

MUMMY 61074: A STRANGE CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY*

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Summary: Mummy 61074: A Strange Case of Mistaken Identity.

Priests of the Twenty-first Dynasty king Smendes I (1070-1043 BCE) had the unenviable task of quickly reburying the kings of the New Kingdom after the Valley of the Kings repeatedly had proven insecure as a final resting place. In the process of reburial these priests identified the mummies of the kings as quickly and as accurately as they could, but reasons exist to question some of their identifications. Mummy 61074, in the Cairo Museum, currently carries the identification of Amunhotep III (1386-1349 BCE). This paper examines Mummy 61074 and with the aid of x-ray and serological evidence proposes that 61074 is not Amunhotep III but his son Akhenaten.

Keywords: Akhenaten – Tutankhamun – mummy

Resumen: Momia 61074: un extraño caso de identidad equivocada.

Los sacerdotes del rey Smendes I de la Dinastía XXI (1070-1043 a.C.) desempeñaban la nada envidiable tarea de volver a enterrar a los reyes del Reino Nuevo, luego de que, de manera repetida, el Valle de los Reyes haya demostrado ser lo suficientemente inseguro. En el proceso de volver a enterrar los cuerpos, los sacerdotes identificaban las momias de los reyes tan rápida y seguramente como podían, pero existen razones para cuestionar algunas de sus identificaciones. La Momia 61074, hoy en el Museo de El Cairo, al día de hoy está identificada como la momia de Amenofis III (1386-1349 a.C.) Este trabajo examina la Momia 61074, y con la ayuda de rayos-X y evidencia serológica propone que 61074 no es Amenofis III, sino su hijo Ajenatón.

Palabras Clave: Ajenatón – Tutanjamón – momia

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Within the Cairo Museum rests Mummy 61074. Priests of the Twenty-first Dynasty king Hedjekheperre Setepenre Smendes I (1070-1043 BCE) identified 61074 as the Eighteenth Dynasty king Nebmaatre Amunhotep III (1386-1349 BCE). This paper examines Mummy 61074, the mummy of Nebkheperure Tutankhamun, and the mummy found in King's Valley Tomb (hereafter KV) 55. It establishes a sibling relationship between Tutankhamun and the KV55 mummy, then with the aid of x-ray and serological evidence proposes that 61074 fathered both, thus concluding that 61074 is not Amunhotep III but his son Neferkheperure-Waenre Akhenaten.

Ascending the throne around 1350 BCE as Amunhotep IV, Akhenaten (1350-1334 BCE) initiated a religious and cultural revolution. In Regnal Year 4, the king held a *heb sed* festival in which he revealed publicly the religion of the Aten, the sun disk aspect of Re-Herakhti and perhaps even the light from the sun disk, to the country.¹ This appears to have alienated the priesthood of the patron deity of the Eighteenth Dynasty kings, Amun, and an open rupture between the Amun priesthood and the king ensued as Akhenaten proclaimed the Aten the primary god of Egypt.² In time, he would close the temples of Amun throughout Egypt. The Aten initially gained prominence during the reign of Menkheperure Djehutymes IV, Akhenaten's grandfather.³ On a scarab from that king's reign, Djehutymes had called the Aten a god of battles. Later, during the lifetime of Akhenaten's father, Amunhotep III, philosophical discussion about the nature of the Aten became commonplace within the royal court. On one statue of Amunhotep III, found in the Luxor Cache, the king refers to himself as "*Amunhotep III: Shining Aten of All Lands.*"⁴ Amunhotep III had even adopted the Aten into one of his names: Tjekhenaten, meaning "*Radiance of the Aten.*"⁵ By the time Akhenaten became sole ruler of Egypt, the Aten stood poised to play a major role in Egyptian religion. In Akhenaten's Regnal Year 5, the king formally changed his nomen from Amunhotep IV to Akhenaten, and moved the capital of Egypt from Waset in Upper Egypt to Akhetaten in Middle Egypt. The Aten Revolution had begun in earnest.

¹ Gabolde 1998: 27; Forbes 2005-6: 75.

² Gabolde 1998: 28.

³ Aldred 1991 [1988]: 142.

⁴ Quirke 2001: 154.

⁵ Wilkinson 2003: 236.

