

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – EAU CLAIRE

EGYPT IN THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY:  
INFLUENCES LEADING TO THE REFORMS OF AKHENATEN

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS IN  
CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

DR. JOHN W. W. MANN, PROFESSOR

COOPERATING PROFESSOR: DR. MATTHEW WATERS

BY

LINCOLN C. A. HARSCHLIP

EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

MAY 2011

Copyright for this work is owned by the author. This digital version is published by McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin

Eau Claire with the consent of the author.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	3
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. EGYPT IN THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY .....	6
3. AMENHOTEP III, “THE SUN GOD”.....	12
4. EGYPTIAN RELIGION IN THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY.....	15
5. THE REIGN OF AKHENATEN.....	20
6. INFLUENCES: BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.....	25
7. CONCLUSION.....	30
APPENDIX.....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	39

## **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt and the early reign of Amenophis IV, or Akhenaten. Akhenaten is known mostly for his radical reforms which focused on changing the Egyptian state religion from its original pantheon of gods to a new, pseudo-monotheistic cult centered on the Aten, or Sun disk. This paper will explore the influences, both domestic and foreign, which brought about these drastic changes.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Akhenaten was not at all an isolated phenomenon, divorced from his time. In every way was his movement a product of past centuries, a cult that could only have come into being at the height of a great empire.

-Donald B. Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*

This paper will be focused on the early reign of Amenophis IV, or Akhenaten, an Egyptian pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who ruled from roughly 1353 to 1336 BCE. Akhenaten is known mostly for his radical reforms which focused on changing the Egyptian state religion from its original pantheon of gods to a new, pseudo-monotheistic cult centered on the Aten, or Sun disk. This paper will also deal heavily with the Eighteenth Dynasty as a whole, because in order to understand Akhenaten's actions, the reader must be fully acclimated to that particular time period, as it will be argued that the reforms Akhenaten enacted were the products of a pre-existing culture of sun-worship. In short, this paper will explore the early influences, both foreign and domestic, that helped fuel Akhenaten's push towards the radicalization of Egypt's religious culture, as well as briefly touch on the subject of whether Akhenaten was truly the heretic later generations painted him as, or if change was already in motion before his ascension to the throne. Though some of the secondary sources probe the subject of the early influences, there has been no definitive work on why it actually happened. This paper will be the first step in adding an original interpretation on the subject of Akhenaten's religious reforms.

It should be understood by the reader that the study of ancient subjects is sometimes difficult, as the primary sources are usually scarce and damaged, making the job of analyzing them extremely frustrating. It is also important to note that when examining ancient sources, new texts can be discovered, as more archeological sites are excavated. The moment a new document or artifact is found, there is the chance that it could change the commonly held beliefs of historians. Thus, present-day scholars must be aware that there is the ever present possibility that new evidence may arise that may drastically alter their previous research and assumptions. Another problem with ancient sources is the overall availability and condition they are in. Some texts are so damaged, that academics must fill in gaps, using only the context of the work to complete the piece. In short, working with ancient sources, though important, is extremely difficult, as scholars are forced to attempt the filling of historical blank-spaces between the existing materials.

Much of the existing secondary literature concerning Akhenaten can be divided into two sides: those with a negative opinion of the pharaoh, and those who hold a more positive view. Two of the most authoritative English-language biographies can be placed on either side of the argument, these being *Akhenaten, King of Egypt* (1988) by Cyril Aldred, and *Akhenaten, the Heretic King* by Donald Redford. Both are still considered indispensable when confronting the subject of Akhenaten, “yet they paint radically different pictures of the king and his reign, which ultimately derive from Redford disliking Akhenaten and Aldred thinking he was admirable. To their credit, neither author makes any attempt to disguise his opinion.”<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this

---

<sup>1</sup> Dominic Montserrat, *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 13.

work, then, will be to help bridge both opinions by arguing that his actions were a product of the historical times, as well as a product of outside influences, and that he was not making these changes simply on his own accord. This paper is not meant to exonerate this man by any means. It is instead meant to present the facts and show the reader that Akhenaten was not a genius visionary, nor a degenerate, heretical fool, as many of the other secondary sources attempt to portray him, but rather he was simply the right man at the right time.

In order to understand the aforementioned “historical times,” it becomes important to know the history of Egypt in the Eighteenth Dynasty. With this background knowledge, it will then be much easier to identify the major themes, both religious and political, in this particular time period and clearly show how they were evolving during Akhenaten’s reign, thus, in a way, justifying his actions.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Egypt in the Eighteenth Dynasty**

The middle of the fourteenth century BCE saw the Egyptian empire at its height. Military conquests conducted by the early Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs subjugated the Nubians to the south, as well as the acquisition of client-states in the Levant, modern Syria, which acted as buffer states between Egypt and the powerful northern states. The Eighteenth Dynasty was

---

founded by a Theban prince by the name of Ahmose I around 1549 BCE, following the defeat of the Hyksos, which brought an end to the Second Intermediate Period and ushered in the beginning of the New Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Following the defeat of the Hyksos, Ahmose I embarked on campaigns to subjugate the surrounding neighbors of Egypt, most notably in Nubia and Southern Palestine. Later in his reign, Ahmose I launched an unprecedented building spree, building up various temple monuments, which is believed to constitute the foundations of a traditional pharaonic building program. This was due in large part to the fact that he was the first king in more than 100 years to build monuments for the gods of both northern and southern Egypt, since the Egyptian Dynasties before the Hyksos. Along with the regular contributions to various temple complexes, honoring Egyptian gods such as Ptah, Montu, and Osiris, archaeological evidence shows that he made significant contributions to the cult of Amun at Karnak, which, though early in the Eighteenth Dynasty, suggests Amun was taking precedence among the other gods of the Egyptian pantheon.<sup>3</sup>

Ahmose I's son, Amenhotep/Amenophis I, followed in his father's footsteps continuing the building projects and renewing the conquests his father had left unfinished. This included further military action in the south against the Nubians, which led to increased financial gains and the consequent improvement to the Egyptian economy. By the end of Amenhotep I's reign, the main characteristics of the Eighteenth Dynasty had been put into place: "it's clear devotion to the cult of Amun of Karnak, its successful military conquests in Nubia aimed at extending Egypt

---

<sup>2</sup> Hyksos, means literally "foreign rulers". "A term applied widely by ancient Egyptians to any heads of state of alien extraction; most commonly used to designate those Amorite kings who subdued and ruled Egypt c. 1665 to 1557 B.C., and the second c. 1778-1550 B.C." Donald B. Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984),238.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 218-222.

southwards for material rewards, its closed nuclear family, and a developing administrative organization presumably drawn from powerful families.”<sup>4</sup> It should be noted, as Donald Redford argues, that both “Ahmose and Amenophis I proudly display the appellative ‘son of Amun’ ... in the list of royal ancestors used in the daily offering ceremony.”<sup>5</sup> This statement provides another indication that the cult of Amun was on the rise.

