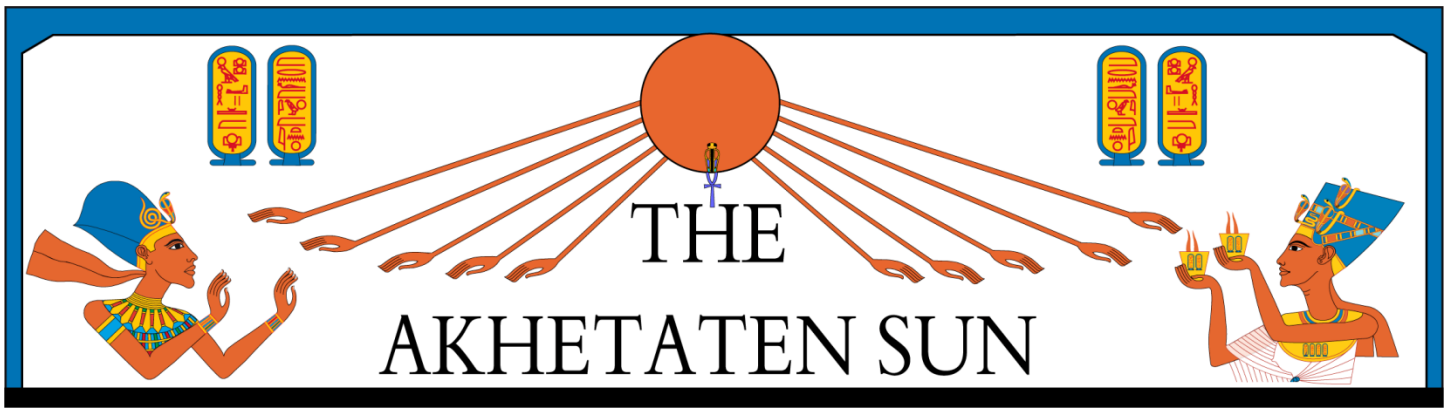

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Officers and Directors

The President's Papyrus

Greetings Amarnaphiles,

Happy New Year to one and all! I hope that the advancement of archaeology in general and Egyptology in particular will have a year of unprecedented year of success and advancement.

You may not be aware that onsite work at Amarna has been delayed for the last two seasons by the government of Egypt out of security concerns. But Barry Kemp has informed us that he has been given the go ahead by the Egyptian Department of Antiquities for the upcoming season. We all here at the Foundation are very happy with this news and hope that this time everything will proceed without any delay.

For those of you who are members and continue to support the work of the Foundation, I wanted to let you know that you are not only supporting the excavation, conservation and research of Amarna but you are also helping to inform a vast number of interested individuals from around the world. We could not do what we do without your continued support. Thank you!

Best wishes to you all for the New Year,

Best wishes to you all,
Floyd

How the City of Amarna Came Into Being

by Barry Kemp

It is commonly accepted around the world that, when new cities are to be built or extended, the work proceeds on the basis of plans drawn up by architects or urban designers. Frequently the designs follow the lines of a grid (e.g. Chicago), although other shapes, perhaps with sweeping curves (e.g. Canberra, Australia), can be preferred. The historic roots of urban planning are to be found in many areas, from the Americas (Teotihuacán) to China (Peking) and across the Mediterranean, where geometric city designs were common creations of Greece and Rome. Examples are to be found in ancient Egypt. The earliest so far appears to be a regularly planned complex (perhaps a 'palace') of the First Dynasty at Buto (Tell el-Fara'in in the north-western Delta), whilst the large Middle Kingdom town of Kahun, attached to the pyramid of Senusret II at Lahun, remains, since its excavation by Flinders Petrie in 1888–90, the largest and best known example.

Despite this earlier history in Egypt, whatever attraction that grid (or orthogonal) planning had for Egyptian builders seems to have faded during the New Kingdom, even though the New Kingdom was a period of city building as the older, congested towns and cities, surrounded by defensive walls, were rebuilt along more expansive lines. We have several written descriptions, flattering in style, of cities in the New Kingdom. They show that people held ideals about them. They concentrate, however, on the atmosphere of the place and on striking details of individual buildings. The ideals seem not to have extended to the overall layout.

Figure 1. Satellite image (Google Earth 2016) of part of the town of Sekota (Soqota) in northern Ethiopia, showing how a modern town has retained the plan of a self-organised village originally composed of groups of circular huts within their own compounds.

Equally spread across the world and far more numerous are settlements of all sizes which display ground plans, each one unique, in which predetermined geometry has played only a small part or none at all. They still come into being particularly in societies where overall government control is weak. We might see them as 'squatter settlements' although picturesque rural villages with long histories will most often also not show the hand or vision of the urban planner. What they have in common is that they are 'self-organised' [1]. In other words, they have come about, usually over a long period of time, as a result of innumerable piecemeal decisions which have had to take into account decisions which have already been made, often by others. Self-organisation is, in effect, normal when external constraints are not present.

This takes us to Amarna. Amarna is a remarkable tribute to the power of self-organisation in city creation because of the speed with which it allowed a large part of a major city to come into existence, creating a layout which could have been the result of decades of growth but in fact took shape within a few years. It is not what we might have expected. The place Akhetaten (of which Amarna was a major element) arose from a decision by one person—king Akhenaten—who had huge resources at his disposal and an almost flat landscape to work with. What followed seems to have amounted to a minimalist approach to city layout. A single line was marked on the desert roughly parallel to the slightly curving line of the river bank (labelled 'city baseline' in Figure 2). The northern end was beneath the cliffs where they begin to approach the river and usable building land is squeezed to almost nothing. After a slight change of angle as the cliffs recede, it then ran as a straight line for about 6.5 km (4 miles). The main royal buildings were set out on either side of it at irregular distances. Most of them formed a group that we know as the Central City and included the two major temples to the Aten and the Great Palace. Buildings of lesser importance were arranged further back along streets which continued the main alignment (though not always very accurately), bringing some degree of geometric order to the city's centre. The southernmost point of the line that we can discern is marked by the location of Kom el-Nana (the sun-temple of Nefertiti).

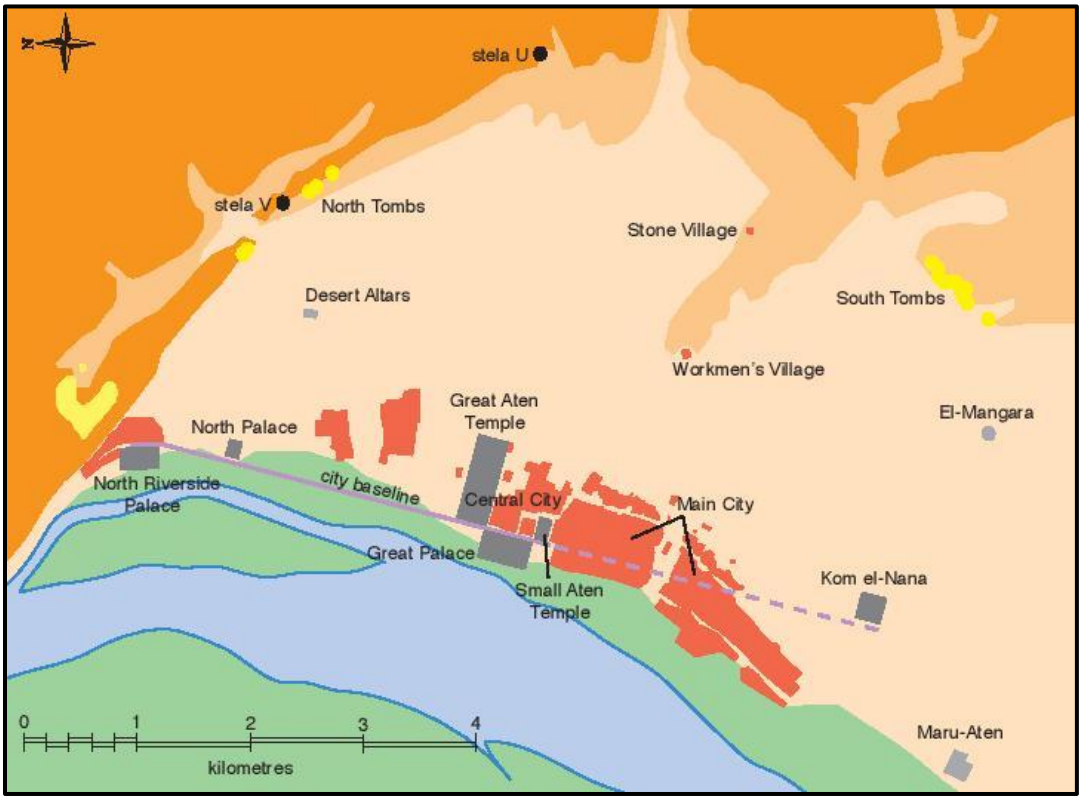


Figure 2. Outline map of Amarna showing the main parts of the city. The main royal buildings are grey, administrative and housing areas are red. The initial baseline for the city is also marked as 'city baseline'.

