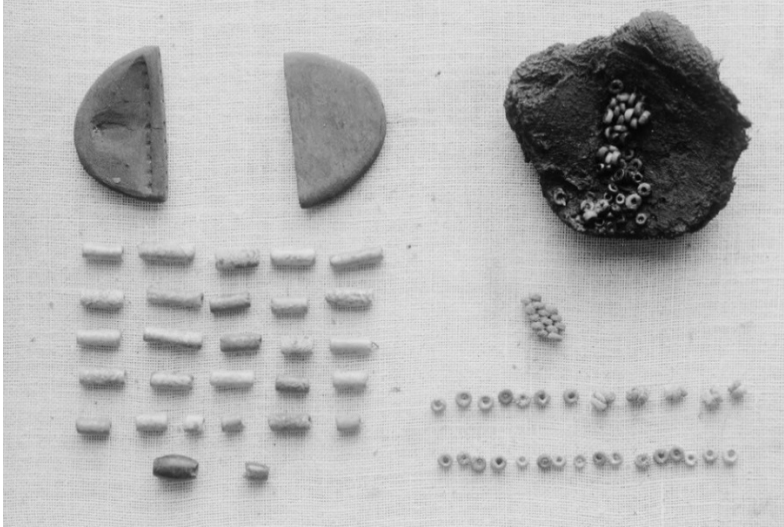


Figure 92. Faience Beads found with “Boston” Plaster Rosette Fragments

Image from “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” Digital Giza, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23468/full/>.

Along with the circular rings, one could imagine that these beads may have formed a similar necklace, although we do not have evidence in this particular burial of click beetle pendants. More specifically, these beads may have formed a *wesekh* broad collar necklace (which were worn by both males and females during the Old Kingdom; Reisner’s expeditions at Giza found 19 such examples²²⁹) given the large semi-circular elements found and per the evidence in tombs G 2004 A II and G 2381 A, dated to the mid-Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, respectively. It would then be similar to that found for a male (Merptahankh-meryre Ptahshepses Impy; titled as *sem*-priest, chief lector-priest, overseer of all royal works) in G 2381 A (Dynasty 6, reign of Pepi II) with gilded beetle

²²⁹ MFA Boston, “Wesekh Broadcollar,” accessed January 14, 2024, <http://collections.mfa.org/objects/148027/wesekh-broadcollar>.

pendants (see fig. 93), and noting that later (extant) broad collars did *not* use the click beetle symbolism:²³⁰



Figure 93. Wesekh Broad Collar with Click Beetle Pendants, Giza Tomb G 2381 A

Images from “Wesekh Broadcollar,” MFA Boston, accessed January 14, 2024, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/140709>.

The excavation report for G 2416 D III states that 14 of the ring beads were found “sticking together showing part of the pattern” (see fig. 94):²³¹

²³⁰ Digital Giza, “Jewelry: Wesekh Broadcollar,” accessed January 14, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/17132/full/>.

²³¹ Digital Giza, “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23469/full/>.

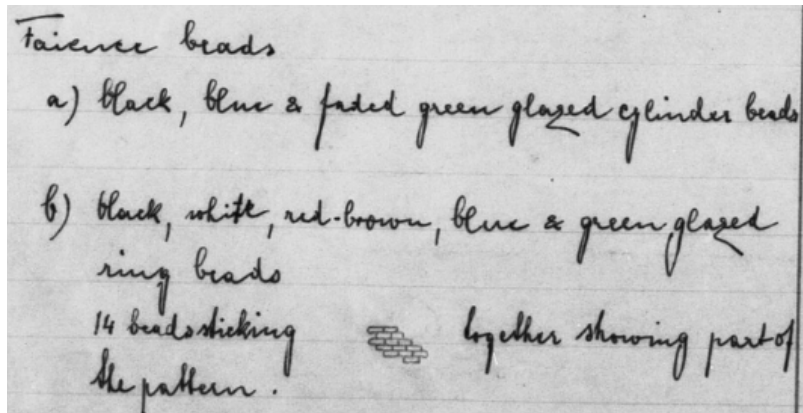


Figure 94. Networked Bead Pattern, Faience Beads with “Boston” Rosette Fragments

Image from “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” Digital Giza, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23468/full/>.

This illustrated pattern, where the bead rows are offset, is not, however identical to the aligning of beads in typical wesekh broad collars. However, ring beads from this grave were used in contemporary history (along with elements from many other tombs) to *reconstruct* a wesekh necklace, as well as a wrist ornament and counterpoise, at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (see fig. 95):²³²

²³² Digital Giza, “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” accessed January 11, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23370/full/>.



Figure 95. Reconstructed Necklace/Wristband/Counterpoise with G 2416 D III Beads

Images from “Jewelry Element: Faience Beads,” Digital Giza, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23468/full/>, and author’s photo taken February 9, 2024 at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Accompanying the bronze fragments discovered by the Harvard-Boston MFA expedition were various faience beads as noted above (and see fig. 96): cylinders in both blue and purplish black, and rings in blue; form and coloration also consistent with the click beetle necklace beads found with the Leipzig diadem (D 208 Shaft 9).

3 cylinder beads. Blue glaze	Faience
2 cylinder beads. Purplish black	“
29 ring beads. Blue glaze	

Figure 96. Register Entry, Faience Beads found with “Boston” Bronze Fragments

Harvard-MFA Expedition Register Entry, December 1925, from “Jewelry Element: Faience Bead,” Digital Giza, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/12098/full/>.

Along with the illustrated stucco/gold leaf fragments found in the Abu Bakr excavation, were small beads scattered within the sarcophagus (as noted above) which were not further enumerated, described or photographed.²³³

In any case, it is striking that *all three* female burials with extant full diadem, potentially all dating to the Fifth Dynasty, were accompanied to the afterlife (and perhaps protected in amuletic fashion) by the symbology of the click beetle, an emblem of the goddess Neith; this may not have been brought to light by any previous scholarship. And, quite relevantly for this discussion, these *additional* four burials at Giza included click beetle necklace pendant beads as well:

G 6012 Tomb “Owner” Nikausokar (male): 3 faience click beetle pendant beads with traces of gold leaf were discovered (see fig. 97); Reisner Date: Late Dynasty 5 or early Dynasty 6; unclear if women were also buried in this tomb:

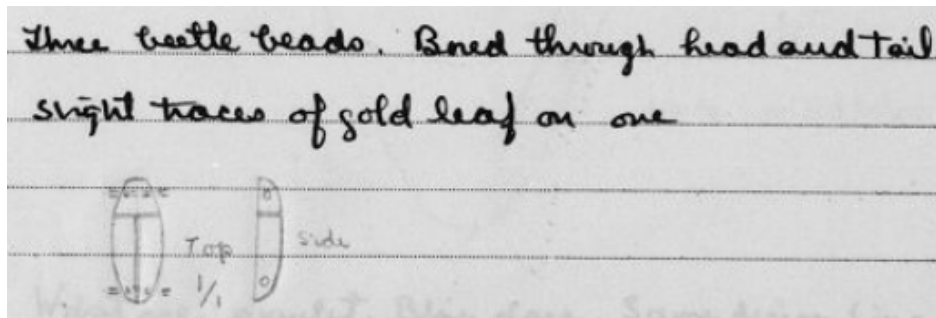


Figure 97. Click Beetle Pendant Beads, Giza Tomb G 6012

Image from “Jewelry Element: Faience Beetle-Shaped Pendants,” *Digital Giza*, accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/12504/full/>.

²³³ Abu Bakr, “Excavations at Giza, 1949-1950,” 85.

