

Akhenaten, Nefertiti and Atenism:
Controversy and Evidence.

By Garry Victor Hill



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Sources

With over five hundred source notes enclosed, on less than half that number of pages of text, plagiarism should not be an issue. Some facts are

in previously used source notes and others are in common knowledge. Opinions are often similar amongst writers using the same materials

American/English spellings have not been standardised in the text, but coloured website attributions have been made uniform in light blue. Few websites had posting dates at the time of initial writing several years ago and several were used before including the access date became standard, so few access dates have been given. Books and articles have been included with websites in the Bibliography as they often overlap in form. By avoiding abrevationese in source notes and the Bibliography I have slightly altered some sources. Volume replaces vol. Editor for ed. Quoting for qtg and so on. Names from different sources have been standardised.

The concept of the split infinitive was issued as a virtual edict and is beloved by anal retentives and grammar fascists: ignore them. Critics of the passive voice structure have a point, but in a topic such as this, when it is often unclear who did the action, it has a place.

While fallacies and errors are referred to, the sources for them or references for their perpetuators are usually deliberately withheld. Litigation, retaliatory anonymous attacks from cyberspace, academic bunfights and humiliating others writing on the topic are all best avoided.

Between September and November 2023 this text went through a later proof reading which included repaginating and an additional few hundred additional words



Introduction

Even as early as 1926, when so much more information had yet to be found, the English historian Reverend James Baikie stated that over the previous forty years more had been written about Akhenaten than all of the other ancient eastern kings put together.¹ Baikie went on to describe the heated fascination caused by the pharaoh who had been dead for 3,300 years. Now we can add another hundred years, without needing to change anything else in Baikie's 1920s statement about overheated arguments.

This leads to the obvious question, why write more on this topic?

There are several reasons. Recently a great deal of new information about Amarna, Karnak, Tutankhamen, Nefertiti and Akhenaten and their families has emerged, much of it in television documentaries. It amazes that despite a deluge of media coverage from 1922 onward, writers based our image of Akhenaten's son Tutankhamen, the last Atenist to rule at Amarna, on comparatively few of those found objects publicised in the 1920s. These were amongst several thousand found then, but were usually not studied in detail or even known of until recently. Even as late as the preparations for the proposed 2022 international exhibition of Tutankhamen's grave goods, there was still much to be done with repairing, cataloguing, preservation and assessments.² When Cairo briefly broke down during the 2011 Arab Spring looters caused theft and damage they contributed to this long-delayed process.³

Why did this process take so long? The most obvious part of the answer to that question is the sheer size of the find. Documentary maker

¹ James Baikie, *The Amarna Age: A Study of the Crisis of the Ancient World*. London; 1926. p. 234.

² Ernesto Pagano, (Writer and Director) *Tutankhumun: The Last Exhibition*. Produced by Sandro Vannini. Narrated by Iggy Pop. (English Language Version) Madman Entertainment/MIC/Cinemadevisu/Nexo. Released 5th October 2022. Shown SBS 18th November 2022.

³ Ibid.,

Ernst Pagano and the teams he worked with estimates the cache at over 3,500 objects, while the *National Geographic* team give a total of 5,400.⁴ This remains the archaeological world's largest cache. Howard Carter, the finder of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 and the cataloguer of so many objects there during the following decade, gives another reason for this delay when in the 1920s he refers to boxes full of finds lying derelict in museum storerooms.⁵ Assessments of recent revelations show the truthfulness of Carter's regretful statement. This was not a process to be rushed: the fragility of the goods meant slow, careful handling and restoration, repairs, dating, frequently photographing and assessing. There were also the financial considerations. Between early 1923 and late 1924 when global fascination with Tutankhamen was at its height, and funding from donations for restoration and cataloguing, most likely, squabbles delayed this work.⁶ In 1926 Carter told fellow Egyptologist Leonard Cottrell that the cost of a full restoration of all these finds would come to thirty thousand pounds.⁷ By 1950 Cottrell's estimated cost was nearly a hundred thousand pounds.⁸ At this time fifty pounds would have been a very high weekly English wage.

Carter describes how if even rudimentary cataloguing and on-site recording had taken place with these objects, 1920s knowledge of Ancient Egypt would have increased by at least fifty per cent.⁹

In the 1920s museum staff packed away this treasure trove and only over ninety years later are experts in Cairo studying some of its contents.¹⁰

⁴ Pagano gives the lower figure.; Tom Mueller, 'The enduring Power of King Tut.' *National Geographic*. Washington D.C. November 2022. p.62 p.74.

⁵ Carter p. 54.,

⁶ Ibid., p.165.

⁷ Cottrell, p. 168

⁸ Ibid., p. 169.

⁹ Carter, p. 54.

Even within that smaller assessed proportion, many objects connect to the world of Tutankhamen's parents. Studying only three such objects, a chest, a bow and a throwing stick, have changed already how we see Nefertiti. Like her famous bust, the equally world-famous gold mask of Tutankhamen has also come under reassessment, both with some surprising results. Other surprises have come from reports and articles concerning recent finds at Amarna, starting in 2001. Earlier indications that Amarna was not the paradise many have claimed it was were essentially tentative. Recently archaeological finds, many of them concerning the workforce there, revealed much, so the Atenist utopia now appears very differently to earlier depictions. For decades experts and creators of fiction came to their conclusions based on Amarna's art, architecture and idealistic hymns, not on what the recent excavations reveal.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Joann Fletcher, a Yorkshire Egyptologist, returned from Egypt and investigated an Egyptian mummy at a museum in Yorkshire. She had found a brief mention of this mummy in an old newspaper clipping. This led to Fletcher finding and then cataloguing bequests, many from William Flinders Petrie's 1890s excavation at Amarna. She had found that when delivered, museum staff at the time found they did not have enough space to display Petrie's bequeathed collection, so they left it in crates. The collection stayed that way for seventy years before being assessed and incorporated into current knowledge. Many of these objects also change our image of Amarna. At Karnak the work on the correct joining of building stones known as talats from early in Akhenaten's reign has gone on much further and faster since being computerised and researchers revealed some surprises that also dramatically change perceptions. Kew's documentary on the most famous Nefertiti bust also changes perceptions of that queen, perceptions that have lasted a hundred years. A single inscription found in a mine near Amarna

¹⁰ 'Tut's Treasures.' *National Geographic*. Producer: Julie Nadezna. Narrator: Paul Mercier. SBS. 7:30 p.m. Episode 1. January 14th 2018; John Baines, and Jaromir Mále, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford; 1984. p. 101; Jamie Simpson, (Director). *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*. Three Episodes. *BBC Studios*, 2019. 7:30 p.m. 5th April 2020. Presenters: Dan Snow. Rakasha Dave and John Sergeant.

in 2012 disproved some theories about her and her husband and validated others. Until that find those ideas were expressed as tentative or speculative. This inscription alone makes everything printed about this couple before its revelation in 2016 outdated, incomplete at best, and more frequently, definitely wrong.

Technological developments have also changed writing history. In 2021 facial reconstruction experts gave us depictions of Tutankhamen and Akhenaten that led to surprising results that raise new questions.

Investigations using DNA has also confirmed some theories and discredited others. Supporting evidence for DNA concerning the parenthood of Tutankhamen became apparent when a reconstructed face revealed a strong similarity to the facial features of the Karnak statues of Akhenaten.¹¹ Other important, regularly used evidence has now been proved to be false, garbled or incomplete. Examples of such sources include dates, even those linked to such primary source evidence as the accounts of Herodotus and the Palermo Stone, the Turin Canon Papyrus, the Abydos King Lists and the salient example of Manetho.¹² Three centuries before Christ, Manetho compiled a supposedly complete list of Egyptian pharaohs.¹³ He included the duration of their reigns in supposedly correct length and order. Experts and others usually took his information as reliable until recent decades: now few do. As well as Hatshepsut, the Atenist kings are unmentioned in this supposedly complete list, which skip them by going from Amenophis III to

¹¹ *King Tut's Allies and Enemies*. Co-hosts Yasmin El Shady and Mahmoud Rashad. PBS. Produced by Soura Films. Shown on SBS. 8:30 P.M. 6TH November 2022. This also got popular media coverage. For a recent facial reconstruction of King Tutankhamen See Ian Randall, 'King Tut brought back to life in 'most realistic recreation ever' made of Pharaoh's face.' (sic) *Express* 12-13 21 December 9th 2022. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1707655/king-tut-tutankhamun-pharaoh-face-reconstruction-most-realistic-prince-philip>. accessed 6th April 2023.

¹² Guy De La Bèdoyère, *Pharaohs of the Sun: How Egypt's Despots and Dreamers Drove the Rise and Fall of Tutankhamun's Dynasty*. London; 2022. p.12-26.

¹³ Joyce Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire: The Age of the New Kingdom*. London; Headline.2001. p. 92.; De La Bèdoyère, p. 13

Horemhab.¹⁴ Most importantly, Egyptologists now know that they have the mummy of Akhenaten and have proved his link to Tutankhamen. These same investigations have created new conundrums and controversies.

Other underused or overlooked information used here comes from out-of-print books and frequently undervalued sources that this writer has found at last. These include E.A.W. Budge's *Amenism, Atenism and Egyptian Monotheism*. (1923), Reverend James Baikie's *The Amarna Age: A Study of the Crisis of the Ancient World*. (1926), Mary Chubb's eyewitness report on the 1930 Amarna excavations, originally published in 1954 as *Nefertiti Lived Here* and Joann Fletcher's *The Search for Nefertiti* (2004). Nearly a hundred years old, Budge's and Baikie's works survive as essentially relevant, despite some of their ideas being proved wrong. New evidence has proved much more of what they stated or suspected. Baikie's other great virtue is that he reproduces so many rare and important documents and inscriptions in full. The Amarna Letters have also now appeared on the internet, many in English translation.

While I have frequently used many primary sources, by not being in Egypt and therefore not being granted access to several sites and documents means there is not as many primary sources as I would have liked. Documentaries and websites have filled that gap - to an extent. This is one reason for so many secondary sources. Another is that I was investigating popular perceptions, fallacies, perhaps fallacies and public interest in the topic, which meant using several secondary sources.

Using so many secondary sources ultimately provides another reason for another book about Akhenaten and Nefertiti which goes beyond new discoveries. Almost all twentieth century secondary sources share an image of Akhenaten not only as an otiose dreamer, but one so far gone in languidly living in his dreams and religious obsessions that he was oblivious to obvious threats and spreading chaos within his disintegrating empire. In such representations he inherits a peaceful, stable Egyptian empire at the height of its prosperity, but by the time of his death

¹⁴ Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire* p.207

seventeen years later his outlandish policies and foolish decisions have proved not only divisive within Egypt, but were leading to defeats, even conquests, by traitors and foreign enemies on his borders. Usually given as the main examples of his supposed foolishness are starting the feud with the priesthood of the rich, powerful and pervasive Amun cult, developing the monotheistic Aten cult, removing his capitol to Amarna and his failure to stop the chaos in his northern provinces. He did not initiate these problems. Like those who administered the empire, he inherited them, albeit in an embryonic form which worsened during his reign. Examining evidence on these difficult matters sometimes reveals a surprising astuteness, not foolishness. In the same way his successful suppression of a Nubian rebellion, his development of stone tablets as a replacement for mudbricks and his encouragement of script over the complicated, time devouring hieroglyphics are all very practical, if underrated achievements. If he did not personally initiate these important developments (and he probably did) at the least, he did not block those who did. This is not replacing one simplistic view with its opposite: extremes of astuteness and stupidity can go together, as the lives of many modern dictators show.

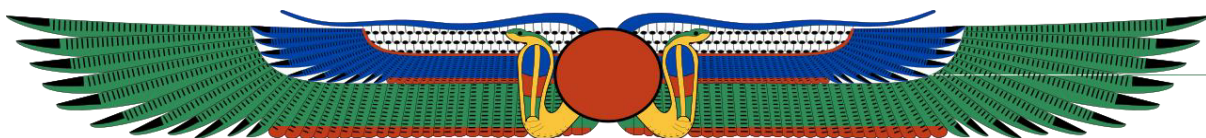
In 2022, just weeks after this book was posted online and printed in a revised edition, a copy of Joyce Tyldesley's *Egypt's Golden Empire: The Age of the New Kingdom* (2001) turned up. Soon after Guy De La Bèdoyère's *Pharaohs of the Sun: How Egypt's Despots and Dreamers Drove the Rise and Fall of Tutankhamun's Dynasty* was published.

De La Bèdoyère's work starts with a section of twenty-six pages concerning problems with Egyptology, both with attitudes and sources.¹⁵ He refers to overly precise interpretations by modern translators to ancient titles in the military, religious and civilian administrations, titles which were initially vaguer than is now usually assumed. Frequently these titles initially came close to the term overseer, not to the modern titles translators often give. Some terms such as son and father were not always literal. Some translators also assumed what was meant in documents and

¹⁵ De La Bèdoyère, pp. 12-39

inscriptions and so put in words which seemed right. With dates, no continuity existed beyond regional years and so this would cause such confusion that no date can be certain before 664 B.C early in the 26th Dynasty. Egyptian pharaohs did not use any number system after their names and had five names, which were not used together. This makes even those primary sources which bear a pharaonic name difficult to link to a particular pharaoh. It would also make sequencing rulers in dynasties difficult – where their names on primary sources existed. Such sources were not meant to be anything like a truthful record. They existed to appease the Gods, instruct Egyptians in the correct ways and for self-glorification. If you are searching for historic truth, try finding one Egyptian account of an Egyptian defeat or of an unwise pharaoh.

While it was heartening to read in these histories similar things to what it I had already written in earlier versions, revising yet again this recently revised work was vexing, but necessary. While this book now has the advantages of using recent revelations and sources, it can only be considered updated until yesterday. As a perfect illustration of that point, on the nightly news on what seemed to be the last day of editing, the accidental discovery of eighty royal mummies in well-preserved sarcophagi near Saqqara was a television story. Some were from the Old Kingdom, some from the new and all are apparently royal. There is also the new solar based method of carbon dating. Instead of giving a range of possible dates spread over decades, by measuring solar spikes it is so precise in calibrations that scientists can now date objects to an exact year. That will revolutionize ancient history, particularly that of the eighteenth dynasty. Given the way so many new finds are emerging so rapidly and so many mysteries and gaps within the topic remain, it cannot contain the final word – but then can any book?



The Enigma of Akhenaten and Nefertiti

Many of the studies of Akhenaten and Nefertiti focus on different disputed points. These usually include the following:

How long did his rule last?

Was he a co-regent with his father?

Was he suffering from diseases that left him physically and /or mentally odd?

Was he a staid, happy family man, or was he incestuous, promiscuous or bisexual?

How original were his ideas?

Was Akhenaten a megalomaniac, a sociopath or somehow mentally disturbed? Or, was he an enlightened, benevolent humanitarian, a hero for trying to replace a degrading, superstitious and racist polytheism with one benevolent God for all?

Were he and Nefertiti pacifists?

What was Nefertiti's role?

What happened to Nefertiti?

Who succeeded him?

Why did this first attempt to found a monotheistic religion fail?

What was the reality of the Atenist era?

Which of the differing viewpoints on these questions appears to be the most accurate?

Each of these questions could take years of research – and after going through that process, many could still not produce a decisive, proven answer. The focus here must be on the evidence about the controversial

nature of the rule of this heretic pharaoh and Nefertiti, their lives and their religion. Great numbers of people have asked these questions since rediscovering this royal pair in the late nineteenth century.

In his introduction to Baikie's work, Cambridge editor and lecturer Stanley A. Cook also noted that this heretic king caused passionate and prejudicial controversies.¹⁶ Cook also expressed his doubts about the view that Akhenaten was a hero, noting obscurities in the evidence and raising the possibility that he was a villain.¹⁷ While giving this simple and opposing division for a man who as he also notes, may have contained elements of both hero and villain, Cook's comments are also still valid nearly a century later, even if several of the answers are yet to be conclusive. The questions listed above have had attempted answers many times, both before and after Baikie's and Cook's 1926 comments and questions. However, those providing answers have often had their answers proved inadequate or erroneous. Other statements and biographies often read as being very certain, even dogmatic on thin evidence.

Another contemporary attitude also emerged in the 1920s. Howard Carter commented that the importance of Akhenaten was probably being overrated.¹⁸ That viewpoint has steadily gained many adherents, but even they frequently divide on believing which of this pharaoh's characteristics is most overrated - his originality, abilities, or inabilities, heroism, villainy, insanity, oddness, reputation or fictional appeal.

To some extent the problem remains because the passions and prejudices noted in the 1920s and 1930s have never faded. Another perennial problem has to be that even the most calm, objective writer on this topic finds that their conclusions must keep changing as new information emerges. Books from as recently as the first decade of the twenty-first century cannot contain recently revealed important

¹⁶ Stanley A. Cook, Introduction to *The Amarna Age* p. xii.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

¹⁸ Carter, p. 9.

information. More information appears as extremely likely to emerge. In 2009 Doctor Zahi Hawass, Egypt's Minister of Antiquities and frequently acclaimed as the world's foremost Egyptologist, stated that around 70% of Ancient Egypt's finds remain unexcavated¹⁹ British archaeologist Chris Naunton separately gave a similar estimate of excavations .totalling only 30% to 40% of what had existed in ancient Egypt.²⁰ His finds around this time give veracity to that statement. Even in the Valley of the Kings, where extensive excavations were going on since the early nineteenth century and were supposedly complete by the 1920s, Hawass found another tomb.²¹ Although excavations on the tomb of Ramses II began in 1817 and were continued sporadically since then, an important burial pit containing many important objects was only found within the tomb as late as 1995.²² In that same year researchers found the tomb of some of the sons of Ramses II in the valley.²³ At Luxor on the famed avenue of the sphinxes, another find was a massive stone head about half a metre high, covered by only a few centimetres of sand.²⁴ Even in the second decade of the twenty-first century over thirty active sites around what was Thebes and the Valley of the Kings are being worked on in different ways.²⁵

¹⁹ Jonathan Wyche, (Director) *Chasing Mummies*. Episode 'Discovered.' Producer: Zahi Hawass. Narrator and executive producer Leslie Graif. *History Channel*. First Shown 4th August 2010; *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*.

²⁰ Alison Todd, (managing director) *Hunt for Nefertiti* Episode 2 Season Two of *Lost Treasures of Egypt*. National Geographic Television, Narrator: Julian Bassat. 2020. Shown SBS 8th October 2022.

²¹ Wyche, *Chasing Mummies*. Episode 'Cursed.' Producer: Zahi Hawass. Narrator and executive producer: Leslie Graif. *History Channel*. First Shown 8th September 2010.

²² 'The Tomb of Ramses II.' Kent R. Weeks, In *The Treasures of the Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Temples of the Theban West Bank in Luxor*. (Kent R. Weeks, Editor) Revised Edition. Milan, 2020. p,50. For more details concerning this tomb and its exploration and revelations see Christian Le Blanc, 'The Exploration of Thebes.' in this volume pp. 86-95.

²³ Kent R. Weeks, 'The Exploration of Thebes.' p.50.

²⁴ Wyche.

²⁵ Weeks, 'The Exploration of Thebes.' p.50

Even these important finds are probably going to be less important than a recent find that because it is so large and located in a seemingly overworked area it stuns. This is a whole city, the largest ever unearthed essentially intact in Egypt.²⁶ It contains three palaces, an administration area and residential and industrial sectors – and this is only what has been found so far and credited to the 18th Dynasty: three other later layers and the city cemetery await full examination.²⁷ It is located opposite Luxor and just outside the Valley of the Kings. Found In 2020, this very well preserved, whole city, named Dazzling Aten, was found under sands near Luxor.²⁸ This was established by Akhenaten’s father and was occupied until the seventh century AD, well into the Byzantine era. Cartouches of Amenophis III and his crown prince have been found there, suggesting a co-regency.²⁹ While far from being fully excavated, already one inscription of Akhenaten dated to 1337 BC and an inscribed ring praising the Aten in monotheistic terms has been found there.³⁰ These recent finds suggest that Akhenaten’s father was either the founder of Atenist monotheism or an early developer. The way the city was named Dazzling Aten clearly suggests that this was so.

If archaeologists can still be finding such important things in and near Luxor and The Valley of the Kings, two of the most investigated and excavated sites in Egypt, what else awaits discovery elsewhere? A great deal can be the only true answer. Radar surveys by Professor Sarah Parcak bears out both this observation and the estimations of Hawass and Naunton. Using radar from outer space, by the end of 2016, she and her

²⁶ Aten (city) *Wikipedia* accessed 29th November 2024

²⁷ Zahi Hawass, “Excavations in Western Thebes 2021: The Discovery of the Golden Lost City; A Preliminary Report.” *Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt*. December 14th 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5913/jarce.57.2021.a005>

²⁸ *Ibid.*,

²⁹ *Akhenaten: Secrets of a Forgotten Pharaoh*. Directors: Hugo Fernandez and Thierry Fessard. AH Productions Taute Historie Producer: Factual Factory. SBS 8:30 p.m. 20th October 2024.

³⁰ Aten (city) *Wikipedia*. Fernandez and Fessard mention the co- inscription

team had found over three thousand ancient settlements, a dozen ruined pyramids, over a thousand lost tombs and the grid pattern for the ancient city of Tanis.³¹ Archaeologists have excavated the three most important sites concerning the royal heretic couple (Karnak, Thebes and Amarna) several times since the nineteenth century, but even within these three sites, discoverers found abundant and important things in the twenty-first century. Who knows what investigators can find in future by radar in other locales? We have very little knowledge about how pharaohs in the Atenist era ruled the rest of the Egyptian Empire outside Karnak, Thebes and Amarna. Even Heliopolis, a city dedicated to the worship of the sun god and a place where Akhenaten built, cannot supply many finds because much of the city was destroyed by different waves of foreign invaders and even what remains has been built over as Cairo expands.³² It can only be impossible to tell with certainty what still might turn up in future.

While there are so many holes remaining in the story of Atenism, several investigators have recently filled several and corrected errors and fallacies. We now know that Nefertiti was an extremely powerful figure and was not dead or exiled during Akhenaten's last years, but was alive and at least to some extent still in favour near the very end of his reign. In a recent documentary archaeologist Chris Naunton expressed the view that Nefertiti as a pharaoh is now widely accepted.³³ Details about her reign are rare and even those are disputed. Several experts now believe that she ruled Egypt directly for just over three years after his death. One of her

³¹ Abigail Tucker, 'Space Archaeologist Sarah Parcak Uses Satellites to Uncover Ancient Egyptian Ruins.' *Smithsonian Magazine*. December 2016. <https://www.smithsonian.com/.../space-archaeologist-sarah-parcak-winner-smitho>, accessed 11th March 2019.

³² Christine Streckful'B (sic) and Saskia Weishei, (directors) *Heliopolis: City of the Sun*. Producers: Frederich Steinhardt and Garielle M Walther. (overall) Producers in Egypt are Osama Mohamed Atif Shinata and Simone Becker. Writer: Sandra Papadopolous. Germany 2020. 2DF Enterprise/ Arte and K 22 Film. SBS 12th June 2022. English language version. K 22 Film.

³³ Allison Todd, (managing director) *Lost Treasures of Egypt: The Hunt for Nefertiti*. Episode Five of Series 2. *National Geographic UK*. First shown 25th August 2020. SBS Television. 21st August 2021. <http://www.windfallfilms.com/show/18312/hunt-for-queen-nefertiti.aspx>;

daughters, Meritaten was apparently married to the pharaoh Smenkhkara.³⁴ Another daughter, Ankhsenamun, is now known to have married Ay, Tutankhamen's successor. These facts confirm some theories and make others untenable.

Not mentioned in most fact and fiction is that Nefertiti also apparently abandoned Atenism sometime after her husband's death. Many academic discussions have gone into Tutankhamen's parentage - often leading to erroneous conclusions. Akhenaten was Tutankhamen's father by an incestuous relationship with a full sister.³⁵ While strong evidence goes against it, Nefertiti might be that sister. A mummy examined in 2003 was recently proved to be Tutankhamen's mother and Akhenaten's sister by experts using DNA. This mummy has strong evidence both for and against being Nefertiti. The mummy found in 1907 in the Valley of the Kings and believed by many at the time and for a hundred years after to be the Atenist pharaoh Smenkhkara and by only a few to be Akhenaten, is indeed Akhenaten.³⁶

This heretic pharaoh has often been acclaimed not only as the founder of benevolent monotheism, but also as the first individual in history: he also emerges as one of the most controversial. Despite massive amounts being written about both him and his queen, despite being

³⁴ De La Bédoyère pp. 292-293. Most of the inscribed and pictorial evidence for this marriage is open to other interpretations, even if their marriage remains the most likely explanation. However, their names in cartouches on a golden robe found in Tutankhamen's tomb remains clear evidence

³⁵ Doctor Zawi Hawass, 'The Discovery of the Family Secrets of King Tutankhamen.' Undated Press Release. These findings are a summary of another article 'Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamen's Family.' Written by members of the international investigating team in 'The Family of Tutankhamen Project.' Hawass, Yehie Z. Gad and Carsten M. Posch, being prominent project members. Published in *JAMA The Journal of the American Medical Association*. February 17th 2010 edition. Volume 303, no 7; Doctor Ashrak Shaleem identifying the mummy on camera at the Cairo Museum in *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*; Paul Bradshaw (writer and director) *Tutankhamun*. Presented by Bettany Hughes. Produced by Sahar Saleem. Cineflex. 2021 Shown on SBS 29th May 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

³⁶ Brando Quillici, *King Tut's Final Secrets*. DVD. *National Geographic*, 2005; Jama;

amongst the few figures from Ancient Egypt to achieve lasting fame, few writers can give a shared overall opinion. They do not even agree on how to spell his name, giving at least four choices! Not even their chronologies match on dating during the brief Atenist era. Some writers may agree on what some points mean, but even there, wide disagreement becomes more common. This pharaoh has more comments and speculation made about him than any other pharaoh; he inspires conundrums, obsessions, loathing, and admiration.³⁷ Novelists and historians, essayists, cultists, cranks, theologians, archaeologists, documentary makers and Hollywood film makers all give very different interpretations to his life, his beliefs, his personality, his motivations, what he intended to do and what he did. Fascination with Akhenaten has long ago reached the stage where that fascination itself has become the subject of a book, Dominic Montserrat's astute and very interesting *Akhenaten: History Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*. (2003).

Montserrat asks again that still very good question from 1926: why are people fascinated by an Egyptian pharaoh who died over three thousand years ago? First, he remains an enigma and they always fascinate. Megalomaniacs are also fascinated by tales of the powerful and of attempts to change the world and megalomania may be much more common than most commonly suppose: like attracts like.

Another point concerning public fascination concerns how his intensely dramatic story attracts creators of fiction, historians and their readers. They are so many turbid holes in our historic knowledge: Those holes virtually beg writers of both fact and fiction to create possible

³⁷ Toby Wilkinson, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt: The History of a Civilisation From 3000 BC to Cleopatra*. London; 2010. p. 279; Cottrell, pp.24-25 pp.172—173 and Appendice "The Reign of Akhenaten." pp..235-238; Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*, p, 11-112 She gives examples in the chapter Akhenaten :the Heretic Pharaoh. pp. 149-175; William Golding, *An Egyptian Journal*. London; Faber & Faber, 1985. p.65-66. See also the previous sourced comments by Carter, Baikie and Cook.

answers and scenarios. With their tantalising hints and fragmentary, ambiguous evidence they also supply a wide range of possibilities over which imaginations can roam or even galivant, creating myriad narrative possibilities. This pharaoh gets a passing mention in fiction as early as 1906 in Rider Haggard's novel *The Way of the Spirit*. By 1984s publishers have put a hundred novels about him and /or Nefertiti into print.³⁸ Try finding two that essentially match in all their depicted major characters and events.

The final reason for public fascination concerns what may well be his great importance on influencing human history. His attempt to establish a seemingly benevolent monotheism for all humanity may have been an isolated attempt that was several hundred years ahead of its time and died out unremembered and unknown. On the other hand, it may have heavily influenced the development of aspects within Judaism, which of course went on to influence Christianity and then Islam. If he did influence these religions, which between them now dominate or influence over half of the world's population, he would be one of the most influential people to have ever lived – if. Did the religion of the Aten stop without further contact? Alternatively, was there a currently untraceable and developing influential path from Judaism into Atenism, or the reverse, from Atenism and Egyptian traditions into Judaism? An answer remains unknown; thin evidence exists for this connection. Nobody can offer conclusive proof, only tantalizing grounds for speculation. Even so, our world remains dominated by laws and religions that now express concepts first expressed in Akhenaten's Hymn to the Aten, inscribed on the wall of the Amarna tomb of Ay, a onetime leading Atenist.

If the links are ever found they will change our perceptions of the origins of the world's dominant religions. Much of this theological development may have come from Nefertiti. While some consensus concerning her exists, the listing below gives some idea of how numerous, divergent and oppositional views of this royal couple are. This is of course simplified as many writers are cautious in expressing opinions. Others

³⁸ Golding, p. 65.

allow for mixtures of the views listed below. Much of the list below was previously put into question form.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were visionaries and religious geniuses aiming to unite all the peoples of Egypt's empire in a rule of peace. They were internationalists and pacifists.

Akhenaten was a short-sighted dictator who could not see that his empire was disintegrating. If he could see he did not care.

Akhenaten was a great man, hundreds of years ahead of his time, brought down by small-minded people.

Akhenaten was a naïve fool and perhaps a lunatic, who devastated Egypt and had to be stopped.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were liberators, aiming to establish a humane religion based in one benevolent God who would overcome the darkness and fear that came from superstition.

Akhenaten was a tyrant and a megalomaniac, enforcing a cruel religion with a god he created as a reflection of himself.

Akhenaten was a uxorious husband and a devoted family man to his wife and children.

Akhenaten was a bisexual, a womaniser and an incestuous paedophile who exiled Nefertiti.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were true and original revolutionaries, rapidly changing Egyptian religion, society and culture.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were only developing ideas and trends that had emerged in his father's reign.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were the first monotheists.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were not monotheists. He allowed other religions and never denied the existence of other gods.

Fiction writers give us many such views and all of these views have some basis in evidence. In Mika Waltari's novel *Sinuhe the Egyptian* (1949) the

monotheistic heretic pharaoh talks like a 1930s peace pledge parson, making naïve sentiments about peace, the brotherhood of man and the love of God. While he dreams of such a world his undefended kingdom experiences invasion and civil war rips Egypt apart. The same idea emerges in the 1954 film version of that book, *The Egyptian*. Both these works show a mentality influenced by the 1930s failure of those European leaders who wanting peace, and in striving for that, failed to contain Hitler. These 1950s depictions also reflect the naivety of those in the west who hoped for peace during the Cold War. Coming from the opposite direction, seeing humanist calls for peace and equality as desirable, something of this mentality seems evident in historian F. Gladstone Bratton's admiring 1961 work *The Heretic Pharaoh*. Here he emphasises the first monotheist's humanity and genius, as he seems to be a figure striving for peace and international goodwill. In Allen Drury's *A God Against the Gods* (1976) and the sequel *Return to Thebes* (1977) this novelist creates an epic. Unlike most who writes epics Drury obviously and assiduously strives to plausibly explain the conflicting evidence. Here Akhenaten emerges as a well-intentioned religious genius, but a disastrously inept ruler unable to make judgements on realities. He is naïve and his homosexual relationship with a royal prince, Smenkhkara alienates Nefertiti, the mainstay of his religion. Something of the later 1970s disillusionment with the idealism of the Vietnam War era comes through in Drury's two books. By 1984 with the publication of Pauline Gedge's *The Twelfth Transforming*, the world was very disillusioned with alternative religions, utopias, and radical messiahs of assorted kinds. This attitude comes through in her portrayal of Akhenaten as a simpering egocentric. He appears as a hideously deformed megalomaniac with a taste for incest. Somebody has to stop him before his wild schemes to transform Egypt destroy that civilisation. Clearly writers perceive him not only through interpreting primary sources, but through developments in their own eras and the influence of the dominant or striking personalities of their times.

In the same way Nefertiti is perceived through changing developments at various times in history. Until the turbulence of the 1960s she is perceived and portrayed as a loyal wife and mother without any

great role in developing her husband's ideology or activities. This perception gives way to a more active and radical one with the coming of the 1960s /1970s social changes. In the era of the "assertive woman" aka the "strong woman" when women have taken on roles as world leaders, other politicians and business moguls and successfully achieved that with all the aggression, intrigue, ruthlessness and sanctimonious ways of male leaders, Nefertiti is perceived as a political power. The idea that she was perhaps more powerful, aggressive and shrewd than her husband now gets the attention it deserves.

What are the primary sources? Before presenting what does exist, the essential problem with sources about the Atenists needs clarification. About seventeen years after Akhenaten's death, after the passing of Ay, the next to last of the pharaohs who had once been Atenist, his successor Horemhab, who had once served as a soldier under Akhenaten then his successors, organised a massive, ferocious and systematic eradication of anything connected with the Atenist heresy, particularly its leaders. This began with sporadic attacks earlier, probably without royal approval. A salient example was during the reign of Tutankhamen with the removal of the heads of Akhenaten and Nefertiti from their statues on a avenue in Luxor: they were replaced with the heads of rams.³⁹ Those ram's heads were an Amenist symbol of vigour and power. Atenist sculpted heads were also replaced by those of polytheistic gods, such as Anubis.⁴⁰ Although Paul Bradshaw in his documentary *Tutankhamen* credits the boy pharaoh with doing this and Tutankhamun did restore Amenism, it is unlikely that he would disgrace his parents this way. It is more likely that powerful adults at court were behind this. Horemhab went further than his predecessors: he made such acts widespread; this policy would continue into the reign of Ramesses II.⁴¹ Portraits were defaced, even in Amarna's abandoned tombs, remote from other centres. Across Egypt, the faces and

³⁹ Bradshaw. The images are on film and come with a voiceover.

⁴⁰ Bradshaw

⁴¹ Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. pp. 211-212.

cartouches of Atenists were systematically defaced, frequently with a ferocious hatred still obvious thousands of years later.⁴² Polytheists or those obeying pharaohs smashed statues and demolished Atenist temples, which they used for rebuilding.⁴³ Enemies scratched out his name and that of his queen and followers from inscriptions, king lists and cartouches.⁴⁴

For Egyptians removing names and pictures from monuments and tombs was extremely vicious as they believed that it removed them from the afterlife. The defaced coffin, sarcophagus, stellas, busts, statues, reliefs and cartouches pictured in this work are unambiguous examples. The royal couple became Ancient Egypt's equivalent to a twentieth-century Communist non-person. Mentioning his name was avoided, but if scribes had to mention him they labelled him "the criminal of Akhet-Aten."⁴⁵

Horemhab extended this royal and religious policy of nomenclatural obliteration and architectural destruction, particularly at Karnak. Not only the works of Akhenaten and Nefertiti suffered there. Those of his immediate successors, Tutankhamen and Ay, were included in the vandalism.⁴⁶

⁴² *The Nefertiti Bust*. Directed by Elliot Kew. Narrated by Tran Bazeley. Produced by Julia Muir. A joint production by UK/Canada. 2013. Shown SBS June 12th 2013. The destruction is shown on camera in detail and explained by Jacelyn Williamson, a member of the Amarna Project.

⁴³ Lisa Manniche, *The Akhenaten Colossi at Karnak*. Cairo; 2010. p. ix, p. 20 p. 35. Photographic evidence is reproduced on p. 20 figure 2.1 then on p. 21 figure 2.2 and p. 49 figures 2.36 and p. 2.37. Manniche mentions the general pattern of repression on p. 17 and pages. 44-45; Nicholas Reeves deals with the vandalism in Tomb 55 in *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet*. London; 2001. p. 81 with photographic evidence and also text on p. 83. See also Cyril Aldred, *Akhenaten: Pharaoh of Egypt*. London: 1972. pp. 187-188. Charlotte Booth, *Horemhab: The Forgotten Pharaoh*. Stroud; 2009. p. 97\;. Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. p. 207; Cottrell, p.25,

⁴⁴ David P. Silverman, *Akhenaten and Tutankhamen: Restoration and Religion*. Philadelphia, 2006. p. 1. On p. 6 and pp. 182-183 their eradication of the king list is referred to there and again on p. 177, where Figure 159 has photographic evidence and a caption; Reeves p. 81; Doctor Anna Stevens, in *Hunt for Queen Nefertiti*. Assorted examples are shown on screen.

⁴⁵ Aldred, p. 188.

⁴⁶ *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*; Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*, p. 207.

As American academic, Mark Damen points out, ironically these attempts to eradicate Atenism from history actually preserved much of the evidence we have. Instead of polytheist successors to the Atenists leaving many Atenist temple inscriptions at Karnak in place, but with Akhenaten's cartouche and face scratched out, they reversed or placed his building blocks upside down when later pharaohs used blocks for rebuilding.⁴⁷ This concealed and preserved images and inscriptions of Atenist pharaohs. In the period between the world wars French and German teams found these blocks in assorted locales and started putting them together, but in 1939 the world war starting meant the reassembling stopped until 1966, when an American businessman financed further reassembling.⁴⁸ The new team used photography to put about forty-five thousand talats together. Archaeologists now have much of an Atenist temple with inscriptions preserved, despite some losses due to black market sales, ironically mainly to Americans.⁴⁹ After visiting the site Egyptologist Joann Fletcher has aptly described the other, larger problem, reassembling the temple resembles doing a gigantic jigsaw.⁵⁰ Ironically because Akhet-Aten and much of Amarna were built and destroyed equally quickly, they were not built upon by later generations, so the groundwork remains.⁵¹ Those rushed eradication attempts also left much unfound by vandals and therefore the would-be eradicators unintentionally helped preserve much.

Surviving primary source evidence divides into four interrelated sections:

First, there is the architecture. The prominent examples are the remnants of a whole city at Tel el Amarna and the temples of Karnak. In

⁴⁷ Mark Damen, 'Moses and Monotheism.' 25th July 2015. Posted January 22nd 2017 *Brewmiate*. 1320 Section www.usu.edu/markdamen/1320hist&Civ/chapters/10AKHENhtm accessed February 22nd 2019; Fletcher, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁸ Fletcher, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*,

one sense Karnak provides too much information. Hawass and Simpson separately estimate it to be the largest temple on earth.⁵² Although Akhenaten's father Amenophis III authorised and completed important aspects and started much of the other work, his son and daughter in law had much to do with making it amongst the great architectural wonders. They were great builders. Both left revealing inscriptions on their temples, palaces and boundary stelae. Although successors and looters destroyed or shattered much of what the Atenists created, much has also survived. Since archaeologists, archivists and writers have used computers they have restored much of the architectural evidence in some form, particularly in computer projections, aerial surveys and models. Computers now mean speed. Computerised work at Karnak means putting the talats together becomes possible, without costly photographs or the expense of using hundreds of workers over decades. For an idea of how time and money in archaeology can be devoured by a combination of slow and intensive manual labour, hand-written record keeping, using old-fashioned typewriters and long-delayed communications, compare Mary Chubb's account of being an archaeologist and secretary at Amarna in 1930 with how computer workers and secretaries research and report now.

Closely related to the architecture is the archaeology, especially the work going on in Karnak and Amarna. Dates and named kingship, which are simultaneously inscribed on excavated jars, are vital for chronology. These function almost as well as dated coins with portrayed monarchs in much later societies. These jars and other finds at Amarna, Thebes and at Karnak are changing knowledge of the Atenist era. The term Atenist era works more accurately than the frequently used 'Amarna period' because the worship of the Aten began in Thebes as the established religion, about five years before Amarna's establishment. References to the 'Akhenaten era' also mislead as the cult stayed the dominant state religion for a few years after Akhenaten's death.

⁵² Wyche, *Chasing Mummies*. Episode 'Robbed.' *History Channel*. First Shown 18th August 2010; *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*.

Amarna's royal archives are a vitally important primary source. A peasant discovered the first and largest collection of these clay tablets in 1887, but how large the original collection was before damage, vandalism and surreptitious sales happened remains uncertain.⁵³ Much of the information about Akhenaten's last years and those of his successors went missing. Plundering remains one problem, another might be that due to conflicts and plague in Amarna scribes might not have created later communications or records. Archaeologists made other smaller later finds, so around 350 to 380 tablets survive. Despite problems with damage, omissions, translation and chronological order, they reveal much about the the Atenist era, particularly concerning foreign relations.⁵⁴ They date from Year 30 of Ahemophis III's reign into Year 3 of Tutankhamen's rule.⁵⁵

The fate of the Amarna archives indicates an even bigger problem with the evidence than deliberate political obliteration: modern vandalism. This problem appears to be even worse when combined with commercial sales.⁵⁶ A vandalised object left in place can be at least to some extent reconstructed: even the vandalised remnants and the act of vandalism itself tells us something. A sold object rarely exists in an examinable form for experts: usually after inexpert cleaning they have vanished into vaults and the homes of the wealthy and so can tell us nothing. Usually, stolen objects cannot even reveal to investigators that they once existed. Even when confiscated an object separated from its original locale and situation has lost much of its informative value. This and missing and vandalised evidence make holes in history and narrative, sometimes very big, very puzzling holes. One example of this problem is the depiction of the royal couple shown in Plate 26. Is the damage here from weathering, part of

⁵³ Aldred, p. 144-145; Baikie, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁴ Baikie, pp.3-5; Aldred, pp. 142-154. Joyce Tyldesley. *Nefertiti: Egypt's Sun Queen*. London, 1999. pp. 7-8. *Wikipedia*. Many of these communiqués are reproduced in English translation in 'Amarna Letters.

⁵⁵ Reeves, p. 63.

⁵⁶ De La Bédoyère, p. xxi

Horemhab's obliteration program or later vandalism? Were inscriptions once there? Is the blank rock facing next to Nefertiti natural or is it what looks more likely, a space for a third person? If so, who was it for and why? Why was it left blank? Who could be so important? If these questions could be answered, our picture about life in Amarna would be much clearer. Unfortunately, much of the remaining evidence now exists in a poor state, poor both in its physical condition and poor in its uncertain meanings. Such things make speculation unavoidable.⁵⁷

Incomplete, but seemingly complete popular accounts and fictions are another problem. Few mention the previous example in detail or the following facts concerning theft and damage at Amarna. When writers or filmmakers do not deal in such details, narratives give false impressions of being based on complete or nearly complete evidence. Many accounts tell us of the 1887 Amarna archive find as if this was the beginning of both the western world's discovery of Akhet-Aten and visitors and locals plundering this site. These are fallacies. As early as 1714 a French priest visited the site and noted the then indecipherable inscriptions. Over the next hundred-and thirty-years foreign visitors frequently came to the site. These included a group of Napoleon's invading soldiers, then English antiquarians and subsequently German investigators. Several noted the strangeness of the statues, so different from anything else found before in Egypt.⁵⁸ Amarna appeared on a map as early as the Napoleonic era.⁵⁹ Some visitors did credit the ancient ruins there to disc worshippers or sun worshippers. Up to the 1880s the foreign visitors *seem* to have done no harm; we just do not know if the common European habit of plundering ancient sites happened here. That changed in 1881, after a wealthy American bought a recently found stone plaque (Plate 30). Soon after those local villagers looking for loot found this Atenist tomb and plundered it,

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. xxv.

⁵⁸ Fletcher, p. 39-47.

⁵⁹ Laura Ranieri, 'Interview: Barry Kemp.' *Royal Ontario Museum*, Posted 11th September 2013. <https://www.rom.on.ca/en/blog/interview-egyptologist-barry-kemp> accessed 3rd June 2020.

selling parts of a royal mummy found there.⁶⁰ A clergyman, A.H. Sayce described how bronze rings, a solar disc, beautiful porcelain, ivory and alabaster “objects” with the cartouches of Amenophis were all taken and sold while the mummy of Amenophis IV was torn to pieces.⁶¹

Unfortunately he does not say how he knew the mummy was that of Akhenaten. It may have been that of Nefertiti, or one of their daughters, particularly Maketaten, Meritaten or her son in law Smenkhkara. No remains of these individuals have ever been found, but this royal chamber at Amarna remains their most likely resting place.

Who that mummy was became an important, vexing and unanswerable question. Going by the names that remain, Maketaten, one of Akhenaten’s daughters, seems most likely, but Nefertiti remains a possibility. Even a description of this vandalism raises as many questions as it answers. In 1882 the locals sold to an Irish clergyman a motley collection of jewellery from this Atenist tomb, including a gold knuckleduster with Nefertiti’s name on it. When he returned in 1893 to buy more, much had gone, including a gold winding sheet inscribed with Queen Tye’s name.⁶² Irretrievable damage by vandals in 1934 leaves this tomb of little use as it is; fortunately photographs and drawings made before 1934 makes some considerations possible.⁶³

A wedding ring for Aye and Tutankhamun’s widow, vital evidence for the last days of the XVIII dynasty’s end was plundered from somewhere, did turn up in Cairo in the 1970s and now must reside in some private collection. Local gold hunters in nineteenth century Amarna are known to have blown up a boundary stele in their search.⁶⁴ The surviving Amarna stele tell us so much and this destroyed stele must have had so

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

⁶¹ Tyldesley, reproduces an excerpt from Sayce’s account, *Egypt’s Golden Empire*. pp.173-174.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 47-49.

⁶² Bèdoyère, p.286.

⁶⁴. De La Bèdoyère, p.319.

much more information: now we cannot even speculate about what it contained. We can still speculate that these gold hunters blew up other sites and plundered them: that may account for missing mummies and more

These examples are only the start of problems with primary source evidence concerning Atenist Egypt. Even setting aside what has just been mentioned, the royal tomb of Amarna provides a salient example of how theft, damage and strange omissions leads to myriad and plausible possibilities – and either a lack of clear answers or seemingly definite answers based on a combination of speculation, assertive tones and thin, ambiguous evidence.

Even apart from the plundering Akhenaten's Amarna tomb, which would have contained much crucial information through its decorations, does not work well as a primary source due to at least two attacks by vandals and a lack of care by early archaeologists. In 1894, when archaeologists carelessly began work, the preserved pictures soon faded and researchers can now make little be out.⁶⁵ Even if we knew what was missing and why and who did what in this tomb attack, Atenist history would be much clearer. Thierry Benderitter's gives information with his description of the Amarna tomb that makes some answers to this problem somewhat clearer, but raises other questions. His diagram of the royal Amarna tomb complex and description of undecorated walls, unfinished wall decorations, bare rooms and an unfinished doorway shows sudden usage of a nearly completed tomb. Why? Sudden deaths? Were surviving royalty suddenly preoccupied with other urgent issues? Scratching out of cartouches, reliefs and inscriptions shows that the first attack on the tomb came in a troubled time in ancient history and was done by those extremely hostile to the royal Atenist family, as to ancient Egyptians such a form of destruction barred the target from heaven. The obliteration of an

⁶⁵ Thierry Benderitter, 'Akhenaten.' *Osiris Net: Tombs of Ancient Egypt*. https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/amarna/akhenaton_tombe/e_akhenaton_tombe_01.htm accessed 8th May 2020. Benderitter provides several of his photographs taken inside the tomb which illustrate this point.

image or an inscribed name was one form of denial of an afterlife. Another form of barring from the afterlife connected to this was never saying the individual's name.⁶⁶ This would mean that never mentioning them in king lists and decrees or genealogies was more than the obvious political obliteration into non-existence; it was also a form of religious non-existence. The Egyptians had a third way of barring enemies from an afterlife. This was to throw enemies or heretics to crocodiles. Did this happen to Atenists after they lost the religious conflict late in the years of the 18th Dynasty? No such depictions have been revealed yet: they probably do not exist now. Depicting that purge in art, inscriptions or documents would have contradicted and therefore defeated the purpose of total obliteration. This selective hostility to Atenist ways by victorious Amenists becomes obvious in Plate 58, which is a depiction of mourning at Amarna, apparently for Maketaten, one of Akhenaten's six daughters. Here attackers obliterated the faces of all royal family members, but not those of the hired mourners in the top corner. This group being depicted here suggests that the new religion retained at least some traditional religious funeral rites, as hiring women as professional mourners at funerals was a traditional practice in pharaonic Egypt.⁶⁷ Like Nefertiti's shabati, this wall illustration becomes puzzling evidence for how much the new religionists retained or discarded the traditional Egyptian religious customs. It also shows that hostility to Atenists went beyond the ruling royal couple. Both deductions tie in with historians interpreting other important events that help them pierce together the story of Atenist Egypt. Benderitter was also puzzled by the obvious inconsistency of the presence of the traditional shabati, but the absence of a copy of what modern Egyptologists named *The Book of the Dead* and what ancient Egyptians called *The Book of Coming Forth by Day*.⁶⁸ These two funeral objects, the shabati and some version of

⁶⁶ Pagano.

⁶⁷ Bob Brier and Hoyt Hobbs, *Ancient Egypt: Everyday Life in the Land of the Nile*. New York; 2009. pp. 60-61.

⁶⁸ Carol Andrews, Editor. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. London; 1985., pp. 11-12

the book, usually went together in traditional rites in the New Kingdom and after, into Ptolemaic times. This costly book was vitally important, as the included spells and incantations ensuring passage to continuing existence in the Egyptian version of heaven.⁶⁹ If a copy was there somebody stole it or returned it to priests. Possession, which ensured heaven, meant that it was worth more than gold. Assuming that a copy existed there and was not stolen in ancient days, it would have been a much-desired collectors' item in the late nineteenth century.

