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AMARNA PERIOD

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Amarna Zeit
Période d'Amarna

The reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten/Amenhotep IV is controversial. Although substantial evidence for this period has been preserved, it is inconclusive on many important details. Nonetheless, the revolutionary nature of Akhenaten's rule is salient to the modern student of ancient Egypt. The king's devotion to and promotion of only one deity, the sun disk Aten, is a break from traditional Egyptian religion. Many theories developed about this era are often influenced by the history of its rediscovery and by recognition that Akhenaten's immediate successors rejected his rule.

تعتبر فترة حكم الملك اخناتون / أمنحوتب الرابع من الفترات المثيرة للجدل ، وعلى الرغم من وجود أدلة قوية محفوظة تشير إلى تلك الحقبة التاريخية ، إلا انها غير حاسمة لعدد من التفاصيل المهمة ، ومع ذلك ، فإن الطبيعة الثورية لحكم الملك اخناتون هي الشئ الملحوظ والبارز للطالب الحديث في مصر القديمة. إن إخلاص الملك وترويجه لإله واحد فقط قرص الشمس آتون ، يعتبر نقض لتقاليد الديانة المصرية ، وغالبا ما تتأثر العديد من النظريات حول هذه الحقبة التاريخية بتاريخ اعادة اكتشافها والاعتراف بأن خلفاء إخناتون رفضوا حكمه.

Pharaoh Akhenaten (1349-1332 BCE), son of Amenhotep III, began his rule under the name Amenhotep IV. Westerners came to know of Akhenaten through material discovered at his capital city at Tell el-Amarna. Consequently "the Amarna Period" is often used to refer to Akhenaten's entire reign and the period characterized by his devotion to a single deity, the Aten.

History of Research

1. Discovering Akhenaten at Tell el-Amarna.

In 1714, Jesuit priest Claude Sicard was the first non-Egyptian to describe the Amarna Period monument that Baudouin van de Walle later labeled as "Boundary Stela A" (Sicard 1717). One of many such boundary markers distributed around the site of Akhenaten's ancient city at Tell el-Amarna, Boundary Stela A shows the royal family offering to the Aten and features an inscription discussing Akhenaten's intentions to found a city dedicated to the Aten. A century following Sicard's discovery, some of the others to visit the site included Napoleon Bonaparte's Expedition d'Égypte, which documented Tell el-Amarna in *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-1828), and John Gardner Wilkinson, who visited the North tombs in 1824.

The art of a traditional Egyptian official's tomb features a celebration of the owner's life

and focuses on ensuring his success in the afterlife. Amarna tombs focus on the royal family's daily life and worship of the single solar god, the Aten, with minimal attention paid to the owner of the tomb or their family. The unusual nature of Akhenaten's art inspired the later work of K. R. Lepsius (Loeben 2009), who delivered a seminal lecture in 1851 arguing that Akhenaten was a monotheist. This was the first entry to a debate that continues today on the nature of Atenism and its relationship to traditional Egyptian polytheistic religion.

Interest in Tell el-Amarna was rekindled toward the close of the nineteenth century when local residents discovered Akhenaten's tomb in the 1880s. In 1887 they also found the first of the Amarna Tablets, also called the Amarna Letters (Moran 1992; Cohen and Westbrook 2000; Rainey 2014). These documents are among the most significant preserved accounts concerning diplomatic relations between New Kingdom Egypt and the rest of the ancient Near East.

Flinders Petrie excavated extensively at Tell el-Amarna starting in the early 1890s. His excavations included the Great Aten Temple, the royal archives, and the King's House (fig. 1). Petrie's work generated even wider interest about Akhenaten and his religion.

Figure 1. Painting of two princesses from the King's House, discovered by Petrie.

Not long after Petrie began work at Amarna, in 1895 James Henry Breasted was the first to translate the *Great Hymn to the Aten* (Tomb 25, see fig. 8) published in *De Hymnis in Solem sub Rege Amenophide IV*. He characterized Akhenaten as a precursor to Saint Francis of Assisi and as history's "first individual."

Norman de Garis Davies produced six illustrated volumes about the rock-cut private tombs at Amarna, titled *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, with the first volume appearing in 1903 (Davies 1903, 1905a, 1905b, 1906, 1908a, 1908b). On the basis of the findings of Petrie and the art of the private tombs surveyed by Davies, in 1905 Adolf Erman labeled Akhenaten a religious "fanatic."

