

The Rewarding Scenes Visual Evidence of Contact Between the King and his Subjects during the Amarna Period⁽¹⁾

Sherine El Menshawy

Abstract. This article shed some light on the pictorial interaction between the king, the court and the people regarding the rewarding theme during the Amarna period in Ancient Egypt. Discussion and interpretations are based on collected corpus of scenes related to the Amarna period, in an attempt to solve number of questions and find a logical answer for them. For example: Where might have been the interaction between the king and his people took place? What was the King's attitude regarding his appearance in the audience hall and the recipient's position upon ushering in front of the King?

The ruler's responsibility was significant for the performance of Egyptian civilization. The country depended on social and cosmic order, so maintaining these was one of the duties of the king: that of liaison between the gods and humankind. The concrete foundation of his authority was the ability to manage the machinery of administration, including the military forces and the police force.

A royal audience needed a customary preparation for the appearance of the king to the subjects. In earlier periods, the displays of the public showing of the king are only found in temples (Davies 1925: 51). The nonappearance of depictions of the royal audience might be for the ritual surrounding the king (Hornung 1997: 284). In the Old Kingdom the king was not depicted in private tombs, however, Radwan (Radwan 1969: 1) argued that the iconography of the king can be found in depictions, which were out of control of the royal palace, such as the graffiti found at Hetnub (Anthes 1928: pl. 5). Yet, we cannot depend on these depictions as sources for the contact between the king and his people. (Radwan, 1969: 1)

During the Middle Kingdom, depictions of the king are not found in private tombs. A possible exception is found in a fragmentary scene in TT 60 (Davies and Gardiner 1920: pl. XVI) built by the vizier *Intef-Iker* and used by his mother *Senet*, which appears to have represented king Senwosert III. Also, in the tomb I of the vizier *Dfa-Hapy* at Asyut, he is shown standing in front of a frame of a sky sign supported by a pair of Was scepters (Griffith 1889: pl. 40).

By the New Kingdom, the contact between the king and his people is shown in groups of scenes often depicted in tombs: the rewarding or promoting of an official, the open-air review of foreign troops and representatives of the state, and the presentation of flowers or New Year's gifts to the king. This expansion is of noteworthy cultural and historical attention, since it reflects the nature of the ideology of the kingship during that time. Here, I will focus on the rewarding scenes during the Amarna period that reveal a kind of communication and intimate relationship between the king and his people.