What appears as obviously clearer is that the almost complete destruction of a wall picture can only be something that thieves fearing execution if caught would not spend time doing. Benderitter dates this purging attack to soon after the king's death.⁷⁰ However this could have been either the 1889 destruction for loot or the 1934 vandalism. How can the smashing or scratching of objects be dated with certainty after a few decades? The oddest destruction was of the two sarcophagi. Both were smashed to fragments. One was definitely for Akhenaten, the other was apparently, but not certainly, for his eldest daughter Maketaten. She was known to have died before him, sometime between Years 12 and 14 of his seventeen-year long reign. Burying her next to him strongly suggests a king and queen. If this could definitely prove to be so it would be more strong additional proof for an incestuous father-daughter paedophile relationship and could prove that Nefertiti, who organised her husband's burial, apparently next to his daughter queen condoned this – if the inscriptions had been preserved. The prominence of her name within the tomb also suggests that Nefertiti organised the burials, (including her own) intended for that tomb. As this was the task of the dead pharaoh's successor, this also suggests that she succeeded Akhenaten as Pharaoh. The prominence of her name within the tomb could also be because it was possible that Nefertiti was briefly buried beside her husband – if the inscriptions had been preserved this may have been a certainty. Some later

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 55-58. Passages from *The Book of the Dead* quoted; Andrews,

⁷⁰ Benderitter,

Pharaoh, probably Tutankhamen, had his parents and his sister removed to the Valley of the Kings and buried in the complex now identified as K 55. While Akhenaten was placed there in a traditional pharaoh's coffin, two royal women found there were not given proper funeral rites, coffins, embalming or even decent clothing. K 55 was sealed by Tutankhamen, strongly suggesting that he had the bodies removed from the Amarna tomb as part of the abandonment of that city.

Akhenaten's abandoned Amarna tombs was supposedly endowed with Amenist objects having magic powers. Figurines known as shabatis were funerary objects meant to accompany the dead individual to the afterlife and so were part of orthodox Amenist burials. In Amenist belief these small figures became animated when the king died and so they lived to serve him - or her. Being such a certain connection to traditional beliefs, they were anathema to Atenists and were frequently smashed during the purges of the Amenists. So why did Nefertiti's broken Shabati lie in the tomb? Looters obviously left it because it was broken and therefore valueless, but why was it there in the first place? Does this mean that the second coffin was Nefertiti's - or that a hypothetical Atenist coffin was removed and replaced with the Amenist sarcophagus found in the Valley of the Kings? What is more likely was that her traditionally styled coffin was acceptable to the Amenists and that she was buried in it and removed with other royal members, while the Atenist coffins, abominations to the old priesthood, were left and vandalised. Or could it be that that the usually prolonged funeral ceremonies for her were interrupted or rushed because she died suddenly? This Amenist object in an Atenist tomb rightly puzzled Benderitter. This small object, seemingly so insignificant when compared to the wall decorations, gold jewellery and paintings, may be the most significant thing in the tomb. It indicates an Amenist burial for her in



Plate 1. *Akhenaten's partially reconstructed sarcophagus. Cairo Museum Gardens. When Thierry Bendritter saw it cigarette butts and mineral water bottles filled it. Author: Sebi. Public Domain. Wikimedia/Wikipedia/Commons.*

an Atenist tomb. This becomes a piece of corroborating evidence that after her husband's death she reverted to Amenist practices. Her name and that of her husband and his parents, and that of their daughter, Maketaten were all on the other coffin lid. We just do not know who smashed the sarcophagi. The almost obsessive defacing of Akhenaten's coffin in tomb K 55 in the Valley of the Kings, while leaving some gold leaf and precious stones on its surface, suggests Amenists, not thieves. Trying to solve this puzzle leads to more problems and possibilities. When restorers painstakingly put together the two smashed up coffins they found very little.⁷¹ Examining Plate I shows how little of Akhenaten's sarcophagus remained, despite a painstaking search for missing fragments. Why would

⁷¹ Ibid.,

*I deal with the full significance in 'The Last Years at Amarna.'

Atenists steal bits of rubble? What happened to the lid of this sarcophagus remains unmentioned and unknown. It is not with the heavily restored sarcophagus, which as of 2015 resided in the open air at the Cairo Museum. Why would Amenists or ancient thieves have taken such a cumbersome, useless thing as a sarcophagus lid away?

These depredations and losses make more sense if the answer is that the sarcophagi were smashed by thieves around the 1880s or 1890s. The stolen and sold objects in the late nineteenth century already mentioned are only known of now by sheer chance and are almost certainly not the full list. Looters could have smashed the illustrated sarcophagi to sell it in fragments. Alternatively, the lid could also have been sold intact: the standard depiction of a full reclining body as was common on sarcophagi would be attractive to buyers. The previously mentioned sale of this tomb's valuables and of one of the mummies there shows a lucrative pattern. The definite removal to the Valley of the Kings of Akhenaten in his coffin after the vandalism was clearly for safer protection. But what of the three other corpses without coffins or even full mummification? This appears odd and becomes odder as another royal mummy of the same family was left behind. Why remains a mystery without enough evidence to go beyond even flimsy speculation.

Even so, this writer's reconstruction on the evidence here indicates that Akhenaten started on his family's tomb, and had both his mother and his daughter-queen buried in it around Year 14 of his reign. He did not quite complete the tomb because of an outbreak of plague and because he died suddenly around three years later. Nefertiti organised an Atenist burial. The shabati, Nefertiti's sarcophagus and other evidence given in the last chapters from other sources shows that she returned to the traditional religion, at least to some extent. She may have pretended to surrender from expediency. The tomb was attacked at least once by traditionalists soon after. Several indications are that the destruction was rushed or interrupted. The existence of an undefaced, incomplete wall decoration in a small room off an uncompleted funeral room, (Plate 59) several undefaced cartouches of Nefertiti and her gold knuckleduster, a mummy and Queen

Tye's gold cloak, all remaining after the attack, suggest this. These bits of evidence also suggest a continuing intense conflict between Atenists and Amenists after Akhenaten's death. After the attack Tutankhamen (or possibly Smenkhkara) had Akhenaten, Nefertiti's traditional coffin (and possibly her mummy) Queen Tye and his aunt moved to the new tomb in The Valley of the Kings and then Tutankhamen had it sealed. The shabati was left behind because it was useless, being broken. The two women were left unprepared for a traditional funeral, either as a gesture of contempt for Atenists or because something happened to disrupt the embalming process. If Atenists had entombed them in Amarna in Atenist sarcophagi these would have been left behind or destroyed soon after by the reinstated Amenist priesthood, who would have seen them as blasphemous. Tutankhamen placing his father in his traditional coffin would have been traditional and therefore acceptable. Therefore, he was entombed in that, with several traditional funerary accompaniments. While acceptable to traditionalists, several aspects of the treatment of his coffin and his mummy show contempt, even mockery.⁷²

Is this evidence based, evidence interpreting explanation plausible? Yes! Is this evidence based, evidence interpreting explanation highly likely? Yes! Is this evidence based, evidence interpreting explanation definitely provable? No!

The existence of two funeral depictions (Plates 58 and 59) for a dead daughter in different tomb rooms also raises the question archaeologists and historians must continually ask to get anywhere – in one word, why? Why depict nearly the same scene twice in different rooms? Why does one scene depict a nurse carrying off a baby and the other not? Do two depictions exist because two daughters died in the later Amarna era? Was the last death not long before or soon after that of their father? Is this why her wall decoration in a small room connected to a larger tomb room contains no trace of anything except that unfinished wall decoration?

⁷² See Plate 60 and caption and the section dealing with the K 55 tomb.

Alternatively, was this because this room was thoroughly looted? By being embalmed with jewellery under their wrappings mummies were often a favourite target for vandals and robbers. If the mummy located in Akhenaten's tomb had been saved at that locale we would know much more, for after relocation it definitely suffered extensive water damage and was probably separated from accompanying funeral objects. For years the missing mummy at Amarna was mistakenly assumed to be Akhenaten, leading many an expert astray into incorrect theories. Nefertiti remains another possibility. Akhenaten swore that his wife, daughter and he were to be buried in that Amarna tomb. The corpse of either Nefertiti or the royal family member, Smenkhkara, cannot be discounted as being the missing mummy - and so its loss might be vitally important for historians. This missing mummy was probably an older daughter, Maketaten, as the tomb room had her name inscribed on objects and the depictions of a royal daughter's funeral show an older girl, one of about her age.⁷³

While what remains of royal mummies and their tombs have always been used by historians and archaeologists for information about this era; fortunately, the twenty-first century researchers using DNA have revealed much more, filling in many gaps caused by fanatical iconoclasts, sellers and vandals. Amarna tombs were not the only major target of vandalism there. By the 1920s the astoundingly beautiful riverside pavement that Flinders Petrie had so painstakingly restored in the 1890s was drawing in large groups of tourists who regularly walked through fields to see it, crushing crops in their walk. One night a vexed farmer smashed up most of the site to save his fields.⁷⁴ A few pieces ended up at the Cairo Museum. Damage still goes on at Amarna. By 2013 tractor drivers worked nearby fields and rubbish piled up.⁷⁵

⁷³ Fletcher, p. 140.

⁷⁴ Chubb, pp. 59-60

⁷⁵ Ranieri,

Using DNA and Carbon 14, they have proved and disproved earlier theories and hypotheses. Studying mummies at Amarna and the Valley of the Kings has moved away from royalty to examine the ordinary workers. This has revealed much about the Atenist religion and life at Amarna. While using DNA reveals easily interpreted reliable information, architecture, seemingly the most reliable source, has inbuilt conundrums with interpretation.

Forgeries are another problem. The prolific writer on the ancient world, Leonard Cottrell was told of how fakes were so well done that they fooled experts for some time.⁷⁶ He recounted two cases related to the eighteenth dynasty. The first was a perfectly preserved, impressive statue of Nefertiti, buried at Amarna and sold to a British airman for forty pounds during WW2. The second statue was planted by workmen so that their employer, an archaeologist who had found nothing, would keep paying them. While they were eventually detected we can only wonder about other finds.

The massive Atenist era architecture initially seems to indicate that there was once a massive, flourishing, popular and wealthy Atenist cult in Egypt, but this is definitely not so. To compare, in 1989 after six years of preparation, Felix Houphet Boigny, then president of the Ivory Coast, opened the world's largest church in Yamoussoukro, 'The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace.' Builders frequently used expensive Italian marble and 7,000 square metres of imported French glass.⁷⁷ Only one of the many depicted faces was of a black person, Boigny himself. Included in the building program was a papal villa. From this evidence archaeologists of the far distant future (who did not have written or filmed evidence available) would deduce that Ivory Coast was an extremely wealthy, predominantly white and Catholic nation, very important in the Catholic world, that the Pope was a frequent visitor to his personal villa and that the basilica was a centre of religious power.

⁷⁶ Cottrell, pp.144-145

⁷⁷ 'The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace.' www.sacred-destinations.com/.../yamoussoukro/basilica-of-our-lady-of-peace. No author credited. No posting date.

These examples are only the start of problems with primary source evidence concerning Atenist Egypt. Even setting aside what has just been mentioned, the royal tomb of Amarna provides a salient example of how theft, damage and strange omissions leads to myriad and plausible possibilities – and either a lack of clear answers or seemingly definite answers based on a combination of speculation, assertive tones and thin, ambiguous evidence.



Pl

Plate 2. The world's biggest Church. Our Lady of Peace. If an archaeologist of the distant future found this basilica would they even consider that the Ivory Coast was a very poor nation with only a small minority of Catholics in its population? The same problems are evident in Egypt's Atenist architecture. Author: BNDDLDPDY Courtesy: Wikipedia.

All of these logical and obvious deductions are not only wrong, but they are the opposite of reality. Only 20% to 30% of Ivory Coast's population are Christians, let alone Catholics.⁷⁸ Whites are a tiny minority

⁷⁸ Ibid.,

of the population and the Ivory Coast was a poor nation when Boigny built the basilica. Yamoussoukro is an unimportant town, not a centre of power. Even the local Catholics worship at the nearby cathedral, which is the bishopric, not the basilica.⁷⁹ Felix Houphet Boigny chose the town for the site because it was his birthplace and in over a quarter of a century only one pope stayed at the villa, and that was once and for a day.⁸⁰

Interpreting a ruler's personality and politics through architecture can be even more misleading. Going by three website guides General Franco's monument and eventual tomb 'The Valley of the Fallen' purportedly exists as his magnanimous, reconciliatory gesture to commemorate the dead on both sides in Spain's 1930s Civil War.⁸¹ The burial of around forty thousand soldiers from both sides supports this view, but two of the websites mention that Republicans worked in enslavement and some died to build the monument, which really exists as a memorial to Franco and the founder of Spanish Fascism. Primo De Valera. Far from being magnanimous, Franco ruled over a viciously repressive regime. He was summarily executing Republican survivors while building the memorial for reconciliation. Although the memorial contains the world's largest cross, an ornate Catholic Basilica and decorations from the gospels, Franco's murderous road to power, active support for the Nazis and repression within Spain are the opposite to what Jesus Christ preached.

Architecture and art can indeed reveal much about society, but they can also conceal, and with revelation and concealment both are not always as intended. At times architecture can even reflect the concerns of one man: the Valley of the Fallen and Egypt's pyramids (being also tombs for dictators) provide obvious examples. Akhenaten's statues at Karnak

⁷⁹ Ibid.,

⁸⁰ Ibid.,

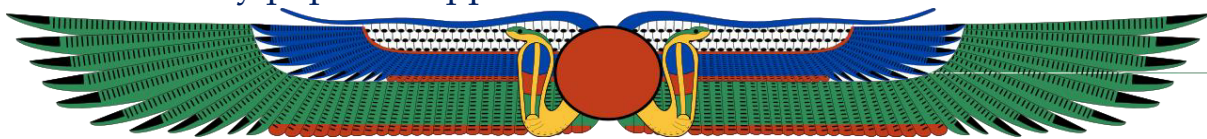
⁸¹ 'The Valley of the Fallen' www.feelmadrid.com/val; 'What is Vale de Los Caidos?' spanishsabores.com/daytrips; 'El Valle delos Caidos' <https://bluifton.edu/~sullivanm//spain/madrid/fallen/fallen.html>. All three websites do not credit an author or give a posting date.

provide another. Amarna appears as less obvious. Atenist architecture and arts do reveal, reflect, puzzle and mislead.



Plate 3. *The Valley of the Fallen. Courtesy: Wikipedia*

These modern examples show how wrong archaeologists and historians can be on any plausibility deduced from architecture: Atenist architecture provides similar examples. This architectural evidence desperately needs and has supporting material to interpret correctly. One interpretative mistake that historians have not made with Atenist architecture is assuming that these many grandiose works reflect popular appeal amongst Egypt's population during the Atenist era. One important point that scholars of the Atenist period agree on is that the new religion had little if any popular support outside the court.



Amenophis III: His Era and His Influence

Egypt's Atenist period developed late in the Eighteenth Dynasty, nearly fourteen hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Much involving Atenism and its culture emerged even before Akhenaten ascended the throne and lasted until the early years of Tutankhamen's rule, when he or what seems more likely, his courtiers, re-established Egypt's traditional religion as the dominant religious force.⁸² Although several writers disagree on the exact length of the Atenist era, on the succession order and the identities of Atenist rulers and their reigning dates, a time span of around twenty years to twenty-five years or a few more years in the middle of the fourteenth century B.C. is probably as accurate as can reasonably yet be ascertained for Atenism's life span.⁸³ As writers who give chronologies had their conclusions investigated and no two give matching dates for reigns and sometimes even for sequences of rule, this writer will not give many precise dates. Investigating primary source evidence reveals almost nothing about the lives of Akhenaten and Nefertiti before they came to power.

Initially called Amenophis, Akhenaten was not expected to rule as he had an older brother, Thutmosis. However, this crown prince died years before their father. Due to researchers finding the tomb of Thutmosis's favourite cat, we know more about the crown prince's favoured pet than

⁸² Donald R. Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*. Princeton, New Jersey; 1984. p. 205 p. 208. Redford reproduces Tutankhamen's edict; Aldred, pp. 180-181; Phillip Vanderberg, *Nefertiti: An Archaeological Biography*. London; 1978. pp. 145-148. Bradshaw gives the edict in a voiceover.

⁸³ Marc Van Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*. Chichester, England; 2011. pp 357-359 p. 382; Alan Gardiner, *The Egyptians: An Introduction*. London; 2002. p. 388; F. Gladstone Bratton, *The Heretic Pharaoh*. London; 1961. p. 164; Aldred, p. 194; Vanderburg, pp. 157-158; Redford, p. 13; Carter, p. 10. Baikie, 'Synchronistic Table of the Amarna Age.' n.p.; Brier and Hobbs, 'Pharaohs of the New Kingdom.' p. 2; De La Bèdoyère, unnumbered contents pages . No two writers listed here give exactly matching chronologies.

about the early years of his brother.⁸⁴ What must be obvious is that as subservient grown adults such as servants, slaves and courtiers deferred to him and as the whole kingdom obediently worshipped royalty as being favoured by the gods and connected to them, this royal child would have had at the least a very great sense of his own importance and power. Royal rituals reinforced this. Pharaohs inspired loyalty, awe and fear: they expected commoners to prostrate themselves before them, while permitting nobles to bow.⁸⁵ In a pharaoh's presence regal rule enforcers did not allow people to look in his face and they could only speak to a pharaoh when he gave that right.⁸⁶ The pharaoh also literally owned the rich and vast empire of Egypt. Courtiers, generals and viziers may have had a great deal of real control. However not only by his own unquestioned whim, but in law, custom, economics, ritual and public appearance a pharaoh ruled as a connection to the gods in an empire permeated at the grass roots level and politically dominated by religion. In such a religious, tradition-dominated society, such power was more than a superficiality. Anyone having such customary, unquestioned, pervasive, and habitual power, wealth and worship would have been well on the way to being a megalomaniac with at best, a patronising opinion of others.

Earlier pharaohs had been close to this promotion to godhead, artists depicting them as heroes consorting with gods or being welcomed by them after death. One of the five names and titles each pharaoh had preceding his given name was Horus, son of Ra.⁸⁷ This not only linked a pharaoh to the most prominent god, but gave him much of their power, as Egyptians believed great magic power resided in names and titles. A pharaoh was almost virtually the empire incarnate, a living symbol of the kingdom,

⁸⁴ Joann Fletcher, *Egypt's Sun King: Amenophis III: An Intimate Portrait of Ancient Egypt's Most Glorious Pharaoh*. London; 2000. pp. 112-113.

⁸⁵ Briers and Hobbs, p. 76.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.76

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 75. The writers reproduce an example of this nomenclature on p.76.

functioning without the usual aspects of government, elected leaders, flags or coinage. He was also more than a symbol. Being high priest, military commander, and dispenser of positions, policies and wealth, initiator of projects, taxes and laws, his bureaucracies instituted his wishes for the kingdom. Theoretically for Egyptians disobedience to his will was supposedly unthinkable, for most it probably was in reality, considering the pharaoh's pervasive control systems and their punishments.

Akhenaten inherited this role. This raises the question of did pharaohs really and literally believe in this plethora of Gods? They were beings represented as sometimes existing in human form, sometimes as animals or fantasy figures. Apart from literal belief in these never seen impossible figures, did the priesthood and royalty mean them to be personifications or symbols of powerful natural forces they could placate by obedience, praise and sacrifice? If the leadership did not believe in them were they smugly playing along to maintain the lucrative and powerful status quo, while secretly laughing or sneering at the Egyptian masses - who superstitiously did believe? Alternatively, did many Egyptians go along with these beliefs because poverty, ostracism, imprisonment or execution could all happen to them if they did not?

Did the young Akhenaten see through all this, both the fantasy gods and the priest's duplicity? This was easy to do, especially as Egyptians publicly worshipped his father as a god while in private, his mummy and some depictions from his reign show that he was an obese, lethargic old man existing in agony with abscessed teeth.⁸⁸ Was his monotheism, which focused on the sun not as an actual god, but as a symbol of the god without the supernatural features, begin as an attempt to explain the order in the natural world, the best in human nature and to be an answer to the questions of why life existed?

Nefertiti's early years attract much speculation, but very little firm knowledge. She seems to appear out of nowhere to become a royal wife. She had a sister Mutbenret and may have been a daughter of the then

⁸⁸ De La Bèdoyère, p. 232.

Master of Horse, later vizier and eventual pharaoh Ay. This key figure in the story of Atenism was a leading Atenist, at least while the Atenist pharaohs reigned. Other possibilities are that she may have been a sister, half-sister or cousin to Akhenaten: Atenist art does frequently show such a strong facial resemblance to her husband, which being a close relative would explain. Was she a sister? One who changed her name to the flattering name the world knows her by, which means that “the beautiful one has come.” Others speculate that she was a foreign princess in an arranged marriage; the facial resemblance goes against this as does the way Ay or Ay’s wife states that she was only the future queen’s wet nurse, Ay’s wife does not identify her as a daughter.⁸⁹ This omission and the use of “only” goes against the idea that Ay and his wife were her parents. It also goes against the ideas that she was an imported princess or a commoner and suggests that at her birth she was very highly placed within the higher levels of Egypt’s ruling class. Nobody really knows of her life before her marriage, but the idea that she and the new pharaoh married four years into his reign is also disproved by the birth of their first daughter Meritaten in Regional Year One.⁹⁰ They must have married in the last year of Amenphis III, or earlier. Five other daughters followed Meketaten between Regional Years four to six, Ankhesenaten before either Regional Year Five or Eight, Neferneferuaten Tasherit in Regional Year Eight or Nine, Neferneferure in Regional Year Nine or Ten and Sefepenre in the next year.⁹¹ Going against those writing of a feud between Nefertiti and her husband, the later births obviously suggest a level of friendliness that excludes any serious conflicts between this king and his queen until sometime after Regional Year 11, if such a conflict occurred at all..

The Atenist cult, art and architecture began long before even the successful reign of Amenophis III. Apart from Egyptologists, people usually think of the ancient Egyptian religion as unchanging over the

⁸⁹ De La Bèdoyère, p.257. This evidence comes from inscriptions in Ay’s tomb.

⁹⁰ ‘Akhenaten’ *Wikipedia* accessed January 19th 2023.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*,

thousands of years of Pharaonic rule, but strong developments frequently emerged, even within the elites in the religious world, where traditions should have been fixed.

Amun started as one of the many localised deities, but his locale was Thebes and as Thebes increased in population, size, prosperity and therefore importance Amun became Amun-Ra, merging with the sun god Ra.⁹² During the Middle Kingdom he became king of Egypt's many gods and even the pharaoh held his position by being the son of Amun.⁹³ Over two thousand Egyptian gods and spirits have been recorded, often being tribal founders or local spirits.⁹⁴

Some of these gods became part of the Egyptian pantheon. One of the most important was Osiris, the ruler of the dead, the underworld and of a regeneration that controlled life after death. His powerful position in the pantheon was connected to the Egyptian concern with the afterlife, which they saw this as similar to their earthly life.

Originally, the afterlife in heaven was only for royalty and the highest nobles, but the development of the concept of the ka who was some type of spirit, seemingly applied to all who had their corpse preserved. That journey to judgement and then to heaven was made with the ka; Egyptologists who give more detailed analyses of how the ka fitted in with ancient religious beliefs diverge.⁹⁵ Some see the ka as embodying abstract qualities; others state it was the dead person's double and others that he served as a protective presence in the Middle Kingdom heaven, which became available for all who could buy the right equipment for entry.⁹⁶ Priests, scribes, undertakers, merchants, grave robbers and outright con

⁹² Cottrell. pp.99-100.

⁹³ Ibid., p.100.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.16

⁹⁵ Ibid.,

⁹⁶ Andrews, pp. 11-12.

artists made profits from the assorted prayers, spells, rituals, incantations, funereal equipment and preservation of the body. If the body was not preserved no attempt to enter heaven by the spirit could be made.⁹⁷ Tomb art was more than decorative, being protective and possessing beneficial magic.⁹⁸ It followed a convention which was intended to perpetuate the rank pleasures and privileges they enjoyed in life. Pictures of food and tomb offerings of real food and drink were not only for the corpse, but also for the ka.⁹⁹ When real sources could not be delivered carvings and sculptures sufficed.¹⁰⁰ Plates 7 and 16 from the Atenist era may have intended to be as decorative as they look, but they may also be a continuance of these polytheistic traditions, which have a deep appeal as to this day statues of angels and inscribed prayers for heaven appear on tombstones and replenished flowers on graves all fit in with this pattern. In 1989 this writer even saw gifts of food on Greek orthodox rural graves.

Even within this ancient development polytheism fundamentally changed several times. Perceptions of heaven itself changed; in one spell grants of land in heaven and supplies of bread and beer are prayed for.¹⁰¹ The longed for bread and beer must have been produced by imaginary spirits functioning as ghostly workers, as initially much of the same agricultural work which existed on earth was perpetuated in Heaven.¹⁰² However, money speaks even there: shabati statuettes could be purchased and with spells, be made to do their dead owner's work.¹⁰³ One such spell

⁹⁷ Cottrell, p.57.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.114

⁹⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁰¹ Andrews, pp. 11-12; Spell 30a, p. 27.

¹⁰² Andrews, Introduction, p. 12 and a reproduced spell "Spell 6" p. 36; Weeks; 'Thebes: A Model for Every City.' In *The Treasures of the Valley of the Kings*. Weeks reproduces two wall paintings from tombs of deceased field workers in heaven. p. 24 p. 25.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 12.

for evading work in heaven ended with the bizarre and enigmatic boast that “I have been initiated into the hearts of the baboons.”¹⁰⁴

If the Atenist religion seems strange to modern people, it reads as enlightened when compared to such silly ideas as are apparent in these examples. Some of the ideas within ancient Egyptian polytheism were not as silly as this or as silly as they initially seemed. They did not literally worship animals as many religious depictions of animals suggest: they worshipped their qualities and, their power.¹⁰⁵ Herds of sheep were not worshipped, but the alpha males of the species, grown rams were, or at least were revered in religious art and associated with powerful gods. Sparrows never made it into the heavenly pantheon, but falcons did, with some gods taking on falcon masks. Apis bulls were venerated as gods, having palaces, slaves and tombs.¹⁰⁶ Clearly strength, courage and being an alpha male were admired qualities and the more human gods were not only endowed with such qualities, but took on some of the physical characteristics of favoured animals.¹⁰⁷

Atenism did not start as a monotheistic religion, nor was it as original, as is so often claimed. The Aten cult was ancient, even in Akhenaten’s life over three thousand three hundred years ago. It was one of Ancient Egypt’s first religious manifestations, with Ra serving as a supreme deity when the Amen cult was a minor factor in Egyptian religion.¹⁰⁸ The cult of Osiris, which contained the idea of rebirth after death and regeneration, became popular. This development resulted in sun worship losing its prominence and some of its appeal while the Amun cult

¹⁰⁴ Andrews,; Spell 5 p.36.

¹⁰⁵ Tyldesley, *Egypt’s Golden Empire*. p.134

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.134-135.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.140-141.

¹⁰⁸ Baikie, pp. 303-305.

became more pervasive with a priesthood growing stronger as their wealth increased. For royalty a counter balance against the Amenites or at least containment in religious affairs was needed.

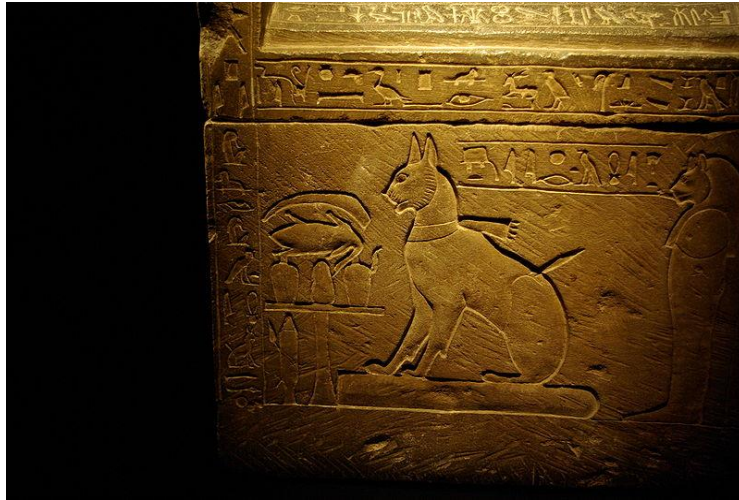


Plate 4. *The sarcophagus of Thutmose's cat. This realistic and delightfully vivid representation is one example showing that the changes in Egyptian art predate Akhenaten's ascension. Author: Larazoni. Wikipedia.*

This development restarted with one barely noticed sun god cult becoming useful. This was the Aten, one amongst Egypt's plethora of gods. Akhenaten's great-grandfather Amenophis II began this move and his grandfather Thutmose IV continued that development, the latter intending the Re cult as a balance rather than a weapon, establishing it at Heliopolis.¹⁰⁹ Like his father and grandfather Amenophis III would take up an interest in these northern solar gods, but would take his identification with the solar cult further.¹¹⁰ What Amenophis II and Thutmose IV did was on a comparatively small scale compared to what Amenophis III did – but then anything would look small scale when compared to the gargantuan building of Amenophis III. He encouraged

¹⁰⁹ Joann Fletcher, *Egypt's Sun King Amenhotep III*: p. 15 pp. 60-61 p. 16; Cottrell, p.

¹¹⁰ Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire* p.134,

and financed this sun worshiper's nebulous cult and during his rule it grew in power, wealth and prestige - to some extent. To what extent becomes a vexing question. He built a royal ship named "The Dazzling Aten" and used that name again for a Theban palace.¹¹¹ This was more than throwing wealth to placate. Amenophis III did worship the sun daily.¹¹² This daily ritual would be continued by his heretic son. Such habits in his father's reign tended to establish such patterns in the son's reign, but they were not on the dominant scale Akhenaten would give the Aten cult. Solar worship initially did not have the intolerance for the Amenist cult or the monotheistic leanings, which as co-rulers Akhenaten and Nefertiti developed. Modern writers frequently speculate that like his father, Amenophis III encouraged the Aten cult as a balance to the increasingly powerful Amen cult, whose leaders were having grandiose and ubiquitous monumental temples built - and by doing so were growing increasingly rich and therefore developing a dominant role in society. Amenophis III may have also used his wealth to expand the idea of the pharaoh as divinity for the same reason.¹¹³ His massive building program, much of it showing portrayals of himself possessing godlike power, reinforced that powerfully expressed, if inchoate and false idea of royalty as divinity. It was a concept that would permeate his society.

Logically such wealth, power and patterns of obedience to godlike royalty would ensure that this new monotheistic idea would spread, but logic failed and so did the new religion. It failed where it should have succeeded: in a prosperous, settled land, shaped and bound by religious belief, tradition and obedience, all of which were not openly questioned or doubted. The precocious new husband and wife ruling duo challenged too much too fast. Even allowing for this and many disastrous events during their reigns, they may have succeeded if they had been more astute, conciliatory and less self-absorbed and alienating. However, they were

¹¹¹ De La Bédoyère, p.221 p.224; Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. p.126 p.134..

¹¹² Kessler, p.148.

¹¹³ Silverman, p. 13.

definitely not diplomats or inspirers. Despite their immense wealth and absolutist power over actions, they had little influence over changing beliefs across their empire. What influence they had become focused on a professionally narrow base, their courtiers, priests, soldiers, scribes and artisans.

Other tendencies originating in Amenophis III's thirty-eight-year reign, which would permeate his son's reign, were the developments of art and architecture. Egyptian architecture concerned with royalty or religion was usually grandiose and its art depicting the gods and pharaohs was in a stilted, stylized style that showed little change through many dynasties. However, a brief change developed before Akhenaten's rule. This new style then flowered during his years in power. The Atenist period's art and architecture does not reflect the whole of Egyptian society during the years of Atenism's predominance: it reflects the focus of a small elite. It also reflects a massive fissure in Egyptian society between its leader and its traditional religion.¹¹⁴ Studying this era also reveals the beginning of an idea that would take over much of the world and still dominates: monotheism.

How the Atenist religion perhaps influenced and inspired Judaism and therefore Christianity and Islam has become an unanswerable and therefore a vexed question. As early as 1903 the husband-and-wife team of Norman and Nina de Garis Davis noticed Atenist similarities with Christianity while working on recording details of Amarna rock tombs. Akhenaten, the simultaneously divine and human son on earth worshiped his father, since his death, resident in the heavens.¹¹⁵ This couple went further, describing the sun as the third part of an Atenist trinity with the

¹¹⁴ Bratton, p. 80; Budge, 'Development of The Cult of Aten Under Amenheep VI.' pp. 75-100.

¹¹⁵ Norman and Nina de Garis, Davis (sharing a pseudonym of N. de Garis Davis) *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*. London; 1903. p. 26.

father and son.¹¹⁶ Despite ubiquitous depictions and prayers to the sun in Akhenaten's religion, the sun was only a symbolic representation of the true god, not an equal force. In Christianity the Holy Spirit is part of the trinity, without a symbol. Akhenaten insisting he was the only way to the father and the paradise that waited also bears strong similarities to the statements of Jesus: "I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. No one gets to the father but by me." The tantalising nature of the scant evidence remains the major problem with making more of these connections between Ancient Egypt, Judaism Christianity and Islam. Even outside Atenism, the Egyptian influence has frequently been put forward as the inspiration for the Ten Commandments.

This idea relies on the forty-two negatives, which Egyptians had to testify before Maat and the jury of Gods and Goddesses in the afterlife.¹¹⁷ While feeding the hungry and clothing the naked are presented as evidence of a good heart, the judgement which gives heaven as a reward were overwhelmingly negative.¹¹⁸

Both Jewish and Egyptian religious instructions contain an overall idea of a godly reward for a good life and punishment for a bad one, both in their afterlife. Half of the Ten Commandments are also negatives against killing, stealing, adultery, bearing false witness and coveting. Although the wording differs and the Egyptians expand the essential idea into other negatives with some differentiations, the essential ideas with them are the same, yet the similarities end there. The differences in the remaining commandments are wider than the similarities to the forty-two negatives. The remaining Judaic commandments contain positives that are unlike the forty-two negatives. While not taking the Lord's name in vain and the honouring the father and mother could be fitted into the Egyptian's ethics and commandment framework by not blaspheming or dishonouring the

¹¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹¹⁷ Both the forty-two negatives and the Ten Commandments are in the appendices.

¹¹⁸ Cottrell, pp.125-126.Original excerpts are presented here.

parents, the others cannot. Keeping the Sabbath because God created the world in six days fits with the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, not at all with Egyptian mythology. The first commandment, not to worship any other God but the one God and the second, not to make craven images, cannot possibly be matched with the forty-two negatives. They are unmistakably in direct opposition. Ancient Egypt had a confusing and varied plethora of Gods and pharaohs to worship.¹¹⁹ This was a sign of religious tolerance as focusing on some did not mean disbelief or disrespect for others.¹²⁰ Egyptians could even pick and choose which god or gods to favour.¹²¹ In such a situation assorted craven images became ubiquitous. The first two commandments read almost as a declaration of war against traditional Egyptian beliefs. Where they then essentially Atenist? While Atenism went on an iconoclastic rampage against images of Amenist Gods, some images of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, such as the colossi at Karnak and her hagiographic pictures there, just by being in a temple, were meant for worship. The Aten represented there was also clearly being venerated by depicted figures.

The Ten Commandments were not copied from the Egyptians and were probably not inspired by them, but by necessity. Almost every society, no matter how small or simple in its structure, has some similar basic rules to prevent trouble. Like the Ten Commandments and the forty-two negatives, they usually cover adultery, theft, blasphemy, unlawful killing, lying, following religious requirements, giving in charity and aid, oath breaking, mischief and stealing. One could go to accounts of pagans in Melanesia, the Amazon basin, the Navajo lands, the Aleutians, Kalimantan, Siberia, Java, Confucian China and Buddhist Tibet and find similar rules for the residents there. Obviously Indigenous people in these locales cannot have derived their laws from ancient Egypt.

¹¹⁹ John A *History of Israel: Revised Edition*. London; 1972. pp. 39-40.

¹²⁰ Brier and Hobbs, p. 43 p. 47.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 43.

One similarity between Atenist thought and Judaism was noticed by the 1920s and cannot be easily explained away. This is the similarities between the anonymously written Psalm 104 and The Great Hymn to the Aten.¹²² These go beyond similarities in general ideas to similarities in structure and terms. It is almost absurdly impossible that a Jewish psalmist somehow got into Ay's sealed tomb in the middle of nowhere to copy out a poem written in a language he was very unlikely to know. Atenists sending papyrus copies to his missionary outposts, perhaps the one found in Syria, remains one likely explanation for those seeing Judaism as being inspired by Atenism to some extent. It could have been found there in either a stone inscription or a papyrus roll hundreds of years later.

Another possibility raised in the documentary *Heliopolis: City in the Sun* is that to avoid the destruction of texts much studied by visiting scholars, the staff there moved their extensive library to Alexandria, which had a large Jewish population. This theory does provide a transmission line between the two monotheistic communities and the more this theory is considered, the more evidence there is for it, although not all that evidence appears in the documentary. Akhenaten did build at least one tomb and probably a temple at Heliopolis, while using stone quarried there for Amarna.¹²³ Nageh Omar and Gamal Faris, have compiled a long list of assorted objects from Akhenaten or Atenists found at Heliopolis, a great academic and religious centre. One text from him has been found there amongst many other traces.¹²⁴ Did Akhenaten also send many other texts there? Archaeologists working in this have not found any evidence of the once extensive library. Although sun-worshippers, the staff living there were apparently traditionalists, not Atenist heretics, so Horemhab probably left them alone. Alexandria and Heliopolis are not that far apart,

¹²² Both texts are in the appendices.

¹²³ Nageh Omar and Gamal Faris, 'Some Blocks from Heliopolis.' December 2005. DOI: [10.21608/jguua.2005.2462](https://doi.org/10.21608/jguua.2005.2462) accessed June 17th 2022. pp.2-4.

¹²⁴ Ibid.,

so when the conflicts which ultimately destroyed the holy city occurred, over eight hundred years after Atenism faded, did priests and scribes send their collection to the great collection of Alexandria? This meant that if the Heliopolis documents were at Alexandria, the documents survived – for centuries. This meant that they could be studied, become an inspiration and absorbed by Alexandria’s large Jewish population. What was called the great library at Alexandria was so massive that priests and officials actually housed the collection in several different buildings. From Julius Caesar onwards into the seventh century AD several different conquerors and religious fanatics devastated these buildings and their contents, usually building at a time.¹²⁵ Whatever was once contained among the estimated conservative minimum of forty thousand scrolls there no longer exists: the theory of connection here cannot be proved or disproved.¹²⁶

Psalm 104 may not have even postdated Atenism. The inspiration and derivation could have gone the other way, from Judaism into Atenism. Different psalmists composed their songs over hundreds of years, the earliest being thought to be from around 1500 BC.¹²⁷ This creates a possible dating up to a hundred and fifty years before Akhenaten ruled. Alternatively, it might also mean that Psalm 104 was composed in his lifetime or soon after it.

Was Moses inspired by Akhenaten or was it the reverse? To answer this, it must be proven that Moses lived, when he lived and that he did write the first five books of the Bible. These include the narrative of the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt, the exodus from there and the subsequent establishment of the Hebrew kingdoms in what had once been part of the Egyptian empire before Akhenaten lost it to foreign powers. Some scholars

¹²⁵ ‘The Great Library of Alexandria.’ *Wikipedia*. accessed 13th June 2022.

¹²⁶ ‘The Great Library of Alexandria.’; Streckful’B. The *Wikipedia* source gives the estimated number of scrolls. The conclusion about the loss of knowledge is in the documentary.

¹²⁷ Reverend Jesse Lyman Hurlbut and Reverend Alfred J.P. McClure, ‘The International Bible Encyclopaedia and Concordance: A Treasury of Bible Facts.’ *Holy Bible: King James Version*. U.S.A. 1946. pp. 279-280.

reject this and state that Moses and the whole history of the Jews before their conquest and removal to Babylon in the seventh century BC was a concoction made for nationalistic propaganda purposes. While evidence for dating the lifetime of Moses and the exodus remains thin and literally fragmentary, some does exist apart from the undated biblical stories and goes against this concoction theory. An inscription of Ramses II does refer to enslaved Semites working on his name city in the Nile's delta.¹²⁸ There are also references in the New Kingdom records to the Habiru, a troublesome people in Canaan and Egypt's north-eastern provinces. These provinces are now in Sinai, modern Israel, modern Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Evidence that these Habiru were the Hebrews does not rest just on alliteration and assonance - or even on sharing a locale and era. Between the fifteenth and twelfth centuries before Christ the Habiru appear in Egyptian records as foes and rebels in Asia and as bondsmen in Egypt, selling themselves as slaves or being impressed to work on various Egyptian projects, while in the Amarna letters they appear as disturbers of the peace and as sometime mercenaries for Egypt.¹²⁹

Although Professor Bright in the revised version of his standard textbook *A History of Israel* (1972) says no firm exact date can be given to the Exodus, he tentatively presents evidence from the Bible and archaeology that it happened from somewhere between 1275 BC to the first half of the thirteenth century, but no earlier.¹³⁰ The clear reference to Israel on the dated Merneptah stele from about 1220 BC means that it could not have happened after this date. Similarly, J.A. Thompson in his revised edition of *The Bible and Archaeology* (1973) suggests that written accounts and archaeological evidence indicate that a once generally accepted date for the Exodus of around 1430 must be discounted and that it happened soon after 1300 BC.¹³¹ Thompson also refers to the archaeological evidence

¹²⁸ Baikie, pp. 443-444; Bright, p.119.

¹²⁹ Bright, p. 93 p. 94.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 121-122.

¹³¹ J.A. Thompson, *The Bible and Archaeology: Revised Edition*, Exeter; 1973. pp.55-59.

of several burned towns in Palestine dating from around 1250 BC.¹³² This fits with the account in The Book of Joshua which describes the Hebrew destruction of cities meted out to the Palestinian inhabitants. Both Thompson and Bright note that in the Book of Exodus the Hebrews worked as slaves for pharaoh in his city of Tanis and 'The House of Raamses.' (sic) Therefore this pharaoh was likely to be Ramses II, who began his sixty-seven-year long reign around eighty years after the Amarna period ended. This thin evidence would place Moses and the Exodus occurring around a hundred years, or perhaps more, after any attempts to spread Atenism and therefore several decades after a fierce and apparently pervasive obliteration of Atenism.¹³³ If there was any monotheistic influence it did not flow from Moses into Atenism. Did such a flow of ideas occur earlier? From the biblical adviser Joseph to an unnamed Pharaoh and into pharaoh's court? Quite possibly:

In *A History of Israel* Professor Bright describes the Habiru as more than an ethnic group who some now insist were the Hebrews; the Habiru were probably amongst those who were not citizens and lived on the outer fringes of Egypt's settled society, along with runaway slaves, ill-paid mercenaries, lawless bands and assorted malcontents.¹³⁴ In line with this theory, he does point out that the word Habiru was used by assorted local chroniclers to describe peoples as far away as Anatolia, Cappadocia the banks of the Tigris River and northern Mesopotamia, making precise identification between Hebrew and Habiru unlikely.¹³⁵ The Jewish tribe in Egypt and its empire could not have spread so far into nearby kingdoms in the large numbers indicated by communities existing in so many locales. Bright's idea that the word Habiru meant outsiders or social outcasts

¹³² Ibid., p.59.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 108. Professor Bright puts the emergence of Moses at less than a hundred years after Akhenaten.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 109

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

within different empires seems the most likely explanation. The way the Habiru swore oaths to 'the gods' in one document and 'the god Habiru' in another suggests different mixtures of polytheists and monotheists and therefore as Bright suggests, various different groups being labelled Habiru.¹³⁶

The first clear mention of Israel outside the Bible exists in a stele from the rule of Ramses II's successor Marniptah, who ruled from between 1224 to about 1211 BC.¹³⁷ This means that early non-biblical evidence for the Exodus story and Hebrew monotheism starts nearly eleven hundred years before the first full Mosaic accounts appeared in existent Biblical manuscripts.¹³⁸ Two other non-biblical inscriptions give credence to the biblical accounts of the Jews before the Babylonian exile. The first was found during excavations in the city of Dan in Israel in 1993. Apparently part of a commemorative inscription raised soon after the events its creator describes, the victor boasts of devastating the land and of the killing of Ahaziah and the defeat of his father King Jehoram, son and heir of King Solomon and a king of 'The House of David.'¹³⁹ These four names are the first people mentioned in the Bible to be found mentioned outside biblical records. The way the boasting matches what the Book of Kings recounts goes a long way to disproving that much of the Old Testament was a concoction made during or soon after the Babylonian exile. The existence of a later king of Israel, Omri, who ruled around three hundred years before the Babylonian conquest, also gains verification by clear references in a stele inscription created by his Moabite enemies.¹⁴⁰ Omri is mentioned in

¹³⁶ Bright, quoting Assyrian and Egyptian documents p. 94. And Source Note 57 on that page.

¹³⁷ Robin Currie and Stephen G. Hyslop, *The Letter and The Scroll: What Archaeology Tells Us About the Bible*. Washington D.C. 2009. pp. 96-97. A photograph of the stele is reproduced; Bright, p. 112 p.121. He dates the stele to 1220 BC and includes a chart, p. 478. This gives the date for Marniptah's reign.

¹³⁸ Currie and Hislop, p. 8.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155. The original stone fragment and its translation are both reproduced.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179. The original stele and its translation are both reproduced.

the Old Testament in ways similar to what the stele inscriber described. Seven kings of Israel who ruled before the Babylonian exile are also mentioned outside biblical accounts. They appear in the records of neighbouring kingdoms.¹⁴¹ Further strong evidence against this Babylonian concoction theory came in 1982 with the deciphering of a Hebrew scroll blessing. This was almost a perfect match with a blessing from The Book of Numbers, which is credited to Moses. This scroll dates to around 600 BC, over a hundred years after the Babylonian exile.¹⁴²

All this differing evidence shows that much of the history of the Jewish kingdoms from the tenth century onwards being fabrications cannot be sustained. With Moses, the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan and what is now Palestine being history, the evidence is much thinner. However enough evidence exists to also disprove the idea that narratives about these events were fictions created during or after the Babylonian exile, several hundred years after Akhenaten lived. Yet the Babylonian exile led to a Jewish diaspora. This may have created links between the two forms of monotheism. Jewish refugees set up a colony in Egypt's border with Nubia at Elephantine Island. A cultural blending with the Egyptians took place there and also perhaps a religious one, as both a Jewish temple and Egyptian temples existed there.¹⁴³ Alexandria would also become a haven for large numbers of Jews. With one of the world's great libraries located there, were Atenist texts found by Jews and their ideas absorbed? Or could it have been the other way? Did Akhenaten and/or Nefertiti absorb monotheistic ideas from the Jews who were in Egypt before Moses? Semitic words do appear in the Egyptian language in the later 18th dynasty.¹⁴⁴ Whatever the factual reality, the biblical story of the unnamed

¹⁴¹ Thompson, p, 4 p. 110.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 200-201. The original scroll blessing and its translation are both reproduced.

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp.188-189.

¹⁴⁴ Kessler, p.146.

Pharaoh who made Joseph the most powerful man in Egypt, does indicate strong links and much influence at Pharaoh's royal court long before Atenism emerged. Professor Bright notes that the Habiru, like Joseph, sometimes rose to high positions in Egypt's structure.¹⁴⁵ As already noted Dieter Kessler notes how foreign advisors came to court in the later eighteenth dynasty. The strongest evidence for a Jewish sojourn in Egypt must be around Tanis where they worked as slaves, but until archaeologists fully excavate Tanis, links between Atenism and Judaism remain unproven and may not be, even then.

While a paucity of evidence creates one puzzle; the opposed differences in what the two versions of a one God reveals create more. From the evidence we have the God of the Aten does not reward belief or punish evil doing: Yahweh, God of the Hebrews, does. The God of the Aten appears nebulous, revealing few expectations or rules: Akhenaten and Nefertiti provided these, but despite absolute obedience to them, their statements lack detail. Yahweh gives extremely precise instructions on what he expects from both his leaders and his people. These expectations go down to diet, what clothing priests wear, how that clothing should be decorated and coloured, how sacrifices are to be conducted and when his people work and rest. The Aten was a God for everyone under his sun's rays; Yahweh was the God of his chosen people, the Hebrews. Even this summary may mislead with a comparison suggesting Atenist tolerance and benevolence in contrast to Hebrew rigidity and strictness. The royal rulers were the harsh side of Atenism, living Gods who repressed Amenists. Yahweh was strict but merciful, forgiving, protective and benevolent to those who followed his ways. Clearly the two forms of monotheism were at opposites on many points.

Even so, these two similar and original monotheist belief systems being geographically in the same area and being not very far apart in time indicates a link. So does the biblical story of Joseph, which places a Hebrew in an unnamed pharaoh's court as a man of great influence. During the

¹⁴⁵ Bright, p. 94.

reign of Amenophis III increasing prosperity and a time of peace led to the arrival and advancement of foreigners.¹⁴⁶ The Biblical Joseph could have been one of them. The way Semitic words started appearing in the Egyptian language during the reign of Amenophis III does suggest another tenuous link between the two monotheist religions.¹⁴⁷ While no precise dates are given, this would definitely have been many years before Ramses II and probably before Akhenaten lived. If no synchronicity exists, what are the odds of two monotheist religions emerging so closely in both time and geography on a globe dominated by polytheism - and dominated for thousands of years until that time?

An obviously clearer and undisputed reality is that Atenist architecture does reflect Egypt's enormous wealth and architectural skill. Akhenaten and Nefertiti launched massive building programs at Thebes, Heliopolis, Karnak and Amarna.¹⁴⁸ What frequently fails to be reflected so obviously, but remains to some extent concealed through Atenist architecture and the art and inscriptions it contains, is the more alienating, hypocritical and tyrannical underside of the Atenist cult.

This pinnacle of Egyptian building, conquest, status and wealth in the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty seemed all the more remarkable when contrasted with what went before.

The Hyksos takeover of Egypt north of Thebes lasted just over 108 years. These invaders ended the ruling dynasty and what Egyptologists label the Middle Kingdom. Thebes and points south did survive as an Egyptian remnant by paying the Hyksos tribute.¹⁴⁹ Around 1580 BC the hated Hyksos were expelled after a war and the victorious Pharaoh

¹⁴⁶ Kessler in Schultz and Seidel. pp. p-146.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. These writers suggest the linguistic development, but not the link.

¹⁴⁸ Katherine Strange, *The Akhenaten Temple Project*.

[<http://katherinestranger.com/egypt/talat.htm>] This includes a text and an artistic creation of Nefertiti's temple; Redford, p. 62; Gardiner, pp. 212-213; Streckful'B.

¹⁴⁹ Gardiner, Manetho and Joseph are quoted. pp. 151-157.

