

Chapter 4

FABIEN BIÈVRE-PERRIN

Nefertiti, a Political Queen for XXIst Century's Pop

Nefertiti was made famous by her bust, discovered in 1912 in Thutmose's workshop in Amarna by the German team of Ludwig Borchardt, currently on display at the *Neues Museum* in Berlin.¹ She ruled Egypt alongside her husband, the Pharaoh Akhenaten, during the 18th dynasty (1550–1292 BC): their wealthy reign was marked by the relocation of the capital in Amarna and by a religious revolution centred around the worship of the sun god Aten.² Some historians think that the queen ruled briefly alone, as Neferneferuaten, when her husband died and before Tutankhamen was crowned.³ Nowadays, her world renown portrait is one of the most reproduced ancient Egyptian artworks: travel souvenirs, tattoos, photographs, drawings, fancy dress... It is everywhere, and with it, the image of the queen, frozen forever and condemned to wear the same headdress again and again. Over the last decade, Nefertiti has caught up with Cleopatra in the race for the title of supreme Queen of Egypt in popular culture, despite a delay of two millennia in Western imagination.⁴

The popularity of Nefertiti stems, of course, from the beauty of her bust, but also from its context of discovery, Amarna, and the alleged monotheism of Akhenaten. Her proximity to Tutankhamen, the pop pharaoh *par excellence*, has only increased her aura within the western imaginary. But the evolution of her role in pop culture seems to follow the controversy over Cleopatra's ethnicity and personality. Nefertiti is just as iconic as the Ptolemaic queen, but much less ambiguous on more than one level, and her politicization has taken very different paths. Being less glamorous and seductive, she may embody a more respectable and inclusive Egyptian queen than Cleopatra, also, debates about her skin colour are less passionate.

1 See Fletcher (2004).

2 See Freed, D'Auria, and Markowitz (1999).

3 See van de Perre (2014).

4 See de Callatay (2015).

A Short Popular History of the Bust and Egyptian Queens

Since its discovery, the bust and Nefertiti herself have been used in politics: it was a ‘treasure’ of Prussia, a ‘unique masterpiece’ of Hitler’s Germany and even an issue of national identity between East and West Germany after World War II. Later, she became a powerful symbol for the Black Power, a feminist and cosmopolitan icon for the Green political party in 1999. Egyptians tried to claim her back, asking for the return of the bust and putting her face on display in diverse occasions, for example on the Minya flag (one of the governorates of Upper Egypt) or on a roundabout, sparking local controversies.⁵ The bust also became a strong influence in popular culture. Movies, TV shows, songs, artworks, video-games and novels about Nefertiti have been published in large quantities all along the 20th century. Her iconic headdress inspired up to the Frankenstein’s fiancée’s hairstyle and has been echoed on the catwalks of the greatest fashion houses.⁶ All of these reinterpretations have made Nefertiti a unique and inevitable icon in today’s pop culture. Despite its origin and chronology, the bust differs from other Egyptian antiquities in popular reception. The characteristics of the Amarna Art seem to confer it a proximity with classical culture. Admired for its technique and compatibility with the Western canons of beauty and modes of representation, the bust lays at the crossroads of both Greco-Roman and Egyptian imaginary, a bit like Cleopatra. So that’s not a surprise when we find it in ‘classical’ settings, especially in the art of Awol Erizku who placed it on a Greek column, sometimes as a whitewashed plaster cast.⁷

The construction of the ‘Nefertiti icon’ is part of a broader panorama and of a kind of recent neo-Egyptomania. In the Egyptizing repertoire, the figure of the ‘Egyptian queen’ belongs to the most frequent representations. As a powerful female figure, she arouses the interest of creators, sensitive to the values they can confer, and which revolve around two opposing visions: a feminist incarnation / a sensual and exotic object. Since the discovery of her bust, Nefertiti has been popular among creators and joined a very selective trio. Indeed, only a few queens are usually explicitly mentioned in pop culture: Cleopatra, Nefertiti, and Hatshepsut. Despite her Greek identity, Cleopatra has almost completely ousted other Egyptian queens of popular culture for a long time.⁸ Nefertiti, Nefertari or Hatshepsut, though more or less known to the general public, played only a minor role in the creation of the archetype in which they found themselves trapped.