The Amarna period is regarded as break-

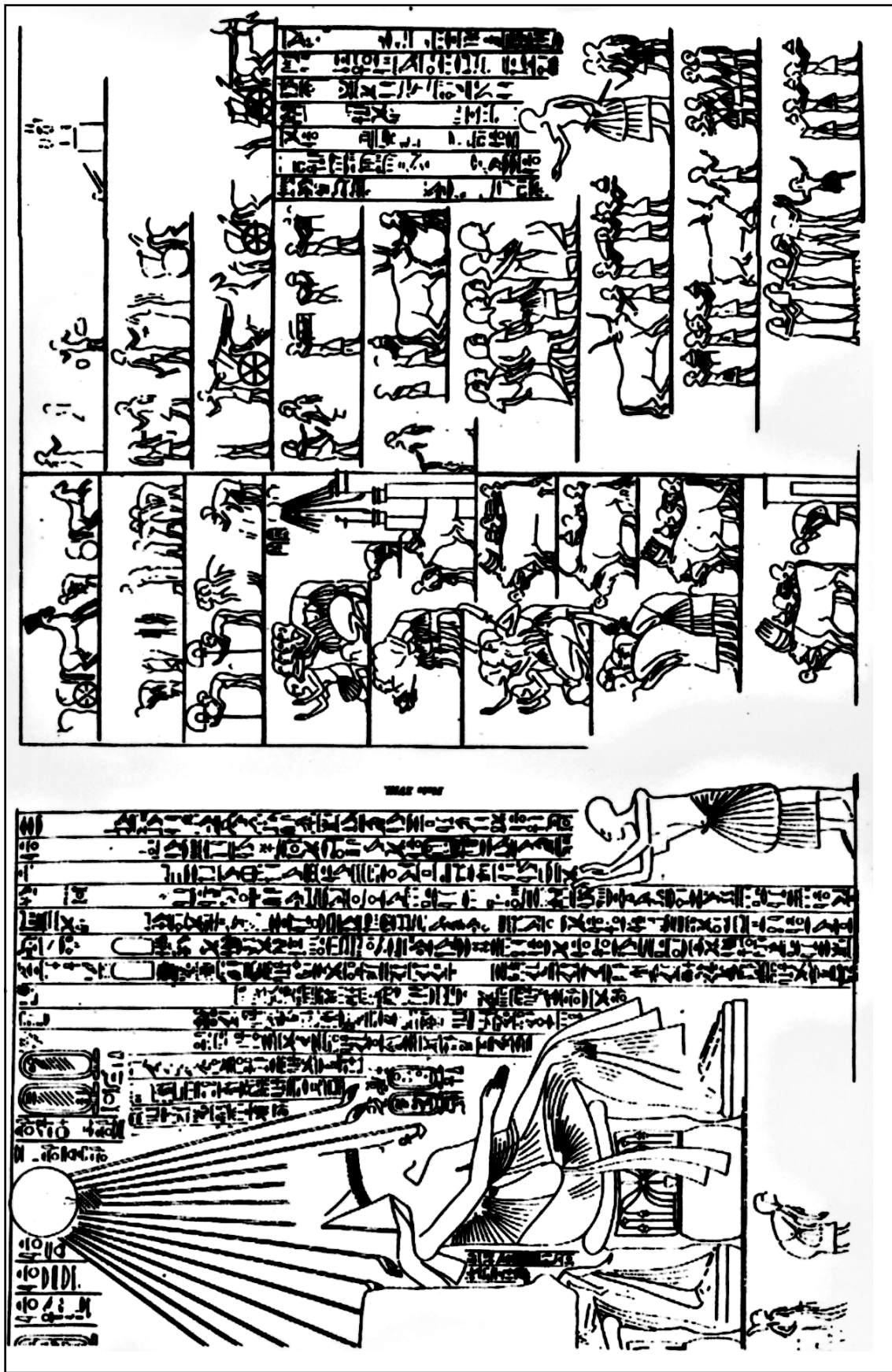


Fig. 1: The reward of Twtw. (Davies 1908 VI: pls. XVII, XVIII)

ing point in the artistic style and context of the manifestations of the king, focusing on depiction of both the official activities and his private life (Gaballa 1976: 68). This supply us with a unique combination of sources, which permit us to reconstruct the public appearances of the Egyptian kingship, manifested in the private tombs of the officials of that period. This Amarna type of scene appears, for instance, in the tombs of *Twtw* (Amarna 8) (Davies 1908 VI: 10, pl. XVII-XIX; Gaballa 1976: 73; Radwan 1969: 21), *Parennefer* (Amarna 7) (Davies 1908 VI: 2-3, pl. IV; Sandman 1938: 69-70), *Mery-Re I* (Amarna 4) (Davies 1903 I: pl. VII-VIII), and *Mery-Re II* (Amarna 2) (Davies 1905 II: pl. XXXIII-XXXVI; Sandman 1938: 29-32).

I choosed the tomb of *Twtw* as a case study in this paper:

The tomb of *Twtw*

A fine example of communication and contact relationship between the king and his people is illustrated through a scene that occupies the north side of the west wall of the tomb of *Twtw* (Amarna 8) (Davies 1908 VI: pl. XVII-XVIII; Gaballa 1976: 73), *Twtw* is shown having an audience with the king on the occasion of his reward (fig.1). The main elements of the scenes are the palace and the courtyard, in which the window of appearances is regularly depicted. The king is shown wearing a long, elaborate sash with a fringe, and seated on a stool in the courtyard of the palace instead of leaning out of the window of appearances. He is wearing a crown with an unusual uraeus around it, and has sandals on his feet. Behind him is the queen (her upper part has been entirely lost), who is also seated on a stool. She is wearing a similar dress to that of the king, and she

also wears sandals. She is shown with two of her daughters on her knee. They are accompanied by male, female servants and fan bearers, all depicted on a smaller scale in the bottom row. Over the royal couple is the sun disk Aten.

Before the king, in the courtyard, stands *Twtw* wearing a bag-tunic and a sash kilt, raising his hands in a gesture of jubilation. Behind him (from top to bottom) are, in the first row: two chariots with their grooms (one of the horses is decorated with a plumed-headdress); in the second row: foreign representatives characterized by their dress; in the third row: soldiers with their military standards; in the fourth row: a group of men wearing bag tunics and kilts typical of officers. (One of them is shown in a prostrating position); and in the fifth row: a group of scribes who are busy recording the event. Behind them, at the front gate of the courtyard, is the gatekeeper.

