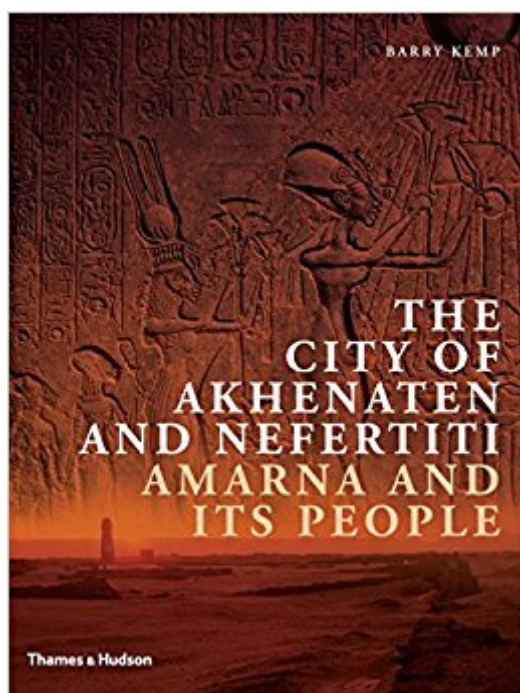


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The City Of Akhenaten And Nefertiti: Amarna And Its People (New Aspects Of Antiquity)



Synopsis

In the process of reconstituting a long-vanished city, the meticulously assembled book also brings to life the exotic, almost alien society once housed there. • Publishers Weekly A city of temples, royal palaces, civic offices, and elite tombs • and of small-scale mud-brick dwellings too • Amarna was an urban village where most of its citizens were only two or three steps removed in the social scale from the king. Barry Kemp evokes the sights and smells of Amarna itself, bringing to life its people--not only the royal family, but also prominent citizens such as the high priest Panehsy, the vizier Nakht, the general Ramose, and the sculptor Thutmose, whose bust of Nefertiti is one of the masterpieces of ancient art. The excavations reveal that, although Akhenaten had overturned the old religion and introduced worship of the Aten, the sun's disk, beneath the surface the old belief in the traditional Egyptian gods continued. Likewise themes of abundance and prosperity depicted in the art are contradicted by new cemetery evidence showing malnutrition in childhood, skeletal injuries, and early death. Insights such as these, together with the beautiful and profuse illustrations, make this volume essential reading for anyone interested in the history of urbanism, the mysterious Amarna interlude, and the enigmatic Akhenaten and Nefertiti, who have fascinated writers as diverse as Sigmund Freud and Noel Coward. 287 illustrations, 53 in color

Book Information

Series: New Aspects of Antiquity

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Thames & Hudson; 1 edition (January 6, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0500291209

ISBN-13: 978-0500291207

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 0.9 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 26 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #531,472 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #417 in Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Egypt #425 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Archaeology #1024 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Ancient

Customer Reviews

Barry Kemp is Emeritus Professor of Egyptology at Cambridge University and has been conducting research and excavation at Amarna since 1977. He lives in England.

Barry Kemp's masterful account of his thirty some years excavating at Amarna is surely the definitive work for anyone piqued by the life of Egypt's heretic king, his new religion, and the city he built to glorify his revolutionary thoughts in a remote and previously uninhabited wasteland. The picture Professor Kemp draws of Akhenaten from his many years of living and thinking among the stark remains of the king's city may be the most accurate we will ever have. Years of feeling the same searing heat, watching the sun come up over the same barren hills, feeling the dry wind and gritty sand, seeing the same lovely water birds along the Nile, walking on the same paths, discovering bits of houses, palaces, and temples where Akhenaten and Nefertiti lived, died, and worshiped, these could only lead to a profound insight that is inaccessible to speculation and academic isolation. As someone who, for sixty years, has devoured anything he could find concerning the Amarna period, this reviewer is quite enthralled by Professor Kemp's considerable accomplishment. I feel like I might now know the real Akhenaten, Nefertiti (and indeed Tutankhamen) somewhat better because the good Professor has so thoroughly shared his vast and unique life-experience at Amarna. The editors and designers at Thames & Hudson also deserve commendation, as the graphics and illustrations in the book are nothing less than splendid. If you love ancient Egypt, get this book; there is nothing quite like it, and you will not be disappointed.

