
Any student or scholar of the Amarna Period knows that this era in Egyptian history is often riddled with more questions than answers; in particular, research on the prominent historical figures of this period are some of the most contested within the Egyptological community. Such is the case with Nefertiti, whose influential role during the reign of her husband, Akhenaten, is the subject of numerous studies.¹ New to this corpus of Amarna-themed books is Aidan Dodson’s *Nefertiti: Queen and Pharaoh of Egypt. Her Life and Afterlife*. Dodson’s reason for writing another book on Nefertiti is to give a “fresh holistic view” of this famous queen, and to provide readers with an account of the Amarna interlude based on his own working hypotheses for this period (pp. x–xiii). The book not only covers the life of the famous queen during Dynasty 18, but also the rediscovery of Nefertiti, the ongoing search for her burial and mummy, and the ways in which her icon and image “overshadow the woman herself” in more recent times (pp. 1–2).

Chapter 1 discusses what (little) is known about Nefertiti before the Amarna Period. Nefertiti’s origins before she married Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten are obscure, since our earliest historical record of Nefertiti comes from blocks from the *Gem-Pt-Aten* temple at Karnak that show the prominence of Nefertiti from early in Amenhotep IV/

¹ As of December 15, 2021, a search on the Online Egyptological Bibliography [http://oeb.griffith.ox.ac.uk] produces 701 search results for the term “Nefertiti” that represent only those sources entered into the database.
Akhenaten's reign (p. 8). The second part of this chapter is a summation by Dodson of his hypothesis as to who the parents of Nefertiti were, his suggestion being Ay as her father, with either Iuy or Tey as her mother (pp. 18–20). The end of the chapter summarizes the Younger Lady from KV35—the purported mother of Tutankhamun. Dodson believes that the Younger Lady represents the mummiﬁed remains of Nefertiti herself, and to genetically make the link to Tutankhamun, he proposes that Nefertiti was the third in a series of ﬁrst cousin marriages (pp. 20–22).  

The subject of Chapter 2 is Nefertiti's role as queen of Egypt. The chapter covers several topics, including the ofﬁcial titles she held, her epithets, and the evolution of the way her name was written over time (pp. 23–27); her iconography and artistic depictions during the period (pp. 26–30 and 55–59); the royal family (pp. 30–31, 46–50, and 50–52); and the founding of Akhetaten (Amarna) as a capital city; its accompanying royal necropolis (pp. 32–46), and the establishment of the Aten cult (pp. 52–55). Here Dodson further elaborates on his hypothesis that Nefertiti is the likely candidate for Tutankhamen's birth mother (as opposed to being his step-mother), based on evidence from Amarna monuments as well as DNA analysis (p. 50). One should note here that the transliteration of consonants only throughout the book is ideal for scholarly research.

Dodson writes about the available evidence to show Nefertiti's transition from Great Royal Wife to Pharaoh in Chapter 3. The beginning section lays out the series of deaths in the royal family and the rise of Smenkhkare as a co-regent with Akhenaten (pp. 63–72). Dodson suggests that Smenkhkare was a younger brother of Akhenaten, based on his long-standing hypothesis that the KV55 burial in the Valley of the Kings was made for Smenkhkare, rather than Akhenaten (pp. 69–70). It continues with a discussion of Nefertiti's ascension to kingship as Neferneferuaten, and whether Smenkhkare and Neferneferuaten, as a co-regent with Akhenaten, and subsequently as a three-year regent to Tutankhamen (pp. 72–83). The chapter ends with a discussion of Neferneferuaten's death and the subsequent reuse of much of her funerary equipment for the burial of Tutankhamun (pp. 88–95). Dodson reiterates his hypothesis that the Younger Lady from KV35 is the mummy of Nefertiti, and here proposes that her untimely death was because of murder (pp. 94–95).

A number of theories regarding the potential burial place (or places) of several Amarna royal family members within the Valley of the Kings is the topic of Chapter 4, including the burial of Neferneferuaten (pp. 97–102). Dodson's discussion suggests that the central area of the King's Valley, near the tombs of Tutankhamun (KV62), the “Amarna Cache” (KV55), and the cache of Amarna-era embalming materials (KV63), would be the most viable candidate for the undiscovered burial place of Neferneferuaten and/or the burials of several members of the Amarna royal family. Dodson writes that “Certainly, there is enough space in the part of this area that remains unexcavated to accommodate such a sepulcher” (p. 99; emphasis by author). The reader should note, however, that this area of the Valley of the Kings has been almost entirely excavated by several different groups over time, including the Davis/Ayrton excavations in 1907, the Amarna Royal Tombs Project from 1999–2000, the Supreme Council of Antiquities between 2008 to 2009, and ﬁnally the ongoing KV10/KV63 Amenmese Project. Dodson does not fully endorse, nor refute, Reeves' theory that KV62 was the original burial place of Neferneferuaten, but provides alternative ideas as to how the tomb may have functioned for her burial before Tutankhamun's death (p. 101).

Lastly, Chapter 5 deals with the story of Nefertiti in more recent history, and the effect she has had on popular interest in Egyptology. The chapter summarizes the rediscovery of Nefertiti in the historical records during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (pp. 107–15); this discussion is particularly strong in bringing together many obscure and complicated sources into one cohesive narrative. A brief synopsis of the excavation history of Amarna is given, including the discovery of the iconic Nefertiti bust and its subsequent removal to Berlin (pp. 115–20), as well as its display history in Germany and the debate between Egyptian and German authorities about its return to Egypt (pp. 123–28). Note that the text for ﬁgure 120 (p. 116) erroneously states that Nefertiti's painted bust was found in Amarna house O47.20 while her quartzite head was from P47.2. These house numbers should be reversed for the caption, but are correctly stated within the text (pp. 117–18). The debate about the sex of Neferneferuaten, and whether Smenkhkare and Neferneferuaten were two separate individuals or one person is summarized (pp. 128–29); this is followed by an overview of

\[\text{2} \] For an accessible summation on the pros and cons of ancient DNA studies, see: Jo Marchant, *The Shadow King* (Boston, 2013), 197–211.

\[\text{3} \] Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* (Cairo, 2009), 40–42.


\[\text{6} \] Aidan Dodson, James Allen, and Nozomu Kawai all view Smenkhkare and Neferneferuaten as two separate kings; James Allen, “The Amarna Succession,” in Peter Brand and Louise Cooper (eds.), *Causing His Name to Live: Studies in Egyptian History and Epigraphy in Memory of William J. Murnane* (Leiden, 2009), 9–20; Nozomu Kawai, “King Neferneferuaten from the Tomb of Tutankhamun Revisited” (in press). Kara Cooney and Nicholas Reeves view the two kings as one and the same person: Kara Cooney, *When Women
Dodson’s Nefertiti proves itself to be a prime example of meticulous and thorough scholarship, which brings together a wide variety of academic sources into one coherent narrative. This book will surely be useful as a scholarly reference for professionals in the field, but also as an accessible read for the general public or students of ancient Egyptian history and the Amarna Period. In addition to the written content, the number of color figures and illustrations throughout the book helps the reader visualize all of the available pieces of evidence within one source. The affordable cost of the book will make it available for anyone to add to their personal or institutional libraries.

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