Aahmes took back the north, even driving the Hyksos out of their refuges in southern Palestine and adding new conquests as far north as Syria.¹⁵⁰ For the next two hundred years Aahmes's successors to the throne were able, successfully maintaining stability and often at gaining territorial or financial expansion. Amongst these successful successors was Thutmose II, who conquered Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria and subdued Nubia. Before him Pharaohs had won victories in these lands, but he added them (and therefore their lucrative resources) to Egypt's expanding stable empire.

After ten tumultuous decades under Hyksos domination without unity, central royal rule or strong pharaohs, the first XVIII dynasty Pharaohs re-established traditional systems and a sense of order. They also turned Thutmose's conquests into an empire stretching from Libya to Nubia, along the Nile to the Nile's delta, then through Sinai, and north-eastwards through Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria.¹⁵¹ By the reign of Amenophis III, although northern Syria was never really pacified and Nubia experienced minor revolts, Egypt's borders had been redefined from Syria to the fifth cataract, near the modern-day border with Sudan. Control through advisors in Palestine and heavy influence in Nubia were upheld by local police and elites.¹⁵² Such indirect control was reinforced by controlling trade routes.¹⁵³ Beyond these were allies and direct trading partners as far away as Minoan Crete, Mycenae, Cyprus and the upper

¹⁵⁰ Baikie, pp. 14-20.

¹⁵¹ Redford, p. 19 p. 23; Aldred, pp. 47-51. p. 143; David Kessler, "The Political History of the Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties." Schultz and Seidel. pp. 144-146.

¹⁵² Kesler in Schultz and Seidel. pp. 144-146.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.145.

Euphrates.¹⁵⁴ These favourable connections were sometimes strengthened by dynastic marriages.¹⁵⁵

This expansion led to increased prosperity, therefore trade increased dramatically.¹⁵⁶ Traded Egyptian gold made this even more so as it was very popular in the ancient world at this time.¹⁵⁷ With this gold flowing northwards from conquered Nubia's mines, Egypt had never been so rich.¹⁵⁸ Starting with Thutmose II this abundant wealth led to an abundant and grandiose series of building programmes.¹⁵⁹ Thutmose IV, grandfather of Akhenaten, continued this pattern in his decade long rule and began the steady, then seemingly unimportant expansion of the Aten cult. His son and successor, Amenophis III continued these policies and soon would expand them, both through financial donations and personal interest.¹⁶⁰

Many subject peoples in the empire and some outside it, including traders and tradespeople and even foreign advisors came to Egypt for employment or enrichment by investment opportunities, bringing new skills, ideas, knowledge and materials.¹⁶¹ This influx of talent contributed to the freeing up of Egyptian art, although this development was only initiated, not made as ubiquitous as it would become under his successors. Amenophis III, not his son, was the first pharaoh artists depicted as not always a superman, but realistically, cheerful and self-confident (see Plate

¹⁵⁴ Bédoyère, mentions these lands as being part of Akhenate's jubilee celebrations. p.266. Archaeological evidence for such trade exists. David Gribbins mentions that around 600 Mycenaean pots at Amarna. p.22.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁵⁶ Aldred, pp. 47-51; Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 2 p. 14. Kessler in Schultz and Seidel. pp. 144-146.

¹⁵⁷ Kessler, in Schultz and Seidel. p. 145.

¹⁵⁸ Aldred, p. 51; Gardiner p. 205; Booth, p. 22.

¹⁵⁹ Tyldesley, pp. 16-18 p. 58; Baikie, pp. 55-56; Kessler, p.145.

¹⁶⁰ Baikie, p. 88.

¹⁶¹ Aldred, pp. 50-51; Redford, pp. 28-29; Kessler, pp.145-146.

6) then in his last years as, tired and old.¹⁶² His depictions were ubiquitous in his reign: over a thousand still survive.¹⁶³ -

This combination of new talent and materials, peace, stability, wealth and the frequent and grandiose building schemes of Amenophis III and his patronage system created a perfect mix of conditions for a new art. Royalty financed and encouraged the self-confidence and experimentation of painters, architects, sculptors, and craftsmen. This situation, rather than Akhenaten's personal tastes, caused a delightful artistic upheaval. He does seem to have enthusiastically encouraged the new development and would later add to it to the extent that one of his man artistic creators, Bek, wrote that he was an apprentice who was taught his art by Akhenaten.¹⁶⁴ Bek's comment suggests the future Pharaoh played a great part in encouraging these developments. Many a prince has shown a strong interest in cultural activities while waiting to succeed. As pharaoh Akhenaten would show a strong and consistent enthusiasm for art, particularly at Karnak and Amarna. This interest was unlikely to be a sudden development. Under his rule the artistic changes that began in his father's reign flowered. Instead of figures as stiff and emotive as cardboard cutouts, artists depicted suppleness, movement and emotions. Life in all its sensual beauty, rather than just war scenes, self-aggrandisement and powerful gods, emerged as themes.¹⁶⁵

Apart from art and architecture Amenophis III achieved much in his thirty-eight-year reign. For thirty of these years Egypt enjoyed a stable peace, except for when he personally waged a brief and successful

¹⁶² Aldred, p. 89; Fletcher's, *Egypt's Sun King Amenhotep III* has abundant photographic evidence of this pharaoh as a happy individual. Unfortunately, the image showing him and Tye as tired and old is unavailable due to copyright restrictions.

¹⁶⁴ Fletcher gives quotes from the inscription Bek left at the royal quarries.. p. 94; Aldred also quotes from the inscription p. 63 p. 102.

¹⁶⁵ Vanenberg, pp. 114-118, text and one illustration. Other architectural illustrations are on pages 85 86 89 111 117 127 128 130; Aldred, p. 63 text. Plates 1 to 44 and plates I to XVII n.p.; Van Meiroop, p. 381; Gardiner, pp. 211-212.

campaign against Nubian rebels.¹⁶⁶ Although he encouraged the Aten cult through much of his building program, his gargantuan building of traditional temples and polytheistic themed architecture at Luxor, Karnak, Elephantine Island, Thebes and his own tomb, demonstrate that he was no monotheist.¹⁶⁷ Plate 5 reinforces that message. He even portrayed himself as Osiris and built temples to divinities that had few temples, Maat and Mantu, Amen's son.¹⁶⁸ Even his development of the Aten cult was not a revolution, at least not an intended one, but the revival of a traditional and old cult that had faded.¹⁶⁹ Apart from his monotheistic building efforts and having a daily image of the sun worshipped and declaring his wife, Akhenaten's mother to be "the great wife of the God" he did not push the new sun god worship too far.¹⁷⁰ Obviously, this man did not want a confrontation with the religious status quo.

Whatever he intended, he set up a situation that under his son would develop that confrontation. This happened because he was doing something new in the Pharaonic world beyond expanding the Aten cult and financing and organising the largest building program even Egypt had ever known.¹⁷¹ While earlier pharaohs appeared in inscriptions and art as associating with the gods, having their attributes or blessings and by doing so becoming semi-divine, Amenophis III went further. He became a living god, blending himself into a trinity of "the king, the god and the sun."¹⁷² As Toby Wilkinson points out, when Akhenaten prayed to his god as "the

¹⁶⁶ Baikie, p. 82.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁶⁸ Wilkinson, p. 264.

¹⁶⁹ Baikie, pp. 303 pp. 313-314.

¹⁷⁰ Kessler in Schultz and Seidel.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 261.

¹⁷² Ibid, pp. 273-274.

Aten his father” he may not have meant this only in the figurative manner it obviously seems, but also literally.

During Amenophis III’s reign the flourishing of Egyptian arts characterised with an opulent new vividness was not only applied to grandiose statues and temples, it filtered down to everyday objects and household effects – amongst the well off. Aldred notes that a taste for luxury was widespread among the wealthier Egyptians, already a common taste due to increasing wealth, was stimulated further by Asia’s tastes.¹⁷³ Like so many cultural revolutions which the modern world associates with a whole society, this development reflected the tastes of only a small proportion of the population in what was a predominantly peasant-based empire.

The thousands of years of enduring Pharaonic Egypt, the impressive sight of the pyramids, the sphinx and Karnak and the seasonal reliance on the Nile all combine to create an image of ancient Egypt as unchanging - except for that disturber of the stability Akhenaten: this is not so. Invasions and famines rocked Egyptian society both before and after him. Power struggles and economic fluctuations were frequent and sometimes extreme in their effects. With religion, developments and sudden changes were common. These changes became more common during the New Kingdom, particularly in the Eighteen Dynasty, when all sorts of changes did affect the lives of ordinary Egyptians. The Hyksos had brought horses and chariots.¹⁷⁴ This meant that both military and civilian transportation were strongly improved, becoming faster and more reliable. Akhenaten also made communications faster and more reliable when he encouraged using hieratic script. By being easier to learn and faster to use than hieroglyphics it made communications and trade faster and more efficient and surely increased literacy rates – and therefore the influence of texts and decrees. This may have also been a subtle and insidious undermining of

¹⁷³ Aldred, p. 51.

¹⁷⁴ Tyldesley, *Egypt’s Golden Empire*. p.102.

the Amenist cult's power and influence as the priesthood controlled much of the economy and the law by keeping communications, transactions and religion through their hold on literacy. Consciously or not, they kept their hold on society by keeping literacy difficult for those outside their organisation. Consciously or not, Akhenaten was weakening their grip on society by his changes. Hieratic writing was one of those changes which had more potential than reality. The use of shadoofs was another. The invention of the shadoof, a counterpoised mechanism for raising water from the Nile to gardens and fields, saved time, money and energy, especially for small gardens and fields.¹⁷⁵ Grains, vegetables, fruit and fish must have become more abundant, but to what extent? Were they marginal, moderate or great in their effects? Marginal is the likely answer as unfortunately shadoofs were ineffectual in large scale irrigation.¹⁷⁶ At Amarna, with buildings and roads literally on the Nile's banks the potential for shadoofs to radically transform the elongated city may have been demonstrated rather than fully developed.

In Allen Drury's novels about Akhenaten he depicts pharaonic Egypt as essentially unchanging: for the vast majority of Egyptians this was so. Throughout the pharaonic eras there were invasions, epidemics and natural disasters, all of which could easily and quickly lead to famines and disorder, but for the peasantry such disasters were a hiatus in the natural order, which was always restored.

This new culture was for royalty and the nobility, the nouveaux rich, artisans, officers, merchants and the gentry. For most people within the Egyptian empire, peace and prosperity would bring stability, but no fundamental change in either culture, religion or social hierarchies.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.190.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.190.





Plate 5. *Amenophis III with a god.* Photographer: A. Parrot. Wikipedia



Plate 6. Amenophis III. The face here hints at his pleasure-loving nature. Photographer: A. Parrot. Wikipedia/ Public Domain.



Plate 7. From Amarna: Glass and Bronze grapes with a timber stem. Photographer Jon Bodsworth. 2007. Egypt Archive /Wikimedia /Creative Commons.



Plate 8. *An Armana find. Made of polychrome, this bottle looks startlingly modern. Electrum Magazine. British Museum/ Public Domain.*



Plate 9. *A broad collar. These were only worn by royalty or the high nobility. Author Daderot./CCD Wikimedia.:*



Plate 10. *An Amarna talat. The Free Thinking Mind/ Brewminate/Creative Commons.*
 Plate 11. *Nefertiti worshipping the Aten. A talat from the great temple. Note that the face has been scratched out. Wikiwand/com*





Plate 12. *Akhenaten, Nefertiti and three of their daughters relax while the rays of the Aten bestow blessings. The combination of naturalness and depicting a royal body unflatteringly was rarely seen before or after the Atenist era, although during the reign of Amenophis III some started appearing. Unlike the stilted representations of children in much of Egyptian art, these are recognisable as real humans. Pharaohs and queens were rarely seen depicted with their children in any other situation except ones involving ritual, hunting or war. Note Akhenaten's spindly arms, puny chest and paunch. Ankh symbols give blessings and life. Such images created an impression of a staid, happy, monogamous family at Amarna. Photographer: Gerbil Wikimedia.*



Plate 13. *e royal family worshipping the Aten. Photographer: Jean-Pierre Dalbéra. Wikipedia. Egyptian Museum / Public Domain*

Plate 14. *Fantasy symbols of pharaonic power; the sun flanked by twin cobras and a predatory bird's wings. This modern recreation is by Jeff Dahl - This W3C-unspecified vector image was created with Inkscape by Jeff Dahl., CC BY-SA 4.0,*



Plate 15. *Amarna schoolchildren with papyrus and writing implements. Realistic figures and flowers showing suppleness and movement were something new in Egyptian art. Photographic Author: Sailko. Wikipedia.*



Plate 16. Although the Egyptians had always used bright colours in their art and pottery, that of Amarna was especially distinctive. Blue made from cobalt was especially beautiful, as even this faded example shows. Author: Maksim Sokolov. Commons Wikipedia.



Tutankhamen and his wife.

Plate 17. The most famous and one of the last and best examples of Atenist art. Tutankhamen being oiled by his queen. This was the backing for his throne, found by Howard Carter in 1922. The rich blue comes from imported Greek cobalt, which was in popular usage in the Amarna years. Note that the Aten blesses them. Image scanned by Pataki Márta . GNU Free Document. Wikimedia/Creative Commons

Akhenaten and Nefertiti Rule

To what extent Amenophis III was personally responsible for the peace, prosperity and stability of Egypt in his last years remains uncertain. Twenty-first century modern scientists using forensics on his mummy have proved Reverend Baikie's 1926 portrayal of Amenophis III as an indolent, prematurely old man who died at around fifty is essentially accurate.¹⁷⁷ What Baikie got wrong, (not having the archaeologists' autopsy report written decades after his 1926 publication) was that the reasons for this indolence were physical, not psychological. Egypt's god in human form suffered from arthritis, obesity and what must have been extraordinarily painful abscessed teeth.¹⁷⁸ Being the richest man the world had ever known up to that time could not save him from several illnesses which (except arthritis) anyone can have healed by dentistry and tablets today.

Given his condition it is obvious that in his last years Amenophis III was either virtually incapacitated in the palace at Thebes or at best, could not travel far. He seems unlikely to have done more than issue edicts, approved plans and officiate at banquets, parades and official and religious events – if he did this much. One early Amarna letter written by Burra-Buriyas, King of Karaduniyas, addressed to Amenophis contains complaints. The pharaoh, “My brother showed no concern” for his fellow king during a recent illness and although he was sent greetings and gifts of lapis lazuli, the Egyptian king's promise of forty minas of gold, upon checking, turned out to be only ten minas. Amenophis's underlings were also involved in the murder of traders and Burra-Buriyas concludes by calling to justice.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Baikie, p. 81; ‘Amenophis III.’ *Wikipedia*.

¹⁷⁸ ‘Amenophis III.’ *Wikipedia*.

¹⁷⁹ Burra-Buriyas, A letter to Naphurureya “King of Egypt” (Amenophis by another royal name) AE 2 ‘The Amarna Letters.’ *Wikipedia*.

Amenophis III must have been given royal functions requiring energy and travel to his designated heir. As pharaoh Akhenaten also took over his father's unwise attitudes towards other rulers. Tushratta, a northern king, complained to Egypt's dowager queen about her son getting a gift of genuine lapis lazuli for giving a gift of a wooden gold-plated statue which was supposed to be solid gold. He quite reasonably pointed out with gold being abundant in Egypt he should have got the promised gift.¹⁸⁰ This cheapskate deceit could only have led to distrust, contempt, and the risk of losing a powerful ally – and for what perceivable gain? Saving some wealth in the world's richest nation

Despite some trouble with banditry, discontent and malfunctioning government in Syria and the Levant around the time when Akhenaten and Nefertiti took over, Egypt's empire had never been so prosperous, powerful and secure. When they first came to the throne at Thebes, which at that time was the capitol, it seemed that seventeen hundred years of pharaonic traditions would continue. His parents had named him Amenophis IV and this implied he would follow his father's ways. Initially he appeared to meet these standard expectations by doing what new pharaohs usually did first, completing a traditional architectural project his father had started and doing that by using traditional architectural decorations. He also had a temple built to Amen-Ra in Nubia.¹⁸¹ One of his first innovations was seemingly innocuous; the new pharaoh and his wife or one of their staff substantially replaced mudbricks with more talats and reduced the size of talats down to sixty kilos.¹⁸² This meant that anything made with stone could be moved and built much faster as a single worker could (with great difficulty) lift such a talat.¹⁸³ The pharaohs had been

¹⁸⁰ Letter EA 26 Tushrutta King of Mittani to Queen Tye, 'The Amarna Letters.' *Wikipedia*.

¹⁸¹ Wilkinson, p. 280.

¹⁸² Todd.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*,

building with stone even before the pyramids, but they had their workforce use large heavy cubes and long blocks. The use of talats was an innovation made during Akhenaten's reign.¹⁸⁴ That the new royal couple intended to perpetuate the gigantic building program of their father was evident by the extensive removal of stone in the quarry where Amenophis IV placed his name on the entrance.¹⁸⁵ That these smaller bricks could be carried by humans meant a death sentence by overwork for thousands. Did this effect of their new innovation occur to them?

Egypt's usual pattern of filial behaviour for royal heirs did not last long. Within a year of their ascension trouble was starting. While Memphis was the kingdom's administrative centre, Thebes was not only the real political capitol because the Pharaoh, his family and entourage resided there, but because it was also Egypt's religious centre for the powerful cult of Amen.¹⁸⁶ Within sight of this city Akhenaten started a grandiose temple to the Aten. He was following his father's lead as he had started a whole city opposite Thebes and provocatively named it Aten. As cartouches for both the royal father and son were found there Akhenaten clearly had some role in the building of this magnificent new city. This may have been how the trouble started remains unclear, but Akhenaten himself claimed that it worsened year by year.¹⁸⁷ His listing of his reign's first five years clarifies this comment by how he has written after each year entry "It was worse."¹⁸⁸ Charlotte Booth gives the full quote, which concludes with the petulant "worse than those things I heard by any kings who had ever

¹⁸⁴ *Ancient Egypt: Chronicles of an Empire* Episode 2. Assorted directors, writers and producers. TV Mini Series.. Germany. 2022

¹⁸⁵ Ibid,

¹⁸⁶ Wilkinson, p. 283.

¹⁸⁷ Booth, p. 24. Baikie, p. 272 quoting the original inscription.

¹⁸⁸ Booth, p. 24 reproducing the text of Akhenaten's stele. Much of this is missing, as Gardiner and Vandenberg both separately admit. Baikie gives a differing translation.

assumed the White Crown.”¹⁸⁹ He wrote that he considered the priests to be “more evil” than the things he has heard and what he has heard is more evil than what was “said by Negroes” to his grandfather, Pharaoh Thutmose VI.¹⁹⁰ This apparently refers to a then notorious, now lost insult given generations earlier. It also suggests a loss of authority and the beginnings of an unprecedented contempt for the new Pharaoh. Other, later evidence supports this interpretation. By then some of his actions deserved it, both by ancient Egyptian standards and by modern ones.

Although he does not specify what “it” was, or how the undescribed situation worsened, hostility coming from the priesthood and worshippers of Amen could only be an extremely dangerous threat, even to a worshipped god-king. For anyone outside the royal family it would have meant at the least ostracism or exile, at the worst death. His insistence on worshipping the Aten alone and the unorthodox role given to Nefertiti, combined with his massive building program for the Aten in Thebes, then the most important stronghold of Amenism, were obvious causes of conflict. Another even worse cause would have been the opulent and massive temple of pylons decorated with the Aten. This was built for Nefertiti and possibly by her design, as her husband rarely appears anywhere in it.¹⁹¹ In one rare depiction he sits on a stool before her while she sits enthroned.¹⁹² This was one of many sure signs that she had an extremely strong role in her husband’s kingship. She may have been the power behind the throne, if not the real ruler, at least during their five or six years in Thebes. Further evidence for this is in other Karnak depictions where she wears the traditional crown, false beard and clothes of a pharaoh and holds the crook and flail, signs of kingship.¹⁹³ Important Egyptian

¹⁸⁹ Booth, p. 24.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁹¹ Katherine Strange, *The Akhenaten Temple Project*.

[<http://katherinestranger.com/egypt/talat.htm>] text p. 1. Artistic recreation of Nefertiti’s Temple..

¹⁹² Fletcher, p. 73.

¹⁹³ Ibid.,

subjects and also foreign rulers and emissaries understood such signs as being those of kingship. She bestows gold collars, ankhs and a sceptre, and rides in an armed chariot, all of which are further signs of royal dominion. She even personally executes bound male captives before her throne, a traditional image for pharaohs in ancient Egypt, demonstrating their power through victory, subjugation and deciding on life or death.¹⁹⁴ The last example perhaps works more as a symbolic image of pharaonic power than a depiction of any violent reality, but with Nefertiti we can never be sure.

These are very traditional royal images for ancient Egypt, but what emerges as very untraditional must be the treatment of his favoured wife. She gets many more mentions than her husband here; her name commonly, even prominently appears, being inscribed on Atenist sacred offering stones sixty-seven times. Akhenaten gains only three such mentions.¹⁹⁵ This strongly suggests that her role in the Aten cult and in Egyptian society was vital. Megalomania and narcissism may not have been her husband's prerogatives. Like him she was subject to strong, pervasive and therefore almost irresistible pressures to develop such a mentality as the royal family fostered such roles as being the "oracle of Amun" and the "God's Wife of Amun."¹⁹⁶ This was a usual role for princesses.¹⁹⁷ Such princesses would have had large numbers of adults obedient to their every whim and order and probably kept their positions not only by obedience, but by flattery. Even just by being the Great Royal Wife Nefertiti would also become the controller of lesser wives.¹⁹⁸ Harem wives would have come with their relatives, staffers and palace servants and slaves, all of them under the control of the Great Royal Wife. In comparison, in the early 1980s this

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.,

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Kessler, p.144.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 144

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 147

writer once asked an aged British insider in Imperial India why the world's first elected female rulers emerged on the Indian subcontinent. She stated that this was an easy question. The answer was that they were from the wealthy ruling class and from childhood on they controlled hundreds of adults from lower social levels and even large estates. This gave them boundless self-confidence, advantageous connections and a belief that their world existed for them. A cousin of this writer was in a similar situation on a family plantation in the South Pacific and emerged with that same haughty self-confident manner and a belief that she was there to control lesser beings. By her own repentant account she treated the servants in a manner which sounded very similar to the Sub-continental ways.

Evidence shows that Nefertiti also had this same mentality by the early years of her co-reign. She has depictions of herself as making offerings to herself, simultaneously as both goddess and a queen.¹⁹⁹ She also appears twice as often as her husband in the art of Karnak and appears as a happy warrior or executioner in one beheading scene, surrounded by bound, captive males.²⁰⁰ What the male-dominated, male-glorifying priesthood would have thought of these depictions and the extremely assertive woman who featured in them can only be obvious. Males were not the only ones to know the queen's wrath. One illustration from Amarna (Plate 28) shows a bare-breasted Nefertiti executing a woman who raises her hands in futile supplication, while the Aten beams down in apparent approval.²⁰¹ These were standard traditional images put on royal buildings, tombs and stela. However they may have had the same motivation of creating an image of royal power, as with much more recent examples.

Is this a murderous reality, propaganda or a show? In comparison, how much of military reality exists for modern royalty, who have never spent a second in battle, but wear ostentatious, bemedalled officers' uniforms at parades which they dominate by their mere presence? They

¹⁹⁹ Strange, *The Akhenaten Temple Project*. page 1 text.

²⁰⁰ Redford, p. 78.

²⁰¹ Tyldesley, p. 61 Figure 2.5. Plate 28 in this text.

have bequeathed titles and they do hold high military rank, but in reality when have they ever commanded, except at parades? Yet with Nefertiti some evidence exists that at the least she was a huntress and perhaps a warrior. A beautiful inlaid bow with her name on it was found in Tutankhamen's tomb and in Amarna a throwing stick was found, also inscribed with her name.²⁰² Both are hunting weapons which could easily be used in war. Were they practical weapons - or useless gifts of the type still frequently given to royalty and soon stored away somewhere, to be soon forgotten?

Another piece of evidence suggests that she had power separate from Akenaten. A gold scarab inscribed with only her name as it was used in the first five years of her husband's reign was found by archaeologists in the Uluburun shipwreck off the Turkish coast.²⁰³ Such scarabs were no mere trading good, decoration or personal property, but a sign of official and high power. So why was it found in a shipwreck off the Turkish coast? The dating of the shipwreck to somewhere between 1300-1325 BC places it at the time of the last years of Atenism, the rule of Tutankhamen when Atenism was fading or that of Horemhab, when Atenism and its culture were being vigorously suppressed.²⁰⁴ Was the power evident by owning this scarab shared when he was alive? Was this a plundered reminder of an era unwise to remember in Egypt and so traded for something more useful with foreigners? Given how Atenist art was destroyed by Horemhab this seems very likely. Another possibility was that it was loot from a tomb. Either way it was wise to trade it out of sight with foreigners for something, perhaps anything, more useful and less dangerous to possess.

²⁰² Fletcher, p. 300 p. 301.

²⁰³ Eric H. Cline, *1177B.C: The Year Civilization Collapsed*. Princeton; 2014. pp. 77-78; Cemal Pulak, 'Uluburun Shipwreck' in *The Oxford Handbook of the The Bronze Age Aegean*. Edited by Eric H. Cline. Oxford; 2010. p. 869; David Gibbins, *A History of the World in Twelve Shipwrecks*, London; 2024. pp.32-33.

²⁰⁴ Pulak, p.869.

What we can be sure of is that writing on Akhenaten and Nefertiti before this ring was found and before the Karnak talats were put together in the 1970s and 1980s has now become obsolescent. Most writers, by working before these findings could only underestimate both her role in the years in Thebes and her personality. She was no meek pacifist, dutifully following her husband's role in establishing the new religion: she was a key player, perhaps the most important one for much of the Atenist era. That revaluation of her role now clearly reveals other motivations for the hostility between the Amenists and the Atenists that go beyond the ideological monotheism-polytheism sources of conflict.

The traditional priesthood could have only perceived this queen's behaviour and actions as those of a pushy, blasphemous parvenu - or at the least of someone overreaching their traditional position. It was also a calculated insult to the traditional role, prestige and vital religious importance of a pharaoh and could have only exacerbated the already existing tensions. Ancient Egypt was a patriarchal, traditionalist society in which the pharaoh was the high priest, an intimate of the gods and for Nefertiti to behave like this, to virtually usurp the position and then blaspheme, could only lead to an irrevocable schism. The way uxorious Akhenaten apparently accepted her behaviour puzzles. Did he let her do these things or even encourage her to infuriate the priesthood as a deliberate sign of contempt for them - because of some perceived contempt, threat or defiance? Alternatively, did he desire revenge for some unknown cause or for those undetailed insults he records as being given to him?

Despite these conflicts Akhenaten would complete his grandiose temple to the Aten at Karnak, just as his father built Atenist temples and a grandiose luxurious barge dedicated to the Aten, but unlike his father, little if anything now known of would be built for other gods after the first year. Despite the great Atenist temple offering employment to builders in a city full of workers needing employment, the new heretical pharaoh had to put empire wide levees on workers, army officers and court dignitaries to build it.²⁰⁵ This suggests that the new royal couple were so unpopular that those

²⁰⁵ Baikie, p. 254.

who usually worked for the pharaoh would not work for them. It could easily be that Amen's priests were working behind the scenes to block the supply of labour to the pharaoh, even if he was also technically Amen's chief priest. It could also be that the workforce believed that their gods would curse them in the afterlife for blasphemy against the gods. Whatever the cause, this levee clearly indicates trouble in Thebes. This pharaoh, who initially got the traditional and habitual instant obedience, now has to battle with his underlings to get his own way.

Apart from a new perception of Nefertiti's early royal role, Karnak now reveals much more about Atenism and its leaders than several nineteenth and twentieth century narrative creators and theorists could allow for. Although later pharaohs had some of the Karnak temple demolished and its stones reused there decades after the Amarna period ended, the Akhenaten Temple Project has constructed a mosaic section on a new wall. Computer regenerators and their field workers have restored two thousand images from the first years of Akhenaten's reign.²⁰⁶ Apart from Nefertiti's role they show other surprising facts. The supposedly pacifistic heretic king mercilessly vanquishes his enemies, once again a traditional Pharaoh's image, whatever the reality.²⁰⁷ Soldiers are ubiquitous.²⁰⁸ The radical lover of humanity who supposedly wanted to give God's benevolence to all reveals a different reality here. Probably by his wishes, he has been depicted having rows of chamberlains prostrating themselves full length as they grovel in the dust before him. He enters in this traditional ceremony reinforcing obedience and subservience. This was known as kissing the earth.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti*. p. 58.

²⁰⁷ Aldred, pp. 172-173.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*,

²⁰⁹ Redford, p. 119 Figure 7.2.

Whatever his queen had built, her husband had also instituted a massive building program at Karnak, which featured a row of thirty- five very similar, very massive statues of himself.²¹⁰ These temples contained no similar accompanying representation of the traditional gods. What may have been worse to Amenists was how he represented himself. With one centrally located statue in contrast to the idealised images of previous pharaohs Akhenaten would be depicted as so physically grotesque and effeminate that many writers have speculated on the causes and come up with different answers, including that he was castrated, a female transvestite or suffering from assorted diseases which caused his deformities.²¹¹ For decades before the DNA tests disproved the idea, Frolich's and Marfan's diseases were the most plausible and common medical explanations.

In another statue (Plate 18) he has been given an obviously female torso without clothes or genitals.²¹² Perhaps only sculptors employed by extraordinarily hostile and powerful priests who knew they could get away with it would create such a degrading thing. Its existence worked as a challenge to the King's authority by making him bizarre, effete and ridiculous. His comments about unprecedented disrespect might apply here. Although he did order distorted images of himself, this seems a parody of even that order. It may well have been a propaganda piece, implying that after building her own temple, his queen was now the man of the family and her husband the submissive woman. While most writers focus on the odd body, the face also suggests contempt. Goony is the first word that comes to mind: it has the vacuous smile and general look of a fool. If this mockery happened this way and Akhenaten eventually heard of it, this would explain both his "it was worse" comments and the ferocity

²¹⁰ Gardiner, p. 208.

²¹¹ Aldred, quoting the differing opinions of Mariette and Lefèbure, pp. 14-15 and expressing his own. pp. 100-102; Vandenberg, pp. 118-122. In this section he expresses his own opinions and reproduces excerpts from two doctors, Hans E. Kehrler and Karl Abraham.

²¹² Aldred, Plate 2 n.p. text pp. 100-102 p. 105. This illustration also appears in Mark Damen's work.

of his attacks on the Amen cult in his Year 9. His enemies could have placed this thing in the temple after the heretic pharaoh left, a mocking, visual parody of the row of nearby statues that Akhenaten did create, apparently to emphasise his power as they tower over anyone walking along the colonnade towards a temple decorated with images of himself, for himself and about himself. The way two rows of these gigantic statues do not face down to a humans' height, or even face the worshippers, but face each other eighteen times, with eyes staring into each other, oblivious to anything else, suggests a level of narcissistic self-entrancement going beyond even the usual megalomaniac level of self-absorption. Even Nefertiti's self-aggrandizement by slaughtering captives still relates to the world outside herself, even if she dominates. His narcissism opens up another possibility. Perhaps this young pharaoh was so narcissistic that he did not see the temple figure as an insult that he should remove; megalomaniacs seldom see themselves as ridiculous, even when this appears as blatant to others.

Another possibility is that Akhenaten ordered this depiction, but that immediately raises the question of why? Even allowing for cultural differences, creating this statue could easily be seen as a sign of insanity. Others give more charitable explanations, apart from physical or mental disease. Tyldesley sees this as combining the male and female elements in a representation of a god intended for worship, rather than as a realistic portrayal of a man.²¹³ Nicholas Reeves believes this to be a portrait of Nefertiti.²¹⁴ This may be her usurping the male pharaoh's regalia of crook and flail, false beard, crown and cartouche. If so, this was blasphemous and dangerous. Apart from the way the face does not look like her, her early images depict her as lithe, while the figure here is plump with wide hips. The usual modern accreditation goes to Akhenaten and the double cartouche supports this. Other megalomaniacs have often gone into what others perceive as the ridiculous in their orchestrated, bizarre self-depictions. We can think of Roman emperors declaring themselves to be

²¹³ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 102.

²¹⁴ Reeves, p. 165-166.

gods and being depicted that way in sculpture. Robespierre's festival of the supreme being (not quite openly himself) Mussolini's kitschy public buffooneries and Hitler being portrayed in medieval armour as Saint George are amongst other examples which once gave lesser folk a laugh. Rock star royalty recently going in for grotesque facial surgery and then having five-metre-high portrayals of his face floated down the Thames on a barge shows that the royal tendency to creating self-enshrining images which look grotesque to the rest of us cannot be limited to the past.

Akhenaten would usually depict himself as a very tall figure with an elongated physique and face, a prognathous jaw, massive lips and ears and womanly breasts. This grotesque depiction invited medical opinions about deformities, but we now know the invited medical opinions should be from psychiatrists. A more prosaic explanation may well be that this statue was the ancient equivalent of a gigantic clothing dummy, which are not given genitalia because they are meant to be clothed. Did priests intend to cover this thing with ceremonial robes? They sometimes robed statues of Egypt's traditional gods within temples in white linen and cosmetically decorated and perfumed them.²¹⁵

After five years it must have been obvious that Thebes's residents would not be converted to Atenism and the conflict was causing stress, defiance and contempt – and probably an erosion of royal authority leading to defeat if he stayed there. Their attack on the state religion during their five or six years long residence at Thebes seems almost suicidal; the polytheistic religion was the mainstay of the Egyptian empire's stability. Economically and at the kingdom's centre both geographically and spiritually, it was extremely important. On a closer consideration, Amenism was becoming a rival to royalty for being the real power in Egypt. The building of the nearby city of Aten was also a cause for enmity, as it was its own little world, complete with three palaces, an administration centre, residences for the workers, workshops for making leather, pottery, stone jewels, faience, clothes, grain grinders, meat

²¹⁵ Brier and Hobbs, p. 48.

processors, a bakery and wide roads, and stables.²¹⁶ However it was not insular enough as it was so suddenly abandoned that horses were left in stables and died there.²¹⁷ This city was probably abandoned to be replaced by Amarna.

The Thebes situation in itself was a crucial problem, but others seethed below the empire's impressive surface.

By inheriting an empire, even a prosperous, peaceful one, the royal heretics had inherited a problem inherent to all empires. Except for Nubia, Egypt's territories usually had their own administrative ways and indigenous rulers: just as long as they kept their oaths of allegiance and paid their tribute on time Egyptians did not rule harshly.²¹⁸ Despite this policy an empire remains an empire and the lesser beings who have been conquered or even become junior partners in empires resent their situation as exploited inferiors. Eventually that resentment causes conflict of some kind, often when the imperialist power's firm hand loosens. Akhenaten and Nefertiti loosened the royal grip on empire by policies that whatever they intended, could only divide the empire, loosening both royal and religious control. Before their rule the pharaoh was a high priest to a polytheistic priesthood. This dual role meant that royalty and religion were theoretically in tandem. Whatever tensions emerged behind the scenes, the priests and royalty regularly appeared as united in public in the time-honoured rituals that regulated public life. These occasions gave the kingdom a sense of order and security; Atenism set priests and royalty in opposition. Monotheism and polytheism both trying to hold the one position of the official state religion could not be anything else but enemies.

Egypt was dominated not just by a royal family, but also by a religion with a god or goddess for every conceivable aspect of life. Egyptian

²¹⁶ Fernandez and Fessard; Hawass 'Excavations in Western Thebes 2021'

²¹⁷ Ibid., The filmmakers state the point about sudden abandonment, the skeletons of horses in stables are shown without comment

²¹⁸ Wilkinson, p. 266.

stability not only rested on this comprehensive coverage and reassuring rituals, but on the concept of which choices to make so as to gain an eternal afterlife. In their concept of life after death good was rewarded with heaven and evil punished with non-existence – after a trial. As with Medieval Christian Europe, an Egyptian’s life on planet earth was merely a trial and testing period for where they would spend eternity.²¹⁹ Why condemn yourself to eternal non-existence when the powerful goddess Maat would judge your every thought, word and deed while you were being trialled? Maat was the goddess of both truth and justice. All souls after death would face a trial (depicted in Plate 20) before a panel of judging gods. In this papyrus account shown below from around 1300 BC a married couple dressed in white enter while ten gods seated above watch and judge. The twin goddesses Renenutet and Mashkent and the judged one’s soul hovers above in birdlike form. The god Thoth records the verdict. In the centre are the scales where the deceased one’s heart will be weighed. The feather of truth will be dropped and if the heart proves to be good and therefore evenly balanced, the defendant goes before the gods while heaven awaits. If it is evil the scales will tip and the jackal god Ammut waits to devour the wicked.²²⁰ After passing the first test the defendant then faces the forty-two God-judges, who must be identified by personal name and greeted in the right way.²²¹ To pass this test the trialled individual will need the correct forms and protective incantations in *The Book of the Dead*. The priests needed money, so this book was mass-produced as teams of scribes could manage in various forms over the centuries. Each copy had a blank space where the defendant inscribed their name. This emphasised individuality and kept profit margins high by denying re-use of the text.

²¹⁹ *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. Director: Peter Hafner. Narrator: Michael Benyaer. Producer: Morningstar Entertainment. DVD. *History Channel*. 2006. The narrator and several Egyptologists explain aspects of these Egyptian beliefs, using primary source material on screen; ‘Maat.’ In *Wikipedia*.

²²⁰ *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*.

²²¹ Brier and Hobbs, pp. 56-57.

Ancient Egyptian beliefs differed from most religions in believing that preserving their bodies was necessary for an afterlife and that the goods they were buried with, (or at the least representations of them) would go with them. The destruction of the body meant non-existence for eternity and was the most dreaded punishment and fate they knew of. Priests, friends or families usually buried ancient Egyptians with protective amulets and talismans. Even the poorest Egyptians were buried with ceremonies aimed at preservation, unless circumstances were highly unusual.

The good are those who can truthfully make the forty-two negative affirmations. They cover not doing such things as blasphemy, adultery, various forms of thieving, being angry without cause, thieving, killing, eavesdropping, deceiving, indulging in witchcraft, cursing, slandering, making people weep, grieving excessively, being a man of violence, being involved with another's wife and causing disorder.²²² Clearly Egypt's traditional religion was structured to uphold justice, peace, order and harmony, and would eternally reward the good, with entry to a heaven, the land of reeds, where peace and abundance reigned.²²³ That combination of afterlife carrot and stick reward/punishment usually made for a law-abiding society.

While the Atenists would attack polytheism, they still apparently adhered to the belief in the afterlife, preserving bodies with objects. One of their most commonly used objects adopted from the old religion was the ankh symbol as a sign of benevolent life. A new idea within Atenism would be a benevolent, merciful god for all peoples, not just Egyptians.

The Aten cult may have developed under the royal couple as an attempt to unite the empire with its newly conquered peoples in Libya, Nubia, Palestine and Syria. The new religion would also be a way to help assimilate the influx of foreigners without tensions. The Atenists could achieve this through sharing a common religion with one benevolent, vitally important, simply understood symbol that everybody knew and acknowledged in a supernatural way, the sun. Despite this, Akhenaten was

²²² Ibid.,

²²³ Ibid.,

not the sun worshipper he seems in so many fictions and accounts. In 'The Hymn to the Aten' he makes it clear that the sun merely serves as one of the many incantations that the one God could have chosen.

He chose the sun out of benevolence to banish the darkness that causes fear. Just as the ankh sign was a symbol for life's blessings, the sun was as symbol for God. In another lesser known Atenist hymn (reproduced in Appendix I) the writer celebrates the joy of life as God's gift to all creatures and permeates his work with exuberance. This one God was not just a God for the king's people, as was the usual belief across the world of the time. However, these hymns may only express part of the Atenist belief. How accurate a picture of Christian theology would we get based on reading a few of the most popular hymns?

It is notable in those Atenist hymns that they lack the frequent hostility to other peoples evident in other Egyptian culture: Aten shines his benevolence on all that live, both human and animal. This God has a place for "every man." He makes their languages differ and gives them distinct skins. Despite differences from Egypt, different kingdoms, Khor and Kush, also share his light.²²⁴ Less idealistically and less originally, there were obvious benefits to a pharaoh from this belief. As his God's high priest, poet, interpreter and financier/instigator of the Aten's temples, Akhenaten's power would have been secure within the Atenist belief system. Alan Gardiner shrewdly commented that while Akhenaten prayed to his Aten, his subjects just prayed to their Pharaoh.²²⁵ On an Amarna boundary stela he did insist that only he was the pathway to heaven and that he and Nefertiti would rule for millions of years through celebrated jubilees.²²⁶ He then went on to decree where both nobles and commoners

²²⁴ Lichtheim, M. 'The Great Hymn to the Aten.' from *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Volume II. Berkeley. 1976. p. 2. [<http://web.archive.org/web/19990221040703/http://puffin.creighton.edu/theo/simkins/txAtenhtml>]

²²⁵ Gardiner, p. 222.

²²⁶ Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. pp.156-157. The writer reproduces the full inscription from the boundary stone.

would be buried in his utopia. Such talk issued as royal edicts shows not only alienating rampant megalomania, but a fatal flaw within spreading Atenism. Gardiner also implied this in his comment: it gives belief not to an unseen God, as did Islam and Christianity, but to a mortal man. This implicitly raises the question of what happens when that mortal man dies? This problem hits every cult or belief system which has its leader as either the end in itself or the only bridge to God or to some secular utopia.

This problem, if perceived, would have seemed decades away when the young Atenist royal couple first initiated their beliefs as the new religion. The declaration that he would live for millions of years, if seriously believed, meant that it was not a problem to him. It may well be that Atenism delayed what was a massive if insidious problem in the Eighteenth Dynasty. This was the way the Amenist priesthood was well on the way to gaining more land and wealth than the pharaoh's gained, even if technically pharaohs owned all things Egyptian.²²⁷ By the end of the New Kingdom the pharaoh's land ownership had indeed diminished so much that the priests did own more land than the Pharaoh did.²²⁸ The Atenist attack on the Amenists does not look so foolish after considering this threat. Another advantage to developing Atenism was to use a unifying, shared religion to create a unity of all classes, both amongst Egyptians and expatriates and conquered foreigners. This would continue Egypt's stability and prosperity and give it the strength that comes from unity.

If this is what he really intended then his concept was brilliant, but his application of his idea looks weak. Although the later destruction of Atenism leaves little evidence, what evidence we do have shows that no great conversion attempts occurred, just a few smaller ones.

After five strife filled years centred on Thebes and Karnak, Akhenaten began his new capitol and within a year retreated there rather than evangelize his benevolent monotheism to any apparent great extent

²²⁷ Bright, p.39.

²²⁸ Brier and Hobbs, p. 77 p. 83.

throughout his empire.²²⁹ Apart from those Atenist temples in Egypt at Thebes, Memphis and Hermon, he did establish known Atenist temples in the wider empire, at the town of Kawa in Nubia, another in Syria and at a colony or temple near the third Nile cataract in Ethiopia, named Gem-Aten.²³⁰

Given what Parcak's recent Egyptian aerial scans reveal, there may easily be others, even a great many others, remaining to be found. How strong were his evangelising efforts? A few foreign temples were a paltry effort given Egypt's fabulous wealth – or was a manpower shortage of Atenist minded evangelising volunteers the problem? Historians also write of his ignoring threats to northern vassals and allies rather than converting them.²³¹ Perhaps his evangelistic enthusiasm waned in Thebes and realising he would have no success, he left to establish a new capitol where he could easily rule, if not an empire, then a capitol city. Akhenaten's inscribed boundary stela proclamations show that he and his most favoured wife started building a new capitol in Year 5 of his reign and that they had moved there from Thebes in Year 6. Given the low level of building technology in the ancient world, this speed of building was almost miraculous. Even today to build the rudiments of a city for around fifty thousand people and have it include grandiose temples and palaces as well as nearby functioning mines, quarries and wharves in a year or less would be considered astounding. That much of the new capitol was built with very little sensible planning or zoning and in a ramshackle way partially explains the miracle. Building with talats, which were easier to move than great stone slabs and cubes and providing a large workforce of slaves to build with them Provides more evidence for the supposed

²²⁹ Booth, p. 24 pp. 96-99; Gardiner, p. 224; Vandenberg, p. 92. Vandenberg admits the evidence is scanty.

²³⁰ E.A.W. Budge, *Tutankhamen: Amenism, Atenism and Egyptian Monotheism*. New York, 1923. p. 89; Baikie mentions the Syrian temple as at an unknown locale; it has since been found. Baikie alone mentions the Ethiopian example. p. 263.

²³¹ Aldred, pp. 172-173.

miracle. Even so the image of an immaculate, efficient urban utopia is overdrawn.hovels were built near palaces and a shoddy use of building materials being covered over with stone exteriors was common.

Those same stelas reveal his utopian enthusiasm, that he centred the new capitol on himself and that his new religion came out of the Aten Cult.²³² Secondary sources frequently misquote, stating that he said that he would never leave. What primary sources do reveal is that he proclaimed that he was to be buried there and not even the queen can move his body. While this suggests a fissure between the royal couple, it also suggests curbing Nefertiti's power, both by his inscribed order there and by moving away from Thebes. By leaving Thebes Akhenaten was separating Nefertiti from her temple, a source of her power and his loss of it. Although their artists would frequently depict them as equals in Amarna, nothing yet found there would show him as subservient to her as he had been depicted at Karnak. Avoiding those humiliating depictions of himself was a wise move. From what evidence we have, he does seem to have stayed in the Amarna area and to have rarely, if ever, left there. Evidence in documents shows that he was probably planning to lead a military expedition north to confront his enemies just before his unexplained death.



²³² Aldred, pp. 62-63; Gardiner, pp. 212-215; Budge, p. 87.



Plate 18. *Akhenaten (?) at Karnak. Brewmanite/ Creative Commons/Wikimedia*



Plate 19. *Akhenaten at Karnak. He wears symbols of authority, the false beard and the uraeus cobra and holds two others, the crook and the flail in the traditional way. This certainly does look majestic. Wikipedia.*



Plate 20. *The Concept of Maat in action. The judges are at the top while the heart is being weighed in the scales and the deceased waits, as do his attendants and the monster who might devour him. Photographer Edna R. Russman. Wikipedia/ Commons.*

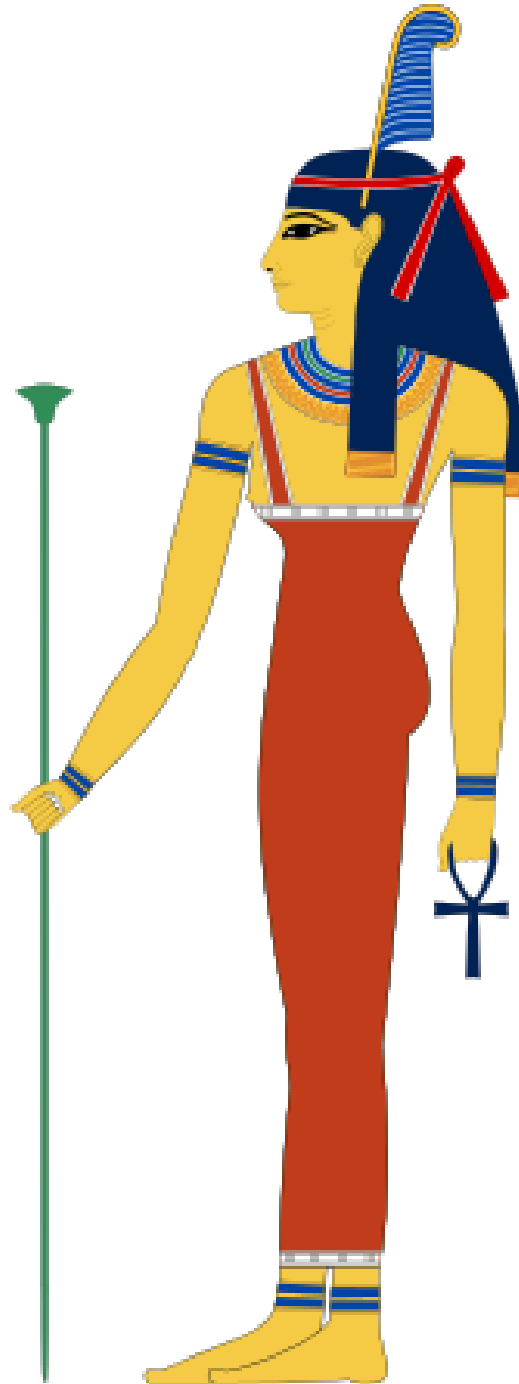


Plate 21. *Maat. Daughter of the sun god Ra. The ostrich feather under her headband is the symbol of truth. The ankh she holds is the symbol of blessed life. This portrait is a modern creation, but very similar to ancient depictions. Copyright Holder Jeff Dahl. Wikimedia.*



Plate 22. *A reconstruction using talats from Akhenaten's Karnak temple. Fletcher's description of the Karnak project being a gigantic jigsaw appears accurate. Author: Jon Bodsworth. Wikipedia.*



Plate 23. An Akhenaten statue from Karnak. During his reign two rows facing each other flanked a road to a Karnak temple. This surviving, albeit battered example now resides in the Cairo Museum. Author: Walaa. CC BY-SA Wikipedia.

