

Was King Akhenaten an unattractive man?

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1 The colossal statues of King Akhenaten

To get straight to the point: no, King Akhenaten (Dynasty 18, 14th century BC) was not an unattractive man. But you might think so when you look at the colossal sandstone statues that the king had erected during the early days of his reign. The statues were found smashed and buried in the first courtyard of his temple to the sun god in the eastern area of Karnak, called Gem-Pa-Aten.² They look like caricatures (Fig. 1 A; 2 A, B; 3 C, E, F).³ With their elongated, hollow-cheeked faces, slanted eyes, large ears, overly long noses, V-shaped mouths, exaggerated chins, thin long necks, and narrow shoulders, they are vaguely reminiscent of aliens in science fiction comics.⁴ Together with the headgear (nemes or khat headdress with double crown or plumes crown) and the ceremonial beard, the head can take up to a third of the statue's height. The eyes resemble narrowed eyes blinded by the sun, but this was probably not the intention for the design.⁵ The hourglass figure with breasts, round belly, and broad hips is clearly attributable to the female phenotype. Only the arms crossed in front of the chest, with the *heqa* staff and flail in the hands, correspond to the normal iconography of an Osiride pillar. However, Akhenaten had himself depicted wearing a king's kilt rather than the Osiris robe.⁶

However, in some Theban officials' tombs from approximately the same period Akhenaten (then still named Amenhotep IV) is depicted in accordance with the artistic canon of the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty and without any physiognomic peculiarities (Fig. 1 F).⁷ On the so-called "Paris block,"⁸ too, the king's face is unremarkable, even though the contours of his body are already more sinuous (Fig. 1 G).

In his new capital city of Akhet-Aten, modern-day Tell el-Amarna (hereinafter referred to as Amarna), Akhenaten used the caricature-like style for himself and his family in two-dimensional art. Art historians call it "extreme style" (Fig. 1 D, E).⁹ However, this style gradually became more moderate during the Amarna period.¹⁰ The king's body shape in

² These statues were not pillar statues, but stood at some distance in front of the temple façade with their own back pillars (Ref 1, pp 89–90). Most of them are now in museums, mainly in Luxor, Cairo, and Berlin. In addition to the Gem-pa-Aten, the temple complex included four other buildings: Hut-Benben, Rud-Menu, Tjeni-Menu, and Sekhen-Aten.

³ Catalog of finds: Ref 2, pp 22–84; Ref 3, p 17.

⁴ P. A. Mackowiak called it a „humanoid praying mantis“ (quoted in Ref 4, p 556), C. Desroches Noblecourt described it as „faun-like“ (Ref 5, p 34).

⁵ Statues of Amenhotep III, for example in the Luxor Museum, already had similar narrow, elongated eyes.

⁶ Ref 6, pp 145–146. The so-called „sexless“ statue is seemingly naked but deprived of a ceremonial beard and male sexual organs (Cairo JE 55938; Ref 6, pp 146–147; Fig. 3 F, this article).

⁷ Ref 7; Ref 8, plts 8, 9; Ref 9, plts 29, 51.

⁸ Louvre E 13482.

⁹ E.g., SMB AeM 14512; Cleveland 1959.186, 1959.188; MMA 61.117, 1985.328.2.

¹⁰ Ref 6, pp 150–151.

Amarna reliefs is hardly distinguishable from that of his wife.¹¹ Some of the relief scenes are unusually private family scenes by ancient Egyptian standards. No other ancient Egyptian king placed his principal wife so prominently in the foreground. The two presented themselves as a couple begotten by the primeval sun god Aten, following the example of the triad, Atum, Shu and Tefnut.¹² It is all the more astonishing that Akhenaten, at a time when he was already a family man,¹³ had himself depicted as a hermaphroditic being in his temple district in Karnak.¹⁴

In reality, King Akhenaten was a well-built man with a narrow face, almond-shaped eyes, full lips, and a pronounced chin. This assertion is justified on the basis of sculptures of the king from the workshop of the court sculptor Tutmose in Amarna (Fig. 1 B; 3 A, D).¹⁵ Tutmose portrayed the royal family and other people with individual head shapes, facial features, facial wrinkles, and in some cases drooping upper eyelids and bags under the eyes. There is therefore little doubt that his works closely reflect the actual appearance of the people who modeled for him.¹⁶ Other Amarna workshops also produced sculptures and funerary figures of Akhenaten with largely unremarkable proportions (Fig. 1 C).¹⁷ A slightly rounded belly is normal for figures of both sexes during the Amarna period, and occasionally even for Amenhotep III, Akhenaten's father and predecessor.¹⁸

Until the beginning of the Amarna period, great importance was attached in Egypt to adherence to an artistic canon. How can the discrepancies in the representations of King Akhenaten be explained?

