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AMARNA ART
فن العمارنة

Dimitri Laboury

Amarna Kunst
Art amarnien

The art that developed in the reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten, known as "Amarna art," has largely been considered revolutionary in the history of ancient Egyptian art. As such, it has been the subject of much debate and has generated numerous theories, often contradictory or controversial, and, in fact, deeply influenced by the history of its modern reception. Nevertheless, the remaining evidence still permits us to investigate Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten's conception of images and art, as well as the artistic evolution under his reign. From a hermeneutic point of view, Amarna art can be interpreted as a multi-causal phenomenon, involving an internal evolution of 18th Dynasty society and art, pharaoh-centrism, and purely aesthetic factors.

يعتبر الفن الذى تطور خلال عهد امنحتب الرابع/أخناتون والمعروف بإسم «فن العمارنة» يعتبر الى حد كبير تطور ثورى فى تاريخ الفن المصرى القديم فيمثل هذا التطور محور الكثير من النقاشات وبنى عليه العديد من النظريات التى غالبا تكون متناقضة أو مثيرة للجدل وعلى أى حال فإن هذه النقاشات والنظريات متأثرة بشدة بتاريخ استقباله الحديث، مع ذلك فإن الادلة المتبقية لا تزال تسمح بفحص مفهوم امنتحتب الرابع/اخناتون للفن والتصوير، فضلا عن التطور الفنى فى ظل حكمه. يمكن تفسير فن العمارنة باعتباره ظاهرة متعددة الاسباب والتى تشمل تطور الذاتية للمجتمع والفن خلال الاسرة الثامنة عشر، دور الفرعون والعوامل الجمالية البحتة.

Amarna art is the designation traditionally used to refer to the unconventional art developed in the reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1352 - 1336 BCE). It was coined after the modern Arabic name for the site of el-Amarna, where the king built his new capital, Akhetaten, in the first third of his year five. So-called Amarna art had nevertheless been initiated earlier, in the king's regnal year four, when the cult of the solar god Aten was officially launched at Karnak, a period that Vergnieux has proposed designating the "proto-Amarna stage" (Vergnieux 1996; 1999: 201 - 202; Vergnieux and Gondran 1997: 193). Given the inextricable link between the art instituted by Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten and the new ideology of the cult of Aten, the designation "Atenist art" thus appears more appropriate.

The Reception of Atenist Art: A Conundrum

The reception of the art of Akhenaten's time constitutes a remarkable conundrum. Akhenaton was rejected into collective oblivion by his successors, and both he and his art were later to be completely rediscovered. Although the earliest recorded modern encounter with Amarna art dates back to the beginning of the eighteenth century (van de Walle 1976), it was not until the scientific expeditions of the founding fathers of Egyptology in the mid-nineteenth

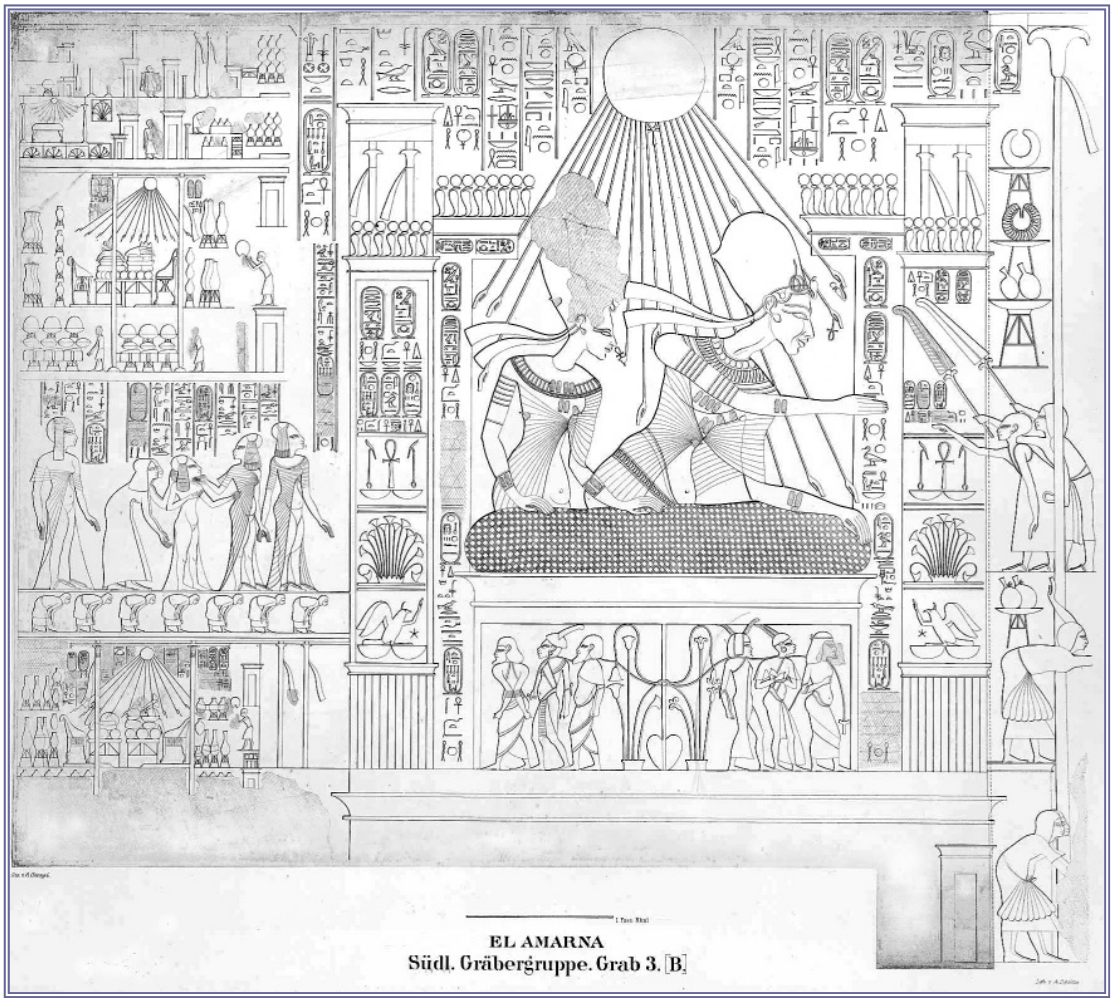

Figure 1. Akhenaten and Nefertiti shown in a wall decoration in the tomb of Parennefer at Amarna (AT 7).

century that the first appraisal of its particularity was presented (for a good synthesis of this rediscovery, see Hornung 1999: 1 - 18; see also Laboury 2010: 15 - 41). Since that dawn of Amarna studies, the beholders of Atenist art have been struck by, and have consequently tended to fixate upon, two characteristics: the fluidity of its compositions, in contrast to the very hieratic nature of traditional Egyptian art, and the unusual, distorted anatomy of the king's figure (fig. 1), which was first interpreted as an expression of "realism" according to art-historical theories of the time—especially those of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717 - 1768), who thought, as did classical authors, that "ancient Egyptian artists imitated nature as they found it."

