

# Putin Thinks He is a Great Strategist, but He Is Duplicating the Madness of Akhenaten, and It Shows

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## Abstract

: Aside from the fiasco of Ukraine, the other news is that Putin's nation is decomposing as China is now in the position of taking over key trading nodes of Siberia, as Putin drives his economy to third world status. The blindness and delusion so prevalent is only equaled by the so called "First Individual" of world history, Akhenaten, whom ruined Egypt as a major power for over half a century until the time of Rameses II

### I. Introduction

This is the tweet of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, See it here.

Gerashchenko (@Anton Gerashchenko) Tweeted: Congratulations to the great geopolitical strategist Putin.

China has approved Vladivostok in Russia as a cross-border transit port for domestic trade shipments in Northeast China's Jilin Province from June 1, - Chinese customs. This will boost Chinese domestic trade.... [https://twitter.com/gerashchenko\\_en/status/1659088897920385025?s=51&t=xAD8sDD-Z3SYAShZORhweQ](https://twitter.com/gerashchenko_en/status/1659088897920385025?s=51&t=xAD8sDD-Z3SYAShZORhweQ)

### II. Why is this tweet so important?

Aside from nearly one million Russians, leaving the Russian Federation, many of them in the high technology sector, the other news is that China is weaving an arc of binding Siberian cities to PRC territories, which is making Siberia a way station of Chinese trade

### III. Putin as re duplicating the madness of Akhenaten, who fantasized that he alone would pray to Aten, and his subjects then pray to him, as a power grab

The mistake that people make is of comparing Vladimir Putin to Peter the Great of Russia. It is delusional to make that comparison and there is yet a far more damning comparison to make.

quote

Akhenaten's promotion of the Aten cult soon intensified. He changed his name from Amenhotep to Akhenaten – One Who is Effective for the Aten – and redirected revenue from Egypt's temples into the Aten cult. Teams of workers were dispatched to chisel out the names and images of other gods from the walls of monuments. Amun, Mut and Khonsu, the patron gods of Thebes, were especially targeted. This removal work was often sloppy and incomplete, but it must surely have been an affront to Egypt's religious institutions.

In the fifth year of his reign, Akhenaten announced plans to create a new cult arena entirely for the Aten. He chose a place halfway between Memphis (Cairo) and Thebes (Luxor) and named it Akhenaten – Horizon of the Aten. The site is known today as Amarna. Whether driven by religious fervor or a political desire to distance himself from the priesthood of Amun, Akhenaten's abandonment of Thebes was a remarkable step away from the status quo.

end of quote

Neither of the above was true. Akhenaten wanted the people of Egypt to pray to him, as a way to centralize power away from the priests, and to then fantasize whatever garbage he wanted as to his imaginary "Aten" being. He, Akhenaten was to be the real source of veneration, and who cares about the economy?

How about PUTIN?

Gets better yet.

quote

After all, the 190,000-square-foot, billion-dollar complex, perched on a rugged bluff overlooking the Black Sea, has every luxury that an autocrat could possibly desire. As revealed by Alexei Navalny's investigation, the palace has its own church, wine cellar, and casino. It has a hookah lounge complete with a stripper pole, an arboretum, and an ice rink for the hockey games Putin likes to play with cronies. But good luck ordering takeout — security is tight. Putin's imperial dacha is sealed off from the country he rules by 17,000 acres of woodland and a special no-fly zone.

The precautions are more than paranoia on Putin's part. Earlier this month, Russian authorities claimed that two drones had attempted to assassinate Putin in a failed strike that ended in an explosion above the Kremlin.

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#### IV. Paging Putin as the new Akhenaten

One little nit in all this fantasy as to a new dawn created by Putin: Crimea is extremely vulnerable.

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Perhaps the biggest drawback to a drone blockade is the time it would take. Siege warfare has always been slow and painstaking. Sapping the capabilities and morale of Russian forces by disrupting their supply lines is one thing. If the goal is to liberate Crimea and force the Russians out — as Ukrainian officials have repeatedly vowed to do — that may require a ground offensive.