In this revolution, Akhenaten altered the written language. No longer would scribes write in Middle Egyptian, but in the then popularly spoken Late Egyptian. Temple architecture would change as the king demanded that the Aten's temples open to the Sun instead of swathing priests in darkness like traditional temples.⁶ The king also introduced new rituals with his new cult, and the king himself would act as sole intermediary between man and the divine even to the point where one's existence in the afterlife would depend upon one's loyalty to the king and vicariously to the Aten. Along with such innovations in Egyptian religion and culture, Akhenaten also redefined Egyptian art. The king changed the traditional representation of the human figure; instead of the traditional eighteen grid canon, Akhenaten instituted a twenty grid matrix. The portrayal of all human figures transformed from a normal though stylized rendition to one with distended abdomens, elongated skulls, and spindly limbs. Because of this, Amarna representations of the human form remain the most distinctive in all of Egyptian art. Egyptologists often have interpreted the portrayals as faithful renditions of Akhenaten's physical form.

For over a century, archaeologists have postulated that Akhenaten suffered from any one of a number of medical conditions such as progressive lipodystrophy, Hypergonadism, Hydrocephalus, Froehlich's Syndrome, or more recently Marfan's Syndrome.⁷ These theories derive from studying some of the art of the early period of Akhenaten's reign, such as a group of steles that ring the perimeter of his capital city. On Boundary Stele S, Akhenaten appears with his queen, Nefertiti, and their two eldest daughters, Meritaten and Meketaten, worshipping the Aten. The Pharaoh and his family have elongated skulls; slanted eyes, fleshy lips, prominent (almost pointed) jaws, long thin necks, and narrow shoulders. They also have wide almost post-natal feminine hips and long spindly legs. This same style appears on a group of statues known as the Karnak Colossi. Along with the upper body features portrayed upon Boundary Stele S, the king sports tall Shu feathers from the top of his nemes headdress. This invocation of the god Shu may invoke that god's nature

⁶ Assmann 2001 [1984]: 209.

⁷ Brier 1999: 52-56. Although modern research has rendered the diagnoses of Hypergonadism, Hydrocephalus, and Froehlich's Syndrome unlikely, Bob Brier's proposal that the pharaoh suffered from Marfan's Syndrome cannot be dismissed as easily. Marfan's Syndrome is a hereditary genetic condition that manifests itself in elongated faces, deformed rib cages, and / or dislocation of the eye lenses. This syndrome is not fatal and could well explain Akhenaten's features but *not* to the extent of the early Amarna portrayals.

as both male and female at creation, and would explain the unusual physical depictions of the Amarna style.⁸

These representations date from the early years of the Aten Revolution, when Bek served as Akhenaten's Chief Sculptor. On the Stele of Bek and Men at Aswan, carved around Akhenaten's Regnal Year 9, Bek described himself as "the apprentice whom His Majesty instructed."⁹ Bek created the Karnak Colossi and Boundary Stele S. In the later years of the king's reign, these distortions subsided after Akhenaten had appointed a new Chief Sculptor: Djehutymes. The art recovered from his studio in Akhetaten do not have the look found in Bek's work.¹⁰ An example of Djehutymes' work from his studio is the painted limestone bust of Nefertiti. On the bust, Djehutymes did not portray the distortions characteristic of the Karnak Colossi. Instead he created very natural eyes, a small (almost turned-up) nose, graceful lips, a delicate, well-defined chin, and a strong, slender neck. But the monuments of Akhenaten themselves do not provide enough evidence to diagnose Hydrocephalus, Hypergonadism, Froehlich's Syndrome, or Marfan's Syndrome. On the contrary, differences in the styles of Bek and Djehutymes indicate that the early Amarna style was indeed an artistic style based upon and exaggerating the physique of Akhenaten and his family. Amarna art was just one vehicle among many which propelled the Aten Revolution. Naturally, the only way to know conclusively is to compare Akhenaten's body to the portrayals of him upon the monuments. At the commencement of the twentieth century, many Egyptologists believed that they could do just that.

In 1907, archaeologist Theodore M. Davis found an unfinished tomb subsequently labeled KV55. Within KV55, Davis found remains of the funerary equipment of Tiye, Akhenaten's mother, and possibly Kiya, one of Akhenaten's wives.¹¹ Kiya held the formal title of "*Greatly Beloved Wife of the King*" in Akhenaten's court.¹² He also found a mummy and initially identified it as Queen Tiye herself. Secure identification of the mummy proved difficult due to the random assortment of five names throughout the tomb: Amunhotep

⁸ Johnson 1996: 80.

⁹ Aldred 1991 [1988]: 94.