Moreover, despite this rather late rediscovery and the absence, therefore, of a long tradition of distorted interpretations, Akhenaten and his art, in the twentieth century, very quickly became the target of modern occidental value-projections. These induced a vast number of historical re-creations or inventions based on purely ethnocentric factors (notably Montserrat 2000). In this context of cultural appropriation and re-interpretation, scholars as well as the general public gained their perception of Atenist art from a rather obsessive focus on the apparently modern-art-like *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi of Amenhotep IV (fig. 2) (discovered by Pillet and Chevrier at

Figure 2. Comparison between a colossal head of Akhenaten from the *Gem-pa-Aten* (Luxor Museum J 46) and a sketch by Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani (b. 1884).

East Karnak in 1925) and the so-called Berlin bust of Nefertiti (unearthed by Borchardt at el-Amarna in 1912), which was, since its first public appearance in 1924, immediately appointed as the epitome of beauty and perfection in the occidental collective mind. These two icons of the Amarna era—almost inevitably reproduced on the cover of every book pertaining to Akhenaten and Nefertiti—have thus become the foci of any analysis of Atenist art.

This history of the modern reception of Akhenaten's art has determined the current two prevailing interpretations: 1) the "clinical" reading of the king's iconography, which, based on the undemonstrated (and often unquestioned) assumption that Amarna imagery faithfully reproduced pharaoh's actual appearance, led to the belief that Akhenaten suffered from a serious physiological disorder (notably Aldred 1962; Arramon and Crubezy 1994; Burridge 1996; Ghalioungui 1947), an opinion strongly contradicted by the analysis of the king's bodily remains (Hawass 2010); and 2) the theory that a clear opposition existed between an early exaggerated (or caricatural) style, exemplified by the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi, and, in the later part of the reign, a softened style, notably attested by Nefertiti's so-called Berlin bust (Aldred 1973; or, for example, Wenig 1975). A systematic study of all the material evidence and data relating to the evolution of art during the reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten—a study that takes into account all relevant fragments, not merely the ones considered "impressive" from a modern, occidental point of view (whether for their beauty or for their repellent qualities)—seriously invites questioning these two interpretations, which appear to be as hastily and historically shaped as they are widely accepted.

Akhenaten's Conception of Images: Rejecting the Tradition

Textual, archaeological, and iconographic evidence converge to demonstrate that Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten disputed the traditional Egyptian theology of images. Ancient Egyptian cultic practices and textual references to art clearly show that images were considered magically efficacious: they were perceived as animated embodiments of their models, representing beings or elements of the beyond that could "come down into them" or "put them on," as the texts say. And, just like hieroglyphs, with which they share a common formal construction, traditional Egyptian images aimed to depict the essence of things rather than their ephemeral and incomplete appearances (Laboury 1998a).

Unlike the other deities of the Egyptian pantheon, Amenhotep IV's solar god was, after a short time, no longer represented according to the traditional semi-anthropomorphic iconography signifying his essential nature (see fig. 5a below), but rather as he appeared each day: as a shining sun. The meaning of this unprecedented metamorphosis is made clear by the king himself when he addresses the god with the following words: "Every eye can look at you straight in front of it while you are [in] the sun disk [the Aten] of the day above earth" (Sandman 1938: 95 [14]; translation by the author). Akhenaten also rejected the very principle of the cult statue, which represented the central concept of Egyptian image-theology and served as the ritual intermediary between man and the divine (Assmann 1991:

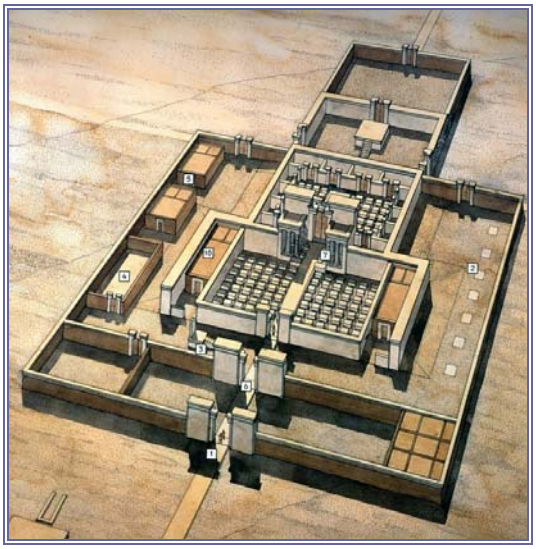

Figure 3. Visualization of an Atenist temple by Jean-Claude Golvin.

50 - 63; Eschweiler 1994), by transforming the traditional, enclosed temple into an open-air structure (fig. 3). Here the deity no longer needed an iconic hypostasis to inhabit his earthly dwelling but could rather be physically—and visibly—present by means of his luminosity. Thus the symbolic iconography of essences was clearly replaced by a representation of phenomenological appearances. Moreover, the cognitive capacity of an image to capture the essence of the depicted subject was denied by the king when he asserted that his god was "the one who shaped himself, with his arms, and no artist knows him" (Sandman 1938: 111 [7]; translation by the author). From an iconographic point of view, the traditional temple-wall imagery, which endlessly illustrated the ritual exchange between the king and the deity in a conceptual and generic manner (i.e., without reference to contingencies of time or space), was supplanted by detailed and seemingly anecdotal representations of the ritualized life of pharaoh, almost as if "every eye could look at him straight in front of it" (fig. 4). The style of these representations, hitherto static and hieratic, became very fluid and dynamic, often suggesting motion or displaying other visual effects.

Nevertheless, despite this explicit and revolutionary intention of rejecting the traditional image-system, most of the principles that had always defined Egyptian art remained unquestioned in Atenist art. For instance, on the formal level, the combination of different perspectives was still commonly used to represent a single object, as was the case for depictions of architecture or of the human face, still pictured in profile with one eye shown from the front. More significantly, on the functional level, the figure of the king, which constituted the very semantic center of Amarna art production, was still conceived as a symbolic evocation of his ideological essence. Thus, rather than yielding an alternative and entirely new system, the artistic revolution instigated by Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten appears as a kind of "window" in the long-established Egyptian theory of images, a window to another image-conception that was never fully assumed (Laboury 2008a), probably—at least to some extent—because Atenist ideology did not last long enough.