Thutmose I became the third pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Upon his ascension to the Egyptian throne, he immediately initiated a campaign against Nubia, taking his army far down the Nile to the fourth cataract, which effectively neutralized this area for the rest of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Following the success in Nubia, Thutmose I led his army to Syria for the first Egyptian campaign in that region. Though this campaign was purely expeditionary, since the king attempted to avoid direct engagement with the Mitanni overlords, there were a few skirmishes with the local vassals. Betsy M. Bryan, professor of Near Eastern studies at Johns Hopkins University, concludes Thutmose I’s military incursion by stating that it is “far more likely that Thutmose I simply found the Mitanni vassals to be superior military powers and that he departed after leaving an inscription and perhaps conducting an elephant hunt in the region of Niy, which lay to the south of the Mitanni-dominated cities.”<sup>6</sup> Despite this early exit from the region with no real confrontation with the Mitanni, this campaign opened Egypt up to the northern states, giving rise to later campaigns and complex relations with its neighbors, enabling it to spread its influence as well as to be influenced through commerce and diplomatic missions.

---

<sup>4</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 224.

<sup>5</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 234.

Thutmose I was succeeded by his son Thutmose II. However, his reign did not last for more than three years, and his half-sister, Hatshepsut, became co-regent with her son Thutmose III. The co-regency, which effectively became the sole rule of Hatshepsut, was noted mostly for its extensive building programs, the most important of these programs being the temple complex of Karnak at Thebes. “With the country evidently at peace during most of the twenty years of her reign, Hatshepsut was able to exploit the wealth of Egypt’s natural resources, as well as those of Nubia.”<sup>7</sup> This of course went into the temple of the god Amun, which, as stated earlier had become the most important as it was chosen by the Egyptian royalty to be their patron deity.

Following the death of Hatshepsut, the young and unproven Thutmose III became the sole ruler of Egypt. Since Nubia was thoroughly under the Egyptian yoke, there was nowhere else to send his armies but north into Syro-Palestine. After nearly seventeen years of continuous campaigns, Thutmose III had successfully established Egyptian rule over Palestine and had made major in-roads into southern Syria. The great amounts of materials won in these campaigns greatly increased the Egyptian economy and were subsequently gifted to the various gods and temples, especially to the god Amun, where Karnak was still the favored site of expansion. Along with the luxury objects obtained in the wars, there was also an increase of war captives sent back to Egypt. These captives, as well as the merchants that followed the armies, would bring their own beliefs and customs into Egypt, leading to a point where “the strange West Semitic dialect was...heard in the streets of the major cities of the Delta...”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 239.

<sup>8</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 28.

Thutmose III took his son, Amenhotep II, on as a co-regent, sharing power for at least two years. Following the death of his aged father, Amenhotep II became the pharaoh, ruling for nearly thirty years. Aside from a few small military incursions into the Levant, Amenhotep II's reign was relatively peaceful, allowing the Egyptian kingdom to stabilize. In fact, it was at this time that the first peaceful negotiations with the Mitanni took place, only after Amenhotep realized the futility of continued hostility in the Levant. "All North Syria went to Mitanni, including the lands of the lower Orontes and the Syrian coast. To Egypt went the cities of the Phoenician coast as far north as modern Tripoli."<sup>9</sup> Archaeologists note the perception and portrayal of the Mitanni in official monuments was much different during and following Amenhotep II's reign, as opposed to the earlier portrayal of them as being the king's vile enemy. "Instead of Thutmose III's designation, "that foe of Nahrin", Amenhotep II several times uses the archaic Egyptian generic term *setjetyu* (Asiatics)."<sup>10</sup> The language on the monumental stelae of Amenhotep II, which were commissioned after his initial campaigns into the Levant, showed that there was finally peace between Egypt and the Mitanni, and that the pharaohs considered them to be their allies.

The building of monuments and the expansion of older ones continued, as it had clearly become an official responsibility of a pharaoh. The most notable building project of Amenhotep II's reign was the temple complex at Amada in Lower Nubia, which celebrated equally the honor of Amun and Ra-Horakhty. Ra-Horakhty was the predecessor of the Aten, or sun disk, which adds credence to the notion of the ever evolving nature of Egyptian religion and the ascension of

---

<sup>9</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 252.

sun-worship. Despite the persistent patronage to other local deities and their temples, the cult centers of Amun, especially at Karnak, continued to be favored while the high-priests of Amun became ever more powerful.

Following the reign of Amenhotep, Thutmose IV became the pharaoh of Egypt. It is clear that Thutmose was not the designated heir, as his name was never mentioned in any of the official inscriptions. It is difficult to know with certainty what happened, but due to the fact there are several monuments dedicated to his older brothers that were intentionally broken and mutilated, it seems as if there was some sort of power struggle in the wake of Amenhotep II's death. Regardless of the domestic turmoil, foreign relations at this time were stable as Thutmose expanded on his father's policy of maintaining mutual friendship between Egypt and Mitanni. To further cement this alliance, the Mitanni king, Artatama, sent his daughter to Egypt to marry the ageing pharaoh.

