

# A Horizon of Aten in Memphis ?

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## Abstract:

Recent excavations in the Memphite area (and especially in its necropolis of Saqqara) have demonstrated the importance of the region during the Amarna period and the reigns that directly followed it. However, the archaeological documents discovered cause problems of interpretation, notably because of the use of certain toponymic terms common to Thebes, Amarna and Memphis.

This paper lists these toponyms and suggests there probably existed, contemporaneously with the foundation of the city of Amarna (Akhetaten), a location in Memphis called the “Horizon of Aten” (Akhetaten).

In the actual state of research, I will nevertheless remain careful about this statement and leave an interrogation mark at the end of this title until further discoveries in the Memphite region bring the definite answer.

## Résumé:

Les fouilles archéologiques menées ces dernières années dans la zone memphite —et tout particulièrement dans sa nécropole de Saqqara— ont démontré l'importance que la région avait conservée durant l'époque amarnienne et les règnes qui l'ont directement suivie. Les documents archéologiques recueillis ne sont cependant pas sans poser certains problèmes d'interprétation, notamment liés à l'usage commun de certains termes toponymiques à la fois à Thèbes, Amarna et Memphis.

Le présent article fait le point sur ces toponymes et suggère qu'il a probablement existé, parallèlement à la fondation de la nouvelle capitale (Akhetaton), une zone géographique à Memphis, elle-même appelée l'“Horizon d'Aton” (Akhetaton).

Dans l'état actuel des connaissances, nous nous devons cependant de rester prudents quant à une telle assertion, c'est pourquoi le titre de cet article conservera son point d'interrogation jusqu'à plus ample information que nous fourniront peut-être de futures découvertes dans la région memphite.

## Key words:

Amarna period, Memphis, *Horizon of Aten*, toponymy.

## Prolegomena<sup>1</sup>

As the reader will have noticed, the title of this article appears in the form of a question. The main reason is that, in the actual state of knowledge and with the archaeological material recorded up to now, tangible proofs of the existence of a *Horizon of Aten* in Memphis are still rather meagre and could only be supported by further discoveries to take place mainly in the Memphite region. Nevertheless, not taking that possibility into account could lead to errors

in the interpretation and dating of the material. Therefore, in spite of these shortcomings, one should consider that not every mention of the terms “*ḥ.t'itn*” is necessarily and systematically to be associated to Akhenaten's capital city of Amarna.

I am aware of how hard a task it is to upset principles settled as true facts for so many years and to deviate from beaten tracks. However the necessity of an examination of recent archaeological material while questioning established

<sup>1</sup> This article is the augmented version of a lecture presented on November 3, 2006 at the Scholars' day colloquium of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Symposium of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities, University of Toronto.

schemes appears to me likely to bring interesting results. Although it is still impossible for me to thoroughly prove my theory, I hope that this article will at least have the merit of raising interest for the question.

My suggestion is based on some indices that there might have existed, prior and / or contemporaneously to the foundation of the city known nowadays as Tell el-Amarna (*Akhetaten*), a location called *Akhetaten* (a "Horizon of Aten") in the Memphite region. The documents that will be used here to support the argumentation are mainly the publication, by Maarten Raven's team of the University of Leiden, of the preliminary reports on the tomb of Meryre / Meryneith,<sup>2</sup> and the discovery, a few years ago, of a contemporary tomb by the *Mission Archéologique Française du Bubasteion* directed by Alain Zivie<sup>3</sup>.

### Akhenaten in Memphis

Thanks to these recent excavations, but also thanks to the pioneering work of Beatrix Löhr in the 70's,<sup>4</sup> it is now well attested that the whole Memphite area had remained a predominant administrative and religious city in the Egyptian landscape during the Amarna period. The

whole region most probably became a significant Atenist centre at the time,<sup>5</sup> since a temple to the Aten was erected there by Akhenaten, that probably remained functional until the reign of Seti I,<sup>6</sup> long after the death of the so-called heretic king. It is therefore legitimate to believe that the king had planned in Memphis, like he did in Thebes, an important construction project that would not have especially fallen into disgrace with the move to Amarna as has the "Southern city", unless it was actually founded at the same period as the "capital city".

Memphis played a prominent role during the whole 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, and saw the development of its religious activities under the pre-amarnian kings. Akhenaten's brother, who should have reigned as King Thutmose (fifth of the name), had he not died too soon, had received there important religious charges as a high priest of Ptah. He was probably buried in one of the New Kingdom cemeteries of Memphis, perhaps in the mountain of Ankhtawi (Bubasteion) as suggested by Marc Gabolde.<sup>7</sup>

Though the Memphite Atenist temple has now disappeared, some *talatat* blocks reused under the pavement of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple of Ptah

2 Joint expedition of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities and the Faculty of Archaeology / Department of Egyptology of Leiden University. M. Raven, R. van Walsem, B. Aston and E. Strouhal, "Preliminary Report on the Leiden Excavations at Saqqara, Season 2001: the Tomb of Meryneith", *JEOL* 37 (2001-2002): 71-89.

3 The tomb of Raïay / Hatiay (Bub. I 27), scribe of the treasury of the temple of Aten in Memphis. A. Zivie, "Hatiay, scribe du temple d'Aton à Memphis", in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, Studies in Honor of D. B. Redford, ed. G. Knoppers and A. Hirsch (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 223-231. A. Zivie, "Mystery of the Sun God's Servant", *National Geographic* Vol. 204/5 (Nov. 2003): 52-59.

4 B. Löhr, "Aḥanjati in Memphis", *SÄK* 2 (1975): 139-187, pl. III-VIII.

5 There are also evidence, not too far from Memphis, in Heliopolis, of an Atenist priesthood and a temple called "The one which lifts Re in the Heliopolis (or Iwn) of Re". L. Habachi, "Akhenaten in Heliopolis", *Beiträge zur Ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde* 12 (Le Caire – Zurich, 1971), 35-45. See also H. Bakry, "Akhenaten at Heliopolis", *CdÉ* 47/93-94 (1972): 55-67; D. Raue, *Heliopolis und das Haus des Re: eine Prosopographie und ein Toponym im Neuen Reich* (Berlin: Achet, 1999), 118-119; G. Lefebvre, *Histoire des grands prêtres d'Amon de Karnak jusqu'à la XXIe dynastie* (Paris: Bibliothèque Orientaliste, 1929), 103. More Atenist blocs were recently discovered in the area of the Suq el-Khamis, in the Ain Shams and Matariyya districts near Heliopolis, by the joint excavation of the SCA and DAIK.

6 See line 4, on the recto of hieratic Rollin Papyrus 213 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale) mentioning freights of wood for the *ḥw.t p3 Itm* (in Memphis), at the time of Seti I. Löhr, "Aḥanjati in Memphis", *SÄK* 2: 146, Dok. I 4.

7 M. Gabolde, *Akhenaton. Du mystère à la lumière* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 24.

in Memphis, indicate that the Aten temple was most likely erected in its vicinity, somewhere east of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty sacred precinct —similar to the *Gem-pa-aten*, built in Thebes east of the great temple of Amun. At Memphis, it has been suggested that the temple of Aten was situated in the region of Kom el-Qalaa<sup>8</sup> (Figure 1). However, the EES archaeological survey led by David Jeffreys seems to indicate the area was a virgin ground until the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty,<sup>9</sup> probably because it was, at the time, occupied by the bed of the Nile, which has gradually shifted eastwards<sup>10</sup>.