¹¹ See, for example, the painted limestone relief from the royal palace (Ref 10).

¹² Ref 3, p 88; Ref 6, pp 146–147.

¹³ Ref 3, pp 17–19; Ref 11, pp 10–11; Ref 12, pp 13, 22.

¹⁴ To my knowledge, there is no hermaphroditic being in Egyptian mythology that could have served as a model.

¹⁵ Among them are several model heads cast from gypsum plaster (SMB AeM 21348, 21351), a gypsum bust (SMB AeM 21360), and the unfinished torso of a limestone statuette (SMB AeM 21221). The name of the master sculptor is attested on an ivory object from the same workshop complex, inscribed with “The praised one of the good god, the overseer of the work, the sculptor Tutmose” (Ref 13, p 176).

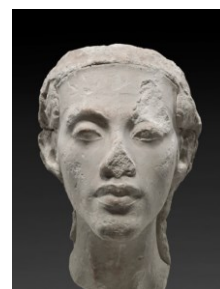
¹⁶ The world-famous bust of Queen Nefertiti from Tutmose's workshop (SMB AeM 21300) also has a naturalistic limestone core. The smooth, painted face made of gypsum plaster was modeled over this core in a second step (Ref 14, pp 235–237). Another well-known example is the 40 cm high limestone statue of the naked queen with a somewhat haggard expression on her face (SMB AeM 21263; Ref 6, pp 151–152).

¹⁷ SMB AeM 21360, 21835, 21836, 34437; Cairo JE 43580; Museo Egizio, Turin, cat. 1398; Louvre E 15593 (E 22746), N 831; MMA 1982.50, 66.99.37, 47.57.2; Brooklyn Museum 59.4.

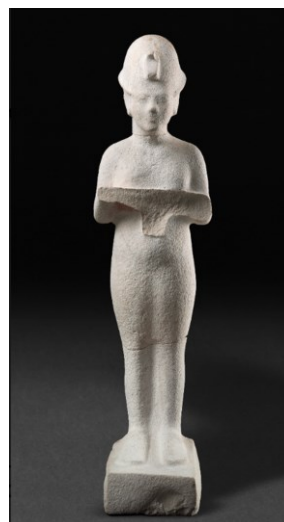
¹⁸ PMESA UC401; Ref 3, p 217; Ref 16, pp 252–263; Ref 7, p 183. The king's kilt had a belt that was set very low in the front, which made the emphasis on the belly even stronger (see, for example, Cairo JE 49529, Ref 2, p 24, fig 2.3).



A) Colossal statue of Akhenaten from Karnak (Cairo EGY 46992837435)



B) Gypsum heads of Akhenaten from Amarna (Left: SMB AeM 21351; Right: SMB AeM 21348)



C) Unfinished statue of Akhenaten with offering tray, probably from Amarna (SMB AeM 34437)



D) Relief fragment from Amarna showing the head of Akhenaten (SMB AeM 14512)



E) Detail of a relief fragment from Amarna showing Akhenaten and Nefertiti worshipping the Aten (PMESA UC401)



F) Drawing (detail) of a relief in the tomb of Kheruef (TT192), Thebes, which depicts Akhenaten burning incense



G) Detail of a relief fragment from Karnak, which depicts Akhenaten burning incense (Louvre E 13482)

Fig. 1: Sculptures and reliefs of Akhenaten: extreme (A, D, E) and canonical styles¹⁹

¹⁹ Photo credits can be found at the end of the article.

2 Interpretations

Akhenaten's bizarre temple statues from Karnak caused quite a stir when they were discovered.²⁰ Naturally, there are numerous interpretations.

2.1 Medical conjectures

N. Reeves wrote that Akhenaten had been of sickly constitution in his childhood.²¹ I am not aware of any sources for this. The temple statues from Karnak led some authors, apparently unaware of certain artifacts from Amarna, to speculate about the king's health. Genetic disorders were suggested in particular.²² The typically female fat distribution ("pear type") on the body of Akhenaten's Karnak statues was explained by a chromosomal or hormonal disorder.²³ However, Akhenaten's fertility is beyond doubt. The display of wealth through obesity is also an unsatisfactory explanation.

2.2 A deliberate compensation for perspective distortion?

The sculptors of ancient Egypt and Greco-Roman antiquity factored the angle from which their works would later be viewed into their work. This is why the heads of colossal statues exhibited at eye level in museums often have strange facial features, because they were made for a different viewing angle. In Egyptian tomb reliefs, too, the proportions of figures in the upper register were slightly altered compared to those in the lower registers.²⁴ D. Laboury (2011) suggested that similar considerations were the reason for the bizarre faces of the Karnak statues of Akhenaten.²⁵ Indeed, some of these statues appear to look down on an imaginary viewer.²⁶ Photographing such a colossus from the perspective of a much smaller viewer causes the face and nose to appear shorter, so that the face actually becomes more human (Fig. 2 A, B, compare left and right).²⁷ On the other hand, the abdomen and hips appear particularly round from this angle (Fig. 2 B). Perhaps the king wanted viewers to see his belly as round as the sun disk to emphasize that he was born of the Aten.²⁸

²⁰ Ref 2, pp 1–16.

²¹ Ref 17, p 519.

²² Ref 4; Ref 18, p 87; Ref 19.

²³ Reviewed in Ref 4; Ref 2, pp 135–143.

²⁴ Ref 20, pp 225–227.

²⁵ Ref 21, pp 7–9.

²⁶ E.g., Cairo, JE 98915, 98895, 99063, 99065; Luxor Museum J 53.

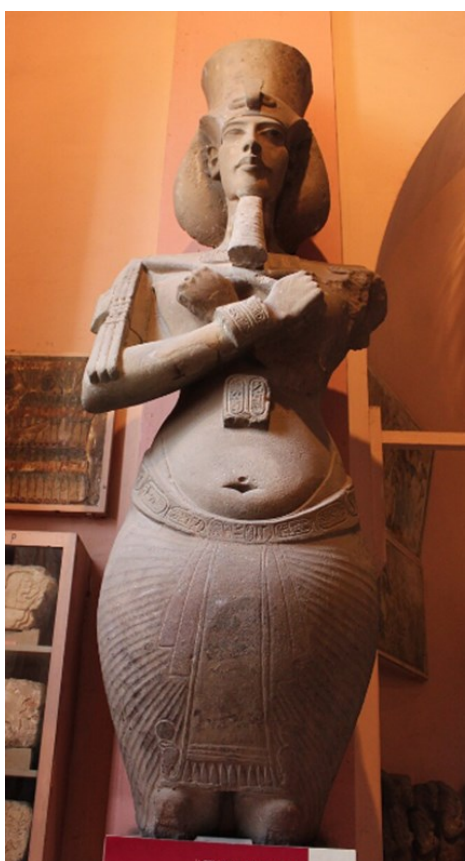
²⁷ See also Ref 21, p 9, fig 12.

²⁸ Akhenaten's self-identification as the son of the sun god is documented in several texts and hymns (Ref 22, pp 215 [7], 216 [41,44, 46, 48, 50], 217 [9], 218 [24], 221 [123], 222 [133, 136], 223 [7], 226 [13, 26], 227 [56]).



SMB AeM
21351

A) Luxor Museum E12



B) Cairo EGY 46992837435

Fig. 2: Effect of perspective

2.3 Primeval deity

In the New Kingdom, it was not unusual for a king to be depicted with the attributes of a god. W. Wolf (1957) speculated that the king had assumed the “almost monstrous” form of the sun god in his temple statues in the Gem-pa-Aten in Karnak.²⁹ Other researchers suggested that Akhenaten, with his feminized lower body, wanted to represent the creative aspect of the sun god.³⁰ Textual records describe the sun god as the father and mother of all creatures.³¹ However, there is no dual-gender representation of this god that could have served as a model for the king. In the Gem-pa-Aten, the sun god was depicted as Ra-Horakhty, with an anthropomorphic body, falcon head, and sun disc.³² In the temple called Rud-Menu and in Amarna, the sun god was exclusively depicted as the Aten in the form of a sun disc with ray hands.³³ Furthermore, there is no textual evidence that Akhenaten identified himself with the sun god. Like most other pharaohs, he saw himself as the son of the sun god.³⁴ When kings in New Kingdom texts were compared with the sun god or the sun disc, this was done in an effusive manner.³⁵

Hapy, the Nile deity who personified the life-giving Nile flood, and Osiris, the god of the underworld and fertility, were also considered candidates for the model of the Karnak statues.³⁶ However, all surviving texts on the statues refer to the sun god. All other gods had already lost much of their significance in Akhenaten's theological view by the second to fourth year of his reign.³⁷ L. Manniche (2010), who reviewed the various attempts at explaining the strange appearance of the colossi, concluded that “they appear to incorporate a number of concepts.”³⁸

2.4 Storming the brain for new ideas

Some scholars argued that certain colossi from Karnak do not depict Akhenaten, but rather his principal wife, Nefertiti.³⁹ However, this does not explain why all of the colossi have feminine hips and thighs. I would therefore like to make the following counter suggestion: Akhenaten was so devoted to Nefertiti that he wanted to be merged with her

²⁹ Ref 23, p 453.

³⁰ Ref 2, pp 86–88, 103; Ref 6, pp 147–148; Ref 21, pp 10, 11; Ref 24, p 145, citing D. Montserrat (2003).

³¹ “You are the father and mother of everything you have created” (Tomb of Meryra; Ref 25, p 12 [8–12]).

³² Ref 12, p 17–18.

³³ Ref 12, p 24, fig 11.

³⁴ See note 28.

³⁵ Urk. IV, 19.6–7; 1466.20–21; 1670.7–8; 1684.16; 1762.16.

³⁶ Ref 2, pp 88–93.

³⁷ Ref 12, pp 19–20, 22, 26.

³⁸ Ref 2, p 115.

³⁹ Ref 2, pp 94–96; Ref 3 1996, p 17–19; Ref 6, pp 146–147; Ref 13, p 194; Ref 26, pp 5–10.

in the temple statuary. The Karnak colossi can then be understood as an amalgamation of the two – ears, eyes, cheekbones, neck, breasts, hips, and thighs belong to Nefertiti; most headdresses, the narrow face shape, nose, mouth, chin, ceremonial beard, chest, arms, insignia, and kilt belong to Akhenaten. It was no easy task for the sculptors, as some corrections to the statues show.⁴⁰ The idea of combining two royal figures into one statue may have been derived from the composite statues that were a specialty of the time.⁴¹ Individual features were additionally emphasized through exaggeration. In general, exaggerated proportions are used as an artistic technique to draw attention to specific features, evoke emotions, or convey a message. The intended message of Akhenaten to his subjects was that Egypt was ruled not by a king, but by a royal couple. This form of representation probably caused irritation in Thebes. In Amarna, the royal couple opted for double statues in which they stand or sit side by side as equals to emphasize their close bond.⁴² This is also evident in the Amarna reliefs, which depict the royal couple doing everything together: performing rituals,⁴³ holding audiences,⁴⁴ awarding honorary gold,⁴⁵ receiving tributes (the couple sits hand in hand),⁴⁶ riding in a horse-drawn chariot,⁴⁷ cuddling their daughters,⁴⁸ and mourning⁴⁹. The officials and priests were certainly indignant about the queen's omnipresence. Nefertiti was also very influential politically.⁵⁰ Some authors even claim that she succeeded her husband on the throne for a brief period.⁵¹

⁴⁰ Ref 27, p 113.

⁴¹ Composite statues were statues that could be assembled from individual parts to allow for flexibility in terms of posture, crowns, garments, and insignia (Ref 28, pp 164–169).

⁴² Examples include the pair statues beneath the boundary stelae of Amarna (Ref 29, p 155; Ref 30, section “boundary stelae”) and a statue of the enthroned king, in which the fragment of a woman's arm is placed around the king's back (Louvre N 831; Ref 29, p 160).

⁴³ SMB AeM 25574; PMESA UC401; Ref 31, plts 1, 32, 40, 41, 42, 54.

⁴⁴ Ref 9, plt 33; Ref 31, plts 60, 65.

⁴⁵ Ref 31, plt 23.

⁴⁶ Ref 3, pp 88, fig 78.

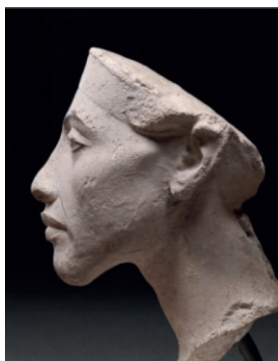
⁴⁷ Ref 31, plts 45, 46.

⁴⁸ Ref 3, pp 98, 102 (figs 88, 93–95).

⁴⁹ Ref 31, plts 6, 10.

⁵⁰ Ref 13, p 190. Apparently, Nefertiti loved to strike the poses of male kings, as in the “smiting the enemies” motif for example (Ref 32, pp 104–112).

⁵¹ Ref 3, p 88–90; Ref 13, p 196; Ref 33, p 41, note 12. The last known mention of Nefertiti is an inscription from the 16th year of Akhenaten's reign in a quarry in Wadi Dayr Abu Hinnis, about 10 km north of Amarna (Ref 34, pp 195–197).



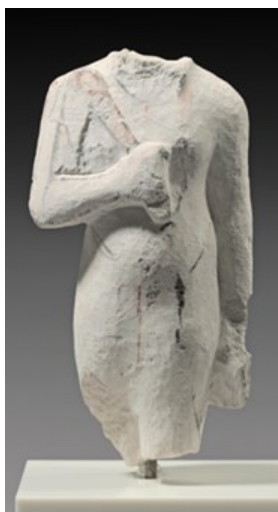
A) Gypsum model head of Akhenaten from Amarna (SMB AeM 21351)



B) Head of a statue of Nefertiti from Amarna (SMB AeM 21263)



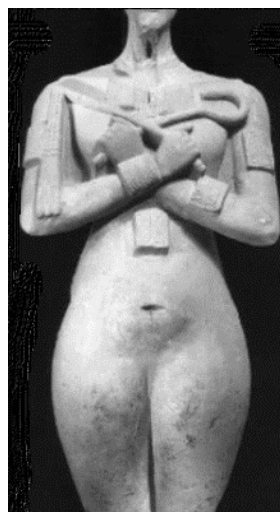
C) Head of a colossal statue of Akhenaten from Karnak (Luxor Museum E12)



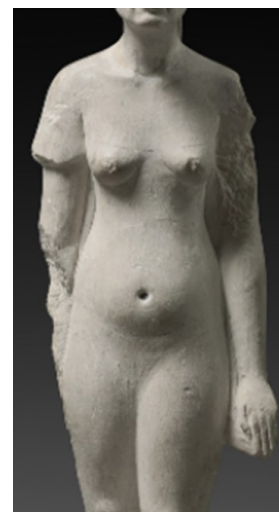
D) Body of an unfinished statue of Akhenaten from Amarna (SMB AeM 21221)



E) Body of a colossal statue of Akhenaten from Karnak (Cairo EGY 46992837435)



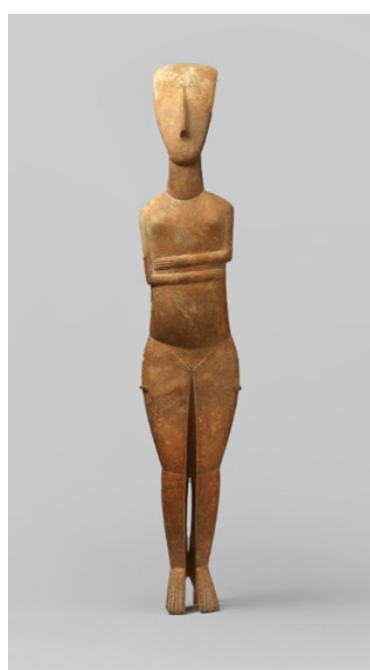
F) Body of a colossal statue of Akhenaten from Karnak (Cairo JE 55938)



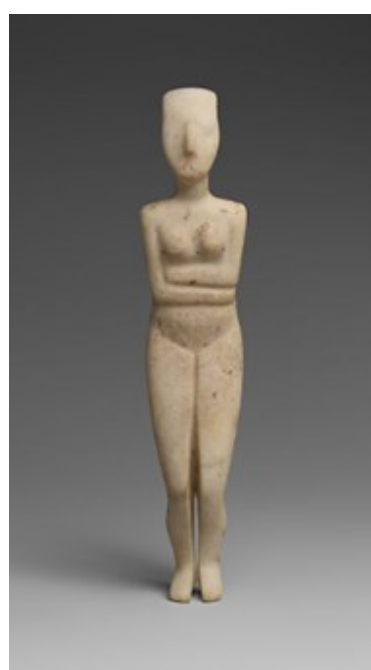
G) Body of a statue of Nefertiti from Amarna (SMB AeM 21263)

Fig. 3: A great love: Akhenaten and Nefertiti united in stone?

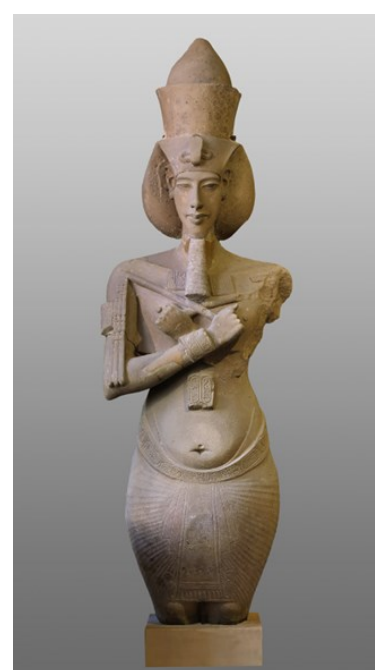
It is also conceivable that Akhenaten gave free rein to his artistic ambitions when planning his temple to the sun god in Karnak. He was a sensitive man with an interest in nature, philosophy, poetry, and architecture. This is evidenced by the religious reform, the hymns to the sun god,⁵² and the innovative palaces and sun temples in Amarna.⁵³ Perhaps he was fascinated by ancient foreign cultures as a young man. He may have been inspired by Cycladic female figurines from the Early Bronze Age⁵⁴ and wanted statuary modeled on them.⁵⁵ The Cycladic female figurines usually have elongated faces, long noses, excessively long necks, feminine hips, and they hold their arms crossed in front of the chest (Fig 4 A, B).⁵⁶



A) Female figurine, Early Cycladic II, 2600–2400 BC (MMA 68.148)



B) Female figurine, Early Cycladic II, 2700–2500 BC (MMA L.2022.38.3)



C) Colossal statue of Akhenaten from Karnak (Cairo EGY 46992837435))

Fig. 4: Early Bronze Age female figurines from the Cyclades (A, B)

⁵² Ref 22, pp 210–227.

⁵³ Ref 30.

⁵⁴ The Cycladic female figurines were produced in large numbers and also found their way to Egypt through trade and cultural exchange (Ref 35; Ref 36, pp. 24–28). Conflicts with the “Sea Peoples” did not begin until the time of the Ramessides.

⁵⁵ Unfortunately, Akhenaten’s Aten temple district in Karnak was demolished so thoroughly by his successors that its foundations were discovered by chance while a canal was being built.

⁵⁶ Ref 35; Ref 37.

Several authors thought Akhenaten was insane.⁵⁷ However, he may have been a clever *enfant terrible* who wanted to provoke. If so, then those colossi that appear to be caricatures were indeed intended as such. Akhenaten was not originally designated to be the heir to the throne and was therefore possibly not well prepared when he had to take the place of his elder brother, who died prematurely.⁵⁸ Until that point, he had hardly been mentioned anywhere. He was still a very young man when he ascended the throne.⁵⁹ Many royal children across the globe have shown signs of the psychological impact of being raised in a privileged environment⁶⁰ and under significant pressure. For some, this manifested itself in particular cruelty, for others in eccentricity or at least in endearing quirks. Akhenaten's personal maturity apparently grew with age and responsibility.⁶¹ However, even aside from religion, art, and architecture,⁶² he and his wife cannot be denied a certain eccentricity. This is evident in the novel fashion, such as a special form of the royal kilt,⁶³ women's garments made of gossamer and pleated linen, and idiosyncratic headgear,⁶⁴ as well as the extremely elongated backs of the heads on sculptures and murals of their daughters⁶⁵.

Whatever Akhenaten's motives were, he paid a high price. It borders on a miracle that he did not fall victim to a conspiracy.⁶⁶ In the years following his death, all his monuments were torn down, the statues mutilated, smashed, and buried.⁶⁷ The list of kings in the mortuary temple of the later king Seti I in Abydos omits the kings between Amenhotep III and Horemhab, which is tantamount to condemnation.⁶⁸ Since the beginning of the 20th century, archaeology has resurrected Akhenaten in images and text, because fragments of his buildings and monuments were reused in Thebes as filling material for new pylons.⁶⁹

⁵⁷ Ref 18, pp 13–15; Ref 38, pp 185–188; Ref 39.

⁵⁸ Ref 40, p 6.

⁵⁹ Ref 18, p 46; Ref 33, p 34.

⁶⁰ Ref 12, p 13.

⁶¹ Contrary to popular belief, he was very much involved in foreign affairs (Ref 18, pp 316–317, 323–324).

⁶² Ref 6, pp 84–91.

⁶³ Ref 2, p 98.

⁶⁴ Ref 13, p 190; Ref 41, pp 113–119.

⁶⁵ Ref 3, pp 53, 54, 56–58, 60, 61 [figs 47, 48–50, 52, 53]). It could be an artistic exaggeration of a family trait (Ref 42, pp 51–56). However, this would be unusual for sculptures from Tutmose's workshop. Alternatively, it could reflect an ideal of beauty achieved by bandaging the skulls of newborns (Ref 43; Ref 44, pp 176–181). There is no known genetic disorder associated with an excessively elongated back of the head.

⁶⁶ At least there is no evidence to suggest it. He died in the 17th year of his reign, probably before reaching the age of 40. Some historians believe that Akhenaten and other members of his family died from an epidemic that ravaged the eastern Mediterranean region and Egypt during that time (Ref 4, p 557; Ref 18, pp 354, 376).

⁶⁷ Ref 2, pp 19–22.

⁶⁸ For the same reason, Queen Hatshepsut is missing from this list (Ref 45).

⁶⁹ Ref 2, p 22; Ref 33, p 34.

The excavations in Amarna⁷⁰ are far from complete and will hopefully one day lead to a better understanding of the man Amenhotep/Akhenaten.

Abbreviations

AcOr: Acta Orientalia; Ann. Intern. Med.: Annals of Internal Medicine; Antike Welt: Antike Welt – Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte; AUC: AUC Bookstores, Cairo; BA: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca; BASOR: Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research; BC: before Christian era; BMSAP: Bulletin et Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris; cat.: catalog; CCdE: Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie; CENiM: Les Cahiers Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne; CT: Computer tomography; ed/eds: editor(s); EGY: Egyptian Museum (inventory number); Fig/figs: figure(s); Int. J. Psychoanal.: The International Journal of Psychoanalysis; JE: Journal entrée (du Musée du Caire); JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies; MIFAO: Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire; MMA: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); OIP: Oriental Institute Publications; p/pp: page(s); plt/plts: plate(s); PMESA: The Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology (University College London); Prisma: Prisma – Illustrierte Monatsschrift für Natur, Forschung und Technik; ref/refs: reference(s); S. Afr. Med. J.: South African Medical Journal; SMB AeM: State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum; TT: Theban tomb; UCLA: University of California in Los Angeles; Urk.: Kurt Sethe, Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums; vol/vols: volume(s); ZAeS: Zeitschrift für ägyptische Schrift und Altertumskunde.

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⁷⁰ Ref 30.

