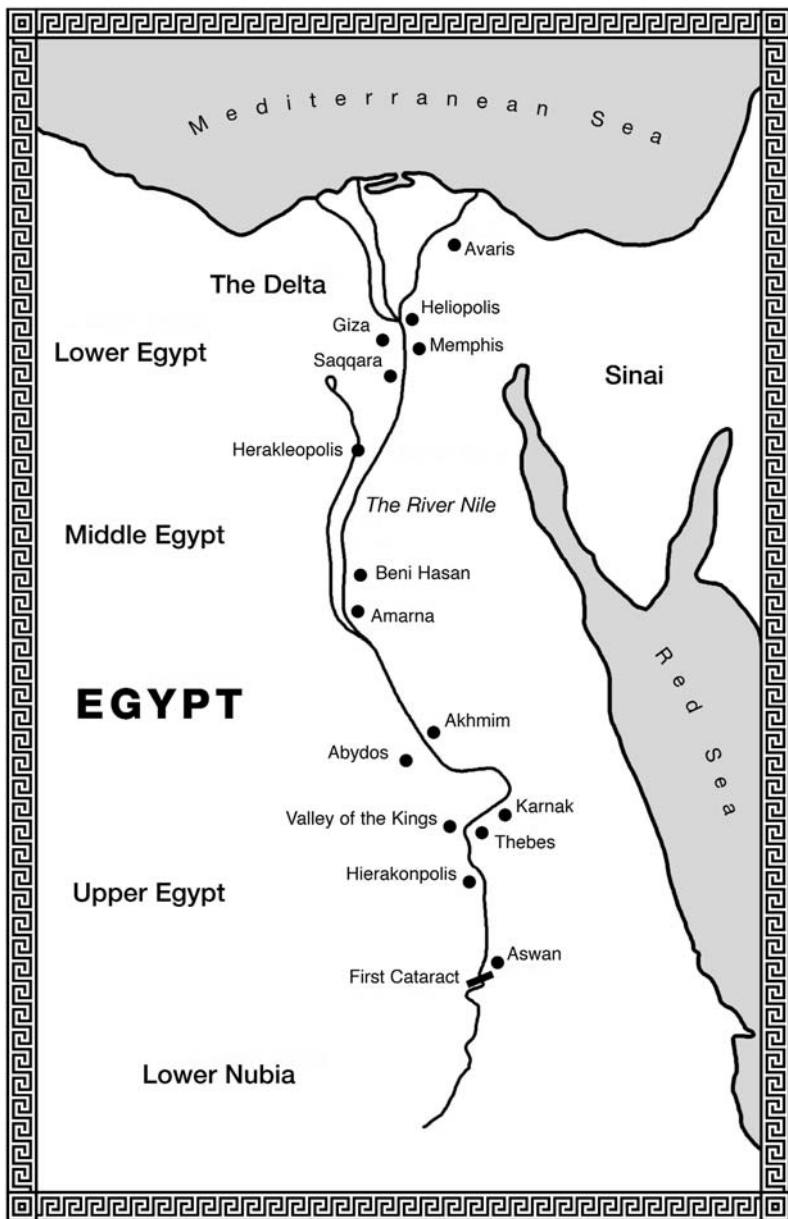


BILL PRICE

TUTANKHAMUN

EGYPT'S MOST FAMOUS PHARAOH





Tutankhamun
Egypt's Most Famous Pharaoh

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A Note on Dates

There is not one universally accepted chronology of Ancient Egypt, but the majority of them broadly agree with each other. Dates given for the reigns of particular rulers and for specific events are, on the other hand, much more widely disputed. These dates have been arrived at through different methods, the results of which rarely agree with each other, and are not necessarily as accurate or reliable as is sometimes made out. So, when reading anything about Ancient Egypt, the dates should always be taken as being approximate. For the sake of consistency, the dates given throughout this book follow the chronology set out in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw.

Introduction

Until the discovery of his tomb in 1922, Tutankhamun, the 12th Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, was one of the least known of all the pharaohs in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. His immediate successors to the throne intentionally attempted to remove his name from history and, for more than 3,000 years, they were almost entirely successful. Ironically their actions would be one of the main reasons why the tomb was eventually found almost completely intact, while the tombs of those later pharaohs were robbed in antiquity. Shortly after his death Tutankhamun appears to have been forgotten and his tomb hidden under debris from the construction of another tomb, preserving it and its contents until it was uncovered by Howard Carter.

News of the discovery created a media sensation around the world, unprecedented in its scale for an archaeological find, and Tutankhamun was propelled out of obscurity and onto the front pages of the newspapers. The nature of the wonderful artefacts found in the tomb, many made of gold and inlaid with semi-precious stones, was a clear demonstration of the extraordinary wealth of the pharaohs of this period. One object in particular, the solid gold funeral mask, soon became the most recognised artefact from the ancient world and it is still considered by many to be the most beautiful.

Successive generations have been able to see some of these artefacts in touring exhibitions, including the latest one, 'Tutankhamun and the Pharaohs of the Golden Age'. The focus of this exhibition has been broadened from that of the previous ones to include objects associated with other pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty as well as Tutankhamun. This may have been done through necessity, as many of the best-known objects from the tomb, including the funeral mask, are no longer allowed to leave Egypt but it has resulted in Tutankhamun being placed in a greater historical context than in previous exhibitions.

Trends in archaeology in general have been towards gaining a wider knowledge of the ancient world, rather than simply appreciating the objects, so the new exhibition can be seen as following these developments. This approach is also the one followed in this book, which is primarily about Tutankhamun, but also attempts to place him in the context of the world in which he lived.

The details of the life of a young man who lived more than 3,000 years ago can never be known with absolute certainty, but archaeology is all about interpreting the available data to give as complete a picture as possible and, again, this is the approach followed here. Recent research and discoveries have also been incorporated, some of which tend to confirm interpretations made in the past while other findings conflict with some of the wilder speculation.

The line between interpretation and speculation can be a blurry one, particularly when dealing with a subject where concrete facts are hard to come by. In the following pages I have tried to stay on the right side of the line. Where more than one theory exists to explain a particular piece of

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evidence, I have presented the argument rather than chosen sides and, where conjecture has been employed, I have tried to make it plain that it is speculation and not fact.

Approaching Tutankhamun in this way, it becomes apparent that his reign coincided with one of the most fascinating and extraordinary periods in Egyptian history, the Amarna Period and its aftermath. It was also a time when Egypt was facing challenges from outside its borders, from the Hittites in the north and Nubia in the south, and from the vassal states within its own empire. By considering these events as well as the contents of the tomb, I hope that what emerges is a balanced account of the current state of our knowledge about Tutankhamun, together with an appreciation of those aspects of his life that are not yet fully understood.

Egypt and the Pharaohs

The Gift of the Nile

Herodotus famously described Egypt as being the gift of the Nile. The annual flood, beginning in July, deposited layers of silt over the inundated land along the banks of the river, building up a thick black alluvial soil. The Egyptians didn't need Herodotus to tell them about it. They called their country *Kennet*, 'the Black Land'. The Nile, rising as it does in the equatorial regions of Africa, flows all year round through the otherwise almost entirely arid region of Nubia and Egypt, on its 4,000-mile journey to the Mediterranean Sea. As well as laying down a rich and fertile soil, it was also a source of water for the irrigation of crops and the watering of animals and it provided a means of transport from one end of Egypt to the other. Boats could float down the Nile with the current and sail back up it on the prevailing southerly winds.

Agriculture was the foundation on which the wealth of Egypt developed. The first evidence of settled farming communities appears in the archaeological record much later than it does in the Fertile Crescent of what is now southern Turkey, Iraq, Syria and the Levant. In this area there is evidence of sedentism going back to the early Neolithic period, around 10,000 BC. During the same period, Egypt

was sparsely populated with hunter-gatherers and, although they leave little evidence behind them, it is thought that nomadic pastoralists would also have passed through the area. The climate of North Africa as a whole was much wetter at that time and the Nile Valley was mostly made up of marshland, which was unsuitable for a settled way of life. By about 7000 BC, the climate in the region had dried out. Desert encroached over an enormous area that had previously been savannah, giving rise to the vast Sahara Desert. The marshes of the Nile Valley also dried out, leaving behind the thick soil of Egypt, perfect conditions for farming.

The first evidence of agriculture in Egypt comes from about 5000 BC around the Fayum Oasis to the west of the Nile. In the absence of any definite evidence, it is generally assumed that farming techniques spread into Egypt from the Levant, although it is difficult to say whether this was due to the movement of people or to the adoption of new technologies by people already living in the region. This is borne out by the type of agricultural practices found; crops included barley, emmer wheat (an early variety of wheat first domesticated in the Fertile Crescent) and flax and there is evidence of the presence of sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. Farming began in Upper Egypt at a later date, where the archaeological evidence suggests it spread from the south, from what is now Sudan, and from the Western Desert, rather than north along the Nile Valley.

Egyptian farmers may have made a slow start but, in such ideal conditions and once they began to make use of the annual flood and the irrigation potential of the Nile, the civilisation developed quickly. Within a thousand years the society that would go on to create the dynasties of Egypt had

emerged. Small communities banded together to form kingdoms and, either by agreement or conquest, a single united kingdom emerged to dominate the whole of Egypt.

The Dynasties of Egypt

In the third Century BC, about 200 years after Herodotus, the Greek-Egyptian priest Manetho wrote a history of Egypt going back to the beginning of the pharaonic period. Although his original work has not survived (in all likelihood, it was destroyed when the Library of Alexandria burnt down in 49 BC), it has been pieced together from extensive extracts quoted in works by later historians. In the *Aegyptiaca*, as it was called, he set out a chronology of Ancient Egypt based on dividing the pharaohs into dynasties. Manetho almost certainly based his chronology on surviving pharaonic king lists, which were inscribed in stone and painted on the walls of tombs or, in some cases, written on papyrus. These formed part of the cult of the royal ancestors practised by the pharaohs. They could also have been used to legitimise the rule of a pharaoh by showing his relationship to previous pharaohs, thereby demonstrating his divine right to reign.

Although modifications have been made to Manetho's chronology many times, it remains the basis of the dating of Ancient Egypt still in use today. Deficiencies in the system have long been recognised and, as more information has come to light, it has become apparent that Egypt has not always consisted of a single unified society, ruled by one king who has then been succeeded by another in an orderly fashion. Dividing the dynasties into three kingdoms, the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms respectively, has partially overcome this

problem. During the dynasties designated as belonging to one of these kingdoms, Egypt can be viewed as a single country comprising the Two Lands of Upper Egypt (the Nile Valley) and Lower Egypt (the Nile Delta). Between the kingdoms come the intermediate periods, during which the central power of a single king no longer existed and the region fractured into a number of smaller chiefdoms, each governed by its own local ruler. In a pattern repeated a number of times, one of these smaller powers grew in strength and overcame the others, reuniting Egypt and creating a single kingdom again.

Advances in archaeological dating techniques have allowed the chronologies to be refined further. Stratification, in which the descending layers of an archaeological dig are identified and the finds from the different layers compared with those from sites of known age, has been used for more than 100 years to give approximate datings. More recently techniques such as carbon dating, thermoluminescence and dendrochronology have further refined the chronology. As is the way of such things, the dates obtained by different methods don't always agree, leading to a certain amount of disagreement between dates in different accounts.