¹⁰ Aldred 1985 [1980]: 182.

¹¹ James 2000: 41.

¹² Van Dijk 2000: 278.

III, Tiye, Akhenaten, Kiya, and Tutankhamun.¹³ Later investigation revealed this individual to be male. Due to similarities between the monuments of Akhenaten and this mummy, and due to a gold sheet found with the mummy that appeared to have once contained the name of Akhenaten, Egyptologists believed that they had found the king.¹⁴ Later investigation of the coffin itself revealed that a king had adapted it from Kiya's funerary equipment, and that someone had obliterated the name of Akhenaten from the cartouches on the coffin.¹⁵ An examination of the mummy by Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, Professor of Anatomy at the Cairo School of Medicine, seemed to confirm the identity of the KV55 Mummy as Akhenaten.¹⁶ Later, in 1922, Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun. A November 1925 examination of Tutankhamun's mummy noted that the shape of Tutankhamun's skull very closely resembled that of the KV55 Mummy.¹⁷

In December 1967, R.G. Harrison, Derby Professor of Anatomy at the University of Liverpool, began an anatomical examination of the KV55 Mummy. Forensic evidence indicated that the KV55 Mummy had died around his 20th year, and definitely before his 25th year.¹⁸ In addition, Harrison found no evidence of Hydrocephalus in the skull, but he noted that it exhibited striking similarities and facial appearances with Tutankhamun's.¹⁹ He identified the KV55 mummy as Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare, the co-regent of Akhenaten during the latter's final years and his possible successor. Another analysis of Smenkhkare, made in 1984 by James E. Harris and Fawzia Hussein, concluded that Smenkhkare may have died at or over age 35.²⁰ Yet a third investigation of the mummy, by James E. Harris and Edward F. Wente, settled upon a 30-35 age range. These three date ranges illustrate the difficulties encountered in forensic investigations of mummies; however, one may reasonably presume

¹³ Gabolde 1998: 264.

¹⁴ Brier 1994: 122.

¹⁵ Gabolde 1998: 255.

¹⁶ Brier 1994: 228.

¹⁷ Derry 1972: 228.

¹⁸ Harrison 1966: 95-119.

¹⁹ Harrison 1966: 111-115.

²⁰ Wente 1995: 2.

that Smenkhkare died sometime between his 25th and 30th years. He died sometime in or shortly after his own Regnal Year 1.²¹

In a serological examination of the two mummies conducted in December 1968, Harrison found that both Tutankhamun and Smenkhkare possessed the A₂ blood type, with MN antigens.²² From this study, Harrison concluded that the two most likely were brothers.²³ Then in 1976, Harrison and his team conducted serological work upon Mummy 61074 and compared the results with those from Smenkhkare and Tutankhamun. He found the blood and antigen type of Mummy 61074 to be A₂M, whereas Tutankhamun's and Smenkhkare's were A₂MN.²⁴ In addition, Harrison also tested the mummies of the maternal grandparents of Tutankhamun, Thuya and Yuya, and found those mummies to have held A₂N.²⁵ From these findings he concluded that Mummy 61074 could have fathered both Tutankhamun and Smenkhkare.²⁶

Egyptologists identify Mummy 61074, one of the most severely damaged royal mummies, as Amunhotep III because of a notation that the priests of the Twenty-first Dynasty king Smendes I had written upon its wrappings almost three hundred years after Amunhotep III's death.²⁷ Beginning in December 1967, a team consisting of members from the University of Michigan and Alexandria University conducted an x-ray and anatomical analysis of the mummy. The team found that Mummy 61074 had died between his 30th and 35th years;²⁸ however, Egyptian records indicate that Amunhotep III had reached at least 48 years old at his death.²⁹ Some Egyptologists have questioned the validity of the Michigan-Alexandria team's findings since the team seemed to consistently report lower ages for the mummies than the historical record

²¹ Peden 2001: 63-64. A damaged grafito in the tomb of Pairi (TT139) dates from Regnal Year 3 of "Ankhkheperure mer[...] Neferneferuaten merwaen[...]," but unfortunately reveals nothing about whether or not Smenkhkare and Ankhkheperure are the same king.

²² Harrison *et al.* 1969: 325-326.

²³ Harrison *et al.* 1969: 325-326.

²⁴ Connolly and Harrison 1976: 184-186.

²⁵ Connolly and Harrison 1976: 185.

²⁶ Connolly and Harrison 1976: 185.

