



CONTENTS

- Exclusive interview with Barry Kemp. Page 1-3
- Message from the Editor Page 1.
- The Second Son: Akhenaten in the 20th Century by Brijit Reed Page 4
- Akhenaten: The Heretic by Ijhomia Page 5
- Cure for the Common Cold: An ancient alternative to Paracetamol by Merida Watson Page 5

Exclusive: Barry Kemp interview

Several weeks ago we contacted Barry Kemp the Director of the Amarna Project and invited him to take part in an interview for the "Reconnect" Newsletter. Professor Kemp kindly accepted and this is the end result.....

Question 1: *Why did you want to become an Archaeologist?*

Answer: When I was a boy I wanted to be a farmer, I don't know why, since I grew up on the edges of a city

(Birmingham). My father had volunteered to join the British army during World War 11 and was seconded as a truck driver to Egypt. Whilst there, on leave, he took advantage of an army scheme of encouragement, and visited the Cairo Museum and the sites at Luxor (and also places in Palestine), sending back postcards and photographs. They were part of my upbringing and eventually became source material for a school project when I was

around 14 years of age. That is the earliest recollection I have of interest in the past. It quickly broadened into an interest in archaeology more generally, and I worked as a schoolboy volunteer on local excavations.

Question 2: *What started your interest in Akhenaten and Amarna?*

Answer: In the 1960s, by which time I was an assistant lecturer in Egyptology at Cambridge University, I was invited by Peter Ucko to present a paper.

Continued page 2

Message from the Editor

WELCOME to the first edition of our "Reconnect" News Letter. An on-line information hub that we hope will enrich and support your learning needs in relation to your search for knowledge about ancient Egypt. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide articles of interest to all our friends and to give everyone the opportunity to voice their responses via our "Letter to the Editor" section. We will also be offering "Notice

Board" a section where you can advertise your ancient Egypt related events to our readers.

Since Ancientegyptamania started their website and their Face Book page back in 2010 they have attracted thousands of followers from all over the world, a positive indication for us that you are out there and that you are forever eager to learn more about your ancestors..

Enjoy...Ijhomia,
Editor

If you would like to submit a Letter to the Editor commenting on the quality of our articles or other related topics... Or if you would like us to include your ancient Egyptian related events in our Notice Board section (June to August 2013 edition) please send your information for consideration to the email below.

Email

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please note that all submissions will be published at the discretion of the Editor

Exclusive interview with Barry Kemp



“As I have worked there I have grown increasingly curious about the ideas and intentions of Akhenaten”

Barry Kemp



Pylon and Palace rebuild

Continued: (in the end it was two) to a grand seminar he was organising on the theme 'Man, Settlement and Urbanism'. The act of writing the paper - 'Temple and town in ancient Egypt' - brought together several strands of interest that had been growing in my mind, one of them that archaeology in Egypt was, at that time, not used as fully as it might be for exploring topics of this kind. Amarna stood out as one of the best places, perhaps the best place, to pursue them. Ten years later I found myself directing a season of excavation at Amenhotep III's palace complex at Malkata, for David O'Connor and the University Museum of Pennsylvania, and this stimulated my interest further. When I later approached the Egypt Exploration Society for support in carrying out a survey of Amarna they agreed, enabling me to begin a survey there in 1977. As I have worked there I have grown increasingly curious about the ideas and intentions of Akhenaten, but he is not the reason why I wanted to work there in the first place.

Question 3: *Do you think an 'archaeologists' country of origin, religious beliefs or research funders could /should influence the Content of their research*

Answer: The dispassionate fully objective observer or researcher does not exist. All people are influenced by factors from the circumstances in which they grew up and in which they continue to live. I belong in

the Renaissance tradition of sceptical humanist enquiry, more particularly as it has developed in the UK. It extends to religion. It has shaped how I look at the world in general. As for pressures derived from sources of funding, they exist only in that one owes to the funders a duty to work professionally and towards the goals one has set. At present, the funding comes largely from the Amarna Trust, from donations supplied by members of the public. We set certain goals - cleaning and repair of the Great Aten Temple or conservation of the wooden coffins from the cemetery excavations, for example - and use the funds to these ends. More broadly, we have a set of objectives that are part of our profile lodged with the UK Charities Commission that are available for inspection (and are reproduced on the inside back cover of each issue of our free newsletter, Horizon and on our web site www.amarnatrust.com) And, of course, everything we do is in line with our agreements with the Egyptian government body responsible for antiquities and archaeological sites. It is generally not wise to go to an archaeological site in the search for a specific object or building or period. Archaeology, even at Amarna, is unpredictable. Whatever is found demands the same degree of care and attention, and is bound to have an interesting story to tell even if not the one that was uppermost in one's mind

at the outset. Amarna has the remains also of communities, partly monastic, of the 5th and 6th centuries AD. They have also been part of our research mission.