Ludwig Borchardt, who worked for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, began systematically surveying the city of Tell el-Amarna in 1911. He discovered Thutmose's workshop and the famous Berlin head of Nefertiti (fig. 2). After World War I ended in 1918, the Egypt Exploration Society began excavating at Tell el-Amarna. They produced three volumes detailing the results of their work titled *The City of Akhenaten*, released in 1923, 1933, and 1951 (Peet and Wooley 1923; Frankfort and Pendlebury 1933; Pendlebury 1951).

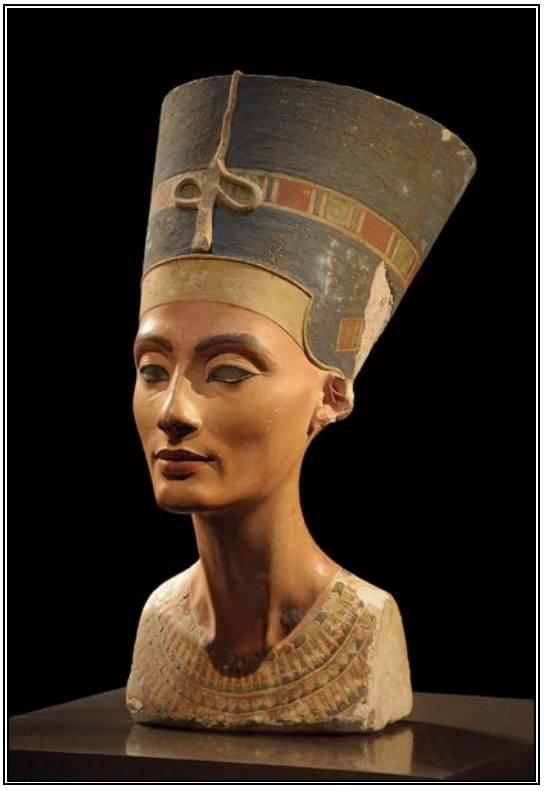

Figure 2. Bust of Nefertiti. Berlin ÄM 21300.

Discoveries from Akhenaten's city were not confined to the site of Amarna itself. Akhenaten constructed his monuments out of smaller stone building blocks than kings before him. Measuring approximately 53 cm long by 21 cm high and 24 cm deep, these *talatat* blocks (named for the Arabic word for three, *talata*, as they are approximately three handspans long) are easier to move than the larger blocks used by the kings before Akhenaten. This innovation allowed Akhenaten to build his monuments rapidly. However this also meant that his monuments were easy to demolish. In 1939 Günther Roeder discovered 1500 of these *talatat* at Hermopolis; Ramses II had used the *talatat* from the abandoned Tell el-Amarna to build the foundations for his temple across the river at Hermopolis. Roeder published the discovery of these blocks in *Amarna-Reliefs aus Hermopolis* (Roeder and Hanke 1969).

Since 1977, Barry Kemp, first with the Egypt Exploration Society and now the Amarna Trust, has directed the work at Tell el-Amarna. Several scholars have reexamined the royal tombs at Amarna (Gabolde 2008-2009). Recent research has revealed new discoveries and new understandings of old discoveries, such as the discovery of Boundary Stela H, a Coptic monastery and church (Pyke 2003), the first Amarna "citizen's cemetery" (Rose 2008; Kemp et al. 2013), the "Sunshade of Ra" or the sun temple of Queen Nefertiti, and the ***rwd ꜥnḫw jtn***, a structure associated with Nefertiti's sun temple dedicated to the maintenance of the afterlives of Akhenaten's citizens (Kemp 1995; Williamson 2008, 2013, fc.-a).

2. Thebes (modern Luxor).

While work progressed at Amarna, evidence for Akhenaten's building program was simultaneously emerging at Thebes. In 1840 Émile Prisse d'Avennes was the first to argue that Akhenaten occupied Thebes during the first four years of his reign, not Amarna. Like Ramses II had done at Hermopolis, Akhenaten's successors reused thousands of his Karnak *talatat* as foundation or fill for their own monumental constructions. In the 1890s *talatat* were found inside Karnak Temple pylons two, nine, and ten and in the foundations for the Great Hypostyle Hall (fig. 3), proving that Prisse d'Avennes was correct.

Figure 3. The ninth pylon of Karnak.

The first examples of Akhenaten's Karnak statuary were published in 1903, found during Georges Legrain's excavations of the Karnak Cachette in the court of the seventh pylon. Also, in the *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, Legrain (1902) published two of Akhenaten's stelae from the Gebel el-Silsila sandstone quarry, Akhenaten's primary source for building material while resident at Thebes. During excavations to the east of the Karnak precinct in 1925, Pillet and Chevrier, accompanied later by Legrain, uncovered the first in situ evidence of Akhenaten's Karnak Temple: the famous Karnak colossi of Akhenaten (fig. 4) and the foundations for Akhenaten's Sed Festival court (Davies 1923; Laboury 2010: 161; Manniche 2010).