But Ukrainians and Russians can both read a map. The obvious Ukrainian strategy is to drive eastward across southern Ukraine and the Black Sea coast, cutting off the neck of the peninsula. The obvious Russian strategy is to defend that area, and in fact Russian forces have built [multiple fortified lines](#) meant to thwart attacks by land or sea.

That is a recipe for a bloodbath, but blockading Crimea with robot attack boats may be a way around it.

End of quote

You would think Putin does not get it. Akhenaten managed to ruin his nation in a decade of misrule and Vladimir Putin is doing the same thing to Russia.

#### V. Now for the Akhenaten horror

Keep in mind that in the capital city of Amarna, nearly 50% of the population 3400 or so years ago showed signs of severe malnutrition. A showing of complete contempt for Egypt's people as food, crops, and trade were to be subordinated to the biggest con pulled on a population in world history. That when Akhenaten demanded that the Egyptian people pray to HIM, and HE in turn was the sole conduit to his made-up God Aten. Sweet.

Done to such an extreme that later Pharaohs, in total disgust, literally wrote Akhenaten out of the official kings (of Egypt) listing of rulers.

Amarna is well preserved only because it was almost immediately abandoned, and its population vacated a charnel house where most of its inhabitants were starving.

quote

Today, the ruins of Akhenaten at Amarna form a remarkable archaeological site: one of the most intact cities to survive from the ancient world and one containing the houses, temples, palaces, streets and cemeteries of a single generation. Archaeological work here has focused not only on the Aten cult but also on the lives and experiences of Akhenaten's people.

end of quote

We should help the Ukrainians and Freed Russians later tear down the bunker Putin squats in, so as not to have a later day Akhenaten at Amara type horror in the future.

How is the situation with Putin equivalent to Akhenaten? Both rulers are burning their nation states to the ground, for very much the same reason.

- A. Akhenaten, as a false prophet, had his fraudulent Aten worship solely to disempower the Egyptian priesthood. In doing so, the fact that the empire in Syria up to the Euphrates River won by Thutmose III collapsed due to the Egyptian Army being sent back to Egypt to terrorize Egyptians made little impression on Akhenaten. He did not care. And ordinary Egyptians starved to death.
- B. In the case of Putin, the fact that 1 billion people worldwide could starve to death due to his attack on Ukraine, means nothing to him. The lives of over a billion people could be lost if Putin disregards little things like the vital role Ukraine plays in feeding up to a billion third world nationals.
- C. Mean time Lavrov, in the hypocritical remark of the century, blames UKRAINE and its allies for blocking of Winter wheat and more in the Black Sea region.

VI. A worthwhile image which encapsulates, starting off with Pacific ports the future of Siberia as an economic colony of China



The above territory is what will be economically controlled by Beijing. Keep in mind that this is not delineating actual direct political control, but with an economy 1/10 the size of China, the Russian Federation is turning into China's giant petrol station.

VII. This tweet shows what Putin THINKS he is doing.

The tweet below is a nice summary of the supposed strategy of the Russian dictator.

- A. He wishes to “humiliate the west” and to destroy the economic order allegedly too beneficial to America and Europe

Fine and dandy, but when you threaten to starve one BILLION people via blockading wheat shipments, you do not destroy an economic order, you are committing genocide.

- B. Wanting to achieve “Greatness.”

Oops, Putin is not Peter the Great. As stated, before he is the Russian equivalent to Akhenaten,



**Andrei V Kozyrev**

@andreivkozyrev



Putin does not want to commit nuclear suicide, but he dreams of successfully intimidating and humiliating the West in contrast to his Soviet predecessors. That is his strategic goal, not just the conquest of Ukraine, which would be the first step to greatness.

[Tweet übersetzen](#)

17:03 · 03 Feb. 23 · **44K** Mal angezeigt

- VIII. And here is a little inconvenient truth for Vladimir Putin to face up to

It so happens that 43 countries have signed onto a registry which will have ALL the damages created by the Russian Federation created.