In his relatively short, eight year reign, Thutmose was able to accomplish much in the way of building projects. "It is a common-place observation that Egyptian rulers built numbers of monuments in direct proportion to the amount of peace and affluence they enjoyed. As king, Thutmose IV had the wealth and peace, but time apparently was cut short."<sup>11</sup> Despite the time constraint, Thutmose was still a prolific builder. His interest in the sun-gods is also evident in his building campaigns and in his inscriptions. There are no references to Amun in his most famous work, the Sphinx Stele, which allowed the sun-god, Horemakhet-Khepri-Ra-Atum, to dominate as royal legitimator. "Given that Amun, even on Amenhotep II's Sphinx stele, was the

---

<sup>11</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 255.

primeval creator and the god who determined the kingship, Thutmose's omission of Amun from his stele must surely have been deliberate..."<sup>12</sup> Even by his own admission, Thutmose had been helped to the throne "through the agency of the sun god Reharakhte, who had appeared to him as a prince in a dream."<sup>13</sup> This was a harbinger of things to come, as his grandson, Amenhotep IV, would adopt the same policy of royal sun-worship himself.

### Chapter 3

#### Amenhotep III, "The Sun God"

Following the reigns of the expansionist Thutmose kings, Egypt was relatively stable under the rule of Amenhotep III, the ninth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who was witness to the flourishing of Egypt's prosperity and artistic culture, along with the halt of territorial growth. Along with this unprecedented ascension to dominance, Egypt also experienced an increase in international correspondence between its vassal states in the Levant and its powerful neighbors further to the north, giving rise to the now famous Amarna period.<sup>14</sup> The Amarna period refers to the short duration of time in which the Egyptian pharaohs, Amenhotep III to the early years of Tutankhamen's reign, kept a regular diplomatic correspondence with the kingdoms to the north. Its name is derived from Tel-Amarna, the modern-day site where the cuneiform

---

<sup>12</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 256.

<sup>13</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*. ed. Edmund S. Meltzer, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

tablets had been found in 1887, among the ruins of Akhenaten's capital city of Akhetaten. These clay tablets were sent from Egypt's vassal states in the Levant, as well as from the kings of the other great powers of the latter part of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It is important to note that this period in Egyptian history had only spanned roughly thirty years. "The archive begins about the thirtieth year of Amenophis III and extends no later than the first year or so of Tutankhamun, at which time the court abandoned the site of Akhetaten."<sup>15</sup>

Amenophis III, sometimes referred to as Amenhotep III, was crowned Pharaoh of Egypt roughly around the year 1384 BCE. Egyptian power up until that point had expanded enough to ensure that the borders were secure and Egypt was safe from any external threats. Immense wealth accompanied this stability, as foreign trade increased dramatically, allowing the subsequent pharaohs to engage in massive building projects. During his reign, Amenophis III proved to be by far the most prolific builder of monuments and palaces, creating new structures as well as rebuilding and enlarging preexisting ones. However, because of his predecessors' success in conquest, Amenophis III never had to engage in any large-scale conflicts, as his father, Thutmose IV, had concluded yet another treaty with the Mitanni late in his tenure, by marrying the daughter of the Mitanni king. However, at this time the Mitanni kingdom was embroiled in a desperate power struggle with the emerging power of the Hittites led by their king Suppiluliuma I. Suppiluliuma made it a point to remain on friendly terms with Egypt, even as he campaigned against the Mitanni, who were still allies to the Egyptians.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, trans. and ed. William L. Moran, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), xxxiv.

<sup>16</sup> Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154-159.

Soon after being crowned as the Pharaoh of Egypt, Amenhotep took a young, non-royal girl, named Tiye, as his first wife. According to the large commemorative scarabs, or beetle-shaped amulets, which were issued after the marriage, the two were wed in the second year of Amenhotep's reign. The text of the marriage scarabs reads as follows:

Living Horus, Strong bull appearing in Truth; he of the Two Ladies, Establishing laws, pacifying the Two Lands; Golden Falcon, Great of valor, who smites the Asiatics; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebmaatre; son of Re, Amenophis – ruler of Thebes, who gives life; and the great royal wife Tiye, may she live. The name of her father is Yuya, the name of her mother Tjuyu (Tuya). She is the wife of a mighty king whose southern boundary in at Karoy, whose northern at Naharin.<sup>17</sup>

The mention of the parents of Tiye show the reader that these people were not lowly commoners, but people of immense influence in the Egyptian court. The inclusion of them on the wedding scarabs was a way to publicly declare that they were supporters of the new pharaoh. . Tiye's parents had held lofty positions prior to her marriage to Amenhotep, which might have added an appeal for both sides.

Despite her non-royal lineage, Tiye eventually became the 'Great King's Wife', which allowed her to wield exceptional power within the Egyptian kingdom. However, as was customary of the royal Egyptians, Amenhotep took many other women as his lesser wives. Besides his many Egyptian mistresses, he is known to have married two Syrian princesses, two Babylonian princesses, two princesses from Mitanni, and one princess from Arzawa in

---

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Reeves, *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 45.

southwestern Asia Minor.<sup>18</sup> Young women were an ever present demand for the Egyptian pharaohs in their correspondence with other kingdoms, as Redford quotes one particular Amarna letter from the Pharaoh to the prince of Gezer:

I have sent you this tablet to inform you that I am sending you Colonel Khanaia, together with a consideration, to fetch beautiful women. Silver, gold, garments... various precious stones, a seat of ebony, and sundry other fine things: total (value), 160 deben. Total women, 40; 40 pieces of silver being the cost per woman. So send very beautiful women, but none with shrill (voices). Then the king your lord will say to you 'that is good.' To you life is sent...<sup>19</sup>

Royal inscriptions show there was a constant stream of foreign women being brought to Egypt, and with a multitude of foreign princesses in the Egyptian court and harem, it is not difficult to imagine the influence they must have exerted on their children, the future kings and high priests of Egypt.

## Chapter 4

### **Egyptian Religion in the Eighteenth Dynasty**

Egyptian religion cannot be summed up in one neat sentence. It was extremely varied from one time period to another. For the most part, deities were worshipped locally, with each city having its own patron god, yet never neglecting the other gods in the Egyptian pantheon. There also seems to have been an ever present cult of sun-worship spanning most of Egyptian

---

<sup>18</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 40-41.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

history. From a very early stage in Egyptian prehistory, the sun, referred to as Ra or Re, was not only a god but considered, “the principal god, creator of the universe, the source of all life.”<sup>20</sup> Having started as a local deity in Heliopolis, the idea of sun-worship gradually spread until it encompassed most of Egypt. As a result, most of the other locally worshipped deities were identified in some way with the sun-god. These local priesthoods were permitted, by the powerful priests of Ra centered in Heliopolis, to maintain their rites and ceremonies to the indigenous gods so long as they acknowledged their gods to be subordinate to Ra.