Figure 4. Colossal statue of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten from Karnak. Cairo Museum JE 49528.

Akhenaten is shown on his Karnak *talatat* and in his statuary in an unorthodox manner. Traditional representations of the Egyptian king favored a muscular physique with a carefully crafted portrait style. Akhenaten is represented with a drooping full stomach, thin arms and legs, and a long haggard looking face, in some ways recalling representations of the Nile god Hapi. The unusual appearance of his art from Karnak reinforced the opinions of some (such as Breasted and Weigall) that Akhenaten was a monotheist whose unusual beliefs caused him to be persecuted by his successors.

Research on Akhenaten's building program at Karnak is ongoing (Vergnieux 1999). Several thousand of Akhenaten's *talatat* are stored within the Karnak Temple precinct, some in a magazine near the Khonsu Temple (fig. 5). Many more are still inside the structures of Karnak Temple itself and spread throughout many storage areas in the Luxor region (Sa'ad 1970). *Talatat* from both Amarna and Thebes have also been found in other areas around Egypt, such as Abydos.

Figure 5. The Pennsylvania Magazine in Karnak.

The Valley of the Kings at Luxor has yielded important discoveries relating to the Amarna Period as well. Tomb 55, discovered in 1907 by Edward Ayrton, contained reburied funerary material of the Amarna royal family and a mummy argued to be either Akhenaten or Semenkhkara, and in 1922 Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen, likely Akhenaten's son. The Theban tomb of Kheruef (TT 192) is also an important resource for Akhenaten's first years on the throne. It has one of the earliest dated representations of Amenhotep IV as king as well as inscriptions that describe the pre-Amarna solar philosophy that later evolved into Atenism (contra this theory: Redford 2013: 11).

Political History, Chronology, Royal Family: Akhenaten's Early Years

Akhenaten was born Amenhotep, named after his father, Amenhotep III. Other than a jar sealing from the Malqata palace of Amenhotep III that mentions him, we have little evidence for Prince Amenhotep's early years (Hayes 1951: fig 27; Redford 2013: 13). His older brother Thutmose may have been heir apparent, but Thutmose predeceased their father, making Amenhotep the crown prince (Dodson 1990; Berlandini 1997; Wildung 1998; Cabrol 2000; Gabolde 2005b; Laboury 2010: 59-60, n.40). Note however that there are some questions about the authenticity of Thutmose's so-called "cat's-coffin," which preserves the key title "king's eldest son" (Hohneck 2014).

Amenhotep was approximately ten years old when he assumed the throne. Many once suggested he served the first years of his young rule in a coregency with Amenhotep III, but current opinion holds that their reigns did not overlap (Gabolde 1998: 62-98; Dodson 2009: 6; Laboury 2010: 61-62, 87-92).

Nefertiti, Akhenaten's queen, is popularly known from her famous bust now in Berlin, (fig. 2). The translation of her name, "The Beautiful One has Come," inspired a theory that she was of foreign origin, but no evidence supports that suggestion. Instead, if she is indeed related to the official Aye, who himself may have been a son of the official Yuya, she most likely came from the 9th nome of Upper Egypt, near Akhmim (Davis 1907: XIV-XV). Although it is difficult to speculate on the exact year of their marriage, it may have occurred at the occasion of Akhenaten's Sed festival celebrations (Gabolde 2005a: 34-35). Nefertiti is represented frequently in Akhenaten's art, and it appears Akhenaten used her to substitute for many of the female goddesses such as Hathor that his religion rendered anathema (Trauneker 2005a; Williamson 2013). In fact,

all the royal women of Akhenaten's reign are integral to the legitimization of his new religion.

The first two years of Amenhotep IV's reign conformed to Egyptian royal traditions. He completed his father's unfinished building projects at Soleb in Nubia as well as the third pylon at Karnak, decorating each in traditional Pharaonic style (Chappaz 1983; Redford 2013: 13-14). Akhenaten may have even started building himself a traditional mortuary temple on the site that is now the Ramesseum (Martinez 2004; Laboury 2010: 108-110).

