

DEIR- MAWAS

It is a western bank district on the Ibrahimia canal, about 60 K.M south of Minia and 75 K.M north of Assiut. It includes the village of Tell-El-Amarna (Ekhat-Aton) which lies at the eastern bank of the Nile.

TELL- EI-AMARNA

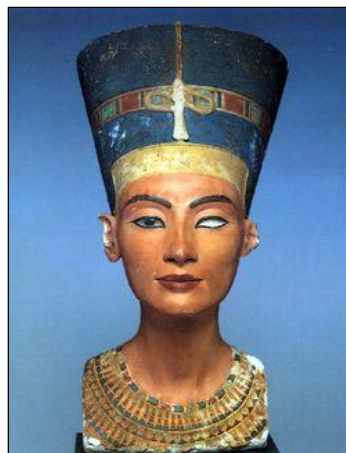
Access: By road or rail to Deir-Mawas, 11 K.M south of Mallawi; then by car to the ferry crossing to the eastern bank of the Nile.

The site of "Tell El-Amarna", with its rock tombs and other remains, lies some 9 K.M southeast of Mallawi at the mouth of a valley on the eastern bank of the Nile. This all that is left of the city of Akhetaten "Horizon of the Aten", the new capital founded by Amenophis IV, who later took the name of Akhenaton , and dedicated it to the Aten or Sun god. The present name comes from that of a local Bedouin tribe, the Amarna.

When Akhenaton became devoted to the exclusive worship of the Sun and abjured the ancient gods of Egypt, he withdrew from the old capital at Thebes and established his residence in an area in the Hermopolitan nome lying on both sides of the Nile. The boundaries of his new capital are still marked by 14 stelae covered on rock faces at El-Hawata close to the southern and northern cemeteries of El-Amarna, at Sheikh Said on the eastern bank, and at tuna-El-Gabal, Dirwa and Gilda on the western bank. The royal residence was on the eastern bank, where a new town rapidly sprang up. Temples and palaces were built, the mansions of high dignitaries clustered around the sumptuous royal palace, and magnificent tombs were constructed for the king and his favorites.



King Akhenaton
The Louvre Museum- France



bust of Nefertiti
Berlin Museum - Germany

The reign of Akhenaton saw not only a religious but also an artistic revolution, reflected in the emergence of the Amarna style which continued to be influential during the reigns of successors Smenkhare, Tutankhamen and Aye. Under the new creed the artists of the period enjoyed greater freedom in their treatment of ancient traditions, and the previous stylized and symbolic presentation gave place to an artistic realism and idealism which sometimes, particularly in depicting the emaciated figure of the king himself, fell into exaggeration. Characteristic of this period is the many representations of nature which in Akhenaton's monotheist and Universalist religion and philosophy was venerated as divine. The reliefs in the tombs of Tel-El-Amarna provide the finest examples of this important new artistic trend.

The site:

From Minia , it is one hour's ride to the extensive remains and Akhenaton's Royal Palace at Tel-El-Amarna ,in which the fine stucco pavements were ruthlessly destroyed in 1912 (fragments in the Egyptian Museum , Cairo) .



Remains of the royal palace - The Egyptian Museum, Cairo

To the south of the palace are the remains of brick pillars, perhaps belonging to the palace vineyard. To the east of the palace were the archives, in which large numbers of clay tablets with Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions (now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the British Museum in London, and

museums in Berlin) were found in 1888. Letters from Babylonian and other kings of Western Asia and Syrian Phoenician vassals to Amenophis III and IV are of great historical importance.

To the north of El-Tel was the Northern palace, dating from the end of Akhenaton's reign. The Sikket El-Sultan, the track which runs south from El-Tel to El-Hag Qandil , leads to the excavated part of the ancient city , which was traversed by three main streets running N-S and a number of cross streets. The ground plans of many houses can still be clearly identified. Particularly notable are the house of the Vizier Nakht, the house of the high priest Pewoh, a very typical example of the house of a high official, and the house of the sculptor Tuthmosis , with workshops in which many fine pieces of sculpture were found (now in the museums of Cairo and Berlin) . Here, too, was found the famous painted limestone bust of Nefertiti, Akhenaton's beautiful queen, which is now in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.

The rock tombs of Tel-El-Amarna

These tombs are similar in form to those of Abd-El-Ouma in western Thebes. In front of each tomb is a fore court, which in most cases was probably enclosed by a brick wall. The wide doorway frequently opens into a pillared chamber, from which a doorway or passage leads into a narrow antechamber, beyond which is a chamber containing a statue of the dead man. Many tombs were left unfinished when the capital was moved back to Thebes. The tombs are numbered in black from 1 to 25, going from north to south.

NO.1 Tomb of Huy: Superintendent of the Royal Harem and steward to the Queen mother, Tiy.