From Farmers to Pharaohs

Manetho gave the name of the first pharaoh as King Menes. No reference to this name has yet been found in the archaeological record and it has been suggested that Menes could be a mythological figure. Alternatively the name has been linked with Narmer, a predynastic ruler from about 3100 BC, or with Aha, the first pharaoh of the Early Dynasty Period, who

ruled c3000 BC. What becomes apparent from the record is that the transition from an agricultural society based on individual settlements to a unified state governed by a single king was not a clear cut process and this means it is all but impossible to pinpoint the exact moment the pharaonic period in Egypt emerged.

The great Egyptologist Sir Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) considered that the complex society of Ancient Egypt could not have arisen from the indigenous peoples of the area and the society they inhabited prior to 3000 BC. Based on the evidence available at the beginning of the twentieth century, which suggested Egyptian society arose very rapidly, this was not an unreasonable conclusion to reach. Petrie thought complex society was introduced by the conquest of the lands of Egypt by a force from the south or, possibly, from the Levant and that the invasion resulted in the rise of a single ruler of all Egypt. More recent archaeological excavations have unquestionably shown that this was not the case and that the dynastic pharaohs were an indigenous phenomenon.

During the Naqata period, from 4000 BC to 3200 BC, the farming culture along the length of the Egyptian Nile began to become much more regular. Towards the end of this period the style of artefacts, such as pottery, found in archaeological excavations of sites throughout Egypt are much the same, suggesting the emergence of a single uniform culture at this time. This process began in Upper Egypt, where towns first began to develop out of scattered agricultural settlements and specialist trades began to be practised, and then spread down the Nile into Lower Egypt. The reason this occurred first in Upper Egypt is thought to have been that the greater availability of resources in this region allowed individual commu-

nities the opportunity to specialise in a particular trade or craft. The increasing wealth of particular towns, gained through trade links along the length of the Nile and south into Nubia, gave rise to a ruling elite. With increasing wealth came greater power and, as one local ruler became more powerful than his neighbouring rulers, the region began to become unified. There are two possible processes by which this can happen; it could have been a development of increasing trade links, with traders being followed by colonists, or it could have been accomplished by warfare and conquest. The most likely scenario is that Egypt was gradually united by a combination of both these processes, with those regions not submitting to the most powerful ruler voluntarily being overcome by force.

One of the main reasons why rulers from Upper Egypt wanted to extend their territory into Lower Egypt was so that they could gain complete control of the lucrative trade routes along the entire length of the Nile and further on across the Mediterranean into the Levant and Syria. One example, that of the timber trade between Egypt and what is now the Lebanon, serves to illustrate why this was the case. At that time the best wood to build large river-going boats and ships to sail the Mediterranean came from the cedars of Lebanon, tall straight-grained trees which do not grow in Egypt. The ruler of Upper Egypt had the natural resources and craft centres in towns to supply the wealth so that he could trade with the city states of the Lebanon, but he could only do so through the ports on the lower Nile and the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. There was an obvious advantage to be gained by developing direct links with the states in the Lebanon rather than having to go through any number of middle men

in Lower Egypt or having to pay tariffs to local rulers for passage through their territory. Once one king became dominant in Upper Egypt, the prospect of his expanding his rule further, into Lower Egypt, must have been an attractive one.

Comparisons of the pottery of the period from various sites along the Nile reveal the replacement of the typical styles found in Lower Egypt with those deriving from the south. The obvious conclusion to draw from this is that the spreading culture of Upper Egypt came to dominate the whole region. It would make sense that not only pottery styles were becoming the same but the entire culture was becoming uniform under a single ruler.

Support for such a theory comes from excavations carried out at cemetery complexes in Abydos and Hierakonpolis, which both contain graves dating back to the early Naqata period. There is a gradual increase in both the quantity and quality of grave goods, indicating the rise of a complex hierarchical society. For example, the tomb designated as U-j in the Umm el-Qa'ab necropolis at Abydos, which dates to about 3150 BC, shows a clear line of development from earlier tombs in the same area, but it is much larger, extending to 12 rooms in all. Although it was robbed of much of its contents before it was excavated, numerous examples of pottery were found, including something like 400 wine jars from Palestine and 150 seals from other containers, which were inscribed with the earliest known examples of hieroglyphs. These, together with the presence of a wooden shrine and an ivory sceptre, point towards it being the tomb of a ruler, probably one of a number of pre-dynastic kings who share the name King Scorpion. There is not enough evidence to say for certain that this king definitely ruled both Upper

and Lower Egypt, but the architectural style of the tomb is part of a progression which includes later kings who definitely did rule both lands. This shows that these later kings came originally from Upper Egypt.

As is the case with much of the archaeology of Egypt, the evidence is not specific enough to prove exactly when the unified state of Egypt arose but, by about 3000 BC, the structure of the state was in place. A state administration, using hieroglyphic writing to keep accounts, was based in Memphis, at the head of the Nile Delta, while the spiritual centre of Egypt remained in Upper Egypt, as it would throughout the entire course of the pharaonic history of the country. The prosperity of the country was based on agriculture and expanded its wealth through its natural resources and the high level of specialisation in particular crafts, such as metal working, and through trade and colonisation. It was held together by a strong state administration and by religious uniformity across the whole country, both under the direct control of a single ruler, who was held to be semi-divine by his subjects. This was the only country during this period in which a state of such size was ruled as a single entity by one king.

The Rise of the New Kingdom

The Old Kingdom lasted for about 800 years (see Appendix 1) and, during this period, many of the cultural, religious and political developments which would form the basis of future kingdoms first became established. Towards the end of the Old Kingdom, rival factions developed within the ruling elite, resulting in the First Intermediate Period, when Egypt

splintered into several smaller states. After the reunification of the Two Lands during the Middle Kingdom, which lasted from about 2055 BC to 1650 BC, a similar process appears to have occurred, splitting the country up again during the 13th Dynasty and leading to the Second Intermediate Period. Like the First Intermediate Period, this was a time when there was not a single ruler of a unified country. The political situation was complex and constantly changing, with shifting alliances forming and breaking between the rulers of different regions and power struggles and open warfare erupting between rival factions.

The Turin Royal Canon, a fragmentary king list written in the thirteenth century BC, during the reign of Ramesses II, and now held in the Egyptian Museum in Turin, names more than 100 kings from the Second Intermediate Period, which lasted for little more than 100 years. This gives a good indication of the volatile nature of the times, where different kings ruled regions of what had previously been a single country for relatively short spans of time, before being dethroned by other more powerful rulers.

During the Middle Kingdom Egypt had expanded south, beyond the First Cataract of the Nile at what is now Aswan, the traditional boundary of the country, and into Nubia. The primary reason for this conquest was to annex the huge mineral resources to be found in Wawat, the region of Lower Nubia between the Nile and the Red Sea which was particularly rich in gold. The extraordinary wealth of the Egyptian state was based on these goldmines but, as the country fragmented during the Second Intermediate Period, the Kushite Kingdom of Nubia seized the opportunity to regain control of Wawat. As well as being threatened by Kush from the south,

Egypt was being undermined from within by the Hyksos, who gained control of most of Lower Egypt, up to and including Memphis, thus reducing the area ruled by Egyptian kings to Upper Egypt alone.

The identity of the Hyksos is a mystery. They left no written records behind them, so they are only known from highly biased Egyptian accounts of the period and from what can be gathered from the archaeological remains. The Egyptian term 'Hyksos' literally means 'kings from foreign lands'. Although it is generally used now to refer to all of the people who gained control of Lower Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period, the Egyptians called the general population 'the aanu', often translated as 'Asiatics' because the Hyksos appear to have come into Egypt from Palestine and Syria. This theory is supported by the names given to the Hyksos kings in the Turin Canon, which derive from the Semitic languages of South West Asia. It is thought that they began to arrive in Egypt from about 1800 BC and may originally have been what we would now call economic migrants, moving to the country to find work. Their numbers were increased by the arrival of prisoners of war, taken in the military campaigns mounted by Egypt in Palestine during the Middle Kingdom, and brought back to Egypt as slaves. Evidence of warfare on Egypt's eastern border, in the form of defensive fortifications, suggests prolonged periods of conflict with Palestine at this time, although there is no evidence of the Hyksos arriving in Egypt as the result of conquest.

The Hyksos established a capital at Avaris, in the Nile Delta, and gradually extended their territory, pushing the indigenous Egyptian rulers further south. They gained control of Memphis, the Egyptian capital at the head of the delta,

from where they could control the boat traffic on the Nile. The Egyptians considered themselves to be the natural rulers of their country and inscriptions concerning the Hyksos which date from this period either complain about having to have the permission of these foreign intruders to travel along the Nile or make grand claims about defeating them in battle. Although the chronology from this period is not entirely clear, the Egyptian rulers of Upper Egypt who make up the 17th Dynasty were constantly attempting to regain the territory they had lost to the Hyksos and were also involved in fighting in Nubia.

Two stelae erected in the Temple of Amun in Karnak, the religious complex near Thebes (and the modern city of Luxor), by Kamose, the last king of the 17th Dynasty who ruled from 1555 to 1550 BC, give details of the campaigns he conducted against the Hyksos. These campaigns began under the previous pharaoh Seqenenra Taa and they were continued by Ahmose, who reigned from 1550 to 1525 BC. Wall reliefs carved during his reign at Abydos in Upper Egypt show the king at the head of a battle fleet on the Nile, which, together with an Egyptian army equipped with horses and chariots, is attacking Avaris. The city was besieged for a period of several years before a treaty was agreed between Ahmose and the Hyksos king which resulted in the Hyksos giving up the city. They retreated into Palestine, a movement of a large number of people which has sometimes been interpreted as the source of the biblical story of the Exodus, when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. However, this interpretation has been disputed and there are numerous other theories which attempt to identify the events of the Exodus with events at different times in Egyptian history.

Ahmose was eventually successful in his campaigns against the Hyksos and, at some point towards the end of his 25-year reign, the Two Lands of Egypt were reunited. An inscription found in the tomb of one of his military leaders describes Ahmose continuing the campaign into Palestine and, after a three-year siege, sacking the city of Sharuhem, near Gaza. As a result of his success in these campaigns, reuniting Egypt under the rule of the Theban pharaohs, Ahmose, although he was the son of a pharaoh of the 17th Dynasty, is considered to be the first king of the 18th Dynasty, and responsible for establishing the New Kingdom.

The Golden Age

The military campaigns of Kamose and Ahmose were consolidated and built upon by Ahmose's son and successor as pharaoh, Amenhotep I, who ruled from 1525 BC to 1504 BC. He extended the empire in the south, gaining control of Upper Nubia, including the region of Wawat and the Nubian goldmines. With the Theban pharaohs in control of the trade routes and the goldmines, Egypt entered a period of great prosperity, sometimes known as the Golden Age of the Pharaohs, which would last for the next 500 years.

Both Ahmose and Amenhotep I began an extensive programme of monumental building work at the important religious sites across the country, particularly Memphis and Karnak, and also at Avaris, the former Hyksos capital on the eastern edge of the delta. The links established between Egypt and the Mediterranean can be seen from the wall decorations of one of these buildings in Avaris, which is in the Minoan style. At this time Crete and the islands of the Aegean were

some of the most important mercantile centres in the region, thought to be particularly involved in the trade in tin and copper, the constituents of bronze. Another indicator of the changing fortunes of the Theban pharaohs can be seen from the increasing size and complexity of the tombs being built during this period, together with the extensive use of precious metals, particularly gold, in their grave goods.