5 See N. N. *Enterprise* (2018).

6 See Young (1991).

7 See for example her work ‘Nefertiti With Tulips’ (2018), exposed during *Say Less, Awol Erizku*, 30 Apr.–3 June 2018 (<https://scotiabankcontactphoto.com/archive/2018/say-less> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024]).

8 See Bièvre-Perrin (2016).

Cleopatra paradoxically, throughout the history of art, literature, and popular culture, gradually synthesized all the Egyptian sovereigns, or even all Egyptian women. More 'glamorous' and sulphurous than other known queens, because of her relationships with men, be it her lover Caesar, her husband Antony, her husband-brother, her children, or her enemy Octavian, she is also closer to the 'Western public' by her culture and her identity, Cleopatra is the current dominant archetype of the Egyptian queen. Any woman dressed near or far to the Egyptian, or even to the Antique, is identified as Cleopatra unless another name is clearly mentioned. Nefertiti stands out as the most serious contender to Cleopatra's throne over the last past years. She is the only competitor unequivocally identifiable thanks to her headdress. Hatshepsut is certainly the third contender but seems to be a bland fusion of the first two in the current imaginary. Other Egyptian queens of pop lay in a sad anonymity that says a lot about their role in contemporary productions.⁹ In this fantasy tinged with colonialism, Egyptian queens are the synthesis of four principles: Pharaonic Egypt (secondarily Greek); the beautiful woman (slightly exotic and lascivious); the cunning (and manipulative) woman; in fact, a fatal woman who dragged her Roman lovers down.¹⁰ These principles characterize any Egyptian queen worthy of the name in contemporary popular culture, whatever our historical knowledge.¹¹ Thus, although represented with a beard and a virile musculature during her lifetime, while dying obese, Queen Hatshepsut became in popular culture a beautiful and frail adventurous young girl learning how to be a strong chief of power.¹²

Queens of Egypt owe their success in recent western popular culture to the subtle cocktail they provide. Easily identifiable, they take the public back to an exotic and popular imaginary. Thus, while belonging to the same exaggerated portray of the Egyptian queen, these women embody divergent ideologies and are staged in very distinct and changing perspectives. To the machismo that conditioned their representation for centuries, respond feminist empowerment messages, going hand in hand with the feminization and diversification of the artists staging them.¹³ The symbolic dimension of these carnival queens is emphasized and amplified by the setting in which the creators make them move: a chimeric pharaonic Egypt, timeless and fantasized by the West, whose codes can easily be introduced into the contemporary world and eventually hijacked. The mystery and magic that surrounds everything related to Egypt¹⁴ end up giving the Eyp-

9 See Bièvre-Perrin (2022).

10 See Sartre (2018).

11 See Pucci (2011: 203–205).

12 See Inudoh (2014).

13 See Bièvre-Perrin (2017a), Wieber and Carlà-Uhink (2020).

14 The interest that Freemasons have brought to Egypt for a century plays an important role in the mystical and sulphurous Egyptian imaginary; see Fritze (2016) and Warmenbol (2013).

tian queens their inevitable appeal and assert their hegemony, sending Roman Empreses, Zenobia, Dido and other ancient female sovereigns into oblivion. Too well behaved and dominated to Scouse men and inspire women, or too anonymous and difficult to identify to capture the public, they do not give creators the same grip as Cleopatra, Nefertiti, Hatshepsut or even other Egyptian Queens whose exoticism compensates the anonymity.¹⁵