A better option for the location of the Atenist temple in Memphis might be the Middle Birka<sup>11</sup> where later the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple of Ptah was situated, a bit north-west of Kom el-Qalaa (Figure 1). The 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty precinct of the temple of Ptah was indeed probably located in Kom el-Fakhry<sup>12</sup> and most of the *talatats* found by Joseph Hekekyan were reused under the Rameside levels of the god's temple,<sup>13</sup> which means they might have come from somewhere in its surrounding areas.<sup>14</sup>

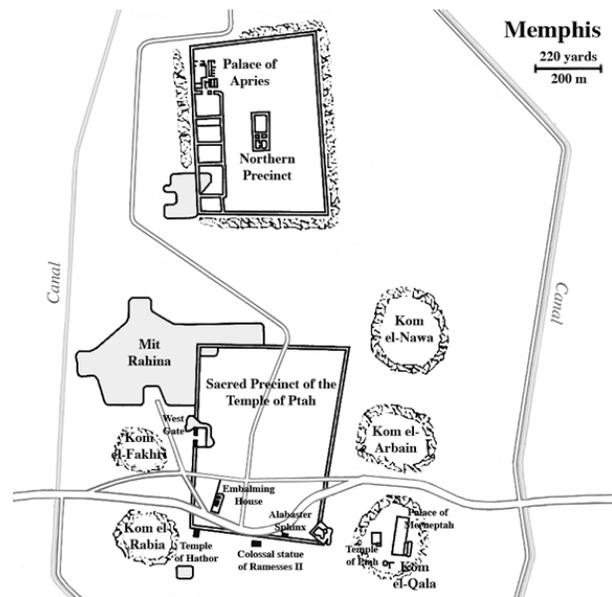


Figure 1: Map of Memphis and the vicinity of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple of Ptah

On the other hand, part of this zone seems to have been occupied by a sanctuary of Amenhotep III, which can be significant regarding the location of Akhenaten's buildings. About one hundred *talatats* were found in the temple of Luxor,<sup>15</sup> a group of reliefs was added by Akhen-

8 J. Malek, "The "coregency relief" of Akhenaten and Smenkhare from Memphis", *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, ed. P. Der Manuelian (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1996), 2: 553.

9 L. Giddy, "Le survey de Memphis: état des recherches archéologiques et épigraphiques", BSFE 129 (1994): 7-20, esp. 12-13. D. Jeffreys, *Survey of Memphis. Excavations at Kom Rabia (site RAT): New Kingdom levels* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2006), passim, conclusions, 137-138.

10 D. Jeffreys and H.S. Smith, "Memphis and the Nile in the New Kingdom", in *Memphis et ses nécropoles au Nouvel Empire*, ed. A. Zivie (Paris: CNRS, 1988), 55-66.

11 D. Jeffreys, *The Survey of Memphis I. The Archaeological Report*, Occasional Publications 3 (London: EES, 1985), pl. 4.

12 As suggested by D. Jeffreys and H.S. Smith, west of the West Hall of Ramesses II: "Memphis and the Nile", 64.

13 South or south-east sector.

14 The *talatats* were found in zones BAO (bearing the early form of the Aten cartouches) and BAF (showing the late form of the name of the god). Jeffreys and Smith, "Memphis and the Nile", 36, pl. 8. However, tangible proofs of a pre-Rameside occupation of the site are also missing. Jaromir Malek suggested to me that the Aten temple might have been built a little bit east of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple, between there and Kom el-Qalaa.

15 A. Fakhry, "Blocs décorés provenant du temple de Louxor. Bas-reliefs d'Akhenaton", *ASAE* 35 (1935): 35-51. However D.B. Redford thinks its illusory to believe they actually come from a building erected in Luxor: "Studies on Akhenaten at Thebes", *JARCE* 10 (1973): 82.

aten in the vestibule of the temple of Soleb,<sup>16</sup> and he established structures around his father's third pylon in Karnak as well.<sup>17</sup> This may suggest that Akhenaten would have attached his own building program to each significant temple built by his father.<sup>18</sup> Such could have been the case in Memphis too.

As regards to the remains of a temple of Amenhotep III in the Middle Birka in Memphis, David Jeffreys and H.S. Smith suggest that these could have been the relics of the lost temple of *Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah*, erected in year 30 of his reign.<sup>19</sup> As a matter of fact, elements explicitly coming from that temple were found in the area.<sup>20</sup> If the origins of the Atenist cult really

take their roots in the ancestral cult of the divinized Amenhotep III,<sup>21</sup> such a location for the Memphite temple of Aten would indeed make sense.<sup>22</sup>

### A "Horizon of Aten" in Thebes

It is known, regarding the history of the Amarna period, that some of the names of the sanctuaries and royal residences in Thebes were reused later on in Amarna (as well as in other places), such as the *Gem-pa-aten*,<sup>23</sup> the *Hut-bnbn*<sup>24</sup> or the *Rudj-menu* among others.<sup>25</sup> The toponyms common to Thebes, Memphis and Amarna will be developed at the next section.

16 W. J. Murnane, "Soleb Renaissance: Reconsidering the Nebmaatre Temple in Nubia", *Amarna Letters* 4 (San Francisco: KMT Communications, 2000), 6-19. The cartouches name him as Akhenaten but his work there had probably already begun when he was still known as Amenhotep, p. 18. See also the recent publication of the site by N. Beaux *et al.* (ed.), *Soleb III, Le temple*, Mission Michela Schiff Giorgini (Le Caire: IFAO, 2002).

17 See the smiting scene in the passage leading to the door jambs of the third pylon in R. Sa'ad, "Les travaux d'Amenophis IV au IIIe pylône du temple d'Amon-Rê à Karnak", *Kêmi* 20 (1970): 187-193. See also Ch. Loeben, "Neferiti's Pillars. A Photo Essay of the Queen's Monument at Karnak", in *Amarna Letters* 3 (San Francisco: KMT Communications, 1994), 41-45.

18 This suggestion was made to me by Marc Gabolde whom I would like to thank here for enlightening correspondence on this topic.

19 About that temple, see R. Morkot, "*Nb-M3't-R<sup>c</sup>*—United-with-Ptah", *JNES* 49/4 (1990): 323-337.

20 Such as the dedicatory statue of Amenhotep-Huy, chief steward of Memphis, overseer of the works in the temple "United-with-Ptah" and half-brother of Vizier Ramose (TT 55). The statue is preserved in Oxford at the Ashmolean Museum, ref. 1913.163. Morkot, "*Nb-M3't-R<sup>c</sup>*—United-with-Ptah", *JNES* 49: 323-325.

21 Without corroborating the theory of a co-regency between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV, see R. Johnson, "Images of Amenhotep III in Thebes: Styles and Intentions", in *The Art of Amenhotep III: Art Historical Analysis*, ed. L. M. Berman (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1990), 43. See also A. Cabrol, *Amenhotep III le magnifique* (Paris: Rocher, 2000), 281.

22 D. Jeffreys and H. S. Smith suggest that Akhenaten might not only have augmented his father's building, but dismantled it and replaced it with a temple to the sun disc ("Memphis and the Nile", 63-64). If this is true, and if this temple was that of *Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah*, the divinized Amenhotep III has to equate Aten; otherwise such a superseding would constitute an unexplained act of *lèse-majesté* on the part of the son, whereas it is a honorific action in the above hypothesis.

23 Apart from Amarna, *Gem-pa-aten* is also the name of the Aten temple / city of Kawa. M. F. Laming Macadam, *The temples of Kawa* (London-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949); J. Leclant and J. Yoyotte, "Notes d'histoire et de civilisation éthiopiennes: à propos d'un ouvrage récent", *BIFAO* 51 (1952): 1-39.

24 Fakhry, "Blocs décorés", *ASAE* 35: 42.

25 C. Desroches-Noblecourt, "La statue colossale fragmentaire d'Amenophis IV, offerte par l'Égypte à la France", *Mon Piot* LIX (1974): 24, n. 4. S. Tawfik, "Aten and the Names of His Temple(s) at Thebes", in R. W. Smith and D. Redford, *The Akhenaten Temple Project. Volume I: Initial Discoveries* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1976), 58-63.



Figure 2: *Talatat* block Gayer-Anderson, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (from their internet site).