During the reign of Amenhotep I most of the characteristics of society and culture found throughout the rest of the 18th Dynasty were established. Amenhotep, which means 'Amun is satisfied', identified himself particularly with the sun god Amun, the local god of Thebes, and the Temple of Amun at Karnak. He continued the territorial gains made in Nubia, guaranteeing the continued wealth of the country, during the 21 years of his reign, but appears to have died without a surviving heir. He was succeeded by Thutmose I, a high-ranking member of the Theban court, who is thought to have been related to Amenhotep I by marriage to the pharaoh's daughter.

Although the royal women of the 18th Dynasty, with the odd notable exception, rarely became pharaohs themselves, they played an important part in the succession of kingship from one pharaoh to the next. Marriage to the pharaoh's daughter was an important part of conferring legitimacy on the claims to the throne of an heir, even if he was the pharaoh's son, and is one reason why many pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty married female members of their own family. Another reason for this was that, while it was acceptable for a male member of the royal family to marry a commoner, it was not considered fitting for a royal woman to do so. According to court etiquette a princess could only marry

someone of an equivalent or higher rank.

The lineage established by Thutmose I lasted for the next 175 years, until it was extinguished by the death of Tutankhamun, his last direct descendant. Thutmose II succeeded his father, but died after reigning for only three years. His son, Thutmose III, was very young at this time, perhaps only three or four years old, and succeeded to the throne, with his aunt Hatshepsut acting as regent. Although not Thutmose III's mother, Hatshepsut was the Great Royal Wife of Thutmose II.

The royal women held considerable power and important positions in the religious life of the country throughout the 18th Dynasty. The mothers, wives and daughters of the pharaoh became much more prominent than women had been in any of the preceding periods. This prominence began with Ahmose-Nefertari, the wife of Amenhotep I, and continued with Hatshepsut, who ruled in the style of a male pharaoh for the first 20 years of Thutmose III's reign.

After the first few years of Hatshepsut's regency, she declared herself to be the legitimate ruler and, over the next 20 years, she reigned as pharaoh, with Thutmose III remaining in the background. It was a peaceful and prosperous time for the country, allowing Hatshepsut to engage in an extensive monumental building programme, including a mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri on the west bank of the Nile, near the entrance to the Valley of the Kings and now one of the most visited sites in Upper Egypt. In a wall painting found in the temple Hatshepsut is shown leading a trading mission to the Land of Punt, on the Red Sea coast, and there are also a number of inscriptions which appear to be an attempt to give legitimacy to her reign. She is shown wearing the sacred false

beard of the pharaoh, a sign of the divine nature of the position, and her name is spelt as if she were a man.

After Hatshepsut's death, she was buried in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings, possibly in the same tomb as her father Thutmose I, the one designated as KV20 in the modern numbering system of the tombs in the valley. At a later date, she was moved to another tomb, KV60. Dr Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities and one of the most prominent modern Egyptologists, announced in June 2007 that a mummy recovered from tomb KV60 by Howard Carter in 1903, which had been lost in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for many years, had been found and identified as that of Hatshepsut. DNA analysis was used to establish the relationship between the mummy and Ahmose-Nefertari and the identification was confirmed, at least to the satisfaction of Dr Hawass, by a CT scan, which was used to compare a tooth found in a canopic jar bearing Hatshepsut's name in a mummy cache from Deir el-Barhi (designated DB320), with a gap in the KV60 mummy's teeth. The scan showed the tooth was a perfect match for the gap and also revealed that Hatshepsut suffered from osteoporosis and severe arthritis and died at the age of about 50 from liver and bone cancer.

Thutmose III became pharaoh on his own after Hatshepsut's death in about 1458 BC and reigned for a further 30 years. He conducted numerous successful military campaigns in Syria-Palestine and in Nubia, known because they were recorded by the royal scribe Thanuny, and these gave him a reputation as one of the greatest of all the warrior-pharaohs. The Egyptian Empire reached its greatest extent at this time, stretching from the north Syrian kingdom of Niya to the Fourth Cataract

of the Nile in Nubia. Although the accounts may not be totally reliable, Thanuny also records the Babylonians and Assyrians, two kingdoms from beyond the Euphrates river in modern Iraq, paying tribute to Thutmose III, as well as the Hittites from further north in Anatolia. He does not mention the Mitanni, the other major power in the region, presumably because they had not submitted to the pharaoh.

Towards the end of Thutmose III's reign attempts were made to remove all references to Hatshepsut from the inscriptions on monuments built during her rule. It is not entirely clear why Thutmose would wait more than 20 years to begin this process if it was motivated by revenge on Hatshepsut, who had ruled in his place. An alternative explanation for the attempted destruction of Hatshepsut's name was that Thutmose, towards the end of his life, was attempting to ensure the succession of his son, the future Amenhotep II, at the expense of rival claims to the throne by other relatives of Hatshepsut.

For the first two years of his reign Amenhotep III shared the throne with his father as the coregent, perhaps another method of ensuring the succession. After the death of Thutmose III in about 1425 BC, Amenhotep II continued to maintain the territorial gains made by his father in Syria and Nubia. He also appears to have reached some form of accommodation with the Mitanni, perhaps by the exchange of princesses between the two royal households, as hostility between the two empires ceased during his reign. It ushered in a period of peace and this, together with the flow of wealth into Egypt from the northern and southern ends of its empire, led to a period of great prosperity which would continue for more than 50 years.

Thutmose IV succeeded Amenhotep II and ruled for about ten years, from 1400 BC to 1390 BC. He is perhaps best known for the Dream Stele, a stone slab erected between the front paws of the Great Sphinx of Giza and inscribed with a text which carries a justification for his rise to the throne instead of his older brother. It describes a dream he claims to have had while resting under the head of the sphinx, which was buried up to its neck in sand at that time. In the dream the sphinx tells Thutmose that, if he clears all sand away from around it and restores its body, he will become the next pharaoh.

Like all the other pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty, Thutmose IV initiated large-scale building projects as soon as he came to power, particularly at the Temple of Amun in Karnak, where, among many other buildings, he was responsible for the tallest obelisk ever erected in Egypt. After being removed from Egypt in AD 3, during the reign of the Roman Emperor Caligula, this now stands in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican.

Since his Great Royal Wife Nefertari does not appear to have had any surviving male children, Thutmose IV was succeeded on his death by Amenhotep III, his son with Mutemwiya, one of his minor wives, Amenhotep III became the ninth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty and his reign of about 38 years, from 1390 BC to 1352 BC, would be looked back on as a time of peace and prosperity to which future generations wished to return. His Great Royal Wife Tiye, who would survive him by a number of years, was not of the royal blood line. She was the daughter of the prominent courtiers Yuya and Tuyu, sometimes also said to be the parents of Ay, who would succeed Tutankhamun as pharaoh. Amenhotep III and Tiye had at least two sons, the oldest of whom, another

Thutmose, died before his father, leaving the second son to succeed to the throne as Amenhotep IV. He would later change his name to Akhenaten. It would be during his rule, from 1352 BC to 1336 BC, that the great empire established by his ancestors would begin to unravel.

Akhenaten's tumultuous reign and the Amarna Period are dealt with more fully in the following two chapters, as he is the person generally acknowledged as most likely to have been Tutankhamun's father. One of the consequences of his rule was a concerted attempt by later pharaohs to destroy everything he had built and obliterate all reference to him from any inscriptions. The campaign to wipe him out of history was a successful one, so much so that it is now difficult to reconstruct the events of his reign, particularly the later part and the succession of Tutankhamun. Akhenaten's Great Royal Wife Nefertiti, who has become famous in modern times through the beautiful bust of her now in the Altes Museum in Berlin, extended the already considerable powers she held and is thought to have ruled as an equal with Akhenaten during the later part of the Amarna Period.

Akhenaten ruled for about 17 years and Nefertiti's name disappears from the record after about the 14th year. A number of theories, none of which can be fully supported with the evidence as it currently stands, have been put forward to explain what happened at this time. One possibility is that Nefertiti changed her name to the male name Neferneferuaten and ruled as co-regent with Akhenaten, becoming pharaoh herself for a few years after his death. An alternative theory says she died during Akhenaten's 14th regnal year, possibly as the result of an outbreak of an epidemic which swept through Egypt at this time, and that

Akhenaten was succeeded by Smenkhare, who was either his younger brother or oldest son. Yet another theory has Meritaten, Nefertiti's daughter, taking on the role of pharaoh herself or becoming Smenkhare's Great Royal Wife in order to give his reign the required legitimacy.

The only thing that can be said for certain is that our knowledge of what happened at the end of Akhenaten's reign and of how Tutankhamun succeeded to the throne is currently not sufficient to be able to untangle the actual events. It will take some major new discoveries in Egypt to make the situation clear. In the meantime, it can at least be said with some degree of conviction that Tutankhamun ascended to the throne within a few years of Akhenaten's death.

The Life of Tutankhamun

The Unknown Pharaoh

Up until the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, he was one of the least-known of the 18th Dynasty pharaohs. His name appeared on some king lists and was mentioned by Manetho, who gave his name as Rathotis, but that was about all that remained. The extraordinary artefacts found in the tomb added greatly to our knowledge of him and of the 18th Dynasty in general, but, as ungrateful as it might sound, there were some disappointing aspects to the discovery. Howard Carter himself acknowledged this. The tomb was quite poorly decorated when compared with the tombs of many of the other pharaohs interred in the Valley of the Kings. Only the burial chamber itself had plastered and painted walls, and it contained no inscriptions or papyri giving details of Tutankhamun's life, as Carter expected and hoped to find.

A great deal can be learned about Tutankhamun and Egyptian life during the 18th Dynasty in general from a detailed analysis of the contents of the tomb, but the information thus gained does not lead to any solid biographical details. Carter compared what can be gathered about Tutankhamun from his tomb to attempting to write a biography of someone by visiting the place where he lived without

having access to diaries, letters or anything else he may have written. It is possible to construct an overall picture, but not to get to know the real person or what he actually did during his life.

The tomb was the only one of a pharaoh ever found in the Valley of the Kings that had not been comprehensively robbed long before the discovery, but many of the other pharaohs left behind numerous monuments containing inscriptions about events occurring during their lifetimes. Almost every reference to Tutankhamun was removed from the record and, after he died, his name was chiselled out of any inscriptions written during his lifetime, so this avenue of investigation into his life is also severely limited. It is not particularly unusual for this to happen but, in Tutankhamun's case, the removal of his name was particularly comprehensive and successful. The reason he was treated in this way after his death is related to his associations with Akhenaten, the heretic pharaoh, and to the fact that he died without an heir, resulting in attempts by later pharaohs to disguise the information that they were not related to a pharaoh who had gone before them, information which might have invalidated their claims to the throne.

The success of the campaign to remove Tutankhamun's name from history is the main reason why we now know so little about him but, because he appears to have been completely forgotten not long after his death, it also resulted in the location of his tomb in the Valley of the Kings being forgotten. The tomb was entered by robbers on more than one occasion shortly after it was first sealed but they appear to have been disturbed by the necropolis guards, a police force employed by the pharaohs in an attempt to prevent robberies, before doing very much damage. The entrance to

the tomb, which is low down in the Valley of the Kings, became filled in with the debris from the construction of another tomb and was forgotten, probably the only reason it escaped the attentions of later tomb robbers.

The rest of this chapter concerns what is actually known about the life of Tutankhamun. With so few concrete facts to go on, it is tempting to write what would be a fictional biography of Tutankhamun, based on the huge amount of speculation surrounding his life, but, rather than that, what follows is a discussion of the available evidence, such as it is, together with reasonable and sensible interpretations of that evidence.