Twtw's servants bring gifts, including oxen. One of these is seen just passing through the front gate of the courtyard, and two of the oxen have festive decorations including ribbons and plumes on their horns. Could they be gifts to the king in return for *Twtw's* reward? The sixth and the seventh rows show a group of officials, including the bearers of the fan, crook (?), and axe.

After his reception by the king, *Twtw* is seen leaving the palace from the gate of the court, where the guards sit at their posts with their standards. *Twtw* is also met by the same kind of jubilation that we have seen before. Three chariots are shown, waiting to convey him home with his retainers. Also a few followers and women folk, perhaps his household or musicians, are clapping and singing. They are preparing to accompany *Twtw's* ser-

vants who are leading away oxen, and who are shown loaded with gifts, of vessels and meat, of the king's bounty. Probably the full design would have included the house of *Twtw* or the temple of Aten, since the decoration is unfinished.

Discussion

The rewarding scene is a regular motif in depictions from the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty to the Twenty-first Dynasty. The iconographical sources related to such an occasion are attested in scenes on stelae (Schulman 1988: 118), walls of private tombs and rarely, temple walls (Ricke 1967: pl. 90; Lefebvre 1929: pl. 2; Helck 1956: 161-78; Federn 1959: 214). It is a scene where the faithful official is personally rewarded by the king.

Vandier notes that scenes of reward before the Amarna period are rare. The increase of the involvement in ritual gift giving to bureaucrats and soldiers under the reign of Amenhotep IV is interpreted as great wish during that particular period to emphasize the ties that joined the king to his subjects (Vandier 1964, 669).

Interpretation of rewarding scenes during the Amarna period

* Narrative Elements:

Elements of narrative describing the interaction between the king and his subjects includes: Window of appearances and the royal audience, the king's attitude, the recipients' attitude, texts accompanying scenes of reward, items of reward, servants aiding the rewarded official and the people witnessing the event. After being rewarded, a series of additional tableaux and sub-scenes continue the narration.

i. Royal Audiences and the Window of Appearances at Amarna

A royal audience required preparation from both sides until the moment of the king's appearance. At Amarna, the king's main royal residence was the riverside palace, situated in the north where it gained both privacy and protection (Kemp 1989: 276; Spence 1999: 14-6). He and his family might have stayed there to spend their leisure time. At intervals, the king drove along the royal road to the centre of the city, probably for the parade of the public showing of the kingship. On his arrival at the king's house (which is represented as a smaller palace), he would be in charge of the worship at the temple, the occasional reception of foreign tribute, or holding audiences. It was also an occasion for the distribution of rewards to officials and to announce their promotion to higher positions. So the king's house served as the king's office, where he met with ministers for making policy decisions and holding reviews (Kemp 1976: 83).

The houses of the officials were distributed through the north and south suburbs. Contact between the king and his highest ministers of state was held in the centre of the city, and occurred within the king's house. The officials and ministers would reach the centre of the city by chariot, and this is illustrated in tomb scenes (Kemp 1976: 98).

Following the king's journey from the northern palace, his residence, to the king's house where the royal audience took place, Kemp suggested that the king would have driven by his chariot along the royal road passing under a bridge - which was intended to link the palace to the king's house. He would then have stopped in the courtyard, which was provided with facilities for dis-

mounting and parking chariots. The king then is assumed to have passed through the doorway on foot, till he reached the back of the window of appearances. Here, there were two rooms, which are interpreted as fitting rooms for the king and queen assumed to have been used by them before their appearance to the audience from the window of appearances (Davies 1903 I: pls. X, XVIII, XXV; Kemp 1976: 83).

Particularly noteworthy in such scenes is the window of appearances, a principle feature of the palace, which appears frequently in depictions of the Amarna period. From the window, the king appears to his subjects and officials who are usually gathered in the court to receive the rewards conferred on them. The differences in details of the window in number of depictions might show that there was more than one window of appearances (Redford 1994: 489-491; Stadelmann 1973: 221-42 pl. LXXVIII).

The depictions of the window focus on two elements: the external portico, which shelters the window, and the area of wall framing the window, its decorations often draw an eye to the person of the king. (Badawy 1954: 33, fig. 18).

ii. The King's Attitude:

At Amarna the king is always depicted accompanied by his wife, Nefertiti, and their daughters. The position of the king in the palace varies from one scene to another. Most of the king's representations show him leaning out of the window of appearances. One scene depicts him seated on a stool in the courtyard of the palace (Davies 1908 VI: pl. XVII).