²⁷ Harris and Wente 1980: 352.

²⁸ Harris and Wente 1980: 202.

²⁹ Harris and Wente 1980: 255.

granted. Although a slower maturation rate for ancient North Africans could partially explain the discrepancy, misidentification of some of the mummies by the ancient priests could also explain the variations.³⁰

In 1978, Egyptologist Edward S. Meltzer contended that if the mummy that fathered Tutankhamun and Smenkhkare were Amunhotep III then he and Akhenaten would have shared a long co-regency.³¹ Tutankhamun ascended the throne at about age nine. If the young king had ascended the throne immediately after Akhenaten had died in his own Regnal Year 17, then Tutankhamun could have been born no earlier than Akhenaten's Regnal Year 8. However sometime in his Regnal Years 15-17, Akhenaten took one Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten as co-regent. Neferneferuaten, whom James Allen has identified convincingly as Akhenaten's fourth daughter Neferneferuaten tasherit, reached a highest attested Regnal Year 3.³² After the death of Neferneferuaten, very likely after Akhenaten had already died, Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare ruled for about one year before Tutankhamun succeeded to the throne.³³ With a range of one and four years between the death of Akhenaten and the ascension of Tutankhamun, the birth year of the young king becomes Akhenaten's Regnal Years 9-12.

Allen theorizes that Akhenaten could not have had any sons because he chose Neferneferuaten tasherit to serve as his co-regent, but to presume that Akhenaten, an unconventional king, chose Neferneferuaten tasherit because he had no sons to enthrone, may presume too much.³⁴ Akhenaten seems to have spent much of his reign surrounded by powerful women. His mother Tiye involved herself in foreign affairs; one diplomatic dispatch (Amarna Letter 26) survives addressed to Tiye from Tushratta, King of Mitanni. Evidence from Akhetaten hints that Nefertiti may have supervised or conducted the daily sunset ritual of the Aten. For Akhenaten to appoint a daughter to co-regency need not necessarily indicate that he had no sons to raise to the uraeus.

Some Egyptologists maintain that Amunhotep III and Akhenaten reigned jointly until Akhenaten's Regnal Year 12.³⁵ Were that true, then in a

³⁰Wente 1995: 2.

³¹Meltzer 1978: 134-135.

³²Allen 2006: 5, 15.

³³Gabolde 1998: 221.

³⁴Allen 2006: 9.

³⁵Aldred 1991 [1988]: 180.

twelve year co-regency Amunhotep III easily could have fathered Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, and Tutankhamun. However, this scenario proves difficult to reconcile with the anatomical finding that Mummy 61074 likely fathered both Smenkhkare and Tutankhamun and died at an age at least one decade too young to be Amunhotep III. The one tablet upon which such a proposed co-regency rests, a hieratic notation upon the edge of Amarna Letter EA27, appears from photographic evidence to read “[Regnal] Year 2, Month 1 of Spring, Day 2,” so the possibility of a long co-regency becomes difficult to support.³⁶ Amunhotep III probably died sometime around Akhenaten’s Regnal Year 2, which would have fallen sometime after Amunhotep III’s Regnal Year 38.³⁷

Tutankhamun was born no earlier than Akhenaten’s Regnal Year 9; although, serological evidence indicates that Mummy 61074 fathered him. Inscriptional evidence fails to support a twelve year co-regency between Amunhotep III and Akhenaten. Therefore, Amunhotep III could not have sired Tutankhamun.

In addition to the medical evidence, two clues from Akhetaten support Akhenaten’s paternity of Tutankhamun. In the first inscription, Hermopolis Block 234-VI originally from Akhetaten, Akhenaten called Tutankhamun “*the King’s Bodily son [z3-nswt n ht.f], beloved of him, Tutankhuaten,*” thus claiming Tutankhamun as his son.³⁸ Although some Egyptologists have dismissed this talatat as Tutankhamun’s propaganda, two similar inscriptions from Akhetaten demonstrate that such talatat faithfully record paternity. One of the inscriptions states: “*King’s bodily daughter, his beloved, Meritaten, may she live forever.*”³⁹ The second inscription is Hermopolis Block 234-VI itself which records the same about Ankhesenpaaten (Ankhesenamun).

