

INTRODUCTION

FACTS AND THEORIES RELATING TO THE KINGS INVOLVED IN THE ATEN HERESY

IN the endeavour to obtain a correct perspective view of the kings involved in the Aten heresy, namely, Amen·hetep III, Amen·hetep IV (Akh·en·Aten), Smenkh·ka·Re, Tut·ankh·Amen (Tut·ankh·Amen), and the Divine father King Ay, one is perplexed by many difficulties and perforce by the lack of sufficient data. Of their true histories we have but little which is trustworthy, and considering how numerous are their monuments it is astonishing how disproportionate the data gleaned from them. The few historical documents that we have are of a very miscellaneous character. An occasional weather-beaten inscription upon a cliff face, a scarab, or a piece of linen, a scrap of papyrus, or a potsherd, which chance has preserved and brought to light. Hints from the numerous reliefs and paintings in the temples and tomb chapels of this age are the only other source of our knowledge upon the subject. And they (chiefly in extensive inscriptions) consist, for the most part, of conventional phrases in laudation of the king, either as a mighty ruler, a mighty pillar of the religion, or as the sole earthly representative and mouthpiece of the supreme god. From them it is but in isolated instances that we are able to gather some knowledge of those kings and their

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households ; with the result that numbers of important questions and details remain unanswered, save from our own conjectural resources.

Searching those records, it is only here and there that the veil which shrouds those monarchs seems for an instant to be lifted, and we catch a glimpse of some amazing or puzzling fact. The domestic side of their lives and deeds in many ways can only be surmised, and, from such material as we have, we can only form our conclusions by a process of deduction.

Another source of trouble is the ambiguity of the dates upon their monuments ; these in themselves are anachronistic, for they combine both the regnal and the civil year. Hence, unless we are aware of the exact civil year, month and day of a king's accession, those dates are nearly useless for any exact computation of time. For example, year 1, month 3, of the third season, of such and such a reign, might represent one year and eleven months, or only thirteen months, from the date of the king's accession. When necessary, to overcome this difficulty, and to arrive at a mean, equally removed from the two extremes, I have reckoned the seasons, months and days quoted on the monuments from the civil year as half a regnal year.

I make this plaint, not to depreciate the value of those ancient monuments and records, nor to disparage the student, but merely as a brief for the "may-bes" and "probables" in the following—what must necessarily be—tentative chronology of the sequence of events.

Manetho in Josephus states that Amen-hetep III reigned thirty years and ten months, yet there are

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monuments of his dated as late as the xxxviiith regnal year, and if we accept a lintel scene in the tomb of Huya, mentioned below, showing an equipoise of two royal households (i.e. of Amen-hetep III and IV), his reign must have extended to about his XLth regnal year.

This discrepancy may be accounted for in a graffito upon the pyramid temple of Medum, written in ink from the ever-ready Egyptian palette of "the scribe May," who went "to see the very great pyramid of Horus-the-Soul of King Se-neferu." The graffito reads: "*Year xxx, under the majesty of the King Neb-maat Re, Son of Amen, resting in truth, Amen-hetep (IIIrd), prince of Thebes, lord of might, prince of joy, who loves him that hates injustice of heart, placing the male offspring upon the seat of his father, and establishing his inheritance in the land.*" The "heir" referred to in this graffito can be no less than Amen-hetep IV, who afterwards assumed the name Akh-en-Aten. There was probably some reason for establishing this young prince upon the throne, and the difference, such as we find between Manetho's statement and the Egyptian monuments, is due to a co-regency between those two kings. The thirty years and ten months ascribed to Amen-hetep III by Manetho is evidently the length of his reign as sole king.

The principal dated monuments prior to this co-regency are: (1) a scarab recording the king's marriage to Tyi, the daughter of Yua and Thua, which must have taken place before his IIIrd regnal year (*see* next scarab). Most probably at the time of his accession when he was about nine years of age; (2) inscriptions in Turra and El-Bersheh quar-

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ries which were opened in his *iii*rd regnal year ; (3) a scarab of the *iii*rd year recording a wild cattle hunt, wherein the Great-King's-Wife Tyi is mentioned ; (4) two stelæ at the first cataract recording a Nubian campaign in his *v*th regnal year ; (5) a scarab recording 102 lions killed by His Majesty between his *i*st and *x*th regnal years ; (6) a scarab dated " year *x*," recording his marriage to a foreign princess Kirgipa, the daughter of Satirna, King of Naharin ; (7) a scarab recording the construction of a pleasure lake in his *xiii*th regnal year ; and (8) his first jubilee celebration, between his *xxx*th and *xxx*ist regnal years, recorded in the tomb of the Vizier Kha·em·hat at Thebes.