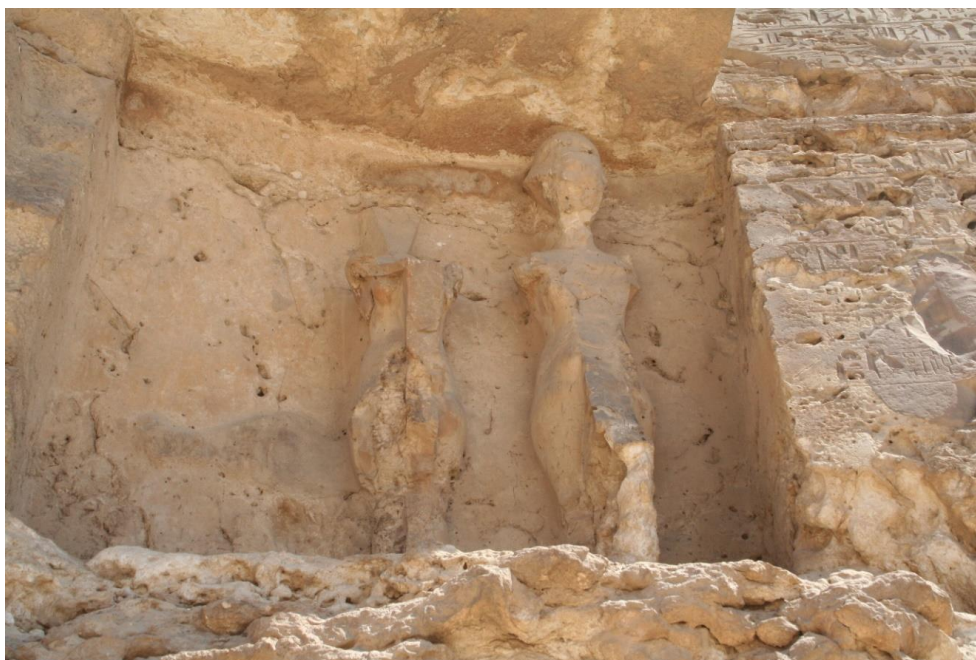


Plate 24. *Akhenaten as depicted in Karnak. While this does give some hint of the facial distortions evident in other works, this is not as extreme and gives a regal impression. Photograph by Jose-Manul Benito Alvarez. Creative Commons/Wikipedia.*

The Amarna Years



Plate 25. *Amarna*. Author: Markh (above) Plate 26. *The smashed niche*. (below) Author: Eisarmer Schütze. Images Wikipedia



The king named the new city Akhet-Aten (city of the Aten) which clearly showed that it would be a religious centre. The similarity to his name showed how closely he linked himself, the city and the new religion. Nefertiti did not rename herself, but at this time she did give herself a new epithet and title: Nefer-Neferu-Aten (fair is the goodness of the Aten).²³³ More breaks from tradition similar to those that they had made in Thebes developed. Akhenaten gave two reasons for this. He claimed that God inspired him to build the capitol and told him where to place the boundary stones. His sacred vision was his second reason.²³⁴

Epilepsy may have induced this vision: such hallucinatory visions are a symptom of megalomania. Some medical evidence for this being an inherited trait has emerged in the examination of his son Tutankhamen's body, who with his hormonal imbalance, showed signs of being an epileptic.²³⁵ Unfortunately, not enough remains of Akhenaten's corpse to make a similar prognosis. Alternatively, his father may have considered the sight of the extraordinarily beautiful sunrises and sunsets (which modern travellers noted) as a supernatural vision. Sunrise across the flat river lands was remarkable.²³⁶ Eyewitness Mary Chubb described how the limestone cliffs of the western boundary would sometimes turn rose, purple and gold.²³⁷ For a worshipper of the sun as a symbol of God this was surely a miraculous sign.

His enclosed area was more than the city of Akhet-Aten. The main Atenist temple was large and lavish, with several rows of altars. The main royal palace was also large and lavish, adjectives which could be applied to almost the whole city, which covered around three thousand acres.²³⁸ It

²³³ Aldred, p. 130; Redford, p. 79 p. 192.

²³⁴ Gardiner, pp. 214-215; Van Mierop p. 385.

²³⁵ *Tutankhamen: The Truth Uncovered*. Producer/ director: Tom Shubberfield. A BBC Documentary. Televised 26th October 2014.

²³⁶ Damen.

²³⁷ Chubb, p. 43.

²³⁸ Todd.

was surrounded by food producing areas, mines, quarries, cemeteries, cliffs and much barren ground. Today Egyptians name the remnants of his city and the surrounding area within his boundaries as Tel el Amarna.²³⁹ In many histories (including this one) his new capitol is referred to by its modern abbreviation, Amarna. Some modern writers think it was an unwisely chosen locale, basing that opinion on it now being mostly devoid of vegetation and being extraordinarily hot, arid and isolated from the major cities.²⁴⁰ Although not immediately obvious, in the ancient world it did have advantages. Although the setting had massive drawbacks, the city's layout was practical for a river city, with agricultural areas, ground suitable for factories and riverside edges making for easily separated quays for the temple, royalty and common usage.²⁴¹ Much of the city stretched out along the Nile's banks, so the river's proximity would make transport, irrigation and domestic water usage easy.²⁴² Across the Nile food growing areas existed and the few fields on the east bank were preserved for food production. The Nile provided ample water, fish and ducks. The river was easily used for transportation and watched for security or flooding. The Nile also reduced heat as well as sand and dust coming from the desert. Nearby were abundant building materials; limestone, clay, sand and alabaster. Being located two hundred miles up from the religious capitol for Amen at Thebes and roughly the same distance from the administrative capitol at Memphis meant that neither major city was being favoured or had much economic or religious influence. The monotheistic pharaoh was also isolated from the Theban priesthood who vexed him. By removing

²³⁹ Van Mieroop, pp. 384-386.

²⁴⁰ Golding, pp. 64-66; Kew's film also shows a barren landscape.

²⁴¹ Chris Sloan, 'Central City of Amarna Model.'

<http://www.thearchitecturestore.co.uk/files/includes/images/city-a4-model-drawing.jpg>;

Vandenberg, reproduced map p. 102; Redford, reproduced map p. 143.

²⁴² Vandenberg, reproduced map p. 102; Mieroop, p. 391; Sloan, *Pharaohs of the Sun*. 'National Geographic Page. The Palace Arrival.' April 2001. p. 1.

[\[http://www.thearchitecturestore.co.uk/NationalGeographic.html\]](http://www.thearchitecturestore.co.uk/NationalGeographic.html) This artistic reconstruction recreates a boat arriving at the quay.

himself he removed the priesthood's major financial link: this was a crippling blow for the Amenist priesthood as they were paid from the coffers of pharaohs, gaining a portion of all war plunder and the labour of enslaved war captives and pharaonic donations of land.²⁴³ Removing himself also gave the priesthood an equally invidious choice, for a high priest to take over the pharaoh's position would have been blasphemous and treasonous: an upheaval in the stability that was at the core of their beliefs. Not to have a leader would have paralysed their hierarchical decision-making processes and traditional ceremonies. The second possibility became the way his removal played out.

Another advantage in establishing his new capitol was that Heliopolis, the empire's sun worshipping religious centre, was close, and being easily and quickly reached, being upriver. This made it easier to protect and influence these sun worshippers and their temples. Isolation was also a military advantage. By being away from the delta Akhenaten had a capitol that could not be easily invaded. The way the Hyksos had rapidly and successfully invaded from the north-east and by seizing the delta, paralysed Egypt, could not happen again with this capitol established virtually in the Kingdom's centre. Amarna's western border provided protection by being sandy, waterless desert. That made it extremely difficult for an army to cross. Any attacking force would have to come down the Nile or march parallel to it and Egypt had a strong navy. In contrast, the other great powers were comparatively weak in naval forces if they had any navy at all. Akhet-Aten's great distance from the other great powers meant that there could be no surprise attacks.

His statement that he chose the site because God came to him in a vision sounds like the delusions of a madman, but while it may be possible to argue with a man, even a pharaoh, who can argue with the will of God? Who can argue with one who merely obeys God's will? Was Akhenaten wily enough to see all this? Like much that he did, where he established his capitol initially looks extremely foolish, but upon consideration shows

²⁴³ Brier and Hobbs, p. 51.

some astuteness. His new capitol did not fail, but was a success: the failure was that it was centred on one man and it would start to die without him.

Looking at maps leads to comparing the area has been to a bow, with the Nile being the string and the northernmost and southernmost points being the bow's tips. The cliffs to the west are roughly shaped like a bow as they narrow at the tips and the land reaches its widest point between the river and the limestone cliffs in the middle, being about three miles wide. The claimed area is about six to eight miles (nearly 10 kilometres to nearly 13 kilometres) long. Aket-Aten's stela served as boundary marks.²⁴⁴ Beyond it to the west are sand and rocks. Except for those few acres suitable for growing crops, the locale was indeed bleak, stony and barren in his time, but what aridity, temperatures and humidity were then remains uncertain.²⁴⁵ Akhet-Aten's population was probably around twenty thousand to fifty thousand, of which perhaps ten thousand formed the elite.²⁴⁶ Even the larger estimate could only have been a very small proportion of the Egyptian Empire's total population.

Completing the essentials in this new capitol quickly came at the cost of shoddy workmanship and apparently no town planning.²⁴⁷ Little if any planning also shows in the way workshops, slums and hovels were crowded into the spaces between the villas of the rich.²⁴⁸ Even burials frequently happened near houses or they were built over.²⁴⁹ The massive

²⁴⁴ Baikie, pp. 265-268. The inscriptions are reproduced in full.

²⁴⁵ Pringle, p. 25; Damen; Kew filmed there. Although he apparently did not intend it, he shows the truth in the descriptions by Pringle and Golding.

²⁴⁶ Booth, p. 26; Silverman, p. 105; Van Mierop estimates 45,000 p. 391; Kew, 30,000.

²⁴⁷ Pringle, p. 25; Gardener, p. 213; Baikie, pp. 275-277; Wilkinson, p. 286.

²⁴⁸ Chubb, pp. 62-63; Baikie, p. 275-276.

²⁴⁹ Anna Stevens, 'Death and the City: The Cemeteries of Amarna in Their Urban Context. 25th September 2017, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*. Cambridge University Press Volume 28 Issue 1 February 2018. pp.103-126. Online version unpaginated.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/cambridge-archaeological-journal/article/death-and->

temple to the Aten was in many architectural ways the opposite of the traditional model. This temple was rectangular, large, made of stone and having parallel columns, all these aspects were as usual.²⁵⁰ However no decorative statues were present, there was no roof and the usual pattern of an imposing statue of a God concealed in a dark room did not exist there: instead, stone altars had Nefertiti's name inscribed; apparently this was unprecedented.²⁵¹ The lack of a roof was so that the sun could dominate proceedings, where residents and visitors worshipped it as a symbol of the one God.²⁵² Architects also placed tombs in an opposite way to the usual Egyptian tradition. Usually polytheists placed tombs westwards, so that departing spirits would journey westwards towards the setting sun, but at Akhet-Aten monotheists placed them on the eastern bank, facing the dawn, as if to greet the sun or to be covered by its rays for the longest possible time.²⁵³ In 'The Hymn to Aten' the writer, very probably Akhenaten, expressed a fear of darkness (which he attributed to being shared by all living things) being overcome with dawn.²⁵⁴ This fear was inherited from traditional Egyptian religious belief, as was the cure, dawn. In both Amenist and Atenist belief dawn came because of imploring prayers.²⁵⁵ Once again this was not as silly as it initially seems, but was a shrewd move. Successful prayers gave the person praying a sense of confidence, of security and of being blessed and happily being linked to the god – and what prayer could be more certain of success than that the sun will rise tomorrow?

[the-city-the-cemeteries-of-amarna-in-their-urban-context/DBD79DE7272127369D22A805525D3D08](http://www.thearchitecturestore.co.uk/Templepage.html) accessed 26th January 2022

²⁵⁰ Sloan, p. 2. 'The visit to the Temple' text and artistic recreation, [<http://www.thearchitecturestore.co.uk/Templepage.html>]; Vandenberg, The first evidence is a labelled overhead diagram p. 106 text p. 105 and pp. 107-108.

²⁵¹ Booth, p. 23.

²⁵² *Ibid*,

²⁵³ Van Mierop, p. 392.

²⁵⁴ Lichtheim, p. 1.

²⁵⁵ 'Hymn to the Aten.; Brier and Hobbs, pp. 43-44.

Trade, tribute and foreign representatives came to Akhet-Aten and to the great festival held there in Year 12 of Akhenaten's reign.²⁵⁶ These trade connections reached far off lands, as Aegean and Cretan pottery found in Egypt show. Fragments of mother of pearl, lapis lazuli and ivory were also found at Thotmosis's Amarna workshop, showing that goods were imported to Akhet-Aten from very long distances away, even as far as Afghanistan.²⁵⁷

Was the move to Amarna an abandonment of ruling Egypt's empire?

The sometimes fictional, sometimes biographical image of an indolent Akhenaten, obsessed with his Aten, living isolated at Amarna and ignoring the collapse of his empire is overdrawn. This image depends to some extent on the Amarna letters, in which much of the correspondence comes to several eighteenth dynasty pharaohs from the northern vassals and other rulers. They are often about not getting gifts, help or replies.²⁵⁸ Their reports are also full of complaints and references to trouble, and appeals for military help against raiders and traitors.

Highly selective quotes from the Amarna letters reinforce this image of a useless, religiously obsessed pharaoh blithely evading responsibilities in his secluded palace at Amarna. Most modern writers do not mention that these vassals and city governors had garrisons and Akhenaten told them to use the troops available. In the *Wikipedia* entry 'Akhenaten' they do reproduce two of his replies which reveal his concern with the situation in the north and contain clear and decisive instructions. He did send a commissioner to investigate, but he was murdered.²⁵⁹ The loyal mayor of the great port city of Byblos, Rib-Haddi, who communicated this, also mentions archers who have come to an earlier request and requests that archers promised earlier by their king be sent with all speed as Gubia

²⁵⁶ Silverman, p. 101.

²⁵⁷ Kew.

²⁵⁸ See sources for the Amarna Letters. In this chapter. *Wikipedia*; Redford, p. 195

²⁵⁹ Rib—Haddi, Mayor of Byblos, A letter to the Pharaoh. EA362. 'The Amarna Letters.' *Wikipedia*.

remains under threat.²⁶⁰ Although the letter starts with the customary sycophantic salutations and literal references to grovelling in the dust before the pharaoh, Rib-Haddi goes on to sound dubious about Akhenaten sending more archers and writes that people say “There will be no archers” and he fears troops will desert if they go on the offensive and that some mayors are disloyal. He concludes by saying that the pestilence in the lands has been “over for a long time” and appeals to the king to come.²⁶¹ This suggests that Akhenaten had previously given pestilence in the area as a valid reason for not shipping troops there. This was obviously wise as they could have been wiped out by the contagion or if surviving, brought it back to Egypt’s major centres. What can only be remarkable is the mixture of disrespect and distrust as Rib-Haddi expresses his and his people’s doubts about their pharaoh keeping his promises to come to their aid. His words reveal that despite some of his efforts Akhenaten’s control of this part of his empire is clearly disintegrating. Rib-Haddi warns parts of his ruling forces are either changing sides or abandoning him. This communication is not the only indication that this was so. Ayyab, another city-state governor, professes loyalty, but writes that the enemy took three towns from him in war.²⁶² In his letter to the vassal Intarauta, ruler of Akšapa, Akhenaten has sent an envoy and food ahead for the coming archers, has infantry and chariots are coming and he writes of cutting off the head of the king’s enemies.²⁶³ The Ruler of Tabu sends a letter that he has preparations ready for archers who are coming and he has “troops and chariots ready for wherever they go.”²⁶⁴

In the letter to Aziru (quoted below) Akhenaten expresses concern about the turmoil in Canaan. Were these the only responses that he gave or the only ones we have? The Amarna archives are incomplete, undated and often do not make it clear which pharaoh gets or gives communications.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.,

²⁶¹ Ibid.,

²⁶² Ayyub, letter to Akhenaten, EA 364. ‘The Amarna Letters.’ *Wikipedia*.

²⁶³ Akhenaten Letter to Intarata , EA 367 ‘The Amarna Letters.’ *Wikipedia*.

²⁶⁴ Letter of the Ruler of Tabu, to Akhenaten EA 205 ‘The Amarna Letters.’ *Wikipedia*.

While most historians write of Akhenaten's reign in the north as one of uncaring attitudes shown by nothing being done in the crisis the previously mentioned facts suggest otherwise. Donald B. Redford, a historian usually very critical of Akhenaten's policy in the empire's northern parts, writes that his foreign policy at the other end of his empire, in Nubia was "followed with determination and intelligence."²⁶⁵ Was this because Nubian gold was a necessity? Or was this because the situation there was clearer and with more loyal and decisive local commanders, he could achieve a victory? In Year 9 of his reign a rebellion there was crushed, with several hundred rebels being killed in battle and the captives being impaled on stakes. That may have been a local commander's order: it may have been Akhenaten's. Years later boasting of going to cut off the head of the leading enemy in the north suggests the king gave these cruel orders. Despite the praise of peace in the Aten's hymns, the loving depiction of family life and his failure to send requested armies north to crush rebellions, the royal couple were definitely not pacifists or even usually irenic. While it could be argued that the militaristic and traditional depictions at Karnak were done to meet expectations, at Akhet-Aten no such expectations existed. At this new capitol the artistic, archaeological and written evidence of military involvement and a ruthless violence comes across as even more determined than at Karnak.

In Plate 28 Nefertiti has one arm raised with something like a scimitar, as with the other she holds a kneeling female captive's head up by her hair as she is obviously about to behead her. The captive raises her hands in supplication, either for mercy from Nefertiti or from the god she will soon meet. This representation may be an imaginary scene of the type pharaohs were expected to use to intimidate underlings and visitors, an "I have claws" routine to show what the ruler can be capable of doing. Considering how often commentators on this royal couple talk of their depicting "living in truth" this murderous scene may well represent a reality. Life in Akhet-Aten was very different to the popular image of some ancient prototype of a pacifist haven. In one reply to the traitor Aziru

²⁶⁵ Redford, p. 194.

Akhenaten threatens to have him and his family go under the royal axe, not just for his evil deeds, but also as a warning not to set “words of evil in thy heart.”²⁶⁶ Axing a whole family to death for the father’s thought crime while praying for peace? It would be easy to dismiss this as too contradictory to be possible if we did not have the examples of other dictators, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and Mao, all promising world peace after killing or imprisoning everyone who disagrees with them. Their assorted followers, who recruit within peace movements, (usually by reciting pacifist platitudes they really hold in contempt) are an example anyone can easily find.

This letter and depictions of Nefertiti as an executioner show the dual nature of Atenism: idealistic words and tyrannical deeds. The sudden purges conducted by Atenists show a pattern that would emerge many times in history: the practice of putting people on an enforced path to utopia; then the endless, dreary, often nightmarish journey towards the mirage, organised and controlled by an idealistic if hypocritical tyranny. Idealistic works as an ambiguous word: it can mean having humane, principled visions. Idealistic can also mean being disastrously out of touch with practical realities: the two meanings can often go together in the one situation.

As is and was a frequent pattern, idealistic plans being made into reality began with the first step being the destruction of what was considered bad and backward. In his Year 9, Akhenaten ordered that across Egypt, Amenist temples, obelisks, statues and shrines should be smashed; this was done using Nubians and foreign troops.²⁶⁷ Even the large tomb of the last vizier for Amenophis III was systematically defaced because he decorated the tomb with images of the traditional gods.²⁶⁸ This

²⁶⁶ Baikie, pp. 371-372.

²⁶⁷ Reeves, pp. 154-155.

²⁶⁸ ‘Curse of the Mummy.’ Directors and shooting producers: Nicholas Freund and Ian Glatt. Producer: Sue Davidson. Narrator John Barratt. *Lost Treasures of Ancient Egypt*. Episode 8 Series 2. *National Geographic*. 1st September 2020. Shown S.B.S. Television 1st October 2021.

was despite initially continuing in his role for Akhenaten as the highest ranking figure in government outside the royal family. Only one portrait, (presumably of the vizier) survived because it was chipped off and fell in the sand face down.²⁶⁹ The filmmakers who show this state that the Vizier's body was not in the tomb: to them this shows that Akhenaten had him murdered.²⁷⁰ Perhaps, but absence is thin evidence and other explanations abound. The filmmakers showed examples from around 350 other bodies of commoners found in the tomb, some with their mouths smashed in, so they could not exist in the after life. They also had hands and feet amputated. The filmmaker's explanation was that tomb robbers were doing this to protect themselves from the spirit of the violated dead. They state that these were the mummies of those who had come to the tomb to venerate the vizier as a martyr to Amun. This idea, while plausible, needs stronger evidence. Investigating those mummies for possible death by violence and their year of burial being in the Atenist years will be necessary before that conclusion can be accepted.

Akhet-Aten differed from anywhere else in that its royal architecture contained references to no other gods existing, but those using the Aten's words in their edicts even instructed polytheistic cartouches should be scraped, particularly those with the word 'gods.'²⁷¹ Despite this edict, even in Akhet-Aten archaeological workers found some polytheistic inscriptions and amulets, shabbat and inscriptions. Even so, this pharaoh was indeed the first royal monotheist and the idea that he tolerated other gods and beliefs seems based mainly on the way he tolerated what he had to - until he could strike. The purge or its effects went as far as defacing scarabs and decorations on make-up jars. Nicholas Reeves, raises the possibility that Akhenaten's zealots or mercenaries did not always enforce this, but a

²⁶⁹ Ibid.,

²⁷⁰ Ibid.,

²⁷¹ Reeves, pp. 154-155; Fletcher, p. 18; 'Atenism' *Wikipedia*. This entry contains three unnumbered photographs of this censorship on Amenist carvings.

fearful populace indulged in cautious self-censorship.²⁷² All this repression appears as far from the idealistic, humanistic pacifist image that emerged in the Edwardian era and sometimes still appears in popular culture.

From the early dynasties until Amenophis III, Pharaohs were depicted as stilted figures, gigantic and manly. Frequently they were depicted as warriors, single-handedly slaughtering or enslaving foreign enemies by the dozen, killing lions or conferring as equals with welcoming gods: this style returned later in the reign of Tutankhamen.²⁷³ Recent scientific tests show that traditional images of Pharaohs could be even further from reality than in Atenist art. In one example (Plate 63) Tutankhamen is depicted riding a chariot while slaying his enemies: given his physical state where he needed crutches or walking sticks to be a pedestrian, this must be unlikely at best. The numbers, finances, status and artwork of the new monotheistic temples throughout the empire remains unclear after the royal family's move to Akhet-Aten. The fact that we know of the Syrian temple from a surviving Akhet-Aten inscription shows that monotheists in the new capitol had not forgotten them, even if they made no obvious evangelizing efforts.²⁷⁴

Whatever the reality, the inscriptions, art and architecture of his capitol make Akhenaten seem the honest, modest and generous founder of a utopia. Apart from already mentioned facial depictions, his grotesque portrayals show him as pot belied, with spindly limbs and a weak chest with breasts. His head appears oddly shaped with a prognathous jaw and androgynous facial features.²⁷⁵ In some depictions he is only

²⁷² Reeves, pp. 154-155.

²⁷³ Carter, Illustration of a war scene on a casket p. 47 and an enlarged detail p. 81. Illustration of a hunting scene p. 91, enlarged detail, p. 88. Examples of traditional art are in Ceram, C.W.. *Gods, Graves & Scholars: The Story of Archaeology. Second Edition.* London:, 1971. War scene illustrations of Pharaoh Sethos are on p. 120. The Lord Ti Illustration appears on p. 134; James, T.G. H. *Egypt Revealed: Artist-Travellers in an Antique Land.* London, 1997. Front and endpaper illustrations. Illustrations on pages 40 43 83 90 91 and 181. Illustrations p. 40 p. 43 p. 83 (modern copy used) p. 90 p. 91 p. 181.

²⁷⁴ Budge, p. 87.

²⁷⁵ Aldred, p. 63 text. Plates 1 to 6 20 21 26n.

distinguishable from Nefertiti by their crowns and cartouches.²⁷⁶ This may reflect being related or siblings. Choosing someone physically resembling himself as the chief wife shows the narcissism so common with megalomaniacs.

Such unflattering depictions and so much of the bright, relaxing Amarna art go directly against the idea of a megalomaniac ruler at Akhet-Aten. Ancient Egyptian art depicting royalty always flattered and glorified, but this changed briefly from just before the Atenist era till just after it. The depictions of flora and fauna from there have a whimsicality, a joy in life depicted in homely details that also go against the usual megalomaniac cultural creations. This contradiction in evidence and similar examples cause more problems for assessing this most enigmatic and controversial of all the pharaohs.

Wall carvings show him as life sized and in modest guises, surrounded by his wife and six daughters.²⁷⁷ Especially in comparison to previous pharaohs he also seems modest through these family portrayals. This modesty appears reinforced because he and Nefertiti are depicted as equals: they are both usually under the Aten's rays, receiving its blessings, frequently approaching each other symmetrically. Narcissistic certainly, but megalomaniacs rarely share the stage with their own kind or allow others such prominence.

Art, architecture, and inscriptions at Akhet-Aten suggest a paradise. Much of the most vividly coloured, delightful and natural art of the ancient world decorates its walls.²⁷⁸ In another refreshing contrast to the ponderous, obsequious depictions and violent topics of so much ancient Egyptian decorative architecture we see flowers, birds, feasts and processions are ubiquitous.²⁷⁹ These works create the impression of life

²⁷⁶ Aldred, Plate 31; Delia Pemberton, *The Glories of Ancient Lands: Treasures of the Pharaohs*. London; 2004. p. 97. Pemberton reproduces a reconstructed wall illustration.

²⁷⁷ Aldred, Plates 5 and 20 n.p.; Vanderberg, p. 89. Reproduced wall illustrations p. 85 p. 86 p. 89.

²⁷⁸ Van Meiroop, p. 387.

²⁷⁹ Bratton, p. 94. Vanderberg p. 107 p. 110.

being celebrated: sensuality, beauty, abundance, whimsicality and optimism abound. The three hymns to the Aten reach these same emotions. God gives sunlight and warmth: the only fear is darkness, which he banishes with every dawn.²⁸⁰ Implicit in this idea is that goodness always wins. Akhenaten shows his god's generosity and his own with his words "Abundant are the rewards which the Aton (sic) knows to give when his heart is pleased."²⁸¹ He also promises his priests that "they shall eat the food of Pharaoh" and that "There is no poverty for him who hath set thee in his heart."²⁸² This was more than rhetoric. Amarna carvings show the royal family on a balcony, tossing necklaces to the assembled believers below. Artisans often depicted banquets, so when he wrote in 1988 Aldred assumed everyone at Akhet-Aten was well fed and Bratton goes further stating that "slaves were not oppressed" and that "all were happy in their work."²⁸³ With artistic evidence such as this, no surprises emerge when many moderns interpret Akhet-Aten as a utopia.²⁸⁴ Recent archaeological efforts of both *National Geographic* and *The Akhenaten Temple Project* have since reinforced this view. Both published artist's reconstructions which recreated bright, pleasing and plausible images of celebrations at Nefertiti's temple and the new capitol's temples. Paintings of ships arriving on the quays and temples at Akhet-Aten have this same appeal.²⁸⁵

These images may be close to the historic reality - of the view at the quay or the temple gates, but they are very far from being the full story. Even apart from the previously mentioned Year 9 purges the planet's long and abundant track record for attempts at utopia should make us sceptical concerning this impression of this first known utopia. From this pharaoh onwards the world has seen a great many attempts at utopia started by a great many leader/saviours. They have points in common with each other

²⁸⁰ Lichtheim, pp. 1-2; Bratton develops this theme in Chapter VI 'O Living Aten.' pp. 104-120.

²⁸¹ Bratton, p. 92.

²⁸² Ibid..

²⁸³ Aldred, 1996 reprint. p. 271, p. 274.

²⁸⁴ Bratton, Chapter V 'The Dream City.' pp. 84-103. Chapter VI 'O Living Aton' pp. 104-120; Vanderberg, Chapter 6 "The City of Dreams." pp. 95-123.

²⁸⁵ Sloan, previous citation; Strange, previous citation. Unfortunately, these interesting illustrations are not in the public domain.

and with Akhenaten. In their dreams they are going to build these brave new worlds very fast, they will be very big and often start on virgin ground. In the initial stages at least, they usually emanate a messianic atmosphere originating with the leader/saviour. Despite cheery propaganda images they are usually dismal failures. Notable examples would include Calvin's Geneva, Russia's Potemkin villages under Catherine the Great, America's 1840s New Harmony Movement, Bolshevik rule in Russia, Stalin's collectivisation of the peasantry and his Five-Year Plan of 1929-1934, Henry Ford's 1920s Brazilian utopia, Hitler's paradise for all healthy racially pure Germans, Mao's Great Leap Forward and his subsequent Cultural Revolution, Cambodia Year Zero, reverend Jones's Jonestown, Gaddafi's Green Revolution and the caliphate of Isis.

The 1930s Moscow rail system shows utopia's high cost even when utopians do succeed at some point. This rail system worked efficiently and still dazzles with its palatial stations, but a diversion of funding that should have gone to finance housing, destroying the beautiful "in the way" architecture, enforced horrific work conditions and a massive death toll. A successful transport utopia came at a high cost.²⁸⁶

Similarly, Akhet-Aten's richer sections dazzled, but came at a similar high cost in exploitation for those who built it. Archaeological evidence incontrovertibly proves this. That conclusion started becoming clearer when in 1977 Barry Kemp began excavations at Amarna, bringing in specialist teams in assorted relevant sciences. He worked there for thirty-five years.²⁸⁷

His gives a different and detailed picture of Atenist life there developed through his decades of research. Kemp states: "the whole city was there to serve the king and court."²⁸⁸ In Akhet-Aten beneath the beautiful architecture, its illustrations and its vivid paint, lies rushed and

²⁸⁶ Leo Gruliov, *Moscow*, Amsterdam, 1978. p. 14 p. 20 pp. 56-67. Edward Crankshaw, *Khrushchev*. London, 1966. pp. 88-98.

²⁸⁷ Pringle, p. 27; Ranieri.

²⁸⁸ Pringle, p. 28.

shoddy workmanship.²⁸⁹ This works as a literal and figurative example of Amarna's realities. He also noted Akhenaten's desire to build on virgin ground, without making the comparisons just made.²⁹⁰ A twenty-first century University of Arkansas excavation team focused on another Amarna workers' cemetery. They analysed two hundred skeletons, releasing their results in 2013. They virtually matched those results from Kemp's team.²⁹¹ Starting in 2010 further excavations from nearly a decade of research by archaeologist Anna Stevens and others in the University of Cambridge team came to the same evidence-based broad conclusions as those of Kemp and also the University of Arkansas team. In the 2019 television documentary *Top Ten Mummies of Egypt* archaeologist Anna Stevens does make one point of difference, putting the weight of the talats at up to seventy kilos. She showed interviewer Bettany Hughes bits of human bone and teeth on the ground and the analysed obviously deformed skeleton of a twelve-year old worker.²⁹² Like the other teams' archaeologists, Stevens gives an age range of seven to twenty-four at the time of death for most workers.²⁹³ This range matches those in the graphs in her 2017 article 'Death and the City: The Cemeteries of Amarna in their Urban Context.' In this article she also gives an approximate total of between ten and thirteen thousand known dead from the worker's cemeteries at Amarna; although in the later interview she mentions that possibly forty-five thousand within the workforce died there.²⁹⁴ Given that

²⁸⁹ Redford pp. 144-145; Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 117; Wilkinson, p. 286.

²⁹⁰ Kew, Kemp speaks on camera.

²⁹¹ 'Archaeology Newsroom,' 'Dark Side of the Sun: New Look at Heretic Pharaoh's Reign.' *Archaeology & Arts*. Posted March 2013. <https://www.archaeology.wiki/blog/2013/03/14/thedark-side-of-the-sun/> accessed 28th February 2019.

²⁹² Bettany Hughes, (writer and presenter) *Top Ten Mummies of Ancient Egypt*. Shown 20th January 2019. SBS. Directed and produced by Russell England. MY5. Studios. England. 2019.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*,

²⁹⁴ Hughes.

bits of bone lie over much of Amarna's surface and that the documentary is two years or more on from the article and was made while excavations continued, the higher figure is more likely. Given the way that high death tolls are unpublicised by the tyrants who cause them and unnoticed or explained away by their followers, this should not surprise.

Obviously for the majority of residents' their lives were absolutely nothing like the beautiful depictions for royalty: Atenists exploited them to make those beautiful things a reality for royalty and their courtiers, while forced to create the opposite for themselves. Crowded, filthy, vermin-infested hovels were common in this supposed utopia.²⁹⁵ Tyldesley also mentions armed police, foreign troops, fortifications and soldiers resident in this supposed pacifist paradise and rightly asked were they used to keep enemies out or citizens and workers in? ²⁹⁶ Builders established one worker's area which they walled near high cliffs with the only exit being guarded, probably by soldiers.²⁹⁷ Possibly police or foreign mercenaries had this role. The police headquarters was adjacent to the rear of the main palace.²⁹⁸ This suggests that royalty was much concerned with surveillance and repression.

Wilkinson wrote an overview of ancient Egyptian history and has no axe to grind either for or against this heretic king. He presents a similar picture to that of Kemp's team and that of the University of Arkansas researchers, Stevens and Tyldesley, all also working separately and coming to the same very similar, and sometimes matching conclusions.²⁹⁹ Worker's

²⁹⁵ Pringle, p. 28. Booth, p. 26; Strange, 'The city of Akhet-Aten.' p. 1; Bratton admits this, see p. 103.

²⁹⁶ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 119.

²⁹⁷ Strange, 'The City of Akhet-Aten.' p. 1.

²⁹⁸ Wilkinson, p. 297.

²⁹⁹ Wilkinson, pp. 291-297. Kemp, Stevens and The University of Arkansas team have citations on these points through much of this chapter.

skeletons reveal why when researchers examined the remains in detail.³⁰⁰ Of the three hundred and fifty bodies found in one worker's cemetery 67% had broken bones and 77% had osteoarthritis, caused by hauling water for the gardens and also for construction, which as ancient pictures at Akhet-Aten show, usually consisted of one man hauling a talat brick weighing around 150 pounds.³⁰¹ Two of the university team members found just lifting a talat exhausting.³⁰² The University of Arkansas investigation into two hundred skeletons came to the same conclusion about lifting talats, with over 75% of the skeletons suffering arthritis in the spine and limbs, suggesting heavy labour. Wilkinson's find of low life expectancy reinforces this idea - teenagers and others barely living to an estimated thirty-five and suffering arthritis? Exactly the same percentage in The University of Arkansas investigation matches Kemp's earlier study for experiencing healed or healing injuries. Those workers aged between three (child labour was common) and twenty-five frequently suffered from dietary deficiencies, particularly scurvy and rickets.³⁰³ As this suggests, children were malnourished, with their teeth also showing sign of malnutrition and their skeletons showing constant use of muscles from hard labour.³⁰⁴ Investigations by the University of Cambridge team bear all this out.³⁰⁵ Despite loving depictions of their royal children, affection or even basic concern for children was clearly an extremely selective process at the capitol. As the area was small and after the first year of the city's construction the royal couple frequently travelled down the royal road where builders were raising constructions, they must have known how their workforce suffered. Obliviousness to the sufferings of others, especially when they have caused it, is another sign of megalomania.

³⁰⁰ Pringle, p. 29.

³⁰¹ Pringle, p. 29. Booth also mentions many spinal injuries p. 26; Archaeology Newsroom.

³⁰² Pringle p. 27 p. 29; Booth, p. 26.

³⁰³ Archaeology Newsroom.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.,

³⁰⁵ Stevens,

A few years before archaeologists revealed the conditions of these workers, Fletcher assessed how the Atenist elite there ate, based on ancient Amarna descriptions, art, reliefs, jar docket listings and food remnants found by archaeologists.³⁰⁶ These combined sources makes for an extensive list: Beef, lamb, fish, duck, geese, oxen, chicken, wine, beer, milk, honey, dates, watermelon, grapes, figs, pastries, wheat, barley, bread, onions, garlic, beans, chickpeas, lentils, lettuce, cucumbers, olives and olive oil and the seeds of sesame, aniseed, caraway and coriander. The Aten's temples needed so much bread that a hundred bakeries worked daily. One of these amongst the cities' granaries covered around twenty thousand square feet.³⁰⁷ Examining an Atenist priest's mummy revealed a health hazard indeed; over-indulgence in meat had led to trouble with the arteries ³⁰⁸ Flesh was common indeed: one relief shows Akhenaten strangling a duck. While the court regularly banqueted and hundreds of temple altars were loaded with ample food, their workers suffered from hunger, anaemia, scurvy, malnutrition and stunted growth, all caused by inadequate diets.³⁰⁹ No contemporary record mentions it, but from Wilkinson's forensic work on the skeletons we know that over half the workforce died in their late teens, most were dead by thirty-five and only a few reached ages in their forties. ³¹⁰ This was in the same place where carvings show offering tables in the temple piled high with nutritious food as offerings to Aten. What happened to that food? Priests may have given it to temple workers and free residents. It may have wilted, wizened and rotted in the sun, quite possibly while the starving workers herded into temple services by guards stared at it while Akhenaten or his priests chanted beautiful hymns about

³⁰⁶ Fletcher, pp. 301-308.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 304 p. 305.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 302.

³⁰⁹ Pringle p. 27; Booth, p. 26; Todd, This filmmaker shows in a screen model where the large number of temple tables were and earlier in the documentary mentions the hundreds of workers using talats.

³¹⁰ Wilkinson, p. 291.

the goodness of the Aten, his compassion for all and his benevolent generosity to the brotherhood of man.

It is unsurprising that archaeologists have found, even in this capitol, pendants and paintings providing evidence for continuing the old religion, especially amongst the workers.³¹¹ Akhenaten apparently did not try to win over the underclass, through generosity or improving living standards, even in Akhet-Aten. His sunny paradise was apparently only for royalty, priests and courtiers. As Doctor Jerome Rose points out, something must have been very wrong in the capitol of an extraordinarily wealthy empire to have drastic food shortages.³¹² Fletcher's account shows that scarcity with food was not the problem. That something Rose mentions is either extraordinary callousness or the common fault of megalomaniacs, of being so in love with a utopian idea that its believers were oblivious to both obvious realities in front of them and their own hypocrisies.

Despite the abundant food and drink, grand architecture, gold and luxury, Akhet-Aten may have been a fool's paradise even for the inner circle. Writer after writer describes the Amarna tombs for the nobles, courtiers and prominent individuals, where ubiquitously Akhenaten's speeches, his sun god and his depictions existed. Apparently, few moderns give importance to the fact that even in death there was no getting away from him or his relentless god.

Just as ubiquitous red stars, medieval crosses, swastikas, crescents with stars and the hammer and sickle started as symbols of liberation, but became oppressive, so do the Aten's ubiquitous rays and ankhs become pervasive symbols of a belief dominating life. Akhenaten's words and the high level of sycophancy in the court reinforce this impression.³¹³ Vizier Ay even requested permission to kiss the ground where Akhenaten and

³¹¹ Pringle p. 29; 22 Tyldesley, *Nefertiti*, p. 83; Stevens. photographic evidence used.

³¹² Archaeology Newsroom, Rose directly quoted.

³¹³ Wilkinson, p. 297; Baikie, Chapter X 'The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire as seen in the Amarna Letters.' pp. 342-391. *passim*. Although this chapter provides salient examples, many others appear in his work and those of virtually every other biographer.

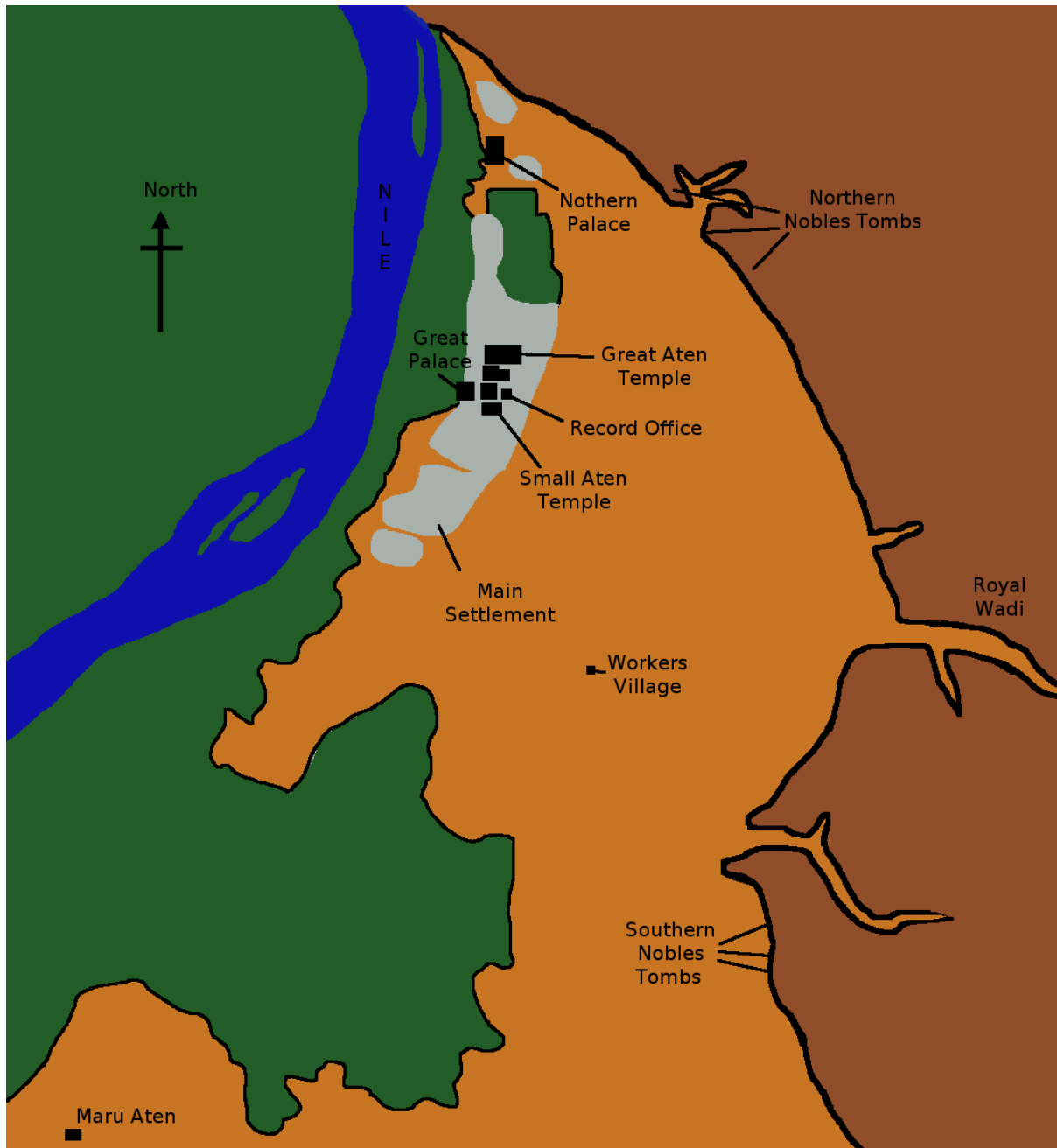


Plate 27. *Map of Amarna by Marh. 2005. Wikipedia/Creative Commons.*



Plate 28. *Nefertiti executes a captive.* Author: *Captmondo.* Boston Museum of Fine Arts Wikipedia.

Nefertiti stood while praising her beauty and sweet voice.³¹⁴ His praise comes from an inscription in Ay's first and unused tomb, decorated with the Aten. Even in their tombs Atenists were allowed little individuality: the royal couple were depicted even there. Enthusiasm, either sycophantic or not, was enforced as Akhenaten promised that upon rising from sleep he would use his power against anyone who ignored his teachings.³¹⁵ This

³¹⁴ Fletcher, Ay quoted. pp. 138-139.

³¹⁵ Baikie, pp. 371-372. Akhenaten quoted.

was not just rhetoric as his far-reaching purge of all aspects of daily life in Egypt's empire showed.

Were the labourers and slaves the only ones who were oppressed and resentful? Reliefs show a large armed contingent of over forty protecting the Pharaoh when he moved around the city.³¹⁶ After seeing this Fletcher identifies this bodyguard by their hairstyles and costumes as a mixture of Egyptians, Nubians and Syrians who were all probably mercenaries; his inner circle included several highly placed foreigners.³¹⁷ This recalls Roman emperors, fearful of the populace and their generals, ruling while being protected by German mercenaries and Lenin with his elite regiment of Latvian mercenaries and highly placed foreigners such as Dzerzhinsky, the Polish head of Lenin's secret police, ruling over a sullen Russia. Once again, this ancient bodyguard shows Akhenaten being astute - or was it his wife? As usual, mercenary foreigners were unlikely to overthrow their paymaster. They would have remained unswayed by concerns over angering the foreign god Amen, nor worried about their leader's disastrous policies against Egyptians. Coming from peoples conquered by Egypt, they probably laughed up their sleeves at the havoc and enjoyed destroying aspects of Egyptian religion in the Year 9 purges. How much should be made of this? Standard Egyptian practice was for every pharaoh's palace to have a palace guard.³¹⁸ Their composition was another matter: using foreigners suggests that this pharaoh did not trust his own army.

Amazingly, from the evidence we have, it becomes clear that the army stayed loyal to him, despite his persecution of their traditional religion. Mark Damen has shrewdly speculated that the army was like royalty, becoming suspicious of the growing power of the priesthood and may have been losing out in budgeting to the ever-enriching priesthood. This certainly goes beyond being just a possibility. Some proportion of

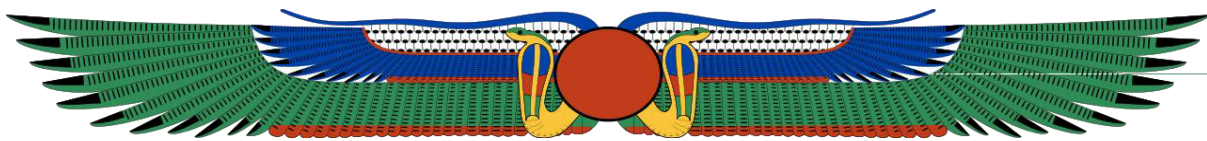
³¹⁶ Fletcher, pp. 88-89. Fletcher reproduces a drawing of the relief. Figure 26. p. 90.

³¹⁷ Fletcher, p. 89; Wilkinson also gives this identification, p. 297.

³¹⁸ Briers and Hobbs, p. 85.

their plunder was also regularly going to the Amenists before Akhenaten, but judging by the unrepaired temples, not during his reign. Another likelihood must be that Akhenaten may have been paying the army more than they ever had earned before. Unless they gain plunder or higher pay, troops do not usually like going on long distances to campaign and although he reinforced the north, he definitely authorised only one campaign. This was the Egyptian victory in gold-rich Nubia, where the troops brought back slaves, gold and almost certainly unrecorded plunder for themselves and their pharaoh. The fact that Akhenaten's one full campaign was a success would have boosted morale and loyalty, especially as it was a lucrative success.

Egypt's army was not prone to coups; if they happened, they would have needed great provocation: their disloyalty would be unrecorded. How onetime Atenist officer Horemhab, who was not royalty by birth, eventually became pharaoh remains unknown. So little can as yet be certain about the different Atenist ruler's suspicious ends that military coups remain possible. Although Akhenaten and his immediate successors died in a time of instability and even conflict, unfortunately neither the records nor the archaeology give any definite conclusions as to why any of the four Atenist rulers reigned briefly and three died young.



The Beginnings of Decline at Amarna

The celebrations at Akhet-Aten in Year 12 of his reign marked the high point in the reigns of the Atenist rulers. At that event the royal family received tribute and greetings from the empire's vassals and allies. They bestowed appreciated gifts and could look over their capitol, which if not yet complete, still impressed with its magnificent architecture and gardens. Although there was perennial trouble in the north, it was not yet an obvious major threat and the greatest danger, Amen's priesthood, had seen their practices amongst the common people crushed, their finances from the pharaoh curtailed and their temples closed or decaying.

Pharaohs were supposed to hold Jubilees every twenty-five or thirty years and usually they were, yet one of the very few points all of his biographers agree on is that Akhenaten was rarely a respecter of traditions or royal rules. Once again this Pharaoh was not so different from others as others also altered their jubilee dates to suit themselves.³¹⁹ So why have an early jubilee? Quite frequently celebratory grand events were (and are) not really about what they claim. These are just the excuse for money-making. Mollifying and rewarding the followers and indulging the leader's self-aggrandisement are frequently other real motives entwined with finance. Atenism was a religious cult and every successful cult or organisation needs to keep the followers optimistic and busy. Keeping underlings busy secures their superior's place in the hierarchy and their privileges. Keeping people busy and in business means that they do not have time to ponder on their exploitation, their elite's controlling mind games, the veracity of the organization's basic beliefs and the failings and illogical ways of their leader. One thinks of Roman emperors at their processional triumphs, Hitler at Nuremburg or Mussolini on his balcony giving loud diatribes and effusions to the multitudes below, turning using tanks and bombers to defeat Ethiopians armed with spears in skirmishes into great victories.

³¹⁹ Kessler, p. 172.

Stalin's fiftieth and seventieth birthday celebrations (both faked, he was actually born in 1878, not 1879) and Trotskyist Gerry Healy assembling his followers for thunderous speeches on the meaningless occasion of changing the name of his party in 1973, (according to some, below a massive portrait of himself) are other examples. Mao was also a master at staging this kind of thing. Cult mass weddings for moonies, soviet parades, and grandiose royal weddings, popes declaring certain years to be pilgrimage years and turning on the celebratory effects for cash are others in this perennial line. These occasions are money-making events. One reason Britain remains unlikely to turn Republican has to be that royal pageantry, tours of royal places and staged events annually load billions into the national economy. This jubilee did the same for Akhet-Aten as those powers owing tribute arrived for the event and did so to presumably pay up.