The second clue lies within the tomb of Akhenaten outside of his capital city. Within three chambers of this tomb, known as the Meketaten Suite, rooms Alpha and Gamma portray Akhenaten and Nefertiti mourning the death of a princess or princesses after childbirth. The inscription in room Gamma identifies the princess as Meketaten. On Wall F of room Alpha, however, the

³⁶ Harris and Wente 1980: 256; Peden 2001: 69-70. At Dahshur exists a badly damaged graffito mentioning an unknown ruler in his Regnal Year 32 associated with Neferkheperure [Akhenaten], but no regnal year for Neferkheperure appears to indicate any co-regency.

³⁷ Harris and Wente 1980: 136.

³⁸ Harris and Wente 1980: 136.

³⁹ Murnane 1995: 206.

portrayal changes slightly. The name of the dead princess no longer appears and a royal fan bearer attends the infant, indicating a royal birth and possibly that of a son. Geoffrey Martin, who surveyed the Meketaten Suite, believes the unknown princess in room Alpha to be Akhenaten's "greatly beloved" wife Kiya and her newborn son Tutankhuaten.⁴⁰ Murnane and Allen have contended that the newborns have no biological relation with the deathbed scenes accompanying them, but the registers suggest strongly that this is not the case and that the newborns are the offspring of the unfortunate women on their deathbeds.⁴¹

Kiya died in about Regnal Year 11 of Akhenaten's 17-year reign.⁴² Assuming that Akhenaten died at the age of 38, and assuming that the Meketaten Suite indeed portrays Kiya and Tutankhamun, then Tutankhamun was 5-8 years old when Akhenaten died in Regnal Year 17. In addition, since Egyptian records indicate that Amunhotep III had reached the age of at least 48 by the time of his death and considering that 61074 died sometime around age 35, then Mummy 61074 cannot be Amunhotep III.

Mummy 61074 fathered Tutankhamun and Smenkhkare; however, serological and inscriptional evidence cast doubts upon 61074's identification as Amunhotep III. In the 1970s, a joint team from the University of Michigan and Alexandria University performed the most thorough examination of the royal mummies in the Cairo Museum to date. In its 1980 report, the Michigan-Alexandria team wrote:

*"It must be remembered that we are discussing here the facial skeleton and not the soft tissue features such as the nose...If we speculated, however, that the mummy of Amunhotep III was misidentified by the priests of the Twenty-First Dynasty, and we then classified it by only the cranio-facial skeleton, we would have to conclude that he appears to be most similar to the portraits of Akhenaten!"*⁴³

Aside from noting the similarities of the craniofacial skeleton of Mummy 61074 to the monuments of Akhenaten, the Michigan-Alexandria

⁴⁰ Brier 1999: 84.

⁴¹ Allen 2006: 12.

⁴² Forbes 1997: 86.

⁴³ Harris and Wente, 1980: 353. Although the Michigan-Alexandria Team did not say to which monuments it considered 61074 similar.

team also noticed that Mummy 61074 lacked those medical conditions such as Hypergonadism, Hydrocephalus, and Froehlich's Syndrome, that some archaeologists believed Akhenaten to have possessed.⁴⁴ Mummy 61074 died around age 35; Akhenaten died around age 38. The serological evidence and the similar cranio-facial structures, noted by the Michigan-Alexandria team, permit only one conclusion: Mummy 61074 is Akhenaten: the father of Tutankhamun and Smenkhkare. This identification could explain the violent damage to Mummy 61074, damage which Wenté considered "*more than what tomb-robbers generally inflicted upon the mummies in search of precious items,*" as either possible retaliation against the Aten Revolution or deliberate neglect of the mummy of a heretic.⁴⁵ As to Amunhotep III, Wenté has suggested that Smendes I's priests may also have misidentified Akhenaten's father: "*Only the Amenhotep II mummy [Mummy 61069] provides a suitable father to the Amenhotep III mummy [61074],*" he concluded.⁴⁶

At this time, technology has not reached a state where DNA and RNA testing in mummies could either confirm or deny any familial relationships between Mummy 61074, Mummy 61069, the KV55 Mummy, and Tutankhamun; however, both serological and anatomical evidence supports 61074's identity as Akhenaten as well as his paternity of both Smenkhkare and Tutankhamun. Inscriptional evidence from Akhetaten supports this conclusion. Future studies of the KV55 Mummy and of Mummy 61074, such as CAT scans like the one performed upon Tutankhamun in 2005, hopefully will shed more light on the familial relationships of the late Eighteenth Dynasty kings.

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⁴⁴ Harris and Weeks 1973: 143.

⁴⁵ Wenté 1995: 2.

⁴⁶ Wenté 1995: 2.

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