We know, on the other hand, that there existed in Thebes a place called “the Horizon of Aten”, systematically spelled “*ḥ.t n 'Itn*.”<sup>26</sup>

This denomination notably and mainly appears in the composition of the name of what is believed to have been the palace-sanctuary of Akhenaten in Thebes, prior to his establishment in Amarna: the “Exalted One in the Horizon of Aten.”<sup>27</sup> The name *ḥꜥy m ḥ.t n 'Itn* (𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒𓆓𓆔) was indeed compared to that of the *pr ḥꜥy* in Amarna (𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒𓆓𓆔), a common name to both the reserved place in the king’s palace, and that of the god inside the enclosure of the *pr-'Itn*<sup>28</sup>. The name *pr ḥꜥy* (“house of Jubilation”) was also the denomination used for a part of Amenhotep III’s palace in Malqata connected to the king’s sed-festivals.<sup>29</sup>

The *ḥꜥy m ḥ.t n 'Itn* may have assumed the same kind of function for Akhenaten, as its

CIX. *Slab Collection Gayer Anderson*

Published: J. E. A. 5, p. 62-63; pl. VIII. -Sitzungsbere. d. Preuß. Akad. d. Wiss. XXVI, p. 477-484 (Schäfer)

Akhenaten, wearing Short Tunic, in Adoration before Altar.

𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒𓆓𓆔 + 𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒𓆓𓆔 = 𓆎𓆏𓆑𓆒𓆓𓆔

Figure 3: Edition of the bloc Gayer-Anderson by Maj Sandman

name appears on a *talatat* block of unknown provenance, depicting rituals related to the king’s first *heb-sed* (Figure 2).<sup>30</sup>

Cyril Aldred suggested that the block might have come from Memphis.<sup>31</sup> Though it would have served my demonstration, I do not think he is right. His main argument was that this block—perhaps acquired in Cairo by Gayer-Anderson—was made of limestone, as are the *talatat* blocks found in Memphis in the vicinity of the temple of Ptah; while the *talatat* blocks from Karnak were made of “Nubian sandstone.”<sup>32</sup> The argument would have had some weight had two other white limestone *talatats* not been found in the Theban region and sold on the antiquity market in Luxor; blocks also bearing the name *ḥꜥy m ḥ.t n 'Itn*, which indicates that this specific sanctuary in Thebes was, at least partially, made of limestone.<sup>33</sup>

26 M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutankhamon*, Collection de l'Institut d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Antiquité, volume 3, Université Lumière-Lyon II (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1998), 28, n. 218. M. Doresse, “Les temples atoniens de la région thébaine”, *Orientalia* 24 (1955): 121-126.

27 M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton*, 82-85.

28 D. Redford, “Studies on Akhenaten at Thebes: I. A Report on the Work of the Akhenaten Temple Project of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania”, *JARCE* 10 (1973): 87-90. See also J. Assmann, “Palast oder Tempel? Überlegungen zur Architektur und Topographie von Amarna”, *JNES* 31 (1972): 143-155.

29 M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton*, 82. On the Japanese excavations of the *heb-sed* monument at Malqata: J. Leclant, “Le monument de fête-Sed d'Aménophis III à Malkata-Sud”, *Journal des Savants* (1987), I-III.

30 M. Doresse wants to recognize in that kind of depiction a quotidian celebration of the king’s *heb-sed*: “Une statuette d'Akhenaton d'époque amarnienne et le culte quotidien de l'Aton”, *Mélanges Henri Wild = Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie Genève* 9-10 (1984-1985): 89-102.

31 C. Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1973), 97

32 Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, 97; R. Vergnienx, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains d'Amenhotep IV à l'aide d'outils informatiques I*, Cahiers de la Société d'Égyptologie 4 (Genève: Société d'Égyptologie, 1999), 17.

33 Doresse, “Les temples atoniens”, *Orientalia* 24: 121.

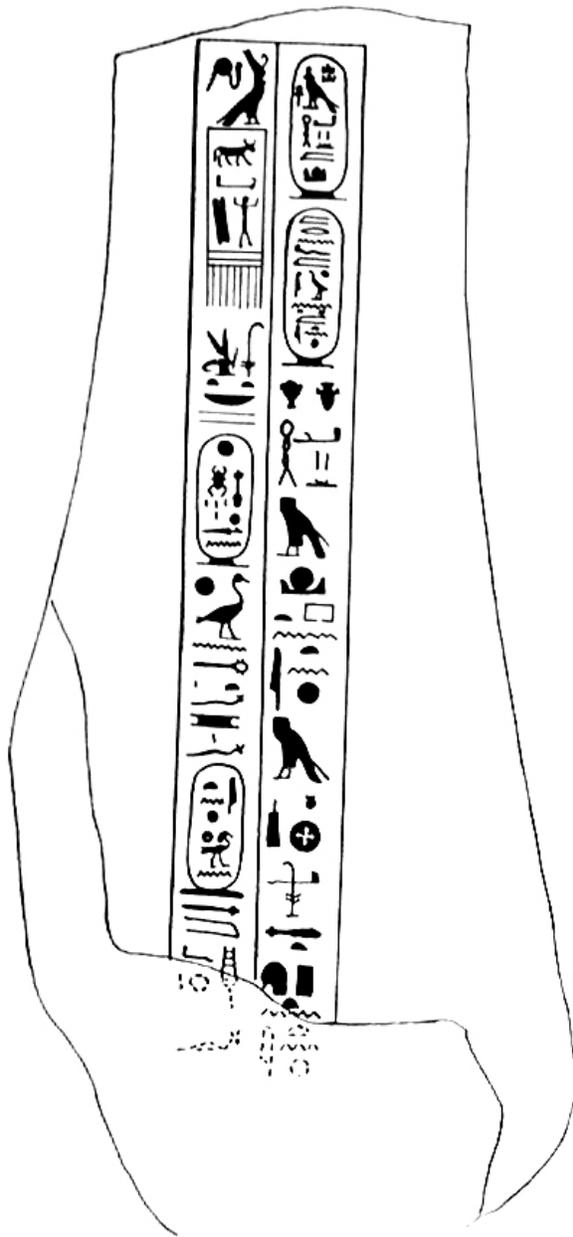


Figure 4: Pink granite altar found in the *Gem-pa-aten* in Karnak (after L. Habachi).

The publication of the text of the Gayer-Anderson block by Maj Sandman might also have supported the idea of a Memphite origin for this block, had it not been faulty.<sup>34</sup> The author indeed transcribes the name of the sanctuary *ḥꜥy m ʒḥ.t Itn* (Figure 3), which is a mistake for *ḥꜥy m ʒḥ.t n Itn*, as the “n” is quite visible on the block itself. This monument is thus attested to by different sources in Thebes but not at all in Memphis.

A few pink granite altars discovered in the area of the *Gem-pa-aten* in Karnak actually leave no doubt about the location of the monument.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, it is specified that the *ḥꜥy m ʒḥ.t n Itn* was situated “in the Southern Heliopolis”, that is in Thebes (Figure 4).

Another mention of the Theban Horizon of Aten is found on a fragment of pyramidion of a small pink granite obelisk, discovered in the wall of a modern Theban house by G. Legrain<sup>36</sup>:  
[...] *m ʒḥ.t n Itn m Twnw šmꜥi* [...].<sup>37</sup>



In spite of all the evidence of its existence, we are still unsure whether the Horizon of Aten would designate a specific territory in the city of Thebes, or if the denomination could have applied to all the sacred lands in which the cult to the Aten was performed.

Two Theban documents mentioning the titles of a certain Nakhy, servant in the Place of Truth under Amenhotep IV, can make us wonder, as they draw a remarkable equivalence between the name of “Thebes” (*Wʒs.t*) and the expression the “Horizon of Aten” (*ʒḥ.t n Itn*).<sup>38</sup>

34 M. Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, Bibliotheca Ægyptiaca 8 (Bruxelles: FERE, 1938), 152, CLX.

35 L. Habachi, “Varia from the reign of Akhenaten”, *MDAIK* 20 (1965): 73-75.

36 Said to be found in Malqata, although this was put into question by H. Kees, “Ein Sonnenheiligtum im Amonstempel von Karnak”, *Orientalia* 18 (1949): 440.