It becomes clear, however, that early in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Amun, the god of Karnak and Thebes, became the favored deity of the Egyptian kings. Amun, or ‘the hidden one’ did not come into prominence until the rise of the Theban kings of the Eleventh Dynasty, and seems to have been closely related to the ancient prehistoric fertility god Min, “who thundered over the Eastern Desert, bringing the storm rains that occasionally filled the wadis and cisterns of that barren tract.”<sup>21</sup> The promotion of Amun continued until the Theban princes, and later the first pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, stated that this deity’s oracles were what had instigated their rebellion against the hated Hyksos. Once the yoke of the Hyksos had been broken, these princes and the eventual pharaoh, Ahmose I, heaped their treasures and devotion upon Amun, fashioning grand temples in his honor, since it was Amun who had given them victory. So, in short, Amun became the most prominent deity in the Egyptian pantheon because it was the Theban princes who expelled the Hyksos, and because Amun was the patron god of Thebes, which was then the most important city in Egypt.

---

<sup>20</sup> Alan W. Shorter, *The Egyptian Gods, A Handbook*. (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1937), 4.

<sup>21</sup> Cyril Aldred, *Akhenaten: King of Egypt*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 134.

It comes as no surprise that there are thousands of examples in royal inscriptions throughout the Eighteenth Dynasty showing Amun as the most important of Egyptian gods. As a specific example, there are artistic scenes and texts dating from Hatshepsut's reign claiming that Thutmose I had proclaimed her as heir before his death, and that Ahmose, Hatshepsut's mother, had been chosen by Amun to bear the new divine ruler. This again shows how powerful Amun and his cult had become since being chosen as the royal family's patron god.

Despite the worship of Amun as the most important deity in Egyptian religion during this time, the practice of sun-worship remained important. This was in part due to the idea that the Egyptian Pharaoh was the embodiment of the sun on earth, or the son of Ra; an idea that had persisted throughout Egyptian history. "All chronological tradition affirms that Ra had once ruled over Egypt, and it is a remarkable fact that every possessor of the throne of Egypt was proved by some means or other to have the blood of Ra flowing in his veins."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, "no deity who aspired to the position of State God could hope for success unless he harmonized with the great body of solar doctrine on which the Egyptian Kingship is based."<sup>23</sup> Once Amun was established as the preeminent deity of Egypt, he assumed the divinity of the sun-god of Heliopolis, Ra, which led to the eventual melding of the two most important deities into one solid identity: Amun-Ra.

As the newly formed god of Amun-Ra became ever more important, so too did its priests. E.A. Wallis Budge, a famous English Egyptologist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, discusses the clever machinations the priests would use to gain their influence:

---

<sup>22</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians; Or, Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 329.

<sup>23</sup> Shorter, *The Egyptian God*, 14.

...Whenever the divine blood needed replenishing the god took upon himself the form of the reigning king of Egypt, and that he visited the queen in her chamber and became the actual father of the child who was subsequently born to her. When the child was born it was regarded as a god incarnate, and in due course was presented, with appropriate ceremonies, to Ra or Amen-Ra, in his temple, and this god accepted it and acknowledged it to be his child. This clever priestly device gave the priests of Ra great power in the land...<sup>24</sup>

If the priests did not support the current pharaoh, they could simply disavow the newly born child, leaving the king with no heir, essentially threatening civil war. Only after the pharaoh presented a new heir, and presumably after giving the clergy whatever they desired, would the priests acknowledge the fledgling child as the heir apparent. Only by courting the priests of the gods could an Egyptian pharaoh gain the favor of the gods. The priests of Amun, and subsequently Amun-Ra, would possess an extremely powerful hold on Egypt, as a whole, which was trumped only by the divine will of the Pharaoh. Despite the growing power of the priesthood throughout most of the Eighteenth Dynasty, there is no evidence suggesting open discord between them and the Pharaohs. In fact, upon completing their numerous military campaigns, many of the Eighteenth Dynast kings poured much of their tribute and plundered goods into the coffers of the Amun-Ra priesthood. By the end of Amenhotep III's reign, Amun-Ra had become the state deity of all Imperial Egypt, "...founding new enclaves for his cult even in Lower Egypt, and increasing his power and wealth until they surpassed those of any other god."<sup>25</sup>

Despite the outward appearance of mutual cooperation between the priestly caste and that of the Pharaoh, there were still growing suspicions among the king's ministers. "Amun's

---

<sup>24</sup> Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 329-330.

<sup>25</sup> Aldred, *Akhenaten*, 135.

temple, serviced by vast agricultural estates, administered by an immense bureaucracy and controlling numberless serfs and slaves, gradually grew in influence to take in shipping, manufacturing, mining and other worldly concerns. The Egyptian king's constant battle was to hold the influence of Amun's troublesome priests – now controlling a virtual state within a state – firmly in check.”<sup>26</sup>

Despite the ascension of Amun as Egypt's chief deity, the cult of Aten was still present and persistent in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Aten was considered a deity which was represented by the disc or orb of the sun, and was by no means a new word or cult. It was obviously related to the cult of Ra, yet it was considered separate from the mainstream cult. The Aten could, therefore, be seen as the physical representation of Ra. As Aidan Dodson argues, “This emphasis on solar cults is evident from earlier in the dynasty, in particular with an increasing promotion of the god Aten, a manifestation of the long established Re-Horakhty, first seen as an independent deity under Thutmose IV.”<sup>27</sup> According to a scarab amulet from the reign of Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III's father, “...If he arouses himself to fight, with Aten before him, he destroys the mountain countries, trampling the desert countries, treading as far as Naharin and Karoy, in order to make the inhabitants of foreign lands like subjects to the rule of Aten forever.”<sup>28</sup>

Archaeologists also noticed the use of Aten in official inscriptions during the later reign of Amenhotep III. “During the king's *sed*-festivals, his deified self had been identified with the

---

<sup>26</sup>Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*, (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 50.