This is not going away,

 **Jay in Kyiv**  @JayinKyiv · 1 Std. 

43 countries sign a register that will catalogue all damages caused by Russia's war on the civilized world.

What's coming for Russia will make the Treaty of Versailles look like a petting zoo.



 5  23  132  3 077 

[Putin as re duplicating the madness of Akhenaten, who fantasized that he alone would pray to Aten, and his subjects then pray to him, as a power grab](#)

Below is the pulse article written weeks ago to commemorate the horror this development engenders.

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**Revealed: Vladimir Putin's secret Black Sea bunker**

[Mattathias Schwartz](#) and [Anastasiia Carrier](#)

May 17, 2023, 7:00 AM EDT



You would think that the architects who designed Vladimir Putin's palace thought of everything.

After all, the 190,000-square-foot, billion-dollar complex, perched on a rugged bluff overlooking the Black Sea, has every luxury that an autocrat could possibly desire. As revealed by Alexei Navalny's investigation, the palace has its own church, wine cellar, and casino. It has a hookah lounge complete with a stripper pole, an arboretum, and an ice rink for the hockey games Putin likes to play with cronies. But good luck ordering takeout — security is tight. Putin's imperial dacha is sealed off from the country he rules by 17,000 acres of woodland and a special no-fly zone.

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But, despite all these princely luxuries and castle-like defenses, the palace's builders appear to have neglected one crucial detail. They failed to hide plans showing two elaborate tunnels running beneath the palace complex — plans that any competent state-security apparatus would fight tooth-and-nail to keep secret.

[In fact, they were posted](#) publicly to the Russian internet. Metro Style, a now-defunct Russian contractor, posted the diagrams to their website to showcase their work in the early 2010's. They were viewable online as late as 2016.

Today, Insider is publishing annotated versions of the diagrams with English-language translations, which can be viewed below.

The underground complex beneath Putin's palace consists of two separate tunnels connected by an elevator that descends roughly 50 meters below the surface. The architectural plans show the tunnels encased in thick concrete are supplied with enough fresh water, ventilation and extensive cables to support VIP occupants for days or weeks at a time. An expert who reviewed the tunnel plans saw signs of Putin's obsession with survival at a time other strongmen were falling.

"Putin has a lot of anxiety about being the not-entirely-legitimate leader of Russia," said Michael C. Kimmage, a former State Department official who worked on Russia and Ukraine policy. "So knowing that his legitimacy is not entirely secured by elections, he is going to seek to maximize his personal safety through a complex of well-defended personal residences."

The exits from those tunnels are visible just below the palace complex, on the bare cliff rising up from the beach:

The lower tunnel includes a moving walkway leading to the exit. "This tunnel set-up has all kinds of safety and security," said Thaddeus Gabryszewski, a structural engineer familiar with defensive structures who reviewed the diagrams for Insider. "There's a fire system. There's water, there's sewer. This is intended for someone to survive or escape."

All leaders of nuclear states make plans for extreme contingencies. The US president has an emergency bunker beneath the White House, and Mount Weather in Virginia. But unlike US facilities, the Black Sea complex was privately funded and remains privately owned. It appears intended not to ensure the continuity of a political system so much as the survival of one individual. Putin's investment in a tunnel complex beneath a brand-new vacation home, built during years when he was still publicly flirting with Russian integration into Europe, is evidence of just how long the Russian leader has been preparing for threats, and building the trapdoors he would need to shelter or escape. "We have to see this as part of a long confrontation with the West that has marked the last 13 or 14 years of Putin's life," said Kimmage.

"These images are not blueprints," Gabryszewski told Insider. "They are closer to architectural drawings. They show you the intent, the flow, and the premise of these spaces."

The two tunnels are approximately 40 and 60 meters long, respectively, and 6 meters wide, creating about 6,500 square feet of potential living space that bears signs of being blast-proof. Their ability to withstand the impact of a nuclear blast or a bunker-buster bomb would depend on two factors that aren't in the diagrams — how the tunnels' 15-inch-thick concrete shells are reinforced, and the material used to fill the area around them, Gabryszewski said.