The headdress of the king, and his garment, varies from one scene to another. In

most instances, he is wearing the blue crown. Another scene represents him wearing the red crown (Davies 1906 IV: pl. VIII). Another show him with a close fitting cap upon his head (Davies 1903 I: pl. XXX). It seems, therefore, that there was no special crown or headdress for the royal audiences. Usually the king wears in his standard royal kilt.

iii. Recipient's Attitude:

The recipient promoted or rewarded is usually shown in the courtyard in a standing position raising his hands in a gesture of jubilation and rejoicing (Daminicus 1994: 61, pl. 13 d-e). His both hands are usually raised high in front of his body (Wilkinson 1994: 206). Other instances show him in a kneeling position, but still raising his hands straight in the direction of the king in salutation, while receiving the honors bestowed upon him by the king, and while loaded with collars around his neck. In one case, he is shown as being carried by his friends, in order to receive the necklace from the king. He is sometimes shown as having shaved head. Other scenes represent him with a cone of ointment on his head. Kemp argued that the rewarded official would 'receive some instructions or reminder of what to do and of what to say to the king' (Kemp 1976: 87). Davies also asserts that 'even the prayers and biographical statements put in the mouth of the deceased are also professional compositions; and even the short legends and dockets, in which we might hope to find a personal note, generally at El Amarna show signs of being stereotyped, too' (Davies 1906 IV: 4). The question that arises is, does this imply a sort of preparation and arrangement, which took place before people had audiences with the king?

For the king's audience, the recipients'

dress varies between two kinds of outfit. The first kind is a full dress, where the hem of the gown falls below the calf. This gown, girded up in this way, is a familiar outfit, probably for the middle class. It was put on over a tunic, and a long sash with ornamental edging was used to tie it at the waist. The second kind of outfit is a tunic with an upper garment. A loose gown is fixed firmly by ties at the throat and then a second tunic is worn over it, organized in bulging folds (Vogelsang-Eastwood 1993: 53-71).

iv. Texts Accompany Scenes of Reward:

The text, which accompanies scenes of reward sometimes, includes the speech of the king and his reason for the bestowal of the reward. It may also include the speech of the rewarded, which contains his gratitude in reply to his royal master (Schulman 1988: 116).

v. Items of Reward

Although the recipient's reason for promotion or reward differs, the main item offered to him while he is being honored is one or more collar (Gaballa 1976: 225). The Egyptians called this type of collar the Shbyw collar, which was part of an honorific decoration. Sometimes, other gifts were offered such as necklaces and bags of gold that are shown displayed under the porch. In addition, cups of gold, vases and signet rings are shown. There are references to other items, which are depicted in the accompanying texts, for example grants of land, unguents, and food and drink (Schulman 1988: 117; Dunham 1938: 2, pl. II).

Texts also distinguish between the kinds of rewards given. Civil officials, for example, were honored with 'Gold of bravery', while military officials were given by 'Gold

of the value'. The gifts differed consistently with the officials' category: e.g. civil dignitaries typically received objects in gold or in silver, whereas soldiers, besides gold, were likely to receive weapons and land (Spalinger 1982: 222-223; Vandersleyen 1971: 89-100).

vi. Servants Assisting the Recipient

When receiving his honors the recipient is sometimes helped by a person who is shown either rubbing his body with ointment or fixing the necklaces around his neck. Davies has described such helpers as servants (Davies 1908 VI: pl. IV) and Schulman, as attendants (Schulman 1988: 117). The one who helps them wearing a particular sort of dress, described as a tunic with an upper garment, a loose gown is fastened by ties at the throat, and then a second tunic is worn, arranged in bulging folds. This is a style that was adopted by members of the upper class, so it may imply that the helper was a person of high-ranking position who was engaged in the public reward procession.

vii. People Witnessing the Event

The people shown witnessing such events include foreign representatives, soldiers holding standards, probably officers, scribes recording the event, and high officials of the state. Bearers of the fan, crook and the axe, and servants carrying gifts, are also present. The royal chariots with their grooms are shown waiting, decorated with feathers for this event.

vii. Additional Sub-Scenes Narrative

After the reward takes place a number of additional sub-scenes continue the narration. The recipient is always shown emerging from the palace, and being received by his

friends and/or relatives who congratulate him. His chariot is also waiting for him. Then he is shown driving towards his house. In two instances, the recipient makes a visit to the temple of Aten. The reason for that is not clear but it might be to give gratitude to Aten (Gaballa 1976: 228).