sun-disc and in several inscriptions, ... the king calls himself ‘the dazzling Aten’”<sup>29</sup> Amenhotep III went as far as to name his state barge the ‘Radiance of the Aten.’<sup>30</sup> The official divinity of Egypt remained that of Amun-Ra, which was the conglomeration of deities from the north and south. However, in that new and international climate, the growing popularity of sun-worship began to reassert itself. The Aten, as the actual sun, was a universal symbol which was visible from all countries, and it was “regarded as an appropriate manifestation of imperial power - the solar manifestation with which the pharaoh, in death, traditionally became one. And to promote the Aten as the empire’s new, universal god, albeit tentatively, was to promote the status of kingship itself.”<sup>31</sup>

## Chapter 5

### The Reign of Akhenaten

Upon the death of Amenophis III, Egypt was at its zenith. Due to the continuing peace with the Mitanni empire and the absence of the emerging Hittites, Egypt was wealthier and more powerful than it had ever been before. Redford writes that Egypt was the unrivaled leader of the known world:

---

<sup>29</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 276. A *sed*-festival was a royal ritual of renewal and regeneration, which was intended to be celebrated by a king after he reached a reign of 30 years.

<sup>30</sup> Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 51.

Her messengers ranged unimpeded over the Middle East to Babylon, the Hittite Kingdom, Mitanni, and Cyprus; her merchant fleets sailed unmolested by pirates to Byblos, Tyre, Ugarit, Crete, and Aegean Greece. Untold wealth poured in from the gold mines of the Sudan and the far-flung lands of central Africa; tribute came annually from the north, borne on the backs of cowed Canaanites and Hurrians.<sup>32</sup>

The influx of foreign peoples into Egypt was also apparent, both at the royal level and among the common people, most likely as slaves and merchants. Into this changing and expanding Egypt was cast Amenhotep IV. He was undoubtedly officially crowned by Amun of Thebes, “for he was described as ‘the one whom Amun has chosen (to appear in glory for millions of years).’”<sup>33</sup> He immediately began his reign with an extensive building program at Karnak, the center of worship for the cult of Amun. However, these temples were dedicated not to Amun, but rather, “to a new form of the sun-god whose official name was ‘The living one, Ra-Horus of the horizon who rejoices in the horizon in his identity of light which is in the sun-disc.’”<sup>34</sup> This name was eventually shortened to “the living sun-disc,” which in Egyptian was the Aten. It was also at this time, early in his reign, that a poem appeared, purportedly written by Akhenaten himself, expounding the love of Aten.<sup>35</sup>

There is still much debate as to whether or not Akhenaten was a co-regent with his father Amenhotep III. As this was a common occurrence in the Eighteenth Dynasty, it would not have been unheard of. Most of the sweeping changes enacted by Akhenaten were not carried out until some three to five years after his coronation, which could be explained by his father still being

---

<sup>32</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 274.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>35</sup> See appendix B. John L. Foster, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*, (University of Texas Press, 2001), 1.

alive and the paternal influence still being in place. The reason for instituting a short co-regency was simple: to avoid any dynastic strife by introducing a legitimate heir. However, Aidan Dodson, the most recent author pertaining to Akhenaten, contends that "...the weight of evidence currently seems to lie in favor of the view that Amenhotep IV's accession only followed his father's demise..." and the portrayal of the two regents on the same monuments should be taken as a memorial to the former, rather than evidence of a co-regency.<sup>36</sup> Erik Hornung writes that the name of the god Amun was intact in the tomb of Amenhotep III, which would point to his death coming before his son's religious reforms and persecution of the cult of Amun. While Dominic Montserrat argues that "the evidence for any extended period of joint rule between Amenhotep III and Akhenaten is circumstantial, or based on art-historical criteria which are so far not generally accepted."<sup>37</sup> All of this evidence points to the idea that there was no co-regency, or, at the very least, it was short-lived.

For the most part, the early years of Akhenaten's reign seem to have gone relatively smoothly. There were no pressing military concerns and the flow of tribute from her client-states continued to flood the Egyptian treasury. As stated earlier, Amenhotep IV continued the expansive building programs initiated by all the pharaohs before him. Despite the outward appearance of a calm ruler, all was not right with Amenhotep IV. Erik Hornung, one of the most influential scholars of Ancient Egyptian religions, states that normally the Egyptian kings would endeavor "to effectuate a comprehensive program for their reigns immediately upon ascending the throne, showing themselves to be creator gods by means of construction works and

---

<sup>36</sup> Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Montserrat, *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*, 14.

military campaigns, repelling enemies and ‘lighting’ the world with their monuments, in the case of Akhenaten, we note curiously little activity aside from his building project at Karnak.”<sup>38</sup>

The first steps towards his new religion came in the third year of his reign, when he formally named this new god, “Re-Harakhty, who rejoices in the horizon in his name Shu, who is Aten.”<sup>39</sup> Shortly after his fifth year as pharaoh, he decided to “sever all links with the traditional religious capital of Egypt and its god Amun, at Thebes, and to build an entirely new city on virgin soil that would be devoted solely to the cult of the Aten...”<sup>40</sup> It was also at this time that he changed his official name to Akhenaten, which means “he who acts effectively on behalf of the Aten,” and decided to name his new city Akhetaten, which means “Horizon of the Aten”. Akhenaten was not alone in his transformation, as his chief wife, the now famous Nefertiti, was given a new name, Neferneferuaten, meaning “Aten is the most perfect.” Following the fifth year of his reign, and his decision to sever all links with Thebes, Akhenaten carried out his plans of reorganization. “The vast extent of the reorganization was unique – religion, art, language, and literature were affected, and surely also the administration and the economy, for a little later the temples of the traditional deities would be closed and their priests dismissed from state service...”<sup>41</sup> There does not seem to be any open persecution of the existing priesthoods at this time, though the year before, the high priest of Amun had been sent out into the desert on a quarrying expedition. This shows that there must have been internal grief between the priesthood and the Pharaoh, which eventually culminated in the expulsion of the

---

<sup>38</sup> Erik Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, trans. David Lorton, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 34.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>40</sup> Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 277.