What's in a Name?

The pharaohs of the New Kingdom idolised their predecessors from the Middle Kingdom. It was one of the main motivating factors for the reunification of the Two Lands at the start of the 18th Dynasty, which represented what the pharaohs considered to be the restoration of their rightful position. Many of the old practices followed by the pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom were begun again, including the use of their naming system for the ruler. The standardised form, written out in full on inscriptions in tombs and stelae, shows each pharaoh adopting a name consisting of five parts, known as the royal titulary or, sometimes, the fivefold titulary. Some of these names were ceremonial titles, only used on formal occasions, and they can be compared to the names and titles used by the current British Royal Family. Some of Prince Charles's titles, for example, are His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Earl of Chester, the Duke of Cornwall and the Lord of the Isles. Most of these titles are not gener-

ally used, except on particular state occasions, and he is usually known as Prince Charles or the Prince of Wales, rather like a pharaoh would usually be known by his nomen and praenomen.

Tutankhamun is the universally accepted form of the pharaoh's name used in modern times, although, since the exact Egyptian pronunciation is not known, the spelling can sometimes vary. This is actually his personal name, or nomen, which was the name given to a royal prince at birth. In Tutankhamun's case, he was originally named Tutankhaten, which translates to 'the Living Image of Aten', but, for religious reasons, he changed his nomen to Tutankhamun, 'the Living Image of Amun', soon after becoming pharaoh. The reasons for the change are expanded on in Chapter 3, but essentially it occurred at the same time as the reformation of the old religious order under Tutankhamun, and a return to the worship of a pantheon of Egyptian gods, chief amongst which was Amun, after the rise of the single god Aten under Akhenaten. At the time of his succession to the throne, the full nomen adopted was Tutankhamun Hekaiunushema, 'the Living Image of Amun, Ruler of Heliopolis', a deliberate reference to the sun god as worshipped by the Priesthood of Amun at Karnak.

The nomen, when written, was usually prefaced by the term 'son of Ra', one of the principal gods worshipped throughout Egyptian history. It was surrounded by a cartouche, an elliptical outline thought to symbolise the protection of the pharaoh, or, possibly, to be a diagram of the sun circling the universe. The only other name similarly enclosed was the throne name, or praenomen, which, in Tutankhamun's case, was Nebkhepure, 'Lord of the Forms

of Ra'. This was usually accompanied by the title *Nesu-bity*, translated variously as 'the King of the Upper and Lower Lands' or 'He of the Sedge and Bee', where the sedge symbolizes Upper Egypt and the bee Lower Egypt. The duality of the name can also be seen as a reference to the pharaoh's position as both a mortal man and the earthly manifestation of a god.

These two names, the *nomen* and *praenomen*, were those usually used in Egypt to refer to Tutankhamun and are primarily concerned with his position as the king of the Two Lands, the ruler of earthly matters. The other three names stress the pharaoh's role as the manifestation of the divine, his place in the spiritual realm rather than the earthly one. The first of these is the *Horus* name. It is the oldest of the names used in the royal titulary, emerging in the pre-dynastic period, where it was used to identify the pharaoh with the falcon god *Horus*. By the time of the New Kingdom, pharaohs were more likely to be identified with *Ra*, but the form of the name remained the same. Tutankhamun's *Horus* name was *Kanakht Tutmesut*, 'the Strong Bull, Pleasing at Birth'. The fourth name, the *Nebty* name, was associated with the vulture and cobra goddesses *Nekhbet* and *Wadjyt* and can be translated as 'One of Perfect Form, Who Purifies the Two Lands' and 'Great of the Palace of Amun and Lord of All'. The *Golden Horus* name, thought to convey Tutankhamun's eternal name for the afterlife, changed throughout his lifetime. One version can be translated as 'He who wears the crown and pleases the gods, Ruler of Truth who pleases the gods, who wears the crown of his father *Ra* and who wears the crown uniting the Two Lands'.

Where the royal titulary was written out in full, the names were placed in a conventional order, starting with the three

divine names and followed by the praenomen, with the nomen, Tutankhamun, placed last.

The Question of Parentage

Very little can be said with absolute certainty about Tutankhamun's parentage. There are only two references to him in this context still in existence, an indication of the thoroughness with which later pharaohs attempted to remove his name from the record. One of these is an inscription on a block of stone found on the west bank of the Nile at Ashmunew, which is directly across the river from Amarna, from where it is thought to have originated. It describes Tutankhamun as the son of a king, saying 'the king's bodily son, his beloved Tutankhaten'. Unfortunately the inscription does not contain the name of the king to whom it refers but, at least, it is possible to say from this that Tutankhamun was more than likely of royal blood, a statement Howard Carter felt unable to make based on the contents of the tomb.

The other known inscription is contained in a frieze decorating the wall of the processional colonnade in the Temple of Luxor, originally built by Amenhotep III and continued by Tutankhamun. It depicts the Festival of Opet, an important yearly ritual which re-enacted a pharaoh's coronation, thereby confirming his rule, and it is one of the very few surviving temple reliefs from the reign of Tutankhamun, perhaps one missed by those who attempted to obliterate all references to him. In the inscription, Tutankhamun describes Amenhotep III as his father which, if correct, would make him Akhenaten's brother. There is some disagreement about the correct translation and usage of the hieroglyph used for

the term 'father'. It has been suggested by some scholars that it refers to Amenhotep III as a direct ancestor of Tutankhamun, rather than as his actual father. An examination of the dates known for the two pharaohs would tend to confirm this latter interpretation. Tutankhamun was born in about 1344 BC and Akhenaten succeeded Amenhotep III in 1352 BC, which means Tutankhamun was born eight years after Akhenaten came to the throne. Unless Amenhotep III lived for a long period after Akhenaten gained the throne, or they ruled together as co-regents for at least those eight years, Tutankhamun could not have been Amenhotep III's son. There are precedents for a co-regency between a father and son in Egypt but the ones that are known only lasted a much shorter period, usually a year or two at the most. It appears highly unlikely that, if a co-regency between Amenhotep III and Akhenaten existed at all, it could have lasted for the required amount of time.

If the above argument is accepted, then the most likely candidate for Tutankhamun's father becomes Akhenaten himself. The eighth year of Akhenaten's reign came right in the middle of the Amarna period so, assuming the inscription found at Ashmunew saying that Tutankhamun was the son of a king is correct, then Akhenaten is the only really viable candidate. A theory suggesting that Smenkhare, the mysterious figure who was possibly Tutankhamun's immediate predecessor, was his father can not be dismissed completely but, with virtually no evidence to go on at all, it can not be confirmed either. Smenkhare was certainly not the pharaoh at the time of Tutankhamun's birth and, if he was any relation at all, he is more likely to have been Tutankhamun's uncle or older brother.

Needless to say, the identity of Tutankhamun's mother is no less problematic. If he was indeed Akhenaten's son, the first candidate to be his mother is Nefertiti, who bore the title of Great Royal Wife. The problem with this is that Nefertiti is only known to have given birth to six daughters and there is no evidence of her having any sons. Wall paintings and reliefs in Akhenaten's tomb in Amarna clearly show the couple with their daughters, but never with any male children. This does not mean that Nefertiti definitely did not have any sons, as it was conventional during the 18th Dynasty for there to be no depictions of any of a pharaoh's male children. Showing a male heir could be interpreted as compromising the position of the pharaoh, presenting him as a mortal rather than as a god. It might also pose questions about the line of succession which were too sensitive to be aired in such a public way. Daughters, on the other hand, presented no threat and represented continuity in the royal household so they were regularly shown. Nefertiti, then, can not be ruled out as a candidate to be Tutankhamun's mother.

Another relief found in Akhenaten's tomb is thought to show one of his other wives, known as Kiya. Speculation that she was a Mitanni princess who was sent to Akhenaten's court to maintain friendly relations between the two countries remains entirely unproven, but there is no doubt she held a privileged position in the royal household. The titles she held included 'Greatly Beloved Wife' and 'the Favourite' which, it has been suggested, could have been granted to her because she gave birth to a male heir to the throne. The relief in the tomb shows a woman lying in a bed, with a figure standing next to her holding a child of indeterminate sex. One interpretation of this scene is that it shows Kiya on her deathbed

with the future pharaoh Tutankhamun being held by a wet nurse but, unfortunately, the depiction is not clear enough to be able to say this for certain.

In the absence of any conclusive evidence, the majority of the literature on Tutankhamun has settled on Akhenaten and Kiya as being the most likely of the candidates to be his parents. To date the Egyptian authorities have not allowed DNA analysis to be carried out on Tutankhamun's mummy but, should this situation change, this would be the most likely avenue of further research into his parentage. Even with this, though, there is a problem. The mummies of Akhenaten, Kiya or any of the other likely candidates have not been found, or, at least, have not been identified, so, even if a DNA test was carried out on Tutankhamun, there is nothing with which to compare his DNA.

Marriage and Children

Nothing can be said with any degree of conviction about Tutankhamun's early years. Presumably he grew up in the privileged position of a prince in the royal household of Akhenaten in Amarna. After Akhenaten's death and the confusion surrounding the succession, which involved Smenkhare and possibly Nefertiti, Tutankhamun became pharaoh at the age of about eight or nine. Very shortly before gaining the throne, or possibly very shortly afterwards, he married Ankhesenpaaten, probably his half-sister, who, in line with her husband, changed her name to Ankhesenamun, which means 'She Who Lives Through Amun'. She was the third daughter of Akhenaten and Nefertiti and was about five or six years older than Tutankhamun.

There is nothing to suggest there was any doubt about Tutankhamun's right to succeed Akhenaten (how could anyone other than a prince gain the throne at the age of nine?) but marrying a senior royal princess would have completely legitimized his claim. It would also have been unthinkable under the strict conventions of the pharaoh's household for a commoner to marry a senior princess of the royal blood line. Marriage between such close relatives was a common feature because it was considered that princesses should only marry those of a suitable status, which often limited their options to other members of their family. Ankhesenamun herself had been married to her father before she was married to Tutankhamun, making her his step-mother as well as his half-sister and wife, and she may also have been married to Smenkhare as well. It is possible that Ankhesenamun had a daughter from the marriage to her father, a child called Ankhesenpaaten Tasherit (Tasherit means the younger or little one), but the parentage of this girl is not known for sure. If Ankhesenamun was the mother, she must have been very young when her daughter was born. Ankhesenpaaten Tasherit appears to have been born in the last year of Akhenaten's life, when Ankhesenamun would have been about twelve or thirteen.

The marriage between Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun may have been a political one, intended to prove to the people of Egypt that Tutankhamun was the rightful heir to the throne, but images of the couple found in Tutankhamun's tomb suggest a close bond between the two of them. One of the best-known of these is on the back panel of a chair from the antechamber of the tomb known as the Golden Throne. It is very much in the informal style of the Amarna Period and this, together with the fact that the inscribed names have been

changed from the original 'Aten' versions to the 'Amun' ones, suggests that it dates to an early period of their marriage. The figures are formed out of silver, coloured glass and faience (a type of glazed earthenware) inlaid into sheets of gold. The royal husband and wife are in a floral pavilion, which is open at the top to allow the rays of the Aten, the sun disc, through. Ankhesenamun is standing in front of the seated figure of Tutankhamun and has a vessel in one hand. She is reaching out to Tutankhamun with the other hand as if she is about to rub ointment or perfume into his shoulder. This depiction of the royal couple is unusual in its intimacy, even by the relaxed standards of the Amarna Period, and shows what can only be described as a close attachment between two people.