G 2004 A II: found in rock-cut pit-coffin under burial were 55 unglazed blue-green faience click beetle pendant beads covered with thin gold foil; mid-5th Dynasty.²³⁴ Also discovered: approximately 500 unglazed and faded blue-green faience cylinder beads (25 still covered with gold foil); 5950 ring beads of similar material with 350 still sticking together and some covered with gold foil; 20 copper ring beads.²³⁵ I would posit that this volume and style of beads implies a “beadnet” dress for a female – similar to that for the woman buried in G 8887 Shaft 294 – and *with* a wesekh broad collar featuring click beetle rather than drop pendants yet otherwise similar to this combination as reconstructed from 7000 similarly shaped faded blue and green faience beads from Giza Tomb G 7440 Z (“an undisturbed burial of a female contemporary of King Khufu,” 4th Dynasty, and displayed at the Boston MFA, see fig. 98).²³⁶

²³⁴ Digital Giza, “Jewelry Element: Faience Beetle-Shaped Pendants,” accessed January 14, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/22465/full/>.

²³⁵ Digital Giza, “Bones of Human Skeleton,” accessed January 14, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/21330/full/>.

²³⁶ MFA Boston, “Beadnet Dress,” accessed January 14, 2024, <http://collections.mfa.org/objects/146531/beadnet-dress>.



Figure 98. Reconstructed Dress and Wesekh Collar, Beads from Tomb G 7440 Z

Images from MFA Boston, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/146531/beanet-dress>, and author's photo taken at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on February 9, 2024.

G 2004 A II's skeleton is shown here and noting pelvis width, which lends toward identification as female (see fig. 99):



Figure 99. Skeleton in Giza Tomb G 2004 A II, Excavation Photo

*Image from “Bones of Human Skeleton,” Digital Giza,
<http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/21330/full/>.*

Five women were attested to be buried in this tomb (G 2004) along with two men per inscriptions discovered; tomb “owner” is Ptakhenui (male palace official) and his unnamed wife is also here. Also buried in G 2004 are Iteti (male palace official) and his wives Senbeshet and [...]tji and daughters Metjeti and Semdet.²³⁷ These are the 55 click beetle pendants, semi-circular end-pieces for a wesekh broad collar, and some of the other beads found in G 2004 A II (see fig. 100):

²³⁷ Digital Giza, “G 2004,” accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/493/full/>.

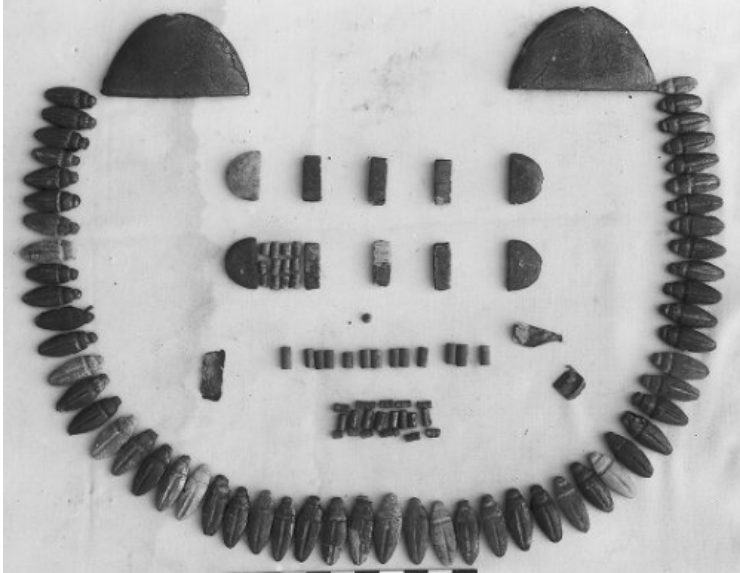


Figure 100. Click Beetle Pendants and Other Beads from Giza Tomb G 2004 A II

Image from “Jewelry Element: Faience Bead,” *Digital Giza*, accessed January 6, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/21329/full/>.

These two further finds can be noted in brief:

G 7700 (probable click beetle: gold sheet fragment, found in street debris, see fig.

101):

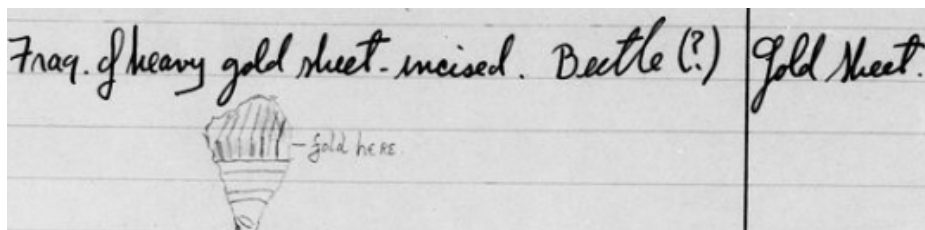


Figure 101. Click Beetle Fragment, found Adjacent to Giza G 7700

Image from “Fragment of Gold Sheet,” *Digital Giza*, accessed January 10, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/20678/full/>.

G 2422 (probable click beetle pictured second from top left, made of faience: blue-green glaze, found in dump heap, see fig. 102.) A possible pendant for a wesekh broadcollar given the end-pieces also discovered?

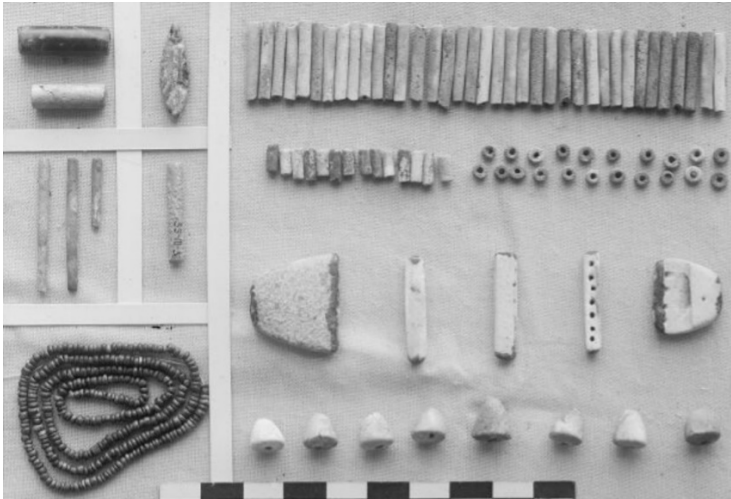


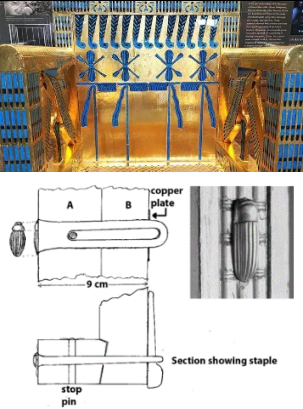

Figure 102. Faience Click Beetle, found with G 2422 Dump Heap




Image from "Jewelry Element: Faience Pendant," Digital Giza, accessed January 10, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/23327/full/>.


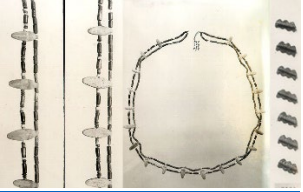
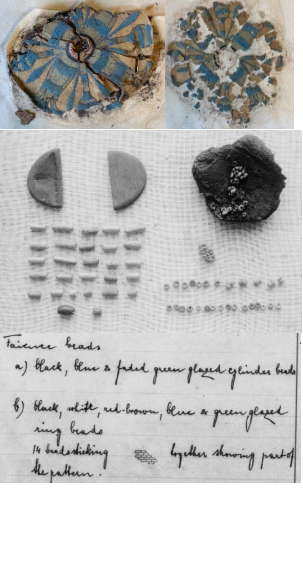

This is another connection for these unknown elite women of the Old Kingdom to Neith and the preservation of life, rising above the inundation of the flood of death, sealed and protected. Table 2 summarizes these findings, for this fascinating religious symbolism as highlighted archaeologically in detail for the first time (to my knowledge).