The Rise of Atenism

However, Akhenaten's interest in solar religion was soon apparent in a stela he erected in his earliest years in Gebel el-Silsila, the main sandstone quarry south of Karnak, on which he states his intention to create a building at Karnak called the great Benben and dedicated to a deity he named "Ra-Horakhty in his name of Shu, who is in the Aten." This is the earliest example of the long, didactic name of the Aten, the solar god who would come to dominate Akhenaten's religious innovations (Legrain 1902: 262; Sandman 1938: 143-44 [cxxxviii]; Munro 1981; Caminos 1992: 54-55, n. 13). This divine name was unusually precise for an Egyptian deity and was meant to convey the "physical manifestation of the sun as the luminous energy of the universe," giving the Aten clearly defined parameters (Laboury 2010: 126). This was unusually restrictive for an Egyptian deity, whose identities were usually more open ended so as to allow their divine nature to syncretize with other gods. From this evidence, it appears Akhenaten already understood the Aten as different from other Egyptian gods. As Akhenaten's reign progressed he changed the name of the Aten several times, suggesting that the king was continually redefining his understanding of the Aten. Toward the end of Akhenaten's reign the name of the Aten had shed references to any deity other than itself, indicating that Akhenaten no longer thought the Aten was related to or defined by any other deity (Gabolde 1998: 105-145; Laboury 2010: 206-207, 314, n. 649).

Although the Aten's didactic name appeared as early as year 3, it was written in two cartouches in the first half of year 4, endowing the Aten with the royal prerogatives of an Egyptian king (Petrie 1894: 33, pl. 25, 91; Pendlebury 1951: pl. 86, 44; Laboury 2010: 129). Soon after the didactic name appeared in these double cartouches, the Aten's image was also changed from a hawk-headed man to a sun disk with rays of light ending in human hands (Gasse 1994). The hands of the Aten extend only to Akhenaten and Nefertiti and its temples and offerings; all others are excluded from its direct attention.

Amenhotep IV soon changed his name to Akhenaten, or "One Who Is Effective For The Aten." Soon after he changed his name, the queen's name also changed to Neferneferuaten Nefertiti, "Beautiful Are The Beauties of the Aten, The Beautiful One Has Come," which was likely a reference to her association with Hathor (Murnane and Van Siclen 1993: pl. 6, line 7; Trauneker 2005a; Laboury 2010: 139-143). Apparently Nefertiti embraced and supported the new theology; certainly it granted her exceptional status. A series of pillars and a gateway from Karnak, perhaps erected around year 5, show her worshiping the Aten on her own with her daughters in attendance. The original location of these structures in the Karnak precinct is unknown, but they were huge, the pillars measuring 2 m on a side and more than 10 m high (Redford 1976: 33-36, 1988; Loeben 1994: 41-45; Gabolde 2005a: 40).

As part of his ongoing building program at Karnak, the king constructed an enormous structure at Karnak to celebrate his early *heb-sed*, or jubilee festival (Gohary 1992; Redford 2013: 17-21). Unlike traditional jubilee festivals where the king offers to many different deities, Akhenaten offers only to the Aten in his *heb-sed*. The festival courtyard measures 210 m by 210 m and was decorated with a long narrative sequence of the events of the jubilee festival as well as colossal statues of the king. The full complex was likely much larger than the festival courtyard, but we lack definitive evidence for the original extent of the structure (Laboury 2010: 135, 2011).

Akhenaten's Early Iconoclasm

On a stela from Karnak Temple Akhenaten announced that all deities but the Aten had "ceased" to exist (Murnane 1995: 31; Redford 2013: 14-15). In year 5 he began to attack inscriptions and images of other gods, targeting Amun, Mut, and Khonsu in particular. However, sloppy and uneven destruction indicates that Akhenaten's semi-literate demolition crews often chiseled out words that were only visually similar to the names of the gods they sought to destroy, so the demolition process was not a highly organized endeavor (Laboury 2010: 199-200). In addition to attacking their images, the king taxed the temples of other gods, redirecting their revenue to the Aten's establishments (Traunecker 2005a: 145-182). As far as can be determined, this activity against other gods was predominant in the earlier years of the king's reign.

The Move to Tell el-Amarna

In year 5 on the 13th day of the 4th month of the season of *peret*, the king announced his intention to move the court to the city he named "Akhetaten" or "The Horizon of the Aten" at Tell el-Amarna in Middle Egypt (fig. 6). Sixteen boundary markers, or stelae, recorded the foundation of the site and Akhenaten's building plans (fig. 7). According to Akhenaten, the Aten itself dictated this move because it wanted its cult relocated to virgin territory. However, politics may have been behind the relocation, as the elite Theban population may have started resisting Akhenaten's changes. This contention is supported by a speech recorded on Boundary Stelae K, M, and X, where Akhenaten denounces what appear to be elite-generated aspersions on his kingship (Murnane and Van Siclen 1993: 26-27, 41-42; Reeves 2001: 110-111).

The new city at Tell el-Amarna was located on a desert plain in a semicircular area defined by the river and a large amphitheater of cliff faces. Tombs of the elite were placed in the northern cliffs and in the southern desert hills (fig. 8). Akhenaten sited the royal necropolis in a natural wadi, similar to the Valley of the Kings in Thebes (see Tell el-Amarna).