Another discovery in the tomb was described by Howard Carter as the saddest thing he had ever found. Two small anthropoid (human-shaped) coffins had been placed together in a plain wooden box, which was piled up with a number of other boxes and an assortment of artefacts in the treasury of the tomb. They contained the mummified bodies of two little girls. One had been miscarried after about five months of pregnancy and is thought to have been stillborn. The other was either stillborn at about eight or nine months or died during childbirth. X-rays of this mummy showed that the little girl suffered from a number of congenital disorders, including spina bifida, making it unlikely she would have survived very long had she been born alive. Although there were no indications of who these two children were, it can only be presumed that they were the daughters of Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun. There is no evidence that the couple had any other children so, when Tutankhamun died, he left no heirs.

The Boy King

It was not unprecedented for a pharaoh to ascend to the throne at such a young age during the 18th Dynasty. Thutmose III and Amenhotep III were both very young when they became pharaoh but, in both cases, the Great Royal Wife of their father acted as regent until they were old enough to take on the full responsibility of being pharaoh themselves. This was not an option for Tutankhamun as he appears to have had no surviving older relatives other than his wife. The role of regent was undertaken by the commander-in-chief of the army, Horemheb, who held great power in Tutankhamun's court, together with the senior adviser Ay, who had previously held high positions with both Amenhotep III and Akhenaten.

At some stage during the first or second year of Tutankhamun's reign, he abandoned the city established by Akhenaten at Amarna, returning the political and administrative capital to Memphis and restoring Thebes as the religious centre of the country. In a later inscription, some years after Tutankhamun's death, Horemheb took credit for this decision, suggesting that the military might have played a major role in restoring the old religion of the country. It is, of course, also possible that Horemheb was writing the history of the period in order to cast himself in the most favourable light.

Prior to Akhenaten, who appears to have spent the majority of his time in his capital in Amarna, the pharaoh travelled extensively throughout the Two Lands, staying in royal palaces in different cities as they did so. As well as exerting the authority of the king by being seen frequently by

his subjects, the pharaoh, as the semi-divine religious leader of the country, presided over many religious festivals occurring at different times of the year in different parts of the country. Presumably Tutankhamun, having abandoned the new religious system imposed on the country by Akhenaten, would have returned to these royal duties himself. When not travelling he would have probably spent the majority of his time in his main palaces in Memphis and Thebes and at the smaller palace constructed for him not far from the Great Sphinx of Giza. This appears to have had been a hunting lodge and was situated in the region traditionally used by the Egyptian royal family for that purpose. Judging by the number of times hunting is represented in the decorations of the tombs of many different pharaohs, it was a favourite pastime enjoyed over many generations by the royal family. Perhaps it was also where royal princes developed such skills as driving a chariot and shooting a bow which they would be expected to have to become military leaders.

The range of weaponry and hunting equipment found in Tutankhamun's tomb gives a clear indication of these pastimes. About thirty bows of various sizes and designs, including sophisticated compound bows, and more than a hundred arrows had been placed in the tomb for Tutankhamun to take with him into the afterlife, perhaps indicating the favourite hunting method of the pharaoh. There are also a number of illustrations of hunting scenes, including, in one example, the gilded decoration on the disc-shaped handle of an ostrich feather fan. Tutankhamun is shown taking aim at an ostrich with his bow and arrow from his chariot, drawn by two magnificently adorned horses at full gallop. A dog runs alongside the horses, snapping at the heels of the ostrich, which has already

been hit by an arrow, and another ostrich lies on the ground in front of it. An inscription commemorates what it describes as the events of an actual hunt in which Tutankhamun killed two ostriches. The feathers from these ostriches, the inscription goes on to say, were the ones used to make the fan itself.

A similar scene was painted on the lid of a beautifully decorated chest found in the antechamber of the tomb and known as the Painted Box, except Tutankhamun is shown this time hunting antelopes and he is followed by a large retinue. On the side of the box, he is shown in a similar pose, drawing his bow from the back of a chariot, but this time he is aiming at the massed ranks of a Syrian army and is being followed into battle by other chariots of the Egyptian army. It is one of a number of depictions of Tutankhamun engaged in military action. In a scene on a ceremonial shield, he is shown as a sphinx trampling over the prostrate bodies of his Nubian enemies. Here he is being represented as the victorious, semi-divine ruler of the Two Lands who is protecting his people from hostile countries at the borders of the empire.

There were plenty of items of military equipment in the tomb, including swords, daggers and shields, most of which were highly decorated and gilded, and clearly intended for ceremonial purposes. Some, however, were more practical in nature and showed signs of having been used. Whether this can be taken as a confirmation that Tutankhamun himself took part in military campaigns, as many of the pharaohs before him in the 18th Dynasty certainly did, is open to question. The depictions could be just symbolic representations of Tutankhamun as the protector of his people, while the actual job of fighting Egypt's enemies was carried out by the army, led by Horemheb.

Other objects found in the tomb show the pharaoh as the political leader of the country. There are a number of representations of Tutankhamun wearing various ceremonial regalia associated with his position as king of the Two Lands and the rest of the Egyptian Empire. Figurines variously show him wearing different crowns; the rounded and pointed white crown of Upper Egypt and the flatter red crown of the delta. In some pictures he is seen wearing a combination of the two, together with the striped nemes head-cloth. In typical representations, the pharaoh is shown holding a shepherd's crook and flail, often, but not always, with his hands crossed over his chest. These can be taken as symbolic of the agricultural base of Egypt and of the pharaoh looking after his people as a farmer looks after his animals and crops, but, as with many Egyptian representations, they also have a number of other complex meanings and associations. The flail, for example, was associated with Osiris, the god of both fertility and death and, perhaps, as a combination of the two, resurrection, and the crook was also a symbol of the pharaoh as head of the government.

As well as Horemheb and Ay, the names of some other officials in Tutankhamun's administration are known, mostly through inscriptions in their own tombs in the Saqqara necropolis near Memphis. The chief of the treasury was a man called Maya, who was responsible for collecting and distributing the tax revenue of the country. This would have involved paying for the building work carried out by Tutankhamun to erect temples and palaces, particularly at Karnak, and to reverse the work done by Akhenaten. Maya is also thought to have been in control of the royal necropolis, where he would have supervised the transfer of the royal mummies, including

Akhenaten, from their original burial places in Amarna to tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Later he also appears to have played an important part in the burials of Tutankhamun, Ay and Horemheb.

Not very much is known about Usermont and Pentu other than that they held the important positions of viziers of Upper and Lower Egypt. Vizier is the term used by Egyptologists to describe the position of chief minister or governor of one of the Two Lands. The holders of these positions would have been the most powerful men in Egypt after the pharaoh himself and, during Tutankhamun's reign, Horemheb and Ay, the men behind the throne. A similar, but not quite so powerful, position belonged to Amenhotep-Huy, who is described as the viceroy of the Egyptian lands in Kush, the part of Nubia conquered and held by Egypt during the 18th Dynasty. Amenhotep-Huy's wife is thought to have been called Taemwadjsi, who held the position of the head of Tutankhamun's harem. Unfortunately nothing else is known about this institution. We do not even know whether or not Tutankhamun had any other wives or concubines in addition to Ankhesenamun. The existence of a harem would tend to suggest that he did but the term can simply mean the members of his family and does not necessarily imply anything more than this. It is generally assumed that, because of his youth and because Ankhesenamun is the only royal woman depicted in his tomb, she was his only wife at the time of his death.

Everyday Objects

The superbly crafted and beautifully decorated ritual and funerary objects discovered in the tomb have received the

bulk of the attention since it was opened by Howard Carter, but these were by no means the only artefacts found. There were a great many other items which generally have not received the attention they merit. In accordance with the Egyptian belief that a pharaoh who had died needed to take everything he would require for the afterlife with him during his journey through the underworld, a vast array of everyday items were placed in Tutankhamun's tomb. As these did not have the ritual or symbolic significance of the more decorative objects, many of them would have been the things Tutankhamun actually used on a daily basis.

A large quantity of pottery was found in the antechamber of the tomb, including bowls, cups and storage jars. Most of these pieces were undecorated, suggesting they were intended for everyday use. Stone and faience containers of various sorts were carefully packed in wooden boxes, including two pieces which look very much like teapots but were actually used in various religious libation ceremonies, such as the one known as the Opening of the Mouth. Residues found in some of the vessels indicated that they had been filled variously with oils, perfumes and cosmetics when they had been first placed in the tomb. Most had been opened on the two occasions the tomb was entered by robbers in antiquity, resulting in the contents decaying, but analysis of what was left was still possible. The robbers appear to have been disturbed before they could do any damage in the burial chamber and the treasury, which were found almost completely intact, but they rummaged through and scattered the contents of the antechamber and annex and, presumably, they removed some items. Only three glass cups were found, even though glass was manufactured on a relatively large scale

during the 18th Dynasty. A wooden chest found by Howard Carter in the antechamber contained nothing but packing material, giving the impression it had been used to store fragile objects, possibly glass items, which were stolen by the robbers.

The tomb was also provisioned for the afterlife with a wide variety of food and drink. The nature of the foodstuffs found reflected the diet available to an ordinary Egyptian but there were also some luxury goods probably only affordable by a pharaoh or a member of the wealthy elite. A model of a granary, of a type which remained in use in Egypt until relatively recently, had been placed in the tomb. For those large items thought essential for the afterlife but which were too big to fit in the tomb, it was common practice to replace them with such models. The granary was divided into 16 compartments containing cereals, particularly emmer wheat and barley, the essential ingredients of Egyptian bread, and actual examples of the bread itself were also included. It also contained other staples of the Egyptian diet, such as chickpeas and lentils, and all the ingredients to make Egyptian beer, although not the actual beer itself. Egyptian beer, made to the consistency of a grainy soup or gruel, was much thicker than beer as we would recognise it today and it formed an important part of the Egyptian diet. Perhaps it was considered to be a drink for the masses rather than the pharaoh, or, perhaps, Tutankhamun simply did not have a taste for it, so it was not included.

A variety of baskets, made from dried grasses and palm leaves, contained fruit and vegetables, including onions, garlic, dates and dom palm fruit. Judging from the amount of jujubes, a fruit rather like dates grown in Egypt, this must

have been particularly favoured by Tutankhamun. There were 36 baskets full of them in the tomb, along with jars of honey, almonds, coriander, cumin, fenugreek and a wide variety of other foods and ingredients. Ay, who is thought to have been responsible for putting together the grave goods, did not intend Tutankhamun to go hungry in the afterlife.

The single largest quantity of any food stuff was of meat. It was contained in 48 lozenge-shaped boxes which were stacked under a couch in the antechamber. The boxes were painted white on the outside and had a black resin spread on their interior surfaces. Most of them had been labelled with what should presumably have been the contents, but the docketts attached to each box rarely matched what was actually in them. It is not clear if the labelling had been done before the boxes had been filled, or if the person doing the labelling was in a hurry and was careless. Most of them contained cuts of beef, an expensive meat beyond the reach of most Egyptians, which showed the status of the pharaoh. There were also smaller numbers of geese and ducks, perhaps a favourite choice of Tutankhamun included to remind him of his hunting trips, although both were also kept domestically in Egypt. No meat from sheep or goats was found in the tomb, which would have been more readily available to the general population but may not have had the symbolic status of beef, the meat of the bull signifying the strength and virility of the pharaoh.