Question 4

To date what is your most memorable moment at Amarna?

Answer: I don't have a most memorable moment. I have a continuum of memories of satisfaction simply in working there, whether on the site or inside the expedition house. Amongst the most satisfying are the first day of every season, when the lengthy process of getting everyone and everything into place culminates in the starting of work on the site. What a relief!

Continued on Page 3



*Column at Small Aten Temple
Aten Temple Project*

Interview with Barry Kemp continued

Question 5

To date, in Amarna what was the artefact that you were most excited about?

Answer:

My reply is similar to the last. What excites me particularly is seeing how one object, or a set of objects, opens up a line of thinking and possible explanation that had not occurred to me before, and sharing the discussion with others. It might be humble things, like faience inlays, or the decorated wooden coffins that have been coming out of the ground at the South Tombs Cemetery for the last few years and are the products of choices by individuals who lived at Amarna (one of them chose to include in the decoration of a relative's coffin a jackal-headed deity). Excavation inevitably reveals chaotic ancient surfaces, from the collapse of buildings and subsequent disturbances. Archaeology, if it is to succeed, has to impose order on that chaos, to 'make silk purses out of sows' ears'.

This is an important part of the satisfaction that carries over into reducing the records to a publishable narrative.

Question 6

Do you think the body of Nefertiti is buried in Amarna or at Thebes?

Answer:

I am sure that Nefertiti was not buried at Amarna. She might have been buried at Thebes, or at other places, depending on when she actually died.

Question 7

In the current political upheaval in Egypt do you believe that Amarna is still a safe place to visit?

Answer:

Yes: it is safe for people to visit Amarna. It has long been the case that foreign visitors are closely chaperoned by the Egyptian Tourist and Antiquities Police and, so far at least, the upheavals have not manifested an anti-'Western' foreign sentiment.

Question 8: *How can we help to ensure that the successful work of the Amarna Project continues to thrive?*

Answer: We largely depend on the generosity of the general public, thus on donations. As to how to donate, information is given on both our web sites: www.amarnatrust.com and www.amarnaproject.com. We are also signed up to the Big Give organisation, see <http://new.thebiggive.org.uk/project/greatatentemple>

Barry Kemp is an Egyptologist and was Professor of Egyptology in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom until 2007, now retired. He is currently the Chairman of the Amarna Trust and has directed excavation and archaeological survey at Amarna for the Egypt Exploration Society since 1977.



*Pylons and Ramps
Aten Temple Project*



PUBLICATIONS BY BARRY KEMP INCLUDE

- ❖ The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and Its People - New Aspects of Antiquity. Published 15/10/2012 Publisher. Thames & Hudson Ltd ISBN 9780500051733
- ❖ How to Read the Egyptian Book of the Dead (eBook) Published 04/10/2012 Publisher Granta Books ISBN 9781847087515
- ❖ 100 Hieroglyphs: Think Like an Egyptian Published 01/05/2006 Publisher Granta Books ISBN 9781862078444
- ❖ Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilisation Published 11/07/1991 ISBN-10: 0415063469 | ISBN-13: 978-0415063463: New edition

The Second Son: Akhenaten In The 20th Century

by Brijit Reed

“He knows who the real God is, and he knows that He’s not valued by any of the priests or churches his father was involved in.”



Pharaoh Akhenaten 18th Dynasty
Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

“For when the young man himself comes to the end of his reign, you and your countrymen come to realize all you’ve lost.”

Imagine that it’s the 1960’s. Although you live in a time that is ripe for sociopolitical upheaval, and there are a few fringe groups who do think independently for themselves, little is done to challenge the status quo. The country you live in has a very powerful King and a legacy of wealth and a body of beliefs, culture, and art that extends far, far back in time. There is a formula for life and a formula for death; a formula for engineering and a formula for creative expression; a formula for worship; and a formula for everything from how to conduct your personal life to acceptable behavior for royalty. There is no evidence that these things have ever been challenged, and as far as you know, everyone accepts them without question. It’s just the way things are and the way they have always been—like the sun rising in the morning and the stars lighting the sky at night. Your country’s legacy of culture and power seem to be static and unchangeable. But is it really?

Now imagine that through unforeseen events, the disenfranchised second son of your current ruler is forced to step into his father’s shoes when the old man’s light goes out. He is not prepared for this. Your country is not prepared for this. In spite of the King’s best efforts when he knew the end of his reign was coming, he could not reverse his son’s spoiled and

pampered, yet neglected and verbally abusive upbringing. This was not the chosen son. In spite of this, the young man—and indeed the country itself—soldiers on, for someone must be in charge.