Figure 6. View of Tell el-Amarna looking south from the North Tombs.

Figure 7. Detail of Boundary Stela A.

It appears that most members of the Theban elite accompanied the king to Tell el-Amarna. Some, such as Parennefer, started new tombs at Amarna (Davies 1908b: 1-6, pls. II-X). Not every member of the elite followed Parennefer's example, however. The official Ramose, whose Theban tomb represents Akhenaten before and after his artistic revolution, is not attested at Amarna. Kheruef did not relocate to Amarna either, and the intentional damage to his tomb may indicate the ramifications of his refusal to accompany the king to his new city (Epigraphic Survey 1980; Manuelian 1999: 145-146). On the other hand, at Memphis some of Akhenaten's officials kept their tombs without reprisal, which may indicate that Akhenaten did not require his Memphis officials to move to Amarna (Angenot 2008; Laboury 2010: 313).

Their continued presence in the Delta area was perhaps permissible due to Memphis' long standing association with solar deities. Akhenaten erected Atenist structures at Memphis as well (for example, the Sunshade of Ra chapel, UPMAA E16230), so he may not have felt a need to secure their loyalty (Silverman et al. 2006: fig. 81).

Figure 8. Tell el-Amarna Tomb 25 of Aye.

The Religion of the Amarna Period

The religion of Atenism departed in many ways from traditional Egyptian beliefs. Akhenaten claimed that he was the Aten's son and only prophet (Laboury 2010: n.172, n.173; Assmann 2012: 79-83; Redford 2013: 28-29). Atenism centered on a visible deity responsible for all of creation, a deity that re-created itself daily. But the Aten was spiritually inaccessible and remote; most of humankind depended on the king's mediation to approach the Aten (Ikram 1989; Redford 2013: 26). The visibility of the Aten in the sky and its universal life-giving properties contrasted with its spiritual remoteness.

Because of the Aten's visibility and concrete gifts to the earth, the cult of the Aten emphasized worshipping the visible and the real instead of the more abstract notions of the Amun cult (Gabolde 2005a: 45; Kemp 2012: 26-29; Redford 2013: 27). Although some suggest that Atenism was the first true "monotheist" religion in the ancient world, this is a misnomer. Many Amarna residents maintained beliefs in traditional household gods, such as Taweret and Bes. It is also impossible to prove that many embraced Atenism outside the royal family and the inner court (Stevens 2006, 2012: 92-97). Atenism and Akhenaten's changes may have been a centralized phenomenon that few in Egypt experienced directly.

Foreign Policy in the Amarna Period

A century before Akhenaten, Thutmose III pushed Egypt's boundaries to the Euphrates River in Syria and expanded control over Nubia. Akhenaten's father, Amenhotep III, further cemented alliances with the nation of Mitanni and established a peaceful border (Bryan 2000: 83-84). The Amarna Letters, cuneiform tablets found at Tell el-Amarna which record international diplomatic correspondence, indicate that by Akhenaten's time six northern kingdoms corresponded with Egypt as equals: Assyria (the upper Tigris River region), Babylonia (southern Iraq), Hatti (central Turkey), Mitanni (northern Syria and Iraq), Arzawa (southwestern Turkey), and Alashiya (Cyprus; Liverani 2000: 15-27).

This vast territory endowed Egypt with considerable wealth and influence by the time of Akhenaten, but it appears he did not exert himself to maintain the empire he inherited. Akhenaten, unlike his father, was a poor correspondent and stayed isolated from outside affairs, even when Egypt's holdings abroad were threatened. Perhaps he felt that foreigners were less deserving of his or the Aten's protections (Murnane 2000: 106-107). In the Amarna Letters, Akhenaten seems to negate his father's diplomacy with Mitanni by ignoring King Tushratta's pleas for help before

Mitanni fell to the Hittites under King Suppiluliuma. In addition, Akhenaten ignored his foreign vassals' requests for protection from the Apiru, a group of aggressive nomads. Many of those vassals switched allegiance to Suppiluliuma, further shrinking Egyptian influence and enabling the Hittites to grow in power (Murnane 2000: 110-111; Dodson 2009: 54-56). This is not to say that Akhenaten was entirely uninvolved; there was a small rebellion he quelled in Nubia, recorded on two stelae from Buhen and Amada (Laboury 2010: 292-293), but on the whole he did not work to maintain the empire built by his ancestors.