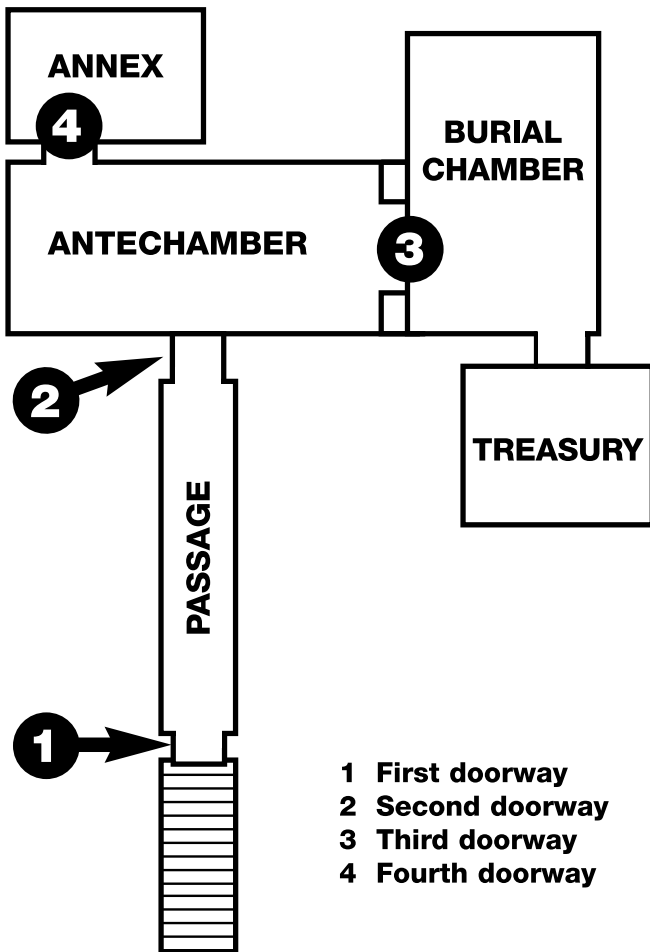
If Tutankhamun did not like beer, the same could not be said for wine. More than 30 wine jars were found in the tomb and recent research on the residues left in them has shown that they almost all contained red wine. Two types of jar were found; most were of the standard amphora design, having two

handles and tapering almost to a point at the base, but there were also some of what are known as Syrian amphora. These have only one handle and resemble normal jugs except that they have rounded bottoms. Although described as Syrian, analysis of the clay used to make them showed that they were actually made locally. Many of the wine jars were labelled with similar information to that found on bottles of wine today, including the vintage, given as the regnal year of manufacture, the vineyard and the name of the wine maker. Much of the wine, labelled as coming from the House of Tutankhamun on the Western River, was from the pharaoh's own estates. The number of jars dating from the fourth and fifth years of Tutankhamun's reign indicate that these two years were particularly good vintages or, at least, that there had been bumper grape harvests in these years, leading to the production of a large quantity of wine. The ninth year was the last one to be represented, which can be taken as a sign that Tutankhamun died after the wine had been made from the grape harvest of that year but before the harvest of his tenth regnal year. Alternatively, of course, wine from the tenth year could simply have been of an inferior quality and so was not thought worthy of inclusion in the tomb.

Tutankhamun was provided with some entertainment to keep him amused in the afterlife. He appears to have liked playing board games, four examples of which were found in the tomb, although some of the pieces to go with the boards were missing. Two sets of the game *senet* were found, one built into a table and the other a smaller box which looks like a travelling version of the game. Each comprises of a board with 30 squares on it, arranged in three rows of ten. Unfortunately, the rules of the game are not known but it was

played by two people and it seems as if the object was for a player to get his or her pieces through an S-shaped course on the board before the other person could.

Considering how popular music is thought to have been among the Egyptians, the number of musical instruments discovered in the tomb was relatively small. The instruments found had either a military function or were used in a religious context. The two trumpets found in the antechamber, one made of silver and the other of a copper alloy, were both of the type used by the Egyptian military for signalling, while ivory clappers and a pair of sistra, or hand-held rattles, were both used in religious ceremonies. It seems Tutankhamun was not a great music lover, or, perhaps, musical entertainment was thought to be already available in the afterlife so large numbers of instruments did not need to be included in the tomb.



TUTANKHAMUN'S TOMB

(See page 90)

The Restoration of Amun

Religion in Egypt

Looked at from the standpoint of a secular western society, the religion of Egypt, with its huge pantheon of major and minor gods, is not easy to understand. Religion was inseparable from other aspects of the daily lives of Egyptians, providing an all-encompassing framework within which everything else occurred. Religious practices can be seen as being made up of two parts; the rituals and festivals associated with the state religion, with the semi-divine pharaoh at its head, and a personal religion which individuals practised as a means to gain the favour of the gods, thereby avoiding disaster and bad luck in their lives. But, for pharaohs and ordinary people alike, the gods were held to control everything that happened in the universe and, in order to gain their favour, people made offerings to them through the priesthoods of the temples.

This form of religion emerged very early in the history of Egypt, arising in the Neolithic agricultural communities along the banks of the Nile. As with farming peoples everywhere, their main concerns were with the continuation of the cycles of life and fertility which controlled their existence in an uncertain world. They recognised the mechanisms of the

natural world which governed their lives: the annual flooding of the Nile, the changing of the seasons and the daily rising and setting of the sun. The failure of any of these, or an interruption of the cycles, would be disastrous for the production of food and for the people themselves.

The central tenet of belief involved preserving the order of the universe, as represented by the goddess Maat who, in Egyptian mythology, was brought into being at the moment of the creation, when order was formed out of chaos. The rising of the sun each morning represented a daily renewal of this order and, consequently, the sun god Ra was one of the most important of all the gods. When the sun went down in the evening, it entered the realm of the underworld, governed by the god Osiris, who guided the sun on a journey through his realm so that it could be reborn again in the morning. This belief was fundamental to the Egyptians and was central to the idea of rebirth and the afterlife. Ra and Osiris were linked together, as were life and death. Neither could exist without the other.

The gods were represented in human and animal forms, or in a combination of the two, and could have a range of associations which could change over time. New gods were constantly emerging and the characteristics of one god could merge with that of another. Some gods were worshipped throughout the country in major temples, while others were much more local, being worshipped in particular cities and religious centres or, even, in particular households.

During the 18th Dynasty, Amun, originally a local god of Thebes, rose in status to become one of the principal gods of the whole country. This can be attributed to the ascendancy of the Theban pharaohs to the throne of a reunited Egypt. In

becoming a principal god, Amun came to be associated with Ra and his name was often written as Amun-Ra. The priesthood at Karnak also became much more powerful, with a large proportion of the total revenue of the entire country being expended on monumental building work at Karnak and on supporting the huge number of priests and attendant workers there. But, even though the various manifestations of the sun god were in the ascendancy, the other gods in the pantheon were not forgotten. To do so would be to invite their displeasure, which could have dire consequences for all the people of Egypt.

The Amarna Heresy

By the time of Amenhotep III, the sun god, always one of the main state gods, had come to be seen as the god from which all other gods had arisen. This process, known as henotheism, where a variety of gods begin to be seen as aspects of a central universal deity, can be seen as a development of religious practices throughout the 18th Dynasty, but it presented problems with the continued worship of the other gods in the pantheon who were now regarded as inferior to the sun god. The priesthood at Karnak had come to associate Amun with Ra, as Amun-Ra, and those at Heliopolis, the traditional centre of the worship of the sun god, began to merge Ra with a number of other gods, including Horus, under the title Ra-Horakhty. It was as if the two major religious centres in Egypt were competing with each other to promote their rival versions of the sun god. The priests at Karnak appeared to be winning the argument and became more powerful than those at Heliopolis. The Temple of Amun at Karnak steadily grew in

size as successive pharaohs added their own monuments to it and it became the largest religious complex in the world at that time.

A theological problem arose during this process. How could one god become more important than all the other gods, and take on the aspects of many of these other gods, while these other gods continued to be worshipped and were thought to be essential for the continued well-being of the country? Amenhotep III attempted to resolve this problem by declaring himself divine during his own lifetime, as his father Thutmose IV may also have done, thereby setting himself on the same level as the other gods and declaring himself the son of the principal god. He particularly recognised the form of the sun god worshipped at Heliopolis, Ra-Horakhty, which included the actual body of the sun itself, the Aten or sun disc, as well as the various different gods associated with it. Late in his reign, he began to identify himself more closely with the Aten, giving himself the title 'the Dazzling Aten' and calling his palace in Thebes 'the House of the Dazzling Aten'. However, he does not seem to have resolved the problem entirely and he continued to associate himself with a number of other gods, including Amun, perhaps because the priesthood at Karnak had become too powerful to ignore.

Akhenaten's subsequent actions can be seen as the logical extension of what his father, and possibly his grandfather, before him had started. On coming to the throne, he instigated the construction of a temple at Karnak dedicated to Ra-Horakhty, represented in the same form as the god was in Heliopolis, with the body of a man and the head of a falcon. The full name of the god was extended to include the Aten, being written as 'Ra-Horakhty of the horizon who rejoices in

the sunlight which is the Aten' and the hieroglyphs forming the name were enclosed in cartouches, as the names of pharaohs were. The Aten was being promoted as the King of the Gods and associated with the body of the pharaoh. It would not be long before Akhenaten shortened the name of the god to just that of the sun disc and began to worship the Aten to the exclusion of all the other gods. It is the first known example of a god being worshipped as an abstract manifestation of the divine, with no association with human or animal forms, and, as the Aten was the one and only god, some people have suggested this was also the first example of a monotheistic religion.

In the fifth year of his reign, Akhenaten began to build a new city on the west bank of the Nile in the middle of Egypt, about half way between Thebes and Memphis, at a site now known by its modern Egyptian name of el-Amarna. He called the new city Akhetaten, 'the Horizon of the Aten', and it was at about this time that he also changed his own name from the one he had been given at birth, Amenhotep, meaning 'Amun is Content', to the one by which he is generally known now, Akhenaten, 'the Glory of the Aten'. Nefertiti, which means 'the Beautiful One Has Come', also added Neferneferuaten, 'Beautiful is the Beauty of Aten', to her name at about the same time, which has been taken as a sign of her increasing importance in Akhenaten's court, where she took on many of the religious roles normally reserved for the pharaoh himself.

As well as a religious reason for moving (to establish a capital in the name of the Aten), there may also have been a very good political reason for the move to the new capital. It put a distance between Akhenaten and the Temple of Amun and its priesthood in Karnak, who had become so powerful

that they may have been challenging the authority of the pharaoh. By proclaiming the Aten as the only god, Akhenaten was taking the power away from the Priesthood of Amun and concentrating it in himself. By moving away from Thebes to establish his own capital at Amarna, which also became the political and administrative centre of the country in place of Memphis, Akhenaten can be seen as taking actions to secure his own position and power base.

From inscriptions found on the boundary stelae at Amarna, it appears to have taken three or four years for building work to have progressed enough for Akhenaten to move his family and court to the city. He was certainly living there by the ninth year of his reign and the move appears to have allowed him to become much more radical as a politician and religious leader. Freed from the restraints imposed on him by the proximity of the Priesthood of Amun, he issued a royal decree banning the worship of all gods other than the Aten. Temples were closed down across the country, the images of the other gods were destroyed and their names removed from monuments, and the many festivals dedicated to the other gods, particularly Amun, were prohibited. An operation of this size could only have been carried out with the cooperation and active participation of the Egyptian army, the only organisation which could have been mobilised throughout the country to carry out Akhenaten's decrees in the face of what must surely have been fierce opposition from the priesthoods.

