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## A Statuette of Amunhotpe III in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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The reign of Amunhotpe III is characterized by its extensive building program in temple and palace architecture, sculpture on every scale from the miniature to the colossal, and a hitherto unparalleled flourishing of the decorative arts.<sup>1</sup> His predecessors had widened the borders of Egypt and enriched the palace and temple coffers through campaigns as far north as the Euphrates and as far south as the fourth cataract in the Nile. There followed in his reign an age of opulence in the court and intensive diplomatic correspondence with the principalities of the day.<sup>2</sup>

Amunhotpe III himself is so often represented in sculpture and relief that his features are readily recognized in the several types preserved. There are life-size and over life-size heads from statues in various materials, some with a characteristic archaic smile, as well as a series of heads assigned to the first part of his reign. Jacques Vandier has isolated no fewer than seven styles in the royal sculpture of the reign: a conventional style, four idealizing styles, a "realistic" style, and the Amarna style.<sup>3</sup> The best-known representations of the king are those in stelae from Amarna, portraying him as a corpulent figure in his old age; the headless epicene statuette in the Metropolitan Museum; and the miniature seated statuettes of the king and his wife Teye in the Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim.<sup>4</sup>

The Museum of Fine Arts has recently received through the generosity of Mrs. Horace L. Mayer a kneeling statuette of the king previously on loan as part of the collection of the late Horace L. Mayer (Figs. 1-6, 8, 9).<sup>5</sup> The Museum is indebted to the Mayers for many distinguished gifts and loans.<sup>6</sup> Through their excellent taste, connoisseurship, and interest the Egyptian Department has been immeasurably enriched.

In this extraordinarily fine statuette Amunhotpe III is represented sitting on his heels with the toes bent forward (the three outer toes clearly shown on each side [Fig. 5]), offering an unidentified cult object to a deity. The cult object and the hands holding it are broken away (Fig. 8). The left shoulder, part of the upper right arm, and the top of the crown with the corresponding portion of the back support are also missing. The statuette is otherwise complete, without any damage to the head and the face. The material is a light brown steatite with a greenish yellow cast. It was once glazed, but most of the glaze has worn away. The signs of splitting in the manner of wood near the base may have been caused by the heat used in the glazing process.

The face is finely carved. The large eyes have the almond shape prevalent in several of the styles established by Vandier. The modeled eyebrows are expressed by a change in plane rather than by raised relief bands. They curve gently downward into



1. Statuette of Amunhotpe III. Glazed steatite. Dynasty 18 (ca. 1400 B.C.).  
Height: 12.8 cm. *Gift of Mrs. Horace L. Mayer. 1970.636.*



2, 3, 4. The Boston Statuette of Amunhotpe III.

5. The Boston Statuette of Amunhotpe III. Detail. *Photo John F. X. McKeon.*





6. The Boston Statuette of Amunhotpe III. Detail. Photo John F. X. McKeon.



7. Colossal head of Amunhotpe III. The Brooklyn Museum. Photo courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum.

8. The Boston Statuette of Amunhotpe III. Detail. Photo John F. X. McKeon.



the root of the nose. The thin lines of the upper and lower eyelids are cut in clean, sharp relief. The upper lid extends outward into a short cosmetic line which does not develop into the usual thickening band with a squared-off end. The eyes themselves show a subtle variation in plane, the eyeballs being slightly rounded, and the pupils raised and darkened. The nose is small and fine, slightly turned up, and the nostrils thin, with the openings indicated. The mouth is relatively small. The lower lip is shorter than the upper, since the depression at the corners of the mouth cuts into it. The small and rounded chin does not project. The philtrum between the nose and lips is marked. Unlike the elongated features of some of the other statues of the king, the face is round.

The torso of the statuette is full, with a suggestion of weight — a characteristic that the king developed in his later years to a marked degree. A single curved line beneath the breast and nipples defines the pectorals, and a slight modeling repeats this line between it and the hollow of the navel. There is a slight swelling of the stomach just above the belt. The impression given by the face and the body is a youthful one.