If you are already somewhat familiar with ancient Egyptian history, this will be of great interest. It is written in a style that the layperson can easily understand and is accompanied by many photos and maps of the site. Because it concerns the city built by the infamous apostate, Akhenaten, and his reportedly beautiful and beloved wife, Nefertiti, nearly everyone's interest is piqued. It is not simply about the city that was built for the pharaoh in a hitherto unpopulated area of Egypt; the author skillfully weaves the story of Akhenaten's reign and the history of that period of time into the narrative giving the city's description relevance and meaning. As mentioned in the title of this review, the book is a marvelous example of archaeology's role in constructing history as the author himself led the more recent excavations at Amarna.

Barry Kemp is the archaeologist who is doing the actual digging, year-in and year-out, at Amarna, the site of Akhenaten & Nefertiti's alternate capital city. This volume unwaveringly focuses on the city and what we have learned from it. It is the only ancient Egyptian city that is not a city built on the ruins of many other cities, so we get a clear picture of what it was like. Kemp is the top expert on the subject and is not biased for or against Akhenaten, as are many other experts on the subject (e.g.,

Redford, who detests Akhenaten). Kemp writes well and in-depth, offers lots of sketches and photos, as well as some excellent color reconstructions of friezes and buildings. This is THE book on the ancient city of Akhetaten and will surely remain so for many years. GREAT BOOK!

I've a degree in Anthropology and spent several years as an Archaeologist digging before turning to a more lucrative profession. As a boy growing up in New York City, I hounded the American Museum of Natural History, falling in love with ancient Egypt and its cultural treasures. Having read much of the available Egyptology literature, especially on the 18th and 19th dynasties, I congratulate Dr. Kemp on his remarkably thorough dissection of the unique Akhetaten site and the late 18th dynasty culture in general. Thanks to Dr. Kemp, I now have a much broader feeling for the Amarna period and of the uprooting of the Royal Court of Thebes and its rapid wholesale transplantation to a relatively vacant bend of the Nile in response to the religious revolution of Amenhotep IV. Amarna is a brief window in time, 3500 years ago but offers in depth observation of the lives of the people in Akhenaten, Nefertiti and Tutankhamen's time. I've only been as far south as Giza but through Dr. Kemp's eyes I can easily imagine myself digging in Amarna's trenches and pondering that distant period so long ago!

This book goes into amazing detail about Amarna and the 'heretic' king of Egypt. There's so much information, and I'm using it for two fiction books I'm writing, both centered around this rather unique Pharaoh. The book comes with lots of illustrations, some showing what the foundations of Amarna's homes looked like, and the detail is impressive. If you're into ancient Egypt, I highly recommend this book. It's well worth it.

Barry Kemp is an acknowledged master of the Amarna site. In this eagerly awaited book he shares his encyclopedic knowledge of Amarna in a way that is easily accessible to even a reader unfamiliar with ancient Egypt. As is usual with his books, you really get a feel for how the ancient Egyptians lived and worked. As Amarna can be difficult to get to (it is an all day drive from Cairo, in Middle Egypt), excellent books such as this may be the only way many have to experience this important site. Professor Kemp has done a great service for lovers of ancient Egypt.

Good text but photos and drawings are very disappointing and not sufficiently explained. They are also rendered in very small size and hard to make out without a lens.

I'm not a fan of how the information is laid out in the book, but it's the most in-depth collection of knowledge of Amarna that I have ever found (and I've found quite a few). Maps are great and Barry spends a lot of time keeping things as realistic as possible. You feel like you're one of his assistant's on the first day at an exciting new job of digging up Ancient Egypt. Recommended.

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