37 G. Legrain, “Notes prises à Karnak”, *Recueil de travaux* 23 (1901): 62.

38 The fact was noticed by M. Gabolde, *D’Akhenaton*, 28, n. 218.



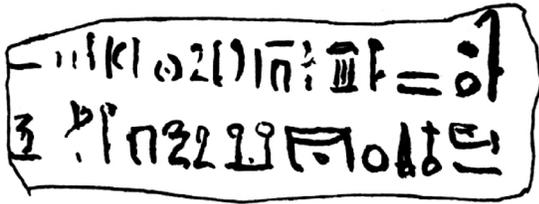


Figure 5: Hieratic wine label from Amarna (after W. F. Petrie)

Rollin Papyrus 213, probably originating from Memphis and dating from the time of Seti I,<sup>51</sup> which indicates that the temple was, in all likelihood, still functioning at the time.<sup>52</sup>

Another mention of a *ḥwt-ʿItn* brings confusion as it appears on the Theban funerary equipment of a scribe of the granaries of Aten, Hatiay, who may have actually worked in Memphis.<sup>53</sup> On his coffin<sup>54</sup> found at Cheikh Abd el-Gurna, Hatiay’s title is *sš mr šnw.ti m ḥwt-ʿItn*,<sup>55</sup> while on a staff from Memphis<sup>56</sup> that may have belonged to him as well (although this is not certain), the title reads *sš n šnw.ti ḥ3ti3y wḥm ʿnh nb im3ḥ ʿItn-pr m Mn-nfr*<sup>57</sup> (see transcription below). The Theban sepulchre could be the reburial of a funerary equipment coming from Memphis. In any case, this shows that for a monument or artefact whose situation is supposed to be known (would it be Thebes or Memphis in this case), there is no need to specify its exact location; but when it is moved, one may easily lose its tracks. It also demonstrates, assuming these two Hatiay

are one and the same person, that *ḥwt-ʿItn* and *pr-ʿItn* were interchangeable and that we might not have to look for two distinct structures in Memphis as in Amarna. The *ḥwt-ʿItn* might also have been enclosed in the *pr-ʿItn* and formed a unit along with it.

However the possibility that *ḥwt-ʿItn* and *pr-ʿItn* were two distinct structures still has to be considered. The question then remains: where were they located in Memphis?

• *pr-ʿItn m Mn-nfr*: until recently, the only known mention of a *pr-ʿItn* in Memphis was that written on the staff of Hatiay mentioned above, with the honorific anteposition of the god’s name:



These two location names also appear together on a hieratic wine label, but are believed to (and quite probably do) refer to the temple of Amarna (Figure 5):

51 W. Spiegelberg, *Rechnungen aus der Zeit Setis I.* (Staßburg: Trübner, 1896), p. 29, 73-74, Nr. 11, pl. xvi and xvii. Löhr, “*Aḥanjati in Memphis*”, *SÄK* 2: 146-147.

52 *Cfr supra* footnote 5. See also H. Schneider *et al.*, “The Tomb of Iniuia: Preliminary Report on the Saqqara Excavations, 1993”, *JEA* 79 (1993): 1-9. J. van Dijk (p. 7-8) mentions two sons of Iniuia “scribes of the treasury of the temple of Aten [in Memphis]” after the reign of Tutankhamun, but he does not precise whether it is *ḥwt* or *pr* used in their titles. As he refers to the work of B. Löhr, p. 146-7, I assume it is *ḥwt p3-ʿItn*.

53 Zivie, “Hatiay”, *Studies in Honor of D. B. Redford*, 223-231.

54 A shawabti was found inside the coffin, bearing no titulary other than *zš* and the name Hatiay: Cairo JE 31385. J.-F. and L. Aubert, *Statuettes Égyptiennes. Chaouabtis, Ouchebtis* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1974), 53; G.T. Martin, “Shabtis of private persons in the Amarna Period”, *MDAIK* 42 (1986): 121.

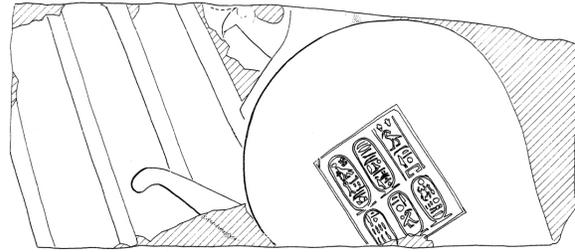
55 Zivie, “Hatiay”, *Studies in Honor of D. B. Redford*, 224.

56 Or probably from Memphis. Zivie, “Hatiay”, *Studies in Honor of D. B. Redford*, 226; Porter-Moss III, 175.

57 A. Hassan, *Stöcke und Stäbe im Pharaonischen Aegypten bis zum Ende des neuen Reiches*, *MÄS* 33 (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1976), 155. The preposition introducing *ʿItn-pr m Mn-nfr* is missing in this title.

58 After Hassan, *Stöcke und Stäbe*, 155.

**Figure 6:** Talatat block from the temple of Ptah in Memphis (drawn by B. Ockinga, after D. Jeffreys).



“Year 8. Wine for the domain of Aten (*pr 'Itn*) ... in(?) Memphis (*Mn-nfr*)”<sup>59</sup>. As this jar label was found in Amarna, it probably refers to wine made in Memphis for the Aten temple in Amarna, as the region was a great producer of wine (“Wine for the domain of Aten ... FROM Memphis”). However, it may still be a reference to the Aten temple in Memphis as well.

In any case, the two documents we are going to analyse hereafter, show with certainty that there existed, in Memphis, a domain devoted to Aten called *pr 'Itn m Mnnfr*, which occurs in the personal titles of two officials working in the region. The name had previously been used in Thebes: *pr 'Itn m 'Iwnw šm<sup>c</sup>w*<sup>60</sup>.

Finally, it is notable that the toponyms were not alone in having been “recycled” throughout the whole Amarna period. The name of the king himself was also used to designate a sanctuary located in Memphis.

- *šh n 'Itn*: this sanctuary is known through its mention on a talatat found by Joseph Hekekyan

in the precinct of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple of Ptah and now preserved in the Nicholson Museum in Sydney (Figure 6, top column on the right)<sup>61</sup>. The bloc should be dated between year 5-6 and year 15 after the spellings of the queen<sup>62</sup> and god's names<sup>63</sup>.

My point was therefore to demonstrate through this digression that the names of the locations devoted to the cult of the Aten in Amarna were borrowed from previous establishments of the cult elsewhere in the country<sup>64</sup>; and that the appellation “Horizon of Aten” was already in use during Amenhotep IV's first years of reign, to designate Thebes itself or at least some location in the area.

Therefore the next step in reasoning is to assume that it might have been the case in the north of the country as well, and especially in Memphis which is known to have been the centre of significant Atenist activity during the Amarna period, as this region also shares some of its cultic location names with Thebes and Amarna.

59 W.F. Petrie, *Tell el-Amarna* (London: Methuen & Co, 1894), pl. 22, Br. 31. Tf. 25, Nr. 93. Löhr, “A<sub>h</sub>janjati in Memphis”, SÄK 2: 145-146, Dok. I 3.

60 S. Tawfik, “Aten and the Names of His Temple(s)”, 62-63.

61 D. Jeffreys, “An Amarna Period Relief from Memphis”, in *Egyptian Art in the Nicholson Museum, Sydney*, ed. K.N. Sowada and B.G. Ockinga (Sydney: Meditarch Publishing, 2006), 119-133.

62 For the forms of the name of Nefertiti: R. Vergnieux and M. Gondran, *Aménophis IV et les pierres du soleil. Akhénon retrouvé* (Paris: Arthaud, 1997), 187-189. For the dating to year 5, beginning of year 6 of the introduction of “Neferneferuaten” in the queen's name: M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton*, 149.

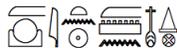
63 M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton*, 110-118.

64 It must be pointed out, however, that the Memphite names are quite generic (*ḥwt, pr, šwt-R<sup>c</sup>*), and that we do not find there more specific buildings such as the *ḥwt-bnbn qr the rwd mnw*. The *šh-n-Itn* seems to be specific to that region and is not known elsewhere.



Figure 7: The statue of Meryre and Aniuia (after M. Raven *et al.*).

What is chiefly of interest to us in that regard, is that recent discoveries in the Memphite region brought to light monuments bearing another designation that is the object of this discussion:

 *m 3h.t Itn m Mn-nfr.*

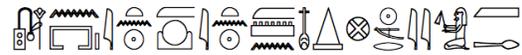
### A Horizon of Aten in Memphis ?

