



Looking at international connectivity and royal depictions on artifacts in Egypt during the Amarna Period

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Amarna Period Egypt

- Eighteenth Pharaonic Dynasty Egypt (1550.BC-1292.BC); New Kingdom (1550.BC-1077.BC)
- Notable figures: Amenhotep IV/**Akhenaten**; Nefertiti; Aten, the Sun Disc; Amun, chief God of the New Kingdom era
- The Amarna Period of Egypt was a religious and social upheaval and attempted revival set in place by the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (1353.BC-1336.BC), the successor of **Amenhotep III** (1391.BC-1353.BC) and predecessor to the boy King **Tutankhamun** (1332.BC-1323.BC).
- Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaten around the fifth year of his reign in homage to the God **Aten**. (Tutankhamun is thought to have changed his name to reflect the God Amun following the fall of the Amarna period and death of Akhenaten, being previously recalled as Tutankhaten).
- Amarna was the city created by Akhenaten to become the new capital of the Egyptian kingdom during the religious revolution. Previously, the capital of Egypt had been Thebes in North Egypt (modern Luxor).
- The Amarna Period was a time of social and religious change in Egypt, beginning in the middle of Akhenaten's reign. To challenge the growing rival power of the Priests in Thebes, dedicated to the God Amun, Akhenaten created upheaval by instating the God Aten, an aspect of the God Ra, as the only God, converting Egypt from a religiously polytheistic one, to one of monotheism.



MetropolitanMuseum, "Two Princesses" ca.1353.BC-1336.BC,
Available at: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544058>

This object depicts two of the daughters of Akhenaten and, most likely, his chief wife Nefertiti (the two had six daughters during their marriage). Like with other discovered representations of the royal family of the Amarna period, a more candid and casual view is given, with affectionate gestures and different physical appearance given of the Princesses.



- Depictions of the royalty from the Eighteenth Dynasty and the Amarna Period are known for giving vastly different representations of the physical appearance of the Pharaohs. The statues, paintings and carvings depict the royals with human flaws in a way that had not been seen with other Dynasties. Pharaohs were depicted, as has been done by rulers across time, with strong and dominant auras; the power and control which the Pharaoh wanted to show himself as possessing was represented through visuals. Whereas the Amarna Period depictions show the royals with larger stomachs (depictions of Akhenaten have his stomach shown folded over the top of his clothes), the non-typical Egyptian features shown in their faces and headshapes, such as overly large foreheads and longer chins. There are also more casual scenes shown in their depictions, such as the one above, which is contrary to previous where the Pharaoh would show power as opposed to affection.

Relations with Greece

- There are many instances of interactions and relations between Greece and Egypt throughout the history of both civilisations. While the Amarna Period served as the last period of relations between Egypt and Crete, relations to the Mycenaean was still seen with international exchange. Artifacts inscribed with the names of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye have been discovered showing said relations. The exchange of objects that were dedicated or inscribed for royalty were important as shows of power and authority, as well as a kind of show of favour because of the wealth behind them.
- Diplomatic envoys would have been sent from both Egypt and Greece to deliver said objects as well as maintain the international relations.
- Some Egyptian artworks showed the Egyptians drawn above captured foreign individuals, these would send a message of Egyptian strength and domination. The New Kingdom of Egypt was the most wealthy and powerful, so the depiction of Egyptians and the Pharaoh's domination over their enemies would be a strong message to send to their international relations.