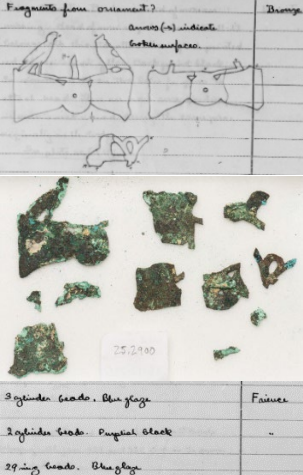
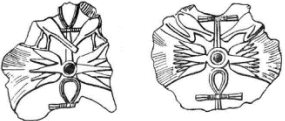
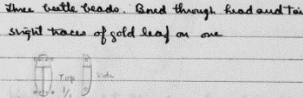
Table 2. Evidence of Neith's Click Beetle Emblem at Giza Necropolis

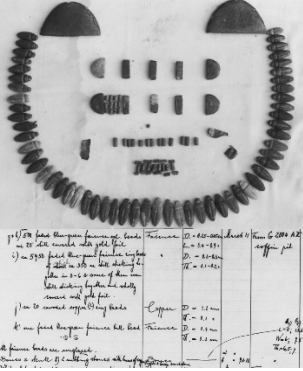


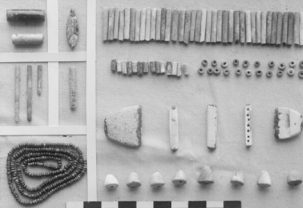

Summary of findings as listed and cited above:

Archaeological Find	Dynasty	Giza Shaft	Cemetery	Click Beetle/Beads
<p><i>Royal Women</i></p> 	Dyn. 4	G 7000 X (Hetepheres I)	Eastern	Click beetle emblems on chair and bed canopy.
	Dyn. 4	G 7530-7540 (Meresankh III)	Eastern	45 faded green faience cylinder beads "from plundering of body," possible necklace.

Archaeological Find	Dynasty	Giza Shaft	Cemetery	Click Beetle/Beads
<i>Diadems/Fragments & Click Beetles</i>				
	Dyn. 5-6	G 8887 294	Central	50 gold click beetle pendants strung on gold wire
 <p> <i>fragment of gold leaf from covering of beetle shaped pendants G 7143 B</i> C18953  L = 2.5 cm </p>	Dyn. 5	G 7143 B	Eastern	Fragment of gold leaf to cover click beetle pendant, with incised lines

Archaeological Find	Dynasty	Giza Shaft	Cemetery	Click Beetle/Beads
 	Possibly Dyn. 5	D 208 9	Western	20 click beetle pendants and blue, green and black faience beads
 <p data-bbox="205 982 506 1136"> <i>Faience beads</i> <i>a) black, blue & faded green glazed cylinder beads</i> <i>b) black, white, red-brown, blue & green glazed ring beads</i> <i>14 beads sticking together showing part of the pattern.</i> </p>	Prob. Dyn. 5	G 2416 D III	Western	<p>Carnelian and numerous faience cylinder (black, blue, green) & ring beads. Possible wesekh necklace with beetle pendants (see below for G 2004 A II). Glazed faience ring beads in black, white, red-brown, blue and green with 14 of them “sticking together showing part of the pattern.” Ring beads from this grave were used (along with elements from many other tombs) to <i>reconstruct</i> a wesekh necklace:</p> 

Archaeological Find	Dynasty	Giza Shaft	Cemetery	Click Beetle/Beads
 <p>Fragment from ornament? Dromy. <i>Acusis (s) indicata</i> <i>Sorbis aurifera</i></p> <p>3 cylinder beads. Blue glaze Faience 2 cylinder beads. Purple glaze 2 ring beads. Blue glaze</p>	<p>Prob. Dyn. 5</p>	<p>G 6028 F</p>	<p>Western</p>	<p>Faience beads: cylinders in blue and purplish black, and rings in blue</p>
 <p>“In addition there were some beads scattered along the eastern side of the sarcophagus. Owing to the smallness of their quantity, we can only assume that they come off bracelets and a necklace.”</p>	<p>Dyn. 4-5 (?)</p>	<p>“B” 42</p>	<p>Western</p>	<p>Small scattered beads (no images or further description)</p>
<i>Click Beetles Only</i>				
 <p>Three beetle beads. Bored through head and tail slight traces of gold leaf on one</p>	<p>Late Dyn. 5 or early Dyn. 6</p>	<p>G 6012 (Male tomb owner; unclear if women also buried here)</p>		<p>3 click beetle pendants: faience with gold leaf (no photo).</p>

Archaeological Find	Dynasty	Giza Shaft	Cemetery	Click Beetle/Beads
	Mid Dyn. 5	G 2004 A II (5 women and 2 men buried here)		<p>55 unglazed blue-green faience click beetle pendants. Also listed: numerous blue-green faience cylinder and ring beads, all unglazed, and some still covered with gold foil, as well as 20 copper (?) ring beads. Possible wesekh broadcollar (attested for men and women) given the semi-circular end-pieces? Would then be similar to that found for a male in G 2381 A (Dynasty 6) with beetle pendants where later broadcollars did <i>not</i> use the click beetle symbol:</p> 
<p><i>Probable click beetle:</i> Frags. of heavy gold sheet, incised. Beetle (?) Gold sheet.</p> 	Prob. Dyn. 4-6	G 7700 (street debris)	Eastern	Click beetle covering made from heavy gold foil with incised lines.
<p><i>Probable click beetle:</i></p> 	Late Dyn. 5	G 2422	Western	<p>Click beetle in faience: blue-green glaze. Possible pendant for wesekh broadcollar given end-pieces? Various other beads found in G 2422 D were used to <i>reconstruct</i> a wesekh necklace per note above for G 2416 D III:</p> 

Here we can also note that Hetepheres I and Meresankh III, in Dynasty 4, would have lived perhaps 30 or more years prior to the elite burials listed for Dynasty 5; the later burials could have been as many as 175 years beyond these royal women (with dating for their reigning husbands, and their own dates of death, extremely variable or unknown in the scholarship), yet it is tempting to consider the elite women found wearing the iconographically-connected burial diadems at Giza forming an ongoing religious community with their forebears and closer in time to Dynasty 4.

Returning to possibilities for *all* of these women in the afterlife, Der Manuelian notes that “Neith even incorporates some androgynous elements” being called “the woman who is a man,” “the man who is a woman,” and “the man who creates men.”²³⁸ In the Pyramid Texts, Neith appears as the “feminine counterpart of the *ka*” (Faulkner translation) or the “guardian forces” (Allen translation) for Unis.²³⁹ Her influence seems *clearly needed* for Unis’ transfiguration. Noting the later Ptolemaic Papyrus Salt 825, Zauzich writes that Neith “was also associated with the House of Life. According to Papyrus Salt 825, the goddess Neith was the keeper and manufacturer of drugs in the House of Life.”²⁴⁰ A Third Dynasty “Jubilee Vase” from Djoser’s Step Pyramid complex depicting *Heb-Sed* symbols just below imagery of the click beetle on the handle links Neith with the periodic rejuvenation and re-coronation of the king and Seshat in her role at these festivals, along with, arguably, the House of Life.²⁴¹ And the *full* image of the fragment from the Fifth Dynasty sun temple of Niuserre depicts priests carrying the standards for Seshat, Hathor (presumably given papyrus umbel at top), *and* Neith, along

²³⁸ Der Manuelian, “The Lost Throne of Queen Hetepheres from Giza,” 14.

²³⁹ Der Manuelian, 14.

²⁴⁰ Jasnow and Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth II*, 204.