Evolution and Documentation

The preserved documentation relating to the evolution of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten's art allows us to detail the successive stages through which this unconventional art was instituted. The commencement of the king's reign bore all the signs of a perfect ideological and artistic continuity with the recent past. For example, the newly crowned Amenhotep IV ordered the completion of the unfinished monuments of his father, Amenhotep III—i.e., the front door of the third pylon of the Temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak (Sa'ad 1970), and the entrance structure of the pylon of the temple at Soleb in Nubia (Schiff Giorgini et al. 1998: pls. 1 - 26). However, before having completed the monumental main-entrance door of the temple of the dynastic god Amun-Ra at Karnak, and before the end of his regnal year one (Gabolde 1998: 24 - 25), he who designated himself as "the chosen one of Amun" (Sandman 1938: 191, 195; translation by the author) decided to devote his energy to the erection of a new cultic structure, still in

Figure 4. Comparison between traditional temple-wall imagery at left (from Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri) and Atenist temple-wall imagery at right, where the ritualized life of the king is depicted under the sun's rays (Luxor Museum assemblage).

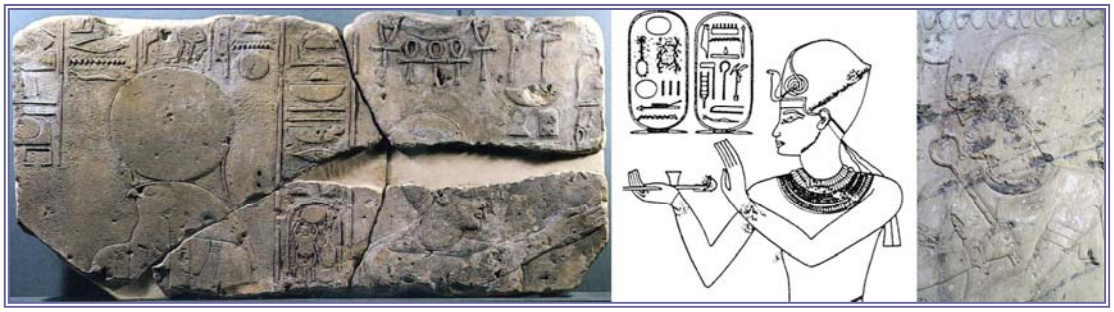

Figure 5. At left, the so-called "Berlin block" (Ägyptisches Museum 2072) from Karnak depicting Ra-Horakhty and Amenhotep IV. Center: Drawing of the king as depicted in the Theban tomb of Kheruef (TT 192). Right: The king as depicted in the tomb of Ramose (TT 55).

the Karnak precinct but dedicated to another divinity—"Ra-Horakhty who rejoices in the horizon in his name of Shu who is [in] the solar disk [the Aten]" (Sa'ad 1974 [Zernikh stelae]; Sandman 1938: 143 - 144 [Gebel el-Silsila stela]; translation by the author)—i.e., the deity that would become known as Aten. The iconography of the blocks from this building, later dismantled (Chappaz 1983), already reveals the king's obvious focus on the solar god, while the figures represented on them, and in contemporaneous Theban tombs—that of Kheruef (TT 192; Epigraphic Survey 1980), parts of Ramose's tomb (TT 55; Davies 1941: pl. 30), and parts of Parennefer's tomb (TT 188; Davies 1923: pl. 27h)—are in perfect accordance with the artistic standards of Amenhotep III's reign (fig. 5).

The metamorphosis of the sun god and his royal worshiper arose in the king's year four. The first step of the transformation, which can be dated to the first half of the year (Laboury 2010: 128 - 130), was the enclosure of the god's name within a double cartouche, as was done for pharaohs. Only two images are positively datable to this early phase: a stela of a certain Kiya, now in Edinburgh (Royal Museum acc. no. 1956.347: Aldred 1959: 19 - 22, pl. 3), and a large graffito in an Aswan granite quarry (fig. 6; Habachi 1965: 85 - 92, fig. 13). They both show the deity's anatomy slightly altered, with more curving contours, especially in the abdominal and pelvic area. Yet, before the last two months of that same year (regnal year four; Gabolde 1998: 26; Goyon 1957: 106 - 107, nos. 90 - 91,

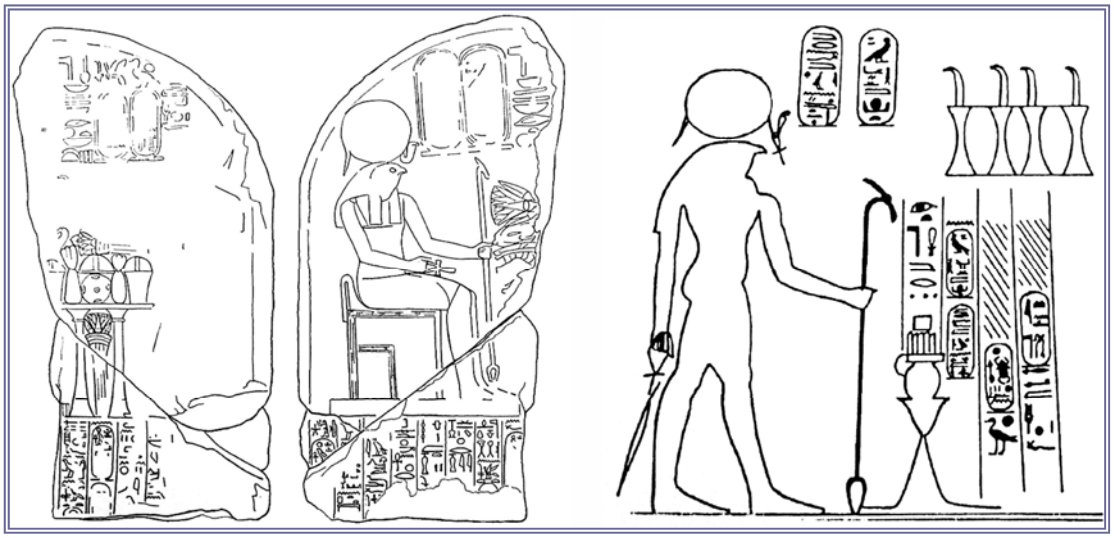

Figure 6. At left, stela of Kiya (Edinburgh Royal Museum acc. No. 1956.347). At right, graffito from Aswan quarry.