In Amarna tombs the sun disk Aten frequently appears. The Aten rays fall down towards the nostrils of the royal couple pro-

tecting them. This therefore constitutes a graphic illustration of the close tie between the king, the queen, and the god Aten.

Finally, it is likely that such depictions were planned to guarantee the performance of the tomb-owner in his official capacity before the king; it was actually a kind of appreciation offered by the kind to his official during such audiences.

Dr. Sherine El- Menshawy: Department- Faculty of Tourism and Hotels- Alexandria University- Alexandria- Egypt.

ملخص: يلقي هذا البحث بعضاً من الضوء على الاتصال التصويري بين الملك والبلاط والناس اثناء مناسبات التكريم إبان حقبة العمارنا في مصر القديمة. وتعتمد المناقشات والتحليل على مجموعة مشاهد تتعلق بفترة العمارنا في محاولة لحل بعض القضايا وعرض الأجوبة المنطقية لها. منها مثلاً: أين يقع الاتصال بين الملك وأتباعه؟ وماذا كان انطباع الملك فيما يتعلق بظهوره في صالة الاستقبال، وماذا كان موقع المكرم حال تقدمه إلى الملك؟

Note:

1- To Mr. Youssef and Miss. Dahab with genuine love and appreciation.

References

- Anthes, R. 1928. **Die Felseninschriften von Hatnub nach den Aufnahmen Georg Möllers**, Leipzig.
- Badawy, A. 1954. **A History of Egyptian Architecture from the Earliest Times to the End of the Old Kingdom I**, Cairo
- Davies, N. de G. 1903-1908. **The Rock Tombs of El Amarna**, 6 vols. London: Egypt Exploration Fund.
- 1925. "The place of audience in the palace", *ZÄS*, 60: 50-56.
- Davies, N. de G. and Gardiner, A. 1920. **The Tomb of Antefoker, Vizier of Sesostris I and his wife, Sent (no. 60)**, London: Egypt Exploration Society.
- Dominicus, B. 1994. **Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches**, Heidelberg.
- Federn, W. 1959. "Roi ou statue royal", *CdE* 34: 214.
- Gaballa, G. A. 1976. **Narrative in Egyptian Art**, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.
- Griffith, F. Ll. 1889. **The Inscriptions of Siut and Der Rifeh**, London.
- Helck, W. 1956. "Die Inschrift über die belohung des Hohenpriesters Imn-Htp", *MIO* 4: 161-78.
- Hornung, E. 1997. "The Pharaoh". In: S. Doadoni (ed.), **The Egyptians**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 283-314.
- Kemp, B. J. 1976. "The window of appearances at El Amarna and the basic structure of this city", *JEA* 62: 81-99.
- Kemp, B. J. 1989. **Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of Civilization**, London.
- Lefebvre, G. 1929. **Inscriptions concernant les grands prêtres d'Amon, Romê-Roy et Amenhotep**, Paris.
- Radwan, A. 1969. **Die Darstellungen des regierenden Königs und seiner Familienangehörigen in den Privatgrabern der 18. Dynastie**, Berlin: Hessling; MÄS 21.
- Redford, D. B. 1967. **History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt**, Toronto.
- Ricke, H. 1967. **The Beit el Wali Temple of Ramesses II**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sandman, M. 1938. **Texts from the Time of Akhenaten**, Brussels.
- Schulman, A. R. 1988. **Cermonial Execution and Public Rewards: Some historical Scenes on New Kingdom Private Stela**, Freiburg and Göttingen.
- Spalinger, A. J. 1982. **Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians**, New Haven.
- Spence, K. 1999. "The north palace at Amarna", *EA* 15, 14-6.
- Stadelmann, R. 1973. "Templepalast und Erscheinungsfenster in den Thebanischen Totentempeln", *MDAIK* 29, 221-42.
- Vandersleyen, C. 1971: **Les guerres d'Amosis, fondateur de la XVIIIe Dynastie**, Brussels.
- Vandier, J. 1964. **Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne IV**, Paris.
- Vogelsang-Eastwood, G. 1993. **Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing**, Leiden
- Wilkinson, A. 1994. **Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art**, London.