After reading the preliminary report of the Leiden Excavations team at Saqqara, regarding the

discovery of the tomb of Meryre / Meryneith<sup>65</sup>, it occurred to me that some of the interpretive difficulties the authors had to deal with, could be solved by taking into consideration the idea that the mention of *3h.t Itn* on Meryre's statue (Figure 7) does not necessarily refer to Amarna, but could actually refer to a Horizon of Aten in Memphis.

I would like to review here different puzzling points that, in my opinion, could be clarified using the above theory.

The text on the statue gives one of the titles of Meryre that the authors of the article translate: "scribe of the temple of Aten in Akhet-aten (and) in Memphis, Meryre, justified"<sup>66</sup>:



Though this careful translation seems to leave room to doubt<sup>67</sup>, further developments in the article indicate that an identification of Akhet-aten with a location in Memphis was never held back.

Nevertheless, they had to admit that their interpretation raised a few problems that they needed to explain.

First they observe that the style of the statue is that of the end of the reign of Amenhotep III<sup>68</sup>, which is incompatible with the mention of Amarna. They try to explain this contradiction by suggesting that the statue may have been sculpted at the beginning of Meryre's career, but inscribed later on, as the text appears to be absolutely intact<sup>69</sup>.

65 Raven *et al.*, "Tomb of Meryneith", *JEOL* 37: passim.

66 Raven *et al.*, "Tomb of Meryneith", *JEOL* 37: 82.

67 The same translation on their internet site provides a link between Akhet-aten and Amarna. <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/saqqara/Excavation/Tombs/Meryneith/Meryneith.htm>.

68 Raven *et al.*, "Tomb of Meryneith", *JEOL* 37: 84. This point was also put forward by R. van Walsem in a lecture held in Leiden on June 9, 2007 (Saqqara-dag 2007): "Het dubbelbeeld van Meryre/Meryneith en Anyuia in cultuurhistorisch perspectief". However, dating based on purely stylistic arguments may be unreliable as regards Artenist artifacts coming from outside Amarna, as I argue at the end of this article.

They are then embarrassed by the title of simple scribe, which they call a “new title” because of the putative reference to Amarna and because they have just assumed that it had been carved later in Meryre’s career. But this is incompatible with the logic of his career plan as he is bearing the titles “scribe of the temple of Aten”<sup>70</sup>, “royal scribe”<sup>71</sup>, “steward of the temple of Aten in Memphis”<sup>72</sup>, “greatest of seers of the Aten” and “first prophet in the temple of Neith”<sup>73</sup>. The article says: “At first sight, the title [scribe] may appear lower in rank than that of steward. However it may also reflect that his career was undergoing major changes at the time and that, pending his new appointment, he chose to use the neutral title “scribe” instead”.

However the reasoning seems to be caught into a vicious circle since the argument for his career undergoing major changes comes from what the authors believe to be the mention of Amarna, which according to them “suggests that he had been summoned to come to the new capital”<sup>74</sup>.

Then, they propose to identify Meryre / Meryneith, who would have reached the rank of greatest of seers of Aten in Amarna, to Meryre I, the owner of the Amarna tomb #4, also great-

est of seers of Aten. But I agree with them that, the fact that his wife would then bear neither the same name nor the same title, is puzzling<sup>75</sup>.

At some point in his career, Meryre indeed became greatest of seers of the Aten, but I suggest it was in Memphis, and not in Amarna.

The fact that both tombs show signs of building activities during the same period frame seems to indicate they cannot belong to the same person. The Dutch team reckons that parts of the Saqqara tomb were still being built and decorated in year 9<sup>76</sup>, while the depiction of Neferneferuaten Tasherit in the Amarna tomb indicates that at least part of the decoration was set after year 8<sup>77</sup>. Besides, the sole building of a Memphite tomb sounds incompatible with the development of Meryre’s career in Amarna<sup>78</sup>.

The exclusive character of their common title *wr-m3.w* of Aten does not contradict them being two distinct people. It is true that unlike the title of “prophet” (*hm ntr*) which displays a hierarchy of priests from first to fourth inside the same sanctuary<sup>79</sup>, that of greatest of seers seems to have been held by just one priest at a time<sup>80</sup>. However, although there was only one *wr-m3.w* at a time in each temple, the existence of different *wr-m3.w* in distinct contemporaneous temples is

69 Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 84.

70 On the statue at figure 7.

71 It is not mentioned in the article where this title occurs, Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 82.

72 On the jambs of the western chapel of his tomb, Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 82.

73 On the north jamb and rear wall of the northeast chapel, Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 82.

74 Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 84.

75 Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 85.

76 Notably based on the changes of names, there is no absolute date. However it is sure it was kept on being built later on in the reign, and even after the death of Akhenaten. Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 84-85.

77 As Neferneferuaten Tasherit was probably born in year 8. Gabolde, *D’Akhenaton*, 122. According to N. de G. Davies, around years 9-10, *The Rock tombs of El Amarna I, The Tomb of Meryra* (London: EEF, 1903), 42.

78 Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 85-86. On the issue of double tomb ownership, see P. Dorman, «Two Tombs and One Owner», in J. Assmann (ed.), *Thebanische Beamten- nekropolen, Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens* 12, Heidelberg, 1995, p. 141-154. At the Xth ICE in Rhodes (2008), Daniele Salvoldi also presented a paper on “Thebes, Amarna, Memphis: Akhenaten’s officials with double tomb”, but most of the tomb owner associations were inconclusive. True double ownerships remain exceptional.

79 H. Kees, *Das Priestertum im ägyptischen Staat von Neuen Reich bis zur Spätzeit* (Leiden-Köln: Brill, 1953), *passim*.

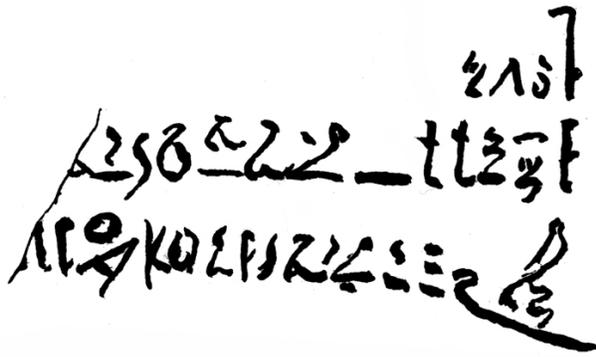


Figure 8: Wine label of the greatest of seers Meryre (after Petrie).

well attested to<sup>81</sup>. For instance, two greatest of seers of Aten are mentioned in Amarna: Meryre I (tomb 4) and Pawah (known from a doorpost of his house in Amarna (O 49,1))<sup>82</sup>. But they were clearly holding their office in two distinct domains. Meryre was Greatest of Seers of Aten in the domain of Aten in Akhetaten (*m pr 'Itn m 3ḥ.t 'Itn*), while Pawah was Greatest of Seers of Aten in the domain of Re (*m pr R<sup>c</sup>*)<sup>83</sup>.

Meryre I was greatest of seers in Amarna at least between year 8 (cfr supra) and year 16<sup>84</sup>, as indicated by a wine-jar docket found in Amarna by Petrie (Figure 8):

«Year 16 wine good good of the tribute of [the house of?] the greatest of seers of the Aten Meryre»<sup>85</sup>.

In the Memphite tomb, when the title *wr-m3.w* is mentioned, the deceased is always referred to as Meryneith (name undamaged) instead of Meryre<sup>86</sup>, which may indicate, along with the style of the reliefs this title is connected to, that Meryre / Meryneith was appointed greatest of seers of the Aten after the Amarna period<sup>87</sup>, after he had climbed up the hierarchical levels (scribe and steward) inside the administration of the Memphite temple.

It could then be assumed that Meryre / Meryneith succeeded to Meryre I in the office of *wr-m3.w* of Aten in Amarna after year 16, but this again sounds incompatible with his keeping on building a tomb in Memphis at the same time,<sup>88</sup>

80 For an extensive discussion on the title *wr-m3.w*, see D. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 134-138. See also Kees, "Ein Sonnenheiligtum", *Orientalia* 18: 430-433.