With such obedience and opulence in Year 12 everything looked secure, but little really was. The northern situation would worsen; the new religion had not put down roots and grown within the empire: it resembled one carefully cultivated hothouse flower more than vigorously spreading ivy. Even where it seemed strongest, within the royal family, problems emerged. Many writers rightly state that Atenism went against centuries of Egyptian habit and accustomed belief. While true enough, what precise form of religious belief did it oppose? By the Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptians worshipped over a thousand gods.³²⁰ Tradespeople and domestics produced amulets by the thousand, these being cheap, popular and common.³²¹ Household statues of the gods were ubiquitous, as were mummification burials with coffins decorated with prayers and chants. While true, does this go far enough? This raises the following questions that few if any ask. If the Egyptians were so attached to their polytheistic religion, why did they not oppose the monotheistic purges? The answer appears to be that the various priesthoods oppressed them. Did the priests

³²⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

³²¹ Ibid., p. 66.

enrich themselves by taxing them into poverty or reduced people close to that condition? The peasantry and servants lived lives of drudgery while they could see the priests lived in opulence created through their stolen efforts. Could it be that few really believed in the enforced beliefs of their religion and state? Priests mass produced and sold copies of *The Book of the Dead* to the rich so that they could use its charms and incantations to pass Maat's test and get to heaven.³²² Meanwhile the not so rich had to take their chances; this must have alienated the vast majority and caused cynicism. The old religion was not one really engaging with its believers. Apart from being watchers and chanters at religious festivals, ordinary Egyptians rarely took any part in rituals: these were the preserve of the priests.³²³ There was no regular temple worship for commoners or little if any succour or help with believers' personal problems; exceptions were prayers for divine help and dream interpretations, both of which they had to pay for.³²⁴ Sporadic religious charity and arbitration with social problems may have happened sometimes, but where is the evidence for that possibility?

Whatever the causes, the old gods had few defenders when the brief overthrow of Amenism happened. Why then did Atenism, which initially seemed to liberate from this religious oppression and promise so much, gain so few adherents? Why did it become a belief which was either enforced, unknown or ignored?

The strangeness of the idea could only be a partial answer. Compare how strange the ideas of monotheists Buddha, Jesus, Paul of Tarsus, Saint Patrick, Mohammed, the Spanish conquistadors, and the thousands of Christian, Buddhist and Islamic missionaries were in a world of pagan polytheists – and how quickly these new monotheistic religions were all able to successfully spread those ideas, gaining multitudes of believers.

³²² *The Book of the Dead*;

³²³ Brier and Hobbs, p. 43.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

They were also going against assorted traditions as strong and sometimes nearly as old as Egypt's pantheon of gods – and without Akhenaten's seeming advantages of finance, public worship, initially unquestioning obedience and military force. These advantages in Atenist Egypt's empire were almost certainly as strong as anything the ancient world had ever seen at that point. Was this very position of power and displays of fabulous wealth in front of the deprived a cause for distrust, apathy or dislike for his new religion? Buddha, Jesus, Paul of Tarsus, Mohammed, Saint Patrick, the Conquistadores, and the first followers of all these men were definitely and obviously not wealthy and offered listeners and readers a dramatic change from their position of being the exploited underlings. The Akhenist message should have appealed, but did not seem to offer any immediate, obvious social change.

Why did the monotheism of Akhenaten, fail to spread? Going by its words and promises, it should have, as it also conveyed an appealed to all people with a similar message of love, justice, and eternal life as a reward for just existing, while the others wanted commitment, self-sacrifice and righteous living. We do not know all the answers: his kingdom's illiterate, over 95% of the population, now have no voice.³²⁵ Two rare pieces of evidence from them concerning royalty show contempt for Pharaonic rule. One comes from a mine of Hatshepsut's time and shows her having sexual intercourse with her chief builder. The other depicts Akhenaten as an ape. Most Egyptians paid taxes and worked their lives away and both for little benefit. Superiors could severely punish for disrespecting both royalty and religion, so their attitude to monarchy and religion was most probably one of sullen fear and avoidance when they could get away with it and compliance when they could not. The ubiquitous grave robbers suggest contempt for royalty and a disbelief in punishing gods. This can only be a plausible speculation about how the vast majority of ancient Egyptians outside the privileged groups felt about their superiors. We have only a few indications, some plausible ideas, and too many assumptions.

³²⁵ Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. p.25.

Before examining the alienating personal reasons concerning the failure of Atenism three comparisons in a failure to spread a religion suggest that settled traditions and attitudes being toppled from above in a social hierarchy will fail.

Oliver Cromwell could not make his mixture of Puritanism and republicanism take hold. This was despite commanding an obedient, efficient and victorious military force which backed a leadership who were ruling over a prosperous nation, one where most were disillusioned with its treacherous monarch and its old Catholic faith. He also had other advantages; the outlet of migration to the colonies for the disaffected, his way of making wise decisions and a staid life none could fault. Even so, Cromwell's government and ideas faded away within less than two years of his death. A closer comparison to Akhenaten is Akbar, Mogul ruler over most of what is now modern India and Afghanistan and what became Pakistan and Bangla Desh. He ruled from 1556 until his death in 1605. Like Akhenaten, he ruled over a fabulously wealthy empire and had access to that wealth, which he spent in a munificent style. Like Akhenaten, he used some of it to build a grand new capitol. Like Akhenaten, he tried to spread a new monotheistic, humanist religion – which did not outlive him.³²⁶ His grand new capitol was also a failure, fading away. Like Akhenaten, he had problems with the succession and initiated practices which flaunted religious traditions. He could also wage war while praising peace without qualms. Despite such close similarities, on other points the two rulers were opposites. Akbar was an energetic, able, popular ruler, paying close attention to what went on in the Mughal Empire and ruling it wisely. He tried to develop his new religion by persuasion, not by force. Charismatic, courteous, merciful, munificent and affable, he impressed his subjects and foreign dignitaries. Despite having so much in his favour his efforts were as unsuccessful as those of the earlier monotheistic ruler of a great empire, if being less disastrous.

³²⁶ Preston, Diana and Michael. *A Teardrop on the Cheek of Time: The Story of the Taj Mahal*. London; 2007. pp. 33-43

Disaster on a massive scale in China was caused by a failed scholar turned school teacher, Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864). Prone to hallucinatory visions, he believed that he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ and chosen by God the father to overthrow the devils who then ruled China. From southern China he would march on Beijing, the capitol in the north and establish a heavenly kingdom which he, the representative of God would rule. He had designed a new version of Christianity in which he was prominent as a messiah. Amazingly, millions followed him and he had many successes against a weak, unpopular and inefficient government. He established his own empire over much of southern and central China. Many of his ideas, such as abolishing slavery, giving women equality and ending the opium trade were worthwhile. Their success in practice help explain the popularity of what became a mass movement. However, Hong's obvious megalomania and mental instability led him into defeats and splits within his own movement. One sign of this was that once again the ruler has an entranced relationship with the sun. Eventually this movement was crushed; the death toll of this civil war was in the tens of millions.

Akhenaten, Akbar, Cromwell and Hong Xiuquan, the rulers striving to establish a monotheistic belief system failed while those who were not rulers, Buddha, Jesus, Saint Patrick, Mohammed, and the conquistadores, succeeded. Hong Xiuquan serves as an example to prove the point: as a teacher and rebel leader he succeeded, after becoming emperor he failed. Apart from being part of a self-serving elite, one clear difference from the successful monotheists is that Akhenaten and his family blatantly behaved in ways which alienate, as their own authorised depictions make clear.

In several earlier histories and biographies writers present primary source evidence as honest because it is not stilted or flattering and shows a relaxed, happy family gathered around their father and king, who supposedly has his alienating and sad abnormalities honestly depicted. Like so many surface image depictions of prominent happy families, these depictions eventually emerge as at best one side of the picture and therefore false evidence. In Tyldesley's *Nefertiti: Egypt's Sun Queen* she

reproduces family carvings which defenders of Akhenaten and/or Nefertiti rarely show. They depict the royal family together naked. In others they wear diaphanous see-through robes, often worn so loosely that they may as well wear nothing.³²⁷ Even when mourning their dead daughter or daughters (Plates 58 and 59) Nefertiti stands naked and Akhenaten nearly so.³²⁸ In a regal statue she is naked, except for sandals and the Pharaonic crown. This may be one of those statues which priests clothed, but considering the other revealing statues this cannot be a certainty. In the strangest of these carvings the royal couple and a daughter are riding in a chariot. While the parents are romantically engrossed with each other, not looking where the horse takes them, the Aten beams down ankhs on them while their little girl whips the horse. All three royals are naked. The vivid and realistic depictions of a daughter whipping the horse while the royal couple kiss make this carving seem more likely to be a depiction of a bizarre reality than of anything symbolic.³²⁹ Allen Drury included this scene in his novel. He has the royals do this ride along the public causeway motivated through their concept of Maat, living in truth, to the derision of their subjects. Drury may well have been right, for also found at Amarna are crude limestone figurines and carved decorations of monkeys behaving like the royal family. Monkeys do not wear clothes. They are famed for their incessant meaningless chatter, excitability, frenetic energy, mischief and promiscuity. Historians differ on what this means. Tyldesley sees it as satire; Reeves as bitter, contemptuous hostility.³³⁰ In one depiction which looks more hostile than humorous an ape wearing the pharaonic crown rides by in his chariot: is this because this was as close as the artist got to their pharaoh?

Even now this idea of nakedness as a truth to live in remains common, often as a sign of extreme mental disturbance, drug addiction,

³²⁷ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti*: Figure 3.5 p. 77 Figure 4.1 p. 99 Figure 4.3 p. 107 Figure 5.2 p. 115

³²⁸ Vandenberg, reproduced illustration, p. 130.

³²⁹ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* Figure 5.3 p. 120.

³³⁰ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 83. Reeves, pp. 173-174.

megalomania or eccentricity.³³¹ Other questions also quickly emerge if we begin to consider that over three thousand years ago human behaviour, ambitions and responses may not have been very different to now. This historian, (like all historians) has been influenced by experiences and mine have involved various sun starers who have a way of staring at the sun while engrossed or entranced, as if it was their own personal mirror. The entrancement seemed essentially to be with themselves, not the sun. The sun served as a tool to let them bask, or like a mirror, build up their ego. Not all of these people were political or religious, but those that were expressed their nebulous, simplistic and utopian ideals with combinations of ruthlessness, sadism, bizarre sexuality and narcissistic ways. As with Akhenaten (and Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Nero, Louis XIV, Catherine the Great, Henry Ford, Hitler, Stalin, Trotsky, Mussolini, Franco, Mao, Gaddafi and Pol Pot) their ideas involved massive building programs that they would carry out extremely fast and they would be very successful. The idea of bestowing equality in some form was extremely common and not necessarily left wing. Unity through ethnicity, race, nationality, peer groups, the team or organisation was common. The belief in a God or a secular prophet who defined which underlings were the good people was a central controlling tenet. The good people would benefit from the wishes, blueprints or edicts which conferred equality. The leader would at best marginalise and more commonly destroy the bad people. These similar experiences both amongst those leaders just mentioned and similarities to Atenist behaviour provides strong evidence for making this writer believe that human motivations and attractions to ideas based in sun worship remain essentially the same. What has slowly changed since the Enlightenment is that supernatural beliefs seem to have faded into a secularized belief in a favourable destiny. Such assorted destinies are for their ideas and also their implicit personal perfection and invincibility. These now have a faded, almost vanished god-conferred feel to them.

³³¹ Gillo Dorfles, *Kitsch: An Anthology of Bad Taste*. Milan, 1969. On page 133 he has a photograph of professional nudists dancing before their nude little daughter. It looks sick and strange here and probably would have in ancient Egypt.

How does the Atenist Egyptian empire compare to these failed utopias? What did people think of their utopia? That depends on where they were. In the villages did they notice any difference from their traditional ways? In the palace at Akhet-Aten they must have noticed. What did Akhenaten's daughters think of parents "living in truth" being naked before them? It gets worse in two cases; they became mothers of their father's children. Although this remains disputed, the strongest evidence goes beyond indications: incest happened. A ring with the names of Akhenaten and Meritaten provides strong, but ultimately inconclusive evidence for incest.³³² By itself this ring could still be alternatively interpreted as being for a ceremonial, unconsummated marriage with Meritaten filling in as something like a consort or first lady for a missing queen. Other similar evidence for incestuous relationships appears as stronger and clearer. Apart from carvings depicting them together, there are their cartouches with their names shown in the manner of royal wives and in the cartouches, they are described that way.³³³ No husbands are listed. Akhenaten even referred to marriages to two of his daughters, Meritaten and Ankhesenpaaten, in a letter to the King of Babylon.³³⁴ As the previous examples show, not all their art was wonderful or attractive. Another of these examples, often reproduced, is of a vivid carved wall illustration showing Nefertiti standing naked with Akhenaten, weeping over her dead daughter, probably Meketaten, while a wet nurse takes away a wrapped baby. Historians Aldred and Reeves separately state this picture shows the princess dying in childbirth with Akhenaten as the father. Both writers state that he had incestuous relations with his daughters.³³⁵ Many writers date the death of Meketaten to either soon after the Year 12

³³² Frederick Wilners, *The True Story of King Tut's Treasure.* SBS. 7:30 15th November 2020. The documentary maker gives a voice over while the ring is shown in closeup.

³³³ 'Akenaten.' *Wikipedia*.

³³⁴ Akhenaten. A letter written to Burne-Buriash, King of Babylon. Letter Number EA 11. 'The Amarna Letters.' *Wikipedia*. Unfortunately, only a modern summary, not the full text is provided.

³³⁵ Aldred p. 173; Reeves, p. 161.

celebration, in Years 13 or 14, or soon after these later dates.³³⁶ Clearly Amarna's royal family gave their subjects much to cause alienation and contempt. Such strange behaviour was not indulged in by other monotheistic evangelists, which is perhaps one reason why they succeeded.

Another alienating factor was the exploitative use of slaves and peasants by extremely rich and hypocritical people. This must have been a sight causing sullen contempt amongst Egypt's poor. While exact proportions are unknown, peasants were the vast majority of Egypt's population and of the others many were servants or slaves. While some wealthy peasants could write and some slaves became scribes, the vast majority of the population were illiterate, so for whom were the Atenist hymns and edicts written? Perhaps proclamations were read to assembled crowds or in what had been Amenist temples when worshippers gathered. However, this remains speculative. Apart from the three known Atenist temples within the empire, what the royal couple built at Karnak and Heliopolis and the purges, no evidence that the royal couple continually tried mass conversions appears.

The difference between Akhenaten's self-created public image and his reality must have also caused alienation from his ideas amongst those in direct contact with the royal family. He was definitely not the monogamous family man of many depictions and histories from the late nineteenth century into the 1960s; an image which still has some believers. Experts only recognised another wife, Kiya, as such in 1959, after they discovered her name on a cosmetics jar.³³⁷ This led historians into searches for information about her; they found very little. She was for some time apparently a lover and a favourite, but her ultimate fate remains unknown, premature death appears likely as unknowns scratched her name out of cartouches.³³⁸ This indicates that at the least purging happened. Akhenaten

³³⁶ Vandenberg, p. 158; Aldred, p. 173; Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* pp. 149-150; Redford, p. 186; Booth p. 30; Silverman, p. 101.

³³⁷ Fletcher, p. 148.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.148-149.

had a harem and DNA has proven that Tutankhamen was his son, and by a full sister.³³⁹ Many writers state that Egyptian royalty viewed incest differently – or did women master their distaste because complying with incest rewarded them with a wealthy lifestyle? If this lure failed was incest possibly enforced through ostracism or drastic punishments for opposition? To what extent can enforcers and manipulators condition people to except anything? Or can they? How would Nefertiti have reacted to her daughters as rivals? Or to Kiya? We do not have the free voices of Egyptian women to tell us what they thought of incestuous relations or polygamy. The world then and now remains full of religious and political beliefs upheld by customs that people follow habitually, but with a weary distaste because social ostracism, poverty, imprisonment or even execution comes with challenges. What Egypt's subject peoples thought of royal incest stays unknown; they may have accepted it as normal: it may have caused a quietly held contempt. The overall Pharaonic tyranny may have caused political apathy, upheld by peace and prosperity in most years in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Soviet Russia, Salazar's Portugal, Burma under the junta from the 1960s into the twentieth century, Khomeini's Iran, Franco's Spain and twenty-first century China provide similar examples of societies being apathetic to their dictators. Did Akhenaten also rule over a society existing with a similar mixture of public apathy combined with cautioning fear? This apathy and alienation would eventually also become a reaction to the Atenists.

In earlier histories and biographies writers and filmmakers sometimes incorrectly describe Nefertiti as vanishing soon after the Year 14 jubilee because portrayals of her with her husband supposedly stopped. However, Redford and Tyldesley both separately mention that the number of depictions was reduced, not stopped, and that the royal daughters in wall decorations frequently replaced not only their mother, but also

³³⁹ Shubberfield: Ker Than, 'King Tut's mysteries Solved: Was disabled Malarial and Inbred.' (sic) *National Geographic News*. 16th February 2014; Doctor Ashram Shaleem. discussing scans of Tutankhamun shown on screen in Bradshaw's television documentary *Voices of the Dead: Tutankhamun*.

Kiya.³⁴⁰ This went as far as altering carvings. The faces of Nefertiti, Kiya or royal favourites were sometimes replaced with the royal daughter Meritaten.³⁴¹ Was this an incestuous paedophile expressing his desire in art? The previously mentioned evidence suggests that this was so. A less likely possibility was that this was a dutiful father building up his daughters' confidence and grooming them for their future royal roles. For decades these pictorial defacements and replacements have led many to assume that Nefertiti had died. One recent documentary not only argued this, but then went on to argue that Meritaten ruled Egypt for just over three years after her father died. They do not mention her husband was Smenkhkara, who briefly ruled as a pharaoh. The evidence the filmmakers give for this becomes complicated as it divides between strong, weak, dubious and clearly wrong, so this writer has assessed it in an Appendix 'Did Meritaten Rule After Akhenaten?' Until 2012 the evidence against Nefertiti either dying, or suffering ostracism or internal exile continually appeared and reappeared in almost all accounts concerning the Atenist era. Evidence for such conclusions was thin and in accounts which were therefore more speculative than definitive. However new discoveries and emphasised older ones show that she was definitely still alive in his Year 16, and she almost certainly outlived him by at least a few years, probably three. Dealing with this development in more detail appears in the last chapter.

Problems with sexual tastes were compounded by the way the queen had given Egypt six children – but they were all daughters and almost all pharaohs were males. Given the need for a male successor and given the beliefs in signs, Akhenaten would have probably concluded that his queen was cursed to give him only daughters and he needed a son by somebody else. If he had been monogamous before necessity meant that another partner had to be chosen to give birth to a son. Tutankhamen, born of a

³⁴⁰ Redford, pp. 188-189, p. 191; Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 153. Fletcher also mentions Kiya's name being scratched out. pp. 148-149.

³⁴¹ Vandenberg, reproduces a diagram showing how this was done stage by stage p. 131; Redford, p. 186; In *Nefertiti* Tyldesley mentions Kiya in this context, p. 150 p. 153,

relationship with a blood relative and born soon after the move to Amarna, fitted that need.

The way so many later found references to Nefertiti come from Amarna's northern palace, while to the south Meritaten's name replaces hers on cartouches led to conclusions concerning Nefertiti's supposed death, palace exile or removal from power. John Pendlebury, who found evidence for Nefertiti's artistic obliteration from Amarna in the 1930-1931 dig there, concluded that after being replaced as queen by her daughter, she was banished, exiled or ostracised.³⁴² This viewpoint was taken up or formulated independently by many in both fiction and history, even after a considerable amount of later evidence emerged showing that this was not so. Joann Fletcher argues that it was not Nefertiti's name that was erased, but Kiya's, who being unknown, was out of the developing narratives before 1959.³⁴³ Even after her discovery modern writers knew so little was about Kiya that they usually did not consider her a factor in palace politics: they should have. Described as a 'Greatly loved Wife' her name does sometimes appear in Akhet-Aten, despite obliterations. Akhenaten or probably somebody complying with his wishes had a canopic jar decorated with her face placed in his tomb.³⁴⁴

A bigger problem than the sexual politics involved ruling the empire. Many write that like his father, apparently years went by with appeals for help by underlings gaining no response from Akhenaten. This overstates the reality, which was inadequate indeed, but he was not totally unresponsive. He did make some responses to the Northern crisis. Guy Aldred writes how forces with supplies were apparently being prepared for a military expedition to the north in Akhenaten's last days: one campaign in the Gezer region may have happened. However, Aldred also rightly sees this as tardy and definitely not enough. He then gives a description of what a Pharaoh should have done years before to deal with

³⁴² Chubb, p. 102. Quoting Pendlebury speaking during the 1930-1931 excavations.

³⁴³ Fletcher, pp. 76-77.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.,

the worsening problems in the northern sectors of Egypt's new empire. Banditry was wrecking overland trade and corruption was spreading. Even the compliance of local communities to traditional patterns was sometimes waning. In one of the last, but undated Amarna letters Biridiya King of Megiddo, acting as a local official serving Egypt, protests his loyalty while informing Pharaoh that local mayors refuse to supply the usual labour levies.³⁴⁵ Even if this unnamed pharaoh came after Akhenaten, it still shows the political disintegration he caused. The bigger threat was the emergence of expansionist warlike superpowers which were trying to win over his vassals: this was leading to mutinous intrigues. As Aldred states, it was the right time for Akhenaten to appear as the leader in a show of strength and to use the superior forces that he did have to suppress those in rebellion, remove the treacherous and reward the faithful. After taking these steps he should have a victory parade to reinforce his image as a successful warrior king.³⁴⁶

This was what Pharaohs had done before and such methods had ensured that Egypt remained a great and respected power. Akhenaten had the resources to do this, but lacked the vision and perhaps the energy or interest. Despite the successful Nubian expedition showing what he could achieve militarily, he obviously did not repeat that success in the north. Despite the great problems there, the disastrous use of Arab mercenaries in the one punitive expedition he did send north, a plague outbreak in the area being best avoided and the tardy plans at the end of his life, he failed in his duties. E.A. W. Budge aptly describes Akhenaten's problem: "He never learnt the kingcraft of the pharaohs and he failed to see that only a warrior could hold what warriors had won for him."³⁴⁷

Writing in 1923, Budge does make strong criticisms of Akhenaten's foreign policy as it showed a lack of the firm commitment needed and so

³⁴⁵ Letter 365. Biridiya, King of Megiddo to Pharaoh. 'The Amarna Letters.' *Wikipedia*.

³⁴⁶ Aldred, p. 171.

³⁴⁷ Budge, p. 77.

left the empire weaker.³⁴⁸ Using the Amarna letters, Budge reproduces many of the desperate warnings and pleas from the North as bandits strangle trade, raiders destroy villages and traitors conspire to change sides. Over three thousand years later their desperate, urgent, blunt tones convey a vivid sense of unfolding tragedy - and a sense that they have communicated before and know that the Pharaoh fails to act on their pleas and requests and perhaps does not even listen.³⁴⁹ Some of these undated letters may refer to Akhenaten's successors. Many other later writers expressed opinions similar to those of Budge. They have created a common image of this pharaoh indolently enjoying palace pleasures or obsessively praying to his god while ignoring the destruction of his empire. This became a "supercilious stupidity" of court responses to loyalist pleas.³⁵⁰ This pharaoh was more ineffectual and desultory in his efforts than indolent. Decades later Seti I and Ramses II did not let such troubles fester, but went north and each of them in their separate campaigns regained some of what Akhenaten should not have lost. Seti I and Ramses II did not have to cope with a plague epidemic and treacherous underlings. Even so, Akhenaten was no recluse, totally ignoring life outside Amarna.³⁵¹ Although he apparently rarely if ever left Amarna, in Year 9 he organised the start of the systematic destruction of the old religions throughout Egypt.³⁵² The successful punitive Nubian expedition also happened in Year 9.

Reverend Baikie used Amarna's archives and frequently reproduced them in full, gives a more complex picture. Most writers do not mention that the King sent an emissary named Khani to review the northern situation.³⁵³ The one expedition he did definitely send north only made the

³⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 98-103.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.,

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p.364.

³⁵¹ Booth, p. 48.

³⁵² Budge, pp. 82-83; Wilkinson, pp. 292-293.

³⁵³ Baikie, pp. 369-370.

situation worse. The vassals, governors, allies and foreign rulers were not sending similar messages concerning a single obvious threat; they were sending protestations of their loyalty frequently combined with warnings about slander and treachery from others.³⁵⁴ Abdashita and his son and successor, Aziru, were the most consistent and opportunistic devourers of territory, people and wealth in Egypt's northern lands and amongst Egypt's allies. Amazingly, despite this, they sent a mixture of loyalty declarations, requests and warnings – often against each other. This would have created a muddle which was not so easy to solve, therefore these communiqués would not quickly lead to wise decisions. Requests for gold also clouded trying to perceive the truth of the situation. It is not difficult to see the court suspecting that the northern situation as being invented or exaggerated by the assorted supplicants to obtain gold for their own purposes. A fifth columnist within the court made the situation much worse. This individual was an influential noble on the royal council board named Dudu. This councillor was working for Aziru, who begged him to block the king's ears against any slanders and not let people say them in court.³⁵⁵ This gives some idea of Dudu's power and Akhenaten's lack of it, despite all his grandiose titles, edicts and artistic depictions. Dudu must have been for some time extremely successful in ensuring Akhenaten did not believe words against Aziru, but gave him even more of what Aziru wanted, not only because of his extreme, almost grovelling flattery to Dudu, but because he promised him extravagant things; his lands, his house and "whatever thou desirest."³⁵⁶ Such rich rewards and extreme flattery are unlikely to be for merely blocking information. While Reverend Baikie, who reproduces this document in full, does not develop the idea, this has another implication. Aziru's flattering where he describes himself as Dudu's son and where he is "my lord" while Aziru is his "servant"

³⁵⁴ Bindiya Governor of Megiddo, writing to the Pharaoh, EA 245; Labaya of the city-state of Shechem EA252; and EA 254 Both letters are to the pharaoh. All three letters are from 'The Amarna Letters.' *Wikipedia*.

³⁵⁵ Baikie, pp. 362-363.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.362.

make more sense if Aziru intends to make Dudu a puppet pharaoh – or get Dudu to make himself Pharaoh.



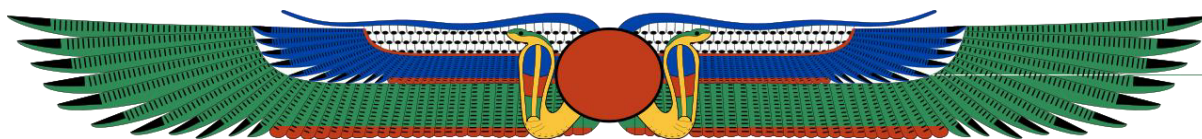
Plate 29. Kiya, from the head of a canopic jar. Photographer Keith Schegili-Roberts

When Akhenaten did send an expedition of Arab mercenaries north commanded by an Egyptian officer, for unknown reasons they attacked the forces of his most his most loyal governor, Ribbaddi (Rib-Haddi in later

translations) of Byblos.³⁵⁷ The reasons for this are unknown, but Dudu's treachery could easily have been the cause as Aziru benefited by having his main enemy weakened and demoralised. After this outcome, even without considering the effects of sending an army into the area where pestilence raged, it becomes understandable that Akhenaten waited years before preparing another expedition.

Tardily Akhenaten woke up to Aziru and told him so. Was the pharaoh planning an expedition to remove Aziru - or willing to let him hold what he had gained by intrigue and murder if he now behaved himself and paid tribute and fought Pharaoh's enemies? The same letter that contained death threats also contained hints that this was so. Aziru's violent death by other intriguers leaves this an open question. Although the evidence shows a much more complex reality in the empire's northern crisis than writers ancient and modern generally portray, even the generally admiring Baikie refers to Akhenaten being "supine" before threats to the north - and the pharaoh was losing his own credibility and prestige.

If sexual politics in Amarna were not tearing the Atenist leadership apart, it must have been to some extent preoccupied with them and with the new religion and building the capitol. These three entwined factors became contributions to Egypt's declining political power. Across the empire corruption and inefficiency became common in government and in the north the empire started crumbling away.



³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 365.

Images and Reality: Akhenaten and the Royal Family

In the twenty-first century the politics, perceived personality and physiognomy of Akhenaten and Nefertiti have undergone great changes - at first amongst historians and other assorted types of researchers, and these changes are slowly percolating into public perceptions. The tall, thin, but misshapen idealistic peace-loving pharaoh and his relentlessly beautiful, never ageing wife are now fading from history and public perceptions. Their pacifist image in some interpretations has gone the same way.

Was Akhenaten a megalomaniac? Definitions of the term emphasize the obsession with power, their narcissism, delusions of grandeur and an inability to emphasize or even consider with others. His obsession with the sun just by itself is typical of the mentality, even without his claims to be a son of the sun.³⁵⁸ The rapidly swinging attention span between vague and nebulous concerns with the big picture of utopian life in the immediate future to almost hysterically intolerant and

³⁵⁸ Wilkinson, p. 287;

*This writer has separately crossed paths with nineteen such prolonged sun starers, starting with two high school gym, teachers and a fellow student. All shared most of the same symptoms of megalomania apart from their sun staring, as if the sun was their personal mirror. These included obliviousness to realities if reality went against their desires, arrogance, an inability to relax, extreme hostility to whimsicality or individuality in others and calculating charm when manipulating. This was then frequently followed by instantly appearing sadism and ruthlessness when charm didn't work. Most had a way of implicitly being goodness or morality incarnate or being their particular cause incarnate. Passive-aggressive patterns abounded, as did obliviousness to others. If people made their presence felt their rights were obliterated with a smug narcissism expressed with conceit. Five of them shared the same political alliance to a particular utopian fringe party supposedly much concerned with equality, anti-racism and ecology. Four others had very similar views, but were in or fervently supported not this party, but another major political party committed to equality.. Of these, five, one later became a prime minister. The student was in a small right wing Christian fringe sect and the teachers had vaguely right-wing views. A university lecturer was a Catholic supporter of General Franco. All nineteen had a way of loudly denouncing materialism and greed while financially doing very well for themselves.

controlling concerns about trivialities is also typical of the megalomaniac personality.* His troops obeying his orders to invade homes to smash up household statuettes and to deface personal amulets gives a classic example of their intolerant behaviour. His promise that he would lead his followers to utopia and that he was the only way to it and to God in this self-created, self-subsisting, self-absorbed simplistic utopian religion must clearly be a typical megalomaniac illusion. The paranoid fear of extreme and imaginary dangers where none exists, such as his fear of the night time, which he reveals in his Hymn to the Aten, is also typical of the type. This tendency goes in tandem with its opposite: obliviousness to real dangers, usually because they believe themselves to be invincible, have self-confidence taken to impossible levels or live in delusions about everything outside themselves. Being unable to be empathetic, they cannot see that others might be motivated by self-interest in some form. Bloodthirsty attitudes and acts of sadism are common amongst megalomaniacs; these are ways of reducing others while elevating themselves. Holding all others in contempt, they at the least underestimate the powers others have: frequently they do not even make an underestimation. When they fail to do that, they go into a state of mind where they are oblivious to real dangers or problems. This leads them into thinking they can overcome any obstacle.

One famous example is when Alexander the Great found himself in western India facing a mutiny by his sullen, exhausted troops. They refused to invade more lands and insisted that he should lead them home. Ignoring the reality of locale conditions, he led his army in a disastrous retreat through the deserts of Persia, Julius Caesar's plans to march through eastern Europe and be everywhere victorious and Charles XI of Sweden, Napoleon and Hitler believing they could successfully and easily conquer Russia are similar examples. Trotsky in 1919 communicating that his battered, retreating, much reduced Red Army divisions located in the northern Ukraine, should gallop across the high, freezing mountains of the Hindu Kush to conquer India provides another less well-known example. Egypt provided its own modern megalomaniac comparison. President Nasser damming the Nile near Aswan so as to create a lakeside paradise led many to comparing him to the pharaohs. Once again, his megalomaniac plan was in the tradition of their disasters. Egyptians did not want to live on the extremely hot, barren, scorpion infested, remote shores of what his successor called Lake Nasser. The now blocked Nile no longer carried the fertile silt and massive amounts of

water lower Egypt depended on. Like all the others he also had a way of jailing his critics.

Underlings or the unconverted should never disagree with the type. As is usual, they will mete out ostracism, imprisonment, enslavement, death and destruction to those who try to block the way to utopia or even reject their purification of this wicked world. Questioning their views, expressing doubts or individuality, whimsicality, responding to their behaviour with humour, defending personal gains or reputations are also signs of evil. By the destruction of supposed evil their interpretation of goodness (which to them matches a mixture of their personality and assuaging very materialistic desires) triumphs.

What that meant in practical terms for ancient Egyptians alive in Akhenaten's reign were home invasions by armed soldiers smashing up statuettes. Did it end there? What happened to those who resisted? If records of their treatment exist those records are as yet unfound. They could reveal to us what happened to those who turned up to worship at what turned out to be vandalised or destroyed polytheistic temples. Given the pattern of treatment for those who opposed or ignored ruling past and present dictators or royal autocrats, there are probably no records and little, if any evidence. Think of those who vanished unnoticed in Hitler's Germany while tourists came to the 1936 Olympics, the tens of millions who vanished in Stalinist Russia and Maoist China without a trace or the battles the Argentinean Mothers of the Disappeared have to find out what happened to their children. Were the enslaved workers at Amarna convicted criminals, former enemies enslaved by conquest or imprisoned dissidents from the new religion? The number of women and children tends to exclude criminals, and as they are not Nubians (the only people we know the Atenists definitely went to war with) they are indeed probably slaves or enslaved conscripts or dissidents.

Akhenaten's warning to Aziru also shows signs of megalomaniac obsessiveness, intolerance, paranoia and ruthlessness. In his own words he wakes up to plan the executions of those who oppose or ignore his teachings - and then to exterminate their families as well! Another sign of megalomania and also one of extreme narcissism is marrying someone who bears such a strong resemblance that they look like twins. As already mentioned in the surviving portraits that we have it is often extremely difficult to tell Akhenaten and Nefertiti apart unless they have cartouches. Making love to a physical substitute for oneself takes narcissism as far as it can go. Rather than being an enthused partner and fellow megalomaniac, she

may have been going along with her husband's megalomania, but the evidence of executions from Karnak and Amarna shows that at the least, she was willing to appear as ruthless. It may well be that she was entranced with this Pharaoh to the extent that he devoured her personality and made her both a reflection of himself and a slave to himself.

From what this writer has witnessed, this also is a common pattern with the type. There are cases of women who would have led normal lives being transformed into monsters because they met the wrong man. Charles Manson could induce his murderous female followers to kill a heavily pregnant woman, overcoming any maternal instinct or sense of mercy. Reverend Jim Jones talking women into pouring cyanide down their babies' throats reveals another similar example. 1960s serial child murderers, Ian Brady and his dupe Moira Hindley are also notorious examples where once again the megalomaniac overcomes the usual human restraints others possess. Large numbers of others, less famous, are documented, often in police files. Megalomaniacs are famed for their charm, cheeriness and affability when things are going their way and then suddenly revealed as ferocious, loud, furious and ruthless when they are not. These first characteristics are used to beguile into obedience and therefore usefulness, the second to crush disagreement or a questioning, should it arise amongst the not quite brainwashed. The megalomaniac personality cannot tolerate anything but absolute obedience and they usually get it. Sexual attraction usually plays a part in this entrancing process. This leads to the target becoming at least an obedient dupe, sometimes a virtually brainwashed clone.

Is this what happened to Nefertiti? Just the evidence of how she had herself depicted at Karnak suggests that she was a megalomaniac. Husband and wife megalomaniacs ruling amiably sounds far-fetched, especially as the type hate rivalry from their own kind or any type of sharing, but history provides another similar example: Mao and his wife Jiang Qing. They misruled China, sending their nation into a hellish existence in their shared quest for utopia.

While much about Akhenaten remains uncertain, few now state that he was a pacifist, the founder of a religion practising tolerance, the designer of a paradise for all or a staid, monogamous family man. Now due to several finds, experts know that whatever Akhenaten's mental state, those well-known grotesque depictions are exaggerations. These finds began over a hundred years ago, but only recently has their importance become recognised. When archaeologists discovered a royal

mummy in the tomb of the kings in 1907 good evidence such as his name on the magic bricks under the corners of the sarcophagus and his name on arm bands showed that this was Akhenaten.³⁵⁹

Unfortunately, the tomb, sarcophagus and mummy could have provided more evidence, but Guy Aldred and Joann Fletcher both separately reveal how the first modern investigators in this tomb were, at best, extremely careless in their rudimentary protective and recording steps.³⁶⁰ One excavator even gave away bits from the site as souvenirs to visiting tourists³⁶¹ Despite Reverend Baikie's accurate 1926 comments that this pharaonic mummy was Akhenaten, for many years majority opinion was that this was Smenkhkara, but since the 2010 reports that identification has become recognised as untenable.

The names of Queen Tye, Amenophis III, Tutankhamen and Akhenaten were on some objects, with Tye's being the most common. Thieves or enemies had ransacked this tomb twice and authorities sealed it twice, once with a cartouche of Tutankhamen on the sealing. Debris and shattered fragments of funerary goods lay around, including several seals to caskets those thieves took. Several things suggested that this was not an ordinary tomb robbery. First many gold fragments and pieces and other valuable objects remained. Thieves are not interested in scratching names off cartouches while leaving gold lying around, but somebody was very determined to erase the identity of the tomb's remaining inhabitant, getting all the obvious references. With the canopic jars on one the golden uraeus showing it was for royalty was broken off. Perhaps because they were illiterate, they missed the less obvious names and the textual references; what remained made it clear that the erased name was that of Akhenaten. References to Ty were left alone. A large timber shrine encrusted with gold and encrusted to Queen Ty had been left at the steps, as it was too large to get past the entrance: thieves would have smashed this up to get the gold, but it was left intact. Thieves would have also plundered Akhenaten's body for the magnificent, large, solid gold vulture collar: only a pharaoh could wear these. Unlike in most tomb robberies where thieves

³⁵⁹ Aldred, p. 109-110.

³⁶⁰ Aldred, Chapter 9. 'The Occupants of Valley Tomb No.55'. pp. 106-122; Fletcher, pp. 174-177.

³⁶¹ Fletcher, p. 175. The source is Harold Jones, the team's artist, quoting Davis, the team's financier.

pulled apart royal remains to get jewellery and rings, this pharaoh's body was unviolated and not plundered. This was odd as clawing away his face on the sarcophagus lid, stealing his amulets and erasing his name were all ways to consign him to Egypt's hell. Were the thieves and vandals caught before they finished what they intended? The ransacking of the tomb looked rushed, but then so did its construction.³⁶²

Workers had plastered walls as was usual, but unusually artists had not painted illustrations on these walls. Ancient excavations had begun on a side room, but were stopped. The magic bricks which acted as supports for the sarcophagus and assisted in getting the pharaoh into heaven were not in the usual form, here being shoddy and made of mud; by 1907 two had disintegrated. With the others his name was written in rushed hieratic, the common alphabet of the marketplace, not in the usual hieroglyphics used for royalty and sacred writings.

Both aspects of intrusion, the ransacking and the defacements, suggest that government orders, not robbers, were behind the attacks. The removal of the caskets, the leaving of Tye's name and shrine and the funerary goods suggests what Aldred states, that Tye's body, two other royal personages and some funerary goods were removed to be elsewhere. Elsewhere was the nearby tomb of Amenhotep II. This treatment must have been because she had the respect denied to her pharaoh son who was left behind. The one point the experts agreed on was that this mummy had been a pharaoh. They could hardly do anything else. His sarcophagus and body showed him bearing all the accoutrements of a traditional royal burial; the false beard braided with gold, the golden vulture collar, the crossed hands ready to bear flail and crook, the magic bricks on each corner of the cartouches with the name scratched out was still a cartouche, and therefore also reserved for royalty. As he was buried as an Atenist Pharaoh, who else could he be but either Akhenaten or Smenkhkara? For exactly a hundred years one of the major reasons that only a few ever asserted that this Akhenaten was because this mummy was a small framed man of around five foot five inches in height and without any of the depicted extreme deformities. His hips were unusually wide and his eyes deeply set. His skull was slightly elongated, with a slightly prognathous jaw.³⁶³ Statues and reliefs, by emphasising his thinness, and following the traditional

³⁶² Carter, p. 42 p. 59.

³⁶³ See for example Redford, p. 190.

convention of making the Pharaoh the largest person in the picture, created a sense of tallness. The skeleton reveals a man within the ancient world's average height range.

Unfortunately, this mummy had suffered water damage over the centuries as the tomb roof had a hole. Being mostly bones to start with and in a fragile condition, the discoverers should have left it alone. Instead, they lifted it out of the coffin for their examination and when a tooth was touched it disintegrated to powder. By the time a team moved to Cairo nothing remained but bones and soot. It now resides in the new Cairo Museum, on display as Akhenaten in a glass case near the mother of Tutankhamen. With only the bones left, finding the cause of death becomes extremely difficult. Bubonic plague and smallpox leave traces on bones, but no mention of these emerges.

Even before DNA and CT scan tests ample evidence pointed to this mummy being Akhenaten. Every pharaoh had five names or titles and archaeologists found one of his alternate royal names WA ANRA inscribed on the gold leaf on his sarcophagus.³⁶⁴ This is the equivalent to an inscribed name on a modern coffin plaque and the name on the magic bricks is roughly equivalent to a name on a tombstone. A canopic jar near the sarcophagus had Kiya's name inscribed.³⁶⁵ As she was one of Akhenaten's wives, this only makes sense if the body in the sarcophagus was Akhenaten. To continue with the modern comparisons, how often are mistakes made on modern tombstones or commemorative messages left for somebody else's wife? Especially for royalty? Several other mentions of his name survived the widespread attempts to obliterate it within the tomb.³⁶⁶

The carved, defaced figure on the sarcophagus lid was a pharaoh and an Atenist as he had their symbols. If, as many state, Smenkhkara and Nefertiti were rivals, why was she carved in on the sarcophagus's cornerstones with wings outstretched? This placing and the body language of outstretched protective wings linking the dead with an angel was traditionally the important protective role for the goddess linked to Osiris and no Amenist believer would have committed this heresy. All this evidence meant that this could only be an Atenist pharaoh. Even so, the badly preserved royal male mummy was rejected as Akhenaten's and

³⁶⁴ Quillici, Zawass explains this point, showing the evidence.

³⁶⁵ Quillici.

³⁶⁶ Aldred, p. 109; Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 156.

credited to being the remains of the only possible subsequent Atenist Pharaoh, Smenkhkara on the basis of several examinations before DNA testing. The main tests before DNA were performed in 1907, 1931, 1963, 1988 and the dental tests in 1999.³⁶⁷ The accreditation for this evidence going to Smenkhkara consisted of the resemblance of the skull to that of Tutankhamen and blood tests that linked the two mummies as related.

Smenkhkara was then widely believed to be Tutankhamen's brother and few believed Akhenaten was Tutankhamen's father. Another factor researchers found was the way this KV.55 mummy's bones had not yet formed together as they did around the age of twenty-five. In the early tests researchers considered that the teeth were those of someone around twenty with results from the 1999 dental examination being used to support this age. The skull was normally shaped, with a slight elongation, while much reproduced art showed Akhenaten with a distorted skull shape and body. Actually, some art showed Akhenaten that way: other art which had much less publicity did not. Tests on the mummy support what ordinary looking portrayals in this work indicate.



³⁶⁷ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 158. Aldred, pp. 109-113; Booth mentions the 1999 dental examinations. p. 26.

Plate 30 *Akhenaten and Nefertiti from the Amarna Period. Locals found it lying in the sand and was sold to a westerner for a few pennies. This started local plundering at Amarna. Brooklyn Museum/ Creative Commons.*



Plate 31. *Akhenaten as a Sphinx. Kestner Museum. jpg By Hans Ollermann. Wikimedia. Creative Commons*

Examples reproduced here show a fairly normal looking man with a reasonably strong jaw and chin, but without the height, elongated body and face and exaggerated prognathous chin and jaws emphasised in so much Atenist art. Other examples in Aldred's *Akhenaten: Pharaoh of Egypt* show the same.³⁶⁸ The facial reconstruction of 2021 differs from both the distorted examples and the supposedly realistic ones; While both of these types show a thin man with a narrow elongated face, prominent cheekbones a prognathous jaw and delicate, androgenous, and ascetic features. Almost in direct opposition to every other

³⁶⁸ Aldred, Plate 1 and the unnumbered plate opposite page 112.

known portrait, the reconstruction shows a man of fleshy, undistorted, but strong macho facial features. To guess his impression? First off - a boxer! (see Plate 74).

As for the age, testing the age of this skeleton initially seems a strong point for identification for Smenkhkara, as he was a young man when he died and the early datings giving a young age to the skeleton. As Akhenaten ruled for at least seventeen years and there is no mention of his rule starting at the age of eight or younger, and his first daughter, Meritaten, was born in Regional Year One of his rule, this seemed to settle the argument. Many writers quote part of an early medical report by Doctor Elliot Smith that the mummy was that of a man of twenty-five or twenty-six, so therefore they then dismiss the possibility that this was Akhenaten. They should have given the full quote, which A.W. Budge did in 1923. After indeed giving the believed age of twenty-five or twenty-six, Doctor Smith stated that his estimate was “without excluding the possibility that he may have been several years older.”³⁶⁹ 1992 tests put the mummy’s age at thirty to thirty-five years.³⁷⁰ The 2005 tests indicate around forty.³⁷¹ The later tests go as high as fifty-five. Isis Davis Marks writing about the recent facial reconstruction states that the bones show a man of about twenty-six and that some of the later higher age estimates reflect a desire for the tested skeleton to be Akhenaten.³⁷² With Cairo Museum having its own CT scanner for use on mummies, researchers can gain much more detailed information than from the old method of x rays.³⁷³ Experts universally consider DNA testing as infallible evidence, DNA combined with CT scans, radiology, and bone comparisons have proved that this mummy is indeed Akhenaten.³⁷⁴ The scanners failed to pick up any outstanding abnormalities or evidence of Marfan’s syndrome, suspected by so many writers.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ Budge, p. 75

³⁷⁰ Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 160.

³⁷¹ Quillici,

³⁷² Isis Davis Marks, *Is this the Face of King Tut’s Father< Pharaoh Akhenaten?*’ March 29th 2021. Smithsonian Institution.

³⁷³ Wyche, *Chasing Mummies*. Episode ‘Lost’ History Channel First Shown 28th July 2010.

³⁷⁴ Than; Shubberfield.

³⁷⁵ Than; Manniche.

The 2010 DNA testing which proved that the mummy was Akhenaten also proved that he was the father of Tutankhamen.³⁷⁶ The CT scans and other tests done by the Family of Tutankhamen Project team place the body as much older than any previous estimation, being between forty-five and fifty-five. The same tests prove that he is the son of Amenhotep III and Tye and the grandson of Anmenhotep's parents.³⁷⁷ The scientifically proven, now much older age becomes the decisive factor: this can only be Akhenaten. Some question the accuracy of the Family of Tutankhamen Project team's tests, but Brando Quillici's documentary *King Tut's Final Secrets* shows testers explaining in detail as they conduct their research. Documentary makers then film the researchers' results as they appear on the computer's screens. The filming shows that these results are carefully done and match other tests. Joann Fletcher also had a point when she quoted three twenty-first century experts who coming from different angles, raised doubts about the reliability of deducting ages from the bones of adults.³⁷⁸ Despite what was lost during the Edwardian era excavations, much about Akhenaten and his appearance and incestuous proclivities have recently become known because of this mummy's identification and modern tests conducted on it.

In 2012 Zawi Hawass stated his conclusions, most of which matched virtually everything said a few years earlier and with the remainder he added more clarifying information. Given the confusion and disparities in scientific reports Hawass's findings are worth mentioning as they back twenty-first century conclusions which go against so many earlier conclusions and theories. His results also showed that the result of recent DNA and CT scans revealed that Akhenaten's mummy and another royal female found in the Valley of the Kings were the children of Tye and Amenophis III and that he had found both parents of Tutankhamen. As previously mentioned the female was a full sister to Akhenaten. They also revealed that Akhenaten was aged closer to forty than twenty-five and showed signs of aging through age related spinal degeneration and osteoarthritis in the knee joints and legs.³⁷⁹ Others using x-rays gave ages of the middle thirties or over thirty-five and noted a height of around 170 centimetres (five and a half feet)

³⁷⁶ Than,

³⁷⁷ Hawass; *Jama*.

³⁷⁸ Fletcher, pp. 181-182. Although Fletcher gives their quotes and in two cases the dates and locales of their talks, she does not name the experts.

³⁷⁹ Zahi Hawass, 'King Tut's family Secrets' *National Geographic* December 12th 2012. p. 6.

and that there were slight signs of being effete.³⁸⁰ This test again showed that the skeleton was wide-hipped.³⁸¹ This gives a creditable age range for Akhenaten's lifespan, rule and fathering six daughters by one wife and a son by another. Given Akhenaten's slightly odd physique, he may have possibly suffered from both (or either) premature aging illnesses or physically arrested development.

Support for these conclusions concerning normality appears in some of his portraits, those in Plates 32, 33, and 38. These are not the only examples, others have copyright problems. Several of these sculptor's busts were amongst the eighty objects found at the Amarna sculptor's workshop.³⁸² Like the facial reconstruction these portraits depict the face of an undeformed man.

In the 1950s Professor Samuel Terrien, a biblical expert, conducted an interesting experiment. He photographed a modern Egyptian in profile, twice. The first photograph was plain showing him in modern clothing. In the second he wore the headgear and accoutrements evident in the bust of Akhenaten shown in Plate 24. The third photograph, which is the same size and profiled position of the first two, was of Akhenaten's bust in profile. It was an almost perfect match.³⁸³ Even one of the extreme facial depictions from the Akhet-Aten sculptor's studio shows that Akhenaten could have passed unnoticed in modern Cairo. However, unlike the grotesques, these normal depictions were not for public show. At least two were taken from the sculptor's studio in Amarna, where they were probably used as models, but apparently with some facial features such as the lips and chin being meant to be distorted for the public images. The elephant in the room is why would a handsome looking man choose to be represented like this? Why would he depict his children this way?

A clue could come from the entertainment of the modern world. Like Akhenaten, some of the screen's most famous villains were also in the public view where despite their normal looks they also sometimes depicted themselves grotesquely. Boris Karloff, Vincent Price, Edward G. Robinson, Robert Ryan, Telly Savalas, Raymond Burr, R. G. Armstrong and Harvey Keitel are amongst the

³⁸⁰ Reeves, pp. 83-84.

³⁸¹ Quillici.