²⁴¹ Hollis, *Five Egyptian Goddesses*, 17.

with additional symbols in the second register of Neith (two bows in carrying case) and Seshat (see fig. 103):

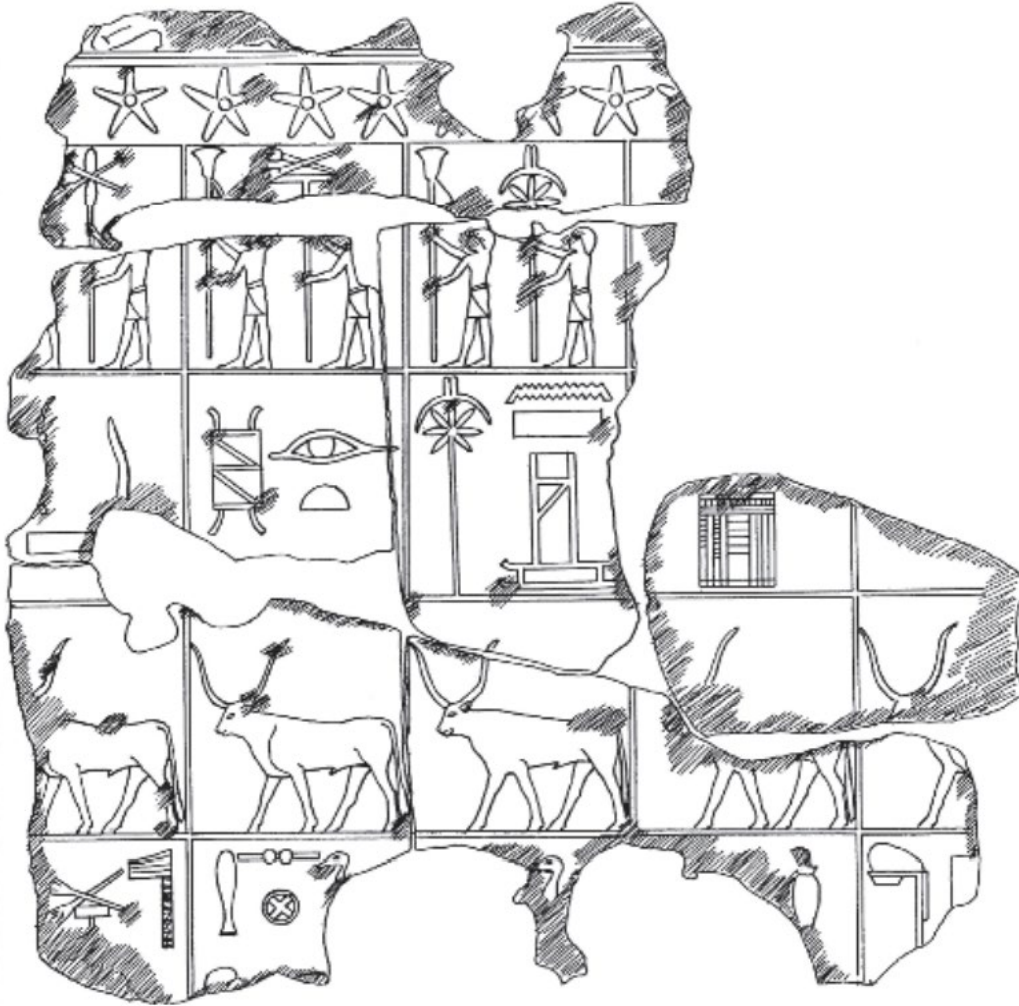


Figure 103. *Sed*-Festival Procession, Relief from Niuserre's Sun Temple

After von Bissing and Kees, Das Re-Heiligtum II: Die kleine Festdarstellung, pl. 7, from Massimiliano Nuzzolo, "The Sed-Festival of Niuserra and the Fifth Dynasty Sun Temples," in Peter Der Manuelian and Thomas Schneider, ed., Towards a New History for the Egyptian Old Kingdom, vol. 1 (United States: Brill, 2015), 374.

In the context of the elite, unknown 5th dynasty women in the years following the lives of Hetepheres I, Hetepheres II, and Meresankh III in the 4th dynasty, can we imagine a *persisting* connection via Hathor *and* Neith, Seshat-Nephthys-Thoth and the House of Life towards afterlife possibilities? Both in the proximity to the god-like influence of the Pharaoh which radiated out from his center at Memphis and at the pyramid complex at Giza (which again, may *not* have been constructed as mortuary tombs) and *as individual women*, clearly connected in iconography and therefore, belief?

A look at the symbolic coloration and formation of the Old Kingdom circlets can shed additional light.

Symbolism of Circlets and Fragments

To further understand the unique designs of these circlets found on the heads of women presumed to be non-royal and their afterlife significance, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the crested ibis (*akh*-bird), the *ankh* symbol, the central carnelian stones, the overall color schemes, the circular/symmetrical design, the papyrus umbels and lotus flowers, and the placement of the (3) elements on the head. All three complete diadems were considered “purely funerary.”²⁴² Given that the central ornament of the “Boston” diadem contains all of these elements, we can review the various motifs it contains (see fig. 104):

²⁴² Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 37.



Figure 104. “Boston” Diadem Central Ornament

Author’s photograph taken on February 5, 2023 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Akh and *ankh* symbols: as noted earlier, the *akh* was depicted as the crested ibis (here, two *akh* birds face with other with beaks actually “crossing over the top of an *ankh*-sign”), and is the luminous and effective spirit of the deceased which can, at the place of the *akhet* (translated usually as “horizon”) transcend the boundary between realms, between “Here and Not-Here,” “between this world and the hereafter.”²⁴³ Brind-Morrow considers this symbol incorporating the Thoth-bird to be “the light body,” where “the energy leaving the body, the nature of which is light, is the word *akh*, the sound of *ka* spelled backward, as though it were a mirror, a twin. It is the haloed bird, the hermit ibis.”²⁴⁴ Further she notes in her radically-different translation of the Pyramid Text of Unis, that “Thoth is the subtle but real radiance of the electric awakening of

²⁴³ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 12–14.

²⁴⁴ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 31, 81–82.

intelligence.”²⁴⁵ While literal food and other offerings were deemed necessary for the *continued* sustenance of the deceased (at least as depicted in Fourth and Fifth Dynasty Giza tombs unless meant metaphorically), it is considered “the primary meaning of *akh* to be a form of primordial creative power related to the birth of light” and of the “celestial effectiveness” of both sunlight and starlight, beneficial to humans and divine beings alike in reciprocal relationship.²⁴⁶

The two *akh* birds also appear in the “Cairo” circlet and the Mastaba “B” illustrated stucco fragments (facing away from each other), the “Leipzig” circlet and the Boston bronze fragments (facing towards each other). As such, they would appear highest on the head for these central ornaments, enabling flight or ascent. As the two *akhs* are conjoined in three or four of these cases with the *ankh* symbol between them, the relationship is apparent (as noted earlier) that eternal life is the goal. These literally rise out of the central red carnelian (whether presumed or extant) which appears as the sun at the horizon – the *akhet* – whose rays emanate to west and east as shown by the radiating lines painted in black onto the symmetrical blue-green papyrus umbels of the “Boston” diadem. Not as clear from the photo, Wilkinson describes that inlaid carnelian decorated the tips of the papyrus (followed by the outer gold borders) and also appears in the calyx flowing out from the central stone, adding to this effect of streaming sun rays.²⁴⁷

Dunham’s color diagram best shows these features (see fig. 105):

²⁴⁵ Morrow, 31–32.

²⁴⁶ Florence Dunn Friedman, “Akh,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780195102345.001.0001/acref-9780195102345-e-0018>.

²⁴⁷ Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 39.



Figure 105. Color Diagram for “Boston” Diadem Central Ornament

Image from Dunham, “An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom,” XLIV.24.

One can see in this early 20th century painting of an 18th Dynasty (New Kingdom) marsh scene, how this stylization for the papyrus with red calyx and tips and radiating lines between, along with birds lifting off directly from the umbels, was an ongoing symbolic motif:



Figure 106. Marsh Scene, New Kingdom

Image from Hugh R. Hopgood, "Papyrus Marsh," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed January 14, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/557718>.

On the central ornament of the “Boston” diadem, a “stylized lotus flower with buds on either side” is shown pointing down, towards the earth and the marsh-world of creation.²⁴⁸ Alix Wilkinson describes the central ornament of the “Cairo” circlet (which resembles the design of the “Boston” plaster fragments) as alternating “four floral motifs which resemble the lotus-seed vessel resting in the calyx ... with four lotus buds or petals.”²⁴⁹ Cyril Aldred considers these to be alternating “so-called lily flowers” and

²⁴⁸ Wilkinson, 39.