81 The title is attested to at the same period in Thebes, This, Amarna, Heliopolis and Hermonthis (though the last one seems to be based on the identification of the Southeren Heliopolis with Hermonthis!): W. Hayes, ("Inscriptions from the Palace of Amenhotep III", *JNES* 10 (1951): 94. For the time of Amenhotep III, W. Hayes associates the greatest of seers Amenemhet who donated honey jars in Malqata to the Heliopolitan temple ("Inscriptions", *JNES* 10: 94), while C. Aldred places his office in Karnak ("Two Theban Notables during the Later Reign of Amenophis III", *JNES* 18 (1959): 113-120), as the successor of Aanen, Queen Teye's brother.

82 H. Kees, *Priestertum*, 86.

83 Though this domain of Re might have been situated in Amarna, it is considered to be in Heliopolis by D. Raue, *Heliopolis und das Haus des Re*, 42, 119. Pawah would then have preceded the "greatest of seers in the house of Re in Heliopolis" Pareemheb (Stela Cairo 34175), dated to the direct post-Amarna period by D. Raue, p. 40, 44. There was also a domain of Re in Thebes, but that one is less likely in this case: Kees, "Ein Sonnenheiligtum", *Orientalia* 18: 441. A wine jar found in Amarna also bears the name of a *pr-R<sup>c</sup> nty m Kbh<sup>w</sup>*, W. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London: Metuhen, 1894), 33, pl. XXIV.

84 And maybe even until Akhenaten's death and the desertion of Amarna, as Meryre I's tomb was left unfinished.

85 W. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London: Metuhen, 1894), 33.

86 Raven *et al.*, "Tomb of Meryneith", *JEOL* 37: 82. Maybe to differentiate himself from his homonym bearing the same title in Amarna?

87 Also suggested by Raven *et al.*, "Tomb of Meryneith", *JEOL* 37: 85.

and with his wife bearing the title of [songstress (?)] of Amun-Re on the same reliefs.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, there is no mention of a Horizon of Aten connected to his title of greatest of seers, which would preclude an office held in Amarna and would confirm he received this charge after the Amarna period. Identifying him to Meryre I of Amarna, or making him move back and forth between Memphis and Amarna imply more movements between the distant cities than required, and engender inextricable issues. As a proponent of the *lex parcimoniae*, I would tend to believe that Meryre / Meryneith never left Memphis, as his competence was doubtlessly fully needed there, in the temple of Aten. In addition, there is no indication in the tomb of Meryre I that he ever held, earlier in his career, the title of scribe or steward of the temple of Aten in Memphis. Instead, he probably started his career in the palace administration as Royal Chancellor and Fan Bearer on the right-hand of the King, before he was credited with the supreme religious charge in the temple of Aten, by the king, his “friend.”<sup>90</sup>

It is rational to assume that the Aten temple in Memphis—which we know existed contemporaneously with that in Amarna—needed its own permanent staff, and that the scribes<sup>91</sup> did not have to travel constantly all the way between Amarna and Memphis (more than 250 km), but were assigned to one temple and were able to climb the social levels inside that institution.

That would explain why we have no trace of this Meryre in Amarna and why the other Meryre had another wife, simply because they were not the same person. If his tomb was still being built in year 9 and even after Akhenaten’s death, this is because he did not have another site under construction in Amarna and because he probably never left Memphis.

This being said, one issue remains: that is the name of the owner of the statue who was either called Meryre or Meryneith in his tomb. It is assumed by the Dutch team that his first name was Meryneith and that he had to change it to Meryre because of Akhenaten’s increasing intolerance.<sup>92</sup> We know on the other hand that at some point in his career he became Meryneith (again?), greatest of seers of Aten and first prophet in the temple of Neith, probably after the death of Akhenaten and the restoration of the ancient cults. This means that he would have changed his name at least twice.

However, in other statements found in the “Preliminary report”, such as that on p. 84, it is stated that “the parts of the tomb using the name Meryre were traditional in style, very similar to those in the Theban tombs of Menna, Nakht or Nebamon and Ipuky, all datable to the reign of Amenhotep III,”<sup>93</sup> which is in accordance with the style of the statue bearing the name Meryre.

It seems that in the most ancient parts of his monuments, as well as on his statue, he would be called Meryre. We should therefore assume

88 J. van Dijk mentions that “the principal motivation of the choice of Memphis (as a burial place) was undoubtedly a religious one” (“The Development of the Memphite Necropolis”, in *Memphis et ses nécropoles*, 42). Memphis was certainly an important cultic centre at the time, but not more important than Amarna, unless one would work there and there only!

89 Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 85.

90 Davies, *El Amarna I*, 42.

91 As Meryre was a scribe, and not a greatest of seers yet, when he is assumed to have worked both in Memphis and in Amarna.

92 And because in different parts of the tomb, the name Meryneith was recarved into Meryre. But the contrary is true too. Raven *et al.*, “Tomb of Meryneith”, *JEOL* 37: 79-84.

93 Again, one should be cautious with dating based on stylistic arguments, let’s just say it was the earliest style used in the tomb.

that this was the first form of his name<sup>94</sup>. We also have to be very careful when attributing tendencies observed in Amarna (such as the proscription of certain names) to the rest of the country. For example, Ptahmay, goldsmith (head of the gold-leaf makers) in the temple of Aten (*pr Itn*), whose tomb was found in Giza, had two sons also bearing theophoric names in Ptah<sup>95</sup>. None of the names seem to have ever been altered. Nevertheless, Ptahmay may not have been an exact contemporary of Akhenaten either. Christiane Zivie dates the tomb to the course of the Amarna period,<sup>96</sup> but Beatrix Löhr gives it a more recent date, arguing that the "Amarna style" characteristic of that tomb could have actually only reached Memphis after Akhenaten's death, with the move of the court (and of its artists) from Amarna to Memphis during the reign of Tutankhamun.<sup>97</sup>

Another personality of the time<sup>98</sup> whose tomb (Bub. I.27) was recently discovered by Alain Zivie in another area of Saqqara, in the

Bubasteion cliff, is the scribe of the treasury of Aten Raïay / Hatiay.<sup>99</sup> He also bore two names, but none of them seem to have been censored.

The tomb owner of Bub. I 27 was a scribe of the treasury of Aten; maybe, originally, the wealthy treasury of the temple of Ptah, reallocated during these days to sustain the Atenist cult.<sup>100</sup> Raïay was himself the son of a goldsmith who worked for the temple of Ptah.<sup>101</sup>

In fact, his tomb does not bring the definitive answer we are expecting here, though once again we find the mention of *3h.t Itn* connected to that of Memphis.

In different parts of the tomb, Raïay is simply called "scribe of the treasury of the temple of Aten", as if it was obvious to everybody where this temple was actually situated.<sup>102</sup> But on the right doorjamb of the small portico preceding the entrance to the tomb,<sup>103</sup> we may read a dedication "...for the ka of the scribe of the treasury of the temple of Aten in the Horizon of Aten (and?) in Memphis, Râïay, justified."<sup>104</sup>

94 But without having had contacts with the monument, I have to admit here that the recarving of the name, from Meryneith to Meryre, is puzzling when assuming Meryre was the first form of the name.

95 Löhr, "Aḥanjati in Memphis", *SÄK* 2: 165.

96 C. Zivie, "À propos de quelques reliefs du Nouvel Empire au musée du Caire : 1. La tombe de Ptahmay à Giza", *BIFAO* 75 (1975): 285-310.

97 B. Löhr: "Aḥanjati in Memphis", *SÄK* 2: 180-186. Ptahmes, son of Ptahmay, might have succeeded his father in his function (C. Zivie, "À propos", *BIFAO* 75 (1975): 304). The location of the temple in which Ptahmay held his office is not mentioned. We may assume (with no certainty) that it was the only surviving Atenist temple at the time, that of Memphis.

98 Part of the decoration is dated to the second half of the reign of Akhenaten, while the stela found in the tomb most probably postdates the king's death. A. Zivie, "Le point sur les travaux de la Mission archéologique française du Bubasteion à Saqqara", *BSFE* 162 (mars 2005): 38-43.