Figure 7. Top: The so-called "Paris block" (Louvre E 13482ter) from Karnak. Depicted in close-up bottom left and bottom right.

pl. 25; Redford 1963), the god relinquished his classic and symbolic semi-anthropomorphic iconography to be depicted according to his visual manifestation as a shining sun (though with hands at the end of his "rays," to suggest his actions on earth)—according to an image already attested in literary sources long before

Figure 8. The king represented in the new Atenist style on *talatats* 154 and 155, from the ninth pylon of the Temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak.

the Atenist age (Hornung 1971; for iconographic antecedents, see Redford 1976). One of the first occurrences of this new divine representation appears on a large block known today as the "Paris block" (Louvre E 13482ter), where Amenhotep IV is featured twice, in a symmetrical composition in keeping with the long-established fundamental principles of traditional temple imagery (fig. 7). However, the body shape—this time of the king—is now more sinuous. This physical remodeling quickly led to a peculiarly elongated royal figure (fig. 8),

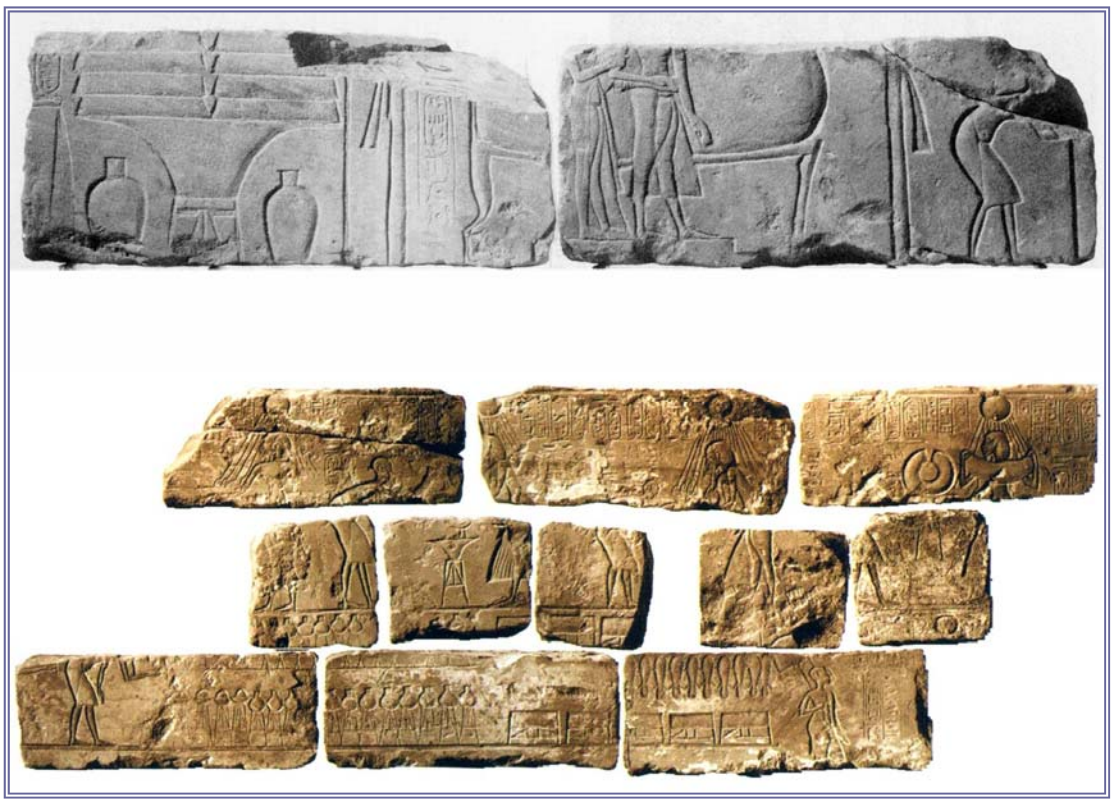

Figure 9. Top: The king and queen on their way to the matrimonial bed, on *talatats* 31/216 and 31/203 from the ninth pylon, Karnak. Bottom: The "heliacal rising" of Akhenaten, on *talatats* re-used in the ninth pylon (originally from the *Rudj-menu*, in the Atenist complex, Karnak).

androgynous rather than feminized (Robins 1996), visible in the next phase, a phase distinctive for the invention of *talatat*-technology and of the new open-air temple architecture exploited to build a gigantic complex in east Karnak (the *Gem-pa-Aten*), where the king officially inaugurated the new Atenist era with the celebration of an abnormally early Sed Festival (Gohary 1990; Redford 1988; Smith and Redford 1976; Traunecker 1986; Vergnieux 1996, 1999; Vergnieux and Gondran 1997).

From this point on, the entire official iconographic repertoire—in temples, palaces, and even private tombs—is centered on the ritual, or "ritualized," life of pharaoh, who is shown "embraced by the sun's rays," as Amarna texts describe him (Sandman 1938: 76 [8]; translation by the author). Vergnieux (Vergnieux 1999: 193 - 194; Vergnieux and Gondran 1997: 154 - 191) emphasizes this important iconographic shift from the traditional interaction between god and king to an exclusive representation of pharaoh's actions under the auspices of the divinity (see fig. 4), a transference that ultimately resulted in the depiction of sacred, or sanctified, royal intimacy on temple walls (fig. 9; Traunecker 1986) and other religious monuments (Aldred 1973: cat. no. 123; Freed 1999: 28, fig. 13; Ikram 1989; Stevens 2006: 133 - 136; Vassilika 1995: cat. no. 27)—a concept astonishingly similar to the famous heliacal rising of Louis XIV, thirty centuries later.

On the basis of the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi and isolated *talatat* representations, this emerging Atenist art from Karnak has often (if not always) been described as excessive, caricatural, and even grotesque, as opposed to the Amarna art of the second half of the reign, which depicted Nefertiti with her (apparently) more naturalistic face, in contrast to the elongated one of Akhenaten. Such an evolution is, however, highly questionable. On