A Game of Thrones: A Queen of Colour Rising

Although usually generated and controlled by men, representations of Egyptian Queens are sometimes diverted by women. Since the nineteenth century, the negative clichés attached to Cleopatra and her ilk have been taken over by some member of the 'fairer sex'. Thus, 'man-eaters', living at the expense of wealthy gentlemen, or independent women with a sulphurous reputation such as Mata Hari were portrayed with humour and irony as Cleopatra.¹⁶ In her music video *Dark Horse*, Katy Perry replayed the entire history of Art and appropriated the criticisms made of her model in a cynical skit in which she destroyed one by one her Eastern suitors to strip them off their wealth.¹⁷ This image of a dangerous Egyptian woman also exists in popular culture, probably in connection with the fear of mummies: in Ann Rice's books, and their cinematographic adaptations, the first vampire woman, 'Akasha' is an Egyptian Queen (*Queen of the Damned*, 2002, Michael Rymer, with the singer Aaliyah in the main role). This dangerous and ambiguous figure has inspired various reinterpretations, notably by the singer FKA Twigs (video clip *Two Weeks*, 2014). At the same time, Queens of Egypt have freed themselves from men on many occasions and are more willing to be surrounded by felines than lovers: the feminine vision collides with the magical aura of Egypt, making them appear as mistresses of animals (*Potnia Theron*).

Beside this feminist reappropriation, another movement is to be analysed. Embodying an Egyptian queen today can also have a political meaning for a woman of colour wishing to claim a glorious African past. If Hollywood has almost always chosen white women to embody its Egyptian (and more largely ancient) Queens, other industries have followed polemics surrounding the carnation of the last sovereign of Egypt. Some wanted to see Cleopatra as a great African woman, Black, who preferred to die than to submit to the West.¹⁸ These debates issued from Pan-Africanism and led to the creation of very contradictory representations.¹⁹ In the field of animation films and entertainment, representations are particularly astonishing. In the series *Cleopatra* (1999), the Queen is mixed, but not African-European, as one might expect: the actress Leonor Varela is of Chilean,

15 See Schwentzel (2019).

16 See Loubier (2000).

17 See Bièvre-Perrin (2016).

Hungarian, Italian and Syrian descent. In the series *Rome* (2005–2007), the English Lyndsey Marshal plays the part: she is sometimes very tanned, and her make-up as well as her outfits are orientalizing, but she still looks Caucasian. As for cinema, in the movie *Asterix and Obelix: Mission Cleopatra* (2002) the queen is also Caucasian (Monica Bellucci is the archetype of the Italian woman, white with black hair), but surrounded by 'Oriental' actors whose skins are darker. In France, for a musical show (2009), Cleopatra has been embodied by Sofia Essaïdi, a Franco-Moroccan artist. It seems that producers find it more convincing to hire a white or Arab rather than a black Cleopatra, maybe because Egypt is today mostly Arab?²⁰ Finally, to see a black Egyptian Queen in Western video graphic productions, we must look at non-historical series or cartoons. During a costume ball in *Smallville* Lana Lang is disguised as Cleopatra and in *The Prince of Egypt* (Brenda Chapman, Steve Hickner, Simon Wells, 1998), it was decided to represent a black royal family. The toy industry is also interesting in its evolution. Two major brands have designed Cleopatra figurines: Lego and Playmobil. While the classic yellow colour of Lego figurines is kept, colour variations are introduced by Playmobil. Thus, the figurine is black in 2014, while it was white in 2006 and is again in 2016. As for Barbie dolls, they are white unambiguously, and refer to Liz Taylor more than to Cleopatra. It may also be noted that 'Queen of Egypt' carnival dresses are only marketed for young white girls: no black model is ever casted to promote them (which is the case for almost all costumes). The same observation applies to recent videogames, even if *Assassin's Creed: Origins* (2017) offered a very smooth and ambiguous version of the queen. On the comic side, the Ptolemies have very dark skin in *Alix* (Jacques Martin), but Théli-Chéri has a lighter skin than her friend Papyrus in the eponymous comic (Lucien De Gieter).²¹ Hatshepsut has surprisingly been the subject of several manga: in *Queen of Egypt* (Chie Inudō, 2014), she became nor Asian or black, but white with blue eyes; she's thin and muscular, which is unlikely given her Nubian ancestry and her probable obesity.²²

18 On Cleopatra's skin colour, debates are numerous. For a recent review, see de Callatay (2015: 28, 103–107) on Cleopatra's skin colour in contemporary culture, and Fritze (2016: 314, 331–332). The incessant search for Cleopatra's mummy is certainly linked in part to the 'need' to fasten her identity clearly (DNA research was conducted in this direction on the so-called mummy of Arsinoé, her sister) and provoked in itself a rich 'reception'; see Olivier (2019).

19 See Walker (2001), Mbodj (2000), Fritze (2016: 300–325).

20 The Netflix documentary *Cleopatra*, which caused a lot of controversy because of the casting of a black actress for the title role, was released in 2023, after this article was written.

21 Which seems faithful to colour representations in canonical Egyptian iconography; see Lalouette (1996: 55).

22 See Hawass (2007).

In connection with these diversions and this renewal of representations at the margin, the figure of Nefertiti also experienced a clear phenomenon of reappropriation. While white women were cast to play Nefertiti in the peplums *The Egyptian* (Michael Curtiz, 1954, with Anitra Stevens), *Nefertite, regina del Nilo* (Fernando Cerchio, 1961, with Jeanne Crain), *Toto vs. Maciste* (Fernando Cerchio, 1962, with Gabriella Andreini) and *Nefertiti, figlia del sole* (Guy Gilles, 1994, with Michela Rocco di Torrepadula), the case is very different in the rest of the popular reception. Here are some examples: the Queen is black in *The Sun Queen*, a French animated film (Philippe Leclerc, 2007, the hero is her daughter); Leila Bolukat, an Iranian actress played the Queen in *Prophet Joseph*, a 2008 Iranian television TV series;²³ the popular French television show *Secrets d'histoire* chose a black actress to impersonate her in August 2018; in most children's literature, her skin is dark;²⁴ souvenirs sold to tourists in Berlin or in Egypt include both whitewashed and colourful busts.²⁵ Besides this, black musical artists have been using the figure of Nefertiti in their songs and communication for a long time. Many jazz players paid tribute to the Queen (Cecil Taylor, Miles Davis, Andrew Hill, ...). In 1977, The Ritchie Family recorded *African Queens*. In 1992, Michael Jackson seduced Nefertiti in his *Remember the time* video.²⁶ These examples show the popularity of the Queen among Afro-Americans²⁷. But in this context, her global popularity was lesser than that of Cleopatra.

Nefertiti's Voguing

What is happening since 2012 is unprecedented as the situation is clearly reversing. To the western orientalism, Nefertiti tends to oppose a strong Egyptian identity in popular culture.²⁸ Recently, Cleopatra seems to be replaced by Nefertiti when an Egyptian queen is needed, but only a particular part of the creators is responsible for this evolution: black and Afro-American artists. This is not so much their skin colour as their key role in recent pop culture that matters here. If we

23 The series, directed by Farajollah Salahshoor, tells the story of Prophet Joseph from the Quran and Islamic traditions (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3084150/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024]).

24 Within the *Quelle histoire* collection, Nefertiti has a darker skin than other Egyptian sovereigns, while Ramses and Cleopatra are white; see Baron, Wennagel, and Ferret (2016).

25 In a different domain, the brand Elenco sells 'Nefertiti Forensic Head Reconstruction Kits' with a dark modelling clay (<https://elenco.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EDU567-2.pdf> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024]). Despite its growing popularity and unlike Cleopatra, Nefertiti has not got yet her Barbie, Playmobil or Lego figurine, and rarely appears in games. Her mummy is an opponent in the 2018 videogame *Assassin's Creed Origins: The Curse of the Pharaohs*.

26 See Saura-Ziegelmeyer (2017).

27 See Soliman (2020).

28 Orientalism is still strong in ancient Egypt reception; see Blouin (2019).

focus on pop music, it is noticeable how Black singers are dominating the charts, all the while controlling their own image to an extent never reached before. Beyoncé and Rihanna represent a, still rare, new kind of non-white pop stars, who no longer depend on their producers as much as past black pop stars and make the important choices about their public representation, controlling it partly directly through social media.²⁹ The rise of Nefertiti in this context has to be analysed as a consequence, almost a culmination, not a corollary.

Beyoncé and Rihanna are the best-known actors of this movement, but let's not forget about Janelle Monae, Erika Baddu, Keke Palmer and many others. We must also notice that these pop stars are collaborating with well-known artists, who are not all black or Afro-American. Next to Awol Erizku, we can spot Reilly or Damien Hirst, for example. These three internationally recognized artists are often using Antiquity as a way to work on Western norms and representations. It seems like they all are very consciously and politically participating to a more inclusive history of art, by mixing old and new, including black people into a story they were excluded from by western and white standards. Popstars like Beyoncé give a wider audience to these approaches and contribute to their diffusion and trivialization. The video clip 'Apushit' (Beyoncé & Jay-Z, 2018) is probably one of the most successful and popular manifestations of this phenomenon, offering meaning and perspective to the appropriation of Nefertiti.³⁰

So, why are these artists and their pop-star sponsors so keen on using Nefertiti rather than Cleopatra? Beside a constant need for change in pop culture and the presence of the Queen in archaeological news,³¹ the response seems to be political as the identity of the actors tends to bring it out. After a century of controversies and a batch of publications, scientific or not, on Cleopatra's skin colour, the Ptolemaic Queen seems to have tired creators. Playing on her ethnicity is nothing subversive anymore, but rather seems to be a bad gimmick for attention seekers. Meanwhile, Nefertiti offers an alternative yet full of promise. While controversies on her skin colour also exist, they are way less violent and radical.³² Definitely Egyptian, unlike her Ptolemaic sister, Nefertiti can more clearly embody an African-Egyptian ancestor and participate to an identity discourse. Her presence in pharaonic settings and within ancient Egyptian narratives is more coherent. Recent pop culture reception, however, clearly shows that several readings coexist. When Rihanna posed as Nefertiti for *Vogue Arabia* (2017), it did not really raise the indignation of the defenders of a 'white Antiquity', but nevertheless caused

29 The situation remains difficult for most black singers; see King (2018) and Marr (2018).

30 See Bièvre-Perrin (2018b).

31 Nefertiti recently made the headlines when the hypothesis of the discovery of her tomb was published in the press; see N. N. *BBC* (2018).

32 See for example two different takes on the subject: Ciaccia (2018) and Shenje (2017). See also Specter (1990).

uproar. Being considered by nationalists as the ancestor of modern Egyptians, some said the Queen should have been represented not by a black woman, but by an Arab one, accusing Rihanna of cultural appropriation.³³

To highlight the coherence of this phenomenon, the case of Rihanna deserves a more in-depth analysis. After tattooing Nefertiti's bust on her flank in 2012, the singer used it as a central prop for her communication in the year 2017. The November issue of *Vogue Arabia* is only the main piece of a wider discourse. By the words of the editor-in-chief himself, Manuel Arnaut, putting Rihanna as Nefertiti on the cover of the magazine was a political decision: 'We are dedicating the issue to strong and dynamic women who are changing the world [...] Rihanna, our cover star, is one of them. Not only is she one of the most successful pop icons ever, shaping the entertainment industry with her powerful tunes and unique sense of style, she is also an advocate for diversity.'³⁴ The fashion journal chose to display the Queen in an anachronistic setting: the singer is posing in front of modern buildings. Beside the headdress, only some white fabrics alluding to mummy strips clearly refer to ancient Egypt. On one of the inside photography of the issue, the singer is seen side by side with a black bust of her as Nefertiti. This is one of the art pieces from Damien Hirst's exhibition *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* (Venice, 2017). In the movie *Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets* (Luc Besson, 2017), released three months before the *Vogue Arabia* cover, Rihanna plays Bubble, a polymorphic being. After a lifetime of exploitation, she chooses to die with the appearance of Nefertiti. The dying queen then turns into sand, running through Valerian's fingers.

With immaculate timing (*Valerian*, exhibition, *Vogue Arabia*), this coordinated manifestation of Rihanna-Nefertiti shows that nothing hazardous or postmodern is at takes here. The singer made a takeover on Nefertiti's figure. It's not clear whether she tried to take the Queen all for herself or to confirm and impose her as a new panafricanist pop queen. Indeed, as we've already mentioned it, the resurgence of Nefertiti these last years is consistent and perceptible among other Afro-American pop stars communication. Beyoncé is the successor of Rihanna in 2018, collaborating with Awol Erizku and Olivier Rousteing (Balmain) to transform her into a new Nefertiti.³⁵ First the bust was on her side, for the 'I have three hearts' photo shoot (2017), announcing her pregnancy to the world as a black Madonna. Then the two figures collided at Coachella (2018) when Beyoncé began her show, wearing a renewed version of Nefertiti's famous headgear, a dazzling cape and her name associated to a depiction of the bust itself. Surrounded by black dancers whose outfits are ornamented with Tutankhamen's mask, the singer