The statuette seems to portray the king shortly after his coronation as a handsome yet nonathletic prince instead of as the reigning monarch, which his crown and cartouches show him to be. He wears a pleated skirt with triangular frontal apron just above his knees. The apron ends in the royal device of two cobras with disk crowns on either side (Fig. 8). The knees themselves are slightly stumpy and squared off (Fig. 2). The skirt is casually cut with a rough tool (Fig. 5), and it presents a deliberate contrast to the fine lapidary cutting of the face. On the apron is set the cult object now broken away (Fig. 8). It may be possible to identify this votive object through parallels and the remaining traces, but I cannot suggest a solution with confidence. Although the base of the missing object is round with a narrowing rise and suggests the shape of a libation vessel of the *hes* type,<sup>7</sup> it could be the pedestal of an offering tray. The mention of Isis in the dorsal inscription (Figs. 4, 9) alternatively suggests that the missing object might be the “knot of Isis” associated with her cult. Many statues hold a ram’s head in this position, an emblem more likely to occur in a statue from the Delta, where ram cults were frequent.

As his regalia the king wears a heavy double-strand necklace of the collar-of-gold type, a necklace ordinarily worn by nobles and frequently bestowed as royal rewards on favored officials. In a double statue of the reign of Amunhotpe II the mayor of Thebes is represented with four such strands.<sup>8</sup> Four strands are also shown in a statue head of the reign of Amunhotpe III formerly in the Gallatin Collection.<sup>9</sup> The gold-of-honor<sup>10</sup> necklace is rarely worn by a reigning king, and yet a double strand is shown in a Cairo statue of Amunhotpe III.<sup>11</sup> In the Boston statuette the king also wears a three-part armband on his upper arms, and the remaining part of his left arm indicates that he wore bracelets on his wrists.<sup>12</sup>

The headdress of the king is unusual and complex. A valanced wig covers his ears, reaches to his shoulders, and touches the necklace. The cloth or leather lining cap for the wig is shown, as frequently elsewhere, as a distinct band under the wig on his

forehead. Just above it is set the cobra diadem with the figure-eight coil of the serpent's body slightly higher on the king's right side. Above the wig is set the double crown, or pschent, of which the top is broken away. In Cairo statue CG 42083 the king wears this crown on top of the nemes headcloth, a frequent combination in later dynasties.<sup>13</sup> The combination of the pschent with the wig is unusual.<sup>14</sup> The sculptor has achieved the proportioning of the headdress elements without seeming to impose too much weight on the head. The short, thick neck with the heavy necklace is in keeping with this scheme. All these heavy elements set off a youthful, somewhat prim face.

A vertical text is inscribed on the back support: "[The King of Upper and Lower Egypt], Lord of the Two Lands, Neb-maat-Re, Son of Re, Amunhotpe-Ruler-of-Thebes, beloved of Isis who dwells in Behdet, given life." The second cartouche has been scratched out, as is frequently the case even on small objects with Atenist erasures.<sup>15</sup> Behdet is either the Delta town in Lower Egyptian nome 17, for Isis is particularly prominent in the Delta, or the similarly named town in Upper Egyptian nome 2.

The general impression created by this small sculpture is of a superb mastery of the art. The simple features and the well-knit, well-muscled body cannot be interpreted other than as an early sculpture in the king's reign. The quality of the statuette is underlined through comparison with the MacGregor-Gallatin statuette of approximately the same height. The latter is in serpentine and is a more conventional piece. It shows Amunhotpe III kneeling on his right knee with left leg outstretched; he is wearing the nemes headdress and is presenting an offering stand to a god. Aldred suggests that the MacGregor-Gallatin statuette belongs to the earlier years of the reign. Yet, to judge from the published photographs, it lacks the delicacy of the Mayer statuette.<sup>16</sup>

Since Egyptian statuary is functional in the sense that every sculpture had its purpose, the question arises as to the use of these small royal examples. The early date of both the Mayer and MacGregor-Gallatin pieces and the Atenist erasure on the latter almost preclude their use as part of the king's funerary equipment. It is therefore logical to surmise that they may have been made for the temples of the gods to whom the king offers the votive object, for the king's mortuary temple, or for a private chapel. Statues were offered to the king as part of the New Year gifts of his royal workshops and at other occasions of the delivery of their products.<sup>17</sup> The small pieces would have been placed in an inner room of a temple, stored in a treasury, or kept at the palace. While it is not difficult for us to visualize the emplacement of the large statues of the king in temples, since many are still in place in the temples at Thebes, the disposition and function of these miniatures is more difficult to reconstruct. I shall return to this subject later.