<sup>41</sup> Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, 49.

priests, and the dismantling of the temple priesthods. Next, he created a new royal titulary, “from which were removed not only the name of the hated Amun but also references to his locales of Thebes and Karnak.”<sup>42</sup>

In depictions of the pharaoh’s new religion, such as in the various stelae from Amarna, we clearly see the importance of his wife’s role in it. Akhenaten’s mother, Tiye, held a similar religious role during Amenhotep III’s reign, but not one so visual, as was in the case with Neferneferuaten. “In group statues, she appears striding at the king’s right, which was highly unusual for a queen. She assisted the king in all his cultic activities, even the smiting of enemies, and she herself was even depicted in the triumphal pose.”<sup>43</sup> Redford even speculates that perhaps Nefertiti was the domineering force behind the sweeping changes in Egypt, as she was the first queen to be depicted in Egyptian art as having power equal to her husband’s.

Despite the plethora of artistic representations of this time, we will never be able to fully comprehend what the common Egyptian thought of these massive reforms. Upon making these changes, Akhenaten again broke custom by celebrating his *sed*-festival, which was meant to commemorate a pharaoh’s thirtieth year of rule. Redford contends that this festival provided Akhenaten the opportunity to shower his subjects with his wealth in the form of food and presents, which in turn tempered their dismay with gratitude. However, there is evidence of discontent. “In a later text in which he swears never to leave his newfound home in Middle Egypt, Amenophis IV alludes cryptically to the ‘evil words’ his father and grandfather were

---

<sup>42</sup> Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, 50.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

obliged to listen to, and which even he in his time had heard.”<sup>44</sup> These ‘evil words’, of course, refer to the influence the priests of Amun held over the Egyptian pharaohs. Despite this, the High Priest of Amun was still active in year four of Akhenaten’s reign, right up until he decided to move the religious capital from Thebes to his newly founded city, Akhetaten. By doing this, Akhenaten was able to rid himself of the powerful priests which had exerted influence on virtually every section of Egyptian culture, effectively expelling his rivals in the government, and allowing him to become the undisputed, sole ruler of Egypt.

## Chapter 6

### Influences: Both Foreign and Domestic

In the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty, following the conquests of the Thutmoside pharaohs, Egypt took to the international stage as a regional powerhouse. With this new-found status, Egypt began to attract large groups of foreign people. Besides the large amounts of war captives following the expansionistic policies of the early Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs, there also came increased commercial trade along with a burgeoning foreign merchant class. “The impact upon the civilization of Egypt of such foreigners, even as a subject people, was considerable, and will account for a number of changes in religious ideas, and for innovations in the material culture, even perhaps in the ethnic composition of the governing class in later years...”<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Redford, *Akhenaten*, 139.

<sup>45</sup> Aldred, *Akhenaten: King of Egypt*, 118.

Treaties between Egypt and its allies, such as the Hatti and Babylonia, were common in the Amarna age, and were cemented by marriages between the daughters of the various kings and the pharaoh. The best documented of these international and diplomatic marriages was between princesses of the Mitanni and Tuthmosis IV, Amenophis III, and Akhenaten.<sup>46</sup> These marriages were well documented in the Amarna letters: “With regard to the girl, my daughter, about whom you wrote to me in view of marriage, she has become a woman; she is nubile. Just send a delegation to fetch her.”<sup>47</sup>

Along with the marriages between kings came an outpouring of trade between Egypt and northern Mesopotamia. “Commerce was a great attraction, and the Syrian merchant soon became a fixture in the Memphite marketplace.” Donald Redford points to the influx of foreigners into Egyptian society as a plausible factor in the transformation of the Egyptian culture and the eventual change in religion: “Influences mingled – cultural, artistic and linguistic – with foreign cults such as those of Baal, Astarte and Reshep finding ready acceptance.”<sup>48</sup> Through the increase in trade and mingling of people, it is not hard to imagine there were ample opportunities for Egyptian culture to be influenced by foreign customs.

The domestic influences Akhenaten experienced early in his life would have greatly impacted the way he would have developed his ideas surrounding the eventual reforms in religion. The first line of evidence scholars can look at would be his immediate family, which would include his father and mother, Amenophis III and Tiye. Tiye’s parents, Yuya and Tuya,

---

<sup>46</sup>Aldred, *Akhenaten: King of Egypt*, 146.

<sup>47</sup>Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 6.

<sup>48</sup>Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 28.

were of relatively high status, both playing key roles in the religious cults of their home town of Akhmim, but lacked royal blood, being only minor nobles. Despite being from a non-royal bloodline, Tiye's mother, Tuya, held the various titles of, "king's mother of the great royal wife", "lady of the harem of Min", "chief of the entertainers of Min", "songstress of Amun", and the "chief of the entertainers of Amun."<sup>49</sup> "Tuya thus occupied an important position in the hierarchy of Amun at Thebes."<sup>50</sup> Yuya, Tiye's father, held the titles of "priest of Min", "overseer of the cattle of Min, Lord of Akhmim", "master of horse", and "his majesty's lieutenant-commander of chariotry".

Many scholars, such as Nicholas Reeves, suggest Yuya, the father, to have been of non-Egyptian lineage, due to the variability in the spelling of his name and his mummified remains, which showed he was taller than most Egyptians of that time, and had an elongated skull, a practice thought to be common in Anatolia.<sup>51</sup> The practice of elongating the skull, at least in art, was present in Egyptian artwork only during Akhenaten's reign, as seen in many of the pieces of artwork found in Amarna. "Vertical axes become diagonal, stressed by receding foreheads and elongated crowns."<sup>52</sup> Though the appearance of the elongated skull of Yuya does not prove an overarching influence from Anatolia on the Egyptian culture, it does present a tantalizing question. Yet there seems to be little or no evidence, at the moment, to fully justify such a connection. Regardless of this, Reeves suggests that Yuya's various titles could also serve as

---

<sup>49</sup> Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Aldred, *Akhenaten: King of Egypt*, 146.

<sup>51</sup> Nora Griffith, "Akhenaten and the Hittites", (*The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 9, 1923), 78-79.

<sup>52</sup> Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, 44.

indicators of his foreign origins, as the title “his majesty’s lieutenant-commander of chariotry” may refer to a high-ranking Syrian *maryannu*, or chariot warrior, of which the Hittites were renowned for.<sup>53</sup> Because there is so little information pertaining to Yuya and Tuya, this hypothesis can never fully be proved, yet many prominent scholars of the Egyptian Amarna period believe to be, at the very least, a possibility.<sup>54</sup> Reeves concludes his discussion of Tiye’s parents by stating that, “given the family’s close connections with the Middle Egyptian town of Akhmim where Yuya’s supposed father Yey held similar office, it seems improbable that the man was not a native Egyptian – though the family might conceivably have been of foreign ancestry.”<sup>55</sup> Whatever the origins and ancestry of Tiye’s family, it is apparent that her parents held immense influence over the Egyptian court and the Pharaoh, Amenhotep III. These influences would have then been passed on to Akhenaten by his mother Tiye.