The iconography of the Aten was also a radical departure from the traditional Egyptian representations of their gods. The human and animal forms of representation were abolished and the Aten was shown solely as the disc of the sun

with its rays reaching out from it and ending in human hands. Images of Akhenaten and Nefertiti were shown under the rays of the Aten, as if being held in its protective care. Akhenaten was represented in pictures and statues in a very different form from that of any previous pharaoh, shown as an almost androgynous figure with protruding breasts and feminine hips. He was depicted with an elongated head, a protruding chin and thick lips, large almond-shaped eyes and a bulging stomach, giving rise to suggestions that, if these representations were in any way accurate, he must have been suffering from some form of genetic disease, although there is no hard evidence to support such a theory. These strange representations which, according to an inscription left by one of the sculptors, were done on the orders of the pharaoh himself, were more likely to have been an expression of his religious beliefs. Some modern art critics have described this new style as being expressionist in form and, at times, almost verging on the surrealist.

The physical form of the pharaoh was not the only departure from the art that had gone before. For the first time in Egyptian history, the pharaoh was shown in relaxed and intimate scenes with his wife and daughters. A stele found during the excavation of a house in Amarna, and now in the Altes Museum in Berlin, shows Akhenaten and Nefertiti seated under the rays of the Aten, playing with three of their daughters. The scene is like a family portrait, with the children crawling over their parents, although it is thought to have been part of a shrine and may well actually represent Akhenaten and his family as divine. Even if this was the case, the art has none of the rigidity and formality of previous depictions of pharaohs which, as was usual in all Egyptian art

before the Amarna period, were set out on an unvarying grid pattern. Amarna art became much more fluid and dynamic, depicting Akhenaten and Nefertiti in natural poses and giving the impression of movement and speed. The majority of the changes made by Akhenaten would not last but this more relaxed style of art was one of the few to continue after his death.

The revolutionary new style in art was also apparent in the architecture of the temples built at Amarna. The main building materials used for their construction were mud bricks, rather than the more usual large blocks of quarried stone. No doubt this allowed building work to proceed much more quickly than it had in the past, but it would also make the temples easier to demolish when attempts were made to destroy all references to Akhenaten after his death. The temples were open to the sun, allowing the rays of the Aten to penetrate throughout the interior of the building. It was in stark contrast to the standard design of temples, which had small dark enclosed inner sanctuaries, where the icons of the god of the temples were kept and to which only the most senior priests were allowed admittance.

This is not to say that Akhenaten's temples were any more egalitarian than previous temples had been. If anything, they were even more exclusive. The royal family alone was allowed to perform the rituals in the temples in Amarna. This could have been a reflection of Akhenaten's opinion about his own divinity, seeing himself and Nefertiti as the sole links between the mortal and the Aten, to the exclusion of any priests. In this respect, it can be seen as a further reaction against the power previously attached to the priesthood in temples. By restricting contact with the Aten to himself and his family,

Akhenaten was continuing the process of concentrating power in his own hands.

Akhenaten left a record of his beliefs in the form of the Hymn to the Aten, which is thought to have been composed by the pharaoh himself. The most complete known example of the hymn was found in the unused Amarna tomb of Ay, who was a senior member of Akhenaten's court before going on to serve Tutankhamun and eventually gaining the throne himself. Ay was actually buried in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings and the tomb in Amarna was abandoned before it was finished, but not before the hymn had been inscribed on the walls. It sets out Akhenaten's belief in the Aten as the only god, who created the world and everything in it, and lists some of the creator's achievements. In the hymn, Akhenaten also identifies himself as the son of the one and only god. Similarities between the hymn and Psalm 104 have been recognised, although whether the hymn had a direct influence on the composition of the psalm or if they were independently expressing similar religious concerns is not known. It is one strand of evidence used by some academics to support the theory of a cultural link between the religion of Akhenaten and Judaism.

Akhenaten's own tomb was also in Amarna, cut into the cliff face of what is now known as the Royal Wadi. In yet another break from tradition, the site of the tomb is on the east bank of the Nile, on the side of the rising sun, symbolising life, rather than on the west bank of the river, the usual location of burial sites. Much of the decoration of the tomb, which was discovered in the late nineteenth century, was defaced in the immediate aftermath of the Amarna Period and the sarcophagus in the tomb was found smashed into

numerous pieces, although it has since been reconstructed and now stands in the car park of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Rather than being decorated in the usual manner, with the images of the four protective goddesses, Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selkis, at each corner, Akhenaten's sarcophagus was protected by four figures of Nefertiti. There were no representations of Osiris, the god of the underworld, anywhere in the tomb, which was not only an indication of Akhenaten's proscription of all other gods but a rejection of death. Akhenaten, according to his own theology, would live forever in the light of the Aten.

The Beginning of the End

At its height, the population of the city established by Akhenaten at Amarna could have been as high as 50,000 but, within a few short years of his death, the city was completely abandoned. This represented a complete reversal of the religious reforms initiated by Akhenaten and a return to the older form of worship and the pantheon of gods. One of the outcomes of the reformation was an attempt by Akhenaten's successors to wipe his name from history by destroying everything he had built, including the city, and removing his name from all the inscriptions carved during his lifetime. One of the results of this has been to make it all but impossible to discover how Akhenaten's radical theological experiment came to an end. One of the most likely reasons for the failure is that Akhenaten lost the support of the general population, who found his new religion to be elitist and inaccessible.

It is difficult to say to what extent the religious changes implemented by Akhenaten were actually adopted by the

wider population of Egypt. Access to the major gods had always been controlled by the state and the priesthood and the only occasions when ordinary people could interact directly with these gods would have been during religious festivals, when icons of the gods were brought out of the inner sanctuaries of the temples and carried through the streets in processions. By banning all of the gods except the Aten, Akhenaten put an end to these religious festivals, together with the practice of making offerings to the gods at temples. The effect of this was to severely limit the religious practices of the majority of the people and it seems probable that many would have deeply resented this. It was an enormous change in the daily lives of ordinary people, who suddenly found the gods they relied on to bring good fortune into their lives banned and replaced by a god to whom they had virtually no access at all.

Excavations of houses of ordinary people in Amarna have uncovered private shrines and idols dedicated to other gods as well as to the Aten so, even in Amarna, Akhenaten's reforms were not universally accepted. It is difficult to date finds in other parts of the country accurately enough to know for certain whether or not the old religion continued alongside the reformed religion but it is safe to assume that, if Akhenaten's prohibitions were not being explicitly followed in the centre of Atenism, then the rest of the country did not unconditionally accept the changes either. The worship of the old gods did not die out, but may have been driven underground, with people maintaining their beliefs in the privacy of their own homes.

Essentially what Akhenaten was demanding of his people was the abandonment of their personal beliefs. He was the

Son of God and, as such, the devotion of the people had to be directed through him. The pharaoh had always held an exalted position but, under Akhenaten, the prosperity and well-being of all the inhabitants of Egypt became his personal responsibility. This was all very well while the country remained wealthy and the people happy and healthy, as appears to have been the case at the start of Akhenaten's reign, but, as soon as anything went wrong, people would quickly turn against him. It is speculation to suggest that this is what happened to Akhenaten but, based on the available evidence, it is not beyond the realms of possibility either.

Towards the end of Akhenaten's reign, he appears to have encountered a number of personal and political setbacks which could have triggered a popular movement against him. Decorations in his tomb in the Royal Wadi show him and Nefertiti mourning the death of at least one of their daughters. There are some suggestions that Nefertiti herself also died at about the same time, although she may simply have changed her name as part of the process of becoming co-regent with Akhenaten. Evidence from excavations carried out in burial grounds in a number of different parts of Egypt shows a sudden increase in the number of burials from this period. The people who were dying came from a wider cross section of society than would normally be expected in such burials, where the majority of deaths would be of the very old and the very young. This suggests there was a serious outbreak of an epidemic, possibly even the black plague, towards the end of Akhenaten's reign, which could have caused the deaths of about 20 per cent of the entire population of the country. In the light of the abandonment of the old gods and of Akhenaten's personal responsibility for the country's well-

being, such an outbreak could, at the very least, result in people thinking the epidemic had been caused by the pharaoh offending the old gods. A logical extension of this would be for demands to be made for an end to the exclusive worship of the Aten and for a return to the old ways, when people could make offerings to the gods themselves to ensure their own personal safety.

Diplomatic Relations

An accusation often levelled at Akhenaten is that, while he was concentrating on making revolutionary changes within Egypt, he was neglecting the rest of the empire and diplomatic relations with countries beyond its borders. The Amarna letters, a cache of diplomatic correspondence from Egyptian vassal states and allies in the Levant and Syria, has shed some light on the situation. The letters themselves were found in the remains of a building known as the House of Correspondence of the Pharaoh in Amarna in the late nineteenth century and are now scattered among a number of different museums around the world. There are something like 400 of them and they were sent to Egypt over a period of about 20 or 30 years, initially to Amenhotep III, then to Akhenaten and finally to Tutankhamun during the short time he remained in Amarna after becoming pharaoh. Most of the letters found were copies of the original letters made by scribes. They were written in Akkadian, the language of the Assyrians and Babylonians which was used as the common language of diplomacy at the time, and were in the cuneiform script, a form of writing developed by the Sumerians and common to much of the Near East.

Both the content and chronology of the letters have proved to be a source of intense debate in the academic world but, even so, they give a picture of the Amarna Period somewhat at odds with the conventional view that Akhenaten ignored foreign relations. Although the Egyptian side of the correspondence was not included in the archive, the extent of the letters and the number of different states represented suggests Akhenaten was deeply concerned with what was going on outside Egypt and the empire. What the letters appear to show is an increase in disagreements and fighting between various vassal states, together with a greater threat from outside the empire, particularly from the emerging Hittite Empire to the north, which was perhaps attempting to exploit the infighting of the vassal states for its own ends.

The most frequent letter writer was Ribaddi (sometimes transliterated as Rib-Hadda), the king of the city state of Byblos, an important trading port on the coast of what is now Lebanon, north of Beirut, which had been a close trading partner with Egypt over a long period of time, particularly in the supply of the timber of the cedars of Lebanon for ship building. Ribaddi wrote about 60 letters to Akhenaten, complaining about his neighbouring states and requesting urgent military assistance to prevent the invasion of Byblos. He appears to have had constant problems with Abdi-Ashrta, the king of Amurru, a state to the west of Byblos, who was intent on expanding his sphere of influence and, no doubt, recognised the importance of adding a wealthy trading port to his territory. Although we do not know exactly what was in Akhenaten's replies to the repeated entreaties for assistance, he appeared to be offering no support. Perhaps he was content to let the rival states fight it out amongst themselves.

At one point he was apparently growing tired of the constant barrage of complaints and demands, telling Ribaddi to stop bothering him all the time.