First, however, let us consider the source of these statuettes. Aldred has noted that the king, whether he had recently acceded or had been rejuvenated by the jubilee rites, immediately required in addition to his personal regalia a new set of images, clothing, and implements for replacement in all the shrines up and down the country, where the statue of the king symbolized his presence in the cult as the inter-

mediary between gods and men.<sup>18</sup> Occasionally royal statues and objects were dedicated by private persons, both during the king's lifetime and after his death for his tomb, and Aldred also notes that the occasional presentation of a royal statue by a private person has to be distinguished quite sharply from the extensive and opulent parade of the royal trousseaux before the enthroned kings as depicted in the tombs of the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>19</sup> In these scenes of gift-giving it is difficult to find an exact parallel for the Mayer statuette. Close parallels to this statue type have been found in the scene in the tomb of Kenamun at Thebes (dated in the reign of Amunhotpe II), in which a kneeling statue holds a vessel in front of the king (Fig. 10). A similar type is shown in the royal workshops in the tomb of Hepu, a vizier under Thutmose IV, the predecessor of Amunhotpe III; it portrays the king presenting a djed pillar surmounted by a vase incorporating the ankh sign (Fig. 11). Hence it seems likely that these statuettes were offered to the king on the occasion of a royal presentation.

There are also some clues as to the final disposition of the statuettes after their presentation. The Boston statuette belongs to a group of small glazed stone statuettes of the reign of Amunhotpe III first recognized by Vandier.<sup>20</sup> Six of these have been identified:

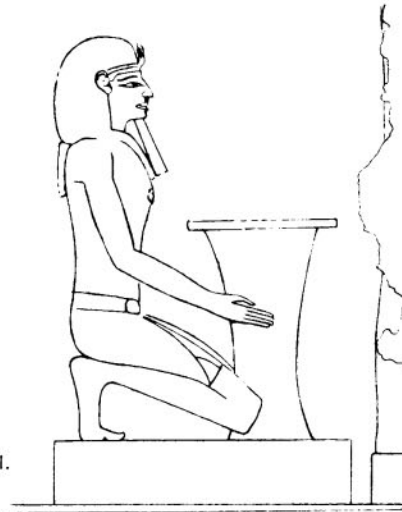
1. The Boston statuette of Amunhotpe III kneeling. MFA 1970.636. Height: 12.8 cm. (5 inches).
2. Cairo CG 42083. Standing statuette of the king with nemes headcloth, pschent crown, collar, armbands, bracelets, and triangular apron. Karnak cachette. Preserved height: 28 cm. (11 inches).<sup>21</sup>
3. Cairo CG 42084. Headless standing statuette of king with double-strand necklace of collar-of-gold type, armbands, bracelets, and triangular apron. Preserved height: 25 cm. (9<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches).<sup>22</sup>
4. Louvre N 2312 + E 25493. Double statuette of the king and his queen, Teye, of which the figure of the king (except for his left arm) as well as the entire base are missing. This statuette has had an extraordinary history. The lower part of the figure of the queen, with the identifying text on the back, was purchased for the Louvre by Champollion in 1826 as part of the Henry Salt Collection. In the revolution of July 1830 it was stolen and subsequently recovered. By amazing good luck, the upper part of the figure of the queen, a masterpiece in itself, was offered for purchase to the Louvre in 1962 and found to fit the 1826 fragment exactly. Preserved height of both pieces together: 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cm. (11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches).<sup>23</sup>
5. Alnwick Castle, now University of Durham Museum. Birch No. 496. Standing statuette of the king with double-strand necklace of collar-of-gold type, armbands, and triangular apron. Upper part of head and lower part of statuette broken away. The dedication on the back indicates that it was offered to the mortuary temple of the king in western Thebes. This is the celebrated Amenophium, of which the site is marked today by the Colossus of Memnon and its mate. Preserved height: 23 cm. (9 inches).<sup>24</sup>
6. Baron von Saurma Collection. Statuette of king and queen, upper part of queen



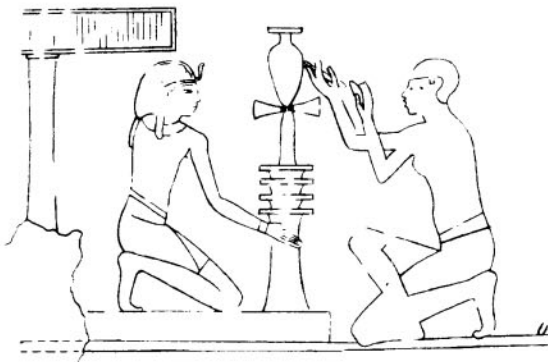


9. The Boston Statuette of Amunhotpe III.  
Inscription on dorsal support.  
Drawing by Suzanne Chapman.

10. Thebes, Tomb of Kenamun. Kneeling statue holding vessel. After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amun at Thebes*, New York, Metropolitan Museum, 1930, pls. 18-19.