²⁴⁹ Wilkinson, 38.

“lily” buds.²⁵⁰ Brind-Morrow’s Pyramid Text translation includes, “Unis becomes a pool of lilies glittering on the flooded land” which she likens to the Pleiades in Taurus.²⁵¹ However, the lotus symbolism is certainly compelling here. Reliefs from the tomb of Hetepet, a priestess of Hathor buried in Giza in (most likely) the first half of the Fifth Dynasty, show this elite non-royal woman in a boat, on a marsh journey and surrounded by lotus flowers and buds and heading towards the dense papyrus (see fig. 107).



Figure 107. Marsh Scene, Tomb of Hetepet, Relief Photo and Illustration

Photo from Fischer, Egyptian Women of the Old Kingdom and of the Heracleopolitan Period, Plate 1b, and Illustration from Alexandra Woods, “Chronological Considerations: Fragments from the Tomb of Hetepet at Giza,” Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology, January 1, 2013, 129, https://www.academia.edu/30190242/Chronological_considerations_Fragments_from_the_tomb_of_Hetepet_at_Giza.

²⁵⁰ Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewelry of the Dynastic Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 33–34.

²⁵¹ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 108.

Woods and Swinton note that the blue and white lotus varieties in ancient Egypt (“probably a water lily”) had symbolic and therapeutic properties, writing that “the lotus sinks under the water at night but re-emerges in the morning, which may have caused the flower to become the symbol for rebirth and regeneration.”²⁵² Schwaller de Lubicz describes how the *Nymphaea* lotus proliferates by growing new buds directly out of the blossom itself, such that a new plant is born above and out of the original, as shown in the “Botanical Garden” reliefs at Karnak (New Kingdom) – which he connects with the *Sed*-festival and the “exaltation of the mortal toward the immortal” with the King as “ferment” (see fig. 108):²⁵³

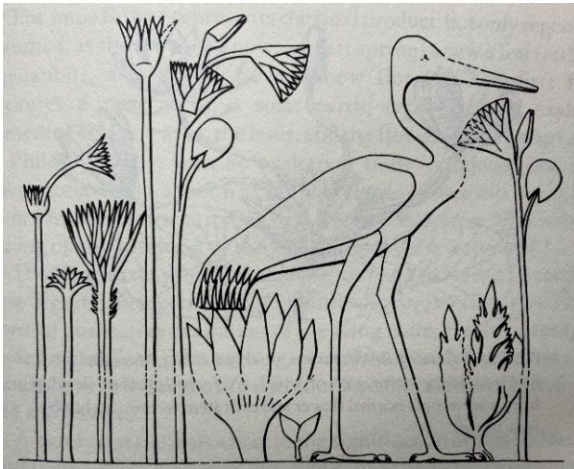


Figure 108. Illustration of “Botanical Garden” Relief at Karnak

Image from Schwaller de Lubicz, Sacred Science, 241.

Here, he notes that this is not about multiplication “characteristic of all seed,” but about “the celebrating of regeneration,” entailed in “the ceremony of rebirth: a return to the

²⁵² Alexandra Woods, “Chronological Considerations: Fragments from the Tomb of Hetepet at Giza,” *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (January 1, 2013), 143–44.

²⁵³ Schwaller de Lubicz, *Sacred Science*, 240–45.

womb for a new gestation in order to be reborn in a higher state” and that “like Osiris, the King must die in order to be renewed in a more perfect state” – a “*qualitative*” exaltation (which he describes in an alchemic fashion, as “transmutation”). During the *Sed*-Festival, the King “must pass once again through the phases of the white crown and the red crown” and “symbolically ... must pass through an animal skin, the *tikenu*, always associated with the mystery of Osirian renewal.” Schwaller de Lubicz further notes that “the deeper sense of the ritual, *which concerns every human being*, is no longer understood.”²⁵⁴

He also writes that “the lotus symbolizes the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire” given that it “has its roots in the earth, grows in and by means of water, that its leaves are nourished by air and its flower by the sun’s fire.”²⁵⁵ Hetepet’s relief shows her crowned with lotus blossoms, plucking and smelling a lotus, and with lotuses actually proliferating new buds as Schwaller de Lubicz describes, in the water and air all around her as they rise up from the earth below and into the light above. She heads toward the papyrus thicket where birds perch and take off into the sky, the place where she too can arise on her celestial boat-journey. Brind-Morrow translating Unis’ Pyramid Text, has

²⁵⁴ Schwaller de Lubicz, 240–47. Elisabetta Bertol and her colleagues have also noted the hallucinogenic properties of the blue lotus (*Nymphaea caerulea*) and the so-called “white lotus” (*N. lotos*), describing that “the isolation of the psychoactive apomorphine from *Nymphaea* species has offered chemical support to speculation that *Nymphaea* species may have been employed as hallucinogens in both the Old and the New World. The use of *N. caerulea* and of *N. lotos* in rites and rituals is depicted in the frescoes within the tombs, and in very early papyrus scrolls. The most important of these was the scroll of Ani (*Book of the Dead*). *Nymphaea* is mentioned and represented in several chapters of the book, always tied to magical-religious rites. Depictions of *Papaver somniferum* and mandragora, also known as mandrake, a hallucinogenic plant with anticholinergic properties, often appear alongside those of *Nymphaea*. Tutankhamon’s tomb contained a gold-plated shrine decorated with a bas-relief of a pharaoh holding a huge *Nymphaea* and two mandragoras in his left hand.” See Elisabetta Bertol et al., “*Nymphaea* Cults in Ancient Egypt and the New World: a Lesson in Empirical Pharmacology,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 97 no. 2 (February 2004): 84, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/014107680409700214>.

²⁵⁵ Schwaller de Lubicz, 244–45.

“Unis rises as the beautiful one, as the lotus, the shining joy, he rises on the horizon full of light. Pure are the stars of his appearance.”²⁵⁶

Hetepet is shown surrounded by female attendants – might they all be affiliated with the House of Life? In other reliefs, numerous women are shown bringing her offerings: notably, five of them bring her wesekh necklaces (for protection), along with refreshment and lotus flowers (see fig. 109):