Ribaddi wrote to Akhenaten to tell him Abdi-Ashrta had been killed, but his son Aziru continued the campaign. Aziru eventually captured Byblos and handed Ribaddi to the ruler in the rival port of Sidon, where it is highly likely he was killed. Akhenaten does not appear to have been pleased by this, even though he had not done anything to stop it, and he summoned Aziru to Egypt to explain his actions. After Aziru had been in Egypt for a year, Akhenaten received reports of the Hittites advancing on Amurru and he allowed Aziru to return to his kingdom to defend his territory. Once Aziru got there, he entered into talks with the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I and switched allegiance to the Hittites, handing control of a strategically important region of the Egyptian Empire's northern border to its main rivals.

The Amarna Letters contain a number of reports on the activities of the Hittites. Unfortunately, because the chronology of the letters is difficult to establish, it is hard to know exactly when they were threatening the northern borders of the Egyptian Empire. The letters from the king of the Mitanni, offering one of his daughters as a wife to Akhenaten, can be interpreted as the cementing of an alliance between Egypt and the Mitanni, perhaps made in the hope of seeing off the threat of the Hittites. If this was the case, it clearly did not work. By year twelve of Akhenaten's reign, the Hittites had defeated the Mitanni, leaving them free to move against Egypt's vassal states in northern Syria.

The threat of a Hittite invasion was not the only problem Akhenaten was facing. In the same year an Egyptian army was

sent to Nubia to put down a rebellion, and this seems to have been successfully achieved. Perhaps this was the reason why Akhenaten was not more supportive of the northern vassal states. The army was busy in the south, protecting Egypt's economically vital territory in Nubia, where the gold mines that underwrote Egypt's wealth were situated. At the same time the army had to continue to implement Akhenaten's unpopular reforms at home. It is speculation to say that the army was becoming overstretched and, as a result, dissatisfied with the rule of Akhenaten. However, if this was the case, and Akhenaten was also losing the support of the general population and the priesthood, then his continued reign as pharaoh was becoming untenable.

The Restoration

The details of Akhenaten's death and the immediate aftermath of the succession to the throne are entirely unknown. He died during the seventeenth year of his reign and, within a year or two of his death, Tutankhamun, probably Akhenaten's only living male relative, was made pharaoh at the age of eight or nine. With the empire apparently threatened on two fronts, by the Hittites and by the Nubians, with Egypt suffering from the effects of a terrible epidemic and with the general population turning against the reforms Akhenaten had instituted, it was hardly a good moment for such a young boy to become the supreme leader of the country. Perhaps he was installed by the powerful elite, including Horemheb and Ay, who controlled the court, as a figurehead behind which they could continue to run the country. Tutankhamun could have represented both a fresh start and a return to the values of the

previous pharaohs, before Akhenaten. If the people of Egypt were looking back to a golden age during the reigns of Thutmose IV and Amenhotep III, when the wealth of the nation had reached its greatest heights and there was relative peace along its borders, a ruler from the same blood line could, perhaps, be seen as a means to return to it.

The problem with such a scenario is that Tutankhamun was also closely associated with Akhenaten. Tutankhamun's advisers needed to dissociate the new pharaoh from his father and all he stood for. On this occasion there is actually some primary source material to support this line of speculation. Often described as the most important document remaining from Tutankhamun's reign (actually, it has to be since it is pretty much the only one), the Restoration Stele contains an inscription concerning the terrible state of the country at the start of Tutankhamun's reign and what the new pharaoh proposed to do about it.

The stele, now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, is a slab of red granite, about 8 feet 4 inches (2.5m) high. It was found in an excavation conducted at the Great Temple of Amun at Karnak in 1905. The place where it was found is significant, assuming it had not been moved there from where it was originally erected. It stood in front of the Third Pylon, a massive ceremonial gateway erected by Amenhotep III, in a prominent and highly visible position right in front of the temple as it was in Tutankhamun's day. Anybody coming to the temple could not fail to see it or miss what must have been the intentional association with Amenhotep III.

The text begins with Tutankhamun's full five-part name. At some point Tutankhamun's praenomen and nomen were chiselled out and replaced with those of Horemheb. Considering

Tutankhamun would have been about ten years old when the text of the stele was written, it is entirely possible that Horemheb had a hand in its composition and, on ascending to the throne, wanted to claim it for himself. Unfortunately for him, whoever made the changes did not do a particularly thorough job, as Tutankhamun's name remains legible under the new inscription and, in any case, his identity can easily be established from the other three names which were not defaced at all.

The main body of the text is given below:

The good god, son of Amun, son of Kamutef [a reference to Horus], the good son, the holy egg created by Amun, father of the Two Lands, the one who makes the one who made him, the ba [the spirit or soul] of Heliopolis united in order to form him, to be king forever, as Horus, living immortally. He is the effective king who did what was good for his father and all the gods. He restored everything that was ruined to be his monument forever. He has vanquished chaos from the whole land and has restored Maat to her place. He has made lying a crime, the whole land being made as it was at the time of creation.

Now when His Majesty was crowned king the temples and estates of the gods and goddesses from Elephantine as far as the marshes of Lower Egypt had fallen into ruin. Their shrines had fallen down, turned into piles of rubble and overgrown with weeds. Their sanctuaries were as if they had never existed at all. Their temples had become footpaths. The world was in chaos and the gods had turned their backs on this land. If an army was sent to Djahy [thought to be in Syria] to extend the boundaries of Egypt,

it would have no success. If you asked a god for advice he would not attend to you and if you spoke to a goddess she would not listen either. Hearts were faint in bodies because everything that had been was destroyed.

Now some days after His Majesty appeared upon the throne of his father and he ruled the Two Banks of Horus [all of Egypt], the Black Land [the Nile valley and Delta] and the Red Land [the desert] were under his authority and every land bowed down before his might. His Majesty was in his palace which was in the House of Aakheperkare [referring to Tutankhamun's ancestry going back to Thutmose I], being like the sun in the sky, and His Majesty carried out the works of this land and everything the Two Lands needed every day. Then His Majesty considered in his heart and looked for something which would be effective for his father Amun. He made the holy statue out of genuine electrum [an alloy of gold and silver], giving to it more than he had done before. He made his father Amun thirteen poles long, the holy statue being made of electrum, lapis lazuli, turquoise and every noble and precious stone, although the majesty of this noble god had been only seven poles long before. His Majesty made monuments for the gods, making their statues of electrum from the tribute of the foreign lands. He renewed their sanctuaries as his monuments forever, endowing them with offerings forever, laying aside for them divine offerings daily, laying aside bread from the earth. He added great wealth on top of that which existed before, doing more than his predecessors had ever done. He allocated waab priests [local lay priests in a temple], God's servants and the heirs of the Chiefs of the Cities, to be the sons of wise

men whose reputation is established. He has enriched their tables with gold and silver, bronze and copper without limit. He has filled their storehouses with male and female workers and with His Majesty's booty. He has added to the wealth of every temple, doubling, trebling and quadrupling the silver, gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise and every noble and precious stone, together with byssus [very fine linen], white linen, ordinary linen, oil, fat, resin, incense, perfumes and myrrh without limit.

(From the transliteration by Benedict G. Davies in *Egyptian Historical Research of the Eighteenth Dynasty* v6, Aris and Philips [1995]).

The text is a repudiation of Akhenaten's reign, without actually mentioning his name, and the disastrous state he left the country in when he died. Tutankhamun was being associated with Amun and the other gods and goddesses in the Egyptian pantheon, including Maat, who represented the divine order of the universe. Out of the chaos that preceded him, the text claims, Tutankhamun had restored the prestige of the crown and the overall prosperity of the country. He rebuilt the temples across the whole country, in contrast, no doubt, to Akhenaten concentrating all his efforts and tax revenue on building work in Amarna, and had appointed the right people to the priesthoods of the restored temples to administer to the needs of the people through the rituals of making offerings to the gods and conducting the required festivals and processions. Without saying it in so many words, Tutankhamun is telling the people of Egypt that the pharaoh is no longer the only conduit to the gods, as Akhenaten had

claimed, and that they were free to worship as they pleased.

As with all primary source material, attention has to be paid to the context. The country was apparently facing a crisis and Tutankhamun was being set up as the solution to the problem. The gods had turned their backs on the people but, under Tutankhamun, they were being appeased with offerings and the restoration of the temples. How much of this is propaganda, or spin as we might call it now, and how much is a factual account of what was really happening is impossible to tell, but the message is clear – the mistakes of the past are behind us and we can look forward to a brighter future.

Evidence that the text of the Restoration Stele was more than just words comes from the amount of building work carried out across the country during Tutankhamun's reign. Maya, who was in charge of the treasury in Tutankhamun's administration, appears to have travelled throughout the country to supervise the restoration of old temples and the building of new ones. It can be seen as the new pharaoh making the restoration of the old gods obvious to the Egyptian people across the whole country. They could see with their own eyes that the restoration was really happening as the building work continued. Alongside this, work was also being done publicly to erase the memory of Akhenaten by removing his name from inscriptions and by demolishing the temples dedicated to Aten he had built. The demolition work began in Thebes, with much of the rubble being reused in the construction work at the temples in Karnak and Luxor, and continued throughout the country, including in Amarna, which would cease to exist entirely over the course of the next few decades.

Although the evidence is by no means conclusive, Maya

may also have been responsible for removing the bodies of the royal family from the Royal Wadi in Amarna and reburial in the Valley of the Kings. The tomb designated as KV55 contained various pieces of evidence to suggest that it had been used to house the mummies of Akhenaten and Tiye, the wife of Amenhotep III. A mummy, thought to be that of a man, was actually found in the tomb when it was first opened in 1907 and was identified by some scholars as that of Akhenaten, although it is now thought to be Smenkhare's.

Moving the royal mummies from Amarna to the Valley of the Kings suggests that Tutankhamun had not forgotten about his family, even though he went along with the restoration of Amun and the repudiation of Akhenaten. A few items found in his tomb would tend to support this idea. A lock of hair was found in a nest of four small coffins which carried an inscription identifying it as being from the head of Tiye, Akhenaten's mother and, in all probability, Tutankhamun's grandmother. She outlived Amenhotep III by something like 12 years and accompanied her son to Amarna, becoming, as described by some, the matriarch of the royal family in the Amarna Period. Other items in the tomb were inscribed with the names of Akhenaten himself, Neferneferuaten (the name adopted by Nefertiti during her co-regency with Akhenaten), and Mekketaten and Meritaten, the two eldest daughters of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. It is possible that these items were actually taken from the desecrated royal tombs in Amarna specifically to be used as grave goods for Tutankhamun but, wherever they came from, they provide an intriguing picture of a Tutankhamun who was not as committed to the changes occurring during his reign as the Restoration Stele makes out.

Death of a Pharaoh

An Unexpected Death

In one of the more widely accepted chronologies of the Egyptian pharaohs, Tutankhamun is said to have died in 1327 BC, during the ninth, or possibly tenth, year of his reign. This broadly agrees with Manetho, who stated that the pharaoh died in his ninth regnal year, assuming, as appears entirely likely, the pharaoh he names as Rathosis is actually Tutankhamun. The presence of wine jars in his tomb bearing labels dating them to the ninth regnal year would suggest Tutankhamun died quite late in that year, certainly after the grape harvest and the wine-making process had been finished. A garland of flowers had been placed around his coffin during the funeral, presumably shortly before the sarcophagus was closed, and the type of flowers used, including cornflowers and mandrake, bloom in Egypt in late March. A number of different fresh fruits which also ripen in the same month, including dates and jujubes, were also placed in the tomb, so it would be reasonable to say that the funeral took place at this time of year.

Given that mummification was a ceremonial process intended to take 70 days to complete, following the guidelines set out in the funerary texts of the period, an approxi-