Several of the official's tombs at Tell el-Amarna record a lavish event in year 12 featuring international ambassadors bringing gifts to the royal family (Davies 1905b: pl. XIV, 1905a: pl. XXXVII). The reason for the event is obscure, but its purpose may have been to reinforce Akhenaten's flagging international status (Murnane 2000: 103; Dodson 2009: 11-17).

The End of the Amarna Period and the Reigns of Aye and Horemheb

Between Akhenaten's regnal years 13 and 17 several members of the Amarna royal family disappear from the archaeological record. At the same time the people of Hatti were suffering from a fatal illness that they believed was brought to them by their Egyptian prisoners of war (Laroche 1971: 378.2). If it is true that there was a fatal epidemic disease in Egypt, it may be the cause of the disappearance of these members of the royal family.

For example, Akhenaten had a second wife, Kiya (Harris 1974a; Krauss 1986; Reeves 1988). Although she was called "the Greatly Beloved Wife," around Akhenaten's year 16 her name and image were removed from several monuments at Amarna, including the Maru Aten, and replaced with the names of Akhenaten's daughters Meritaten and Ankhsenpaaten (Krauss 1986; Laboury 2010: 323). On *talatat* Ny Carlsburg Glyptotek Copenhagen AEIN 1776, Kiya's name is replaced with Meritaten's (Freed et al. 1999: 221, no. 57). Although some have suggested she suffered a fall from Akhenaten's grace, she may have been a victim of the epidemic instead. Her tomb may have been located in the royal necropolis at Tell el-Amarna (fig. 9). In years 13 or 14, three of Akhenaten's six daughters—Meketaten, Neferuneferura, and Setepenra—disappeared from the record as well (Gabolde 1998: 125-131; Laboury 2010: 321, n. 663).

Figure 9. Tell el-Amarna Unfinished Tomb 29 possibly of Kiya.

However there is a debate surrounding Meketaten's death in particular, due to the enigmatic nature of a scene in the burial annex assigned to her in the Royal Tomb. The scene shows the royal family mourning Meketaten's death, accompanied by a nurse holding an infant. This has lead many to suggest the princess died in childbirth (fig. 10). Gabolde's reconstruction of the scene's inscriptions indicates that the infant is described as Nefertiti's child, not Meketaten's. If so, this may be one of the few representations of the future king Tutankhamen, born Tutankhaten (Gabolde 1998: 118-124). Still others believe the infant may instead represent Meketaten reborn (Harris 2004; Van Dijk 2009).

In year 14 Akhenaten's mother Queen Tiy died and was buried in the royal necropolis at Amarna (fig. 9; Gabolde 1998: 136-138; Laboury 2010: 319-321). Akhenaten died in year 17 of his reign and was also buried at Amarna, although evidence from KV 55 suggests his mummy was later moved to Thebes (Allen 1988; Reeves 1999: 89-90; Dodson 2009: 76). The cause of his death is unknown.

Figure 10. Akhenaten's tomb. Detail of the royal family mourning Meketra. Tell el-Amarna.

The years before and after Akhenaten's death generate much discussion, especially concerning the figures known as Semenkhkara and Neferneferuaten. In the Amarna tomb of the official Meryra II, Akhenaten's daughter Meritaten is shown married to a person named Semenkhkara, a new king (Davies 1905a: pl. XLI; Allen 1991; Dodson 2009: 29). Semenkhkara appears suddenly and then vanishes from the record just as quickly. His largest monument is the so-called "coronation hall"—a vast construction at the Amarna Great Palace whose purpose is unknown (Newberry 1928: 3-9; Pendlebury 1951: 60, pls. XIII C, XLIV 1,2; Dodson 2009: 30-32). Semenkhkara could have been Akhenaten's son or even his brother, and may have married Meritaten, his sister/niece, sometime after year 12. He may have served briefly as a coregent, crowned alongside Akhenaten and helped him to rule Egypt for a brief time (Murnane 1977: 169-179). Semenkhkara may have died early from illness, perhaps the epidemic mentioned above, cutting short his tenure as coregent and king (Dodson 2009: 38-47).

An additional controversial royal figure named King Neferneferuaten appeared at the end of Akhenaten's reign. Although some have argued that Neferneferuaten can be conflated with the male king Semenkhkara (Newberry 1928: 3-9; Allen 1994; Dodson 2009: 35-39), it is clear from several inscriptions that Neferneferuaten was indeed female (Harris 1973a, 1973b, 1974b, 1977; Gabolde 1998: 153-157, 2009). The phenomenon of a woman holding the male title of king was not unknown in Egypt; one of the earlier kings of the 18th Dynasty, Hatshepsut, was a woman. King Neferneferuaten could thus have been Meritaten's throne name if, as some suggest, she succeeded her father to the throne (Gabolde 1998: 147-185, 2005b: 284; Krauss 2007).