Subsequent to his co-regency with his son, Amen-hetep *iv*, we find the following dated monuments : a mortuary temple edict, which legally established in perpetuity an endowment for the maintenance of the king's mortuary cult, publicly read in his mortuary temple at Thebes, is dated in the year *xxxii*nd of Amen-hetep *iii*'s reign ; upon an altar at Gebel Silsileh year *xxxv* is mentioned ; his third jubilee celebration is recorded in the tomb of a certain Kheruf, under the following heading : "*Year xxxvi. Conducting the companions for presentation in the (royal) presence at the third jubilee of His Majesty.*" Mentioning Queen Tyi in the titulary ; and a stela of similar date at Sarbut-el-Khadem in Sinai records an expedition thither in that year. Mr. Winlock discovered a date of this reign as late as the *xxxviii*th year, in the king's palace at Thebes, south of Medinet Habou. There being no indication in those records of the existence of a co-regency, let us turn from the inscriptional to the more plastic material.

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A unique scene upon a lintel in the tomb of Huya, at El Amarna, furnishes us with juxtaposed pictures of the two royal households, namely, those of Amen-hetep III and Akh-en-Aten. This equipoise of the two households not only confirms the co-regency of the two kings, but gives reason to suppose that Amen-hetep III continued to live for at least a year or so after the birth of Akh-en-Aten's fourth daughter, Nefer-nefru-Aten-ta-sheri. Below this scene the prayer of Huya on the left door-jamb repeats the familiar salutation of the three worshipful powers, the Aten, the King, and the Queen, but the powers saluted on the right jamb are Akh-en-Aten, his father Amen-hetep III, and his mother Tyi. The illustration to this text is furnished by the lintel scene above. The picture is divided into two halves, that on the left showing the household of Akh-en-Aten; that on the right the household of Amen-hetep III. In the former scene, Akh-en-Aten and his Queen Nefer-titi are represented seated, side by side, on a couch, and facing them are their four daughters waving fans. The counter-picture shows Amen-hetep III in a close-fitting *nems*-cap, sitting on a chair, as if in the act of addressing his wife, who occupies a seat facing him, with the Princess Bakt-Aten at her knee. Represented above both households is the Aten disk, and rays offering the symbol of life impartially. The picture at least intensifies known or suspected facts, and we glean from it that Amen-hetep III must have been living at least a year or so after the birth of Akh-en-Aten's fourth daughter, namely, about his XLth regnal year, when he had reached at least forty-nine years of age, coinciding probably with Akh-en-Aten's IXth regnal year. Judging from

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the stature of Bakt·Aten, figured in this picture, she was about the same age as Ankh·es·en·pa·Aten.

The extraordinary similarity of the figure of Amen·hetep III, in the right-hand scene just mentioned, to a seated king represented on a small unfinished stela in the Berlin Museum (No. 20,716), found at El Amarna, leads one to believe that both works were by the same artist, and, one is tempted to say, possibly by the sculptor, Auta, who is figured in Huyu's tomb completing a statuette of Bakt·Aten. On the Berlin stela two kings under the disk and rays of Aten are indubitably represented. Akh·en·Aten is probably the king standing on the right; he wears the *khepres*-crown, and pours wine into the cup of the king on the left, who is seated and attired in precisely the same manner as Amen·hetep III in the lintel scene. This stela seems to be another echo of the two kings associated in a co-regency, in which Akh·en·Aten, without doubt, became the supreme monarch.

Queen Tyi, the mother of Amen·hetep IV, was not of royal birth; she was the daughter of a court official and his wife, who are known to us as Yua and Thua. Hence Tyi's exalted titles, "Hereditary Princess, Mistress of the North and South, The-King's-Great-Wife, Lady of the Two Lands," were not hereditary, but were attained through her marriage to Amen·hetep III. She was the official, the favourite, and the principal wife of the king, and for that reason her father, Yua, reached high rank, and, possibly by his being the parent of the queen, he was designated "Divine Father." Thus Amen·hetep IV could not be claimed to be wholly royal, and that may be part reason for "placing the male offspring

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upon the seat of his father, and establishing his inheritance in the Land ” noticed in the last phrases of that Medum graffito previously mentioned.

Amen-hetep III seems also not to have been of entirely royal blood, inasmuch as special scenes and inscriptions in the temple of Amen at Luxor, like those made for Queen Hat-shep-sût at Deir-el-Bahari, give him a supernatural birth and coronation by the gods ; in other words proclaiming his birth to have been no less than divine. Later, in various proclamations, his son, Amen-hetep IV, appears as the son of “ The Father Aten,” a divinity given both godly epithets and kingly titular.

Be that as it may, his inheritance was established, he was placed upon the seat of his father, and he became virtually dictator. Within seven years of this co-regency Aten became the supreme divinity and supreme over-lord. This Aten, who thus replaced Amen, was entitled “ The Father,” and was considered as having commenced his reign as a supreme god and over-king on the same day as his future prophet and restorer, Amen-hetep IV.

The Aten had long been known, but Amen-hetep IV seems to have been the medium through whom his real nature and supreme dignity was discovered.