99 For a numbered list of the tombs discovered in the Bubasteion cliff, see A. Zivie, *Les Tombeaux retrouvés de Saqqara* (Paris: Rocher, 2003), 22-23.

100 On the contributions of the traditional cults to Atenism during Amenhotep IV's early years, see C. Traunecker, "Amenhotep IV, Percepteur royal du disque", in *Akhénaton et l'époque amarnienne*, ed. Th. Bergerot and B. Mathieu, Bibliothèque d'Égypte Afrique & Orient (Paris: Khéops, 2005), 145-182. For the mention of the domain of Ptah in Memphis, see p. 159-160.

101 Zivie, "Mystery of the Sun God's Servant", *National Geographic*: 54.

102 Just like in Ptahmay's case, *cfr supra*. S. Tawfik notices it is also the case as regards the mentions of the temple of Aten on the *talatats* from Thebes, "Aten and the Names of His Temple(s)", 63.

103 As well as on a pillar of the pillared room.





be connected to the increasing role of Thebes as a centre for sun worship at the time,<sup>115</sup> and to the solarization of the monuments built in Karnak. Calling Thebes “Heliopolis” would therefore be aimed at reflecting the aura of the northern ancestral cultic place on the southern city and its newer role in solar worship.<sup>116</sup>

Could the process have been similar for the attribution of the name Horizon of Aten to Memphis? It might have been Akhenaten’s intention to present the northern city as such.<sup>117</sup>

But was the concept of a Horizon of Aten—that we identify with the city name of Amarna—actually meant to designate a city? On the one hand, it was certainly not the case for the original *Horizon of Aten* in Thebes. On the other hand, the lack of a city determinative after the name *ḥ.t (n) Ttn*, in all its known occurrences (Figure 9), seems to state otherwise. It gives the impression that it was rather used, at the origin, to designate some sacred area in which the Aten was revered, inside the limits of

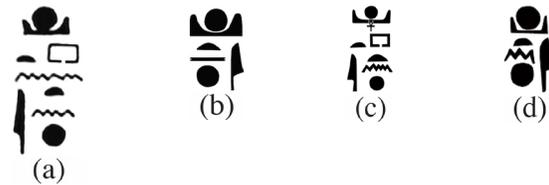


Figure 9: Different spellings of Akhet(en)aten in (a) Thebes, (b) Memphis, (c) Memphis, (d) Amarna.

the big city. After abandoning the Theban Horizon of Aten, Akhenaten founded a new one on an (almost) virgin ground (distinguishing it from the former by the use of a direct genitive). This meant that the name of this new Horizon of Aten would not be embedded in that of another city, but would become THE Horizon of Aten par excellence, the cultic place for the worship of the new god, detached from any pre-existing settlement. It might have been around the same period that he created a secondary Horizon of Aten in Memphis<sup>118</sup> whose name was embedded in that of the northern capital as in Thebes.

Christian Cannuyer reaches the same conclusion using a different argument. He wrote: “si l’ôn

114 Thebes being often referred to as the “Southern Heliopolis” at the time: A. Varille, “L’inscription dorsale du colosse méridional de Memnon”, *ASAE* 33 (1933): 85-96. See also, Redford, *History and Chronology*, 134-135. I would rather call the terms “Southern Heliopolis” a substitution than an epithet, as the two names never appear together, hence the difficulty of identification of its location. During the Late Period, “Southern Heliopolis” would designate the city of Armant: C. Cannuyer, “Akhet-Aton: anti-Thèbes ou sanctuaire du globe? À propos d’une particularité amarnienne méconnue”, *GM* 86 (1986): 11, n. 30.

115 The sun god under his form of Amun-Re who resides in Karnak. Kees, “Ein Sonnenheiligtum”, *Orientalia* 18: 430.

116 The connection between the Northern and the Southern Heliopolises is stressed on the back of the southern Memnon colossus of Akhenaten’s father, who built “important monuments, worthy of his power, brought from the Northern Heliopolis to the Southern Heliopolis”. Varille, “L’inscription dorsale”, *ASAE* 33: 85-96.

117 It might also have been a political move on the part of the king, aimed at annexing Memphis to his religious reform after all “the bad things he had heard in Thebes” that pushed him to move away from there, as mentioned on the boundary stelae of Amarna (W. Murnane and C. van Siclen, *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten* (London – New York: KPI, 1993). In year 5, Akhenaten receives a letter from the steward of Memphis Ipy, reporting that everything was in order there, and that the temples were receiving their prescribed offerings: E. Wente, “The Gurob Letter to Amenhotep IV”, *Serapis* 6 (1980): 209-215. Memphis, less touched by the king’s reforms, would not show the same opposition as Thebes.

118 The parallelism between two potential *Horizons of Aten* on earth, one in the north and one in the south, and the solar divinity Re-Horakhti (Re-Horus of the two Horizons) at the origin of the Atenist cult, crossing the sky from east to west, is interesting for it reflects well the Aten’s late epithet of “lord of all that the disc circles”, connecting the four cardinal points on earth and in the sky. For the names and epithets of Aten, M. Gabolde, *D’Akhenaton*, 106.

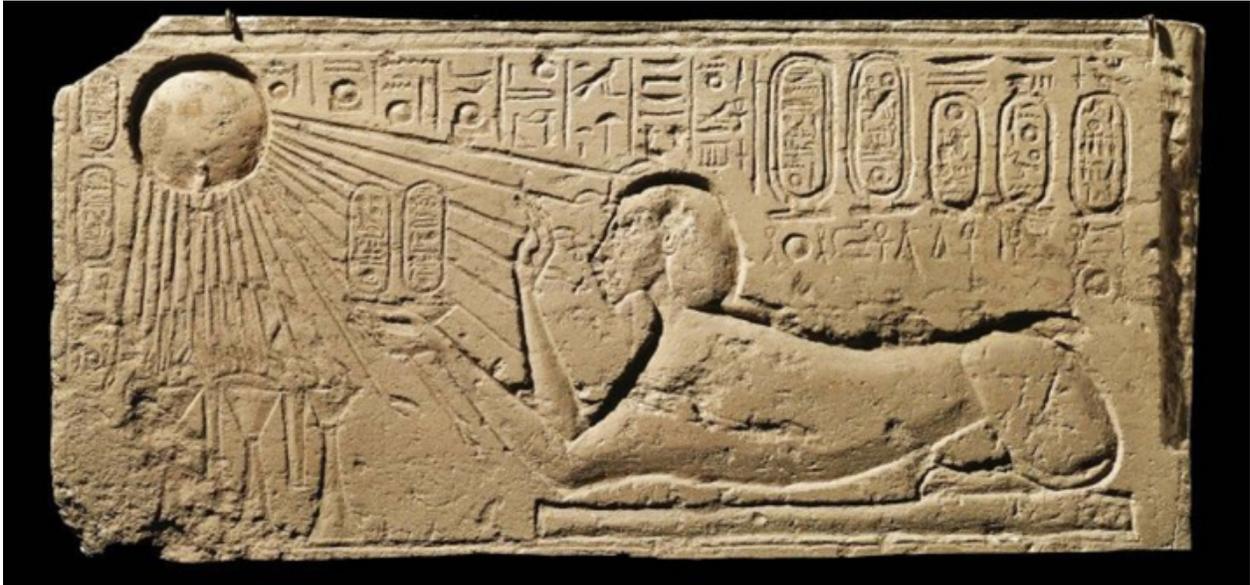


Figure 10: Sphinx stela of Akhenaten in Boston (© Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

s'en tient à son orthographe, la ville d'Akhenaton, cette cité idéale de l'universalisme atonien, n'aurait pas été, dans l'esprit de son fondateur, considérée comme une  traditionnelle<sup>119</sup>. He suggests that the lack of a *niwt* determinative would be a way for Akhenaten to distance himself from Thebes, the “City” par excellence. Yet he also reminds us that the word *3h.t* was commonly used in Egypt to designate royal mortuary temples and, from the New Kingdom on, divine sanctuaries<sup>120</sup>. Therefore Akhet(en)aten could simply be a way of naming the “sanctuary of Aten”, a wide and open air sanctuary whose borders could have been determined by the city limits in the cases of Thebes and Memphis, and by the boundary stelae in the case of Amarna. The  determinative behind the word *3ht* in dif-

ferent spellings of the *Horizon of Aten*<sup>121</sup>, as well as the above demonstration, would tend to support that view.

