

The “naked” earlobes of ancient Egyptian kings

Eva Traunmüller

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Table of contents

1	Ear jewelry in ancient Egypt.....	3
2	On what occasion did the kings wear ear jewelry?.....	5
3	Attempts to explain the “naked” royal earlobes	10
3.1	Artistic-practical reason.....	10
3.2	Ear jewelry was only worn on festival days	11
3.3	Men wore ear jewelry during childhood only.....	12
3.4	Ear piercing primarily served a medical purpose.....	12

List of figures

Fig. 1: Ancient Egyptian ear jewelry	3
Fig. 2: Royal sculptures	7

List of abbreviations

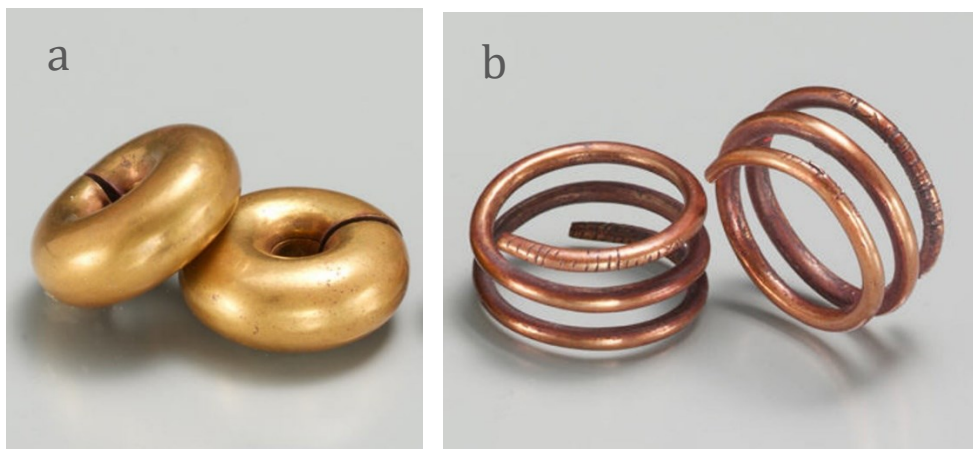
AeMP	Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz
ARCE	American Research Center in Egypt
BCE	before Christian Era
Berlin AeM	inventory number of the AeMP
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale
BM	British Museum, London, UK
Brooklyn	Brooklyn Museum, New York
Cairo	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt
Cambridge	The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK
Carter	Howard Carter's main object list (KV62)
Cf.	compare
CG	Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire
dyn.	dynasty
ed./eds	editor/editors
JE	Journal d'Entrée du Musée du Caire
KV	Kings' Valley (Thebes West)
Louvre	Musée du Louvre, Paris, France
Louvre-Lens	Musée du Louvre, Lens, France
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
MMA	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
MME	Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden
Museo Egizio	Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy
NMS	National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh
QV	Queens' Valley (Thebes West)
Rmn-Grand Palais	Réunion des Musées Nationaux Grand Palais, Paris, France
TT	Theban tomb
Walters Art Mus.	Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland

1 Ear jewelry in ancient Egypt

Ear piercing has a long history among civilizations across all continents. The earlobes are predestined to serve as jewelry carriers. Ear jewelry catches the other person's eye during interpersonal communication. Thus, it is well suited as a status symbol or as a transmitter of subtle messages. Moreover, earlobes are easy to pierce.

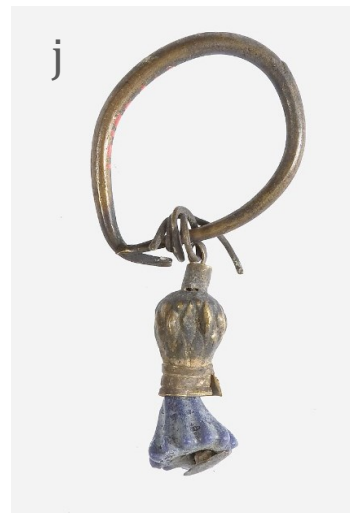
The ancient Egyptians used four basic forms of ear jewelry: earrings (figs. 1 a, c–f), spirals made of metal wire (fig. 1 b), drop earrings (figs. 1 i–k) and ear studs of different sizes and designs, including two-part plugs (figs. 1 g, h).¹ Materials ranged from bone, ivory, glazed ceramics, faience to metals (bronze, gold) and semi-precious stones. By the New Kingdom at the latest, ancient Egyptian goldsmiths had mastered advanced techniques such as repoussé, chasing, granulation, and filigree.²

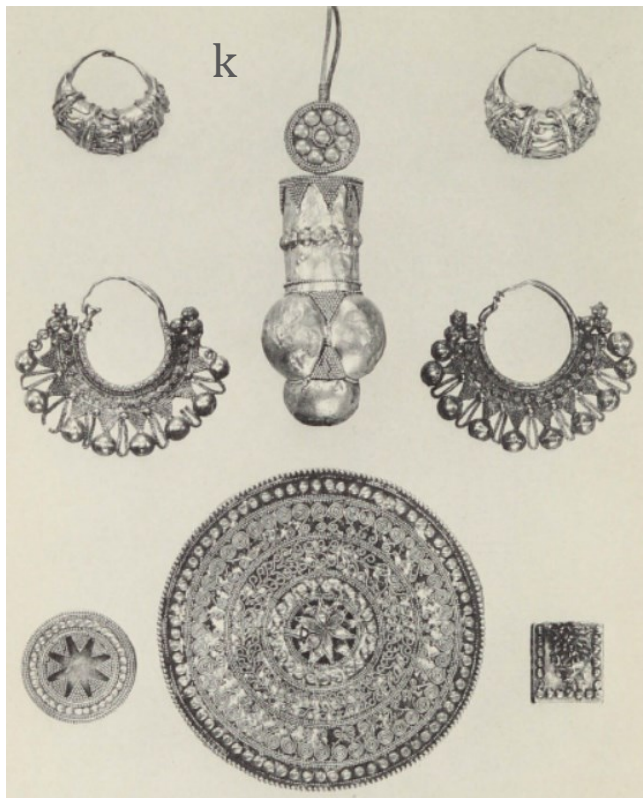
Fig. 1: Ancient Egyptian ear jewelry



¹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Ancient Egyptian Jewelry: A Picture Book* (New York, 1940), Plates 16, 18, 20; A. Wiedemann, *The Ancient Egypt* (Heidelberg, 1920), 132–133 (§ 103).

² Market Square Jewelers, <https://www.marketsquarejewelers.com/blogs/msj-handbook/from-pharaoh-to-fashion-a-history-of-egyptian-revival-jewelry> (accessed on April, 2024). See the examples in fig. 1 k.





(Figure legends can be found at the end of the document.)

2 On what occasion did the kings³ wear ear jewelry?

To answer this question, we have to rely on statues and murals. This is problematic because these are subject to certain conventions and are loaded with propaganda and symbolism, so that they do not necessarily reflect the reality of life.

On many royal statues and relief scenes from the 12th dynasty onwards, holes in the earlobes are discreetly depicted as a depression or circular groove (fig. 2B).⁴ In the New Kingdom, the diameters of these depressions became larger and more noticeable (figs. 2 B h–s).⁵ Occasionally there are penetrating holes,⁶ or the holes are painted on⁷. Towards the end of the New Kingdom,

³ The word “kings” also includes the few reigning queens.

⁴ This feature is often missing in colossal statues, sphinxes or Osiris pillars, e.g. Senwosret I (MME 1972:017), Hatshepsut (MMA 31.3.154, MMA 31.3.155, MMA 31.3.164, MMA 31.3.166, Berlin AeM 2299), Thutmose III (BM EA61).

⁵ During this time, heavy drop earrings became fashionable, possibly under the increasing influence of “foreign peoples” (Asia Minor, Cyprus).

⁶ Examples from Tutankhamun’s tomb (KV62): Golden death mask (Carter no. 256), all three gilded/golden sarcophagi (Carter nos. 253–255); miniature Rishi coffins (Carter nos. 266g1–4).

⁷ For example, a limestone ushabti from KV62 (Carter no. 330m).

the holes in the earlobes were depicted so clearly, as if they were an important attribute.⁸ In the Late Period, the feature becomes rarer,⁹ but more common again with the Ptolemaic kings¹⁰. Ear jewelry, however, can only be found sporadically on depictions of the king.¹¹ Curiously, there is sometimes a representation of an ear stud on only one side.¹² In relief scenes of hunting, “knocking down enemies” and family scenes¹³, the absence of ear jewelry is understandable. However, even on highly official occasions, when sitting majestically on the throne, when receiving homage at the apparition window, on magnificent outings and during sacrifices and other interactions with the gods, the king in the vast majority of cases does not wear ear jewelry. Even at the moment that was the climax of existence for the Egyptians, namely when they appeared before Osiris on the occasion of the impending awakening to the eternal afterlife, the ears of the kings were unadorned.¹⁴

The ears of those royal mummies that were spared from being robbed or reburied were also free of jewelry.¹⁵ After all, these mummies prove that the holes depicted in the earlobes were not an artistic freedom, but rather existed in nature.

⁸ Pierced earlobes can be found on practically all representations of members of Akhenaten’s family including king Tutankhamun.

⁹ E. g. the golden death mask of Psusennes I (Cairo JE 85913).

¹⁰ E. g. MMA 47.13.2; Brooklyn 53.75; Walters Art Mus. 22.109.

¹¹ E. g. Neferhotep I (Cairo JE 37497 = CG 42022); Nefertiti (Berlin AeM 21263, AeM 21341; according to Nicholas Reeves, Nefertiti was co-regent and later “king” [N. Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun*, London 2022, 27–33]); Kushite kings of the Third Intermediate Period.

¹² E. g. statue heads of Amenemhet III (BM EA 1963 and possibly Cambridge E.2.1946; ear stud on the right ear, see figs. 2 e, f); Amenhotep III (BM EA3, ear plug on the right ear). Sides were not meaningless, as we know from the anatomical impossibilities that the ancient Egyptian artists sometimes accepted in murals in order to show a scepter or staff on the “correct” side.

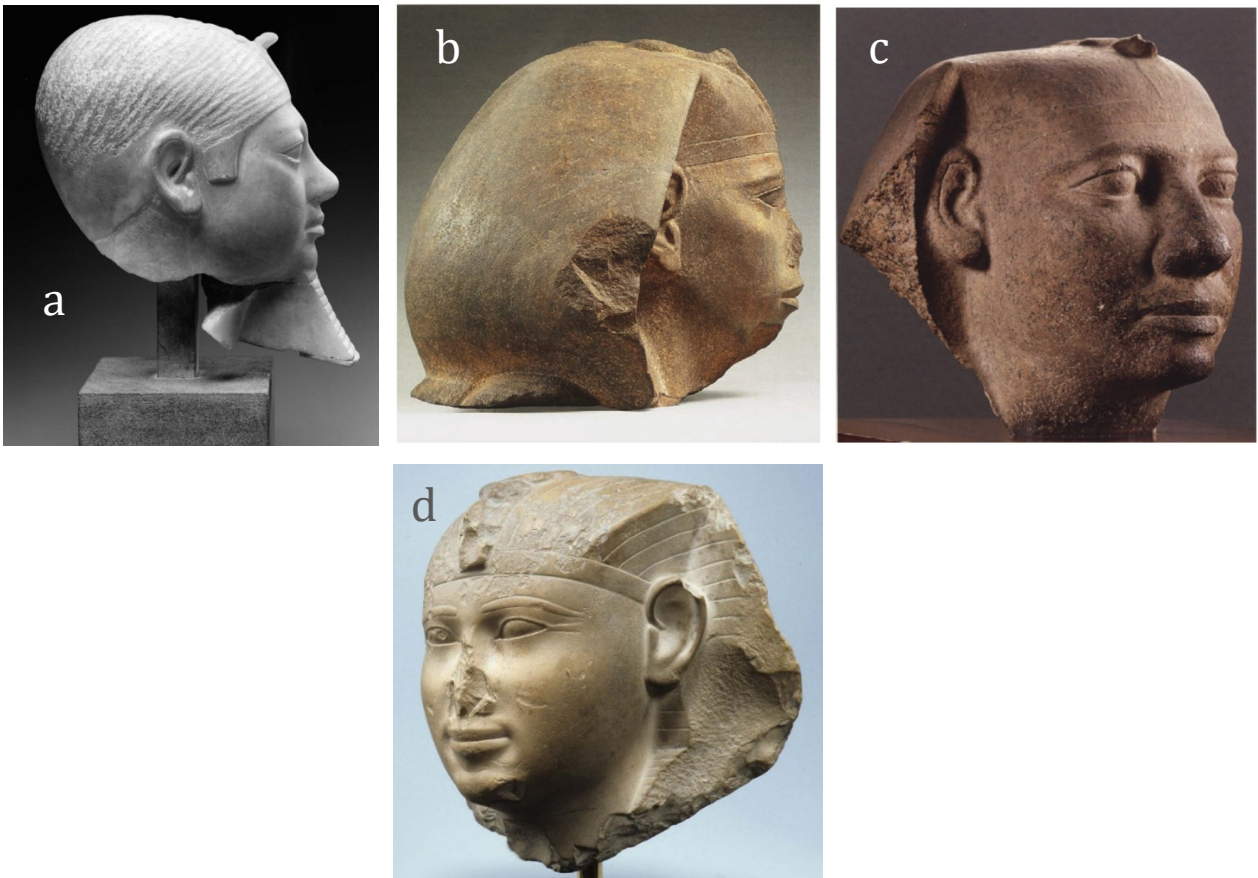
¹³ King Akhenaten and his family (Amarna period).

¹⁴ However, the inscription on one of the jewelry boxes of Tutankhamun (Carter no. 269a) gives an indication that the jewelry inside was intended for a burial ritual. The two boxes that contained earrings were unlabeled, but were found next to the labeled box (A. Wilkinson, “Jewelry for a procession in the Bed-Chamber in the Tomb of Tut’ankhamun”, *BIFAO* 84 (1984), 335–345).

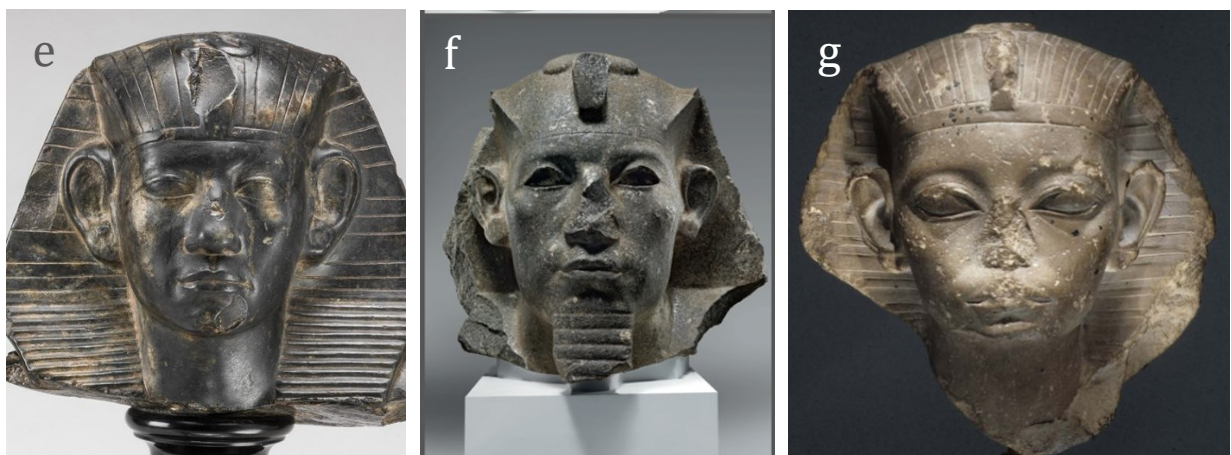
¹⁵ See for example Howard Carter’s pencil drawings and notes of jewelry found on the mummy of Tutankhamun (Griffith Institute, University of Oxford, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4tutmdra.html>; <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4mummy.html>; Reeves, *Tutankhamun*, 229–231). The king’s five pairs of richly decorated drop earrings were found among the grave goods in two jewelry boxes. However, some researchers suspect that these earrings belonged to a woman from the royal family (Reeves, *Tutankhamun*, 292).

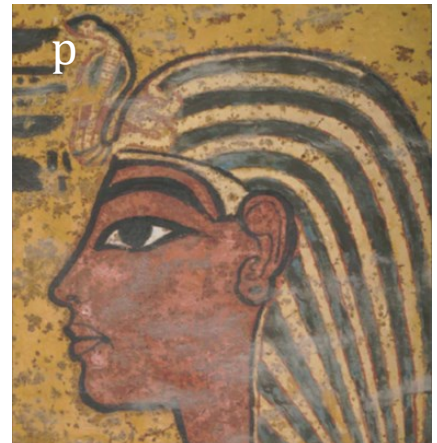
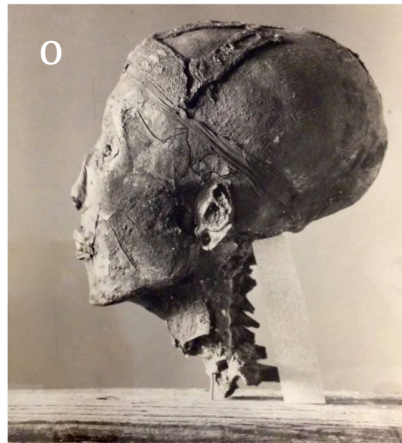
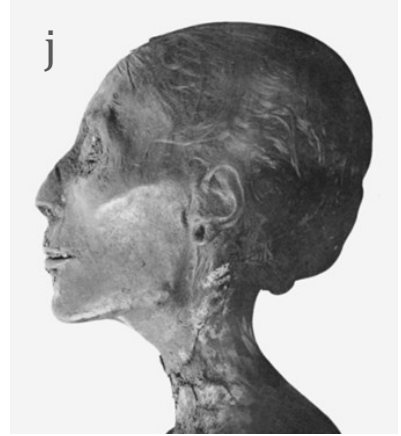
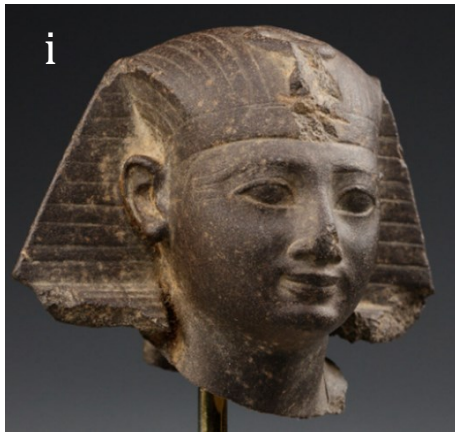
Fig. 2: Royal sculptures

A) Examples of kings of the Old and early Middle Kingdoms (still without pierced earlobes):



B) Examples of kings from the 12th dynasty onwards (with pierced earlobes):





(There are further examples from the Third Intermediate, Late and Graeco-Roman Periods. Figure legends can be found at the end of the document.)

Body decoration, on the other hand, was certainly part of the royal outfit, and this for almost all of the activities depicted.¹⁶ In general, pieces of jewelry were status symbols, and some of their ornamentation had cultic significance.¹⁷ The real models of the jewelry are known from numerous grave goods.¹⁸

The pierced earlobes (from the later Middle Kingdom onwards) are also found in the royal family,¹⁹ with high-ranking officials²⁰ and even deities.²¹ Many noblewomen of the 18th dynasty have double-pierced earlobes.²² However, earrings are not particularly common among these elite or divine figures.²³ Rather, it is the non-royal women, primarily the musicians, dancers and certain female servants in festival and banquet scenes, who were

¹⁶ The uraeus was less a piece of jewelry than a symbol of royalty.

¹⁷ M. Moroney, *Egyptian Jewelry: A Window into Ancient Culture* (ARCE, 2015), www.arce.org/resource/egyptian-jewelry-window-ancient-culture (accessed on April 16, 2024); D. Kurth, "On the explanation of the image motif on one of Tutankhamun's magnificent earrings", *ZÄS* 109 (1982), 62–65; A. Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptian Jewellery* (London, 1971), 124–127; Wilkinson, *BIFAO* 84, 335–345.

¹⁸ D. Craig Patch, "Jewelry in the Early Eighteenth Dynasty", in C. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, C. A. Keller (eds), *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh* (New York, 2005), 192–215; Y. J. Markowitz, "The Allure of Ancient Egyptian Jewelry", *Aegyptiaca* 2 (2018), 140–149; Reeves, *Tutankhamun*, 291–304; É. Vernier, *Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire: Bijoux et Orfèvreries* (Cairo, 1925); Wilkinson, *Jewellery*, passim.

¹⁹ Examples of royal family members with pierced earlobes: Queen Nefret II (Cairo JE 37487 = CG 381); Queen Neferu I (MMA SL.3.2015.8.6); Queen Tiye (Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* [New York, 1906], 126 [fig. 133]); statue head of a queen or princess (Berlin AeM 21220); statue head of a princess (Berlin AeM 21223); mummy of the "Elder Lady" from KV35 (Cairo CG 61070). Even the earlobes of the Rishi sarcophagi of the stillborn babies found in KV62 are pierced. See also D. Arnold, *The Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty From Ancient Egypt* (New York, 1996), passim.

²⁰ Examples of officials with pierced earlobes: Nikare (5th dyn.!, J. P. O'Neill et al. (eds), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* [New York, 1999], 374 (Cat. 130); statue head of an official (Cairo CG 849); Prophet of Horemheb of Pakhet (B. V. Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period: 700 BC to 100 AD* [New York, 1960], fig. 249). In naturalistic sculptures from the Late Period, an oblique or almost horizontal groove is sometimes found in the earlobe, e. g. Psametic II (Louvre-Lens N 830), the "Boston Green Head" (MFA 04.1749), bust of an official from Memphis (MMA 25.2.1), Basa, prince of Mendes (Bothmer, *Sculpture*, fig. 43). However, this does not represent a piercing, but rather a fold that is very common in advanced age and is known in medicine as "pierced earlobe sign".

²¹ Examples of deities with pierced earlobes: Amun (MMA 07.228.34, MMA 07.228.35, MMA 7.26.1412); goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Selket and Neith (alabaster and gilded shrines and the quartzite sarcophagus of Tutankhamun, Carter no. 108, no. 266b, no. 240); golden figurines of Atum, Ptah, Geb, and Duamutef from KV62 (Carter no. 290a, 291a, 299a, 302a); Isis in the tomb of Nefertari (QV66; MMA 30.4.142); ears of the goddess Nebethetepet on a prayer stela of Usersatet (Museo Egizio Cat. 1546).

²² Predominantly noblewomen of the Amarna period (Reeves, *Tutankhamun*, 30, 37). As a male example: Ramesses III (facsimile at <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/78/Ramesses3.png> [accessed on April 16, 2024]).

²³ Examples of elites wearing ear jewelry: Imapepi (6th dyn.!, O'Neill, *Egyptian Art*, fig. 44); plaster mask of Kiya (Berlin AeM 21239); Anchesenamun (gilded shrine, Carter no. 108); Murals: Queen Nefertari (QV66, MMA 30.4.142, 30.4.145); princesses Neferneferuatet-Tasherit and Neferneferure (Arnold, *Royal Women*, 57 [fig. 49]); Sennefer and Meryt (TT96); daughter of Menna (TT69, MMA 4.30.46).

depicted with dangling earrings.²⁴ Of the male servants, practically only the Nubian tribute bearers have earrings.²⁵

So, there is a strange discrepancy in pictorial representations between the frequency of pierced earlobes and the frequency of ear jewelry. The depiction of ear jewelry seems to have been frowned upon for kings, but the depiction of “naked” holes in the earlobes was apparently desired.

With this in mind, it is important to remember that in Ancient Egyptian art, jewelry, like clothing, was canonized. It was therefore not a free decision of the artists as to who they depicted which jewelry on.²⁶ In any case, the royal formal canon apparently only provided for ear studs in exceptional cases. On the other hand, one cannot help but feel that ear jewelry had a special meaning.²⁷ The question therefore arises as to on what occasions kings actually wore ear jewelry. Or to put it another way, why, with a few exceptions, ear jewelry was omitted from representations of the king, whereas the holes in the earlobes were consistently depicted more or less clearly from the 12th dynasty onwards.

3 Attempts to explain the “naked” royal earlobes

In the following, I consider possible explanations for the curious phenomenon.

3.1 Artistic-practical reason

It may have been too difficult for sculptors to model or hammer filigree earrings or drop earrings.²⁸ Only the button-shaped ear studs were relatively easy to model and were therefore occasionally depicted in statues (figs. 1 g, h; 2B f). This hypothesis is supported

²⁴ Examples of non-royal women wearing earrings: Papyrus, 21st dyn. (MMA 30.3.31); Murals: female servant in the tomb of Tjener (TT101, MMA 30.4.8); Iyeferti in the tomb of Sennedjem (TT1); wife of Ipuw (TT217, MMA 30.4.114); women in the tomb of Nebamun (BM EA37977, EA37984, EA37986); women in the tomb of Nebseny (TT108, MMA 30.4.92); female musicians in the tomb of Nakht (TT52, MMA 15.5.19d).

²⁵ E. g. in the tomb of Amenhotep Huy (TT40, MMA 4.30.21). Nubian captives were also mostly depicted with earrings.

²⁶ Cf. Craig Patch in C. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, C. A. Keller (eds), *Hatshepsut*, 192.

²⁷ There is a Late Period bronze sculpture of a cat (= goddess Bastet) wearing real gold earrings (the “Gayer-Anderson cat”, from Saqqara, BM EA64391). See also note 17.

²⁸ Cf. Craig Patch in C. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, C. A. Keller (eds), *Hatshepsut*, 191.

by the fact that finger rings were never depicted on statues, although the kings undoubtedly had finger rings.²⁹

The most important objection to the artistic-practical explanation is that the kings' ear jewelry is also missing from the wall paintings (fig. 2B p), although painting the finest details were no problem for the artists, as is well known.³⁰ Craig Patch suggested that earrings on statues might have once been painted on.³¹ However, sculptures with preserved painting also have no earrings (figs. 2B h, m).³² Furthermore, the artistic-practical explanation does not explain the lack of ear jewelry on unrobbed mummies.

3.2 Ear jewelry was only worn on festival days

The Egyptians had recurring festivals in which the king played an important role. The most famous of these festivals are the royal renewal festival (Sed festival, usually first in the 30th year of the king's reign), the Opet festival, the Beautiful Festival of the Desert Valley and a festival in honor of the god Min. From a Western-centric perspective, one would expect the king to wear his most valuable pieces of jewelry and earrings on these festivals. Other occasions that perhaps received less attention in art are also conceivable, e.g. audiences at which the king may have wanted to appear particularly pompous and awe-inspiring towards his court and officials.

This explanation is contradicted by the fact that in the surviving relief scenes from the festivals mentioned, the king, as far as can be judged, does not have any ear jewelry on, but shows the naked holes in his earlobes. The same applies, with a few exceptions, to statues of the enthroned king, which can be seen as a demonstration of power in stone. However, this does not rule out the possibility that the king wore ear jewelry at a specific ceremony.³³

²⁹ Craig Patch in C. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, C. A. Keller (eds), *Hatshepsut*, 209–210 (figs. 128f, 129a); Reeves, *Tutankhamun*, 185.

³⁰ This also applies to relief art and sculpture, as proven by two examples of Ramesses II (or possibly Ramesses II) as a child with drop earrings (Louvre N 522; NMS A.1956.139).

³¹ Cf. Craig Patch in C. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, C. A. Keller (eds), *Hatshepsut*, 192.

³² See for instance the painted sculptures Museo Egizio 1387, Louvre N 446, Cairo JE 36538, Cairo CG 572, MMA 31.3.164. It would rather be absurd to model holes in the earlobes and then paint over them with stylized ear studs.

³³ One of Tutankhamun's pairs of drop earrings (Carter no. 269a3) shows the king together with two uraei standing on the hieroglyph with the phonetic value "heb" for festival (Wilkinson, *BIFAO 84*, 342). See also note 14. In the north wall of the burial chamber of KV62, king Ay, while performing the mouth-opening ritual on Tutankhamun, appears to be wearing an earring.

3.3 Men wore ear jewelry during childhood only

This view expressed by Nicholas Reeves³⁴ I cannot entirely share. As already mentioned, in male mummies of the later New Kingdom the holes in the earlobes are so large³⁵ that they cannot just be a residual condition from childhood (figs. 2B j, o). In addition, many of the drop earrings and ear plugs found are so heavy or so voluminous that they cannot possibly be suitable for children.³⁶ Furthermore, in depictions of a king as child or youth we also find the earlobes unadorned.³⁷

3.4 Ear piercing primarily served a medical purpose

This explanation assumes that the holes in the earlobes in ancient Egypt primarily had a medicinal rather than a decorative purpose.³⁸ This would explain why Egyptian kings were given ear jewelry as grave goods, whereas their mummies were found with unadorned ears. According to Egyptian belief, the king after his death lived as a justified being among the gods, which made any medical treatment unnecessary. Likewise, ancient Egyptian eye makeup, which contained toxic (antibacterial) lead sulfide, is said to have served a dual, medicinal and decorative, purpose.³⁹

Piercing the earlobes was a tradition in many ancient cultures (dating far back – possibly to the Stone Age),⁴⁰ the original purpose of which could have been medical. Inuit, Bantu in South Africa, and natives of Brazil and Saudi Arabia were reported to combat various

³⁴ Cf. Reeves, *Tutankhamun*, 217.

³⁵ They are reminiscent of the condition after intentional „ear stretching“ in modern times.

³⁶ I am not aware whether special children's earrings have ever been found.

³⁷ Examples: alabaster statuette of Pepi II as child (Cairo JE 50616); Tutankhamun: head on a lotus flower (Carter no. 8), golden figurine in a crouching position (Carter no. 320c), wooden mannequin (Carter no. 116), granite statue from the temple of Khonsu at Karnak (Cairo CG 38488); Ramesses II: statue as boy in front of the Canaanite sun god (Cairo JE 46735), as boy on a relief in king Seti I's temple at Abydos. But see Ramesses II as boy with a heavy drop earring on the stela fragment Louvre N 522 and the statue from Deir el-Medina of an unidentified king with earrings (possibly also Ramesses II) sitting on a man's lap (NMS A.1956.139; M. Maitland regarded the latter as a naophorous statue; M. Mailand, "The king an I: Comemorating the privilege of royal statue dedication in Ramesside Deir el-Meina", in C. Greco et al. [eds], *Deir el-Medina: Through the kaleidoscope* [Modena, 2022], 167, 169). I have not come across any sculpture or wall painting of a non-royal child wearing earrings.

³⁸ Perhaps there was a medical reason why an ear stud was sometimes shown in only one ear (see fig. 2B f and note 12).

³⁹ Cf. W. Westendorf, "Handbuch der Altägyptischen Medizin", Vol. 1, in H. Altenmüller et al. (eds), *Handbuch der Orientalistik, Erste Abteilung: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten* (Boston, Cologne and Leiden, 1999), 147.

⁴⁰ An overview is provided by Victoria Pitts-Taylor (ed.), *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Body*, 2 Vols, (Westport, 2008).

ailments of the body by treating the ears with sharp or red-hot objects.⁴¹ In Hinduism, ear piercings still have not only decorative but also preventive, medical and spiritual significance. In the ceremony Karna Vedha,⁴² a small child's earlobes are pierced in order to protect him or her from illnesses and to improve the ability to perceive divine sounds.⁴³ Remarkably, according to traditional Chinese medicine, there are acupuncture points located on the auricle, with certain points on the earlobe being said to be connected to the ipsilateral eye, face, inner ear and teeth.⁴⁴ Similarly in the Egyptian Ebers Papyrus from the 16th century BCE, "vessels" that are reminiscent of the energy pathways of the Chinese acupuncture system are described (Eb 854–855).⁴⁵ According to this papyrus, there are at least two such vessels that form a connection between the ear and the eye on one side (Eb 854e).⁴⁶

However, the fact that ear piercing is not mentioned as a treatment in the known ancient Egyptian medical papyri speaks against the medical explanation.

This article deliberately has an open ending. If you would like to contribute a possible explanation or know examples of royal statues with earrings, please write to me at info@egyptological-hypotheses.org.

Photos

Photo rights: CC BY, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, or reproduced with kind permission (figs. 1 i, 2B k, 2B p).

Figure 1:

⁴¹ Cf. Luigi Gori and Fabio Firenzuoli, "Ear Acupuncture in European Traditional Medicine", *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med* 4, Suppl. 1 (2007), 13.

⁴² Karna Vedha is one of the 16 Shodasha Samskāras (comparable to Christian sacraments).

⁴³ <https://www.thangamayil.com/corporate/scientific-reason-behind-ear-piercing/> (accessed on April 16, 2024).

⁴⁴ Cf. Pei-Jing Rong et al., "Analysis of Advantages and Disadvantages of the Location Methods of International Auricular Acupuncture Points", *Evid Based Complement Alternate Med* 2016 (2016), 4231260, (figs. 5, 10, 13). However, piercing the earlobe as "permanent acupuncture" is said to be rather detrimental to health.

⁴⁵ Cf. Lutz Popko, <https://sae.saw-leipzig.de/de/documents/papyrus-ebers#section-53> (accessed on April 16, 2024).

⁴⁶ This could also be the reason why in Eb 356, the medicine to treat blindness has to be poured into the ear.

- a) Pair of penannular earrings, gold, diameter 2.8 cm, thickness 1 cm, approx. 1635–1458 BCE, from Asasif, MMA 10.16.473, 10.16.474 (Rogers Fund, 1916). Photo: MMA.
- b) Pair of spiral earrings, electrum, diameter 2.2 cm, width 1.2–1.3 cm, ca. 1550–1425 BCE, from Asasif, MMA 10.16.469, 10.16.470 (Rogers Fund, 1916). Photo: MMA.
- c) Pair of beaded penannular earrings, gold, lapis lazuli, diameter 2.1 cm, width 0.7 cm, ca. 1550–1425 BCE, from Dra Abu el-Naga, MMA 7.26.1355 (Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926). Photo: MMA.
- d) Earring, gold, lapis lazuli, diameter 2.5 cm, ca. 1295–1186 BCE, unknown provenance, MMA 10.130.1540 (gift of Helen Miller Gould, 1910). Photo: MMA.
- e) Pair of ribbed penannular earrings, gold, diameter 3.4–3.5 cm, width 2 cm, ca. 1479–1425 BCE, from Wadi Gabbanat el-Qurud, MMA 26.8.92a, b (Fletcher Fund, 1919). Photo: MMA.
- f) Pair of ribbed penannular earrings, gold, diameter 1.8 cm, width 0.8 cm, ca. 1550–1425 BCE, from Asasif, MMA 7.26.1335 (Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926). Photo: MMA.
- g) Ear plug (ear spool; 18th dyn.), Egyptian alabaster, diameters 1.4 and 2.4 cm, ca. 1478–1425 BCE, from el-Balabish, Brooklyn 15.500 a,b (gift of the Egypt Exploration Fund). Photo: Brooklyn Museum.
- h) Ear stud, faience, length 2 cm, shaft diameter 0.5–0.7 cm, cap diameter 0.9 cm, ca. 1390–1352 BCE, from Malqata (palace of Amenhotep III), MMA 11.215.444 (Rogers Fund, 1911). Photo: MMA.
- i) Pair of earrings, gold cloisonné, lapis lazuli, carnelian, turquoise, blue glass, length 10.9 cm, ca. 1333–1323 BCE, from KV 62, Cairo JE 61969 (excavation Howard Carter, 1922). Photo: Rmn-Grand Palais, https://www.photo.rmn.fr/archive/11-537127-2C6NU00D8B_K.html (accessed on April 16, 2024).
- j) Earring, gold, faience, diameter of ring 1.5 cm, length 3.2 cm, ca. 1390–1352 BCE, from Malqata (palace of Amenhotep III), MMA 12.180.419 (Rogers Fund, 1912). Photo: MMA.
- k) Earrings and other ornaments in granular and filigree technique, gold, Graeco-Roman Period, ca. 300 BCE–300 AD. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Ancient Egyptian Jewelry: A Picture Book* (New York, 1940), fig. 16.
- l) For comparison: Earring, Achaemenid Empire (First Persian Empire), gold, turquoise inlay, diameter 6 cm, approx. 6th–4th century BCE, from Iran, MMA 1989.281.33 (gift of Norbert Schimmel Trust, 1989). Photo: MMA.