NO.2 Tomb of Merire: He was also Superintendent of the Royal Harem. It is of particular interest because work on the tomb continued during the reign of Akhenaton's son-in-law and successor Smenkhare.

NO.4 Tomb of Merire: A high priest of the sun. It is one of the largest and most interesting in the group.



Tomb of Merire NO. 4
Akhenaton and his wife Nefertiti are driving their chariots
from the palace to the temple of Aton ; the sun god

NO.5 Tomb of Pentu: The owner of that tomb was a physician. It is much damaged. In the entrance doorway, on the right and left, the dead man is shown at prayer. In front of him an inscription (a hymen to the sun). On the left hand- wall of the first chamber, the king and Queen are depicted praying to the sun, above the pylon of the temple. In a side passage on the right is a deep mummy-shaft. The statue of the dead man, which stood in the rear chamber, has been chiseled away.

To the SE, a short distance away, is **NO.6**, the tomb of Penehse. Half an hour's ride E of tomb 6, carved on a rock face, is one of the 14 stelae which marked the boundaries of the city of Akhenaton.

Half way between the northern and southern groups of tombs, outside the city , on a spur of hills to the E, are the remains of a walled settlement in which the workmen constructing the tombs and looking after the cemetery were housed. Nearby is a cemetery with brick-built chapels.



Tomb of Merire NO. 4
A band of blind musicians



Akhenaton, Nefertiti, and their daughters

Half an hour's ride south of the northern group of tombs, in the lower slopes of Gebel Abu Hasah, is the southern group of tombs.

NO.8 Tomb of Tutu: On the doorjambs the dead man is depicted in prayer, above him his names and titles. In the doorway, on the right, the King and Queen are making offerings to the sun, with dead man kneeling in prayer below; on the left, the dead man in prayer. The main chamber originally had 12 columns in two rows of which eight remain. The columns in the rear row are linked by screens, and between the two middle columns is a low doorway, of a type usually found only in the Ptolemaic period. Steps, on the left, lead into the tomb chamber. In the two end walls are small unfinished niches containing statues. Right-hand entrance wall; the King and Queen look out of a palace window as Tutu is decorated with gold chains; below the King and Queen seated in the palace, with Tutu and other courtiers in respectful

attitudes before them; below, the dead man is praying. The corridor is unfinished.

NO.9 Tomb of Mahu: A highly military officer. A short flight of steps leads down to the entrance. In the doorway, on the left, are the King, holding the hieroglyph for "truth" towards the sun, the king and a Princess, with sister, in the presence of the sun, below, the dead man is kneeling with the text of his prayer in front of him, on the right, the dead man is praying. Main chamber, left-hand entrance wall, the King at a window in the palace (preliminary sketch in black pigment)

NO.10 Tomb of Epei: An unfinished tomb. King and Queen present two pictures to the sun.

NO.11 Tomb of Ramose: In the entrance doorway, on the left, the King and Queen, accompanied by a Princess, receive the hieroglyph for "life" from the hands of the Aten. In the niche are seated figures of the dead man and his wife.

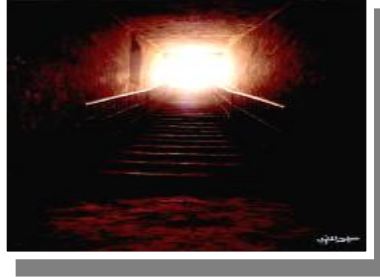
NO.14 Tomb of Mnei: A steward and Scribe in the royal household. It differs in form from the other tombs.

NO.25 Tomb of Aye: Tutankhamen's successor as King. Like many other tombs, it was left unfinished when the capital was moved back to Thebes (where Aye had a new tomb constructed for him). In a palace window, the Queen and her three small daughters are standing, with the sun above them. In the courtyard of the palace the royal retinue (charioteers, scribes, fan-bearers, and soldiers) raise their hands in homage. Below, boys are capering in delight. On the right, Aye is seen leaving the place and receiving congratulations of his retainers, who raise their hands in exultation; servants carry the gifts away, and in the top row the palace doorkeepers with some small boys observe the scene.



Tomb of Aye NO. 25
Ay and his wife recite the rhymes of Akhenaton

About 11k.m from Tell-El-Amarna, in the Darb El-Hamzawi or Darb El-Melek; a valley running east between the northern and southern groups of tombs, are a number of rock tombs without relief or inscriptions and one (NO.26) which has interesting relief but is unfortunately much damaged. This is the family tomb of Amenophis IV / Akhenaton, long thought erroneously, to be the tomb of Akhenaton himself, who was buried in the tomb of his mother Tiy in the Valley of Kings.



Family tomb of King Akhenaton
Doorway to the tomb
