

Shrine Stela of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye **The British Museum**

From the house of Panehsy, Tell el-Amarna, Egypt
18th Dynasty, around 1340 BC

Probably from a domestic shrine



The reign of King Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) (1352-1336 BC) brought a very different style of art to Egypt for a few years. This is clearly associated with the religious changes which Akhenaten started, centred around the cult of the sun disc, known as the Aten. Features of this style include the use of more relaxed poses, accentuated stomachs and heads, and the motif of the sun disc with its life-giving rays.

In the new theology of Amarna, Akhenaten was the sole intermediary of the Aten, and thus all addresses to the deity had to go through him. Houses contained small shrines to the king for this purpose. The shrine in the house of Panehsy contained this plaque that unusually shows Akhenaten's father, Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC) beneath the sun disc, in the style usually confined to Akhenaten and his officials, though Amenhotep III did identify himself with the sun in the later years of his life.

The name of the old god Amun was proscribed on monuments of the Amarna Period, and so Amenhotep III is identified here by his throne name Nebmaatre.

A.P. Kozloff and B.M. Bryan, *Egypt's dazzling sun: Amenhotep* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1992)

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