33 See N. N. *Arabnews* (2017).

34 Arnaut (2017).

35 Beside its collaboration with Beyoncé, Balmain proposed a new vision of ancient Egypt, way less orientalist and retro than usual reception in Fashion industry, see Renault (2018).

joins a pyramidal scene where, among other Egyptian symbols, she then appears with a widely commented 'coat of arms'. Separated into four areas, it refers to Nefertiti, the Black Panthers, the Bee (both Egyptian and reminiscent of her nickname, *Queen B*) and Alpha Phi Alpha, the first interuniversity fraternity created by African Americans in 1906. It is surrounded by a winged Udjat eye and the inscription '20 18 ΒΣΥΘΝCΣ'.³⁶ Without turning to a clear Afrocentric discourse, Beyoncé uses ancient Egypt as a semantic key. She inserts Egyptian heritage into that of African Americans, and especially black women, to whom her concert is dedicated.³⁷

Two Queens for One Throne

Beside her legendary beauty,³⁸ the recent success of Nefertiti is thus linked to her skin colour. Panafricanism is to consider in the rise of the Amarna Queen within pop culture these last ten years. Afro-Americans are claiming ancient Egyptian as ancestors for black peoples all over the world and Nefertiti offers a popular and available model. This isn't new, but in the current political and scientific context,³⁹ the pop culture version of this position offers a new perspective. It also seems relevant to identify a connection with the 'representation matters' movement, highlighted in 2016 by Michelle Obama who then said that her role and that of public women of colour was to serve as role models for young black girls, so that they can identify and emancipate themselves.⁴⁰ Nefertiti is supposed to show that great black female figures have existed in the past and can be an inspiration. Along with black impersonations of Medusa,⁴¹ Aphrodite or the Virgin Mary,⁴² she emphasizes that classical culture, fantasized as a universal and common good, actually belongs to who wants to seize it.⁴³

36 Which does not make sense, as it literally reads 'BSUTHNCS': it refers to the Greek letters of the interuniversity fraternity, not to the Greek alphabet itself.

37 Before this, Beyoncé already made echo to Nefertiti's headdress on several occasion, see Bièvre-Perrin (2018a).

38 In popular reception, her beauty is almost always mentioned, and for some is innovative or a consequence of her power, see Hess (2018).

39 The 'whitewashing' of classic and ancient Egyptian history is currently at the centre of numerous approaches, following Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (1987) and his historical and sociological reconstruction of the evolution of the idea of origins of Greek civilization in Europe, arousing passionate reactions, membership or denunciation. For a recent comment and a bibliography on the subject, see Jayesh (2013).

40 See Jones (2016).

41 Like Azealia Banks, Rihanna posed as Medusa; see Bièvre-Perrin (2017c; 2017d, 2023).

42 See Bièvre-Perrin (2017b).

43 Photographer Advan Matthew chose the Singaporean Kelly Tandiano to depict the life of Nefertiti at various stages of her life (<https://www.anneofcarversville.com/style-photos/kelly-tan-advan-matthew-serenade-nefertiti.html> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024]).

Nefertiti's popularity is also partly due to the idea that she can embody a 'decent' feminine historical model, as she escaped the 'bad reputation' complex that stained Cleopatra's image.⁴⁴ The monotheist aura surrounding her and her husband must have played a role in this picture of simplicity and honesty. This led to two options. While Cleopatra is seen as a white, pagan, manipulative and seductive queen, Nefertiti can personify a black, monotheist, wise and devout spouse.

References

- Arnaut, M. (2017 [5 Nov.]), 'The November Issue: A Letter from the Editor', *Vogue Arabia*, online: <https://en.vogue.me/fashion/editors-letter-november-2017/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024]
- Baron, C. V.; Wennagel, B.; Ferret, M. (2016), *Néfertiti* (Paris: Quelle Histoire).
- Bernal, M. (1987), *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press).
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2016 [17 Feb.]), 'Katy Perry reine du Nil – Dark Horse', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/60> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2017a), 'Black Feminism et Antiquité dans la pop-music', in *Pop History: Histoire sociale du rock*, online: <https://pophistory.hypotheses.org/2518> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2017b [5 Feb.]), 'I have three hearts – Beyoncé as Black Venus', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/2261> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2017c [4 Aug.]), 'Azealia Banks, nordic Medusa – Ice Princess', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/490eng> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2017d [17 Dec.]), 'Rihanna and the Antique: from Nefertiti to Medusa', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/2925eng> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2018a [16 Apr.]), 'Ancient Egypt summoned to Coachella by Beyoncé: why Tutankhamun and Nefertiti?', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/3693eng> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2018b [18 June]), 'Jay-Z, Beyoncé & the Classics (Apehit)', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/antiquipop-english/4097eng> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2022), 'De Cléopâtre à Néfertiti : icônes, fantasmes, mythes et réalités', in *Égypte. Éternelle passion. Catalogue de l'exposition du Musée royal de Mariemont (24 septembre 2022 – 26 février 2023)*, ed. A. Quertinmont (Morlanwelz: Musée royal de Mariemont): 151–159.
- Bièvre-Perrin, F. (2023), 'Méduse(s) post-moderne(s)', in *Sous le Regard de Méduse. Catalogue de l'exposition du Musée des beaux-arts de Caen (printemps 2023)*, ed. E. Delapierre, A. Merle du Bourg (Caen: In Fine Editions d'Art): 107–118.
- Blouin, K. (2019 [14 Jan.]), 'Walk Like an Egyptian? How Modern Fashion Appropriates Antiquity', in *Everyday orientalism*, online: <https://everydayorientalism.wordpress.com/2019/01/14/walk-like-an-egyptian-how-modern-fashion-appropriates-antiquity/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- de Callataÿ, F. (2015), *Cléopâtre, usages et mésusages de son image* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique).

44 Mercier (2020); Nefertiti was preferred to Cleopatra by the street art collective Lediesis to join their 'SuperWomen' for a feminist project, see Nieri (2019).

- Ciaccia, C. (2018 [12 Feb.]), 'Recreated face of Queen Nefertiti sparks "whitewashing" race row', in *Fox News*, online <https://www.foxnews.com/science/recreated-face-of-queen-nefertiti-sparks-whitewashing-race-row> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Fletcher, J. (2004), *The Search For Nefertiti. The True Story Of An Amazing Discovery* (London: Hodder & Stoughton).
- Freed, R. E.; D'Auria, S.; Markowitz, Y. J. (1999), *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen* (London: Thames & Hudson).
- Fritze, R. H. (2016), *Egyptomania. A History of Fascination, Obsession and Fantasy* (London: Reaktion).
- Hawass, Z. (2007 [June]), 'The Search for Hatshepsut and the Discovery of her Mummy', in *Guardians*, online: http://guardians.net/hawass/hatshepsut/search_for_hatshepsut.htm [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Hess, L. (2018 [20 Sept.]), 'How Queen Nefertiti used her beauty to convey power', in *Dazed Digital*, online: <https://www.dazeddigital.com/beauty/article/41528/1/queen-nefertiti-beauty-power-egypt> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Inudoh, C. (2014), *Reine d'Égypte* (Paris: Ki-oon).
- Jayesh, A. K. (2013), 'Black Hellas? A Footnote to the Black Athena Debate', *Journal of Literary Theory* 7: 86–110.
- Jones, N. (2016 [23 Aug.]), 'Michelle Obama Explains Why Representation in Pop Culture Matters', in *Vulture*, online: <http://www.vulture.com/2016/08/michelle-obama-on-why-tv-representation-matters.html> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- King, B. (2018), "'An Easily Consumable Package": What It's Like Being A Black Woman In The Music Business', in *Blavity*, online: <https://blavity.com/what-its-like-being-a-black-woman-in-the-music-business> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Lalouette, C. (1996), *L'art figuratif dans l'Égypte pharaonique* (Paris: Flammarion).
- Loubier, J.-M. (2000), *Mata Hari: la sacrifiée* (Paris: Acropole).
- Marr, A. (2018), "These Three Black Women Are Some Of The Biggest Driving Forces in the Music Industry", in *21ninety*, online: <https://21ninety.com/these-three-black-women-are-some-of-the-biggest-driving-forces-in-the-music-industry> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Mbodj, M. (2000), 'Autour d'un livre. Howe (Stephen), *Afrocentrism. Mythical Past and Imagined Homes Afrocentrismes*. L'histoire des Africains entre Égypte et Amérique', *Politique africaine* 79: 165–191.
- Mercier, C. (2020 [30 Dec.]), 'Cléopâtre, égypte infidèle pour Gleeden', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/9214> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- N. N. *Arabnews* (2017 [30 Oct.]), 'Rihanna as Egypt's Queen Nefertiti? Vogue Arabia thinks so', in *Arab News*, online: <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1185166/offbeat> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- N. N. *BBC* (2018 [6 May]), 'Tutankhamun "secret chamber" does not exist, researchers find', in *BBC.com*, online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44026087> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- N. N. *Enterprise* (2018 [14 Oct.]), 'Egypt's sculptors finally redeem themselves with new Nefertiti bust', in *Enterprise: The State of the nation*, online: <https://enterprise.press/stories/2018/10/14/egypts-sculptors-finally-redeem-themselves-with-new-nefertiti-bust/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Nieri, F. (2019 [7 Mar]), 'Ladiesis, la forza di 8 donne sui muri di Firenze', in *Firenze Urban Lifestyle*, online: <https://firenzeurbanlifestyle.com/ladiesis-la-forza-di-8-donne-sui-muri-di-firenze/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Olivier, J. (2019 [18 Mar]), 'Cléopâtre dort-elle sous les géraniums de la "Nationale" ? Autopsie d'une légende tenace', in *L'Antiquité à la BNF*, online: <https://antiquitebnf.hypotheses.org/7790> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].

- van de Perre, A. (2014), 'The Year 16 graffito of Akhenaten in Dayr Abū Ḥinnis: A contribution to the study of the later years of Nefertiti', *Journal of Egyptian History* 7: 67–108.
- Pucci, G. (2011), 'Every Man's Cleopatra', in *Cleopatra: A Sphinx Revisited*, ed. M. M. Miles (Berkeley: University of California Press), 195–207.
- Renault, M. (2018 [22 Nov.]), 'La campagne d'Égypte de Balmain et Hogg', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/5721> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Sartre, M. (2018), *Cléopâtre, un rêve de puissance* (Paris: Tallandier).
- Saura-Ziegelmeyer, A. (2017 [24 July]), 'Des usages de l'Égypte ancienne dans la musique pop: quelles nuances?', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/2666> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Schwentzel, C.-G. (2019 [20 Feb.]), 'Nicki Minaj dernière reine et déesse d'Égypte', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/6740> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Shenje, K. (2017 [1 Nov.]), 'If Rihanna Wants To Be Styled As Nefertiti, Y'All Can Keep Your Shady Remarks In The Trash Where They Belong', in *Wear your voice mag*, online: <https://wyvarchive.com/rihanna-wants-styled-nefertiti-yall-can-keep-shady-remarks-trash-belong/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Soliman, D. (2020 [23 May]), 'Bring it back: ancient Egypt as imagined in Afro-American music', in *Antiquipop*, online: <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/8761eng> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Specter, M. (1990 [26 Feb.]), 'Was Nefertiti black? Bitter debate erupts', in *The Washington Post*, online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/02/26/was-nefertiti-black-bitter-debate-erupts/4e7bdc74-18a6-435e-a5f6-df900cb7f014/> [last accessed 16 Mar. 2024].
- Walker, C. E. (2001), *We can't go Home again. An argument about afrocentrism* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Warmenbol, E. (2013), 'L'égyptomanie et l'égyptologie en Belgique. Quand passion deviendrait raison', *Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques de l'Académie royale de Belgique* 24: 153–182.
- Wieber, A.; Carlà-Uhink, F. (eds., 2020), *Orientalism and the Reception of Powerful Women from the Ancient World* (London: Bloomsbury).
- Young, E. (1991), 'Here Comes the Bride: Wedding Gender and Race in *Bride of Frankenstein*', *Feminist Studies* 17: 403–437.