Figure 2:

- a) Statue head of king Menkaura (4th dyn.), Egyptian alabaster, height 29.2 cm, width 19.6 cm, depth 21.9 cm, ca. 2490–2472 BC, from Giza (Menkaura's valley temple), MFA 09.203 (Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition). Photo: MFA.
- b) Statue head of king Djedefre (4th dyn.), red quartzite, height 26.5 cm, width 33.5 cm, depth 28.8 cm, ca. 2565–2558 BCE., from Abu Rawash (Djedefre's pyramid complex), Louvre E12626 (excavation Emile Gaston Chassinat, 1907). Photo: Musée du Louvre.
- c) Statue head of king Userkaf (5th dyn.), red granite, height 75 cm, from Saqqara (Userkaf's pyramid temple), Cairo JE 52501 (excavation Cecil Firth, 1928). Photo: Hasaballa el-Tieb, Archives Photographiques de Saqqara, in: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), 315 (no. 100).
- d) Statue head of a king, possibly Mentuhotep III (late 11th dyn.), limestone, height 18.3 cm, width 21.5 cm, depth 18.2 cm, ca. 2000–1988 BCE, unknown provenance, MMA 66.99.3 (Fletcher Fund and The Guide Foundation Inc. Gift, 1966). Photo: MMA.
- e) Statue head of king Amenemhet III (late 12th dyn.), dark shelly limestone, height 12 cm, width 14.3, ca. 1831–1786 BCE, from Aswan, Cambridge E.2.1946 (bequeathed by Oscar C. Raphael, 1946). Photo: The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
- f) Statue head of king Amenemhet III (late 12th dyn.), granodiorite, height 83 cm, width 82 cm, depth 69 cm, ca. 1854–1808 BCE, from Tell Basta, BM EA1063 (donated by Egypt Exploration Fund, 1889). Photo: British Museum.
- g) Statue head of a king, possibly Amenemhet IV (late 12th dyn.), limestone, height 14 cm, ca. 1814–1805 BCE, from El Lisht (temple of Amenemhat I), MMA 08.200.2 (Rogers Fund, 1908). Photo: MMA.
- h) Statuette of king Amenhotep I (early 18th dyn.), limestone, height 65 cm, width 27 cm, depth 40 cm, approx. 1292–1190 BCE, from Deir el -Medina, Museo Egizio Cat. 1372 (collection Bernardino Drovetti, 1824). Photo: Museo Egizio.
- i) Head from the statuette of a king (18th dyn.), basalt, height 5 cm, 1479–1458 BCE, from Dra Abu el -Naga, MMA 7.26.1400 (Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926). Photo: MMA.
- j) Mummy of king Thutmose IV (18th dyn.), around 1390 BCE, from KV 35, Cairo CG 61073 (excavation M. Loret, 1898). Photo: G. Elliot Smith, *Catalog Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire: The Royal Mummies* (Cairo, 1912), Plate XXIX, https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/eos/eos_page.pl?DPI=300&callnum=DT57.C2_vol59&object=155 (accessed on April 16, 2024).
- k) Statuette of king Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (18th dyn.), limestone, height 35 cm, approx. 1353–1336 BCE, from Tell el -Amarna, Cairo JE 43580 (excavation Ludwig Borchardt, 1911). Photo: John Bodsworth, <https://www.worldhistory.org/Akhenaten/> (accessed on April 16, 2024).

- l) Earlobe from a statue of a king or queen (18th dyn.), indurated limestone, height 3.2 cm, width 3.8 cm, depth 1.2 cm, ca. 1353–1336 BCE, from Tell el-Amarna, MMA 57.180.83 (Harris Brisbane Dick Fund 1957). Photo: MMA.
- m) Bust of queen Nefertiti (18th dyn.), limestone, painted stucco, rock crystal, wax, height 49 cm, width 24.5 cm, depth 35 cm, ca. 1351–1334 BCE, from Tell el-Amarna, Berlin AeM 21300 (excavation German Orient Society, 1912). Photo: Sandra Stei, AeMP.
- n) Head of king Tutankhamun (late 18th dyn), indurated limestone, height 17.2 cm, width 16 cm, depth 23.6 cm, ca. 1336–1327 BCE; unknown provenance, MMA 50.6 (Rogers Fund, 1950). Photo: MMA.
- o) Mummy of Tutankhamun (late 18th dyn.), around 1323 BCE, from KV 62, Carter no. 256 (excavation Howard Carter, 1922). Photo: Harry Burton, 1922, The Howard Carter Archives, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256-p1577.html> (accessed on April 16, 2024).
- p) King Tutankhamun (late 18th dyn.), detail of a wall painting in tomb KV 62, around 1323 BCE. Photo: Lori Wong (ed.), *The Conservation and Management of the Tomb of Tutankhamen (KV62): A Project Bibliography* (The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2013), cover page.
- q) Statue of king Horemheb (and the god Amun, late 18th dyn.), limestone, height 290 cm, width 112 cm, depth 90 cm, 1319–1292 BCE, Museo Egizio Cat. 768 (collection Bernardino Drovetti, 1824). Photo: Museo Egizio.
- r) Statue of Seti I (19th dyn.), granodiorite, height 114.5 cm, width 37 cm, depth 76 cm, ca. 1294–1279 BCE, from Abydos, MMA 22.2.21 (Rogers Fund, 1922). Photo: MMA.
- s) Statue of Ramesses II, close-up of the right ear (19th dyn.), granodiorite, height 196 cm, width 105 cm, depth 70 cm, ca. 1279–1213 BCE, Museo Egizio Cat. 1380 (collection Bernardino Drovetti, 1824). Photo: Museo Egizio.