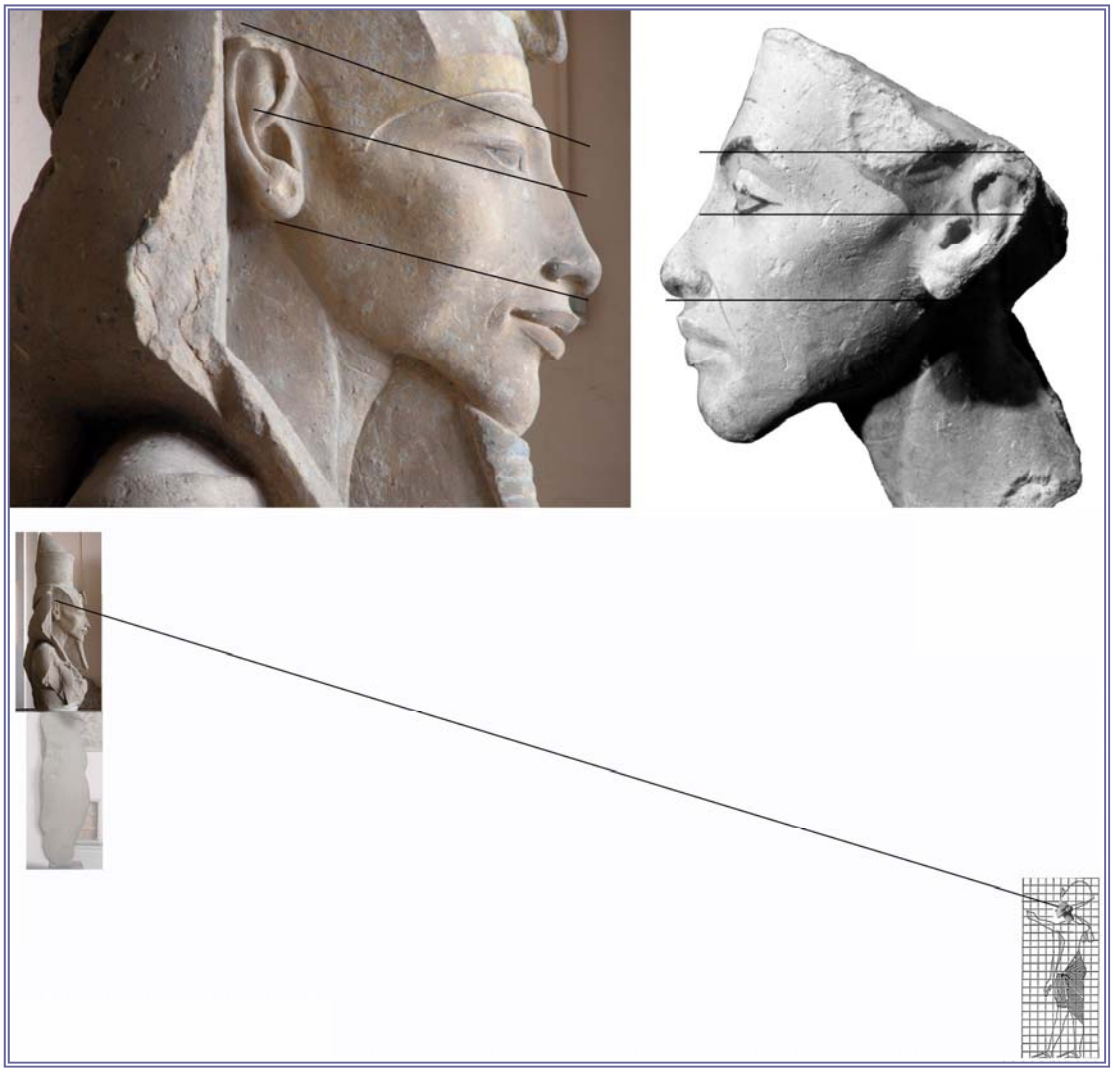

Figure 10. "Perspective deformation" of the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi physiognomy and the geometry of the observer's theoretical perspective.

the one hand, the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi have proved to display deformations according to the perspective from which they were meant to be viewed by the observer (fig. 10) from far below, and, as such, they are not fully representative of the artistic standards of their time (Laboury 2008b). On the other hand, although Nefertiti, like every queen depicted in ancient Egyptian art, might have been portrayed at first with her husband's features (Krauss 2005: 136), large-scale assemblages of *talatats* from Karnak already show her with the distinctive physiognomy of the Berlin bust very early—before or, at the latest, during regnal year six (fig. 11; Laboury 2008b, with reference to Vergnieux 1999: 127, pl. 25).

Moreover, the artistic documentation that can be dated later in the reign does not show any clear-cut evolution from this proto-Amarna phase. For example, for statuary, which always allows a more precise stylistic analysis than do two-dimensional representations, the following successive groupings can be singled out: 1) the statues made to adorn the first official buildings erected in Akhetaten (fig. 12), i.e., the temples of Aten and the Great Palace, in preparation for the move to the new royal residence (thus

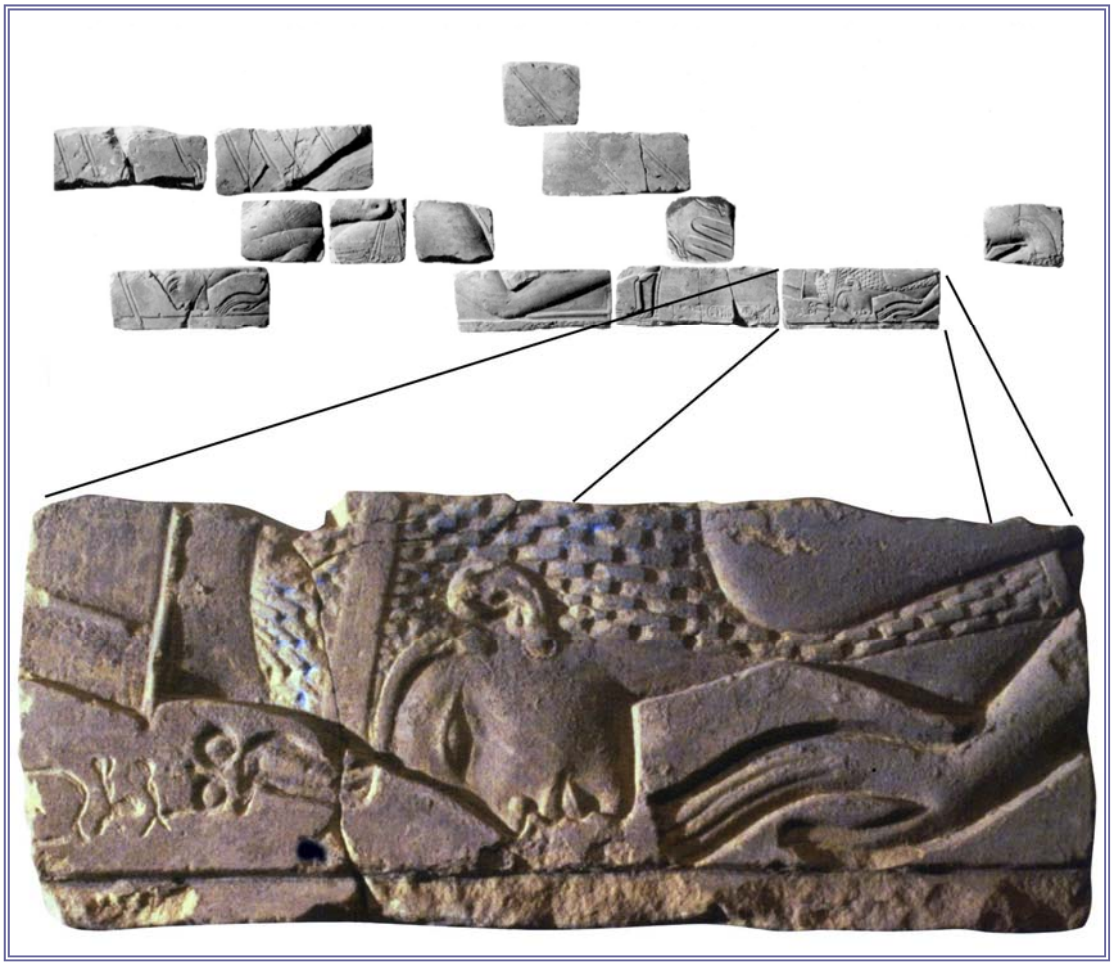

Figure 11. Nefertiti shown on *talatat* 34/118, from the ninth pylon of the Temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak, assemblage A 0081.

Figure 12. Comparison between faces of the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi, photographed at left without perspective correction; center, with perspective correction. At right: face of king reconstructed from fragments of statues from the Great Aten Temple, el-Amarna.

between the first third of year five and year eight); 2) the statuary groups that accompanied the boundary-stelae inscribed with the second proclamation, of year eight, probably on the occasion of the move to Akhetaten; and 3) the sculptors' models and unfinished statues left in the workshop of the royal sculptor Thutmose when the city was abandoned, at the end of the Atenist episode. With the exception of the design of the eye, which became less stylized and less almond-shaped around year eight, there is no real stylistic evolution apparent in the above statue-groupings during these 15 years of truly Atenist art.

Interpreting Atenist Art

The particularity of Atenist art within the continuum of Egyptian artistic traditions cannot be simplistically interpreted as the result of a single, or simple, cause. Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten's innovative ideas concerning the status and purpose of representational art account for its emancipation from the conceptual and essentialist tendencies of classic ancient Egyptian art, and for the manifestation of a window to a more perceptual system of visual representation. Like the Atenist ideology that yielded and shaped it, this new artistic conception was actually rooted in a cultural evolution, which, inspired by a new metaphysical approach to reality, led to a questioning of the long-established mindset and the traditional ways of imaging the world, whose forerunners can be traced back one century before Amenhotep IV's birth (Assmann 1983, 1995).

The absolute pharaoh-centrism of Atenist iconography nevertheless reveals that this internal cultural evolution was ideologically commandeered by Akhenaten—a fact that, in itself, suffices to demonstrate that he was the actual instigator of so-called Amarna art (Krauss 1986: 40 - 62; Laboury 1998b: 74 - 77; Sandman 1938: 170 [10-1], 171 [12]). It has been suggested that this strong and fundamental ideological dimension of Akhenaten's art inspired the peculiar appearance given to the ruler (Hornung 1971; Westendorf 1963). The rather quick metamorphosis of year four resulted in a notably stylized manner of depicting the king (see fig. 12); this stylization, succeeding the "deification style" of his father's Sed Festivals only a decade earlier (Johnson 1998), and according to well-established artistic convention, may have served to signify his extraordinary nature on the occasion of his own Sed Festival and in the following few years. Indeed, just as the iconographic repertoire sanctified royal life and intimacy, official texts from el-Amarna confirm that Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten was conceived as the earthly hypostasis of the god Aten: he is, in fact, very often described as "the beautiful child of Aten" (Davies 1903: pls. 38, 41; 1905: pls. 21, 36; 1906: pl. 33; 1908a: pls. 15, 25; 1908b: pl. 2; see Eaton-Krauss 1983 and Feucht 1984 for an iconographic version of the statement), "his unique son, from his body" (Sandman 1938: 76 [7 - 8]; translation by the author), "shaped according to his [the god's] shape" (Sandman 1938: 83 [6]; translation by the author), or "the transfigured image of Aten" (Davies 1906: pl. 33; 1908a: pls. 15, 25; 1908b: pl. 2). The name "Akhenaten," adopted by the king between year five and year six, can also be understood as a play on words: "the transfigured one of Aten." Akhenaten's role as the provider of all sustenance, like Aten, who is "father and mother of everything he has created" (Sandman 1938: 12 [8 - 12]; translation by the author), was also emphasized by his designation as "the great Hapy of the whole land, *ka* of Egypt" or "[*ka*] of anyone" (notably Sandman 1938: 5 [4], 16 [9], 32 [9], 37 [9], 39 [11]; translation by the author; Robins 1996). Thus, even if, theoretically, the "conceptual" iconography of essences was supposed to be replaced by a "perceptual" depiction of appearances, the king, the central element of Atenist iconography, was still explicitly presented as a symbol of the profound nature of his divine genitor.

In addition to this pharaoh-centric dimension that truly characterizes Amarna art, Atenist imagery is notably distinguished by its

Figure 13. Royal hand depicted on *talatat* MMA 1985.328.1 (Gift of Norbert Schimmel, 1985), from el-Amarna, found at Hermopolis.

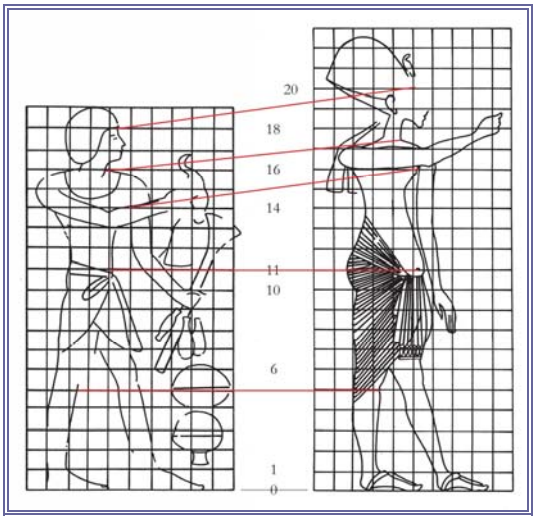

Figure 14. Comparison between traditional 18-square proportion grid and Atenist 20-square grid.