11. Thebes, Tomb of Hepu. The king presenting a djed pillar surmounted by a vase. After Nina de Garis Davies, *Scenes from Some Theban Tombs, Private Tombs at Thebes*, vol. IV, Oxford, University Press for the Griffith Institute, 1963, pl. 9.



missing. Now lost and probably destroyed. Material and dimensions not recorded. Just conceivably identical with the Louvre statuette.<sup>25</sup>

The discovery of the Cairo statuettes in the cachette at Karnak and the text on the Alnwick Castle statuette indicate that the first two were dedicated to the temple at Karnak<sup>26</sup> and the third to the mortuary temple of the king on the other side of the river. It is likely, therefore, that the other statuettes were similarly dedicated to temples and placed in their treasuries. The mention of Behdet on the Mayer statuette suggests that it may have come from Edfu. This adds some weight to the otherwise unsupported statement by the dealer who sold the Louvre fragment of Queen Teye in 1962 that it was found at Edfu.<sup>27</sup> If this information is correct, both pieces may well derive from the temple at Edfu, which is now represented by the structure of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.

In its present setting in a museum collection, the Mayer statuette can be appreciated by an audience much larger than and undoubtedly different from that envisioned by the sculptor. We are pleased to be that collection.

#### NOTES

1. For a general view of the arts of the reign (1405–1367 B.C.), consult William Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1958, pp. 145–185, and Cyril Aldred, *New Kingdom Art in Egypt*, London, Tiranti, 1951 (and later editions). For methodology and wealth of detail see the account of private statuary by Bernard V. Bothmer, "Private Sculpture of Dynasty XVIII in Brooklyn," *Brooklyn Museum Annual* 8 (1966–1967) pp. 55–89. An example of royal statuary in miniature of Amunhotpe III is the gold pendant statuette from the tomb of Tutankhamun, illustrated in color in Cyril Aldred, *Akhenaten, Pharaoh of Egypt: A New Study*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1968, pl. XIII. Height: 5 cm. (2 inches). At the other extreme there are the Colossus of Memnon and its companion to the west of Thebes and the statue of the king and queen with family at the end of the main hall in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo; height: ca. 7 m. (23 feet).
2. See accounts of the latter part of Dynasty 18 in Aldred, *Akhenaten*; Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, *Tutankhamen: Life and Death of a Pharaoh*, New York, New York Graphic Society, 1963; and George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele, *When Egypt Ruled the East*, rev. ed., Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957.
3. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, Paris, Picard, 1958, vol. III, pp. 317–328, with plate volume. There are two recently acquired sculpture heads of Amunhotpe III in American collections. The first is a magnificent quartzite head with the "blue crown" in the Metropolitan Museum illustrated in the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 15 (February 1957), p. 148. The second is a polished black basalt head with the same crown, on a scale over twice life-size, in the Brooklyn Museum. The Brooklyn head, which is a very powerful and curious piece, is illustrated in my Fig. 7 and in Aldred, *Akhenaten*, pl. 23. Both heads are assigned to an early date in the reign on stylistic grounds.
4. One of the Amarna stelae is illustrated in Aldred, *Akhenaten*, pl. 80, p. [181]. The Metropolitan statue is illustrated in the same volume, pl. 58, p. [169]. For the statuettes in Hildesheim see Hans Kayser, *Das Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim*, Hamburg, 1966, p. 59, number 32 (ebony, height: 6 cm.), and Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pl. 105.4.
5. MFA 1970.636, formerly loan no. 503.66. Height: 12.8 cm. (5 inches), base 5.5 cm. front to back, 3.5 cm. wide. Sotheby Sale Catalogue, November 29, 1965, no. 144 B, as property of E. Filmer, Esq.
6. For other gifts and loans from Mrs. Mayer and the late Mr. Mayer see *Centennial Acquisitions: Art Treasures for Tomorrow*, Boston, MFA, 1970, pp. 20–21; Dows Dunham, "A Fragment from the Mummy Wrappings of Tuthmosis III," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 17 (1931), pp. 209–210; Adolf Greifenhagen, "Ein Alexandrinisches Fayencegefäß im Archäologischen Museum in Varna," *Archaeologischer Anzeiger*, 1969, pp. 52–57; William