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Photo credits

- Fig. 1: A) Colossal statue of Akhenaten (Cairo EGY 46992837435), sandstone, height 239 cm, from Karnak. Photo: The Egyptian Museum Cairo, <https://egyptianmuseumcairo.eg/ar/artefacts/colossus-of-amenhotep-iv-akhenaten> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).
- B)
- Left:
- Head of Akhenaten (SMB AeM 21351), sculptor model, gypsum plaster, height 26 cm, from Amarna. Photo: Sandra Steiß, State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum, <https://id.smb.museum/object/607472/gipsmodellkopf-des-k%C3%B6nigs-echnaton> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0).
- Right:
- Head of the young Akhenaten (SMB AeM 21348), sculptor model, gypsum plaster, height 28 cm, from Amarna. Photo: Sandra Steiß, State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum, <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/607473/gipsmodellkopf-des-k%C3%B6nigs-echnaton>

(accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0).

C) Unfinished statue of Akhenaten with offering tablet, probably from Amarna (SMB AeM 34437), limestone, height 106 cm, from Amarna (?). Photo: Sandra Stei, State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum, <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/607505/unfertige-standfigur-des-echnaton-eine-opferplatte-darbietend> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0).

D) Relief fragment with head of Akhenaten (SMB AeM 14512), limestone, height 15.5 cm, from Amarna. Photo: Jrgen Liepe, State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum, <https://id.smb.museum/object/606972/relieffragment-mit-kopf-des-pharao-echnaton> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0).

E) Relief fragment depicting Akhenaten and Nefertiti worshipping the Aten (PMESA UC401), calcite, height 56 cm, from Amarna. Photo: Ref 13, p 211, cat. 10 (detail).

F) Relief in the tomb of Kheruef (TT 192), Thebes, which depicts Akhenaten burning incense. Drawing by Leslie Greener (detail). Source: Ref 8, plt 8.

G) Relief fragment depicting Akhenaten burning incense (Louvre E 13482), sandstone, height of fragment 65 cm, from Karnak. Photo: Musee du Louvre, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010010159> (detail; accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-NC 4.0).

Fig. 2: A) Colossal statue of Akhenaten (Luxor Museum E12, Karakl no. 47), sandstone, from Karnak. Photos:

Left: Safari Afrika, <https://www.safari-afrika.de/land-und-leute/aegypten/amenophis-iv-echnaton> (accessed August 12, 2025).

Right: Selket's gypten, <https://www.selket.de/pharaonen/tutanchamun/echnaton-luxor-museum> (accessed August 12, 2025).

Far right: Same as Fig. 1 B, left.

B) Colossal statue of Akhenaten (EGY 46992837435), sandstone, height 239 cm, from Karnak. Photos:

Left: kairoinfo4u, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mana4u/26132103265> (accessed August 12, 2025; CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).

Right: لا روسا, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colossal_statue_of_King_Amenhotep_IV_Akhenaten00_%282%29.jpg (accessed August 12, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0)

Fig. 3: A) Same as Fig. 1 B, left.

B) Head of a statue of Queen Nefertiti (SMB AeM 21263), limestone, statue height 40.5 cm, from Amarna. Photos:

Front view: Sandra Stei, State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum, <https://id.smb.museum/object/767631/standfigur-der-nofretete> (detail; accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0).

Profile: Ref 3, p 76, fig 69 (detail).

C) Head of a colossal statue of Akhenaten (Luxor Museum E12, Karakl no. 47), sandstone, from Karnak. Photos: Ref 2, p. 42, figs. 2.24, 2.25 (detail).

D) Body of an unfinished statuette of Akhenaten (SMB AeM 21221), limestone, height 24 cm, from Amarna. Photo: Sandra Stei, State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum, <https://id.smb.museum/object/607156/unvollendete-statuette-des-k%C3%B6nigs-echnaton> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC BY-SA 4.0).

E) Same as Fig. 1 A (detail).

F) Body of a colossal statue of Akhenaten (so-called “sexless” statue; Cairo JE 55938), sandstone, from Karnak. Photo: Ref 27, fig. 5.

G) Same statue as in Fig. 3 B (detail).

Fig. 4: A) Female figurine (MMA 68.148), Early Cycladic II, 2600–2400 BC, marble, height 62.8 cm. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/255275> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC 0).

B) Female figurine (MMA L.2022.38.3), Early Cycladic II, 2700–2500 BC, marble, height 25.3 cm. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/854694> (accessed September 10, 2025; CC 0).

C) Same as Fig. 1 A.