trend toward aestheticizing (exaggerating the figure in order to approach the perceived ideals of beauty), plainly perceptible in many small details, such as over-elongated hands with an apparent extra phalange near the fingertips (fig. 13). As Jan Assmann has stressed (Assmann 1988), the female figure in Amarna art, and especially the archetypical one of Nefertiti, appears as a real rhetoric in images of the ideal of beauty depicted in an almost-contemporaneous love poem: "the most beautiful one . . . the one with a long neck . . . whose fingers are [elongated] like lotuses, her hips are plump and her waist is tight, so that her haunches increase her beauty" (Papyrus Chester Beatty I). The concept is also relevant to Akhenaten (Laboury 2002), as can be demonstrated by the study of proportion grids, which enables us to describe objectively, and according to ancient Egyptian criteria, the iconographic transfiguration that affected the king's figure—that is, the change from the traditional 18-square-grid to the Atenist 20-square-grid (on this grid see Robins 1983a, 1985a, 1985b; 1994: 119 - 159) induced an elongation of the human body in which two extra squares were inserted at the chest, between the armpits and the navel, and also at the neck (fig. 14). This modification engendered a lengthening of the neck and an emphasis on the contrast between the waist and the haunches—i.e., precisely the beauty criteria underlined in the above-quoted love poem. The iconographical androgyny of the king and his adoption of this feminine beauty should not be too surprising, for he was considered a divine provider of fertility and prosperity to Egypt, much like the androgynous Hapi, and like Aten, "the father and mother of everything he has created." Moreover, the aesthetic evolution that occurred during the pre-Amarna 18th Dynasty had already generated a feminization of male figures and a hyper-feminization of female ones, notably through a modification of the position and proportion of the haunches (Robins 1997).

Regarding physiognomy, Rolf Krauss demonstrated in his study of Nefertiti's so-called Berlin bust that the "perfect" beauty of the queen was artificially constructed. He re-created the original design of this sculptor's model (Laboury 2005) by projecting a grid composed of a standard Egyptian unit of measure, "the finger" (1 finger = 1.875 cm), on a 3D-rendering of the work of art (fig. 15), and thus showed that every major facial feature is positioned on a line or at the intersection of two lines (Krauss 1991a, 1991b). Moreover, Krauss also emphasized that the upper part of Akhenaten's and Nefertiti's respective faces, from the bridge of

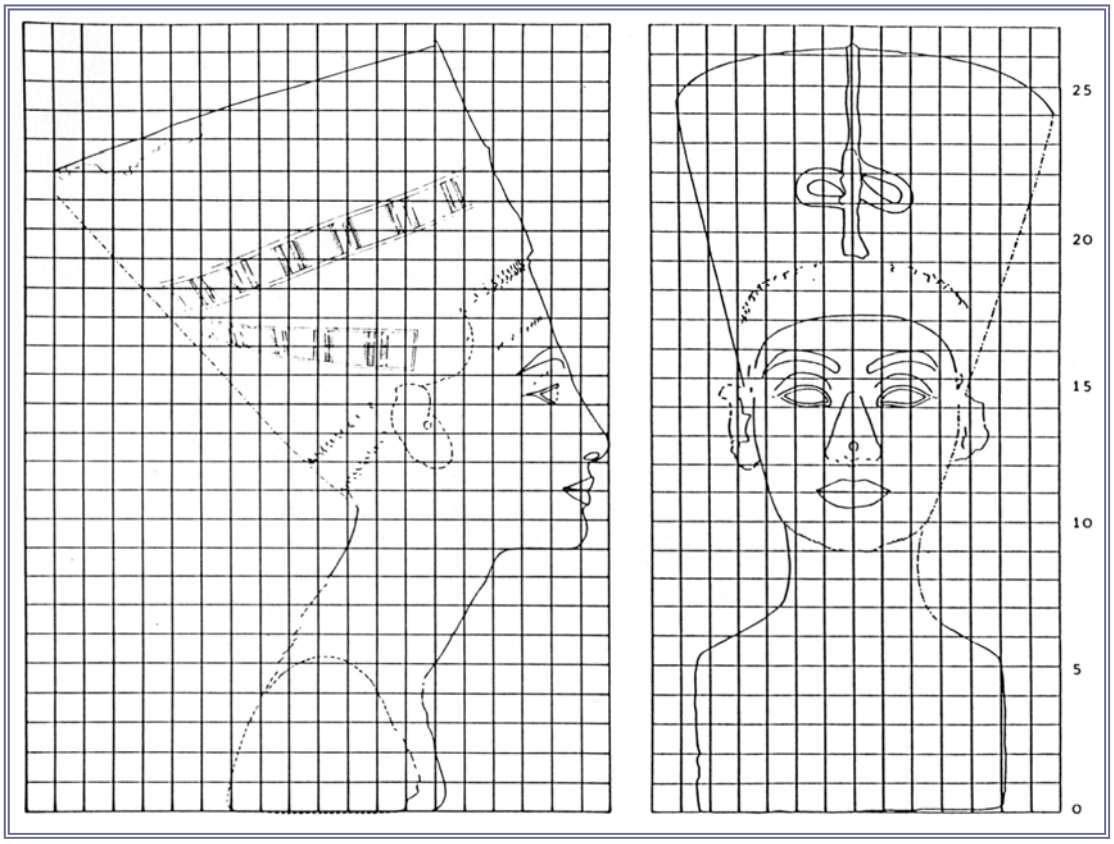

Figure 15. Projection of grid composed of the ancient Egyptian "finger" (a unit of measurement equal to 1.875 cm) on a 3D-rendering of Nefertiti's Berlin bust (Ägyptisches Museum 21.300).

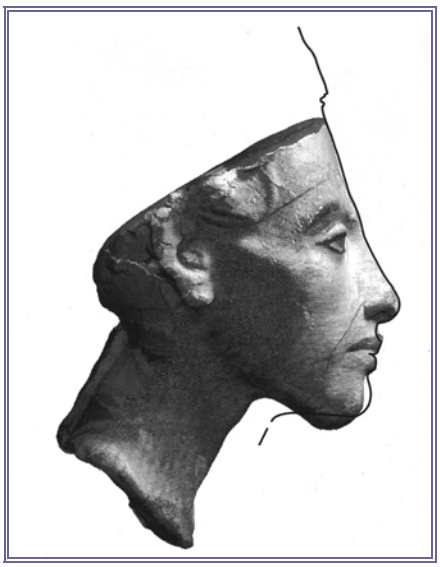

Figure 16. Comparison between profile of 3D-rendering of Nefertiti's Berlin bust and 3D-rendering of plaster model head of Akhenaten (Berlin 21.351), both found in the workshop of royal sculptor Thutmose, el-Amarna.

the nose to the crown of the forehead, is exactly identical (fig. 16; Krauss 2005). Clearly, the canonical visage of Nefertiti, as well as that of her husband, was a purely aesthetic creation, and Akhenaten was, in his own eyes, truly "the beautiful child of Aten."