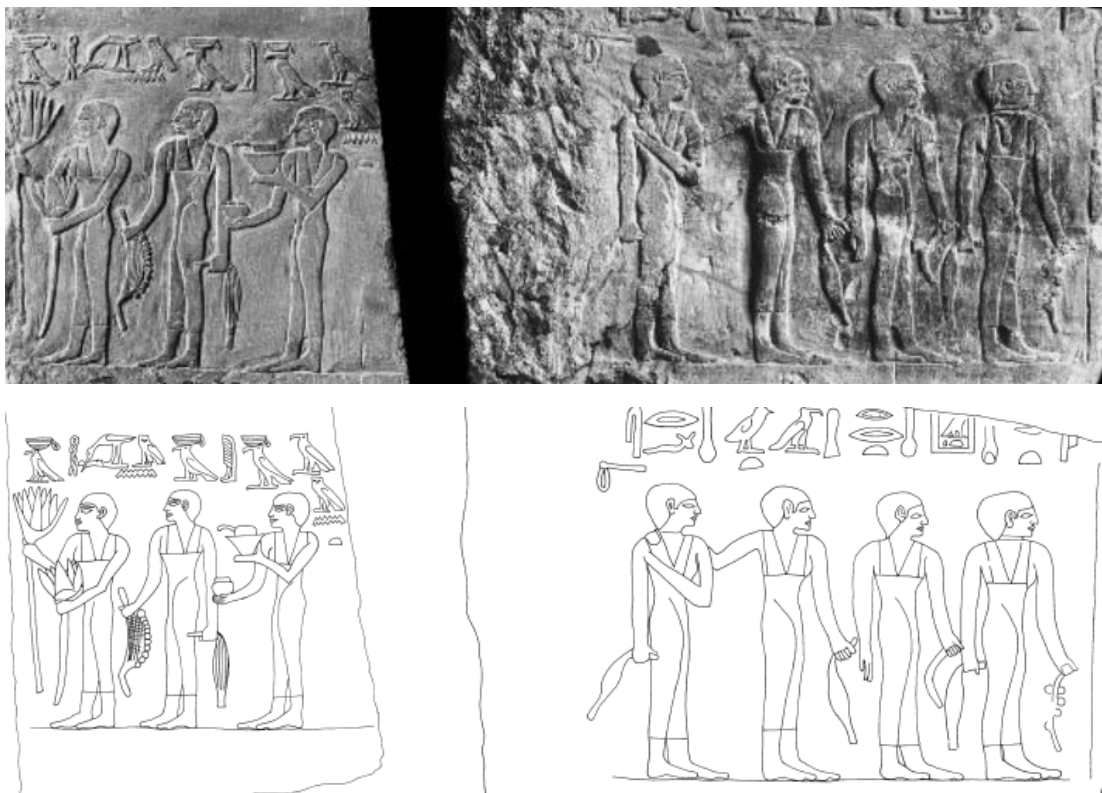


Figure 109. Offering Scene, Tomb of Hetepet, Relief Photo and Illustration

Photo from Fischer, Egyptian Women of the Old Kingdom and of the Heracleopolitan Period, Plate 2, and Illustration from Alexandra Woods, “Chronological Considerations: Fragments from the Tomb of Hetepet at Giza,” Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology, January 1, 2013, 129.

²⁵⁶ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 108.

Returning to the diadems and the symbolic placements of the elements: we can posit for these elite women the aspiration for a sky journey to becoming an eternal *akh* (north and the circumpolar stars), with the sun at the horizon at its dawn arising (east-west axis), with lotus and marsh-place of birth and rebirth below. In the same way, temples, pyramids and many other buildings including some tombs, were sited to the cardinal points. Old Kingdom burials were laid out to face the east and the rising sun which was born anew each day, while death was associated with the setting sun in the west.²⁵⁷

In terms of color symbolism: green for ancient Egyptians was naturally the color of freshness and regeneration, as was blue-green, and note that the *akh* birds on the “Boston” diadem were painted green as was the lotus, with blue-green for the papyrus. Wilkinson notes that the plaster rosette fragments in Boston are “made of gesso, linen and papyrus and are painted with thick Egyptian blue over yellow and green paint with the outlines drawn in black ink.”²⁵⁸ Blue for the sky is not surprising, but green was also considered celestial with the “Field of Reeds” an aspect of the stellar afterlife – a place, whether physical or metaphysical. “O reeds of the green fields of reeds,” translates Brind-Morrow and “the green fields they are stars.”²⁵⁹ Further, she highlights “of malachite born as Sirius.”²⁶⁰ Black was often associated with green, in connection to the renewal of Osiris as well as to the “fertile black silt deposited by the Nile in its annual flooding.”²⁶¹ Blue was associated with the heavens, the primeval flood and the inundation of the Nile

²⁵⁷ Richard H. Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 65.

²⁵⁸ Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery*, 40.

²⁵⁹ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 83–87.

²⁶⁰ Morrow, 108.

²⁶¹ Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*, 109.

“which was an annual reminder or re-enactment of the watery origins of the world” – all functioning as symbols of “life and rebirth.”²⁶² Richard Wilkinson notes that the ibis (the Thoth-bird) was usually painted blue.²⁶³

Yellow “was seen as symbolic of that which was eternal and imperishable,” particularly in its connection to the sun, and gold was considered the flesh of the gods.²⁶⁴ In the religious sphere, coloration was more important than what material was used, and so colored paint and glass (for example) were considered as potent in use as were gemstones and actual gold, and so headdresses crafted for the tomb could be made from more fragile materials without any loss of protection or aid in the afterlife. Wilkinson describes how “the word *iwēn* used to signify the concept of ‘color’ in the Egyptian language can be translated as not only ‘external appearance,’ but also ‘nature,’ ‘being,’ ‘character,’ or even ‘disposition.’”²⁶⁵

Red was “associated with fire and blood” and could symbolize both “life and regeneration” as well as the dangerous forces of destruction and wrath, as connected also with the god Seth. Red was both the “fiery, protective” aspect of the sun-god Re, and *also* his “potentially destructive aspect.”²⁶⁶ Goebis links “the Red Crown and its personifying goddess(es) Wadjet (and possibly Neith as flood) with the red light or sun disc at sunrise” as well as with “blood and slaughter.” She notes that “in the cosmic sphere, the imagery of bloodshed and massacre is strongly associated with sunrise as the time when the sun-god has to battle against the negative forces manifest in the dark and the night before

²⁶² Wilkinson, 107.

²⁶³ Wilkinson, 107.

²⁶⁴ Wilkinson, 108.

²⁶⁵ Wilkinson, 104.

²⁶⁶ Wilkinson, 106–7.

he rises victoriously in the eastern horizon.”²⁶⁷ This certainly heightens both the aspirational and the apotropaic and amuletic aspects of the diadems and fragments.

Other associations for red with the afterlife journey: Queen Neith’s (wife of Pepi II) sarcophagus and canopic chest, found in the burial chamber under a canopy of inscribed stars, were made of red granite.²⁶⁸ Meresankh II’s sarcophagus (found in G 7410 Pit B) was also made of red granite,²⁶⁹ although Meresankh III’s sarcophagus (originally constructed for her mother) was crafted from black granite.²⁷⁰ And Callender notes a rose quartzite sarcophagus for 5th Dynasty Princess Kha-merer-nebty (daughter of King Niuserre).²⁷¹ Perhaps encased in red or rose, and facing east to the rising sun, these royal women (whose headwear was unfortunately plundered) were also prepared for the journey to the *akhet* – and Meresankh III could participate in the Osirian renewal associated with black.

In terms of the form and position on the head: the three complete diadems certainly have a three-ness versus the singularity of cobra/uraeus at front-center. Still, the central roundel designs are distinct from the side ornaments, where extant -- for the “Boston” and “Cairo” circlets in any case. So the center-forehead placement for a key element at the “third eye,” as noted above in the research of Schwaller de Lubicz, is still a feature of these female diadems and their afterlife significance. Notably for this distinction: a male diadem found at Giza (G 5000 Shaft S 316) dating to the end of Dynasty 5 – early Dynasty 6 (currently in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

²⁶⁷ Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature*, 204–5.

²⁶⁸ Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, 3.

²⁶⁹ Digital Giza, “Red Granite Sarcophagus of Meresankh II,” accessed January 15, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/26784/full/>.

²⁷⁰ Mused: Digital Giza, “Black Granite Sarcophagus and Lid of Meresankh III.”

²⁷¹ Callender, “The Burial of Women in the Old Kingdom,” 5.

constructed of copper covered with gold foil (19.5 cm) and considered made for funerary use, which instead shows two side-bows with carnelian centers over brown faience and *no* frontal element.²⁷² This diadem was discovered in the wooden coffin near the head, along with wesekh broad collar and faience beaded bracelet (see fig. 110).²⁷³



Figure 110. Male Diadem from Giza Tomb G 5000 Shaft S 316

Images from “Diadem,” Digital Giza, accessed January 15, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/44969/full/>, and “Diadem,” Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, accessed February 25, 2023, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/318653/>.

Neferi’s tomb at Giza (considered probably 4th Dynasty and possibly 5th) includes this stone facade where he is shown wearing a diadem with looped side-bow of this same variety (see fig. 111):

²⁷² Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, “Diadem,” accessed February 25, 2023, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/318653/>.

²⁷³ Digital Giza, “Diadem,” accessed January 15, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/44969/full/>.

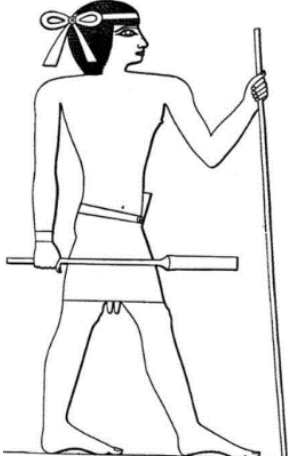


Figure 111. Illustration of Side-Bow Diadem, Tomb of Neferi

Image from Abu Bakr, "Excavations at Giza, 1949-1950," 49.

In another depiction Neferi is shown with diadem of papyrus umbels tied in back (see fig. 112):

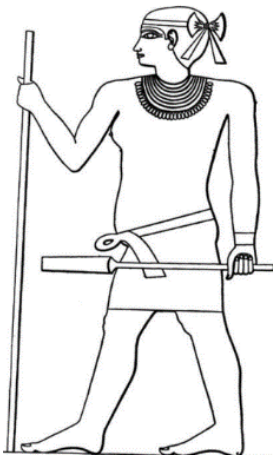


Figure 112. Illustration of Papyrus-Umbel Diadem, Tomb of Neferi

Image from Abu Bakr, "Excavations at Giza, 1949-1950," 51.

And in another Giza mastaba (dated to end of Dynasty 4), Hetep-ni-Khnum, an inspector of *w'b* priests (among other titles) is also shown wearing the looped side bow (see fig. 113), and is depicted in another image in leopard-skin garb, shown with his wife Henti

with her daughter pictured below her wearing a lotus garland of fresh flowers, both carrying lotuses (see fig. 114):



Figure 113. Illustration of Side-Bow Diadem, Tomb of Hetep-ni-Khnum

Image from Abu Bakr, "Excavations at Giza, 1949-1950," Figure 10.



Figure 114. Hetep-ni-Khnum and Family with Leopard-Skin and Lotus Garland

From Abu Bakr, "Excavations at Giza, 1949-1950," Figure 10.

While scant, this is further archaeological evidence towards understanding what sets apart the female Old Kingdom circlets and fragments from those which were worn in life and death by elite males. Notably, these diadems intentionally placed on the head of each deceased woman were intended – or so it appears – to aid in her afterlife journey, while the necklaces carrying the emblem of Neith, the click beetle, and worn at the throat, would have “placed the owner under the goddess’ protection” for the perilous journey ahead.²⁷⁴ Brind-Morrow translates an inscription of the Pyramid Text of the ascent of

²⁷⁴ Carol Andrews, *Amulets of Ancient Egypt* (London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, 1994), 10.

Unis, “you unfold, as you remain among them, the shining souls of eternity,” adding “the final image: Unis unfolds, opens, as the flower. Here the verb *to open* is represented by a four-petaled flower that opens from within.”²⁷⁵ This could also apply to the floral central roundel of the “Cairo” circlet and the rosette fragments in Boston and to the women who wore them at death!

Elite (Non-Royal) Women of the Old Kingdom

Hans Goedicke cites two examples of non-royal males being deified during the Old Kingdom: “*Ddf-Hr*, the son of Cheops and author of a wisdom-text, and *K3gmny*, the vizier of Tety to whom also a ‘teaching’ is assigned.”²⁷⁶ He further posits a third from various evidence: *Ddy* (Djedi), noted in the Westcar Papyrus as a magician during the reign of Cheops who “knew the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth” and performed life-renewing miracles as noted in a footnote above.²⁷⁷ So, how can we consider anew the afterlife possibilities for the elite, non-royal women buried at Giza? Fischer finds evidence at Saqqara for a non-royal woman identified in her tomb with Osiris (and therefore with the potential for eternal life), dated to the 8th – 10th Dynasty: the name [Osi]ris S3t-'Iy-tnw, is accorded to this non-royal Priestess of Hathor.²⁷⁸ What about non-royal women *prior* to this time?

In studying Old Kingdom mortuary practice, Callender finds far fewer women than men accorded the ritual offerings, particularly food and drink (as inscribed in the

²⁷⁵ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 83–85.

²⁷⁶ Hans Goedicke, “A Deification of a Private Person in the Old Kingdom,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 41 (1955): 32, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3855234>.

²⁷⁷ Goedicke, 32.

²⁷⁸ Henry George Fischer, “A Stela of the Heracleopolitan Period at Saqqara: the Osiris 'Iti,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 90, no. 1 (January 1, 1963): 36, <https://doi.org/10.1524/zaes.1963.90.1.35>.

chambers) that would have been considered necessary for sustenance and concludes that “very few of the upper class women of the Old Kingdom had access to the afterlife,” and for those women with less means who had “either simple shallow graves or nameless pits,” there would have been considered no possibility for an afterlife.²⁷⁹ Were the diadem-wearers either women of means, title, and royal connection, in their own right or through their husbands, or were there *also* sacred communities that afforded other possible fates after death to which they were connected? Edward Brovarski finds in depictions at Giza that the long leopard-skin garment as worn by women is shown mainly in 4th Dynasty images, although perhaps is seen on one early 5th Dynasty false door as well (and those for men wearing leopard-skin vestments over short kilts figure in imagery spanning 4th through early 5th Dynasties).²⁸⁰ Recall again that Seshat’s characteristic dress is the leopard-skin garment. Even if women’s cultic roles were diminishing over the course of the Old Kingdom (as noted above), a persisting connection to Hathor, Neith, Thoth and Seshat, deities considered already quite ancient at this time, could be emblematic of ties to the enigmatic House of Life.

The related Giza tombs 5170 and 5080 may shed light on these larger questions. Henutsen, buried in G 5080, is called royal acquaintance, priestess of Hathor Mistress-of-the-Sycamore and priestess of Neith Opener-of-the-Ways. Her husband (the tomb “owner”) was Seshemnefer, an overseer of the scribes among many other titles, and their son was Seshemnefer III. The latter (as tomb “owner”) was buried in G 5170 along with his wife, Hetepheres, called “king's daughter, priestess of Hathor Mistress-of-the-

²⁷⁹ Callender, “The Burial of Women in the Old Kingdom,” 6–8.

²⁸⁰ Tuḥfah Aḥmad Ḥandūsah and Edward Brovarski, *The Abu Bakr Cemetery at Giza*, Wilbour Studies in Egyptology and Assyriology No. 5 (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2020), 15.

Sycamore, priestess of Neith Opener-of-the-Ways.” Titles for males buried in G 5170 include male inspectors/overseers of ka-priests, ka-priest, royal document scribe, overseer of royal document scribes, scribe of the library, inspector/overseer of scribes, priest of Ma’at, and there is a craftsman and ka-priest (!) named [...]def. A false door of his tomb shows father Seshemnefer II wearing the leopard-skin garment according to Naguib Kanawati (see fig. 115, difficult, however to make out in the photo):²⁸¹



Figure 115. Seshemnefer II wearing Leopard-Skin Garment

Image from Kanawati, Tombs at Giza. 2, Plate 27a.

This interesting combination of titles and roles within this family suggests a possible connection to the House of Life.

²⁸¹ Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza. 2*, 59.

We also find at Giza King Sneferu's probable son, Ankh-haf (4th Dynasty), titled "the great one of the Five of the House of Thoth" (G 7510)²⁸² and king's son Hemiunu (4th Dynasty), considered architect of Khufu's pyramid at Giza, whose statue was found in situ in the G 4000 serdab and who was called "greatest of the five of the House of Thoth."²⁸³ Certainly the connection to Thoth was quite strong at this time, as also attested for Queens Hetepheres II and Meresankh III, and notable given his role as one of the gods *most closely associated* over time with the *per ankh*.

²⁸² Digital Giza, "G 7510," accessed January 15, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/1570/full/>.

²⁸³ Digital Giza, "Hemiunu (G 4000)," accessed January 15, 2024, <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/3dmodels/71055/full/>.

Chapter V.

