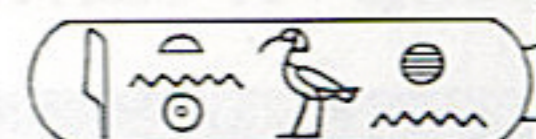


Stop 3: el-Amarna

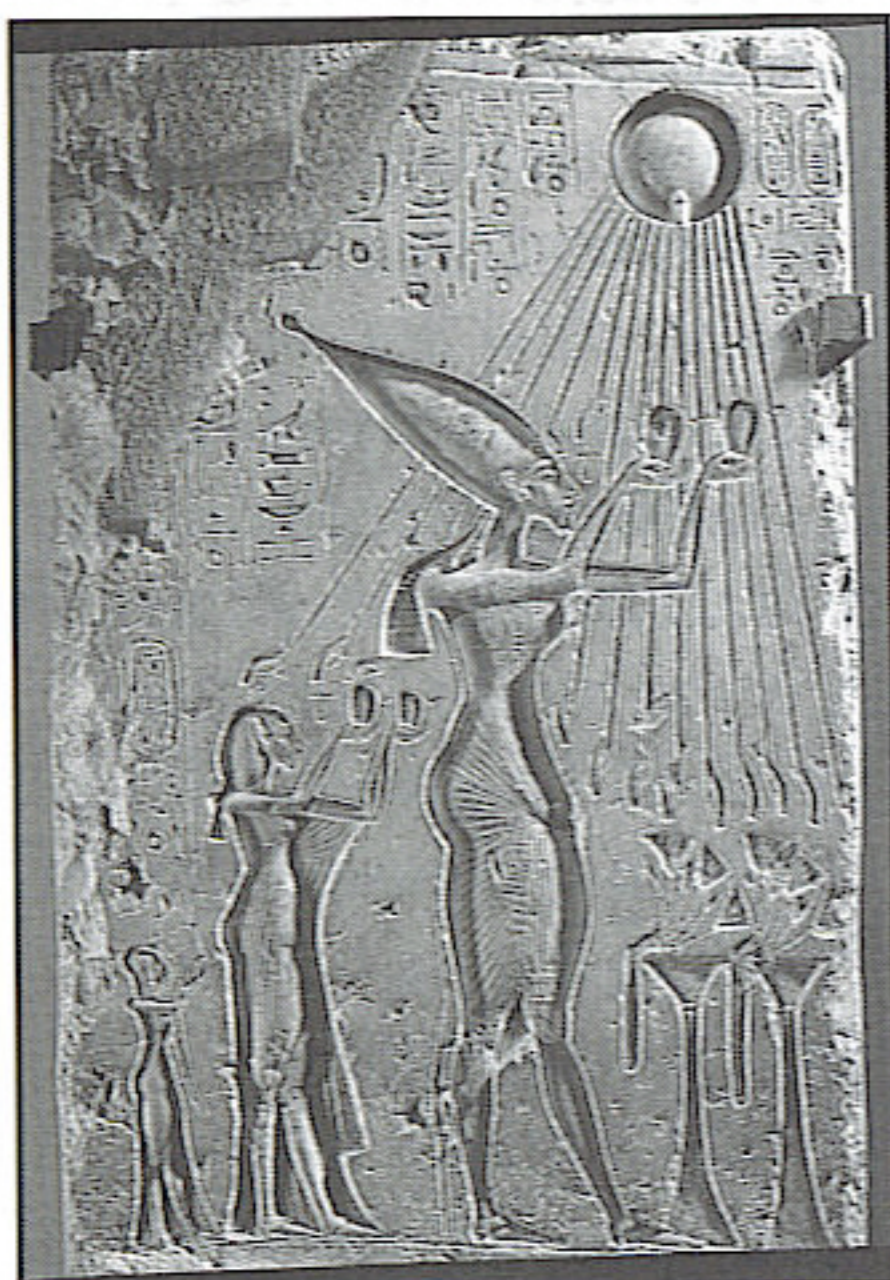


Statue of Akhenaten

Information on Akhenaten



Akhenaten (pronounced ah-ken-AH-ten) ruled Egypt from 1353 to 1335 B.C.E., during the New Kingdom. The entire reign of this pharaoh, who was first known as Amenhotep IV (pronounced ah-men-HO-tep), was marked by disputes, anger, and controversy over his religious beliefs. Shortly after Amenhotep became pharaoh, he changed his religious beliefs. He turned away from worshipping many Gods, including the God Amon, whom most Egyptians at the time considered very important. Instead, he began to worship Aten, the sun God who had been popular during the reigns of earlier pharaohs. Amenhotep gave up his original royal name and took the name Akhenaten, meaning “He Who Is of Service to Aten.” At the same time, he, his wife, and their followers abandoned the capital city of Thebes to start a new city more than 100 miles to the north, which they called Akhetaten (pronounced ahk-uht-AH-ten), the “Horizon of Aten.”



Akhenaten worshipping the God Aten

Akhenaten and his followers created spectacular new buildings and held elaborate ceremonies in their new temples and palaces. As the new capital city gained in riches, many craftspeople created unique and unusual works of art. Some of these creations showed the pharaoh in his most natural physical appearance. He was depicted without the rigid posture and formality with which previous pharaohs were shown. Many works of art also showed the pharaoh and his family in informal, even playful scenes. Akhenaten not only insisted on worshipping one God, Aten; he also attacked the other Egyptian Gods. When his followers began to destroy the statues and sites of these Gods, many Egyptian people became very angry. They felt that all of the familiar religious aspects of their lives were being taken away. By the time he died, Akhenaten had become so unpopular that his successors destroyed almost everything he had built in his new city. Some historians also believe that his successors also destroyed his corpse, which disappeared and has never been found.

Prompt: Create a simple drawing of one of Akhenaten’s subjects, with a voice bubble explaining why many Egyptians are upset with the pharaoh’s leadership.