If Yuya was indeed of foreign stock, he would most likely have come from either the Mitanni kingdom, or the emerging Hittite kingdom, as there is ample evidence from the Amarna letters showing communication and trade between these entities, as well as intermarriage between the royalties. In fact, it has been suggested that Nefertiti, the wife of Akhenaten, was of foreign stock, on account of her name, meaning “The beautiful one is come,” implying she came from somewhere other than Egypt. Nicholas Reeves suggests that “it is not at all surprising that an identification with Tadukhepa, daughter of Tushratta of Mitanni, has been proposed...”, but concludes that “on present evidence, the probability is that Nefertiti was Egyptian born and

---

<sup>53</sup> Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 57.

<sup>54</sup> Redford. *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 36.

<sup>55</sup> Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 57.

bred.”<sup>56</sup> With the ample evidence of royal marriages, it is not much of a stretch to imagine that there was intermarriage between non-royal Egyptians and foreigners. All of this intermarriage would inevitably lead to foreign ideas being introduced to Egyptian society, the most important one, pertaining to the subject of this paper, being the religious philosophies of the Near East.

Even if Akhenaten’s grandparents were of Egyptian heritage, and were not in fact from Mitanni or Hittite, there still could have been tremendous influence from the north. Cyril Aldred contends that, along with the ascendancy of Amun in the early Eighteenth Dynasty, there also seems to have been a reviving of the sun-cult, which may have been reinvigorated from ideas introduced by the Asiatic sun-cults. Contemporary Hittite society contained a plethora of gods and goddesses, just the Egyptian pantheon, yet the most important one was the Sun Goddess of Arinna, chief female deity of the Hittite world. Her origins stemmed from a Syrian mother-goddess figure.<sup>57</sup> The Hittite king was even referred to as “the Sun,” pointing to the fact that “it would have been natural for exiles...to magnify the power of the greatest god of their native land, especially when they found him as one the more exalted deities in the Egyptian pantheon.”<sup>58</sup> The influx of war captives, slaves, merchants and, at a higher level, royal wives, would have brought with them their own set of beliefs and customs that invariably influenced the Egyptian people around them. Since Egypt had been experiencing an increased level of interaction with Near Eastern peoples in the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty, this connection between the Egyptians and Hittite religion seems plausible.

---

<sup>56</sup> Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 88.

<sup>57</sup> Trevor Bryce, *Life and Society in the Hittite World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 137.

<sup>58</sup> Griffith, “Akhenaten and the Hittites”, 78-79.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

Akhenaten did not enact his reforms by himself. As the evidence shows, there were obvious influences from abroad, stemming from years of increased interaction with other powerful kingdoms, which helped shape Akhenaten's view of Egyptian religion. These foreign religious ideas could have been easily transmitted to the Pharaoh through his many lesser wives, as well as from his mother, who was very close to him after Amenhotep III died.

Akhenaten, the enigmatic ruler of Egypt, has never ceased to arouse such vehement distaste or passionate defense from the various scholars who pursue Egyptian history. However, it is exactly this reason why this paper was written: to take no particular side in the argument and present the facts without any prejudice, allowing the reader to gather the information and choose for themselves. Akhenaten was by no means the sensitive humanist Cyril Aldred paints him to be, nor was he the despotic dimwit that Robert Redford portrays him as. Akhenaten was living in a particular time with obvious religious significance which culminated in his reforms. At the very end of his book, Aldred briefly suggests that Akhenaten's reign was simply an extension of his father's; the only difference being that Akhenaten took the next step by excluding the other gods from Egyptian worship. He was simply a man at the right time, in the right place, making a decision that had been clearly influenced throughout multiple generations.

## Appendix

### Appendix A

#### Regnal Chronology: Eighteenth Dynasty (1539-1307 BCE)

\*Dates Approximate

Ahmose I	1545-1520 BCE
Amenhotep/Amenophis I	1520-1499
Thutmose I	1499-1489
Thutmose II	1489-1479
Thutmose III	1479-1425
Hatshepsut	1472-1457
Amenhotep/Amenophis II	1425-1399
Thutmose IV	1399-1389
Amenhotep/Amenophis III	1389-1349
Amenhotep/Amenophis IV/Akhenaten	1349-1335
Smenkhkare	?
Neferneferuaten	?
Tutankhaten/Tutankhamun	1333-1323
Ay	1323-1319
Horemheb	1319-1307

## **Appendix B**

### **Akhenaten's *Hymn to the Aten***

Copied from Foster, John L. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*. Edited and Translated by John L. Foster. University of Texas Press, 2001.

**i**

Let your holy Light shine from the height of heaven,  
O living Aton, source of all life!  
From eastern horizon risen and streaming,  
You have flooded the world with your beauty.  
You are majestic, awesome, bedazzling, exalted,  
Overlord over all earth,  
Yet your rays, they touch lightly, compass the lands  
To the limits of all your creation.  
There in the sun, you reach to the farthest of those  
You would gather in for your son, whom you love;  
Though you are far, your light is wide upon earth;  
And you shine in the faces of all who turn to follow you journeying.

**ii**

When you sink to rest below western horizon  
Earth lies in darkness like death,  
Sleepers are still in bedchambers, heads veiled,  
Eye cannot spy a companion;

All their goods could be stolen away,  
Heads heavy there, and they never knowing!  
Lions come out from the deeps of their caves,  
Snakes bite and sting;  
Darkness muffles, and earth is silent:  
He who created all things lies low in his tomb.

### **iii**

Earth-dawning mounts the horizon,  
Glowing in the sun-disk as day:  
You drive away darkness, offer your arrows of shining,  
And the Two Lands are lively with morningsong.  
Sun's children awaken and stand,  
For you, golden light, have upraised the sleepers;  
Bathed their bodies, who dress in clean linen,  
Their arms held high to praise your Return.  
Across the face of the earth  
They go to their crafts and professions.