Another possibility is that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti, who was already using the throne name "Neferneferuaten Nefertiti" from year 5 of Akhenaten's reign. She may have retained the name Neferneferuaten when crowned king, perhaps as a coregent to fill a power vacuum left by the death of Semenkhkara. However a jar docket dated to Akhenaten's year 17 was emended to say "year 1," which could indicate direct succession rather than a joint rule (Gabolde 2005a: 89). In other words, according to this jar docket Neferneferuaten was not named coregent after the death of Semenkhkara, but assumed the throne only after Akhenaten's death. Supporting this last argument, and assuming Neferneferuaten is indeed Nefertiti, an inscription recently found in the Amarna Period quarries near Deir Abu Hinnis indicates that Nefertiti was probably still alive in year 16 and was still using her queenly title and names (Van der Perre 2012: 195-197, 2014.). If Nefertiti had not yet adopted a kingly identity by year 16, only one year before the death of her husband, she was not a coregent or a king at that time, lending support to the direct accession theory.

Whatever the identity of King Neferuneferuaten, she ruled only briefly (Harris 1974b; Reeves 1999: 88-91; Dodson 2009: 36-38). A graffito from the tomb of Para in Thebes, TT 139, indicates that King Neferneferuaten, whomever she was, spent some of her third regnal year in Thebes. This also indicates that at least some members of the Amarna royal family returned to Thebes very soon after the death of Akhenaten. King Neferneferuaten disappears from the historical records after the graffito in TT 139, so she did not rule for long (Gardiner 1928; Reeves 1999: 88-89). However, also based on this graffito, not only did Neferneferuaten return to Thebes, she may have started the process of returning Egypt to its traditional religious practices

(Laboury 2010: 343-345). She may have also even served as coregent to Tutankhaten / Tutankhamen when he first took the throne (Dodson 2009: 45).

Seven-year-old Tutankhaten began his rule during or after the rule of Neferneferuaten. He changed his name from Tutankhaten "The Living Image of the Aten" to Tutankhamen "The Living Image of Amun" and returned the country to its pre-Amarna status quo. Official decrees announcing the return to orthodoxy were spread throughout the country; the "Restoration Stela" in the Cairo Museum, CG 34183, preserves an example of one such decree. Tutankhamen ruled for nine years, and the tomb of the young king remained largely intact until it was discovered in the twentieth century (Reeves 1995). At Tell el-Amarna only a ring bezel and a mold bear the name Tutankhamen (rather than his earlier name Tutankhaten), indicating that after he changed his name the king was not very active at his father's city (Petrie 1894: pl. XV, 117). His return to the traditional occupation and religious centers of Egypt terminated the use of the necropolis at Tell el-Amarna. The rock-cut tombs at Amarna appear to have been unfinished, likely abandoned by their owners when the royal family reverted to its traditional beliefs. Even the royal burials at Tell el-Amarna may have been exhumed and returned to Thebes.

Tutankhamen was likely too young to orchestrate such sweeping changes. Instead the officials Aye and Horemheb could have been responsible for the return to orthodoxy. Possibly the enigmatic Neferneferuaten, mentioned above, was involved as well. Aye and Horemheb were both military men, and Horemheb was an *jrj-pʿt* or "hereditary nobleman" and member of the ruling elite. He possessed an extensive list of additional elite titles that gave him the equivalent status to that of regent and the king's oldest son (Martin 1989: 163-164). Horemheb's wife, Mutnodjmet, may have been Nefertiti's sister, which would explain his close association with the royal family. Aye had fewer titles, but he used his title "God's Father" extensively, which may indicate that he was both Nefertiti's father, Tutankhamen's grandfather, and possibly the father-in-law of Horemheb. Certainly he is more prominent in Tutankhamen's monuments than Horemheb, even appearing on a fragment of gold foil with the image of Tutankhamen from KV58 (Cairo JE 57438) and on several blocks from Karnak pylon IX, where he is shown following Tutankhamen (Sa'ad 1975; Eaton-Krauss 1988: 2-3; Schaden 1992: 101,103). Aye's tomb (TA 25) at Tell el-Amarna indicates that he was also called a "Fan Bearer on the Right Hand of the King" and the "Real Royal Scribe," both indications of close affiliation with the highest ranks of royal administration.

Another subject of contention surrounding the end of the Amarna Period and possibly the death of Tutankhamen concerns several letters from an unnamed queen of Egypt to the Hittite king Suppiluliuma at Bogazköy. In these letters the Egyptian queen asks the Hittites to send her a son to marry and make king of Egypt (Bryce 1990; Murnane 1990: 22-31; Miller 2007; Dodson 2009: 89-94). Accordingly the Hittite Prince Zananzash was sent to Egypt, but a subsequent letter, also preserved from Bogazköy, suggests he was assassinated en route. The Egyptian queen in question is likely to have been either Meritaten, who may have sought a husband following Semenkhkara's death to fill the power vacuum left by the death of Akhenaten's new coregent, or her sister Ankhesenamen (born Ankhesenpaaten), the widow of Tutankhamen, who perhaps feared her future without a clear heir to her young husband (Dodson 2009: 89-94; Laboury 2010: 329-349). Ankhesenamen may have married Aye instead of the Hittite prince, but the ring that bears their two names together is the last attributed mention of the young queen (Krauss and Ullrich 1982).

In an attempt to forget this period of iconoclasm the successors to Akhenaten removed his name and the names of Tutankhamen and Aye from the lists of legitimate kings. Horemheb, Ramses II, and many others also used stone from Akhenaten's monuments as fill for their own building programs. These buildings inadvertently protected Akhenaten's legacy for thousands of

years. As a result, with these *talatat* and the site of Tell el-Amarna, we know more about the Amarna Period than many other periods in Egyptian history.

Bibliographic Notes

The works cited below are but a sampling of the hundreds of volumes and articles analyzing the reign of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Starting in 1921, The Egypt Exploration Society reported their work at Tell el-Amarna in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. Although the reports ceased in 1936, they resumed in 1978. The Amarna Trust, under the oversight of Barry Kemp, publishes annual reports in the newsletter *Horizon* and the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. Kemp edited *Amarna Reports*, a six-volume series containing many significant articles about the period. The web sites http://www.amarnaproject.com and http://www.amarnatrust.com frequently update current Tell el-Amarna work. From 1911 to 1915, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* released reports from L. Borchardt's work. Between 1926 and 1953, Chevrier published work on the Karnak structures in *Annales du service des antiquités d'Égypte*. Ludwig Borchardt and Herbert Ricke produced an essential study of the houses at Tell el-Amarna (Borchardt and Ricke 1980). Cyril Aldred published influential work on the reign of Akhenaten, including a catalog on an exhibit on their reign, and James Allen has written several articles on the theory of coregency and other issues (Aldred 1973; Allen 1991, 2009). The painting at Tell el-Amarna has been examined by many scholars including Frankfort (1929) and Weatherhead (2007). Erik Hornung has been influential to our understanding of Atenism (Hornung 1992, 1999). Kemp has also conducted a survey of Tell el-Amarna and with Stevens has investigated the domestic occupation aspects of the site (Kemp and Garfi 1993; Kemp and Stevens 2010). Dimitri Laboury's most recent work (Laboury 2010) includes a more extensive discussion of the complex international relations, which are beyond the scope of this essay. For the importance and significance of the royal women see Arnold (1996), Green (1988 and 1998), Troy (1986), Traunecker (2005b), and Williamson (2013). For the post-Amarna period, see Assmann (1980) and Chappaz (ed., 2008), Laboury (2010), and Gabolde (1998, 2009). For the twentieth century response to Akhenaten, see Montesserat (2003) and Assmann (1998). Also look for the forthcoming volumes on the reign of Tutankhamen by M. Eaton-Krauss, M. Gabolde, and N. Kawai, and J. Williamson on the Sunshade of Ra at Kom el-Nana (fc.-a and fc.-b).

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Figure 1. Painting of two princesses from the King's House, discovered by Petrie. Ashmolean Museum Oxford 19931-41. (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Painting_of_Akhenaten%27s_daughters.jpg)

Figure 2. Bust of Nefertiti. ÄM 21300. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung. Photograph by Philip Pikart. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike CC BY-3.0. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nefertiti#/media/File:Nofretete_Neues_Museum.jpg)

Figure 3. Ninth pylon of Karnak. Photograph by the author.

Figure 4. Colossal statue of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten from Karnak. Cairo Museum JE 49528. Photograph by the author.

Figure 5. The Pennsylvania Magazine. Photograph courtesy of Jocelyn Gohary.

Figure 6. View of Tell el-Amarna looking south from the North Tombs. Photograph by the author.

Figure 7. Detail of Boundary Stela A. Photograph by the author.

Figure 8. Tell el-Amarna Tomb 25 of Aye. Photograph by the author.

Figure 9. Tell el-Amarna Unfinished Tomb 29 possibly of Kiya. Photograph by the author.

Figure 10. Akhenaten's tomb. Detail of the royal family mourning Meketaten. Tell el-Amarna. Photograph by the author.