They show several features that suggest Putin commissioned the structure with worst-case scenarios in mind. Especially striking are 16 cable racks, each about a foot wide, embedded into the wall of the lower tunnel. These racks are designed for the "conduit" cables that can carry electricity, lighting, copper wire and fiber optic cable needed for a command post.

The sheer volume of conduit running through the lower tunnel is important because it's far more than would likely be necessary to operate the tunnel's own internal systems. "Those trays could be for communications, lighting, power — anything that goes through a cable or tube," Gabryszewski said. "It's an awful lot of cable just for the tunnel itself. So it could be some kind of back-up system for the palace complex." Rather than serving merely as an escape passage, one of the tunnels' purposes appears to be a kind of emergency spinal cord for the entire palace complex.

Neither the Moscow-based company that acquired Metro Style, nor Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin's chief spokesperson, responded to requests for comment. Amid mass protests triggered by Navalny's 2021 video investigation, Putin denied owning the Black Sea palace.

Metro Style, a company founded in the 90's by three men who have gone on to find several construction companies since, was also hired by the Russian government to dig subway tunnels beneath Moscow. When the company posted the diagrams to their website, they did not specify that the Black Sea tunnels were built for Putin. Instead, they described "a complex of underground structures for a boarding house in the city of Gelendzhik, Krasnodar Territory." Gelendzhik is the town closest to the palace complex, a five-hour drive from the resort city of Sochi.

The existence of the fortified tunnels, nearly 1,000 miles away from Moscow, demonstrates that Putin isn't just focused on indulging his taste for the high life near a resort town. He is also

concerned with staying alive. Survivalism was a likely driver behind the tunnels' remote location, said Kimmage, the former State Department official who is now a professor at Catholic University. "The two times there has been a big transition in Russian history — 1917 and 1991 — the status of the capital city and the leader's position there has been a big issue," Kimmage said. "Putin is solving for that contingency by establishing a network of residences that are as far from the center as possible. So, a tunnel system within the Black Sea complex makes a lot of sense. Even without an active threat, he's going to be worrying about this eventuality."

A cutaway diagram showing the interior of the elevator shaft connecting the two tunnels indicates six separate ventilation shafts designed to deliver fresh or filtered air to the tunnel's occupants.

The multiple ventilation shafts and the two separate tunnels could have been designed with a chemical attack in mind, layering in redundancies that make it harder to wholly constrict the palace's supply of clean air; the multiple cable conduits could serve similar purposes. Two separate portals on the hillside "create a secondary and tertiary backup for ventilation," said Gabryszewski. "If there's some kind of attack, Putin has got two sources of air intake, one high and one low."

The diagrams do not offer any detailed views of structures to the east of the tunnel complex. Given that it appears to connect the tunnels with a road, it's possible that the eastern structures are designed to be a route through which supplies can be loaded through the hidden elevator and into the palace complex. Gabryszewski highlighted an area near the end of the road, beside the tunnel complex, that could be used for loading and unloading shipments of supplies.

A link to the diagrams, saved for posterity on the Wayback Machine internet archive, circulated for years among a Moscow subculture known as "diggers," urban explorers who visit and document forbidden sites, before appearing in a [comprehensive report on the palace](#) assembled by Navalny, the Russian opposition politician who is now serving a 9-year sentence in a Russian penal colony. The diagrams were first brought to Insider's attention by an anonymous digger who said he was affiliated with a group called "Sect Ze." A spokesperson for the group said in an email exchange that they were sharing their findings "because we are tired of Putin's stupid face and want to show his paranoid underground transport." In a follow-up video call, he said he is speaking up to "bring closer the end of the regime."

Kimmage, the former State Department official, said that Putin's careful preparations more than a decade ago indicate how long his mind has been focused on the possibility of existential conflict with the West.

"With the war in Ukraine," Kimmage said, "there's speechmaking, there's propaganda, there's exaggeration — there's this performative aspect that plays to Russia's domestic politics. But this is also deadly real. Putin perceives himself as being engaged in a confrontation with the West. The nuclear dimension is an important part of that. He knows he is standing on top of a volcano. He doesn't seem to be so psychopathic as to initiate a nuclear conflict — he has grandchildren — but he's been standing on that edge for a very long time. These tunnels, this bunker, is a part of that."

Mattathias Schwartz is Insider's chief national security correspondent. He can be reached by email at [schwartz79@protonmail.com](mailto:schwartz79@protonmail.com).

Anastasiia Carrier is a Detroit-based freelance reporter focusing on Russia, disinformation, and current affairs. She earned an M.S. from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and her work has appeared in POLITICO, The Wire China and Radcliffe Magazine.

End of quote

And how Crimea will become the next battleground.

quote

### **Ukraine's military may not be able to retake Crimea, but it can make life hell for Russians there, experts say**

Michael Peck May 17, 2023, 7:17 AM EDT

- Ukraine is gearing up for what's expected to be a counteroffensive against Russian forces.
- There's debate inside and outside of Ukraine about whether and how Kyiv can recapture Crimea.
- Retaking the peninsula would be tough, but Ukrainian forces can isolate it, two US experts say.

Rather than a costly ground offensive to liberate Crimea from Russian control, there may be an easier way: Use unmanned boats to attack Russian forces and blockade the peninsula, argue two American experts.

Ukraine does not "need to drive occupying forces out of Crimea to render it less hospitable to Russia's purposes," William Courtney and Scott Savitz, two researchers at the RAND Corporation think tank, wrote in an essay published by [The Moscow Times](#) in April.

Defending the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia invaded and annexed in 2014, has historically presented a quandary. A land invasion from the northwest — the direct route — must cross the narrow and easily defended Perekop isthmus between the peninsula and the mainland.

On the other hand, a hostile army can just as easily block communications between Crimea and the mainland. This would force Russia to supply the peninsula either by sea or by road and rail using the 11-mile [Kerch Strait bridge](#) on the eastern side of the peninsula, which connects Crimea with the Taman peninsula in southern Russia.

In October, a Ukrainian truck bomb badly damaged the bridge, which Ukrainian officials recently said they would target as part of the counteroffensive.

The result is that Russia's ability to supply and reinforce its military in Crimea — or retreat, if need be — by land depends on two precarious chokepoints.

"The geography that makes Crimea hard to invade facilitates a modern-day siege," Courtney and Savitz wrote. "All Russian movements by land must pass through one of two constrained corridors. The first entails traversing hundreds of miles of occupied territory, including areas relatively close to the front and crawling with hostile populations, saboteurs, and special forces. The final gauntlet is the isthmus, a target-rich place with minimal room for maneuver and within range of current Ukrainian weapons."

That leaves the Black Sea route. Ideally, Ukraine would either launch an amphibious invasion of the peninsula — as Britain and France did in the Crimean War in 1854 — or starve out the Russians through a naval blockade.

But the Ukrainian navy is much too weak to take on Russia's Black Sea Fleet, which lost its flagship but still fields about six diesel-electric submarines as well as several dozen missile-armed frigates, corvettes, patrol craft, and other support vessels.

But Ukraine could use unmanned surface vessels laden with explosives to damage and destroy Russian ships. Ukraine has already employed USVs to [damage Russian warships](#) and to [attack the Russian naval base at Sevastopol](#), at the southern tip of the Crimean peninsula.

"USVs are well-suited for networked swarm attacks, and relatively low-cost," Courtney and Savitz wrote. "Their nascent designs can be modified to make them stealthier and harder to detect than most crewed vessels. Sinking a warship in a confined channel could create obstacles that would take weeks to clear, or longer if under fire."

If sea and land links to Crimea were blocked, that would only leave air transport. Supplying Russian forces on the peninsula — including the Black Sea Fleet — would require far more airlift capacity than Russia has. "Ukraine could attenuate this flow by targeting runways and fuel facilities on the peninsula," they wrote.

"Augmented by other weapons, Ukrainian forces could hinder Russian forces from using it as a safe haven from which to attack the mainland or threaten Black Sea shipping," Courtney and Savitz added. "Rattled by attacks, short of supplies, and somewhat isolated, Russian forces in Crimea could become less capable."

A naval drone blockade has its risks. Ukrainian aerial drones and GPS-guided weapons such as HIMARS rockets are already being hampered by Russian jamming. It is possible that Russia could devise some defense or countermeasure against USVs, especially if they have naval and air superiority over the Black Sea.

Perhaps the biggest drawback to a drone blockade is the time it would take. Siege warfare has always been slow and painstaking. Sapping the capabilities and morale of Russian forces by disrupting their supply lines is one thing. If the ultimate goal is to liberate Crimea and force the Russians out — as Ukrainian officials have repeatedly vowed to do — that may require a ground offensive.

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Michael Peck is a defense writer whose work has appeared in Forbes, Defense News, Foreign Policy magazine, and other publications. He holds a master's in political science. Follow him on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

end of quote

And of the madness of the Aten cult in Egypt

<https://arce.org/resource/akhenaten-nefertiti-aten-many-gods-one/>

quote

### **Akhenaten, Nefertiti & Aten: From Many Gods to One**

By Anna Stevens

University of Cambridge & Monash University

The reign of King Akhenaten stands out in ancient Egyptian history for artistic innovation, the creation of a new religious capital and intrigue surrounding royal succession. Above all, though Akhenaten is known for his development of a kind of early monotheism that stressed the uniqueness of the sun god Aten, and of Akhenaten's own relationship with this god. For this king, there was only one god and only one person who now knew the god: Akhenaten himself.

Initially called Amenhotep IV, Akhenaten came to the throne around 1349 BCE. He spent his early years as king engaged in fairly traditional building projects, including at the great Karnak Temple, home of Amun, and in the gold-rich land of Kush (Nubia) to Egypt's south. Late in his third year of rule, however, he took the extraordinary step of celebrating a Jubilee Festival, a ritual renewal of kingship usually held after 30 years on the throne. At Karnak, Akhenaten constructed a series of Jubilee buildings with talatat, small stone blocks that became a signature of his reign.

Initially, the king's building projects embraced a range of cults, including that of the Aten – shown at the time as a falcon-headed man. But the Karnak Jubilee buildings featured the Aten alone and represented in a new form: as the disc of the sun, its rays ending in hands reaching out to the royal family.

One of the Karnak buildings was also decorated with striking, colossal statues of the king with heavily exaggerated and androgynous features: drawn-out face, broad hips and distended belly. These statues set the king apart from the mortal world and highlighted his role as a divine provider of fertility and prosperity, like Aten.

Another of the Karnak buildings showed the Aten not with Akhenaten but with his queen, Nefertiti, and the royal daughters. The Aten cult afforded a special place to royal women, especially Nefertiti, who was linked with Akhenaten and the Aten in a divine triad. The three were assimilated with the divine figures in one of Egypt's most important creation myths: the birthing of the twins Shu and Tefnut from the androgynous creator god Aten. Royal women helped to legitimize the Aten cult. They stood in for goddesses in contexts where female divine power was needed, and so became semi-divine themselves.

Akhenaten's promotion of the Aten cult soon intensified. He changed his name from Amenhotep to Akhenaten – One Who is Effective for the Aten – and redirected revenue from Egypt's temples into the Aten cult. Teams of workers were dispatched to chisel out the names and images of other gods from the walls of monuments. Amun, Mut and Khonsu, the patron gods of Thebes, were especially targeted. This removal work was often sloppy and incomplete, but it must surely have been an affront to Egypt's religious institutions.

In the fifth year of his reign, Akhenaten announced plans to create a new cult arena entirely for the Aten. He chose a place halfway between Memphis (Cairo) and Thebes (Luxor) and named it Akhenaten – Horizon of the Aten. The site is known today as Amarna. Whether driven by religious fervor or a political desire to distance himself from the priesthood of Amun, Akhenaten's abandonment of Thebes was a remarkable step away from the status quo.