The case of the name of the *šwt.R* on the sphinx “interrupted lintel” ( “the *šwt-R* of the temple “He fashions the *Horizon of Aten* in the *Horizon of Aten*”<sup>122</sup>) is also of interest for this discussion (Figure 10). It shows that if Amarna was originally conceived as an open air sanctuary free of any connection with previous establishments, it was probably at the same time perceived as a city name in which another *Horizon of Aten* could be fashioned.<sup>123</sup> But maybe for the reason invoked by Christian Cannuyer, namely that Amarna was some kind of anti-Thebes, it never took on the city determinative.

119 Cannuyer, “Akhet-Aton: anti-Thèbes”, *GM* 86: 7.

120 In Memphis we would have both if the temple of Aten was built on the basis of the temple of Amenhotep III Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah (*cfr supra*). The New Kingdom Temples of a Million Years are probably to be considered as structures in which the king was revered under a divinized form rather than mortuary temples *per se*.

121 Fig. 9a (Thebes) and 9b (Memphis). That spelling may also be found in Amarna, for example on the shrine from the house of Panehesy. Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, 132.

122 *Cfr supra*: Boston, Hanover and Geneva stela. Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, 99.

123 Probably quite early after the establishment in Amarna as these lintels display the first version of the god's name (Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton*, 105).

### Where and when?

Considering the *Horizon of Aten* in Memphis really existed, as I hope to have been able to demonstrate, the questions that remain to be answered are: where was it situated, and when was it functional?

As for the first question, it is still difficult to answer. However, we saw that the main temple of Aten was probably situated under the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple of Ptah or a little bit east of it.<sup>124</sup> But we do not know exactly whether that temple was the *ḥw.t'Itn* or the *pr-'Itn*, as we don't know either if we really have to differentiate the two. On the one hand, the *ḥw.t'Itn* remained functional until the reign of Seti I; on the other hand, it is most likely that Meryre / Meryneith was appointed *Greatest of seers of the Aten* in the *pr'Itn* after Akhenaten's death (*cf supra*), which means that domain was also active after the Amarna period. So should we really look for two different structures? Further excavations in Memphis and its necropolises might bring the definitive answer some day. If the temple lying under the layer of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty temple of Ptah is the *pr'Itn*, and according to the Amarnian nesting nomenclature system, the *Horizon of Aten* must then be situated in the same area, enclosing it; unless, again, the expres-

sion *ḥw.t'Itn* is a generic denomination for all the cultic places in which the Aten was worshipped.

As for the 'when', there are two options. The first one would be to consider that the Memphite *Horizon of Aten* started its activity very early in Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten's reign, contemporaneously with the establishment of the *Horizon of Aten* in Thebes and the building of the Karnak *Gem-pa-aten*. But this theory can only be backed up by stylistic arguments which should be handled carefully.

An important issue in assuming the *Horizon of Aten* in Memphis existed since the beginning of Akhenaten's reign is the letter of the *Steward of Memphis* Ipy to the king, dated to year 5 of Amenhotep IV, that does not mention it.<sup>125</sup>

However, on the autobiographical text of his father, Amenhotep-Huy,<sup>126</sup> also *Steward of Memphis*, and half brother to vizier Ramose (TT 55), it is stated that the temple of Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah was under the control of the Chief Steward of Memphis and of all future Stewards;<sup>127</sup> and yet, this temple is not mentioned in Ipy's letter either. There is a decent possibility that the temple of Aten in Memphis was built on the ground of the dismantled temple of Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah (*cf supra*), or somewhere in its vicinity;<sup>128</sup> but still, neither one is mentioned in Ipy's letter, whereas at least

124 Because of the *talatat* blocks found under its pavement (*cf supra*). The statue of Amenhotep-Huy, discussed hereunder, was also found within the *temenos* of the Great temple of Ptah (Morkot, "*Nb-M3ʿt-Rʿ—United-with-Ptah*", *JNES* 49/4: 337). In the vicinity (Kom el-Qalaa), was also discovered —by the E. B. Coxe expedition (Pennsylvania)— the yellow quartzite head of Nefertiti, now in the Cairo Museum (JE 45547). The head must have been removed from its original place as the Kom el-Qalaa was occupied by the bed of the Nile during the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty (*cf supra*).

125 Wente, "The Gurob Letter", *Serapis* 6: 209-215.

126 On the statue in the Ashmolean Museum, 1913.163. W.F. Petrie, G.A. Wainwright and A.H. Gardiner, *Tarkhan I and Memphis V* (London: School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1913), 33-36.

127 Morkot, "*Nb-M3ʿt-Rʿ—United-with-Ptah*", *JNES* 49/4: 328.

128 On the possibility for the temple of Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah to have actually been adjacent to the temple of Ptah, like the temple of Aten, see Morkot, "*Nb-M3ʿt-Rʿ—United-with-Ptah*", *JNES* 49/4: 326. For its situation in the domain of Ptah, *idem*: 328. However, Morkot argues that the temple Nebmaatre-united-with-Ptah might have been replaced, under Ramesses II, by the temple "House of Ramesses-mery-Amun [called] 'United-with-the-M3ʿt-of Ptah'", p. 336 (*i.e.* just when we have no more traces of the temple of Aten in Memphis).

one of them must have been standing in year 5. This shows again how careful one must remain in drawing conclusions based on e silentio arguments. It is not impossible either that the Aten temple / domain / horizon was actually not under Ipy's jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, there exists another solution that would make all the elements fit together even better. That would be to admit that we know very little about the spread of the new Atenist style outside Karnak and Amarna. The point should be developed with strong arguments in a separate article, and maybe tearing down one established belief is big enough a task for this article. But, as mentioned above, the main contention for advancing the date of the foundation of the Atenist structures in Memphis to early in the reign of Amenhotep IV is a stylistic one<sup>129</sup>. It should be taken into consideration that the Horizon of Aten in Memphis might have been founded more or less contemporaneously with the settlement of the court in Amarna. The Atenist artefacts that are datable with accuracy (that is not on stylistic grounds) send us back at the earliest to year 6,<sup>130</sup> and both the tombs of Meryre / Meryneith and Raïay / Hatiay show activity later on in the reign and even after the Amarna period.<sup>131</sup>

The later date for the existence of the Memphite *Horizon of Aten* might be assumed to coincide with the abandonment of Amarna. There is no reason, *a priori*, to believe its mention stopped before the death of Akhenaten, but the expression does not seem to be used after it occurred. When Meryre / Meryneith becomes *Greatest of seers* in the temple of Aten, the *Horizon of Aten* is not named in his titles anymore, and on the post-Amarna "restoration" stela of the tomb of Raïay / Hatiay, the tomb owner is still called *Scribe of the treasury of the temple of Aten* but the location of his activity is not mentioned anymore either.<sup>132</sup>

Even though it does not bring a definitive answer to all the issues raised by our lack of knowledge of the events that occurred in Memphis during the Amarna period, I think that my theory as the merit of addressing some of them, and of making the few data we possess fit together a little better.

This is why I believe that Meryre and Raïay never followed Akhenaten in the new capital city, but were assigned and worked all their career long in Akhetaten, not in Amarna but in Memphis, on his behalf and that of his god.

Again, we can only hope that future discoveries in the area will bring the definite answer we are looking for.

129 I would like to thank here Dimitri Laboury for enlightening discussions on various points related to this article and especially on the question of stylistic arguments. The idea that we might be misled by stylistic criteria was also pointed out to me on several occasions by Alain Zivie.

130 Or end of year 5, for example the Nicholson Museum *talatat* (*cfr supra*).

131 For Raïay: Zivie, "Le point sur les travaux", *BSFE* 162: 38-43.

132 Zivie, "Mystery of the Sun God's Servant", *National Geographic*: 56.