Most of the city's population lived in areas devoted to private housing. The main one (the Main City) ran south from the Central City and actually covered the southern part of the main initial axis (which was used for the setting out of Kom el-Nana), leaving no trace of it in the street plan here. Instead this part of Amarna (amounting to an area measuring roughly 2 x 1 km) was treated as if it were a blank surface on which no guidelines had been marked. It is likely that a large part of the future population arrived within a short space of time. It was a complete society, with senior officials (including the vizier), lesser officials, craftsmen, soldiers, labourers and suppliers of all kinds of needs. How did they go about settling the land? The answer illustrates the power of self-organisation, when many people are obliged to make decisions with no outside guidance.

Let us imagine a sunny day on an expanse of seaside beach at holiday time. Individuals and families arrive and leave their cars beyond the perimeter, and walk to the beach carrying only what they need to establish a tiny territory and to entertain themselves. Towels are a key item: laid on the sand they immediately claim it for the owner. Bags with food and perhaps a windbreak or sunshade add to the sense of making a camp. To begin with people space themselves at some distance from others but, as the day wears on, newcomers fill up intervening spaces so that the density of settlement gradually builds up. An innate desire for privacy sets limits, so that groups of towels do not actually touch each other. Moreover, spaces need to be left to give access to the sea and to facilities. The point is reached when the beach is, in effect, full. The individual camp sites can appear to be spread more or less evenly across the sandy surface. No one has given orders. The one-day settlement creation has been achieved amicably.

Beach camps illustrate how people organise themselves in somewhat ideal circumstances, when competition has been largely suppressed because of the brevity of occupation coupled with the lack of means of claiming ownership beyond that day's hours of daylight. They are created in optimum conditions for self-organisation to reveal itself.

The mass of people who were to become the starting population of Amarna are likely to have arrived by river over a relatively short time. They will not have 'drifted in' in a leisurely way and spread themselves out in an egalitarian fashion. They are bound to have been prey to urgency and some degree of competitiveness, although most are likely to have come in groups who shared a common background. What followed must have been a short period of intense discussion and negotiation amongst individuals, families, sometimes groups of families as to the location and size of particular patches of unmarked desert.

People who study informal or self-organised settlements have long realised that a few rules can explain how they are generated, and the process can actually be simulated by computer programmes, which take the form of an additive process happening over a period of time. In a classic formulation (Hillier and Hanson [3]) published in 1998 settlements were reduced to cellular automata: a pair of cells, one of them closed (house) and the other open (adjacent space), the two always being joined. The rule for creating the kind of settlement which the authors had in mind—traditional villages in France—was that each open cell must join another, face to face, to create a continuous open space. If this rule is maintained, the random spacing of additions will produce something that looks like the villages, each village arising from a single starting-point.

Whilst this kind of process is helpful in reducing the phenomenon of settlement growth to its barest essentials, for Amarna it has two limitations. It is obvious from the city plan that settlement did not start from a single node at one end and spread towards the other. What we face is the likelihood of a large population settling the land at multiple locations at almost the same time and spread over an area of considerable distance, too great for most people to be aware of what most of the others were doing. There must have been many starting-points. The other limitation concerns randomness. When applied to human behaviour it is a relatively weak promoter of action. It will quickly have been squeezed out of the system or at least strongly reduced because individuals, in making their decisions, are bound to have been influenced by outside circumstances, not only the decisions which neighbours (who might have been relatives) will have made but broader determinants which are outlined below.

The merit of the analogy with beach camps is that it reveals how people can colonise an area with some degree of evenness of spacing and relatively high density by almost instant assessment of how they can fit into an emerging pattern. The 'mathematics' [4] involved are hidden within the brain and propel individuals (or families engaged in minimal discussion—'I think it looks nicer over there') to the destination of their choice whilst remaining unaware of exactly why they chose it. They have briefly joined a 'flock' and become subject to the kind of group decision-making often observed in the natural world.

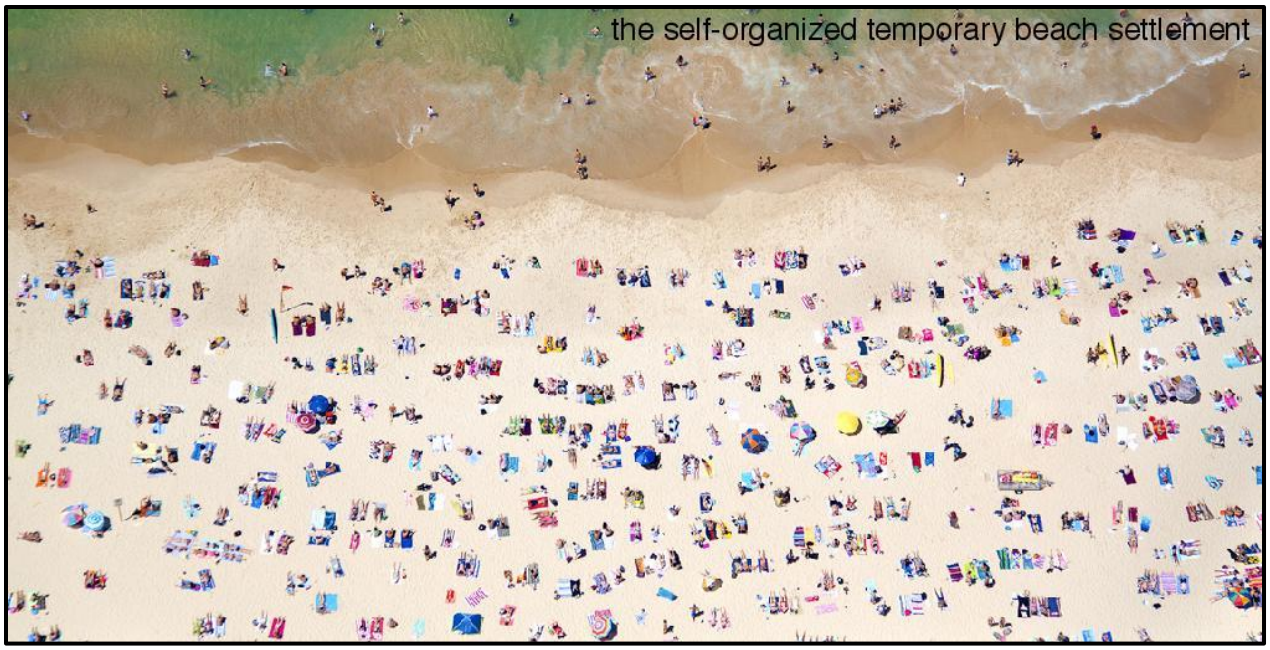


Figure 3. Aerial photograph of the temporary camps of visitors to a beach (Coogee Beach, Australia) [2]

Figure 3 is an aerial photograph of a beach which has been colonised in this way. I have imagined it as a starting-point for a longer-term settlement of this flat sandy expanse. The analogy works only for the brief instant of inception. I am arguing that the invisible mental computations that have brought about this remarkably even spread of camps will have been present in our initial Amarna population but that, almost immediately afterwards, other non-random factors will have started to work, pushing people away from an ideal equilibrium. I have recognised five factors and shown them working one after another whereas, in reality, they will have been simultaneously active.

These factors are:

1. Local access (Figure 4). The river Nile was the main means of communication with the outside world. Egyptians exchanged personal letters with their relatives as well as more formal letters concerning fields and other property. Letters as well as goods would have entered and left Amarna through mooring-points on the river bank. It is also unlikely that people's personal needs would have been entirely satisfied through distributions arranged by the state's institutions or the households of the more senior and wealthier officials. At Thebes in the New Kingdom booths that were the equivalent of shops were set up on the river bank where boats moored bringing commodities, and it is reasonable to think that this would have been repeated at Amarna; that there would have been many mooring-places spaced along the full length of the river bank opposite the city. The city was also provided with numerous wells. The water that would have been drawn from them would, however, have been brackish, to judge from how things are now. Does this mean that people's supply of drinking-water was carried to houses from the Nile?

A pattern of routes of access from east to west, leading to the river-bank, is thus very likely. In Figure 4 I have marked a small number of pathways from a much larger number of possible choices.

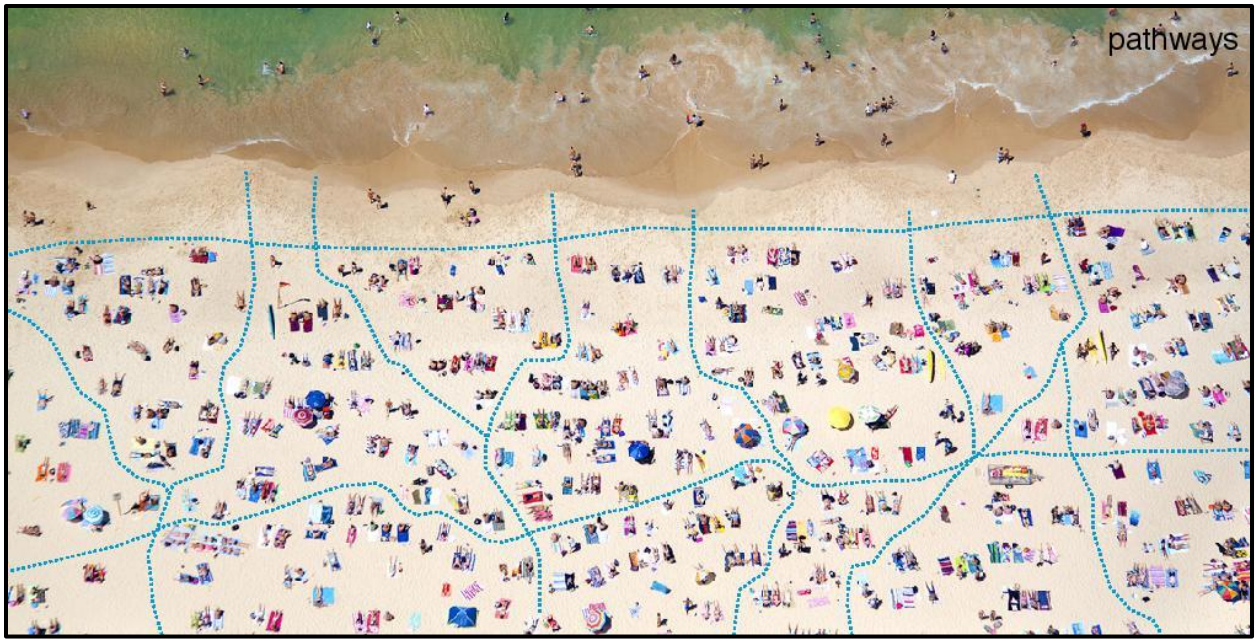


Figure 4. The same picture, with possible pathways added, both to the shoreline and laterally across the beach.

2. Differentiation of house size and social position. Houses were built to different sizes across what was a rough gradient of steady increase in floor area. In general, a great many of the smaller houses correspond
in floor area to the houses of the Ramesside village of Deir el-Medina. What prevented people who moved to Amarna from building a house that was considerably larger than the one they had left behind? If they were forbidden from doing this, how was this policed during what must have been, at the crucial time of maximum settlement activity, a time of some confusion? The most likely answer, it seems to me, is that people constrained themselves, building what was more or less a replica of their old house in the presence of neighbours who would be on the alert for anyone stepping beyond their material position in society and who would be unable to work collectively to change their status.

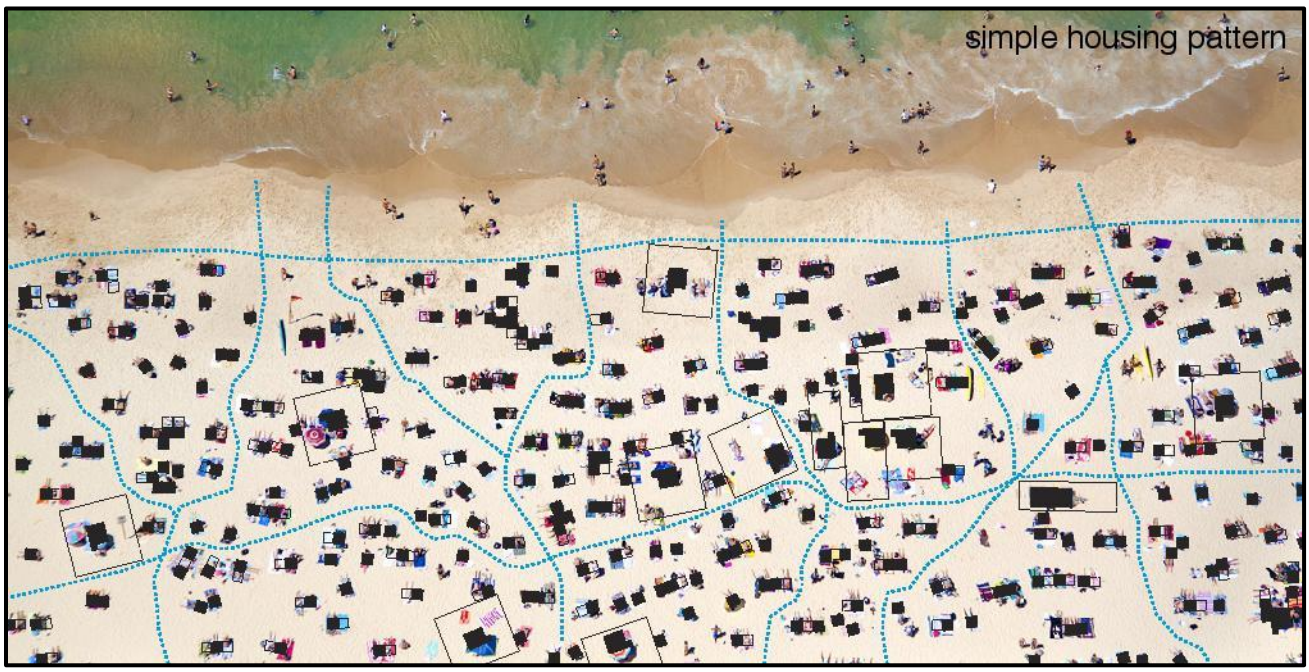


Figure 5. The same picture, with conversion of individual camp sites to dwellings.
The larger houses (inside an enclosure) replace camp sites where sunshades or umbrellas have been set up.

Amongst the incoming population were 'officials'. To judge from what we know of Egyptian society every family who occupied a house at Amarna would have been designated according to the name of the male head of household who would have borne a title, for example, 'metal-worker', 'sandal-maker'. But some titles placed their owner higher in the scales of authority and wealth. At the top was the vizier and close to him were senior figures in the temples, the army and the governing institutions, including the court. In between were 'scribes' who worked with written documents from the various institutions. Very few of the houses at Amarna have preserved evidence of the identity of their owner. But the plans of the houses show an important mark of separation between those lower and higher on the social scale. This is a walled enclosure inside which the house was located, surrounded by outbuildings which included a private grain store. This probably does not correspond to the division between 'scribes' and 'non-scribes' although it is hard to be sure.

In the simple schematic plan of Figures 5 and 6 I have envisaged two categories of house. One is composed of a single roofed cell, a dwelling, to which is mostly (but not invariably) attached an open court. The other is a larger house set within a walled court. In the original beach photograph a minority of camp sites possess a sunshade or umbrella. I have placed a larger house within a compound over each of these, and scattered either the roofed/open pairs or individual roofed cells (dwellings) over the remainder of the camp sites.

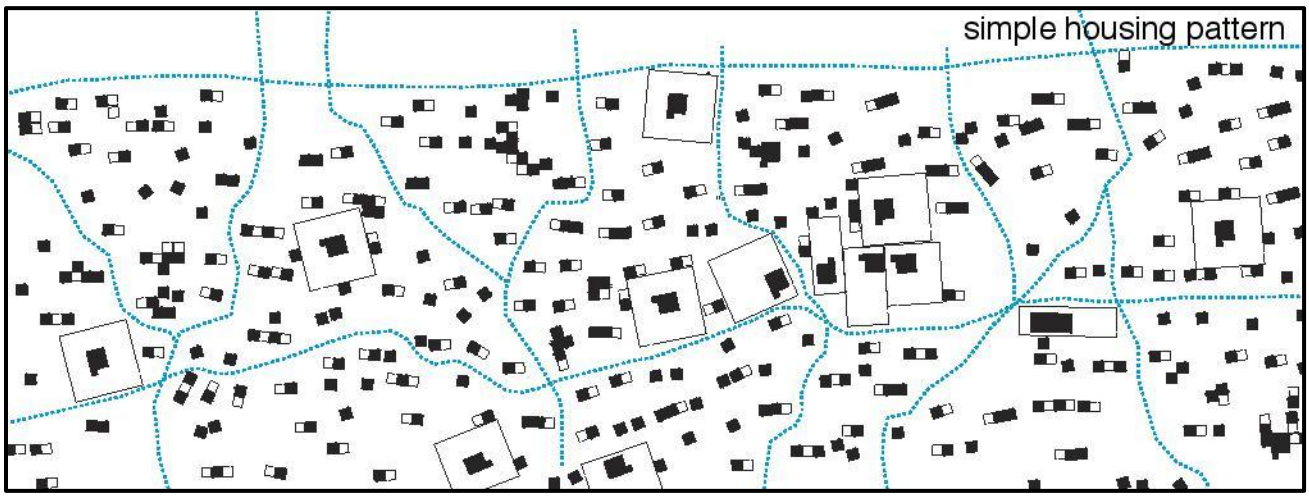


Figure 6. Figure 5 with photographic background removed.

3. Access to the centre. Where did those who were scribes and thus attached to an institution perform their work? The main housing area at Amarna is not composed entirely of houses [5]. Interspersed amongst the houses are buildings which, from their plans, are clearly not residential. It is usually impossible to tell what purpose they served, but the handling and/or storage of commodities is generally a good first guess. Anything of this nature would require the presence of scribes, and other scribes will have been part of the household of the really senior officials, looking after their personal affairs.

The most important administrative centres were, however, located in the Central City. We know the names of some: the 'Bureau of Correspondence of Pharaoh' where the Amarna Letters were found, the 'House of Life' nearby, 'the office of the royal scribe Ahmose' and 'the office of the town of the Aten'. Moreover, a 'village' of straight streets and similar (but not identical) houses is likely to have been offices for scribes who did not live on the premises. The drawing into the centre of many officials of all levels is likely to have been, therefore, another powerful factor influencing the city plan. The dynamic sprang from the role of the vizier. We know from the 'Duties of the Vizier', as recorded in earlier Eighteenth Dynasty texts, that the king was given a daily briefing by the vizier based upon reports from the various departments of the state. If this was properly followed it would have required the regular attendance of officials in the Central City. These were men who mostly lived dispersed through the residential areas.

The house of the vizier Nakht is one of the few where we can identify the owner. It lay about 2 km (one and a quarter miles) south of the Central City, towards the further end of the Main City.
People of this rank travelled by chariot accompanied by an entourage of servants and bodyguards, and they needed clear routes into the centre. Yet even these had not been marked out when the building of the city began. The routes to the centre emerged as far-from-straight roads, of uneven width, that emerged during the initial self-organisation phase. In Figure 7 I have widened one of the lateral tracks to become one of the prime routes into the centre.

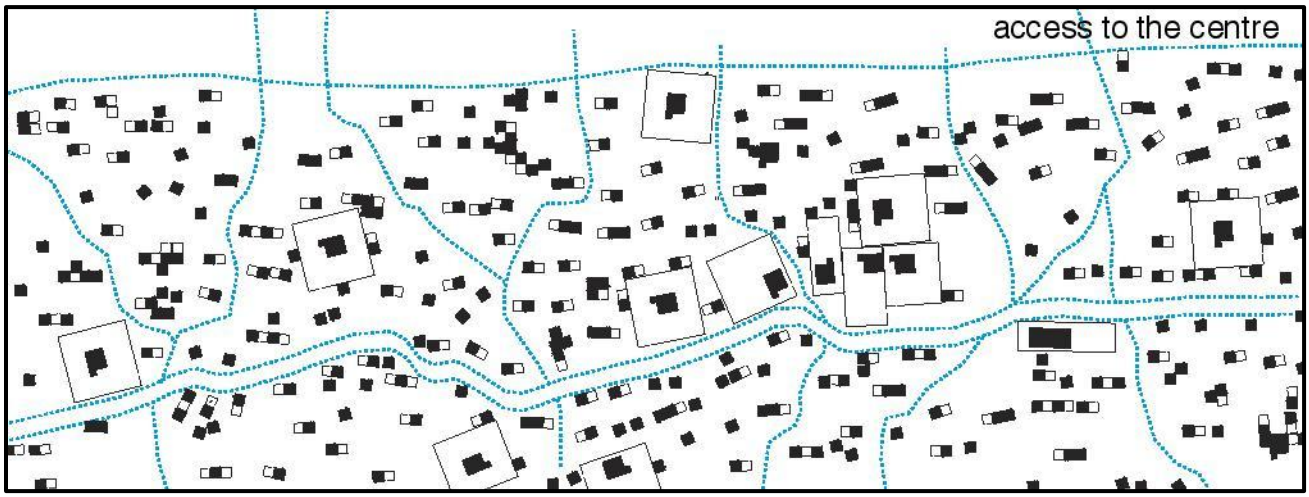


Figure 7. The central lateral pathway has been widened to create a prime route of access to an important destination off the right side of the picture.

4. Aggregation. To be an important person in ancient Egypt meant having not only a large house in the city (and ideally another in the country surrounded by an estate), together with boats and chariots. Status was also publicly advertised by the number of dependants. Although most of the smaller houses in which such people lived were not grouped into easily recognisable villages, it must be that many of the smaller houses which were adjacent to the larger houses were, in fact, villages of dependants even though we cannot usually identify where one ended and another began. Thus another factor influencing the shape of the city's residential areas was proximity to the large house of one's master or patron.

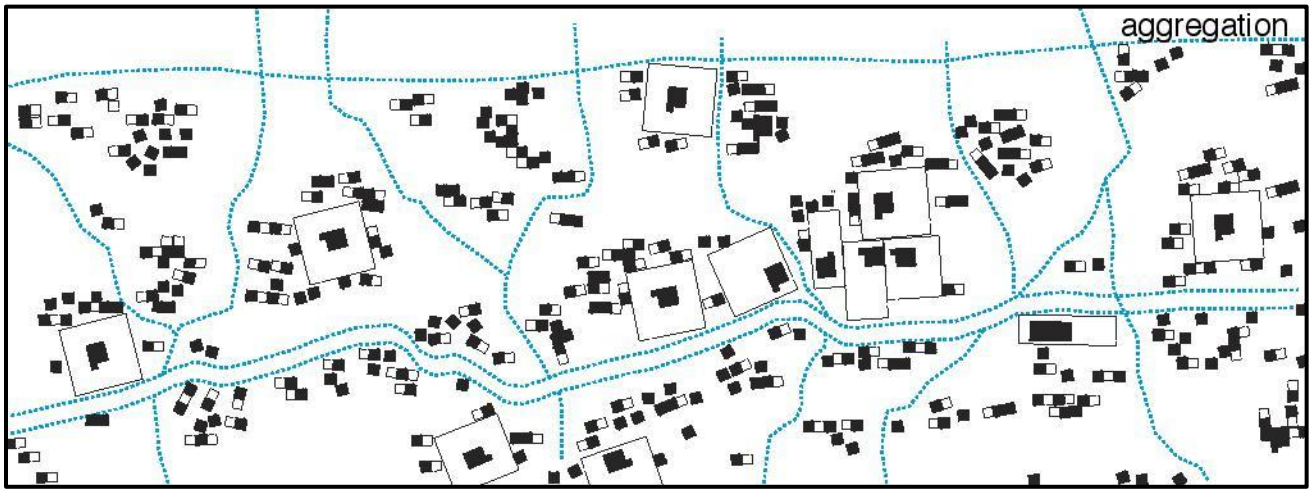


Figure 8. The larger houses act as attractors to those making smaller houses resulting in aggregations of dwellings.

In Figure 8 I have pulled in many of the small houses towards the larger ones, creating agglomerations of houses of dependants approximating to villages. It was not seen as necessary to mark the social boundaries of dependence by means of walls which marked off territories. Agglomeration is where a rule-

based process of addition comes into play. And people did not, in reality, move their houses from their original camp site closer to that of their patron. This was a factor present from the outset: the arriving families, in choosing their spot, gravitated towards their centre of obligations and source of their benefits.

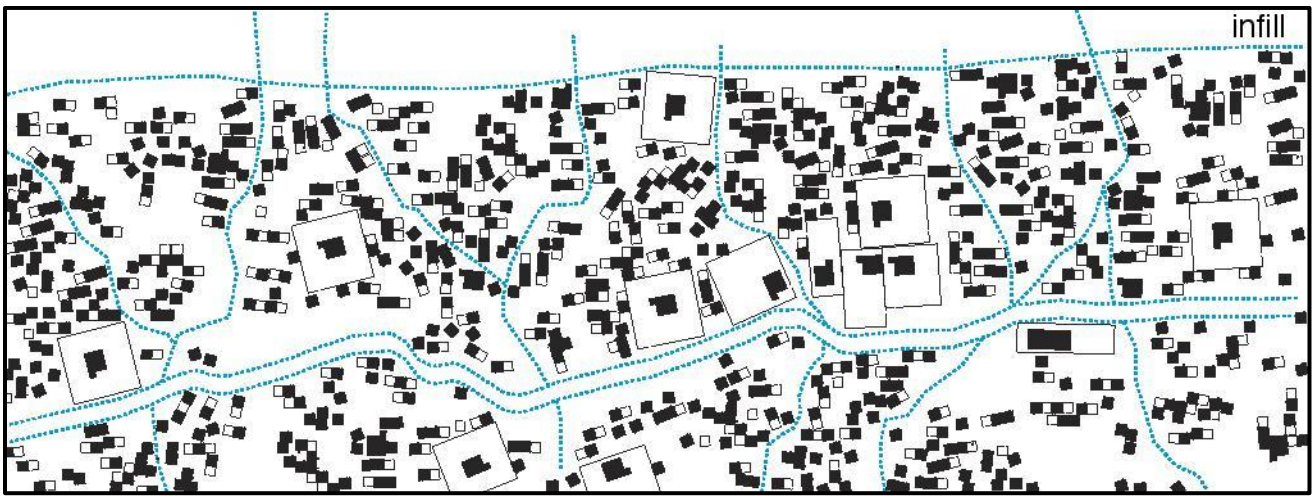


Figure 9. As time passes, open spaces are filled with the dwellings of newcomers.

5. Infill. The need for a large population that could be drawn on for building the king's special buildings—particularly the Aten temples and the Great Palace—must mean that a large part of Amarna's people arrived within a short time after the king's act of foundation (recorded on the first set of Boundary Stelae of year 5). The city plan reveals, however, that when the abandonment started some houses were under construction, especially noticeable on the eastern fringes of the city, where the open desert began. People had continued to move in, and the infilling of empty spaces was taking place. It would have been, in part, a continuation of the process of agglomeration (Figure 9).

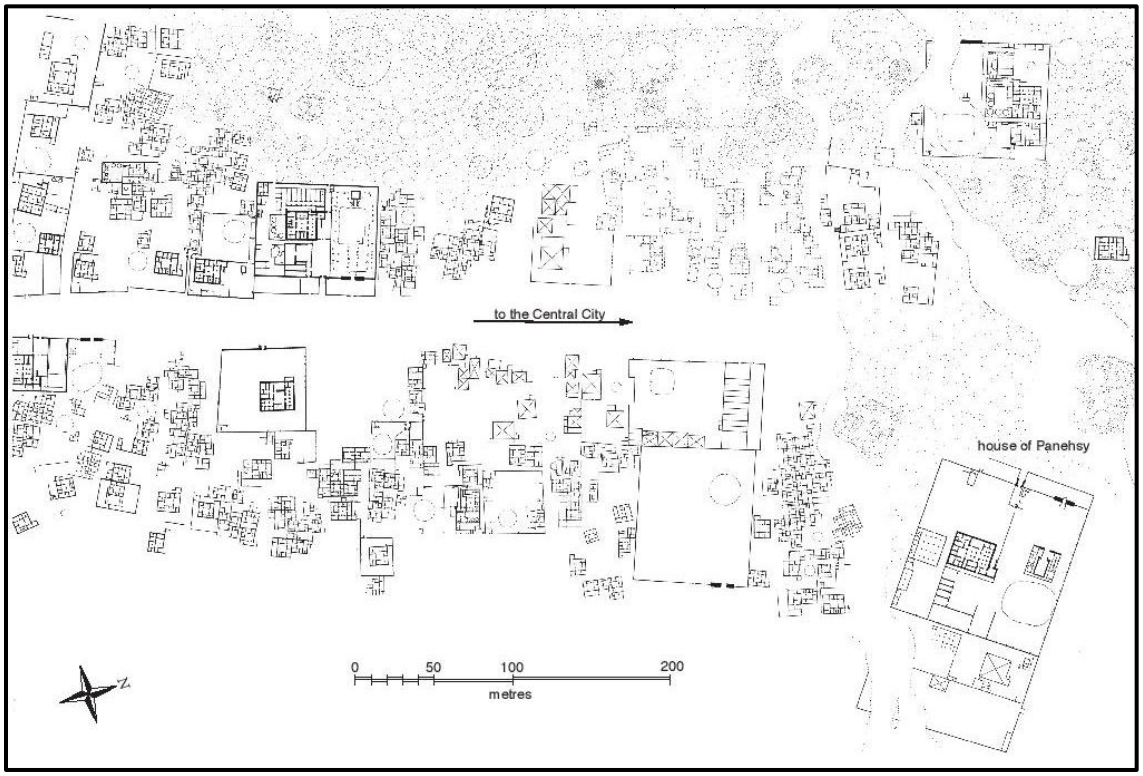


Figure 10. Plan of part of the Main City at Amarna. After B. Kemp and S. Garfi, *A Survey of the Ancient City of El-ʿAmarna*. London, Egypt Exploration Society, 1995, part of Sheet 6.

Finally I move to what actually happened on the ground. I show a partially excavated portion of the Main City, as ground plan and as aerial photograph (Figures 10 and 11). My answer the question, how has this plan come about, is to make it the product of the factors I have, rather artificially, broken down in the previous paragraphs. I also show, for contrast (Figure 12), an aerial photograph of the isolated Workmen's Village at Amarna where a strictly planned layout, with enclosure wall, was imposed.

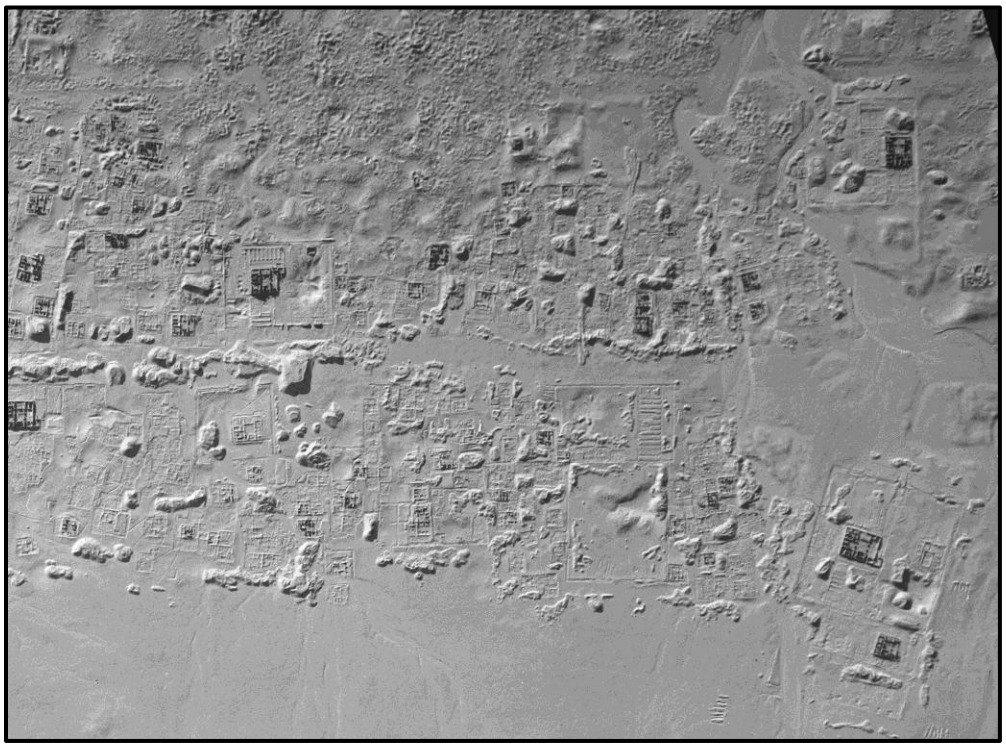


Figure 11. Aerial photograph of the same area as Figure 11, taken in 1964 by the French Geographical Institute.

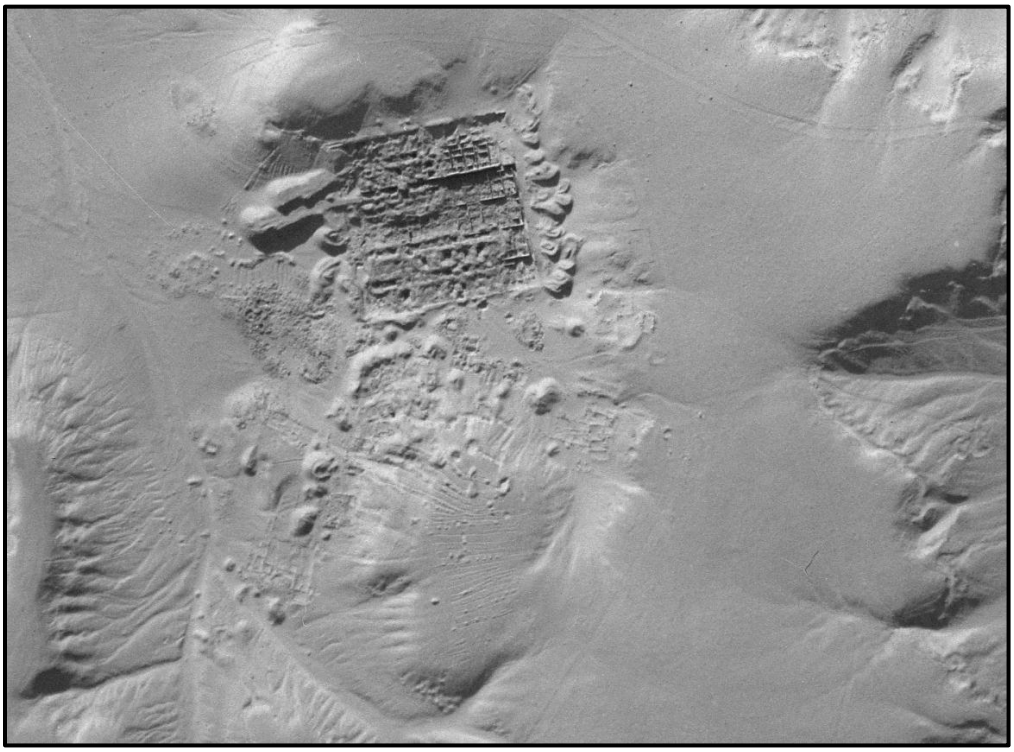


Figure 12. Aerial photograph of the Workmen's Village, taken in 1964 by the French Geographical Institute, illustrating a project of settlement creation through prior planning.

What wider lessons can we draw? Anything to do with Akhenaten runs the risk of being particular to his mind. One might consider that the way that Amarna developed illustrates how his interest in the cult of the Aten detached him from more worldly matters, such as what preparations should be made for the city that would inevitably develop at Amarna. On the other hand, Amarna could be illustrating a general preference that developed in the New Kingdom for not planning towns and cities as a whole but limiting planning to temples and other areas of major royal building. To answer this we need a spread of examples, and there are still very few to be found.

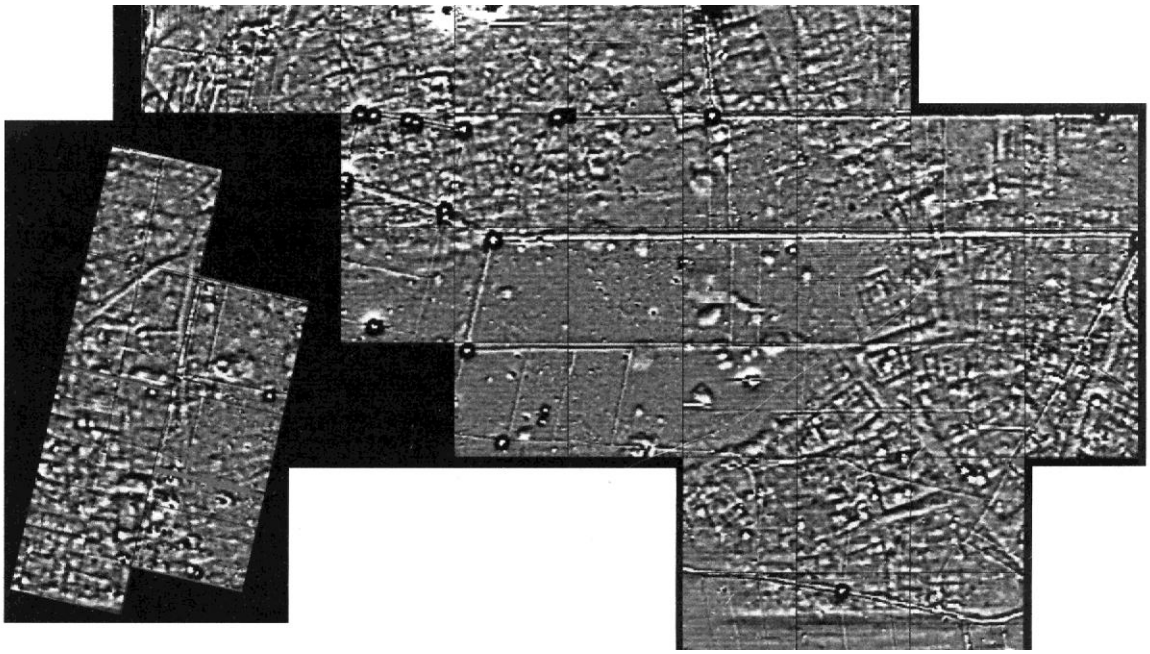


Figure 13. An area of the magnetometer survey of the city of Per-Rameses as it lies beneath fields. It is said to show 'part of the domestic area with villas and houses of the Amarna type, streets, and what may be the harbour and its reinforcement.' [6]

The most promising place for comparison is Per-Rameses. Less than a century after Akhenaten's death, which was followed by the abandonment of most of Akhetaten (an area at the southern limit where the modern village of El-Hagg Qandil stands remained occupied for a long time afterwards), a new royal residence city was founded in the north-eastern Delta by the military family who took over Egypt and are, to us, the Nineteenth Dynasty. Their city, called 'Per-Rameses' ('Piramesse'), lay in an area now largely under modern fields and dwellings near the modern town of Qantir. Very little of its plan has been revealed by excavation but fuzzy outlines of large parts have been obtained through using magnetometry. They suggest that, at least in what appears to have been a large residential area (Figure 13), a plan somewhat similar to the Amarna residential areas is present. One wonders if this was true also for Thebes and Memphis in the New Kingdom.

Much of my own life has been spent in city areas with irregular street plans that go back to the Middle Ages (Cambridge, UK, and the old part of Cairo). I cannot see that my experience of either place would have been enhanced if the streets were straight and laid out on a grid. The constantly changing vistas as one navigates the narrow twisting streets are attractive or at least interesting in their own right and rapidly communicate a sense of familiarity. I guess that New Kingdom Egyptians had discovered this for themselves. The seeming free-for-all which rapidly produced the housing areas at Amarna was a most effective way of quickly building a functioning city. It could not happen now. Then the self-imposed restraints on grabbing too much of the desert surface for one's own house applied to rich and poor alike. Although land had value in ancient Egypt, it was not (as far as we can tell) subject to hoarding and speculation. No one thought in terms of property portfolios or realty development as a way of becoming rich. A greater social harmony was the likely result.

ENDNOTES:

[1] I had first encountered self-organisation as a research subject through a book recommended to me by Mark Lehner: E. Schaur, *Ungeplante Siedlungen: charakteristische Merkmale—Wegesystem, Flächenteilung/Non-planned Settlements: characteristic Features—Path Systems, Surface Subdivision.* (Mitteilungen des Instituts für leichte Flächentragwerke (IL) 39.) Stuttgart, Universität Stuttgart, Institut für leichte Flächentragwerke (IL), 1991.

[2] Photographed by Gray Malin http://www.designboom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/aerial-beach-gray-malin-designboom02.jpg

[3] B. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space*. Cambridge, CUP 1988 (1990 reprint), Chapter 2 pioneered the reduction of settlement growth to the behaviour of cellular automata which could be made the object of computer programming. See also W. Erickson and T. Lloyd-Jones 1997. 'Experiments with settlement aggregation models.' *Environment and Planning* B 24 (1997), 903–28.

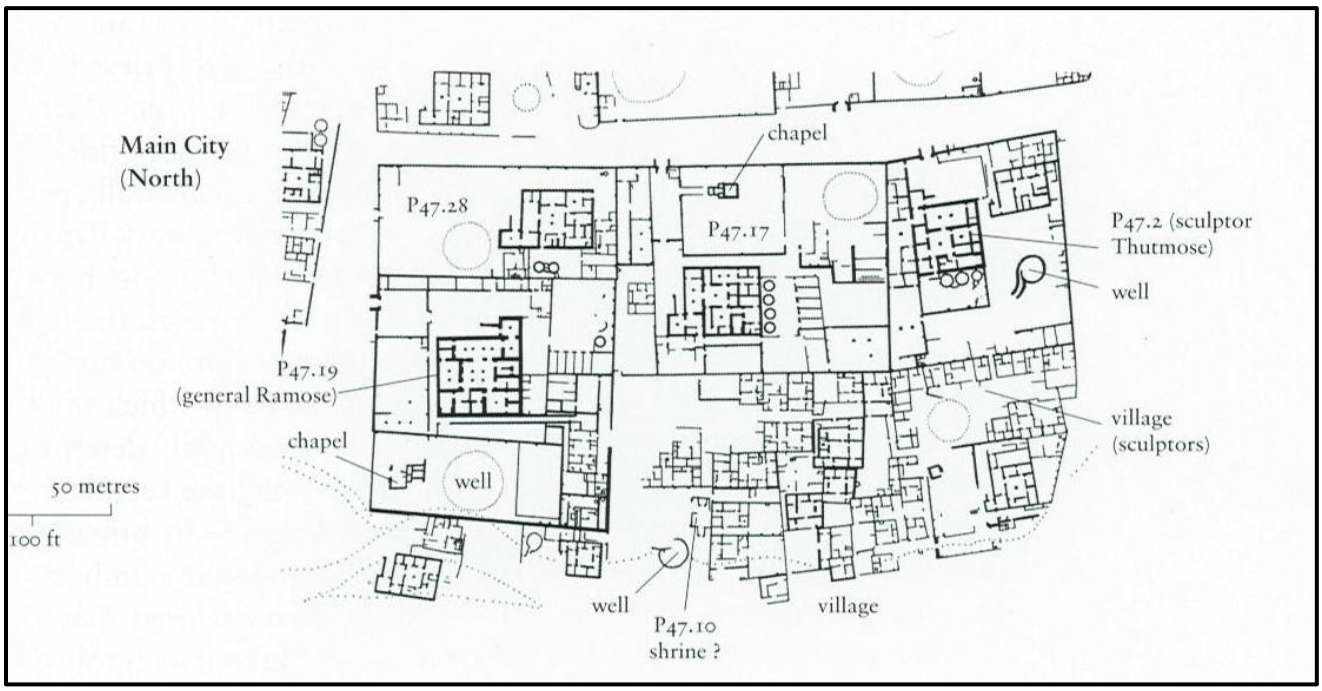
[4] Juval Portugali, *Self-organization and the City.* Berlin, Springer 1999 is a far more theoretical and intensive analysis of the underlying mathematics, as they can be applied to modern cities.

[5] I had commented on certain aspects of the housing at Amarna in a paper written before the current fieldwork began: B.J. Kemp, 'The city of el-Amarna as a source for the study of urban society in ancient Egypt.' *World Archaeology* 9 (1977), 123–39.

[6] The remarkable magnetometry maps of Per-Rameses are briefly published in E. Pusch, 'Towards a map of Piramesse.' *Egyptian Archaeology* 14 (1999): 13–15.

Ruins of an Amarna House – photo by Jill Taylor Pepper

Buildings in the Main City - photo by Jill Taylor Pepper



Houses in the Main City – Barry Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, p. 165

What's in a Name?
An Analysis of Akhenaten and the Aten's Titulary
By Floyd Chapman

During the Middle Kingdom it became customary for each pharaoh to adopt a detailed set of titles or titulary when assuming the throne. These consisted of five standard titles which were as follows: (1) the Horus name; (2) the Nebty name; (3) the Golden Horus name; (4) the Throne name; and (5) the Personal name.

Only two of these titles, however, were regularly reproduced on monuments which the pharaoh built, remodeled, or simply usurped. These were the throne and personal names which were always enclosed within cartouches.

By analyzing the titles that Akhenaten gave to himself and the Aten we can understand how he defined himself and his god.

Akhenaten's Titulary Defined:

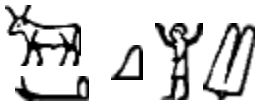
When Akhenaten commenced his reign he adopted the standard titles which were consistent with orthodox practice. But, breaking with tradition, "on day 13, Month 8, in the fifth year of his reign, the king arrived at the site of the new city Akhetaten (now known as Amarna). A month before that Amenhotep IV had officially changed his name to Akhenaten. Amenhotep IV changed most of his five fold titulary in the 5th year of his reign. The only name he kept was his prenomen or throne name of Neferkheperure." (Wiki Commons).

Now let's compare, side by side, the king's titulary while he was still Amenhotep and then later as Akhenaten:

Amenhotep IV

Horus name:

Kanakht-qai-Shuti
"Strong Bull of the Double Plumes"



Nebty name:

Wer-nesut-em-Ipet-swt
"Great of Kingship in Karnak"

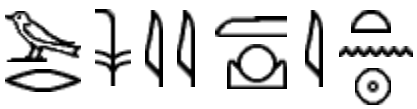
Akhenaten

Horus name:

Meryaten
"Strong Bull, Beloved of Aten"

Nebty name:

Wer-nesut-em-Akhetaten
"Great of Kingship in Akhet-Aten"



Golden Horus name:

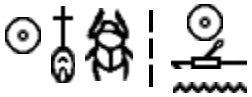
Wetjes-khau-em-Iunu-Shemay
"Crowned in Heliopolis of the South"

Golden Horus name:

Wetjes-ren-en-Aten
"Exalter of the Name of Aten"

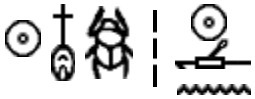
Prenomen (Throne name)**:**

Neferkheperure-waenre
"Beautiful are the Forms of Re,
the Unique one of Re"



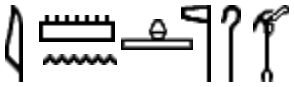
Prenomen (Throne name)**:**

Neferkheperure-waenre
"Beautiful are the Forms of Re,
the Unique one of Re"



Nomen (Personal or birth name)**:**

Amenhotep Netjer-Heqa-Waset
"Amenhotep god-ruler of Thebes"



Nomen (Personal or birth name)**:**

Akhenaten
Effective for the Aten"

What is the meaning of these names? According to Professor Erik Hornung the royal titulary "represented a sort of program for a reign, and, like a seismograph, it indicated any change in the concept of kingship" (Hornung: 1995). He also points out that it is very significant that part of Akhenaten's birth name, the name Amun (Amen), king of the gods, is nowhere to be seen in any of his later titles.

1. The Horus name always alludes to the pharaoh as being a manifestation of sky god Horus, and it is the most ancient of the king's titles. During the New Kingdom, this name, which always begins with the strong bull element, was written within a rectangle above a palace façade enclosure and surmounted on top by a Horus-falcon.

2. The Nebty name or "Two ladies" refers to the two protective goddesses of Egypt: Nekhbet, the vulture goddess of Upper Egypt; and Wadjet, the snake goddess of Lower Egypt. Each is shown graphically above the hieroglyphic basket sign meaning lord or lady. They represent the two 'kingdoms' that made up the one united nation of Egypt.

3. The Golden Horus name is written as a Horus falcon atop a stylized beaded collar, which was the hieroglyphic symbol for gold. This symbol is enigmatic and its meaning is not fully understood.

4. The Throne name, preceded by the titles "King of Upper and Lower Egypt," was always written enclosed within a cartouche or oval object that is thought to be rope tied a one end.

5. The Personal or 'birth' name was always preceded by the title "Son of Re". This title is the explicit assertion that the king is the son of the creator god Re and is therefore divine.

With the foregoing information you can see how Akhenaten saw his person and role as reflected, first as Amenhotep IV and then five years later when he changed his name to Akhenaten and moved to his new capital city, Akhetaten.

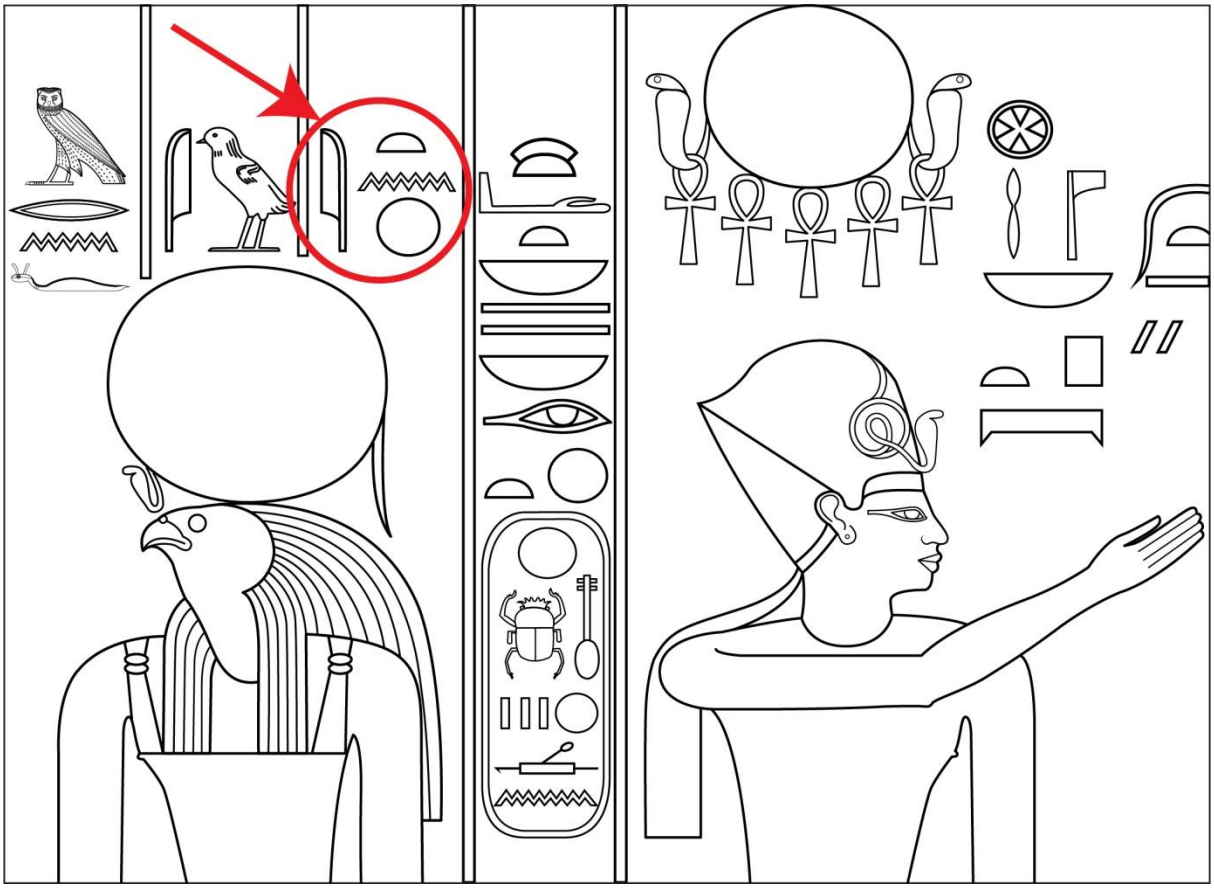


Figure 1: Author's line drawing, after Lepsius, of the Karnak Amenhotep IV relief fragment

Now let's consider the evolution of the iconography of the Aten and Akhenaten. Lepsius' team documented a relief fragment from Karnak (Fig. 1) that was carved at the beginning of Akhenaten's reign.

It clearly demonstrates the revolutionary changes to come, and it's an indication of the evolution of the kings thinking about the nature of the sun god, Aten. Therefore, I want to analyze this remarkable monument in detail. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words and that is especially true for this relief, carved at the beginning of Amenhotep IV's reign, and executed in the classic style of his father, Amenhotep III.

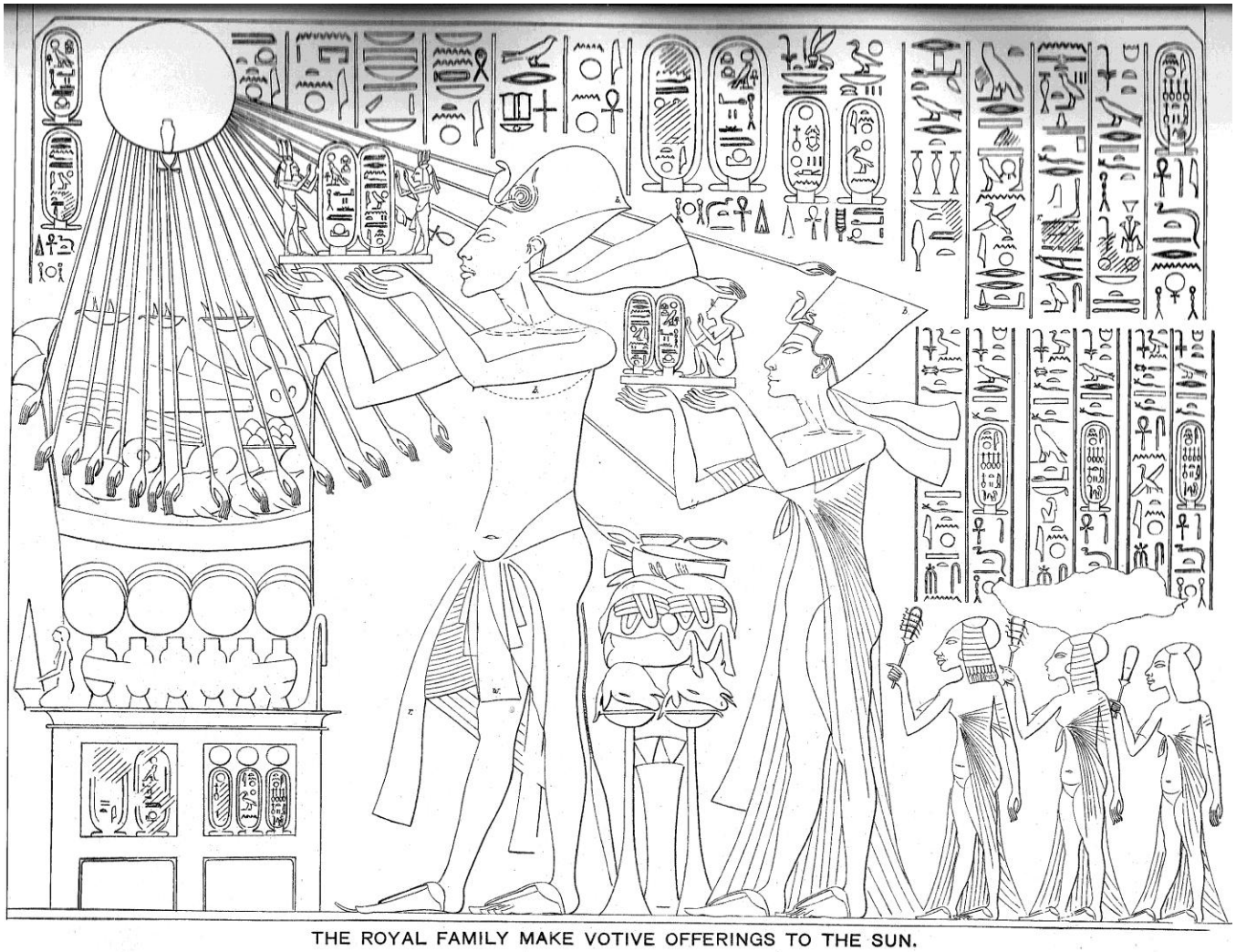
We see two figures standing back to back and separated by Amenhotep IV's titles. The individual on the left clearly identified as the Aten (see arrow) is reproduced in the form of the orthodox falcon headed god Re-Harakhty wearing the Aten disk on his head. On the right, we see Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) standing under the Aten sun disk ornamented with two uraeus serpents and ankhs that have not yet evolved into the sun disk having multiple sun beams ending in hands which we are all so familiar with. Likewise, the image of the king has not yet been transformed into the ugly caricature with which we are also accustomed to seeing.

This relief, nevertheless, shows us how quickly the king's concept of the Aten was evolving in his mind. For the ancient Egyptians, the parallel of the image of king standing in the place of the god, Re-Harakhty, would have been obvious, but few if any, would have realized how far reaching would be the changes in the religious landscape that were about to take place under the direction of the new monarch.

Figure 2: Amarna Stela

Now, let us consider the titulary of the god Aten. This too was a unique innovation by Akhenaten, for never before or after his time was a god given a royal titulary like that of a king.

The titulary first given to the Aten by Akhenaten was 'Re-Harakhty who rejoices in the horizon in his name Shu, who is Aten'. By the third year of his reign, Akhenaten had the Aten's title enclosed in a two cartouche s just like those of the king (see picture on the left). In the fourth year of the king's reign, Akhenaten changed the Aten's titulary which becomes "Live Re, ruler of the horizon, who rejoices in the Horizon, in his name of Re the father, who returns as Aten". From this point on we see that the Animal headed- human form of the god, so traditional in Egyptian iconography disappears forever.



THE ROYAL FAMILY MAKE VOTIVE OFFERINGS TO THE SUN.

In the tomb scene above, we see the Aten that we are most familiar with. The Aten's later titulary makes it very clear that the Aten disk of the sun with beams terminated by hands does not represent the physical orb of the sun but symbolizes the radiant light of the sun instead. Furthermore, we see that the Aten wares the uraeus like the king does because in Akhenaten belief the Aten is not only the creator and sustainer of all but is the king and ruler of his creation. Akhenaten taught that it is the suns light that is the force or power the Aten used to create, renew and sustain everything that exists. As the Aten's divine son, he too is a god and he alone is the mediator between god and man. The people prayed to Akhenaten and he as mediator communicated with his father, the Aten.

References:

Akhenaten and the Religion of light by Erik Hornung, Translated from the German by David Lorton, Cornell University Press 1999

Figure 2 credit: By Dalbera (Jean-Pierre Dalbéra), Flickr, and Wikimedia Commons.

Akhenaten & Nefertiti – Pergamon Museum, Berlin

Akhenaten as a Sphinx, Kestner Museum, Hannover

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The Amarna Research Foundation, Inc.
3886 South Dawson Street
Aurora, CO 80014

e-mail: RTomb10@comcast.net
website: www.TheAmarnaResearchFoundation.org