Battiscombe Gunn rightly points out that the chief purpose of naming that god : “ Re lives, Harakhte, who rejoices on the Horizon in his name : ‘ Shu who is Aten,’ ” was to establish the equation $\text{Aten} = \text{Harakhte} = \text{Re}$, and thus proclaim the identity of Aten with other purely solar gods of Egypt from the beginning of history, and so consolidate and legitimize his position as the supreme god. Atenism, so far from attempting an entire

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break with the past, was a direct bid for the adherence of the older solar cults. And one wonders whether this movement was not the result of contentings for supremacy between the North and South—between the partisans of Re-Harakhte of Heliopolis, and the partisans of Amen of Thebes. However, one point is clear, the supremacy of Aten waxed and waned with the reign of Akh·en·Aten.

Within seven years, dating from Amen·hetep iv's accession, a city was founded ostensibly for "his father Aten," 250 miles north of Thebes and 200 miles south of Heliopolis, as the river flows, whither Akh·en·Aten's court was removed. Boundary tablets were erected demarcating this site, generally called El Amarna, but which is more properly known by its name Akh·et·Aten. Upon those tablets we read that before the companions of the king, the great and mighty ones, the captains of the soldiers, etc., of the land in its entirety, His Majesty said: "*Behold Akh·et·Aten which the Aten desires me to make unto him as a monument in the great name of my Majesty for ever: it was Aten my father that brought me to Akh·et·Aten. Not a noble directed me to it, not any man in the whole land directed me to it saying 'It is fitting for His Majesty that he make an Horizon-of-Aten in this place.' Nay, but it was the Aten my father that directed me to it, to make it for him as an Horizon-of-Aten. . . . I will make Akh·et·Aten for the Aten my father in this place. I will not make for him Akh·et·Aten south of it, north of it, west of it, or east of it. I will not pass beyond the southern tablet of Akh·et·Aten southward, neither will I pass beyond the northern tablet of Akh·et·Aten northward, to make for him Akh·et·Aten therein; neither will I make for him*

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on the western side of Akh·et·Aten. Nay, but I will make Akh·et·Aten for the Aten my father upon the Orient side of Akh·et·Aten . . . neither shall the Queen say unto me, 'Behold there is a goodly place for Akh·et·Aten in another place' and I hearken unto her : . . ."

The king then recounts the various buildings he will make within Akh·et·Aten, and says: "*There shall be made for me a sepulchre in the Orient mountain; my burial shall be made therein . . . and the burial of the chief wife of the king, Nefer-titi, shall be made therein . . . and the burial of the king's daughter, Mert·Aten, shall be made in it. . . . The tombs of the 'Great of Seeing,' and the divine fathers of Aten, and the priests of Aten, . . . the tombs of the officers, shall be made in the Orient mountain of Akh·et·Aten and they shall be buried therein.*"

The king's speech here brings to mind an old French saying, "*Qui s'excuse s'accuse,*" and the impression makes this new city appear uncommonly like an asylum for the young king who, influenced by obscure powers within the royal court, became the prophet and mouthpiece of a politico-religious movement.

From that moment great activity must have followed, for the new royal residence-town speedily grew and prospered. Temples and tombs, palaces and dwellings, sprang up. The hammer took precedence of the chisel, from the southernmost to the northernmost borders of the Empire, the Amen element was hammered out and the Aten chiselled in. The old and quiescent Amen·hetep III was robbed of his nomen, and he spent the rest of his life with only his prenomen, Neb·maat·Re. The Aten, by being the god of the king's capital, became the capital god.

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In its new residence the Aten schism burst into bloom, but like most exotic growths it lasted only a short time, barely ten or eleven years.

When the reaction in favour of Amen triumphed, the city of Akh·et·Aten was destroyed, and the king's mummy, buried in the royal tomb in the Orient mountain, was transferred to a rough rock-cut cell in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, in order to save it from the wrath of the victorious sectarians. Judging from the seals found in that cache, it would appear that it was Tut·ankh·Amen who planned and executed its transference.¹

The remains of Akh·en·Aten's skeleton were minutely examined by Professor Elliot Smith, who maintained that the age at death was about twenty-five or twenty-six years; however, in response to strong pressure from archæologists, he said: "No anatomist would be justified in denying that this individual may have been twenty-eight, but it is highly improbable that he could have attained thirty years if he had been normal." Dr. Douglas Derry also examined the skeleton, and he came to the conclusion that it was of a man not more than about twenty-four years of age.

However, a sculpture from a Karnak monument, dated Year v of the king's reign, represents Akh·en·

¹ This cache of Akh·en·Aten, discovered in the Tombs of the Kings by Mr. Theodore M. Davis, in the year 1907, was named, for some obscure reason, "The Tomb of Queen Tiye." However, the mummy found therein is that of a man, and the evidence points to it being that of Akh·en·Aten. Recently, Mr. Engelbach, the Curator of the Cairo Museum, based from the formulæ inscribed upon the coffin, gave reasons for believing the remains to be those of Smenkh·ka·Re, but, as Dr. Alan Gardiner has pointed out to me, those inscriptions refer to a woman and not to a man. It is well known that during those ancient transportations of the royal mummies to safer places, especially after violations had taken place, any temporary or useful coffin at hand was employed for the purpose.