Conclusion: The Jewel in the Crown

We return again to: who were these Old Kingdom, presumably non-royal but elite women each buried with symbolically-related diadems placed *around their heads*? Is the fillet a stage in development, marking you as initiated into the House of Life or in any case associated with Thoth from this perspective? Bonacker, in providing context for the Egyptian Book of the Two Ways, writes that “only the initiated succeed in participating in the voyage of the god of the dead (Osiris) and in passing with him through the gates of the nether-world, divided into separate rooms.”²⁸⁴ In the end, we can only speculate on potential, formal initiation of women into the mysteries of the House of Life during the Old Kingdom and for their specific training and preparation for the afterlife journey, *the jewel in the crown*. “Secret are the ways to take,” translates Brind-Morrow for Unis’ Pyramid Text and certainly very little is known about the *per ankh* and its composition and functions.²⁸⁵

Further, is the circlet different from a fillet? Could you become an *akh* after death although not with the same status as Osiris – yet still granted a form of longer/eternal life in the stellar realm? I am suggesting that the symbolism of these three circlets imply the belief that to become *akhified* was the aspiration and considered possible for our unnamed Old Kingdom women, buried in mastaba tombs at Giza. Were they part of a

²⁸⁴ Bonacker, “The Egyptian ‘Book of the Two Ways,’” 13.

²⁸⁵ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 111.

larger enclave of women surrounding the royal queens in the lineage/tradition of Queens Hetepheres I, Hetepheres II, and Meresankh III who were all a part of an enduring House of Life tradition or connected with it in some way, and to be a Priestess of Thoth was a sign of this (noting also the connection of Thoth and ancient Heliopolis as a primary religious center in the Old Kingdom)? Are these the women depicted in Meresankh III's tomb on the back and side walls as guardians, companions, witnesses, and not simply images of herself and/or women of her bloodline? Can later evidence (for example, from the tradition of God's Wives of Amun and their relationship to Seshat during the New Kingdom and beyond) help us to understand the possibilities of these earlier women? If there were (as attested) Priestesses of Thoth, and Priests of Seshat ... were there also Priests of Thoth at this time (or only those affiliated with the "House of Thoth") and Priestesses of Seshat as I have suggested? Perhaps these are all one and the same ... officials, initiates, students, affiliates of the House of Life. The tradition of women as prophetesses or priestesses of cults other than for Hathor diminished over time. Perhaps in the Old Kingdom we are seeing one of the high points for female status and potential.

In the symbolic elements of the diadems and fragments discovered, we can posit a *living* connection in service to Thoth and Hathor, as had the priestesses of Isis, *initiated into her Mysteries*, much later in time (Graeco-Roman periods) who were depicted with the Isis knot and other key symbols, *as votaries of the goddess*, at death. Schwaller de Lubicz describes the *extra muros* sanctuary of Thoth at Luxor (New Kingdom) as the training ground for how to acquire the gift of "mastery of the ego."²⁸⁶ With the *ankh* and *akh* symbolism of the Giza diadems and fragments – this wish to be a *living*, radiant,

²⁸⁶ Schwaller de Lubicz, *The Temple of Man*, 439.

effective *akh* comes through vividly, just as later in time 18th Dynasty Queen Ahmose-Nefertari was shown as *having achieved*. Potentially at death, the *ba* which can move (fly) in the air (like a vehicle for the soul) reunites with the *ka*, and thus becomes an *akh*, which would then – possibly – be the *new and radiant body* for the reunited *ba/ka*... *if* the individual is properly prepared during lifetime on earth. Here, the *ka* is the *divine* double or twin created at the same time as birth of the physical body and perhaps could even be considered the consciousness/being/*nous* of *who you are*: true for men and women alike and essentially beyond gender as described by Lana Troy for Atum (and notably, for Neith and Ptah as well in their creative aspects).²⁸⁷ Brind-Morrow suggests, “one strives at death to be true to the clean underlying pattern of what one is, the *ma’aherw* – *the true vibration, the vibration of truth*.”²⁸⁸

The Hubble and Webb telescopes reveal extraordinary images of the birthplace of stars in the Orion Nebula, located below Orion’s Belt and at the place or middle of his “sword” (more than likely, his phallic place of creation, see fig. 116):

²⁸⁷ Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, 15–18.

²⁸⁸ Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind*, 88.



Figure 116. Diagram of Orion and Orion Nebula

From “Orion,” Library of Halexandria, accessed January 15, 2024, <http://www.halexandria.org/dward107.htm>.

NASA notes that “the nebula is only 1,300 light-years away, making it the closest large star-forming region to Earth.”²⁸⁹ Close enough, that is, “to appear to the naked eye as a fuzzy star in the sword of the popular hunter constellation” (see fig. 117):²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ NASA Universe Exploration, “Discovering the Universe Through the Constellation Orion,” accessed January 15, 2024, <https://universe.nasa.gov/news/147/discovering-the-universe-through-the-constellation-orion>.

²⁹⁰ NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, “The Sword of Orion,” accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/images/pia08653-the-sword-of-orion>.



Figure 117. Photographs of Orion Nebula

Images from “The Sword of Orion,” NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/images/pia08653-the-sword-of-orion>, and from “Discovering the Universe Through the Constellation Orion,” NASA Universe Exploration, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://universe.nasa.gov/news/147/discovering-the-universe-through-the-constellation-orion>.

Visualizations for this incredible birth process can be found on the NASA website, “Discovering the Universe through the Constellation Orion,”²⁹¹ and via the *New York Times* YouTube video, “Born From Dust.”²⁹² Additionally, “observers have long noted a distinctive greenish tint to the nebula, in addition to regions of red and of blue-

²⁹¹ NASA Universe Exploration, “Discovering the Universe Through the Constellation Orion.”

²⁹² Jason Drakeford, Jonathan Corum, and Dennis Overbye, “Born from Dust, Out There with Dennis Overbye,” streamed on December 19, 2014, *Birth of a Star, Out There*, *The New York Times*, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7MG-LahuX4>.

violet.²⁹³ Do these colors remind us of the frequently used red, green, and blue in Egyptian symbolism and in the diadems and fragments? Recall as well here the twenty butterfly bracelets crafted for Hetepheres I, with inlaid turquoise, green jasper, lapis lazuli, and carnelian (red and orange-red) which stones were frequently used in Egyptian jewelry for millennia (see fig. 118).²⁹⁴



Figure 118. Butterfly Bracelets of Queen Hetepheres I with Inlaid Stones

Images from author's photo taken at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston on May 10, 2023, and from "Silver Bracelets of Queen Hetepheres I," Egypt Museum, August 3, 2022, <https://egypt-museum.com/bracelets-of-queen-hetepheres/>.

²⁹³ "Orion Nebula," *Wikipedia*, accessed November 9, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Orion_Nebula&oldid=1184246650.

²⁹⁴ Nigel Fletcher-Jones, *Ancient Egyptian Jewelry: 50 Masterpieces of Art and Design* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020), 17.

Of further note for Orion:

Many of the stars in the constellation are further from other stars in the constellation than they are from Earth. In other words, we see only the projection of these stars on what appears to be a flat surface, whereas some of the stars are enormously further away from Earth than others in the same constellation. The notable exception is that the stars of Orion's "belt" and the Orion Nebula are at roughly the same distance from the Earth, and thus are quite close to each other. This close connection may very well imply a greater degree of importance to these central players in the Orion Constellation than to the rest of the constellation.²⁹⁵

Perhaps the Pyramid Texts which assert the possibility to join Osiris/Orion as a new luminous being are not so far-fetched, or in any case we can posit that the same processes may exist both cosmologically and metaphysically. An understanding of this may have formed the context for the afterlife beliefs for elite women of the Old Kingdom – as stemming from far more ancient wisdom that was preserved and remained quite active in the esoteric knowledge and practices of the House of Life tradition.

²⁹⁵ Library of Halexandria, "Orion," accessed January 15, 2024, <http://www.halexandria.org/dward107.htm>.

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