Akhenaten grew quickly into a large, sprawling city on the east bank of the Nile River. Vast temples were dedicated to the Aten, left unroofed to be filled with light – thus eliminating the need for cult statues of the god. Offerings of bread, beer, cattle, fowl, wine, fruit and incense were given to the sun god on open-air altars. As the sun moved east-west over the temples, Akhenaten traveled north-south through the city in a golden chariot as the Aten's representative on earth.

Akhenaten's palaces and temples were decorated with scenes from the natural world, including birds, frolicking calves, and river plants, celebrating the life-giving aspects of the Aten. Reliefs, paintings, and statues of the royal family adorned cult buildings, less extreme in style than the early Karnak colossi but often still fluid and exaggerated. Occasionally the royal family was depicted kissing and embracing.

Around the city's outskirts, Akhenaten built at least four Sunshade of Re temples dedicated to royal women, where the king connected with the regenerative powers of the sun god. In a valley

deep in the eastern cliffs, he created a new royal burial ground. Loyal officials were granted space in the cliff face for their own grand tombs. Hoping for an afterlife in the company of the sun god, they celebrated the cult of the Aten and the divine king through scenes and texts carved on the tomb walls. These included the famous Hymns to the Aten, in which the Aten is presented as the creative power of light. The Hymns stress that the Aten is the only god, encompassing concepts of beauty, love, and fatherhood.

Today, the ruins of Akhenaten at Amarna form a remarkable archaeological site: one of the most intact cities to survive from the ancient world and one containing the houses, temples, palaces, streets and cemeteries of a single generation. Archaeological work here has focused not only on the Aten cult but also on the lives and experiences of Akhenaten's people. Ongoing fieldwork by the [Amarna Project](#) at the city's non-elite cemeteries, for example, has shown that difficult working lives and poor nutrition were common, although whether these conditions were more or less extreme at Akhenaten is still unknown. The cemetery excavations also have yielded coffins decorated with images of traditional funerary deities, suggesting that not everyone followed the king in abandoning the gods.

The occupation of Akhenaten was ultimately to be short-lived. After 17 years on the throne, Akhenaten died of causes now unknown. He was buried in the Amarna Royal Tomb, where his daughter, Meketaten, and perhaps his mother, Tiye, had already been interred. The Amarna period was followed by a quick succession of reigns, the details of which remain hazy.

In his final years, Akhenaten seems to have shared the throne with one or more family members. One of these was Smenkhkare, perhaps the son or brother of Akhenaten, who was married to the king's daughter, Meritaten. Smenkhkare appears only briefly in the historical record.

Nefertiti also seems to have taken the throne under the name Neferneferuaten. Details of her rule are also frustratingly scarce. She may have ruled briefly with Akhenaten, reigned alone in her own name or served as coregent in the early years of Tutankhamun's reign. In any case, her time on the throne lasted just a few years. The Royal Tomb at Amarna contains a prominent but unfinished side chamber that was likely intended for Nefertiti's tomb, but it was never used. A young Tutankhaten (later Tutankhamun) next assumed the throne. He was likely Akhenaten's son. Within a few years, probably led by influential officials, he shut down Akhenaten, relocated the royal court to Memphis and announced the restoration of traditional cults. Around this time, the Amarna royal burials were moved to Thebes. After Tutankhamun's early death, the official Aye took the throne, followed by Horemheb, a military general from Memphis. From Horemheb's reign onward, the grand stone buildings at Akhenaten were dismantled to leave little of Akhenaten's initiatives.

Akhenaten left a complicated legacy. To later Egyptian kings, he was a heretic whose name and family were excluded from official king lists. Today, views of him are more diverse and sometimes more sympathetic. In any case, Akhenaten's momentous reign challenges us to consider how and why spiritual and societal changes occur, whether in ancient Egypt or any land.



## **Recommended Reading**

### [The Amarna Project](#)

D. Arnold. 1996. *The Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty from Ancient Egypt*. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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