This purely aesthetic dimension might be explained as a consequence of the more perceptual tendency of Amarna art, because, as Jan Assmann wrote, "Perception is exactly what 'beauty' means. Beauty is something to be perceived and not conceived. It is a sensual quality in that it addresses the senses" (Assmann 1996: 69). However, it also has an ideological meaning, for Atenist texts insist on the idea that the solar god fills creation with his light, love, and beauty, these three qualities being identified with the god's manifestation on earth. As Nefertiti's second name—Neferneferuaten ("Beautiful-is-the-beauty-of-the-Aten")—seems to indicate, Aten was

conceived as the origin and the essence of beauty (Assmann 1988; Laboury 2002).

Like the ideology that gave birth to it, Amarna art appears as a politically oriented radicalization of an internal evolution of Egyptian civilization during the 18th Dynasty. As such, it was probably doomed to failure.

The Aftermath of Amarna Art

Atenist art, along with Atenism, disappeared progressively during the reigns of Tutankhamen, Aye, and Horemheb (Robins 1983b, 1984a, 1984b). It nevertheless transmitted to post-Amarna art some of its innovations, notably a more sensual aesthetic and a more organic, or holistic, composition of single figures as well as of entire scenes. However, many of its naturalistic developments were re-integrated in the traditional ancient Egyptian imaging system and were thus exploited as semiotic means to express symbolic distinctions (see, for example, Russmann 1980).

Bibliographic Notes

A good synthesis of the rediscovery of Amarna Art is provided by Hornung (1999: 1 - 18) and Laboury (2010: 15 - 41). The classic reference for the theory of opposing artistic styles in the early versus later parts of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten's reign is still Aldred (1973). For an atlas of the archaeological sites that have provided documentation of the king's reign, with comments and bibliography, see Chappaz et al. (2008: 143 - 170). Laboury (2010: 127 - 135) gives a detailed discussion of the chronology of steps leading to the emergence of Amenhotep IV's new tutelary divinity. Assmann (1983; English translation 1995) constitutes the major work on the solar theology that was essentially the root of Atenist ideology. On the distinction between "the Aten" (the common name of the solar disk as a celestial body) and "Aten" (the proper name of the god), see Assmann (1992: 165 - 166). For a possible allusion to the father-son relationship between the king and Aten on an iconographic level, with reference to the god Shu, see Abd-ur-Rahman (1959) and Assmann (1991: 251 - 253). Since Amenhotep III often designated himself as the (dazzling) sun-disk (Aten), W. Ray Johnson advocated an identification between the earthly and the divine father of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten in Atenist ideology, for which see Johnson (1998). On the question of the coregency revived on this hypothesis, see Gabolde (1998: 62 - 98). For a discussion of Nefertiti's so-called Berlin bust as a sculptor's model in the context of the plaster finds in Thutmoses' workshop at el-Amarna, see Laboury (2005). As underlined by Robins (1994: 139 - 143), the new royal canon influenced the depiction of the human body in Atenist art, although the anatomy of non-royal persons was never rendered as pronounced as the king's.

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Figure 1. Akhenaten and Nefertiti shown in a wall decoration in the tomb of Parennefer at Amarna (AT 7). (Lepsius *Denkmäler III*: pl. 109.)

Figure 2. Comparison between a colossal head of Akhenaten from the *Gem-pa-Aten* (Luxor Museum J 46) and a sketch by Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani (b. 1884). Colossal head: De Meulenaere (1975: 63).

Figure 3. Visualization of an Atenist temple by Jean-Claude Golvin. (Vergnieux and Gondran 1997: 114.)

Figure 4. Comparison between traditional temple-wall imagery at left (from Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri) and Atenist temple-wall imagery at right, where the ritualized life of the king is depicted under the sun's rays (Luxor Museum assemblage). Photographs by the author.

Figure 5. At left, the so-called "Berlin block" (Ägyptisches Museum 2072) from Karnak depicting Ra-Horakhty and Amenhotep IV. Center: Drawing of the king as depicted in the Theban tomb of Kheruef (TT 192). Right: The king as depicted in the tomb of Ramose (TT 55). Photograph at left by the author; center drawing: Epigraphic Survey (1980: pl. 9); photograph at right by the author.

Figure 6. At left, stela of Kiya (Edinburgh Royal Museum acc. no. 1956.347). At right, graffito from Aswan quarry. Stela: Aldred (1959: pl. 3); graffito: Habachi (1965: fig. 13).

Figure 7. Top: The so-called "Paris block" (Louvre E 13482ter) from Karnak. Depicted in close-up bottom left and bottom right. Top photograph courtesy of the Louvre Museum; photographs bottom left and bottom right by the author.

Figure 8. The king represented in the new Atenist style on *talatats* 154 and 155, from the ninth pylon of the Temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak. (De Meulenaere 1975: 100.)

Figure 9. Top: The king and queen on their way to the matrimonial bed, on *talatats* 31/216 and 31/203 from the ninth pylon, Karnak. Bottom: The "heliacal rising" of Akhenaten, on *talatats* re-used in the ninth pylon (originally from the *Rudj-menu*, in the Atenist complex, Karnak). Top: Traunecker (1986: 36); bottom: Vergnieux and Gondran (1997: 191).

Figure 10. "Perspective deformation" of the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi physiognomy and the geometry of the observer's theoretical perspective. (Laboury 2008b.)

Figure 11. Nefertiti shown on *talatat* 34/118, from the ninth pylon of the Temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak, assemblage A 0081. (Vergnieux 1999: 127, pl. 25.)

Figure 12. Comparison between faces of the *Gem-pa-Aten* colossi, photographed at left without perspective correction; center, with perspective correction. At right: face of king reconstructed from fragments of statues from the Great Aten Temple, el-Amarna. (Laboury 2008b: pl. 33.)

Figure 13. Royal hand depicted on *talatat* MMA 1985.328.1 (Gift of Norbert Schimmel, 1985), from el-Amarna, found at Hermopolis. (Chappaz et al. 2008: 80.)

Figure 14. Comparison between traditional 18-square proportion grid and Atenist 20-square grid. (Robins 1994: 90, 127.)

Figure 15. Projection of grid composed of the ancient Egyptian "finger" (a unit of measurement equal to 1.875 cm) on a 3D-rendering of Nefertiti's Berlin bust (Ägyptisches Museum 21.300). (Krauss 1991a: 148-149.)

Figure 16. Comparison between profile of 3D-rendering of Nefertiti's Berlin bust and 3D-rendering of plaster model head of Akhenaten (Berlin 21.351), both found in the workshop of royal sculptor Thutmose, el-Amarna. (Krauss 2005: 142.)