³⁸² Kew.

³⁸³ Samuel Terrien, *The Golden Bible Atlas*. New York; 1957. p. 20. The three photographs are produced together. Unfortunately, copyright could not be found.

screen's most memorable, humourless and grotesque villains - and off-screen also amongst Hollywood's most consistently courteous, affable, humorous and generous humanitarians. The public persona and matching costume and makeup creates an image the opposite of that of the private man. Did these Hollywood people have a royal prototype in an Atenist royal performer? The Atenist depiction of a happy and relaxed royal family in so many depictions also suggest an actor's divided behaviour pattern occurring amongst royalty in ancient Egypt. Being royalty and being an actor have points in common.

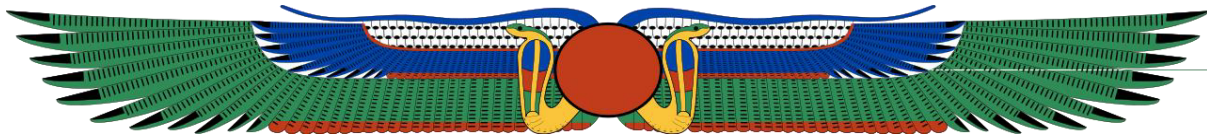
Throughout history parents, tutors and courtiers brought up young royalty to be constrained by expected behaviour, particularly when before the public. This involved decorum, restraint and correct ceremonial procedures. We now know that this was at least to some extent an act. Even so, in whatever society where royalty existed and in whatever form the media or art took, the media and art rarely showed the reality of royalty. Idealised representations or images meant to cause fear, obedience or adoration were usually the norm.

Possibly the other traditional depictions and edicts of Akhenaten as war leader, elitist and megalomaniac friend of the God, were, like those of these Hollywood actors, an expected public persona? In public did he give a very different image to his real personality? These warlike and powerful images were traditionally expected depictions for a pharaoh; were they reality or images to be complied with? The mummies of Amenophis III and Tutankhamen also reveal lives lived differently to their depicted personas. With Akhenaten and Nefertiti were it not for the proof of incest, the Amarna workers' skeletons, the Year 9 purges, the Nubian invasion, some of his messages and edicts and his frequent iconoclasm, this theory would have more credence. With this evidence what was an act goes the other way: the royal couple could only be a happy, peaceful family if they lived in a fool's paradise. Strong and repetitive evidence shows that was a strong possibility.

Hollywood stars are not the only example of people adapting of bizarre, threatening personas. Well-documented groups find bodily distortion and scaring attractive: no need to rely on colonialist ethnographic studies. European streets provide ample evidence with adolescents of all ages having rings through noses, razors worn around the necks, bizarre hairstyles and facial tattoos. Exhibitionism? An "I have claws routine?" Teenage attention seeking? Were the Pharaoh and his queen suffering arrested development? The way children and adolescents love to

dress up in exotic costumes and be mock threatening in another persona could be the answer. Whatever the answer, reader, get used to living with that elephant in the room if you study Akhenaten, for his public depictions cannot be easily explained, at least in sane terms. Some writers even use the weirder images to prove that this royal family were aliens.³⁸⁴ With the “egghead” depictions of their daughters, we can wonder if it is Hollywood induced forgery, or the inspiration behind Hollywood depictions of aliens.

What would Egyptians have thought of both the royal family’s real appearance and their artistic depictions? Usually they would have not been able to look at a pharaoh, but Akhenaten changed that some of his art and the monkey depiction shows. This may have led to some loss of power and certainly of respect, but only a tiny proportion of Egypt’s population would have been involved in the palace and temple intrigues of this era.



³⁸⁴ John ‘KMTSESH,’ (sic) ‘The Enigma of Akhenaten’ *Ancient Near East Just the Facts*. Posted 3rd January 2014. Others also express this idea elsewhere.



Plate 32. *Akhenaten depicted with a believable facial expression and an elongated skull. Both eyes have been scratched to ensure blindness in the afterlife. Other scratches on the nose, chin and cheek suggest the attack of someone venting extreme anger. Louvre Museum CC. Wkikipedia/Commons*

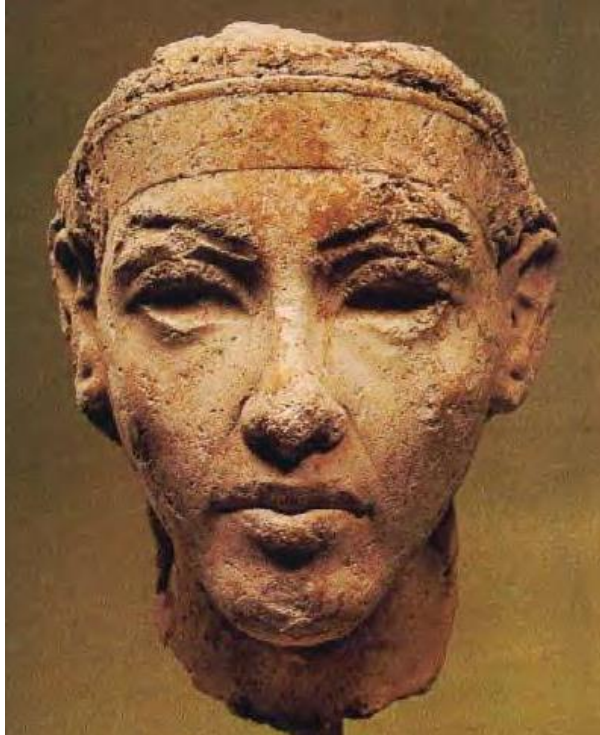


Plate 33 Akhenaten. The headband here and in Plate 34 are for holding crowns. No author credited. Fandom Ancient Egypt/Wikia. Wikimedia/Creative Commons.



Plate 34. Some believe this to be a portrait of Akhenaten, but it may be a relative, possibly Smenkhkara. The family resemblance is so strong that it might be a younger depiction of the face above. Both were found in Thutmose's workshop. Author: Keith Schengil-Roberts. Wivi/Fandom Creative Commons.



Plate 35. Tutankhamen. A timber portrait taken from his tomb. This is a portrait of a living person. The much more famous gold mask is a royal icon. Wikipedia.



Plate 36. *Tutankhamen. This is a rare portrait of a real person. It also shows some similarities to the gold mask. Wiki Fandom.*

Plate 37. *A grotesque depiction of Akhenaten from Amarna. c. 1345 B.C. Why would someone who looks so ordinary in several other depictions wish to be depicted as grotesque?*
Photographer: Keith Schengili-Roberts





Plate 38. *Akhenaten wearing the blue war crown. Once again he displays strong but normal features. Author: Jon Bodsworth. Wikipedia.*



Plate 39. *The interior of Horemhab's tomb showing traditional gods and their welcoming of the dead pharaoh. Author: Jean-Pierre Dalbéra. Wikipedia/ Creative Commons*

Plate 40. *Two of the royal daughters. A part of a damaged Amarna wall relief. Wikipedia.*

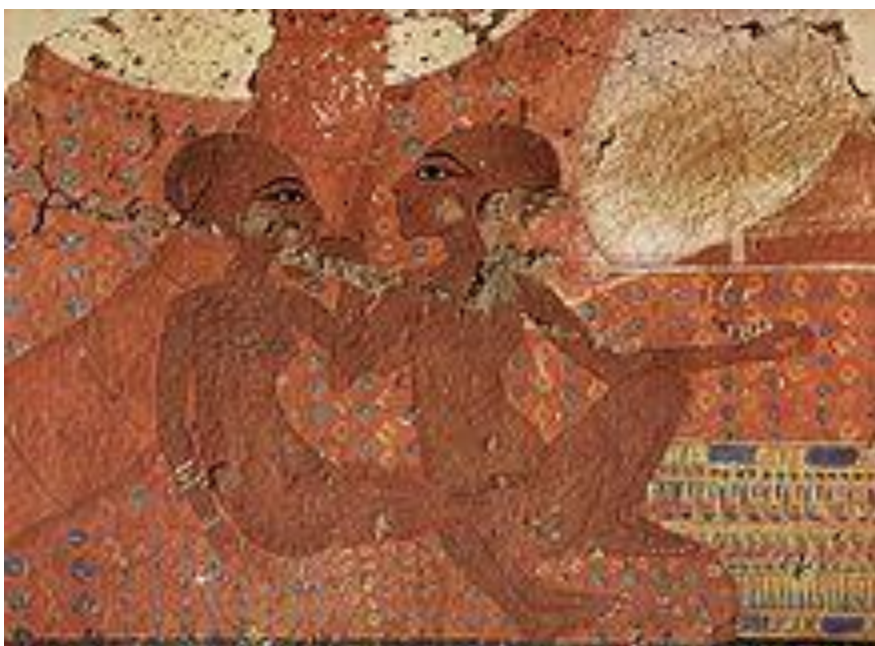




Plate 41. *Believed to be Meritaten, this is a more realistically depicted princess of Akhenaten's royal family. No known author. Wikipedia.*



Plate

42. *An Amarna princess. As in Plates 43 if these are accurate depictions they could not be the same person and are unlikely to be siblings. Photographer: Miguel Hermoso. Creative Commons/Wikipedia.*



Plate 43. *An Amarna princess. Photographer Keith Schegili-Roberts. Commons/Wikipedia.*

Plate 44. A view of Akenaten's skull. Wikipedia/ Creative Commons



Plate 45. Akhenaten's skull in profile. Public Domain Wikipedia.

Plate 46. *Nefertiti as an older woman depicted on a talat. Author: Keith Schegili-Roberts. Wikipedia.*





Plate 47. Queen Tye. Author: Einsamer Scütze Plate 48. Kiya. Author: Keith Schengili-Roberts.
Both pictures Wikipedia.



Plate 49. Believed to be a portrait of Ay taken from the workshop of Thutmose. Author: Keith Schengili-Roberts. Creative Commons



Plate 50 *A Monkey in faience. Found at Amarna. Apart from being evidence of the delightful playfulness of Amarna's art, it also shows that Amarna had extensive contacts with the outside world, monkeys being in Nubia and southern Egypt* Author Sailko / CC (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>)https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuovo_regno,_fine_della_XVIII_dinastia,_scimmia_in_faience,_1352-1336_ac_ca,_da_el_amarna_02.JPG

The Last Years at Amarna

Writers usually describe Akhenaten's last years as a time of decline and strife, yet to what extent was it so? Was the destruction of the Atenist experiment inevitable because of almost insoluble problems? Was Akhenaten at the end, addressing these problems? The latter question's answer is yes, he was, but how advanced and strong his efforts were remains uncertain. As already mentioned, he showed concern by sending Khani, an emissary, to investigate the continual crises in the north. He may not have sent more commissioners because Rib-Haddi told him that enemies killed the one he did send. His strong warning letter to Aziru about his intrigues in the north, and sending a contingent of archers there as reinforcements as part of the planned northern incursion, showed that the decline there was being opposed, if not decisively, at least seriously. Akhenaten may even have intended to lead the expedition himself as one bust from Akhet-Aten (Plate 38) depicts him in the blue war helmet, in the New Kingdom; this was worn by pharaohs as they went to war so that they would stand out in battle.³⁸⁵

Another problem, the succession, was solved with the birth of a male heir. Although sickly, Tutankhamen must have been around four to six when his father died and so had lived beyond the dangerous infant years. When the prince first caught the malaria that made him lethargic remains unknown, but DNA tests do show that he was infected with malarias several times.³⁸⁶ Long before Akhenaten's last years the conflict with the Amenists had resulted in a stalemate and would stay as such until years after his death. The description from Tutankhamen's reign of deserted, overgrown traditional temples and their owners and worshippers' prayers

³⁸⁵ Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. p.101

³⁸⁶ Bradshaw;.Bédoyère mentions the DNA proof for the malaria, but not the recurrences. p. 330 This has been mentioned in recent documentaries. See Hughes..

of thanks, brimming with relief at the Aten's overthrow, shows that in the last Atenist years the Amenists were not doing very well with keeping adherents, but neither were the Atenists. All available evidence suggests that even after nearly twenty years, Atenists had made few if any converts outside the Amarna region.

What was not addressed was the widespread, corruption and violence within what we now call the judicial and civil service systems.³⁸⁷ While it had always existed to some extent, this became endemic and entrenched during the rule of Akhenaten and perpetuated or at least tolerated by the later Atenist pharaohs. In Charlote Booth's *Horemhab; The Forgotten Pharaoh* (2009) she describes at length his concerted efforts to eliminate the widespread corruption with the government and judiciary he inherited around twenty years after Akhenaten's death.

Many modern writers narrate of snowballing problems and conflicts, both within the Atenist court and the world outside. This supposedly made for a doom-laden atmosphere of approaching tragedy, both within Akhenaten's life in his last years and amongst his capitol's residents. This makes for strong dramatic fiction, where tragedies and disastrous errors pile on one another until an epic death becomes the denouement, but was this what happened? Fiction creators and documentary makers' evidence can easily use some historic knowledge to create such a reality. When the plague hit the Amarna area was it merely a minor inconvenience that quickly passed, leaving few casualties in the elite? Or was it the last straw, the killer blow to a dying, failed dystopia? Another possibility could be that this epidemic was a catastrophe which wiped out a system, which while it still had some remaining problems, was recovering from other problems.

These last Akhet-Aten years raise many questions on evidence that remains patchy. Where it does exist it is incomplete, ambiguous and contradictory. Historians can often use new evidence to demolish old and sometimes even recent conclusions. The roles of this Pharaoh and his

³⁸⁷ Schultz and Seidel. p.148

queens, the succession and even the existence of the elusive Smenkhkhenra are all common controversies amongst scholars concerned with the era. The narrated fates of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Ay, Tutankhamen and his sisters and even Atenism, rarely match on important points. The questions of how the royal couple died and what became of their bodies, still await conclusive answers, despite important new evidence that now definitely disproves several ideas. Nefertiti did not die young, years before Akhenaten. She was not involved in some type of ongoing palace war for power. She was not exiled while her husband lived and at least for three years after this.

An undated dual portrait (Plate 54) which shows them together must be late in their reign, as they look middle aged. They also look pensive, in contrast to the exuberance of earlier portrayals. The naked portrait (Plate 55) and also Plate 56 clearly show that Nefertiti lived into middle age. The crown shows that she was either still in favour, was a co-ruler or had taken power. As with Plate 54, the facial expression in these two portrayals appears as pensive and even more than that, tired and sullen. Her famous bust and the limestone portrait beneath it showing the older face also support this idea. The broken off cobra on the crown shows the sign of a ruler and the breakage probably shows defilement, although it could be an accidental break.³⁸⁸ This find shows that she was still in royal favour in middle age, perhaps even as a Pharaoh. Unfortunately, like the other evidence showing her as middle aged, it is also undated.

Several writers assumed that because dated, addressed wine jars were taken from an unnamed 'King's Wife' at Nefertiti's palace as late as Year 17 that she resided there as an exile or lived under house arrest³⁸⁹ Others see the title without a name as being because someone who had taken or inherited her title also took the palace. Vandenberg states that the

*The documentary evidence, details about these possibilities and details of the source are dealt with in following pages in this chapter.

³⁸⁸ Kew.

³⁸⁹ Redford gives the wine jar dates on p. 186, but not the conclusions; Tyldesley, *Nefertiti* p. 176

wine jars there had her name on them while Akhenaten was still alive. Finding the Year 16 inscription at the Amarna mine supports this idea. As the name should always have been that of the ruling pharaoh, she was usurping his prerogative and so she may have been in rebellion.³⁹⁰ What was more likely was that these dates probably come from a co-reign or her reign. Was she giving herself this prominence because her husband was ill, probably dying? Did somebody not rub off her husband's name after his death during her brief reign? They possibly might be different jars to those referred to separately by Redford and Tyldesley. She also inherited the palace, by the wish of a pharaoh, either late in Akhenaten's reign, or what are more likely possibilities, as part of his will or by the gift of a later pharaoh.*

Although she may possibly have had them carved several years before and then died before his funeral, the way Nefertiti replaced all of the Pharaoh's four traditional protective goddess, one each on the four corners of Akhenaten's sarcophagus with herself, strongly suggests that she outlived him: being a living person protecting a dead one. The four goddesses were those who protected and resurrected the dead and their presence on the corners of a sarcophagus showed that they did this for the individual within.³⁹¹ By taking on this role the royal heretic queen was being blasphemous, as she was usurping the roles of goddesses. While others, perhaps her surviving daughters, could have given her this role after her death and ordered it sculpted; it is far more likely that she took on this protective role while alive, and soon after her husband's death. Clearly she remained the main defender of Atenism, at least for a time.³⁹² More evidence supporting this viewpoint emerges in the Amarna tomb. Going

³⁹⁰ Vanenberg, p. 126 p. 128.

³⁹¹ Maria Rosa Valdesogo, *Nefertiti Granted the Resurrection of Akhenaten. Part II*. Posted 05/09/2017 <http://www.mariarosavaldesogo.com/nefertiti-granted-the-resurrection-of-akhenaten-part-ii/> . accessed 11th May 2020; Benderitter.

³⁹² Although both Benderitter and Valdesogo do not state this, both present photographic evidence of Akhenaten's sarcophagus and their textual accounts are strong evidence for reaching this conclusion.

against the idea of an early building of the tomb is Thierry Benderitter's diagram of the entire tomb and entrance. He shows it to be small and simple, but even though that meant it was not costly or time devouring, it was not really ready. He mentions that it was not quite complete as the door way and some wall decorations were unfinished.³⁹³ Nefertiti's cartouches were common, as if she was in charge of supervising the tomb, not Akhenaten. The presence of only two sarcophagi, one for her daughter Maketaten, who died between Year 12 and Year 14 and one for her husband who died in Year 17, but none for her or anyone else, also strongly suggests that she rushed the burial.

Another piece of evidence suggesting that she outlived Akhenaten and ruled after him, is often used selectively to prove the reverse. This is the previously mentioned broken shabati found in the vandalised Amarna tomb. Being broken meant that it would be useless for resale, surely why it was left. As these things usually came in sets, others were presumably intact and therefore stolen. This shabati was a gift from someone with the title of 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt' and 'Lord of the Two Lands.' These are titles only used by pharaohs.³⁹⁴ Only a pharaoh presented this shabati to the great royal wife, with praise. As Marianne Luban points out, many wrongfully assume that Akhenaten, presented the shabati and therefore outlived Nefertiti, but as the presenting king is unnamed, different possibilities emerge; so which king made the gift? ³⁹⁵ It would not be from her husband, but from Smenkhkara, Tutankhamen or Ay. Akhenaten the strict monotheist despised such things to the extent that he had his troops make home invasions to smash them, so why give him one as a gift? Although Luban does not develop the idea, another accolade to Nefertiti was as the "heiress" of the great royal palace. Heirs usually gain things left by the dead; few inherit bequests from the living. Akhenaten had built the palace at Akhen-Aten and owned it. It can only be extremely

³⁹³ Benderitter,

³⁹⁴ Briers and Hobbs, p. 75.

³⁹⁵ Luban reproduces the passage in full.

unlikely that he would have given it away in his lifetime; this would have lost him kingly authority and prestige: it even comes close to abdication. An indication of how strong the link between a pharaoh and his palace was is the origin of the word pharaoh, it originally meant "great house." At the least it would have led to impracticalities of ruling an empire without a palace. Leaving such important property to a person must be a sign of goodwill, not being out of favour, exiled or dead. The dating of her wine jars there, like her residing there, shows the bequest coming into effect; these two factors also clearly indicate that she outlived him. Oddly the shabati does not praise Nefertiti as a ruler amongst her accolades and so works better as evidence that she did not rule. Had she been deposed by the time of her death? Did she succeed Smenkhkara? Or was he her successor?

Other inconclusive evidence that also suggests that Nefertiti outlived Akhenaten, and ruled, but died suddenly, comes from the Akhen-Aten workshop of the sculptor Thutmose. This seems to have been suddenly abandoned and then preserved from Amenist vandals by fortuitous sandstorms burying it. This was a merciful miracle for archaeologists and scholars. Even so, it created more questions as it answered those already existing. The workshop contained several busts of her, including the most famous one, found upside down in the sand in December 1912.

Why make and keep so many busts of someone out of favour? This prolific productivity would make more sense to keep so many if she was queen; there would be a ready market for such things. The busts themselves with their headbands to accommodate a crown indicate that she still ruled in some fashion, either as a queen or possibly as a co-regent. The heads would remain there if she suddenly died. Or were they kept because they were the sculptor's artwork and he did not wish to destroy them? The way a sculptor designed four busts to take crowns, but did not use any that way opens opposing interpretations. Did he keep so many because Akhenaten's widow and successor was then Pharaoh and he built up a ready to use stockpile as they were in demand, but she died suddenly? Did he leave the busts left unfinished for that reason? If not,

why were they left unfinished? The way the unfinished busts also show an older woman suggests that this sudden deposition from power happened late in the Atenist era, either by death, (most likely) abdication or enforced removal.

Joann Fletcher presents abundant supporting evidence for Nefertiti being her husband's successor in *The Search for Nefertiti* (2004). Throughout this work she assesses varied evidence; Nefertiti's cartouches being placed where the Pharaoh would place theirs, statuettes and reliefs showing her wearing a pharaoh's crown and being depicted in traditional pharaoh's roles such as hunting whilst riding in a chariot and killing captives and bestowing gold collars from the throne. All this is without the strongly suggestive forensic evidence from the mummy of the "younger woman." Much of this evidence shows an older, sadder pensive queen, frequently alone when Akhenaten should be with her – if he was still alive. Fletcher's evidence would be conclusive, rather than supporting except for one thing – Nefertiti also did almost all of these things Fletcher mentions at Karnak, when the royal couple were in the first five or six years of their rule and her husband was very much alive and apparently tolerating her usurping traditional pharaonic customs and roles.

Apart from the Amarna's archaeological and artistic evidence, ancient and classical scholars believed a queen ruled after Akhenaten.³⁹⁶ Unfortunately, it remains unknown what was the basis for these opinions. Therefore, like so much of the other evidence concerning Nefertiti, what Fletcher presented in 2003 could only then be strongly suggestive and tantalising, as she concludes.

Conclusive proof for both Nefertiti's continuing existence and her occupying her usual role came in December 2012, with the finding of an inscription in a limestone quarry twenty kilometres away from Amarna. This inscription bears the date Year 16 Month One of Akhenaten's reign and refers to him and then to her, both by name. She is described respectfully as the great chief wife. This inscription although worn, appears

³⁹⁶ Fletcher, p. 46. She quotes Eugène Lefébure about the classical scholars.

as just legible and has been authenticated.³⁹⁷ They are clearly still a couple. The inclusion of her name in an equal manner, the cartouche and the use of the same respectful title here shows that she still lived in a powerful position up to at least the last eighteen months of her husband's life.³⁹⁸ An orderly hieratic inscription elsewhere records the death of a queen soon after Akhenaten, giving her a reign of three years and some months.³⁹⁹ A rule of three years for "Neferneferuaten" (Nefertiti's pharaonic name) appeared as part of egregiously rushed and large, hieratic graffiti on a high priest's elegant tomb wall.⁴⁰⁰ This was obviously not only vandalism, but a challenge to Amenist power, suggesting that either Nefertiti had not yet surrendered to the Amenists or this vandal did not know of it. These inscriptions show a time span which fits neatly into the troubled reigns between Akhenaten's death and the return of Amenism in full force with the rule of Horemhab.

The inscription in the Amana mine disproves three common theories previously put forward about Atenist Egypt. The first concerns a supposed palace war between the royal couple, Nefertiti being a loser out of favour is another and Smenkhkara replacing her as co-regent is the third. This found inscription backs the evidence of the two statuettes, the palace bequest, the limestone portrait in the famous bust, the more elderly depictions, the busts made to hold crowns and the Amenist temple records and inscriptions about Nefertiti's continuing existence late in Akhenaten's reign and after. These pieces of primary evidence support the earlier conclusions of Redford and Tyldesley about what the wine jar dates meant.

³⁹⁷ *Wikipedia* source note 141; Kew, His documentary shows the quarry and the inscription which is made clearer by computerised colour coding and then Jacelyn Williamson interpreting and explaining the inscription and the double cartouche.

³⁹⁸ 'Akhenaten' *Wikipedia* This entry refers to an article by the finder Athena Van der Perre. The inscription was displayed in Berlin at the Agyptisches Museum on December 6th 2012. It was authenticated within two years; 'Neferneferuaten' *Wikipedia*.

³⁹⁹ Wilner, The documentary shows the hieratic inscription on stone and is accompanied by a voice over translation.

⁴⁰⁰ Frend.

This inscription dates from over one year before Akhenaten's death. One of the Year 17 jars has been crossed over and replaced with a Year 1 to show a new reign has begun. Was the new reign hers or Smenkhkara's? Unless trouble developed between the royal couple in the king's last eighteen months the quarry inscription strongly indicates that she was almost certainly his successor.

This good and unambiguous evidence now strongly indicates that she became the female Pharaoh Neferneferuaten Nefertiti. Her name as Pharaoh appears in two Amenist temples, one explicitly names her as the wife of Akhenaten by an alternative title, Uaenre. Both would date from Year 3 of her reign. Who else could this pharaoh be? One of her daughters had the same name but with a suffix meaning the younger. As she was aged ten or less at the time of her father's death and her brother Tutankhamen had primogeniture, she was unlikely to be made pharaoh.

A possibility is a male prince Smenkhkara. At least one piece of evidence linked to him can now be discounted. They shared the same epithet Neferneferuaten. Apart from him nobody else with this name seems to have had the power, connections or credibility to become Pharaoh. As mentioned, she had changed her name from Nefertiti to Neferneferuaten in Year 5 of Akhenaten's reign. Did she change it again to Smenkhkara? He may have been Akhenaten's co-regent, as with two reigns totalling around five to six years before Tutankhamen ascended the throne, he must have been around four when Akhenaten died, too young to rule. To worsen this problem of a succession he was almost certainly a sickly child. It is likely that Nefertiti accepted Smenkhkara as a crown prince, as he definitely ruled for at least one year and well into a second year. He may have succeeded her. Whatever the immediate succession pattern was after Akhenaten, it became clear with the ascension of Tutankhamen about six years after his father's mysterious death.

The two most likely line of the succession are as follows:

Akhenaten	Nefertiti	Smenkhkara	Tutankhamen
died around 1336 BC.	ruled 3½ years	ruled nearly two years	about nine years

Akhenaten	Smenkhkara	Nefertiti	Tutankhamen
died around 1336 BC.	ruled just 3 years	ruled three years	about nine years

So who was Smenkhkara? To take precedence over Tutankhamen he could only have been highly placed royalty, even if he may have been a puppet of either the Atenist or Amenist priesthood. His absence from depictions of the royal family when the royal couple had five daughters shows that he was not a child of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, although he was their son in law, being Meryetaten's husband and so was inside the royal circle.⁴⁰¹ He may, like Tutankhamen, been the son of another wife in their father's royal harem. The strong facial resemblance between the two pharaohs evident in the busts does suggest some close relationship; was he Akhenaten's nephew or a much younger half-brother? The facial similarities are so strong that experts are often unsure if they have portrayals of Akhenaten or Smenkhkara. These possibilities are so thin on evidence that they are speculative, but they do fit in with traditional succession patterns and plausibility. Where Smenkhkara stood on the Atenist-Amenist divide, what were his policies and why he died so young, are questions that lack even any basic knowledge for a starting point to answer them.

Historians investigating Smenkhkara come to few firm conclusions. They even disagree on if he existed. A small minority even claim that he was Nefertiti in disguise! He did exist and in male form and as a pharaoh. Apart from the wine jars with his regional years inscribed on them as proof other conclusive evidence exists.

Smenkhkara was married to Meryetaten, their names were together in gold sequins on a linen garment found in Tutankhamen's tomb.⁴⁰² His name and that of Meryetaten appear together in clay seals from Amarna

⁴⁰¹ Bédoyère, pp.292-294, Several primary sources are quoted for this marriage.

⁴⁰² De La Bédoyère, p.293.

where on one he is described as dual King and also as Lord of the Two Lands.⁴⁰³ The former suggests a co-regency, the latter is a pharaoh's title. Does the title of dual king refer to a co-regency with Akhenaten or as is more likely, with his wife? Rings with his name on have been found at Amarna and his name or his royal title of Ankhheperure on an Atenist temple in Memphis. Several eyewitnesses there made notes from other worn inscriptions, but the originals were destroyed in 1880. Bricks from a destroyed hall at Amarna bore his title Ankhkheperare, although Nefertiti may have taken over this title.

Whoever Smenkhkara was, he ruled briefly and before Tutankhamen. Some speculate that Smenkhkara died before Akhenaten or just after and either never ruled as pharaoh or only ruled for a very brief time. The latter must be more likely as two labelled wine jars have inscriptions stating that the wine comes from the 'House of Smenkhkara' and have a dating of Year One, with one of these dockets 'deceased' crossed over the date Year Two.⁴⁰⁴ At Amarna Petrie found and recorded Smenkhkara's name on one jar from his Year 1, twenty-five oil jars from his regional Year 2 and one from his Regional Year 3.⁴⁰⁵ That last may be either a mistranslation, a wine jar from Nefertiti's rule or an ancient error as the other wine jar shows him as dead by the start of his regional Year 2. These dates suggest he died nearing or starting a third year after coming to the throne; but these jars are now unfindable.⁴⁰⁶ De La Bèdoyère, also assesses other, more inconclusive evidence, including the claim that Smenkhkara was Akhenaten's co-regent. A vase found in Tutankhamen's tomb bears the cartouches of Akhenaten and Smenkhkara side by side, which would be strong evidence or a co-regency if the carved cartouches were in better condition than they are. They are apparently almost illegible and

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p.291

⁴⁰⁴ 'Akhenaten.' *Wikipedia* The given source is J.D.S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten*. 1951 Part III p. 1 xxxvi ccxvii.

⁴⁰⁵ De La Bèdoyère, pp.294-295

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p 295

were heavily restored without full scientific examination and photographs taken were not done under the correct lighting before their heavily done restoration.⁴⁰⁷ Another primary source referring to Smenkhkare as being a “dual king” makes some type of co-regency clear, but with who? Akhenaten. Nefertiti or his wife, Meritaten, the former princess who ruled as his queen are all possible.

Others claim that Smenkhkara was really Nefertiti in disguise as a male prince so that she could be co-regent and eventual pharaoh after her husband’s death. Why the woman with the most famous face in Egypt, a woman who had no hesitancy in repeatedly depicting herself as a female pharaoh in a whole Karnak temple about herself, would continuously go into a sudden masquerade as a male cannot be explained. After seeing the depictions at the humongous Karnak, the famous bust, the near naked reliefs, her massacre of prisoners and the full-frontal naked Amarna statue (Plate 55) we can discount modesty, an inferiority complex, a lack of confidence or public acceptance for a female pharaoh. Ancient Egypt would have five other female pharaohs, none of whom posed as males and three of these ruled before Nefertiti.⁴⁰⁸ While Hatshepsut did take on aspects of male appearance on occasion, such as wearing the male beard, she ruled as an obvious woman.

While all this is strong evidence against Nefertiti being Smenkhkara, the clinching evidence that disproves this theory is on the wine jars and the inscriptions. Apparently Smenkhkara did not live to celebrate the marking of his third year as Pharaoh; Nefertiti lived beyond marking her third year.

Another old theory is that Nefertiti and Smenkhkara ruled as co-regents, but their separate nomenclature on the jar docketts and inscriptions disprove this. Some of the confusion is caused by the fact that they both used the epithet Neferneferuaten, but they used it in different ways and in

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., p.294.

⁴⁰⁸ Fletcher, p. 186.

different cartouches.⁴⁰⁹ The often-quoted evidence for his position as Akhenaten's co-ruler and also for a homosexual relationship between them appears weak upon examining the primary source material. Phillip Vandenberg, who tends to follow the idea of a homosexual royal relationship, notes that Smenkhkara was given the title of 'Beloved of Uaenre.' This is indeed Akenaten's other royal name and how Nefertiti was sometimes identified as his wife.⁴¹⁰ Apart from Vandenberg's presented evidence there was also the way the male corpse in KV.55 was given the wig of a royal wife, and had his right arm straight by his side and the left across the breast, which was the traditional placing of the arms of a woman.⁴¹¹ While these are apparently done in mockery, what is being mocked? His homosexuality? His effete appearance? His uxorious ways combined with Nefertiti's dominance? Many make much of Stele 17B, which supposedly shows Akhenaten and Smenkhkara, two kings in a supposedly homosexual relationship because one has his arm around another while the embraced one strokes the other's chin. While crowns do denote kingship, developed breasts denote womanhood and this supposed king has breasts. To quote an ancient history teacher "she looks like she needs a size 32b bra." So does Akhenaten here - and elsewhere as several illustrations in this work show. Fletcher states that this stele represents Akhenaten and Nefertiti, not the pharaoh and the prince.⁴¹² Here they do match other representations of the royal couple. As all of the cartouches are left blank this could be any royalty. Why the cartouches were left that way? Did Akhenaten die while this was being carved and did Smenkhkara then assume power, or out manoeuvre the dowager queen to briefly become the next pharaoh? The blank cartouches are odd. Did Smenkhkara marry a royal daughter and gain an appointment as co-regent sometime during her father's last year? The reasons for this need no great speculative

⁴⁰⁹ 'Neferneferuaten' *Wikipedia*.

⁴¹⁰ Vandenberg, p. 125; Hawass mentions this title as being Akhenaten's in *King Tut's Final Secrets*.

⁴¹¹ Fletcher, p. 176.

⁴¹² Fletcher, An unnumbered reproduction of the stele and a caption are opposite page 149.

leap and while not proven, are quite plausible. She may have been Tutankhamen's mother, but so far as is known Nefertiti had given Akhenaten only daughters.

Tutankhamen had a left club foot containing weak bones and a sickly appearance.⁴¹³ What becomes closer to a certainty (as much as anything from this period after Akhenaten but before Tutankhamen does) is that the royal succession had to be assured through the birth of a healthy son - and grandchildren would assure that. Nefertiti may have either voluntarily taken or been forcibly given a retiring role in the northern palace. Younger royalty gained prominence while she still occasionally appeared in royal reliefs and commemorations. Akhenaten may have been ill and he must have known that his Atenist revolution was a heartbeat away from failure. In the perennial ways of royalists, a handsome, healthy young prince could secure his dynasty both through being a heir and by procreation. He could rejuvenate the waning dynasty and make it popular among the courtiers and the masses, the way young princes always do for a brief time.

Other evidence concerning this elusive individual has been disproved or has become dubious. The individual in Plate 52 has mistakenly been identified as Smenkhkara, but with his walking stick on the same side, the left clubfoot and the strong similarities to the depictions of Tutankhamen and Ankhesenamun in Plates 61 and 62, this cannot be so. Other evidence appears dubious. The bust once stated to be Smenkhkara (Plate 34) now lists him as being a possibility. The strong physical resemblance to other busts shows that it could also be a young Akhenaten. The strong resemblance could be due to being closely related. Fletcher has noted that many of the depictions that are interpreted as being of an effete young prince portrayed with Akhenaten are really of Nefertiti.⁴¹⁴ The way both the prince and the queen used the royal title Neferneferuaten adds to the confusion. The little conclusive clear evidence of his existence, his reign and an indication of how long he ruled rests not on grand monuments,

⁴¹³ *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy.*

⁴¹⁴ Fletcher, p. 286.

dubious depictions or great architecture, but on the Egyptian habit of dating wine jars by the year they were sealed in the ruler's reign. Nefertiti-Neferneferuaten ruled for perhaps two years and one month by wine jar dates which are known; who can say if this is the complete collection? Going by a dated inscription in a Theban tomb she ruled at least a little longer, into Year 3 at least. The hieratic inscription states a queen died a few months after her Year 3 began. Although this evidence remains thin, it is also unaffected by later pharaohs organizing the systematic destruction inflicted on written and carved records of the Atenist era because nobody had a reason to lie, aggrandise or distort on wine docket. These dockets show that several twentieth century theories concerning Smenkhkara and his relationship to Nefertiti are wrong.

Smenkhkara could not have been the ruler Neferneferuaten. A gold knuckleduster from a royal tomb shows who Neferneferuaten was as it has the unusual name Neferneferaten-Nefertiti.⁴¹⁵ A similar example is the white chest found in Tutankhamen's tomb: it also had both names inscribed and researchers accredited it as belonging to her.⁴¹⁶ Apart from these examples and the way their cartouches recorded their names differently, she had these two unambiguous inscriptions which escaped the attempted obliteration of all things Atenist, because they were in Amenist sites. As both date to Year 3 of her reign, Smenkhkara's cancelled out wine dockets for his Year 2 show that ruling for that three years and slightly more could not have happened for him unless the crossed out date is wrong, but the death of a pharaoh was an extremely unlikely mistake to make.. In Year 3 of her reign when she gets a direct mention an Amenist scribe in Thebes shows a longing for Amen, who he states protects "the humble man."⁴¹⁷ He implores Amen to return to them as his name or

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p. 289.

⁴¹⁶ *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*.

⁴¹⁷ David Montserrat, *Akhenaten: History Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*. London, 2000. p. 27; Fletcher, pp. 331-332. The document is quoted.

uttering it revives life's vitality, while existence now is miserable.⁴¹⁸ Another edict written within a few years of Akhenaten's death has a similar tone as the anonymous writer mourns for a luckless ruined Egypt, where prayers for relief go unanswered, temples are in ruins and Egypt cannot win victories in the Levant.⁴¹⁹ Fletcher and others see that soon after the widowed heretic queen became ruler she started cutting her losses over the attempts to establish Atenism and made a peace with the Amenists.⁴²⁰ As an obvious conciliatory gesture and also perhaps because of the plague, this female pharaoh started abandoning Amarna. The renegades did not achieve this in one sudden move, but the process was complete soon after Tutankhamen became pharaoh. This must be why archaeologists found Nefertiti's coffin empty and Akhenaten's mummy in the Valley of the Kings.

An incomplete temple inscription in Thebes lists Neferneferuaten in Year 3 of her reign as 'the beloved of Aten' and the 'Beloved of Uaenre.' As previously mentioned, those last three words often identified the wife of Akhenaten. Here she is "living worship to Amen" and making "divine offerings to Amen." This woman who once worshipped herself as a goddess in this same city even sinks to kissing the ground before a lay priest, Wenennefer.⁴²¹ This has become someone so extraordinarily desperate and disillusioned that she at the least compromises as the supplicant with her enemies. She may even be reneging on the cult she once co-founded, although identifying herself with the Aten and

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.,

⁴¹⁹ Fletcher, quoting several parts of the edict. p. 332.

⁴²⁰ Fletcher, pp. 329-333; History.com editors, 'Nefertiti.' *History*. A&E Television Networks. June 15, 2010. Original Published Date. Updated June 7, 2019. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/nefertiti> Access Date May 14, 2020; Reeves also makes points about her Amenist coffin.

⁴²¹ Originally found in 'Akhenaten' *Wikipedia* several years ago, this source has now vanished. The given source was Munane, *Texts from the Amarna Period*. L (1995) This passage has been used by several others.

Akhenaten in the address suggests surrender was not total, at least at this stage.

For any royalty to grovel in submission before any priest was an unimagined humiliation and loss of power, but for a pharaoh to do this before a mere lay priest? Was this a calculated insult - or was there some rule that Amen's ordained priests at higher levels could not confer with heretics?

Was she trying to avert a religious civil war that would have torn Egypt apart? On the other hand, what was more likely was that she was trying to forestall a bloody religious purge of the Atenists by the Amenists? Was the eradication of Atenism more than dealing with carvings and statues? Was it an early version of the world's various later religious purges? It is not only very possible, but also likely that the Amen-Aten purges and counter purges were the globe's first known religious purges within a kingdom: humanity has a frequent way of exterminating whole groups of those of different religious or political beliefs.

Such a purge may have unfolded in ancient Egypt or been averted by her surrender. This is speculative, but what can only be certain must be that something extraordinary must have happened to reduce this once extraordinarily proud, self-confident and powerful woman to this state of self-abasement. As her coffin with its decorations from Osirian beliefs evidently suggests, she may have totally renounced Atenist views and returned to orthodoxy.⁴²² On the other hand, this may have been made without her permission. Why did it end up being used by Tutankhamen? Was this because she had rejected it earlier? Or had she abdicated (perhaps by force) and was she still alive when he died? If so, she must have ruled as regent and then withdrew from politics and religion.

Like her protecting wings on the corners of Akhenaten's sarcophagus, possessing the palace by bequest, the wine jar dates, graffiti, depictions of her in middle age, the written letters and the royal ring, this

⁴²² Reeves, p. 179.



Plate 51. *The famous bust of Nefertiti found in Amarna in 1912. Frequently profile shots or those slightly angled from above with lighting emphasise her beauty, but this shows a woman capable of starting her own cult, going to war and ruling. A more traditional Nefertiti is depicted in the segment below. Photographer: Phillip Pikart. 2009. Wikipedia.*



Plate 52. Two portraits of Nefertiti from the workshop of Thutmose in Akhet-Aten. In both the head is deigned to take a royal crown. Photographer: Miguel Hermoso Cuesta. Creative Commons/Wikimedia.



Plate 53. Photographer Keith Schegili-Roberts. Creative Commons/Wikimedia.



Plate 54. *Nefertiti and Akhenaten approach middle age and look paunchy, pensive and very human. Photographer: Rama. Creative Commons by S. A. /Wikimedia*



Plate 55. Nefertiti in middle age. She still wears a crown, if nothing else. Was this originally clothed? Wearing a pharaoh's crown also suggests that this statue either dates from her reign or that she was a co-ruler. How many other Pharaohs depict themselves naked? This leads to the question of why? Was this essentially a clothing dummy? User: Andreas Praefcke. Wikipedia.



Plate 56. Nefertiti. Photographer: Tore Kjeilen. Looklex Encyclopedia. Entry 'Nefertiti.' The original is a small statue in the Neues Museum, Berlin Germany



Plate 57. *Statuette of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and a princess. From Amarna. Another defacing?*
 Photographer: Omar Shukir Muhanned Amin. Creative Commons/Wikimedia.

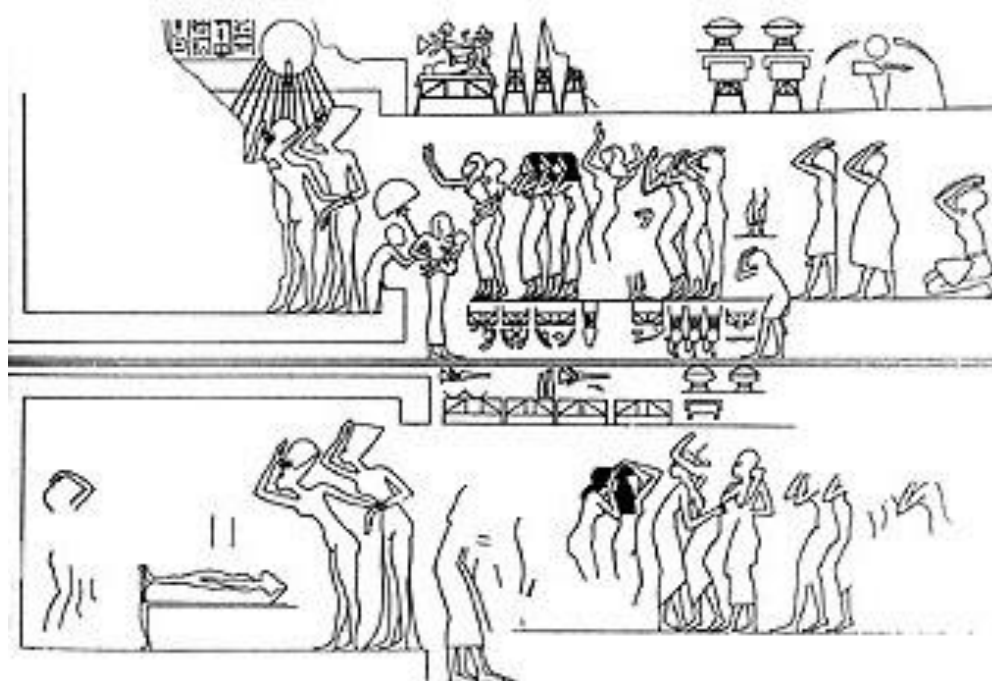


Plate 58. *Wall decoration from the Royal Amarna Tomb Note the unfinished sections.*
 Courtesy Thierry Bendritter.



Plate 59. A wall decoration from Akhenaten's tomb showing the royal family and others in mourning, but for whom? Why is a woman standing at right, receiving the mourner's procession? Note how all the royal faces have been scraped out while those of the mourners or courtiers in the top corner remain. No photographer credited. Wikipedia



Plate 60. *Akhenaten's coffin decorated with gold, blue glass and carnelian; this fits in with tradition (as does the beard) as the ceremonial sign of a pharaoh. However, the wig is not for that purpose, being for women. Was this a gesture of contempt? The royal symbols of rule have either been removed from his hands or were not placed there. The face has been deliberately chiselled away. This worked as a sure and still vivid sign of extreme hatred as Egyptians believed that such defacements would leave the victim blind, starving and unable to smell or breathe in the afterlife. Author Hans Ollermann. Cairo Museum. Wikipedia/Creative Commons. Universal Public Domain.*



Plate 61. *Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamen. Original Contributor Tiger Cub.*



Plate 62. A late example of Atenist art depicting a royal couple. According to Wikipedia in their entry on Smenkhkara most scholars credit this to being a portrait of Smenkhkara and his wife. Others claim it shows Akhenaten and Nefertiti, but note the walking stick and the left leg bent back and resting on toes. Tutankhamen had a left clubfoot. Many of the 130 walking sticks in his tomb showed signs of use. The queen paying attention to the Pharaoh also recalls the depiction of them on the throne Carter found in 1922. (Plate 17) An almost identical depiction of Tutankhamen and his queen appears in the previous plate. Note that now there is no Aten in either depiction, although the style is in the free form of Atenist art. Photo: Andreas Praefcke / Public Domain/ Wikipedia.



Plate 63. *Tutankhamen destroying his enemies. A painting on wood dated to around 1327 BC. Photographer: Yann Forget. Egyptian Museum of Cairo. Creative Commons /Wikipedia.*

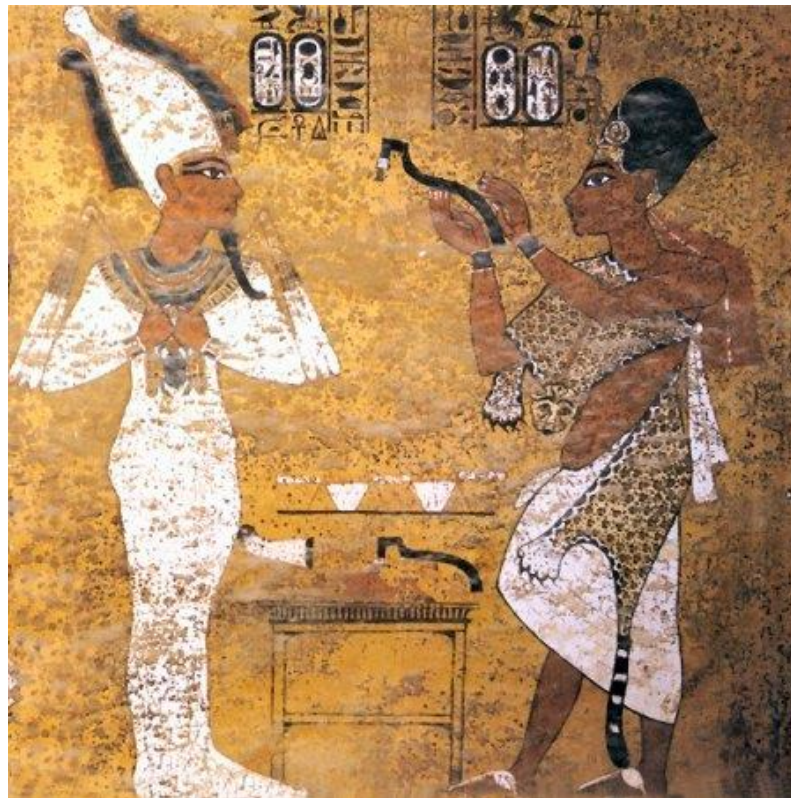


Plate 64. *Ay performing the ritual for the dead on Tutankhamen. A segment of a longer tomb wall depiction of Tutankhamun going to the Land of Reeds. Wikipedia.*



Plate 65. *A letter from the Amarna archives. Letter EA 161 Aziru to Pharaoh: 'An Absence explained.'* No photographer credited. Public Domain/Wikipedia.

coffin works as another piece of evidence strongly suggesting that she was still alive and a power for several years after her husband's death.

Unless archaeologists and researchers make new discoveries, very little can be known concerning the reigns of either Smenkhkara or Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti, although her name appears on some objects from Amarna. The previously mentioned statue of Nefertiti alone shows her middle aged, naked except for a royal crown, careworn and expressing something much, much less than being victorious. Grovelling before a minor priest of those considered enemies definitely appears as not a good indicator of a happy or even a long future. As the Aten cult continued, she may not have organised a surrender as a leader, but changed sides, being a traitor to Atenism would have added to the number of enemies who wanted her dead. While Akhenaten died as Pharaoh and we have an idea of his age and a possible cause, her fate remains not conclusively known, but since the 2003 investigations into the three mummies in tomb KV. 39, we have some very strong indications of what was her fate.

The eradication of Atenist records and culture was not immediate. If there was an immediate purge soon after Akhenaten's death no records of that purge have been found. Redford estimates that the Aten cult lasted in a reduced form for about a decade after Akhenaten and faded away.⁴²³ That decade of decline roughly matches the reigns of two former Atenists who followed Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti. Within two or three years of Tutankhamen coming to the throne he permanently left Amarna for Thebes and reverted to the worship of Amen.⁴²⁴ This remains one of the few undisputed facts amongst those writing about the Atenist era. Aged Ay followed Tutankhamen as Pharaoh and modern writers using the wine jar docket system, generally accord him a rule of three or four years. The Atenist repression really developed under the next pharaoh, Horemhab. His rule began about thirteen years after Tutankhamen's started. He had his followers deface or destroy Atenist objects, depictions and inscriptions and destroy the records of Atenist rulers in the King lists.⁴²⁵ Things connected to the renegade Atenists, Ay and Tutankhamen, got the same treatment.⁴²⁶ Even paintings in Ay's traditional polytheistic tomb were defaced.⁴²⁷ Every writer on the topic mentions how later pharaohs purged almost anything found concerning the Aten or Akhenaten and his depictions. Some of Karnak's statues were a rare exception. Was this because they were too large to demolish easily? Would their fall have caused reverberations that would have destroyed other buildings at Karnak? Apart from the obvious practicalities, would such effects have caused demoralization, even fear and trauma amongst a superstitious populous? Almost certainly. At Amarna in particular Akhenaten's monuments and architecture were sometimes demolished to be turned into

⁴²³ Redford, p. 207.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 205.

⁴²⁵ Silverman, p. 1 p. 6 p. 177 Figure 159 depicts the altered king lists from Abydos. See also the explanatory caption on that page and. pp. 182-183; Booth p. 97; 'Horemhab.' *Wikipedia*.

⁴²⁶ Booth, p. 97. See citation 3.

⁴²⁷ Pemberton, text p. 120 and a photograph of the interior of Ay's tomb shows the defacing. p.121; T.G. H James, 'The Tomb of Ay.' Text and a photograph, p. 174.

quarries. If builders scraped stones, they leave little that appears clear about the last years of the Atenist era.

The Aten cult may have also failed to supplant the old religions for other reasons than the death of its co-leader or the royal family's alienating behaviour. Nefertiti, One time Atenists Ay and Horemhab emerge as trendy trimmers, but Nefertiti, the once fanatical monotheist, would not have caved in to the Amenists without very good reasons. Despite the Year 9 purges, despite the wealth and power of this rich and powerful king, the Atenists had always been fighting a losing battle to win hearts and minds away from polytheistic gods. The Atenist Year 9 purge resembles examples that are more modern in that the vandalism by foreign troops and the systematic destruction of signs of worship never wins hearts and minds. From the pharaohs to fascism, from the beginnings of European imperialism, to Bush's New World Order and the rule of Isis and the Taliban, most people have preferred to avoid abstracted monotheistic ideas, especially when enforced with violence and persecution. They prefer beliefs with clear heroes and villains, striking symbols, easily understood language and visual images. Tangible rewards, clear parables and pithy little proverbs with easily understood wisdom are always popular.

Akhenaten did seem to grasp two of these aspects with brilliance. These were the use of symbols and the need to simplify language, which he did by making the common language of hieratic the one used in inscriptions. This reduced the power of the priesthood by making what was a strong part of their elitist ways more common and outside their control. With symbols, choosing the sun was also brilliant. Using the easily made and understood ankhs with their simple but unmistakable design and the carved sunrays with the benevolent hand on carvings was astute. He seems much less than brilliant concerning other points. Like many famed megalomaniacs, he could be brilliant and astute in some aspects and extremely stupid or oblivious to realities in others. At times he even seemed blind to the need for the exposition of concrete, easily comprehended religious ideas. From all the evidence available Atenism was a nebulous belief system without practical laws, advice for day to day

living or myths, parables and fables to explain the world. In Atenist writings apart from banishing night every dawn, no system of rewards and punishments came from above. This meant that the old polytheistic ways filled these voids and although the Amenist leadership was powerless and probably unpopular, the old structure retained some appeal and could easily be the base from which Amen's priests could regain control when circumstances changed.

In Atenist Egypt the tyranny, personal failures, exploitative, strange and hypocritical ways of the pharaoh and his queen and gross misjudgements may have been more decisive factors than the strength of tradition. All of these factors may have combined with the unfamiliarity of the monotheistic ideal to ensure that Atenism never took over the way Islam rapidly would two thousand years later in the Middle East, when Christianity had made the idea of one God familiar. Like Akhenaten, Mohammed died in power without living into old age, but unlike his predecessor Mohammed did live to see his invented religion grow from an idea in one man's be an expanding, popular and thriving religion and a pervasive form of government. Akhenaten must have known how brittle his religion was.

His personality and actions apparently alienated Egyptians, who could easily have interpreted the loss of some Northern provinces and successful rebellions as the punishment of the gods. Such a belief would have been reinforced by being combined with another obvious ill omen, especially for sun worshippers., This was the eclipse of 13th May 1338 BC which would have been seen across central Africa, including Amarna.⁴²⁸ This was also about the time of the arrival of plague during the late Atenist period. All of these factors could be easily construed as curses from the Gods for heresy and would be a great aid for those striving for a return to Atenism. These were also important factors about Atenism that decrees, architecture and inscriptions did not depict.

⁴²⁸ De La Bèdoyère, pp.19-20 p.294 Bèdoyère, mentions the eclipse and explains how they can be easily calculated, but the effects are my conclusions..

Despite massive entwining problems contributing to Atenism's failure, the decisive factor in this failure may have been plague in some form, probably bubonic plague. Late in Akhenaten's reign, around 1335 /1336 BC some form of pestilence hit his northern provinces and his capitol as he refers to a recent epidemic outbreak there in an undated letter to Babylon's King.⁴²⁹ An anonymous Egyptian account known as the Ebers Papyrus, from around 1500 B.C. describes a spreading disease leaving buboes excreting pus.⁴³⁰ This reads as a Black Death symptom. Archaeologist Eva Panagiotakopulu, while excavating at Amarna, found evidence there of the Nile rat species and cats, both known carriers of fleas which infect plague. Her mention of the black rat species, which originated in India and which trading ships apparently carried to Egypt, marks this as of interest: this species and the role of shipping frequently gain mentions when apportioning blame for spreading bubonic plague.⁴³¹

Archaeologists also found fossilised insect remains, which show that rats and their fleas, carriers of the contagion, were in the Amarna hovels.⁴³² Panagiotakopulu also found evidence of floods, which would have brought humans and carriers into close proximity.⁴³³ Rats escaping flooding was often documented as how plague spread in more modern times. It must have hit Akhet-Aten, as a jumble of hundreds of skeletons, clearly hastily buried, were found by archaeologists.⁴³⁴ Even poor Egyptians were usually

⁴²⁹ Akhenaten. A letter written to Burne-Buriash, King of Babylon. Letter Number EA 11. 'The Amarna Letters.' *Wikipedia*. Unfortunately, only a summary, not the full text is provided.

⁴³⁰ Cameron Walker, 'Bubonic Plague Traced to Ancient Egypt.' *National Geographic News*. March 10th 2004. <https://newsnationalgeographic.com/new-bubonic-plague-traced-to-ancient-egypt>, accessed 25th November 2018. A quote from the Eber manuscript is reproduced.

⁴³¹ Garry Victor Hill, *The Black Death in England 1346-1918*. Armidale; 2020. The role of these two factors in the spread of plague is dealt with in several different outbreaks mentioned in this work, using mainly secondary sources.

⁴³² Booth, p. 30. See Source Note 3.

⁴³³ Walker, Panagiotakopulu, quoted.

⁴³⁴ Quillici; Pringle, p. 29; Other writers mention the plague, Redford, pp. 205-206; Booth, p. 30; Aldred, 1996. p. 289.

buried with some ceremony. Anna Stevens and the Cambridge team also found evidence in the worker' burials suggesting a killer epidemic. Unusually bodies shared graves which were dug wider than needed, as if more deaths were expected and the graves were dug in expectation of more corpses needing space soon.⁴³⁵ Others were obviously buried together at the same time, as they were wrapped together in mats in these oversized graves. What was killing large numbers of people simultaneously or a few days apart if it was not some form of epidemic? War? No reports of blows or cutting wounds emerge. That only leaves the possibility of famine, in this land of abundance and for which no evidence emerges. Other evidence for plague does emerge.

In 'Plague Prayers' a document written by a Hittite prince, the contagion which ravaged the Hittite empire and killed its king was blamed on Egyptian prisoners brought back from a successful campaign in northern Syria.⁴³⁶ It may have started in the area of Cyprus and spread to Lebanon and could easily have reached Amarna either through visiting courtiers and envoys and messengers, or through unloaded goods and foreign tradespeople.⁴³⁷ The likelihood of the infection route is revealed when the King of Alisha delivered by ship five hundred talents of copper with an apology for the small amount due to the effects of plague.⁴³⁸ Did he also unintentionally send the pestilence? Alisha included modern day Cyprus and perhaps parts of the adjacent Levantine coast, areas hit by this pestilence.

Plague in Amarna may explain the proportionally large numbers of deaths and young people vanishing from amongst the royal family in the last four years of Akhenaten's reign or just after. Excepting Tutankhamen, they were apparently healthy. Four out of six of the royal daughters either

⁴³⁵ Stevens,

⁴³⁶ Cline, p. 66 p. 68.

⁴³⁷ Aldred, 1996. p. 283.

⁴³⁸ Baikie, He quotes the king's apology, which is stored in the Amarna archives. p. 114.

died or inexplicably vanished from the records. Meketaten, one of her sisters, Kiya, Smenkhkara, Tutankhamen, apparently all died young, Nefertiti and Akhenaten died not far into middle age. At the time of his death the Pharaoh who founded Atenism was aged from somewhere in his late twenties into possibly his middle fifties. While strong evidence emerges for one murder amongst these people dying prematurely and others also died conveniently, contagion may have been the cause of several of these deaths. If it devastated the Aten cult's centre, this could have given the cult a blow that left a never robust movement on the wane, even when Akhenaten survived the epidemic and lived a little longer. Judging by the two Amarna letter references to him and to the epidemic being in the recent past, this must have happened. Being either the origin of the epidemic within Egypt or a major vector would also explain why residents abandoned the city and therefore why Atenism never became a major Egyptian religion under a successor who could have only been a more politically astute leader than Akhenaten. The Cypriot ship which bore an apology about the plague in his land may have infected only isolated Amarna alone - if it did not stop anywhere before reaching that city. Other vessels also may have followed this pattern. No evidence seems to have emerged yet that plague devastated anywhere else in Egypt's Empire excepting Cyprus, the area around Byblos and the Levant.⁴³⁹ Any Amenist leader with the slightest sense of opportunity would have blamed the epidemic on Atenism at Amarna and argued that the kind gods were protecting everywhere else. From the obvious evidence available Egyptians would have then had good reason to accept the Amenist accusation. The eclipse of 1338 would have reinforced this idea and shown the weakness of the sun god - or disapproval of his Atenist worshippers.

The Pharaoh's widow may have initially tried to keep the cult going. Decorations on Akhenaten's sarcophagus suggest that. A Theban tomb inscription does show her being identified with the Aten and her husband. Assuming that she did want Atenism to flourish, in better circumstances

⁴³⁹ Mayor of Byblos, AE 362.

she may have succeeded. She would have had to make wiser choices than her husband did, but if her religious leadership did come with her succession, her Atenist leadership came too late. It may have not been leadership at all, more custodianship of a belief and an organisation she had wearied of and wanted to dismantle. Jacelyn Williamson stated that Nefertiti might have lived long enough to see the systematic destruction of Atenist art by gangs organised for that purpose.⁴⁴⁰

Akhenaten's frequent political ineptitude, indolence, sex life, obsessive behaviour and frequently apathy about the world after leaving Thebes must also have been a major cause for the cult's failure. Even in Thebes he probably alienated many with these characteristics and strange behaviour, including perhaps ultimately alienating even Nefertiti. That may have caused the reduction or fading out of her crucial role and her eventual surrender. Involvement with some of their daughters could also have caused jealousy. It is also possible that she just woke up to his megalomania, the consequences of misrule or the reasons for Atenism's failure to spread. Teenage fanatics or obsessives frequently burn out their energy, idealism and youth in a cause and suddenly disillusioned, wearily and bitterly turn against it or just abandon it. As most place her birth date as about 1370 BC and her ascension to the throne as queen as happening in about 1353 or 1351 BC, she was probably between seventeen to nineteen when she became queen. At only a year or two older, she started on her own temple at Karnak – and the idealistic and adolescent dreams that she expressed there. Adolescent radicalism and utopian dreams seldom last beyond the twenties and depictions of her in her husband's last years show that Nefertiti was aging for beyond her twenties. She was probably around thirty-five or thirty-six when she ascended the throne.. What evidence that still exists indicates that she died after a rule of three years, perhaps a little longer, but by months. and therefore was about forty when she vanished from history

⁴⁴⁰ Kew.

One odd, unofficial piece of evidence does bear a date of being from Year 3 of her reign. Unfortunately, it is graffiti, says nothing more than she ruled for three years and it is located in an Amenist temple where it is scrawled across sacred Amenist wall decorations in large, ugly hieratic letters.⁴⁴¹ This makes for evidence that interests and puzzles more than it supplies certainty. What is certain here is that to inscribe graffiti on religious carvings is an act of defiant, deliberate blasphemy. If this was not the act of one isolated fanatical survivor, it shows that the Amenist-Atenist conflict continued several years after Akhenaten's death. What can we make of the use of the Queen's name and length of her rule used in this way? It is likely that this was a way of affirming that the queen still ruled over the Amenists - or had. Or was this a reproach, a way of showing that the queen had ruled over Egypt for three years before being removed by Amenists going against the sacred ruler? Death by natural causes must be an unlikely cause for such graffiti, but removal by murder, execution, exile or imprisonment were all possible and plausible.

The deaths of at least two daughters and possibly others, would have demoralised and drained away the optimism she initially expressed. If Akhenaten capriciously promoted Smenkhkara and Maketaten to do her duties rather than her, this would have also alienated her, even without the possible if unlikely homosexual angle. This assumes that she was the sincere and enthused Atenist depicted in art, architecture and inscriptions. She was not the only wife to go along with her husband's politics and abandon it when the marriage ended or became troubled. She seems the first to be like that in recorded history.

The answer to Atenism's failure may have been much simpler and involved a factor few writers consider, but has much to do with human havoc, conflict, misery and change: that is sheer bloody boredom. Examining Atenism beyond a few remarkable hymns reveals it as tedious, nebulous, never developing, never varying and never allowing for contrast or complexity. Staring at the sun quickly becomes wearying in minutes or less: doing that for hours in the same ritual day after day, year after year...

⁴⁴¹ Williamson, This showed up in the film close up.

If she was not an obsessive, was she bored with it all? Or did all these factors entwine? After Year 14, when she no longer appears so often in inscriptions and reliefs, was this because she wanted to have less to do with her old role rather than some type of enforced withdrawal?

While ultimately her fate remains inconclusive, recent investigations into a mummy containing strong evidence for and against this being hers reveals her very possible fate. The three previously mentioned unwrapped female mummies, which French Egyptologist Victor Loret found in one royal tomb in 1898, contained one mummy that is unlikely to be that of Nefertiti, although many writers (including initially myself) wrote that it probably was, few went beyond that into certainty. Even so, this highly placed royal mummy indicates what may also have been Nefertiti's fate.

This tomb, in the Valley of the Kings was labelled KV. 39 and was originally the tomb of Akhenaten's great-grandfather Amenophis II.⁴⁴² This contained several other royal mummies from the eighteenth to the twentieth dynasties. The number of contained mummies, their haphazard placement, the unwrapped women, the miscellaneous grave goods from several different rulers and the lack of the usual wall decorations and illustrations indicated that this was a temporary storage area. Officials obviously used it that way while reburial in proper entombments for those contained there was being carried out. Almost certainly, given the different families and the mix of Amenists and Atenists, this onetime tomb was not meant to be a single tomb for all found there. For unknown reasons, possibly the sudden death of Tutankhamen, or Smenkhkara, Nefertiti or Ay, the reburials did not happen. This act of protective storage was probably to prevent robbery and despoliation of the corpses.⁴⁴³ In Ay's reign tomb robbing was common and his successor Horemhab had Thutmose IV's tomb resealed.⁴⁴⁴ The presence of three Ramesside era

⁴⁴² Baikie, p .79; Bradshaw.

⁴⁴³ 'Nefertiti.' *James M. Deem's Mummy Tombs*; Quillici.

⁴⁴⁴ Baikie, p. 412. Horemhab's instructions are quoted.

pharaohs in KV 39 shows that somebody reopened the tomb centuries later and probably for the same reasons.

The oddest thing in this odd entombment is the way in a small, undecorated side room three nearly naked royal corpses lay on their backs side by side. What was even more puzzling than what was there was what was missing. The corpses were not only without the usual sarcophagi, coffins and magic bricks, but were without proper wrapping linen, amulets, shabati, other funerary statuettes, canopic jars or even a thick coating of resin. Clearly, those carrying out mummification and entombment processes were interrupted or had abandoned their important task for unclear reasons.

Researchers officially described the oldest of these three as 'The Older Lady' and in the twenty-first century their successors used DNA to prove that she was who their predecessors suspected, Queen Tye, Akhenaten's mother.⁴⁴⁵ Investigators used both hair from a hair lock in Tutankhamen's tomb and samples from this mummy to eventually confirm this identity.⁴⁴⁶ The other two mummies were of an unidentified boy in his early teens and another who became entitled 'The Younger Lady.' While Tye's body was unmarked, the other two had suffered deliberate damage. The Younger Lady, long suspected to be Nefertiti, had her mouth and chest smashed in. This initially looked like grave robbers at work or desecrators who hated Atenists. Writers from the first investigation at the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning years of the twenty-first usually described these blows as vandalism. These three mummies were taken from their Amarna tombs.. Twenty-first century DNA testing on The Boy

⁴⁴⁵ Doctor Ashrak Shaleem identifying the mummy on camera at the Cairo Museum in *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*: Bradshaw, Doctor Selim explains as the attacks on the mummy are shown onscreen.

⁴⁴⁶ Quillici; Hawass; Jama. Marianne Luban, 'Do We Have the Mummy of Nefertiti?' (1999) Posted October 2009. http://www.oocities.org/scribelistdo_we_have_hm, accessed 17th March 2019.

King, Akhenaten and both women in the tomb proved that The Younger Lady was Tutankhamen's mother and a sister of Akhenaten. In Bradshaw's documentary Britany Hughes and a prominent member of the 2010 DNA research team into the question, Sahar Saleem, both clearly say that DNA proves this. Interbreeding was also obvious in Tutankhamun's skull shape.⁴⁴⁷ Supporting this was a reconstruction of the boy king's head done with strong scientific restrictions: it revealed a skull shape and face bearing a strong resemblance to the more grotesque depictions of Akhenaten and yo yje facial reconstruction of Akhenaten in Plate 74.

That the older woman was Tye, Akhenaten's mother and therefore Tutankhamen's grandmother, remains one of the few facts that have widespread agreement amongst researchers writing about these three mummies. The boy who Luban and Fletcher believed was Akhenaten's elder brother may have been a son of Amenhotep II, who ruled long before – so why was his body placed between two women who lived over two centuries later?⁴⁴⁸ This is only one of many questions raised by the unusual evidence from this site.⁴⁴⁹ Was this Smenkhkara? No mention of him emerges in that storage area.⁴⁵⁰ It may well be that this boy's tomb was robbed around the time that the bodies from Amarna were being reinterred, so he was placed with them as a temporary measure.

Before DNA testing the identity of "The Younger Lady" led to much speculation and then controversies. In 1999 writer Marianne Luban's 'Do We Have the Mummy of Nefertiti?' was published. She noted many strong physical similarities between depictions of Nefertiti and 'The Younger Lady.' These included not just a facial resemblance, but also the long

⁴⁴⁷ Bradshaw.

⁴⁴⁸ Luban; *Wikipedia*; Baines and Mâlek, p. 36.

⁴⁴⁹ Fletcher, pp. 173-183 Fletcher visited the site and was a witness to many of the computer-based assessments going on. In his 1968 edition Aldred spends a whole chapter on this tomb, its occupants and the way it was initially badly excavated and also comes up with many justified questions. Chapter Nine 'The Occupants of Valley Tomb 55.' pp. 106-122.

⁴⁵⁰ Fletcher, p. 182.

slender neck, long eyelashes, the strong jaw and the shape of the nose.⁴⁵¹ Luban matched Elliot G. Smith's 1912 measurements of this mummy with an exact blown up to life size photograph of the Berlin bust, getting perfect matches to Smith's measurements with the nose, forehead and minimal frontal breadth, all three matched to the millimetre.⁴⁵²

Egyptologist Joan Fletcher also noticed a similarity between one of the mummy's facial features and that of Nefertiti in the famous Berlin bust. Fletcher began investigating in 2003 and found several other similarities. The mummy had once suffered scoliosis. Nefertiti's sculptor depicts this by building up one shoulder higher than another in the Berlin bust, so Nefertiti showed this scoliotic symptom in this iconic depiction.⁴⁵³ This mummy also had a Nubian wig, jewellery, double pierced ears, a shaven skull, embedded nefer beads that show that she once had a royal pectoral collar, and skull marks caused by wearing a crown. These are all unmistakable marks and accoutrements of Egyptian royalty and all seven of these factors were consistent with what historians know about Nefertiti's regal ways, tastes and appearance. When these are added to the eight matches and similarities Luban found four years before, a very strong case emerges for this being Nefertiti. All her finds are difficult to explain away as coincidence. Three facial measurements, each matching to the millimetre? Other favourable evidence came in from two university efforts. The Nottingham University Facial Reconstruction unit reconstruct faces from skulls, sometimes for the famous, more often in police forensics.⁴⁵⁴ One of their most important working rules was that the reconstruction team did not know whom they were working on and they applied this rule to 'The Younger Lady.' Their reconstruction bore a startling resemblance to the busts of Nefertiti, particularly to that in Plate

⁴⁵¹ Luban,

⁴⁵² Ibid.,

⁴⁵³ Fletcher, p. 369.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 377-378.

51 ⁴⁵⁵ A separate facial reconstruction in 2018 by the University of Bristol, while slightly different in expression and just a little fuller in the flesh, also brought out the striking facial symmetry, regal appearance and age.⁴⁵⁶ The only major difference was a lighter skin colour. This team backed the idea that Nefertiti had been found.⁴⁵⁷ Two profile photographs, one of the Plate 51 bust and one of the mummy's head, when put beside each other, show an extraordinary similarity in size and shape as this mummy also has the elongated and slightly prognathous jaw typical of Akhenaten's family.⁴⁵⁸ In Plate 72 the portrait of Tutankhamen shows obviously similar inherited traits when compared to the portraits of Nefertiti in Plates 70 and 71. Only a close relationship could cause this strong similarity. In 2010 DNA testing on these royal mummies began and experts using DNA found that this younger lady was Akhenaten's sister and Tutankhamen's mother.⁴⁵⁹ At the least, this proves the incest strongly implied by the marriages, the Amarna letters and assorted illustrations. One expert working on these cases dissented, pointing out that the DNA in these ancient cases was degraded and therefore not perfect proof.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁵ Fletcher, p. 378. The artistic representation which appears in the Google entry 'Nefertiti' under 'Images' bears this out. Unfortunately, this image is not in the Public Domain; Tim Friend, 'Could This be the Profile of a Queen?' *USA Today* 15th August 2003. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/science/2003-08-12-ne> accessed March 16th 2019. This article which is reproduced on the website *Race and History* also reproduces the facial reconstruction. See Plate 67.

⁴⁵⁶ Dana Dovey, 'Ancient Egypt: Mummy of Queen Nefertiti Brought to Life with controversial Fair Skin in 3D Scan.' *Newsweek* 2/7/18. No pagination.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁵⁸ This double image is unfortunately in copyright, but appears in the Google entry 'Nefertiti' under 'Images.'

⁴⁵⁹ Bradshaw, *Voices of the Dead: Tutankhamun*. Both the documentary voiceover and Doctor Sahar Saleem expressed this conclusion; In another documentary the same conclusions and other information was given by other experts;. El Shady. <https://www.pbs.org/show/tutankhamun-allies-enem...>

⁴⁶⁰ El Shady

Not all the evidence for this mummy being Nefertiti was so good; other possibilities must be considered and ultimately work against this being a definite conclusion. While this mummy was highly placed adult royalty, so was Nefertiti's sister Mutbenret and so were any of the Pharaoh's known five sisters. Any of these sisters could be 'The Younger Lady,' albeit with weaker evidence in their favour outside the strong DNA evidence. Other problems that block verification of this being Nefertiti soon emerge. Age at death became one puzzling factor and trying for clarification on this and other points leads to more unanswered questions.

Four different assessments of the mummy's age give a range of ages from nineteen to forty-five, with one giving a maximum age of thirty, *Wikipedia* giving twenty-five to thirty-five and two others give the older levels.⁴⁶¹ The beginnings of arthritis suggest an older age while teeth development strongly suggest a younger. The Younger Lady had not yet developed wisdom teeth, suggesting an age approaching twenty-five.⁴⁶² Therefore unless the assessment of the teeth are wrong or she was physically a case of arrested development at nearly forty, the younger ages are correct on this dental evidence. The history of her reign supports this conclusion. Nefertiti co-ruled for around seventeen years and disallowing Smenkhkara's three-year reign as a co-regency she ruled for three more years in her own right. She bore six children, the first of them Meritaten, being born in her husband's Regional Year One. To bear children she must have been at least thirteen; add to this the seventeen years of her husband's rule and then add at least three more for hers, means at the very least by stretching the favoured interpretation of evidence for a younger age as far as what is possible, she was at least thirty-three when she died. This clear, incontrovertible evidence goes against that possibility, let alone being younger than that. The early depictions of her at Karnak show a fully grown young woman, not a girl of thirteen. The later depictions at Akhetaten show a tired, middle-aged woman with age lines, sagging breast

⁴⁶¹ Deems; 'Nefertiti' *Wikipedia*; Fletcher, p. 182 p. 366-368.

⁴⁶² Bradshaw, Doctor Saleem is the source.

and the beginnings of weight gain: this suggests a woman well into her forties., not someone thirty-three years old or younger Most estimates based on records plausibly put her age as nearly forty at least at the time of her death or possible disappearance from records.

So how did this sister of one pharaoh and mother to another die? Only one cause of death has conclusive evidence for it – murder. Fletcher comes close to saying this and others do. These include the Egyptian Mummy Project team using evidence from CT scans, Doctor Saleem speaking during Bradshaw’s documentary and three writers working separately, Julian Heath, Ashraf Saleem and Doctor Zahi Hawass. In an assessment given years after Fletcher’s 2004 publication, Hawass said the cause of death was most likely to be murder as investigators found shattered bone in the sinus and blood clots existed.⁴⁶³ While the shattered bone could obviously be an effect from either bad mummification or hostile blows given long after death, blood clots could not. They could only be developed while alive or very soon after death. Since that statement, more tests and evidence has emerged which bears out his opinion.⁴⁶⁴

Other evidence for murder is that one arm had suffered fractures from a sharp object and somebody struck the left hip with a blade.⁴⁶⁵ An angled knife or sword had glanced off her ribs. When Fletcher asked could the blow to the ribs have killed the victim a researcher told her the individual could have bled to death.⁴⁶⁶

To this writer it seems that the arm injuries could have been defensive as she attempted to ward off an attack. A large part of the chest had been removed, perhaps because resin stuck it to the royal collar; beads were still held in the body. This missing chest section may also have borne

⁴⁶³ ‘Nefertiti’ *Wikipedia*.

⁴⁶⁴ Fletcher, previous citations; The *Wikipedia* entry ‘The Younger Lady’ quotes extensively from CT scans, DNA tests and various experts’ reports. Unless stated otherwise facts and findings mentioned here are from this *Wikipedia* entry and Fletcher.

⁴⁶⁵ Fletcher, p. 352. pp. 373-374.

⁴⁶⁶ Fletcher, p. 374; Bradshaw, Doctor Saleem speaking.

other stab or axe wounds. One hand was cut off at the wrist. Was this an assassin? Was it the work of thieves unable to immediately remove rings? A hole was in the top of the skull would be odd for thieves to inflict. While it may be that thieves were trying to get amulets as attendants usually wrapped these in the wealthier mummy's linen wrappings, no traces of linen were found within any of the wounds.⁴⁶⁷ While a lone attacker could have at first used a knife and then used an axe or a mace, the use of two weapons, one with a blade and the other capable of smashing a face in, suggests two attackers as being more likely. The victim may have been stabbed after taking defensive blows to the arms and then taken the axe blow to the face, while either standing or lying down dying. Such a blow was probably meant to deny her the afterlife, suggesting Amenists. Another possibility that occurred to this writer is that shattering the mouth also works as a second royal denial. As a dead pharaoh's successor succeeded by the ceremony of opening the mouth of his predecessor, this blow could have been a way of denying the succession, probably to Atenists, although Nefertiti's deal with the Amenists could have led to the reverse: Atenists trying to block an Amenist successor. This assumes that the mummy was that of a female pharaoh. If it was not, an unknown sister-wife of the pharaoh inspired an extraordinary ferocity for unknown reasons, such ferocity inspired perhaps just by association. The extreme hostility evident in scratching out of the faces of the adolescent daughters of Akhenaten and Nefertiti in the Amarna tomb funeral depiction (Plate 59) makes this level of hostility plausible as these defacings denied them the afterlife in Amenist beliefs. Those wishing to control the boy king Tutankhamen may have wished to remove this obviously powerful and Atenist influence on her son. Alternatively, as a rival in both politics and romance Nefertiti may have been the killer, not the victim. Romantic jealousy worsened by the way this sister-wife had a son while Nefertiti only gave birth to daughters may have caused the ferocity. Whoever the murders were, this was likely to have been in Nefertiti's lifetime as 'The

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.,

Younger Lady” died young. This suggests a murder in her brother’s last years or soon after, during the reigns of the Atenist successors.

For years many assumed that hostile Amenists or tomb robbers smashed in the mummified face of ‘The Younger Lady’ to deny her existence in the afterlife. CT scans and scientific examinations now confirm Hawass’s opinion that this was a lethal blow. Julian Heath opined that she was hit with an axe. Ashraf Saleem opined that a horse had kicked her and others consider an accident in a chariot as the cause. That possibility does not explain the blade wounds or the hole in the skull. All three differing explanations give some idea of the force of the blow. It was strong enough to break her jaw and knock out several teeth. Another sign that this was murder, not the desecration of a mummy decades later, was that investigators found very few bone splinters or flesh parts in the cavity, someone had cleaned the wound before burial. They also used subcutaneous filling and resin coated packing to conceal the wounds’ effects. This was more likely to be a response to the murder of royalty than to an accident. Oddly, the undertakers did not remove the brain, as was standard practice. Replacing the preserved heart within the body was standard practice as it was part of the moment of truth in the afterlife, when the sins of the heart were weighed against the goddess Maat’s feather of truth. For this reason, the heart was preserved and then replaced in the body. This was a traditional polytheistic rite, but then so was preserving the body. To destroy the corpse by cremation or destructive hacking was to condemn its soul to destruction. By preserving the three bodies in the storage tomb, but by not removing the brains or having the full mummification process, it seems the Atenists retained some traditional burial practices, but not others – or what was more likely, was their work interrupted?

The lack of linen also applies to the wounds on the unidentified royal boy in his early teens who somebody placed between Queen Tye and The Younger Lady.⁴⁶⁸ He had a cavity made in the chest made by either a

⁴⁶⁸ Fletcher, p. 373.

robber's blow or an assassin. He had been hit with strength five times in the left side with an axe. Why? The thin residue of resin which had been placed on all three bodies and linen would not have made any valuable encrusted enough to warrant several crushing axe blows. Ancient Egyptian undertakers used the left side to remove internal organs through a surgical operation using a blade, not wrecking it by hacking with an axe. It is possible that thieves did this to remove a gold covering over the incision and the blows to the chest were to remove jewellery. Going against this idea is that ancient Egyptian undertakers did not place funeral valuables on the left side. They usually placed valuables on the chest, hung them around the neck or kept them the way the dead had worn them in life, as anklets or bracelets.

With both victims the wounds were close to the time of death and not of the type robbers inflicted generations later. Fletcher points out that the weapons used on the two mummies were rare, expensive in ancient Egypt, and so unlikely to be used by tomb robbers.⁴⁶⁹ Soldiers, palace guards and executioners used such weapons. One Amarna relief does show a bodyguard with an axe. History records several cases of groups of supposed underlings or bodyguards killing their superior, particularly in the ancient world. Phillip of Macedon, Darius, Julius Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian, Commodus and Caracalla, In modern times the Zulu chief Shaka and Indira Gandhi, suffered such a fate.

The obvious murder of royalty was an extraordinary event, as was the absence of sarcophagi for royalty. Explanations become clear quickly if the mummies were Atenists. The reinstalled Amenist royalty could not let even heretic royalty remain unburied. Such an act would be a loss of all royal prestige, but these same royal or priestly personages could not tolerate heretic Atenist sarcophagi and inscriptions in an Amenist tomb. If they did so, they would be aiding heresy and blasphemy against the beliefs and traditions that were a cornerstone of their power. Leaving them in an empty room was a perfect solution: an ancient version of a too hard file.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 376-377



Plate 66. *A magnificent vulture collar, only worn by royalty. This was taken from the male body in the sarcophagus in K55 who is now identified as Akhenaten. Author; [Ulises Muñiz](#) Wikipedia*

The Younger Lady's face does have the elegance of the Nefertiti bust, but while Fletcher has claimed strong evidence for this being Nefertiti, she has never claimed absolute certainty on the identification, despite media reports that she did.⁴⁷⁰ This denial was wise as Hawass, Luban and others separately rejected such a positive identification, and for good reasons, such as DNA showing that she was the mother of Tutankhamen.⁴⁷¹ Just as DNA also showed that Akhenaten was Tutankhamen's father 'The Younger Lady' was a royal wife to him. DNA tests also revealed that she was the daughter of Tye and Amenophis III.⁴⁷² If this was Nefertiti this would make Akhenaten and Nefertiti full brother and sister and so explain their facial similarity and many of the odd things about the physical

⁴⁷⁰ Fletcher, pp.378-379; Friend.

⁴⁷¹ 'The Younger Lady.' *Wikipedia*

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*,

depictions of their inbred children. Doctor Ashrak Shaleem clearly stated on camera this sibling link of Tutankhamen's parents as he stood beside the glass-encased mummy of the 'The Younger Lady' in the Cairo Museum, with Akhenaten similarly enclosed in the background.⁴⁷³

This linking identification has become one of the few undisputed facts on this topic. DNA solves one puzzle while causing another, because if accepted, this identification hits another problem. If this is Nefertiti, why was she not listed as the Pharaoh's sister? Akhenaten had five sisters listed, so why doesn't the name of Nefertiti appear amongst them? Is it because she changed her name and so did her sister Mutbenret? This can only be unlikely. Why is this accredited sister also unlisted amongst these five daughters of Amenophis III and Queen Tye? Only Mutbenret gains a mention as her sister.

Critics also have a point when stating that the royal harems had hundreds of women who could also fit the identifying points Fletcher noted. The placing of the arms in the regal position was not restricted to pharaohs. Doubly pierced ears and Nubian wigs were a common 18th Dynasty fashion.⁴⁷⁴ However, how many women would have skull indentations from wearing a crown or be permitted to wear a pectoral necklace? How many had the elongated skull or Luban's exactly matching measurements? The identity of 'The Younger Lady' and her age at death are all ultimately inconclusive, but the best evidence from this mummification points to this being Nefertiti. If this mummy is a great maybe in ancient Egyptian history, new work has made one of its great certainties a probability. Her bust is one of the world's most famous images. Until recently it was one of the very few certainties about her. Now in the television documentary *The Nefertiti Bust* raises doubts about even that.

⁴⁷³ *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*. Ashrak Shaleem and Sahar aleem are two different people.

⁴⁷⁴ Deems; 'Nefertiti' *Wikipedia*.

The first doubt the documentary raises concerns the authenticity of the bust. The evidence here against authentication appears mostly weak and easily disproved. Their main witness in the documentary, Shaun Greenhalgh, a convicted forger, expresses his opinions while revealing his expertise. He lists the following reasons for believing this bust to be a fake:

The face looks like a modern depiction.

The bust does not look thousands of years old. The paint looks bright.

The broken bits are on the edges and not on the nose and chin. Breaks in those last-mentioned places are common and lower the value considerably.

Forgers put breaks in the edges to make fakes look authentic. He identifies these as hallmarks of fakery.

The face had one eye that was authentically ancient. The forger supposedly could not find another because finding such pairs are rare now.

In response:

Most Amarna art looks modern. Peruse the examples in this book.

The same comment applies to the bright colours. Images in the documentary showed investigators testing bright paint. Researchers did not find evidence of modern chemical usage.

The breaks were in the ears, and the cobra, the most delicate sections.

Nefertiti may have been blind in one eye, or perhaps the ancient sculptor also had trouble making or finding a perfect pair for such a perfectly



Plate 67. *The reconstructed head of Nefertiti and the skull it came from. Generic license. This was one of two investigative reconstructions, the other is copyrighted and unavailable.*

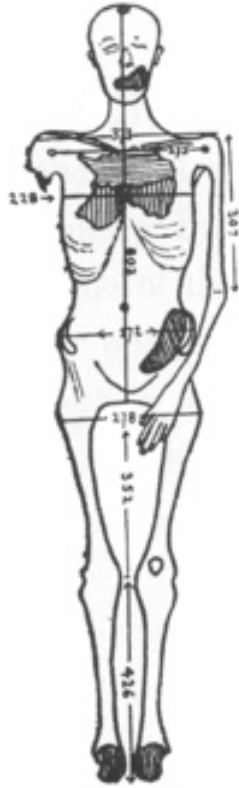


Plate 68. *Elliot Grafton Smith's drawing of 'The Younger Lady.'* Wikipedia.



Plate 69. *An early photograph of 'The Younger Lady.'* Wikipedia.

symmetrical face. Perhaps the making was incomplete, which is why archaeologists found it in his studio, not the palace.

The more recently revealed portraits of Nefertiti shown here in Plates 70 and 71 bear strong resemblances to the more famous, supposedly forged bust. Similarities exist not just in the regularity and strength of the features, but also in revealing the same sense of regal self-confidence and winsomeness. Are these strikingly similar portraits also forgeries? If they are, why were they kept out of sight for decades? It is much more creditable to believe that they are all genuine portraits of the same person. Other evidence presented in the documentary for some form of fraud was more creditable. The bust just happened to be found on the day German royalty visited, a rare event. Coincidence? Replanting? Presenting a prepared forgery? It would be worthwhile to see how many dignitaries visited over the period of the dig and how the prince who was there on the day responded. Was he pleased, bored, or inspired to make a donation or hopefully to purchase? Did he have anything to do with financing, encouraging or authorising the dig? The documentary does not explain the motive for setting up the find to his visit. At present it seems just coincidence. More unsettling was the revelation that in 1926 Borchardt, the man in charge of the 1912 Amarna excavation, was involved in personally selling a well-made forged bust of an ancient Egyptian. It is unclear if he knew it was forged or not, but the document of sale shown on television was a clear, dated, account with his clear signature.

On the evidence available, the bust remains genuine.

A 2009 cat scan caused the second reassessment. This revealed that beneath the beautiful stucco exterior was a limestone carving that showed the same woman, but somewhat older.⁴⁷⁵ This revelation also suggests that the bust is genuine, for why would a forger go to the long, laborious process of creating a portrait in limestone and then hide it by doing another over it? A displeased queen or a sculptor fearful of displeasing a queen would hide such a portrait under a more flattering stucco image. If the

⁴⁷⁵ Kew.

stucco face was that of a woman aged around thirty, to this writer the limestone image was of a woman in her late thirties at least, more likely to be about forty-five. This is another piece of evidence to suggest that his favoured queen outlived Akhenaten by years. Several other busts reproduced here were not available to earlier writers. They show strong similarities to the Borchardt bust and others show that she aged and was pensive in her last years. While people with grief and worries can age prematurely and Nefertiti obviously had such problems, no indication of such effects on her have conclusive evidence. The best evidence shows that she lived to be middle aged.

What was likely was her removal by murder. This plausibly fits into the unfolding events after Akhenaten's death and the hatred the Aten cult engendered. It may have been that she was surrendering to the Amenists in a futile attempt to save her own life. Atenist fanatics could have killed her for being a traitor. Others could have wanted Smenkhkara on the throne, because he was a male, more malleable or more of an Amenist than an Atenist. Tying in with this, Nefertiti was too assertive, provocative and had followed or acquiesced to her husband's disastrous policies. She may have even initiated them. After succeeding her because he had some primogeniture or because Tutankhamen was too young and sickly, was Smenkhkara also murdered because he was not as malleable as people initially thought? Or did he die of plague? Whatever the reason, the wine jars show that he died young after ruling briefly. Tutankhamen probably succeeded him, not Nefertiti. Those powers behind the throne must have known that this very young prince was definitely more pliable than his immediate predecessors were. The depiction of traditional gods on his tomb decorations, the much quoted praise for him restoring Amun's deserted temples and the recently found carvings of traditional gods and their inscriptions at Tutankhamen's quarry are all definite evidence that the traditional polytheism returned in force during his reign.⁴⁷⁶ From Hittite

⁴⁷⁶ The stela quote and the tomb decorations have been frequently produced over the decades. The inscriptions and illustrations of the gods at the quarry were shown with voiceovers in *Lost Treasures of Ancient Egypt: The Lost Tomb of Tutankhamen*. SBS 7:30 P.M. 17TH November

archives and a document *Deeds of Suppiluliuma* written by the same prince who wrote the plague prayers, we have a vivid glimpse into the intrigues of the Egyptian court after Akhenaten. Baikie reproduces the full document, which unfortunately was not dated when written.⁴⁷⁷ An unnamed, widowed Egyptian queen without a son to become king wrote to the Hittite king saying that she wanted to marry one of his sons rather than one of her courtiers. His son, a prince, would rule with her over Egypt. After the Hittite king sent an envoy to verify the astounding and unprecedented offer, the envoy returned with the queen's curt affirmation and her request to move fast. The Hittite king sent Zannanza, a Hittite prince, on his way to Egypt.⁴⁷⁸

However, somebody ambushed his party on the way and Zannanza was killed. Whether by bandits who had no knowledge of whom they attacked or by Egyptians, with very clear knowledge of who they should attack through secret royal orders, remains unclear.⁴⁷⁹ Although Nefertiti, and Meritaten, (probably by then Smenkhkara's widow) one of the royal Atenist daughters are suspects, many writers probably correctly assume that Tutankhamen's widow, Ankhsenamen, made this marriage offer. A teenager, she was trying to hold onto power and avoid a repulsive marriage to her aged vizier, Ay, who became the successor to her dead husband. This must be the most likely intriguer as her May–December marriage now seems proven, A ring with her name and his, showing a marriage, recently turned up in Egypt's antiques market.⁴⁸⁰ This is the strongest, almost conclusive evidence for Ankhsenamen being the intriguing queen. Unfortunately, soon after being sighted, this ring vanished.

2023. Originally made in 2021 IMD credits list multiple producers but no narrator or director
National Geographic

⁴⁷⁷ Baikie, pp. 406-410. The document is reproduced in translation and assessed.

⁴⁷⁸ Carter, p. 11.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.,

⁴⁸⁰ Aldred, p. 184.

The Queen must have made offer to the Hittites in the usual seventy days given between one Pharaoh's death and the ascension of the next. The seventy days were mandatory for the preparation of the pharaoh's body. After that time, the entombment of the dead pharaoh occurred. During this ceremony by personally enacting the freeing of the Ka ritual by the opening of the corpse's mouth, the individual doing this became the next Pharaoh. He therefore gained regal power more by these acts than by any subsequent public coronation. This would explain several pieces of evidence in the intrigue with the Hittites, the short blunt wording of the message, the queen's abrupt anger at the delay by the sending of Hittite envoys, and much about the odd, rushed burial of Tutankhamen.

Archaeologist Chris Naunton succinctly described what many have said about Tutankhamun's tomb and its contents: "There's something not quite right here." Even more accurate would be to say that there is much that is wrong and more that puzzles. Usually pharaohs began their tombs and the assembling of burial goods early in their reigns, but often delays that even the wall painting and the famous gold mask were also rushed.⁴⁸¹ Howard Carter was of the opinion that even in the burial chamber officials had hurriedly performed the obsequies and modern forensics now bears this out.⁴⁸² Robbers had been in the tomb, but much of the jumbling of goods does not look like thieves ransacking the tomb. Why would thieves only overturn a chariot? The tomb was resealed, but not made orderly.⁴⁸³

The successor was usually the one to oversee the tomb and funeral preparations, but what if this succession was unresolved? Was there a power struggle which Ay eventually won by being the one to perform the opening of the mouth ceremony? Much about Tutankhamen's death was odd, even apart from being the fourth young ruler to suddenly die in about thirteen or fourteen years. Writers and documentary makers have advanced many theories about his death, including murder. Too much

⁴⁸¹ Carter, previous citation; Nadezha; *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*.

⁴⁸² Carter, p.108; *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*.

⁴⁸³ Carter, pp. 193-194. Eyewitness accounts, text and a photograph taken at the time.



Plate 70. An unfinished, sculpted head of Nefertiti. Although she looks slightly older than in the famous bust, in this portrait she has the same regal refined expression. Photograph: Sat Ra – Wikimedia. Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, -



Plate 71. *Another bust of Nefertiti, showing the same refined, regular features as in the famous complete bust. As in Plate 70 the head is shaped to take a crown. Egyptian Museum Cairo. Photographer Keith Schegili-Roberts. CC BY-SA 3-. Creative Commons/Wikipedia.*



Plate 72. Tutankhamen (as identified by Wikipedia) Altes Museum Berlin. Photographer Paul Barlow. The similarities to the previous busts suggest that this is either a misidentification and should be for Nefertiti or that Tutankhamen was her very close relative.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TutankhamenBerlin.jpg>



Plate 73. *The famous death mask of Tutankhamen. Although it does not look it, the construction was rushed.*

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CairoEgMuseumTaaMaskMostlyPhotographed.jpg> Rol and Unger / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)



Plate 74 'Is this the Face of King Tut's Father< Pharaoh Akhenaten?' Smithsonian Institute Public Domain. A facial reconstruction of Akhenaten used the skull found in K55. It excluded hair as there was no surviving evidence for hair.

resin coating on his corpse and extremely rough handling of his body in the 1920s have combined to cause damage that makes most conclusions occurred in this complicated, lengthy process and sudden deaths sometimes caused an incomplete tomb. The seventy days preparatory process allowed time to finalise tomb preparations and assemble goods as has happened here. Yet with that ample time span why was so much in Tutankhamen's tomb so different to the usual patterns? Why was so much jumbled, carelessly done, rushed, slovenly or incomplete?⁴⁸⁴ Tests show

⁴⁸⁴ Carter, p. 59 pp. 93-98 passim p. 108. text and pictures; *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*; T.G.H. James, 'The Tomb of Tutankhamen.' In Weeks, *The Treasures of the Valley of*

from autopsies turbid.⁴⁸⁵ There are some exceptions; Tutankhamen did have malaria: this could have killed him. He did have a knee injury which stopped healing due to death.⁴⁸⁶ Something had crushed his left lung and the ribs covering it.⁴⁸⁷ This may have been partially caused by the rough handling in the 1920s with the initial cause dating from the time of his death. Tests showed that this could also have been the result of being run over by a chariot and this would explain the absence of his heart, an extraordinary absence in ancient Egypt, as the belief in the weighing of the heart in the afterlife was vital to gaining heaven. This absence was not malevolence, as a lack of a heart could have barred him from judgement and heaven; somebody placed a compensating imitation on his sarcophagus.⁴⁸⁸ Some artwork does show him riding a chariot while shooting arrows at his enemies. (Plate 63) Writers assumed somewhat more realistic images to also be only a propaganda exercise, designed to reinforce traditional Egyptian expectations of a pharaoh. However, what if he did try to do this, to meet such expectations? Six chariots were in his tomb.⁴⁸⁹ Carter describes them in detail, but does not describe them as showing signs of frequent usage – or of being unused.⁴⁹⁰ Carter's 1920s photographs do show nicks and shattered sections on some wheels, one of them bad enough to stop further use and to cause an accident or be the result of one.⁴⁹¹ Riding an ancient Egyptian chariot was extremely difficult

the Kings. p. 148 p. 154. text, drawn cutaway and picture;. Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. p.208.

⁴⁸⁵ Nadezna,

⁴⁸⁶ Bradshaw, The knee injury was shown in a cat scan in moderate closeup and explained in detail with a voice over.

⁴⁸⁷ Nadezna,

⁴⁸⁸ *Tutankhamen: Life Death and Legacy*.

⁴⁸⁹ *Tut's Treasures*.

⁴⁹⁰ Carter, pp. 113-116.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid*; photographic evidence.

and dangerous even for a healthy, well-built man. This was even without the dangers coming from riding a chariot into a battle. Did Tutankhamen die because he felt obliged to act as a pharaoh should by riding in a chariot?⁴⁹² Carter found so many depictions of the boy pharaoh as a hunter, archer, charioteer and a general sportsman that he concluded that this was what he was.⁴⁹³ What evidence shows as more likely is that these depictions reflected his wishes or expectations of royalty. How could a club-footed recurrently infected malaria victim be an active sportsman? His collection of a hundred and thirty walking sticks found in his tomb, many of them showing usage, the three depictions in this work showing him needing a club to stand up and the depiction of him as an archer needing to fire from a chair or in a sitting position, all indicate he would have been a hopeless charioteer.⁴⁹⁴ The frequently depicted role of archer may have been only that and performed once. In his documentary Bradshaw depicts in a re-enactment a religious ceremony where Tutankhamen acts as expected and shows his mastery (over the world?) by shooting arrows to the north, south east and west. This ritual requiring strength may only have happened once. The role of the pharaoh as an archer may well have been more symbolic than real. From the reign of the athletic Amenophis II onwards two expectations were that the pharaoh was a sporting and hunting hero.⁴⁹⁵ Tutankhamun met such expectations in art, but reality was almost certainly different., especially in war. That depictions of the victorious pharaoh were frequently symbolic becomes undeniable and graphic with the artwork in a pair of sandals found in his tomb; crushed enemies are depicted on the upper soles, therefore being very literally

⁴⁹² Tyldesley, *Egypt's Golden Empire*. p.208. This author poses this possibility as a question.

⁴⁹³ Carter, p. 92.

⁴⁹⁴ See plates 14 51 and 52. Tutankhamen at archery from a chair is based on the metal screen in the collection of the British Academy. This can be viewed on the internet at Tutankhamen 'Images'; Hughes mentions the number of walking sticks in *Voices of the Dead Tutankhamun*.

⁴⁹⁵ Tyldesley her text and an example of praise from the Gaza stella applied to Amenophis II *Nefertiti* p. 101.

under his feet.⁴⁹⁶ This was either wishful thinking or evidence of a peculiar sense of humour. He could not have possibly behaved as depicted in Plate 63 where he rides into battle shooting arrows while the only control over his vehicle comes from reins tied around his hips. If he suddenly died on campaign far off from Thebes this would explain his rushed, odd burial. News of his death and the body would have taken weeks to reach the capitol. Those carrying out the mummification and tomb preparations would be have to be hasty to meet the seventy-day deadline. In an excerpt from a wall painting in Tutankamen's tomb he scene where Ay opens the dead boy pharaoh's mouth shows Ay wearing a blue war crown.⁴⁹⁷ This is depicted in Plate 64. This is strong evidence for a war being waged when Tutankhamen died or very soon after.

Doctor Sofie Schiøt rightly states that there can be no definite conclusion about what killed the boy king: we can only know what he died with, not what he died from.

After the mummification team prepared Tutankhamen for burial without the usual preservation of his heart, they buried him in what was a corridor, arranged to be a woman's tomb.⁴⁹⁸ In *Hunt for Queen Nefertiti* Doctor Chris Naunton apart from factors he refers to elsewhere, mentions that the usual form of male entrance by the left corridor and female by the right has been reversed, and that Nefertiti's name was initially included on the famous death mask, but has been almost obliterated and that the death mask has pierced ears, usually meant for female royalty.⁴⁹⁹ Although he does not mention it, Tutankhamen's mummy does not have pierced ears. The burial party had also included objects from the reigns of his Atenist

⁴⁹⁶ Mueller, no pagination.

⁴⁹⁷ The full wall painting is depicted in Bradshaw's documentary, but not the war crown's significance; Another depiction of the full painting is a photograph by Sando Vannini contained in "The enduring Power of King Tut." Written by Tom Mueller. *National Geographic* Washington D.C. November 2022. PP46-47..

⁴⁹⁸ Nadezma.

parents. Since the 1920s the thousands of goods in Tutankhamen's tomb have led many to believe that if a minor pharaoh who reigned so briefly had so much, and much of that of great value, then surely the long ruling great pharaohs must have had great hoards beyond imagining. A more likely reality emerges with the way that the process of obliterating Atenism and the Atenist pharaohs from Egyptian memory was well underway at this time. Many objects were meant for others: even the middle and the stone sarcophagus had names eradicated and replaced with Tutankhamen's cartouche.⁵⁰⁰ Burying so many objects from the Atenists' reigns was part of this process. By keeping possession of them, Ay would add to suspicions that he was still an Atenist. As a former leading member of the discredited unpopular cult, he had to allay suspicions to stabilise his power by mollifying the traditionalists. The world's most famous tomb was a dumping ground for Atenist objects as well as the usual accoutrements for a pharaoh. The way funerary goods were jumbled together and included objects owned by Nefertiti and from Akhenaten's rule suggest this as well as the way preparations were rushed. All this makes sense if Ay was rushing the long burial process to become Pharaoh before Zannanza arrived; by doing this, he would foil the queen's plot. However, which queen? She remains unnamed.

Most of the evidence does point to Ankhsenamen, but one thing does not. Whichever queen it was, she had betrayed Egypt to its worst enemy, the Hittite King and for an Egyptian such as Ay to marry her would obviously seem foolish as he would be aligning with someone untrustworthy and treasonable. This could taint any husband as being a suspect in her treachery, especially as Zannanza's father had launched a successful war against Egypt's northern provinces in revenge for his son's death. Was this why Ay was wearing the blue war crown in the depiction of the opening of the mouth ceremony where he became pharaoh? Ay was a trimmer; he must have had strong survival instincts to retain his position through four brief and troubled reigns before becoming Pharaoh himself. It

⁵⁰⁰ James, 'The Tomb of Tutankhamen.' p.160 p.166.

could well be that the intriguer was not Ankhsenamen, but her mother, who paid for her treason with her life. Apart from the wedding ring showing the marriage between Ay and Ankhsenamen, both women vanish from history after the murder of the Hittite prince. Both remain enigmatic.

Even our image of Nefertiti as a great beauty might be a construction. The recent examination in *The Nefertiti Bust* also suggests that she was not the classic beauty that the famous image suggested. Although less famous constructions from the studio of Thutmose also show her to be striking and regal, as previously mentioned later works show her as aged and not at all powerful or regal. She may have been doing the reverse of what Akhenaten did with his image in art. Recreating a grid that ancient Egyptians used to construct carved portraits and matching it to the bust, Dimitri Labri showed a perfect facial symmetry. He claimed that it was statistically impossible for a human face to be so perfectly symmetrical down to tiny details. While that claim sounds dubious, such symmetry rarely exists and his statement does gain credence when the same perfect symmetry appears on Akhenaten's face – and Professor Harco Williams shows that these two depictions when merged together, form what would be a perfect match, except for Akhenaten's chin being slightly longer. How should this be interpreted? The recent facial construction result can also lead to suggestions that the duplicated pictorial twin identity it is largely a fantasy. As a megalomaniac did this Pharaoh insist that his partner be depicted as a reflection of himself? And if the facial reconstruction is incorrect and the royal couple did look alike? As a megalomaniac and narcissist, was he attracted to someone he came across with a face so strongly resembling his? As brother and sister or even identical twins bearing the same facial resemblance? As an emphasis on equality? As the pair of them emphasising male-female duality in the new religion where they replaced the old gods? As usual with Atenist primary sources, speculation grows on thin evidence, but what else can writers do - ignore obvious and important questions?⁵⁰¹ The way the facial reconstruction of Akhenaten does not

⁵⁰¹ De La Bèdoyère, p. xxv

match that of any of the busts or illustrations of Nefertiti at all suggests some strange narcissistic construction in this romance. Or was the resemblance initially there, but did his face become fleshy with age?

Like so many other things happening in his life these representations suggest that Akhenaten was definitely not a shrewd man when it came to dealing with people and for establishing a religion. Especially for a radical religion facing powerful opposition, shrewdness must become an essential skill. In assessing him E.A.W. Budge praised his virtues of sometimes showing swiftness in decisions, his cleverness, and courage. He could have added originality and an optimistic breadth of vision, "but with all these gifts he lacked a practical knowledge of men and things."⁵⁰² These lacks are a frequent fault of narcissists and megalomaniacs and almost as frequently contribute to their eventual disasters. Whatever Nefertiti did, the responsibility for the unfolding disaster that was Atenist monotheism apparently rests with her husband, as he apparently made the crucial decisions and mistakes during the early years when Atenist power looked secure, if not popular and thriving.

The truth of Budge's succinct assessment gains proof from the Amarna archives. A complaint from the Assyrian king there reveals much that architecture, art and beautiful hymns does not reveal. His emissaries complained that while Akhenaten did everything in the sunlight, he forced them to stand in the hot sun until they were nearly dead.⁵⁰³ The Hittite king wrote back, recounting this in vexed and contemptuous tones, suggesting that if he wanted to kill himself by doing what his emissaries endured this would be good.⁵⁰⁴ For one king to write to another like this suggests that Akhenaten was held in contempt, seen as mad and was not considered a danger. This also reads as coming from a mentality modern readers understand.

⁵⁰² Budge, p. 77.

⁵⁰³ Redford, pp. 232-235. The original document is quoted.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid*,

The idea that Egyptians worked by different values and beliefs we cannot comprehend or make value judgements on, does not work here. Nobody likes being forced to stand in the sun until they nearly collapse from heat exhaustion, not over three thousand years ago, not now. Akhenaten's obliviousness here also shows a megalomaniac detachment from any consideration of what others might be suffering, especially because their real suffering was caused by his impractical dreams. Atenist architecture shows one reality: enjoyable moments celebrated in the sun. The emissaries' complaints capture another: that same worship, if prolonged, could be what only an obsessive, a megalomaniac, or a lunatic would enjoy or imagine that any great benefit was emerging. Little has changed in that line in over three thousand years.

With Ay's death after three or four years of rule, Horemhab, once a commoner and an officer in Akhenaten's army, became Pharaoh and purged Atenism, which was already at the least waning and more likely nearly dead. He may have initially owed his rise to this position to his marriage. His wife may have been Nefertiti's sister Mutbenret, as she had a slightly different name in translation, but this relationship remains unconfirmed. Whoever this wife was, she died in childbirth or soon after.⁵⁰⁵ To what extent (if at all) either Horemhab or Mutbenret were ever really Atenists remains unclear. Whatever her fate, Mutbenret became another amongst the Atenist Amarna reliefs (Plates 75 and 76) accompanying Nefertiti's daughters and nurses in some supervisory role.⁵⁰⁶ This was a much more important role than a glorified nanny, as it involved protecting and shaping the character of those who would rule Egypt. It also shows that not all royal traditions vanished with the destruction of old Amenist ways.

Whoever he married and whatever his early beliefs, Horemhab restored traditional ways by aligning himself with Amenism. His obliteration of all things Atenist apparently went as far as absorbing the

⁵⁰⁵ 'Horemhab' *Wikipedia*; 'Mutbenret.' *Wikipedia*.

⁵⁰⁶ Brier and Hobbs, p. 86.

reigns of Atenist pharaohs into his own reign. Supposedly lasting twenty-seven years and even recorded that way in some modern histories, it now seems that he only ruled for fourteen years. A large find of wine jars shows systematic dating from Year 1 of his reign to his Year 14 - and then nothing. Before his accredited reign those of Smenkhkara, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen and Ay total thirteen years, which are added to his total to make twenty-seven years.⁵⁰⁷ This obliteration fits with that of the ancient Egyptian king lists, where scribes recorded no Atenist pharaohs.

This makes precise dating of Atenist developments difficult. A potential major source, the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, has no evidence for any original dating: as no written records exist before the tenth century BC.⁵⁰⁸



Plate 76. *Mutbenret is the tallest figure. She watches three of the royal daughters and a servant.*
Author: Lepsius Dankmaher / Public Domain.

⁵⁰⁷ 'Horemhab' *Wikipedia*.

⁵⁰⁸ Bright, p. 23 pp.67-74.

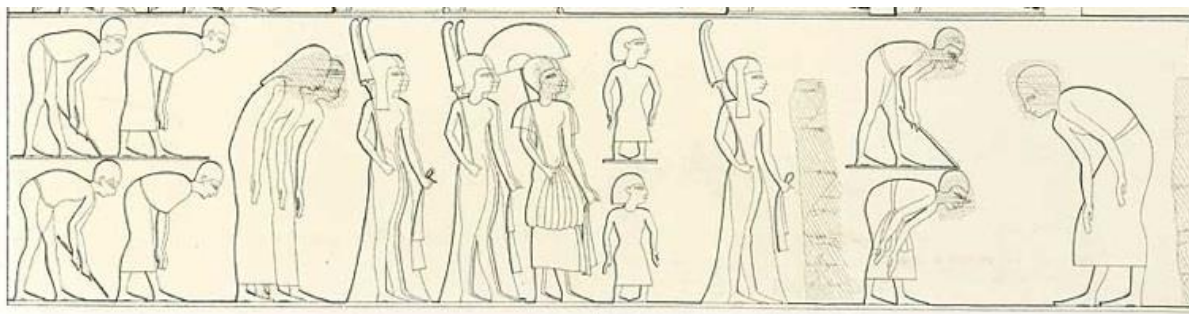


Plate 77. *Mutbenret in a procession with the nurses of the princesses. The smaller figures are her dwarfs.* Author: *Lepsius Dankmaher / Public Domain.*

Therefore Atenism, not Judaism, must be considered the world's first monotheistic religion. Atenism's importance goes beyond the muddled origins of monotheism. It was also the world's first documentable attempt amongst the many attempts over the subsequent millennia, often with startling similarities, at a utopia: its dismal failure emerges repeatedly in many differing locales and eras.

This makes precise dating of many Atenist developments difficult. A potential major source, the book of Exodus in the Old Testament has no evidence for any original dating: as no written records exist before the tenth century BC.⁵⁰⁹

Atenism gave us the template for idealistically written visions that became impractical tyrannies in practice. The way this has happened over a time span of nearly three and a half thousand years and in myriad locales, in both religious and secular cultures, tells us something about the human personality. It also raises other questions. If humans can envision such things, can they ever make them real? Why do waking nightmares so frequently emerge from utopian dreams when people try to build such seemingly wonderful societies? This happens in both deprived societies and those with abundant resources, such as Atenist Egypt, Soviet Russia, Maoist China, Europe and the United States.

⁵⁰⁹ Bright, p. 23 pp.67-74.

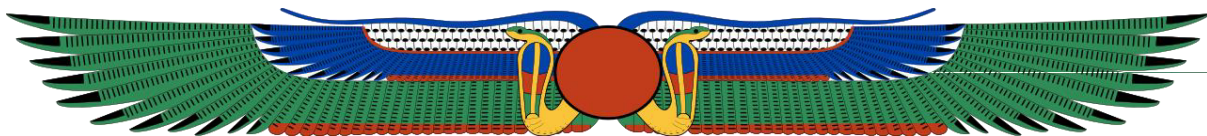
Despite this dismal record, no revolution is a total failure; Akhenaten left a dual legacy. The negative aspect alienates and with reason: one of the world's first recorded tyrants emerges. Clearly evident are his megalomania, inflicted suffering, incest, negligent misrule and blatant hypocrisy. Even so, even despite his failures and the massive conceit concerning his place within his religion, this royal heretic represented a great moment in human progress. To see this point compare the Hymn to the Aten with the religions that existed in his time. Priests sacrificed children by burning them alive on the altars of Moloch. Human sacrifice and burying slaves alive to serve kings in the afterlife were not extremely rare events. Enforced religious donations and mulcted taxes kept people in grinding poverty. In Amenist Egypt people grovelled, praised and pleaded before statues of sheep. Other kingdoms could show similar scenes. Superstition left people living lives in extreme fear over nothing with any reality. Priests made sure that images of merciless and capricious gods ruled their minds: fear of both gods and priests controlled their lives for the priesthood's material benefit and self-aggrandising delusions. Others outside the priesthood and royalty were lesser beings who are always fit for conquest, theft, sacrifice, slavery, humiliation or destruction.

With their Atenist tolerance for all believers regardless of gender, race or language Akhenaten and Nefertiti was the first historic figures to offer all the world's people an inclusive and tolerant religion. Despite their many failings and hypocrisies and the sad reality of their optimistic, stable and benevolent religious worldview a great breakthrough in history happened. While other religions divided people into good and evil based on skin colour, customs, language or their locale, the Atenists told them that they could all live under one benevolent God. This benevolence was not a reward for donations, obedience or good deeds; it was for existing. At least in its theoretical concept of God Atenism was free of the superstition, capriciousness, degradation, extortion, emotional blackmail, fear, cruelty and mercilessness that had dominated the world's religions and the lives of all humans. Soon after Akhenaten's death existing religions would repress again without strong opposition. They would continue to do so until Moses

gave the laws of Jehovah, King David composed his psalms. Buddha explained and Jesus preached.



Plate 77. Horemhab and Amen. The natural order has been restored as pharaoh and god stand together again. Compare this with Plate 5. Author Jean-Pierre Dalbéra. Wikipedia.



Conclusion

Poised in the introduction to this book are the frequently asked questions about Akhenaten and Nefertiti. The answers? Amenophis III reinvigorated and expanded the Atenist cult and to some extent financed it, but he did not invent it, nor make it his empire's sole religion. His son tried to do the latter after reshaping it into something very different to what it was under his father - an intolerant monotheistic religion.

Akhenaten was an internationalist, giving the idea of equality a religious base, but this is not the same thing as establishing a democracy. He was a cruel tyrant who built his supposed paradise on slavery, plunder and lavish taxes. Even by the standards of slave owners he was cruel and exploitative.

The image of the happy family man presented in his art and since then believed by many is wrong. Undeniable evidence, some of it coming from himself, shows he was an incestuous paedophile, a megalomaniac and a narcissist.

Both those who acclaim him as a genius and those who condemn him as foolish have strong evidence on their side. At differing times he could be either. He did inherit an incredibly prosperous and stable empire and within seventeen years brought it to the edge of ruin.

Nefertiti remains more of an enigma. She was certainly no pacifist, no submissive underling, but a partner in her husband's activities. Early in this book an illustration of Akhenaten and Nefertiti's predecessor being companion to an Amenist god appeared. Near the end his successor appeared with another Amenist god, and in virtually the same pose. It was if nothing had changed, but in the very long term, everything had.



Appendices

Appendice 1

The Co-Regency?

Cyril Aldred in his 1972 biography *Akhenaten: Pharaoh of Egypt* presents the theory that for the first twelve years of Akhenaten's seventeen-year long reign he was not sole ruler, but was co-ruler with his father. This has massive implications. It means that Akhenaten was not the solitary religious genius suddenly producing and enforcing his monotheistic religion; his father was his partner in what was a development from early in his father's reign. It also means that the royal heretics were not an unmitigated political disaster that their critics state: the last twelve years of the reign of Amenophis III continued his earlier successes. With the theory of co-regency his son would gain great credit for the successes of his father's last twelve years. Alternatively, Amenophis III would take some blame for the beginnings of the unfolding disaster if he shared. the first twelve years of Akhenaten's reign.

This type of dual rule sometimes happened in the New Kingdom's XVIII Dynasty. Called a co-regency, the heir to the throne shared rule as a junior partner, gaining experience, connections and putting his own people into positions.⁵¹⁰ This co-regency and the policies that came with it also obviously ensured an orderly succession and a continuation of established policies.

The evidence that Aldred presents for Amenophis III ruling with his son for just over two thirds of his son's disastrous reign becomes tantalising, complex, sometimes weak on closer examination and sometimes the most likely explanation. It is also frequently open to other explanations. Egyptologists divide on the issue. Before assessing the evidence for co-regency presented by Aldred and others, stressing an important point becomes essential. This point is that in a supposed period of twelve years nobody has revealed a decree, inscription, or communication bearing their two names or their name with the title of co-regent. No eyewitness account referring to this situation appears. These finds would be the clearest proof for this dual reign.

⁵¹⁰ Aldred, 1972. pp. 83-90.

Aldred refers to evidence coming closest to this: an inscription in a vizier's tomb bearing cartouches of both pharaohs together. Royalty did not have such cartouches unthinkingly inscribed anywhere, let alone in an important tomb. The vizier served both men, late in Amenophis's reign and before the move to Amarna.

Four papyri records of a trader's dealings are also strong evidence for Aldred's argument. A trader dates transactions in Years 27 and 28 and then in Year 2 of Akhenaten's reign without other dealings between them, with the same people involved and with promises of rewards in future for services given – at least thirteen years later, as Amenophis ruled for thirty-eight years. Over a gap of two years this sounds plausible. Over a gap of thirteen years several aspects of this trader's record being for a new reign of one pharaoh becomes extremely unlikely.

The well preserved newly found city of Aten the largest found from the ancient world is still being excavated but already has revealed evidence for a co-regency. Just the name of Aten suggests that the father inspired the son. Cartouches of Amenophis III and Akhenaten have been found there. Given that Amenophis started building decades before and building a city was slow work, he must have initiated this great advance in Atenism. This creates the possibility of Akhenaten being inspired by his father and working with him on building the new city. Alternatively as crown prince he may have built the city or much of it in his incapacitated father's name.

An Amarna stele from Year 9 of Akhenaten's reign shows a tired Amenophis with Queen Tye, both under the Aten's rays, as those rays appear in Atenist art. If this is a later depiction of a dead Pharaoh, why make this illustration years later, especially as it does not flatter the dead?

Why should Amenophis's name appear several times on Amarna buildings? Aldred refers to the supposedly dead king owning property there. Consider that Akhenaten and Nefertiti started Amarna five years after he ascended the throne. He did praise earlier pharaohs in Akhet-Aten, building shrines to them and one each to his mother, grandfather, sister and deceased daughter, but without references to Amen or other gods.⁵¹¹ Did he praise his father then, after erasing him in Amenist works at Karnak? These are all good points, conundrums and questions that at least give strong evidence for some type of co-regency

⁵¹¹ Baikie, p. 278.

Despite the strength of this evidence, the other evidence for a co-regency is circumstantial, very open to interpretation and inconclusive.⁵¹² The other side also has a strong case.

Aldred mentions decorations and illustrations where the two men appear. In one of these Akhenaten offers tribute to a living Amenophis III garbed in jubilee robes; which he celebrated in Year 30 of his reign and again in Year 37. This is what a prince would do, not necessarily a co-regent.

Aldred refers to a wine jar at Akhet-Aten with the dates Year 27/Year 28 of a pharaonic reign on the lid. Dating royal jars has become an acceptable way of establishing the start, length and the endings of pharaonic rule as the jars stored the Pharaoh's collected property, whether it was wine, grains or other perishable goods. Aldred's logic concerns wine being a perishable good and Amenophis III ruled for another eleven years, the contained wine could not have lasted that long in Amarna's searing heat, therefore Amarna and Akhenaten's co-reign must have begun soon after the year dates of 27/28 for the 38 year long reign of Amenophis III. On examination this becomes one of the weakest arguments for a co-regency. Aldred states that Amenophis III's name was not on the jar. As the ancient world's large, thick, stone wine jars were built for long distance transportation and therefore to be durable; they have a very long life. This jar could have easily come from some other pharaoh, from even centuries before. Aldred's argument that workers seldom sent empty jars also fails. Amarna was a new city built in a rush, with many river-borne goods being unloaded and needing storage before spoilage or heat wrecked them. Why not send for needed jars and being in a rush, not redate them? Aldred does not present evidence that the jar did contain wine or anything else. No wine jars listing a co-regency are used as evidence; for Akhenaten they go up to Year 17, not Year 5, which they would if there was a co-regency. Wine jars going up to Year 17 show his long rule.

Aldred argues that Akhenaten's supposed celebratory jubilee at Amarna in his Year 12 was really a coronation after the death of his father. If this is so, why was it called a jubilee and not a coronation? Jubilees celebrate years of successful rule which have passed, not started. Unspecified condolences sent by the King of Mitanni do sound like the type of thing said if his father had just died, but this is vague and hardly even evidence, let alone proof. Similarly, amongst gifts sent by

⁵¹² Aldred, pp. 90-99.

the king of Cyprus was a jar of perfume, which he advises Akhenaten to pour on his head now that “he can sit down on his royal throne.”⁵¹³ Apart from the obvious implication about thrones, royalty having oil or perfume poured on their head anoints them into monarchy, a part of the coronation process. As Aldred mentions that Queen Tye died around this time the condolences may have been for her. The other presented evidence for this being really a coronation is that Pharaohs celebrated their first jubilee after thirty years; they did not celebrate jubilees so early.

Against the argument for co-regency are several other strong points and others that strongly infer sole rule. As Aldred states, early Amarna letters are addressed to Akhenaten and they are from early in his reign, no mention of Amenophis III as joint ruler appears.⁵¹⁴ Some letters from Year 30 of Amenophis III’s reign are in the collection, but where is his son mentioned as co-ruler? Nowhere. For foreign rulers to continually ignore either the junior Pharaoh in the Letters from Year 30 onwards or the senior pharaoh in later official correspondence goes beyond being odd, it would have been an insult and an insult to the strongest power in their world, one they frequently begged gold from and frequently were supplicants in their relationship. Reverend Baikie does not indulge on either side in the co-regency debate, but he does supply interesting and useful information on the topic. He reproduces passages from foreign office communiqués sent by King Tushratta of Mitanni and Egypt’s vassals and allies. These are appeals for help. They describe the dangers in the northeast, where Hittites advance on Egypt’s allies, bandits attack merchants and the kings’ messengers - and disloyal intriguers emerge.⁵¹⁵ In this continuing situation, officials make undated appeals, first to Amenophis and then to Akhenaten, never to them together or even to both in separate communications in the same period, but they appear in a sequence. It is as if Akenhaten has succeeded to the throne and then like his father, does little or nothing with the problem he has inherited. Aldred refers to one of these early letters from Tushratta, pointing out that he advises

⁵¹³ Fletcher, p. 314.

⁵¹⁴ Aldred, p. 88.

⁵¹⁵ Baikie, pp. 98-101; ‘The Amarna Letters’ *Wikipedia*. These individual letters are referred to in the main text.

Akhenaten to listen to his mother.⁵¹⁶ Reverend Baikie reproduces the letter more fully and it becomes clear why King Tushratta gives this advice; Tushratta and Amenophis discussed many things together and now only Ty now knows them.⁵¹⁷ This comment clearly only makes sense only if Amenophis III has died or gone into a coma, senility or a vegetative state without updating Akhenaten on relations with Tushratta, one of the most important rulers in the Middle East. If they were co-regents would Amenophis have kept his crown prince out of foreign affairs? This seems unlikely. Tushratta's letter reads as if he is welcoming a young Akhenaten to his new world of kingship. Unfortunately, this letter, which could have settled the issue if dated, bears no date.

The way Amenophis III continued to build temples to the traditional gods during this hypothetical co-regency would also be extremely unlikely, for soon after his father's death Akhenaten was defacing those same Amenist monuments, removing his father's name from them and persecuting Amenist priests.⁵¹⁸ He even defaced the plural word "gods" and changed his name from Amenophis IV to Akhenaten.⁵¹⁹ His cartouche (without his father's) was inscribed in the new religion during his early ruling years in Thebes. Unlikely as it already sounds, this point becomes even more obvious when considering that Amenophis III owed his position to the accredited belief that he was directly descended from Amen, as his father was the god incarnate.⁵²⁰ In annual polytheistic ceremonies Pharaohs would perform sacred secret rites in traditional temples where their souls would become one with the God and then they would emerge to be worshipped as their power was enhanced.⁵²¹ Throwing this away would have made him a partner to his own discrediting. He had linked himself to the solar cults, but this was to make his kingship stronger than ever, not to make himself the obliterator of polytheistic religions.⁵²² Would Amenophis III have consigned himself to hell by being this obliterator? Such an act only makes sense if like his son, he had renounced Amen

⁵¹⁶ Aldred., p. 88.

⁵¹⁷ Baikie, p. 241 quoting from the letter.

⁵¹⁸ Baikie, p. 258; Wilkinson, p. 292; Fletcher p. 20.

⁵¹⁹ Baikie, pp. 256-259.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p. 310,

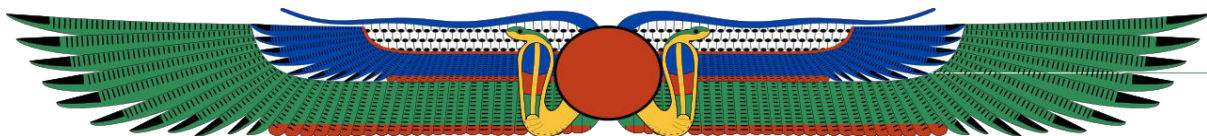
⁵²¹ Fletcher, p. 19.

⁵²² Wilkinson, pp. 262-263.

and become a monotheistic Atenist, but where does a joint declaration to this effect exist? Atenist declarations are in the name of Akhenaten or Nefertiti or refer to them. His defilements and insistence on being the only prophet, interpreter and way to the new god are not sharing power in a co-regency, but by replacing it: if his father was still alive when this happened Akhenaten would be a usurper. Would he have done all this and the defilements in Karnak while his father was not only alive, but also senior pharaoh and therefore able to use Egypt's forces to oust him? Surely if Amenophis III was still alive the priesthood and the many traditionalists would have appealed to him to restore traditional order, but no such appeal seems to exist. Would Amenophis III, after spending so much time, enthusiasm, energy and wealth on building temples, suddenly go on a destructive rampage to destroy them?

It is possible that Amenophis III, with his health, energy and perhaps mental powers failing, in the last years of his reign virtually abdicated and being isolated, let his son do as he wished or was unable to stop him. This would explain the possible traces of what several interpret as a co-regency. It would also disprove the idea some Egyptologists have that he was the co-founder with his son and daughter in law of Atenism. The co-regency debate remains almost stalemated, with those opposing it winning on points.

If the co-regency did exist, it would mean that Egyptologists should only date five years as Akhenaten's reign after Amenophis's death. Various modern historians date that event as happening anywhere from 1378 BC to 1351 BC. In chronologies writers frequently add Akhenaten's longer solo reign of seventeen years after his father's death. If the co-regency was so, these chronologies are twelve years out – and so are events after them up to the end of Horemhab's reign as he added the Atenist reigns after Akhenaten to his. For these reasons and because no two writers apparently agree on exactly the same dates, no chronology has been included in this work and dates are used sparingly and are only indicative.



Appendice 2

Did Meritaten Rule After Akhenaten?

A team of filmmakers recently put forward this idea as a fact in one of the many recent television documentaries about Tutankhamen. This documentary provides an interesting example of how television presenters simplify history with statements presented in absolute certainty for public consumption. Before discussing their claims concerning Meritaten I have listed below several obvious factual mistakes in this documentary.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti did not die in Year 15 of his reign as they clearly state.

The mine inscription found in 2012 and publicised in 2016 shows that they were both alive in Year 16 of his reign. Wine jar dating show the heretic pharaoh lived into Year 17 and a great amount of evidence presented in the text of this work shows that his widow outlived him by years.

The narrator clearly states that Smenkhkara did not become pharaoh.

Wine jar dating and the fact that he had wine jars in his name at the Amarna palace clearly show that he ruled as pharaoh for nearly two years. Other evidence is given in this work.

A military defeat at Kadesh halted vital trade.

No other source this writer has used or found mentions this battle as occurring during Akhenaten's reign. A famous battle of Kadesh happened about sixty years after Akhenaten died, during the reign of Ramses II. Akhenaten and the rulers of Kadesh did exchange letters during his reign and raiders, Hittites and traitors inflicted skirmishes, sieges and small battles in the northern region, but no great single defeat of an Egyptian army sent northwards made Akhenaten change his mind about defending the north emerges elsewhere.

Trade with the north was important, but not “vital” as the narrator states. That last word suggests that without this trade Egypt would die economically. In reality Egypt survived economically for several decades after the Atenists and before much of the north was reconquered, first under Seti I and then with additions under Ramses II.

Others statements are not so clearly wrong, but are dubious

The filmmakers say that the pictures in the Amarna tomb show the mourning of two daughters on one carved wall.

They have made one interpretation of an ambiguous picture. It divides in half, enclosed in carved rectangular frames. These carvings are reproduced in Plates 58 and 59. The top half does show the royal family in a mourning procession with mourners following and a nurse or midwife carrying away a baby in swaddling clothes. However, who the procession mourned for remains uncertain. Either the artists did not finish their work or somebody has broken off the segment that probably did show this, so the royal couple (identifiable by their crowns) hunch over blankness. While artists clearly depicted four daughters, those in the foreground may obscure other daughters or royal wives; these apparently being the same thing. Maketaten’s name is the only daughter who has a name inscribed in this tomb. While she remains the most likely depicted corpse, this may have been Kiya or another wife.

The second panel becomes even more puzzling. A small body, clearly a child, lies on a bed with the family gathered around. The royal procession, similarly depicted to the first, approaches a woman standing above them on a catafalque. While similarly dressed to the princesses in the procession in a diaphanous robe, she may be a simulacrum, rather than a living person. Alive or dead, whoever she is, royalty seems to be not only mourning before her, but in supplication or homage to her.

To say that these difficult to decipher unfinished carvings definitely depict the deaths of two princesses is a stretch and it is not the only one. While most Egyptologists say that Tutankhamen ascended to the throne at nine or ten and died at nineteen, these film makers say that he was seven when he

ascended to the throne and died at seventeen. The evidence for this is the famous throne which they say has had the filigree support kicked in which is what a child of seven would do. They re-enact a bored child swinging his feet on the filigree to break it. So, a child of nine would not do this? Their filming also shows no filigree on the throne's sides or back which cannot be caused by a child's kicks, but they do not discuss their own filmed evidence on this point.

They say Ay ruled for three years.

Perhaps but some experts say he ruled for four years, some say six.

With this list of mistakes and emphatic statements about dubious facts and interpretations, the idea that Meritaten was Queen of Egypt after her father becomes suspect, even more so after considering the presented evidence, which they directly apply to that matter.

They rightly state and show that Meritaten's name was on objects found in Tutankhamen's tomb. They also show what several others have written, stated, filmed or shown, that the funeral workers rushed several aspects of his burial. Amongst the thousands of objects in his tomb were also many with the names of Nefertiti and Akhenaten. One estimate is that 80% of the found objects in his tomb were not his. They also conclusively show that somebody systematically removed a royal personage's name or names from many objects and also the cartouches on one of the golden coffins. They replaced them with those of Ankhnesamen. Whoever that predecessor was remains unknown. Akhenaten, Smenkhkara, and Nefertiti are all strong possibilities. Only one found object that they present clearly shows that Meritaten was a queen to Akhenaten. This is a ring with her name and that of Akhenaten inscribed. While showing that she was a queen of some sort, this does not definitely show that she alone ruled Egypt as Queen after him. In itself it does not even show that she outlived him.

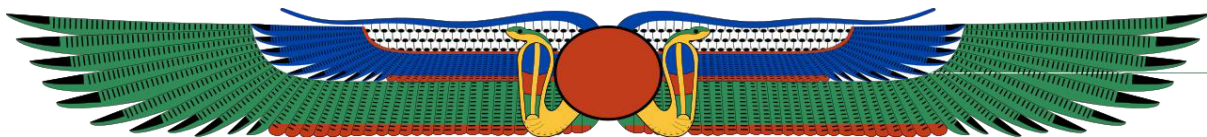
A hieratic inscription shown does record the death of an unnamed queen after Akhenaten; she ruled for just over three years and Egyptian

traditionalists mention that a queen was Pharaoh after him, but she remains unnamed.

The filmmakers use the famous letter to the Hittite king from an unnamed Egyptian queen offering herself in marriage to a Hittite prince to avoid marrying a lesser Egyptian. They emphatically say that this was Meritaten, but that she never intended to marry the Hittite prince. So why did she write the letter? Most writers believe that the letter writer was Tutankhamen's widow, Ankhsenamen. A teenager, she was trying to hold onto power and avoid a repulsive marriage to her aged vizier, Ay, who became the successor to her dead husband. This must be the most likely intriguer as her May–December marriage now seems proven as a ring with her name and his, showing a marriage, turned up in Egypt's antiques market. She also apparently had no living children. Some writers open up the possibility that instead of Ankhsenamen, this letter writer was her mother. The evidence (and evidence against) concerning this has been dealt with in the main text. Despite their emphatic tones and stating their ideas as certainties, no firm evidence emerges that Meritaten ever ruled as a pharaoh. What existent evidence for a queen ruling between the reigns of Akhenaten and Tutankhamen strongly points to Nefertiti.

*

The facts used here to argue against this idea have already been cited in the text.



Appendice 3

The Hymn to the Aten taken from Ay's tomb wall.

A Hymn of praise of Her-aakhuti, the living one exalted in the Eastern Horizon in his name of Shu who is in the Aten, who liveth for ever and ever, the living and great Aten, he who is in the Set-Festival, the lord of the Circle, the Lord of the Disk, the Lord of heaven, the Lord of earth, the lord of the House of the Aten in Aakhut-Aten, [of] the King of the South and the North, who liveth in Truth, lord of the Two Lands (i.e., Egypt), NEFER-KHEPERU-RA UA-EN-RA, the son of Ra, who liveth in Truth, Lord of Crowns, AAKHUN-ATEN, great in the period of his life, [and of] the great royal woman (or wife) whom he loveth, Lady of the Two Lands, NEFER-NEFERU-ATEN NEFERTITI, who liveth in health and youth for ever and ever.

2

He (i.e., Ai, a Fan-bearer and the Master of the King's Horse) saith: Thy rising [is] beautiful in the horizon of heaven, O Aten, ordainer of life. Thou dost shoot up in the horizon of the East, thou fillest every land with thy beneficence. Thou art beautiful and great and sparkling, and exalted above every land. Thy arrows (i.e., rays) envelop (i.e., penetrate) everywhere all the lands which thou hast made.

3

Thou art as Ra. Thou bringest [them] according to their number, thou subduest them for thy beloved son. Thou thyself art afar off, but thy beams are upon the earth; thou art in their faces, they [admire] thy goings. Thou settest in the horizon of the west, the earth is in darkness, in the form of death. Men lie down in a booth wrapped up in cloths, one eye cannot see its fellow. If all their possessions, which are under their heads, be carried away they perceive it not.

4

Every lion emergeth from his lair, all the creeping things bite,
 darkness [is] a warm retreat (?). The land is in silence. He who made
 them hath set in his horizon. The earth becometh light, thou shootest
 up in the horizon, shining in the Aten in the day, thou scatterest the
 darkness. Thou sendest out thine arrows (i.e., rays), the Two Lands
 make festival, [men] wake up, stand upon their feet, it is thou who
 raisest them up. [They] wash their members, they take [their apparel]

5

and array themselves therein, their hands are [stretched out] in praise
 at thy rising, throughout the land they do their works. Beasts and
 cattle of all kinds settle down upon the pastures, shrubs and
 vegetables flourish, the feathered fowl fly about over their marshes,
 their feathers praising thy Ka (person). All the cattle rise up on their
 legs, creatures that fly and insects of all kinds

6

spring into life, when thou risest up on them. The boats drop down
 and sail up the river, likewise every road openeth (or showeth itself)
 at thy rising, the fish in the river swim towards thy face, thy beams
 are in the depths of the Great Green (i.e., the Mediterranean and Red
 Seas). Thou makest offspring to take form in women, creating seed in
 men. Thou makest the son to live in the womb of his mother, making
 him to be quiet that he crieth not; thou art a nurse

in the womb, giving breath to vivify that which he hath made.
 [When] he droppeth from the womb ... on the day of his birth [he]
 openeth his mouth in the [ordinary] manner, thou providest his
 sustenance. The young bird in the egg speaketh in the shell, thou
 givest breath to him inside it to make him to live. Thou makest for
 him his mature form so that he can crack the shell [being] inside the
 egg. He cometh forth from the egg, he chirpeth with all his might,
 when he hath come forth from it (the egg), he walketh on his two
 feet. O how many are the things which thou hast made! They are
 hidden from the face, O thou

8

One God, like whom there is no other. Thou didst create the earth by thy heart (or will), thou alone existing, men and women, cattle, beasts of every kind that are upon the earth, and that move upon feet (or legs), all the creatures that are in the sky and that fly with their wings, [and] the deserts of Syria and Kesh (Nubia), and the Land of Egypt. Thou settest every person in his place. Thou providest their daily food, every man having the portion allotted to him, [thou] dost compute the duration of his life. Their tongues are different in speech, their characteristics (or forms), and

9

likewise their skins [in colour], giving distinguishing marks to the dwellers in foreign lands. Thou makest Hapi (the Nile) in the Tuat (Underworld), thou bringest it when thou wishest to make mortals to live, inasmuch as thou hast made them for thyself, their Lord who dost support them to the uttermost, O thou Lord of every land, thou shinest upon them, O ATEN of the day, thou great one of majesty. Thou makest the life of all remote lands. Thou settest a Nile in heaven, which cometh down to them.

10

It maketh a flood on the mountains like the Great Green Sea, it maketh to be watered their fields in their villages. How beneficent are thy plans, O Lord of Eternity! A Nile in heaven art thou for the dwellers in the foreign lands (or deserts), and for all the beasts of the desert that go upon feet (or legs). Hapi (the Nile) cometh from the Tuat for the land of Egypt. Thy beams nourish every field; thou risest up [and] they live, they germinate for thee. Thou makest the Seasons to develop everything that thou hast made:

11

The season of Pert (i.e., Nov. 16-March 16) so that they may refresh themselves, and the season Heh (i.e., March 16-Nov. 16) in order to

taste thee. 1 Thou hast made the heaven which is remote that thou mayest shine therein and look upon everything that thou hast made. Thy being is one, thou shinest (or, shootest up) among thy creatures as the LIVING ATEN, rising, shining, departing afar off, returning. Thou hast made millions of creations (or, evolutions) from thy one self (viz.) towns and cities, villages, fields, roads and river. Every eye (i.e., all men) beholdeth thee confronting it. Thou art the Aten of the day at its zenith.

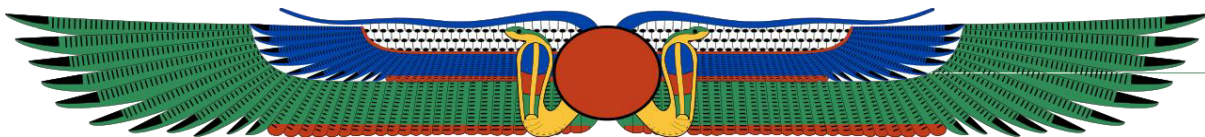
12

At thy departure thine eye ... thou didst create their faces so that thou mightest not see. ... ONE thou didst make ... Thou art in my heart. There is no other who knoweth thee except thy son Nefer-kheperu-Ra Ua-en-Ra. Thou hast made him wise to understand thy plans [and] thy power. The earth came into being by thy hand, even as thou hast created them (i.e., men). Thou risest, they live; thou settest, they die. As for thee, there is duration of life in thy members, life is in thee. [All] eyes [gaze upon]

13

thy beauties until thou settest, [when] all labours are relinquished. Thou settest in the West, thou risest, making to flourish ... for the King. Every man who [standeth on his] foot, since thou didst lay the foundation of the earth, thou hast raised up for thy son who came forth from thy body, the King of the South and the North, Living in Truth, Lord of Crowns, Aakhun-Aten, great in the duration of his life [and for] the Royal Wife, great of majesty, Lady of the Two Lands, Nefer-neferu-Aten Nefertiti, living [and] young for ever and ever.

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Appendice 4

Psalm 104

¹ Bless Yahweh, my soul.

Yahweh, my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honor and majesty.

² He covers himself with light as with a garment.

He stretches out the heavens like a curtain.

³ He lays the beams of his rooms in the waters.

He makes the clouds his chariot.

He walks on the wings of the wind.

⁴ He makes his messengers* winds,

and his servants flames of fire.

⁵ He laid the foundations of the earth,

that it should not be moved forever.

⁶ You covered it with the deep as with a cloak.

The waters stood above the mountains.

⁷ At your rebuke they fled.

At the voice of your thunder they hurried away.

⁸ The mountains rose,

the valleys sank down,

to the place which you had assigned to them.

⁹You have set a boundary that they may not pass over,
that they don't turn again to cover the earth.

¹⁰He sends springs into the valleys.

They run among the mountains.

¹¹They give drink to every animal of the field.

The wild donkeys quench their thirst.

¹²The birds of the sky nest by them.

They sing among the branches.

¹³He waters the mountains from his rooms.

The earth is filled with the fruit of your works.

¹⁴He causes the grass to grow for the livestock,
and plants for man to cultivate,

that he may produce food out of the earth:

¹⁵wine that makes the heart of man glad,

oil to make his face to shine,

and bread that strengthens man's heart.

¹⁶Yahweh's trees are well watered,

the cedars of Lebanon, which he has planted,

¹⁷where the birds make their nests.

The stork makes its home in the cypress trees.

¹⁸The high mountains are for the wild goats.

The rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.

¹⁹He appointed the moon for seasons.

The sun knows when to set.

²⁰You make darkness, and it is night,

in which all the animals of the forest prowl.

²¹ The young lions roar after their prey,
and seek their food from God.

²² The sun rises, and they steal away,
and lie down in their dens.

²³ Man goes out to his work,
to his labor until the evening.

²⁴ Yahweh, how many are your works!
In wisdom, you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.

²⁵ There is the sea, great and wide,
in which are innumerable living things,
both small and large animals.

²⁶ There the ships go,
and leviathan, whom you formed to play there.

²⁷ These all wait for you,
that you may give them their food in due season.

²⁸ You give to them; they gather.
You open your hand; they are satisfied with good.

²⁹ You hide your face; they are troubled.
You take away their breath; they die and return to the dust.

³⁰ You send out your Spirit and they are created.
You renew the face of the ground.

³¹ Let Yahweh's glory endure forever.
Let Yahweh rejoice in his works.

³² He looks at the earth, and it trembles.

He touches the mountains, and they smoke.

³³ I will sing to Yahweh as long as I live.

I will sing praise to my God while I have any being.

³⁴ Let my meditation be sweet to him.

I will rejoice in Yahweh.

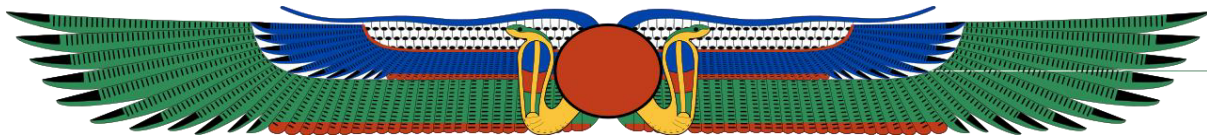
³⁵ Let sinners be consumed out of the earth.

Let the wicked be no more.

Bless Yahweh, my soul.

Praise Yah!

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Appendice 5

The Ten Commandments

1 I am the LORD thy God thou shalt have No other gods before me

2 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images or any likenesses of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water, under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the lord thy god am A jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

3 Thou shalt not take the LORD's name in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain

4 Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

5 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6 Thy shall not kill

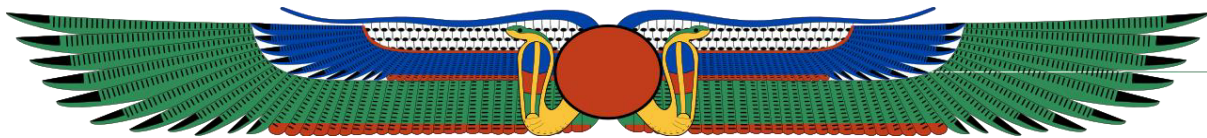
7 Thou shall not commit adultery.

8 Thou shalt not steal

9 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour

10 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife nor his manservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's

The King James Version. 1611. Public Domain



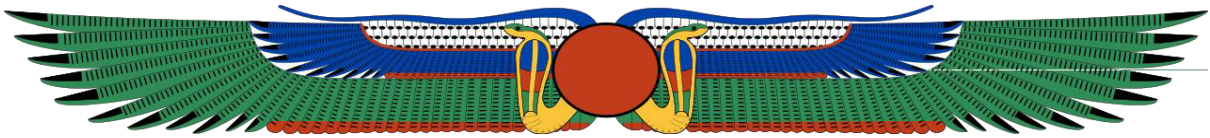
Appendice 5

The 42 negative declarations of to be made in the feather of truth ceremony

1. I have not committed sin.
2. I have not committed robbery with violence.
3. I have not stolen.
4. I have not slain men and women.
5. I have not stolen grain.
6. I have not purloined offerings.
7. I have not stolen the property of the gods.
8. I have not uttered lies.
9. I have not carried away food.
10. I have not uttered curses.
11. I have not committed adultery.
12. I have made none to weep.
13. I have not eaten the heart [i.e., I have not grieved uselessly, or felt remorse].
14. I have not attacked any man.
15. I am not a man of deceit.
16. I have not stolen cultivated land.
17. I have not been an eavesdropper.
18. I have slandered [no man].
19. I have not been angry without just cause.
20. I have not debauched the wife of any man.
21. I have not debauched the wife of [any] man. (repeats the previous affirmation but addressed to a different god).
22. I have not polluted myself.
23. I have terrorized none.
24. I have not transgressed [the Law].
25. I have not been wroth.
26. I have not shut my ears to the words of truth.
27. I have not blasphemed.
28. I am not a man of violence.
29. I am not a stirrer up of strife (or a disturber of the peace).
30. I have not acted (or judged) with undue haste.

31. I have not pried into matters.
32. I have not multiplied my words in speaking.
33. I have wronged none, I have done no evil.
34. I have not worked witchcraft against the King (or blasphemed against the King).
35. I have never stopped [the flow of] water.
36. I have never raised my voice (spoken arrogantly, or in anger).
37. I have not cursed (or blasphemed) God.
38. I have not acted with evil rage.
39. I have not stolen the bread of the gods.
40. I have not carried away the khenfu cakes from the spirits of the dead.
41. I have not snatched away the bread of the child, nor treated with contempt the god of my city.
42. I have not slain the cattle belonging to the god

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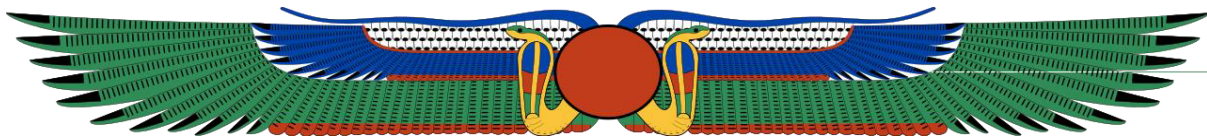
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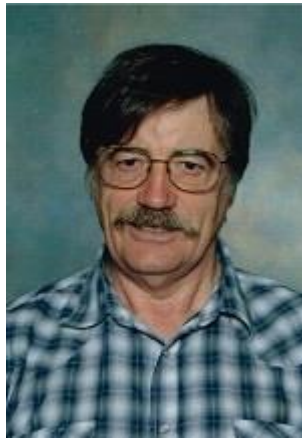
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About the Author

After careers in heavy industry and politics he abandoned these disastrous choices and gained a double honours degree (English & Drama) with Modern History as a third, specialising in the rebellion against western imperialists in nineteenth century India and China. Other subsequent history studies at university included: The Conquest of Mexico, Nazi Germany, Migration, the Crusades, Witch-hunts from 1400-1700 and the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Crete, Troy, Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe. In 1995 by a fluke he became a tutor and defacto university lecturer/tutor, being the only person in the city qualified with the required highly specialized degree. He then worked in mainstream English for a term and then in university preparatory courses for indigenous students in English, Sociology, Education, Critical Literacy and Psychology. After government retrenchments to university in 1998, he returned to High School teaching. Since 2008 he organises and plays community radio

programs in the Folk and Celtic genres. Garry recently finished a second university degree, this time solely in History.

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