- Stevenson Smith, "Two Assyrian Reliefs," *MFA Bulletin* 58 (1960), pp. 44-56; *MFA Bulletin* 59 (1961), p. 120; *MFA Bulletin* 60 (1962), p. 132; Edward L. B. Terrace, *The Art of the Ancient Near East in Boston*, Boston, MFA, 1962, nos. 14, 17, 24, 55; *MFA Bulletin* 58 (1960), p. 98; *MFA Bulletin* 61 (1963), p. 119; *American Journal of Archaeology* 67 (1963), pp. 269-274; *MFA Bulletin* 62 (1964), p. 146; *MFA Bulletin* 63 (1965), p. 224; *The Connoisseur* 169 (1968), pp. 49-56, 117-123.
7. This vessel seems to be a logical way to restore the statuette. For a kneeling king with a vessel in front of him see my Fig. 10; see also Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, p. 377 and fig. 16.4. For statues corresponding to this representation see Cairo CG 42060 and 42061. Compare also Cairo CG 42182 (Hornemann 576).
  8. Recently illustrated and discussed in Edward L. B. Terrace and Henry G. Fischer, *Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Cairo Museum*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1970, pp. 113-116.
  9. John D. Cooney, "Egyptian Art in the Collection of Albert Gallatin," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (January 1953) pp. 7-8, no. 23, pl. 30; Henry G. Fischer, "The Gallatin Egyptian Collection," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 25 (March 1967), p. 262, fig. 14.
  10. Hilde von Deines, "Das Gold der Tapferkeit," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 79 (1954), pp. 83-86.
  11. CCG 42084, illustrated by Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pl. 106.6.
  12. So too in the Cairo statuette CG 42084.
  13. Illustrated in Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pl. 106.5. Later examples of nemes headcloth with pschent crown are illustrated in Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pls. 108.4, 117.2, 119.1, 120.5, 124.6, 128.3, 130.1, 131.6, etc.
  14. For the pschent with a later form of the wig see Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pl. 128.5 and p. 409, note 10.
  15. In a rare ceremonial-size scarab of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) with his early cartouches, now in a private collection in Boston, the name of Amunhotpe is erased on the flat undersurface in the inscription, but the same cartouche is left undamaged on the side between the legs. Dimensions: 6 x 4.3 cm.; possibly the scarab cited by C. Blankenberg-van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III*, Leiden, Brill, 1969, p. 167, top, with present location unknown.
  16. For the MacGregor-Gallatin statuette, now Metropolitan Museum of Art 66.99.28, see Dietrich von Bothmer, *Ancient Art from New York Private Collections*, New York, Metropolitan Museum, 1961, no. 74, p. 16, pl. 22; Cyril Aldred, "A Statue of King Neferkare Ramesses IX," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 41 (1955), p. 5; and Henry G. Fischer, "The Gallatin Egyptian Collection," p. 260, fig. 8. For a small prostrate statuette of the same king in the University Museum, Philadelphia (museum no. 48-16-1), see Henry G. Fischer, "Prostrate Figures," *University Museum Bulletin* 20 (March 1956), pp. 27-42. It measures only 5.6 cm. (2 inches) long.
  17. Cyril Aldred, "The 'New Year' Gifts to the Pharaoh," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 55 (1969), pp. 73-81.
  18. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
  20. Jacques Vandier, "Une Statuette de la reine Tiy," *Monuments et Mémoires, Fondation-Eugène Piot* 54 (1966), pp. 7-23.
  21. Georges Legrain, *Statues et statuettes de rois et particuliers*, Cairo, Services des Antiquités de l'Égypte, 1906, vol. I, pp. 48-49, pl. 51; Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pp. 319, 325-327, 373, 409, 412, pl. 106.5.
  22. Legrain, *Statues et statuettes*, p. 49, pl. 50; Vandier, *Manuel*, vol. III, pp. 323, 327-328, 412, 415, pl. 106.6.
  23. Vandier "Une Statuette," pp. 7-23.
  24. Vandier "Une Statuette," pp. 10-12, fig. 2 (sketch in Wilkinson MS); Samuel Birch, *Catalogue of the Collection of Antiquities at Alnwick Castle*, London, Clay and Taylor, 1880, pp. 56-58.
  25. Vandier, "Une Statuette," p. 12. Mr. Cyril Aldred kindly draws my attention to a glazed steatite statuette in Edinburgh (1951.324) of Queen Ahmose-Nefertari, probably made in the reign of Amunhotpe III.
  26. An excellent introduction to the significance of the Karnak cachette is provided by Eric Young, "An Offering to Thoth: A Votive Statue from the Gallatin Collection," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 25 (March 1967), pp. 273-282. Young comments that the discovery was "the most important artistic and historical find in Egypt since Mariette cleared the Serapeum at Saqqara more than fifty years earlier, and far outweighed in importance the later, spectacular (and much publicized) discovery of the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amun."
  27. Vandier, "Une Statuette," p. 13.