### **iv**

The herds are at peace in their pasture,  
Trees and the vegetation grown green;  
Birds start from their nests  
Wings wide spread to worship your Person;  
Small beasts frisk and gambol, and all  
Who mount into flight or settle to rest

Live, once you have shone upon them;  
Ships float downstream or sail for the south,  
Each path lies open because of your rising;  
Fish in the River leap in your sight,  
And your rays strike deep in the Great Green Sea.

v

It is you create the new creature in Woman,  
Shape the life-giving drops into Man,  
Foster the son in the womb of his mother,  
Soothe him, ending his tears;  
Nurse through the long generations of women  
To those given Air,  
You ensure that your handiwork prosper.  
When the new one descends from the womb  
To draw breath the day of his birth  
You open his mouth, you shape his nature,  
And you supply all his necessities.

vi

Hark to the chick in the egg,  
He who speaks in the shell!  
You give him air within  
To save and prosper him;  
And you have allotted to him his set time  
Before the shell shall be broken;  
Then out of the egg he comes,

From the egg to peep at his natal hour!  
And up on his own two feet goes he  
When at last he struts forth therefrom.

**vii**

How various is the world you have created,  
Each thing mysterious, sacred to sigh,  
O sole God, beside whom there is no other!  
You fashioned earth to your heart's desire,  
While you were still alone  
Filled it with man and the family of creatures,  
Each kind on the ground, those who go upon feet,  
He on high soaring on wings,  
The far lands of Khor and Kush  
And the rich Black Land of Egypt.

**viii**

And you place each one in his proper station,  
Where you minister to his needs;  
Each has his portion of food,  
And the years of life are reckoned him.  
Tongues are divided by words,  
Natures made diverse as well,  
Even men's skins are different  
That you might distinguish the nations.

**ix**

You make Hapy, the Nile, stream through the underworld,  
And bring him, with whatever fullness you will,  
To preserve and nourish the People  
In the same skilled way you fashion them.  
You are Lord of each one,  
Who wearies himself in their service.  
Yet Lord of all earth, who shines for them all,  
Sun-disk of day, holy Light!  
All of the far foreign countries-  
You are the cause they live,  
For you have put a Nile in the sky  
That he might descend upon them in rain-  
He makes waves on the very mountains  
Like waves on the Great Green Sea  
To water their fields and their villages.

**x**

How splendidly ordered are they,  
Your purposes for this world,  
O Lord of Eternity, Hapy in heaven!  
Although you belong to the distant peoples,  
To the small, shy beasts  
Who travel the deserts and uplands,  
Yet Hapy, he comes from Below  
For the dear Land of Egypt as well.  
And your Sunlight nurses each field and meadow:  
When you shine, they live,

They grow sturdy and prosper through you.  
You set seasons to let the world flower and flourish-  
Winter to rest and refresh it,  
The hot blast of summer to ripen;  
And you have made heaven far off  
In order to shine down therefrom,  
In order to watch over all your creation.

**xi**

You are the One God,  
Shining forth from your possible incarnation  
As Aton, the Living Sun,  
Revealed like a king in glory, risen in light,  
Now distant, now bending nearby.  
You create the numberless things of this world  
From yourself, who are One alone-  
Cities, towns, fields, the roadway, the River;  
And each eye looks back and behold you  
To learn from the day's light perfection.  
O God, you are in the Sun-disk of Day,  
Over-Seer of all creation- your legacy  
Passed on to all who shall ever be;  
For you fashioned their sight who perceive your universe,  
That they praise with one voice  
All your labors.

**xii**

And you are in my heart;  
There is no other who truly knows you  
But for your son, Akhenaten.  
May you make him wise with your inmost counsels,  
Wise with your power,  
That earth may aspire to your godhead,  
Its creatures fine as the day you made them.  
Once you rose into the shining, they lived;  
When you sink to rest, they shall die.  
For it is you who are Time itself,  
The span of the world;  
Life is by means of you.

Eyes filled with beauty  
Until you go to your rest;  
All work is laid aside  
As you sink down the western horizon.

Then, Shine reborn! Rise splendidly!  
My Lord, let life thrive for the King  
Who has kept pace with your very footstep  
Since you first measured ground for the world.  
Lift up creatures of the earth for your son  
Who came forth from your Body of Fire!

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Foster, John L. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*. Edited and Translated by John L. Foster. University of Texas Press, 2001.

Hari, Robert. "New Kingdom: Amarna Period." *Iconography of Religions*. Institute of Religious Iconography, State University Groningen. Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1985.

Moran, William L. *The Amarna Letters*. Edited and Translated by William L. Moran. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Murnane, William J. *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*. Edited by Edmund S. Meltzer. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.

### Secondary Sources

Aldred, Cyril. *Akhenaten*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Booth, Charlotte. *Horemheb: The Forgotten Pharaoh*. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2009.

Bratton, Fred Gladstone. *The First Heretic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

Bryce, Trevor. *The Kingdom of the Hittites*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. *Life and Society in the Hittite World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Budge, E. A. Wallis. *The Gods of the Egyptians; Or, Studies in Egyptian Mythology*. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

Cohen, Raymond and Raymond Westbrook, eds. *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Dodson, Aidan. *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2009.

Fletcher, Joann. *Chronicle of a Pharaoh: The Intimate Life of Amenhotep III*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Giles, F. J. *Ikhнатon: Legend and History*. Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1972.

Griffith, Nora. "Akhenaten and the Hittites." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 9 (1923): 78-79.

Hornung, Erik. *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*. Translated by David Lorton. New York: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Kitchen, K. A. *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*. Chicago: Argonaut Inc, Publishers, 1962.

Montserrat, Dominic. *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Redford, Donald B. *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

———. “The Sun-Disc in Akhenaten's Program: Its Worship and Antecedents, II.”  
*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 17 (1980): 21-38.

Reeves, Nicholas. *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001.

Shaw, Ian. *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Shorter, Alan W. *The Egyptian Gods, A Handbook*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co, 1937.

Silverman, David P., Josef W. Wegner, and Jennifer Houser Wegner. *Akhenaten and Tutankhamun: Revolution and Restoration*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2006.

Tyldesley, Joyce. *Nefertiti: Egypt's Sun Queen*. New York: Penguin Group, 1998.