At first, everything seems normal. His father’s former officials have been coaching the young man, showing him the ropes, so that much of the political transition is seamless. But soon, cracks begin to show. The young man has had a taste of power. And he is still the same person he was before taking over his father’s office. He has not put away the incense or stored his paintbrushes. He still listens to the Beatles, experiments with magic mushrooms, and fantasizes about creating a peaceful Utopian society where everyone is happy. And most importantly, he has already had his mind expanded by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. He knows who the real God is, and he knows that He’s not valued by any of the priests or churches his father was involved in. This young man already has a lifetime of his own independent beliefs and experiences and they cannot just be undone or unlearned. He was not groomed to replace his father. He was the second son. And so a revolution begins. He removes the old priests from power and closes down their churches, banning and outlawing worship of their gods, and now you and your fellow countrymen must worship the god he found.

He builds a new city in the middle of nowhere, somewhere out in the barren desert and moves the seat of government there. As a peace-loving gent, he lets the military grow fallow. He builds new temples dedicated to his god and you are now forced to worship only this god. Artists can no longer employ traditional styles of photography, music, or writing. They must express themselves in the manner that the young man wishes—as examples of dedication to the new King himself and his god. While this seems radical and perhaps even contemptible, all is not lost. For when the young man himself comes to the end of his reign, you and your countrymen come to realize all you’ve lost and how much you valued it. He had blazed through your world like a white-hot meteorite, and though many of his changes had been detrimental, a few still sparkled like brilliant lanterns, lighting the path for your country to be reborn and come back stronger than ever... The End

Brijit Reed is a screenwriter and the author of Heretic: The Life And Death Of Akhenaten. She currently lives in Los Angeles and loves words, history, places, people, and cultures. Her second book, “Unbound”, will be about the witch persecutions in Scotland. Follow her on

Twitter: [@BrijitReed](https://twitter.com/BrijitReed)
Web & Blog
<http://brijitreed.com/>



Akhenaten: The Heretic by Ijhoma

Owing to the large volume of information that is currently available in our stores and online about Akhenaten, I often wonder how people who are new to the study of the Amarna period know where to start? In his book Aldred, C., (1988) suggested that Akhenaten's bizarre image depicting rounded thighs, buttocks, a soft belly, and enlarged breasts could have been the result of him having Froehlich's Syndrome, an endocrine disorder. Similarly Burrige, A., (1995) wrote that Akhenaten might have suffered from Marfan, s Syndrome, a genetic disorder of the connective tissues. In "Moses: The

Pharaoh of Egypt (1990) Ahmed Osman suggested that Akhenaten could have been the great prophet Moses. With so many theories to consider is it no wonder that the novice Egyptomaniac might become slightly overwhelmed. The highest of respect goes out to all of those scholars that have endeavored to bring to the world their theories about the great Akhenaten. However for those of you who are just beginning to take their first steps, perhaps a good starting point would be to go back to the drawing board and take a long look at some of the earliest archaeological evidence

relating to Amarna. Then maybe you will be able to find evidence fused within the images of Akhenaten and his family supporting the most popular hypothesis which suggests that the first Amarnian ruler, the Pharaoh Akhenaten was a heretic, a person who held religious views that differed from the norm .

Suggested reading
Tell el Amarna (1894)
Petrie, W. M. Flinders



Lord of the Sun; Akhenaten
A watercolor by I. Ogbuehi
(All rights reserved)



Cure for the Common Cold- An Ancient Alternative to Paracetamol by Merida Watson

Written down inside the Ebers Medical Papyrus (c.1500BC) are instructions that suggest that the common cold was also an ailment suffered by members of ancient Egyptian society. Amongst its many remedies for the common cold, the medical papyrus prescribes that patients should drink the milk from a mother who has recently given birth to a boy. It was suggested that once the nursing milk was placed inside a Bes jar it was believed that the magic of the God Bes would turn the liquid milk into

medicine. Whether or not this cure was successful is unknown. However, according to the Eber Papyrus we do know that the spell that ancient Egyptian priests used on patients to ward off the evil spirit of the common cold was even more popular. Farewell Paracetamol and hello ancient alternative "May you flow out, catarrh, son of catarrh, who breaks the bones, who destroys the skull, who hacks in the marrow, who causes the seven openings in the head to ache, May you fley out"



The God Bes image upon a milk jar
Photographer: Mharrsch
(Courtesy of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum)