

# A Chronological Perspective on the Transition from Amenhotep III to Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten

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[The problem of the alleged long coregency between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten has been discussed from different approaches: from the archaeological, artistic, political and religious point of view. With our present knowledge, however, we believe it is time to make an approach to the question of the transition between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten, from the chronological perspective, taking into account not only the relative chronology, trying to sort out and make sense of some of the dated documents of these monarchs, but also from the absolute chronology.]

**Keywords:** coregency, relative chronology, absolute chronology, Amenhotep III, Akhenaten.

## 1. *The Data: the Sources and their Relative Chronological Order*

When it comes to the relative chronology, the discussion<sup>1</sup> that concerns us, a set of dates play a significant role that define the reigns of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten.

It is commonly accepted that the reign of Amenhotep III lasted 38 years, with that being the latest date attested in a hieratic inscription in a piece of pottery (fig. 01) recovered at the palace of Malqata: *ḥ3t-sp 38 sw 5 ḥrjw rnpt msw Wsjr* “year 38, the fifth day upon the year (*epagomenae*), birth of Osiris”<sup>2</sup>, currently as part of the Metropolitan Museum collection (Rogers Fund, 1917, num. 17.10.2)<sup>3</sup>. If we consider the coronation date, estimated in II *shemu* 1 by Van Siclen<sup>4</sup> and

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1. In the XIXth century, Petrie suggested a 6-year coregency, the beginning of which would be in the year 30 and the end in the year 36, since during Petrie’s time this was the latest year known of Amenhotep III. W.M.F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt during the The XVIIth and XVIIIth Dynasties*, vol. 2 (London, 1896a), p. 208. The bibliography is quite abundant. However, on the principal premises see: D. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt: Seven Studies* (Toronto, 1967), pp. 88-169; W.J. Murnane, *Ancient Egyptian Coregencies*, SAOC 40 (Chicago, 1977), pp. 123-169 and 231-233; F. Giles, *The Amarna Age: Egypt*, (Warminster, 2001), pp. 25-137; M. Gabolde, *D’Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, Collection de l’Institut d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Antiquité, v. 3, (Paris, 1998), pp. 62-98.

2. W.C. Hayes, “Inscriptions from the Palace of Amenhotep III”, *JNES* 10: 1 (1951a), fig. 11 n° 143; however, J. von Beckerath, *Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten*, MÄS 46 (Mainz, 1997), p. 110, considers the latest date the year 38 II *akhet*, taking into account a label that speaks of the wine of the year 38, which harvest might have taken place in late august; E. Hornung, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des neues Reiches*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 11, (Wiesbaden, 1964), 78 n. 51.

3. L.M. Berman, “Amenhotep III and his Times”, in: A.P. Kozloff, B. Bryan, (eds.), *Egypt’s Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and his World*, (Cleveland, 1992), p. 39 fig. II. 4.

early III *shemu* by Von Beckerath<sup>5</sup>, the latest date known to us would still most likely be in the first couple or three months of the year 38. The fact that this constitutes the latest year of Amenhotep III is also supported by the presence of dated inscriptions in pot fragments in the well WV A<sup>6</sup>, associated with the tomb WV 22 (Amenhotep III) in the Western Valley of the Kings, which are comprised between years 32 and 37, but no later.

Flavius Josephus<sup>7</sup> in *Contra Apionem*, Theophilus<sup>8</sup> in *Ad Autolicum*, and other epitomes of Manetho<sup>9</sup>, offer the following sequence of monarchs and their respective regnal years, apparently corresponding to Amenhotep III to Tutankhamun:

TABLE 1: Monarchs of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty according to the epitomes of Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca*

<b>Flavius Josephus <i>Contra Apionem</i></b>	<b>Theophilus <i>Ad Autolicum</i></b>	<b>Syncellus Julius Africanus</b>	<b>Syncellus Eusebius</b>	<b>Eusebius Armenian version</b>
Amenophis 30 years 10 months	Amenophis 30 years 10 months	Amenophis 31 years	Amenophis 31 years	Amenophis 31 years
Orus 36 years 5 months	Orus 36 years 5 months	Orus 37 years	Orus 36 years (38 years)	Orus 28 years
Acencheres 12 years 1 month	(Acencheres) 12 years 1 month	Acherres 32 years	Achencherses 12 years	Achencheres 16 years
Rathotis 9 years	Rathotis 9 years	Rathos 6 years	Athoris 39 years	Acheres 8 years

Despite the well-known irregularities and mistakes that the epitomes of Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca* contain, the name of Amenophis, associated with Memnon seems to be related to Amenhotep III. In that case, the length of his reign is to be situated in 30 years and 10 months, or even 31 years. In general, it has been interpreted that the name of his successor, Orus, should correspond to Akhenaten, whose reign, according to the epitomes, lasted between 28 and 38 years. It is worth mention the fact that Flavius Josephus, when it comes to the king Amenophis, indicates that “conceived the wish to contemplate the gods, like Or, one of his predecessors had done in the throne”<sup>10</sup>, which led some researchers to believe that Amenophis and Or (Orus) could be the same monarch. On the other hand, some followers of the long coregency hypothesis have proposed the possibility that the 30/31 years assigned to Amenophis would consequently be related to his first *sed*<sup>11</sup> festival, during the course of which his son Amenhotep IV would be appointed on the throne.

4. C. Van Siclen III, “The Accession Date of Amenhotep III and the Jubilee”, *JNES* 32:3 (1973), p. 294.

5. Beckerath (Mainz, 1997), p. 201.

6. J. Kondo, “The Re-clearance of Tombs WV 22 and WV A in the Western Valley of the Kings”, in R.H. Wilkinson (ed.), *Valley of the Sun Kings. New Explorations in the Tombs of the Pharaohs*, (Tucson, 1995), p. 30.

7. W.G. Waddell, *Manetho*, (London, 1964), pp. 101-103.

8. Waddell (London, 1964), p. 109.

9. Waddell (London, 1964), p. 113 (Syncellus, from Julius Africanus), 115 (Syncellus, from Eusebius), 117-119 (Eusebius, Armenian version).

10. Waddell (London, 1964), p. 121 n. 2.

11. Petrie (London, 1896a), p. 208 reached that same conclusion.

In support of this theory<sup>12</sup>, a poorly preserved hieratic graffito found in 1891 in Meidum<sup>13</sup> has been considered. The graffito mentions the “year 30” of Nebmaatira Amenhotep III, described as one “causing the male (offspring) to sit upon the throne of his father, establishing his inheritance [in] the land” (fig. 02).

The text in this graffito has been interpreted in different ways<sup>14</sup>, although I agree with Dodson<sup>15</sup> with the fact it may probably refer to the designation of the crown prince of Egypt rather than a coregent. Amenhotep would then supplant his older brother, the prince progeny Thutmose, whom might have died around the year 30 of Amenhotep III<sup>16</sup>.

The prince Amenhotep is documented in Malqata by one object, a stamp on a jar cork with the text “[...] *dd* (?) of the domain of the true royal son, Amenhotep”<sup>17</sup>. The text itself would be meaningless if it were not for the fact that the vast majority of the dated objects from Malqata are actually dated during the period of the three jubilees celebrated in honor of Amenhotep III, which, statistically, would favor the dating of this piece in this same chronological context. Besides, it seems that the palace of Malqata was used by Amenhotep III since his first *sed* festival<sup>18</sup>.

The coregency between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten would end, according to Aldred<sup>19</sup> or Johnson<sup>20</sup>, 11 or 12 years after it started, which would have begun before the first *sed* festival, around the year 27/28 of Amenhotep III, until the year 39. If we suppose, however, that the long coregency would have started in the first *sed* festival (celebrated between the years 29-30), this would lead us to increase the length of the rule of Amenhotep III up to 40 years, that is if we also assume that the sole reign of Akhenaten began in the year 12 (coinciding in time with the *durbar* scene in the tombs of Huya and Meryra II at Amarna); so, either way no later than the year 38, the latest date attested. As stated by the defenders of the long coregency, the other option would be to situate it in the period between the first *sed* festival of Amenhotep III and his likely death in the year 38<sup>21</sup>.

A long coregency was previously supported by Pendlebury<sup>22</sup> and, among others, Fairman<sup>23</sup> (who supported a 9-year coregency), Giles<sup>24</sup> (12 years), and Vandersleyen<sup>25</sup>, with opposition from, among others, Campbell<sup>26</sup>, Hornung<sup>27</sup>, Redford<sup>28</sup>, Krauss<sup>29</sup>, von Beckerath<sup>30</sup> and Murnane<sup>31</sup>.

12. H.W. Fairman, “The Inscriptions”, in J.D.S. Pendlebury (ed.), *The City of Akhenaten, vol. III: The Central City and Official Quarters*, (London, 1951), pp. 156-157.

13. F.L.I. Griffith, “Chapter 6. The Inscriptions”, in W.M.F. Petrie, *Medum*, (London, 1892), pl. XXXVI, n° XVIII.

14. D. Redford (Toronto, 1967), pp. 117-119; K.A. Kitchen, “Further Notes on New Kingdom History and Chronology”, a review of D.B. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt: seven studies* (Toronto, 1967), *CdÉ* 43 (1968), pp. 313-324.

15. A. Dodson, “On the alleged ‘Amenhotep II/IV coregency’ graffito at Meidum”, *GM* 221 (2009), p. 27.

16. D. Wildung, “Le frère aîné d’Ekhnaton: réflexions sur un décès prématuré”, *BSFE* 143 (1998), p. 17.

17. W.C. Hayes, “Inscriptions from the Palace of Amenhotep III”, *JNES* 10: 3 (1951b), fig. 27 kk.

18. H. Goedicke, *Problems concerning Amenophis III*, (Baltimore, 1992), pp. 79-81.

19. C. Aldred, “Year Twelve at El-Amarna”, *JEA* 43 (1957), p. 114; “The Beginning of the El-Amarna Period”, *JEA* 45 (1959a), pp. 19-33; “Two Theban Notables during the Later Reign of Amenophis III”, *JNES* 18:2 (1959b), pp. 113-120; *Akhenaten, Pharaoh of Egypt*, (London, 1968), p. 116.

20. W.R. Johnson, “Amenhotep III and Amarna: Some New Considerations”, *JEA* 82 (1996), pp. 81-82; “Monuments and Monumental Art under Amenhotep III: Evolution and Meaning”, in D. O’Connor and E. Cline (eds.), *Amenhotep III. Perspectives on his Reign*, (Ann Arbor, 2004), p. 93.

21. M.E. Habicht, “Some reflections on the proposed 8-year co-regency of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV Akhenaton”, *GM* 241 (2014), pp. 25-36.

22. J.D.S. Pendlebury, “Summary report on the excavations at Tell el-Amarnah 1935-1936”, *JEA* 22 (1936), p. 198.

During the 1990's, Allen<sup>32</sup> exposed, as possible evidence of a long coregency, a hieratic graffito found by Arnold in the funerary complex of Senusret III at Dashur. Despite its fragmentary state, Allen stated that a double date could be identified. This double date consisted of the year 32 of Amenhotep III, corresponding to an undetermined year of Amenhotep IV. If it would, indeed, contain of a double date, the doubts of coregency would disappear but, as later demonstrated by Van Dijk<sup>33</sup>, the inscription was in fact from the time of Thutmose III, and it didn't bare a double date.

Likewise, there has been recently an attempt to put an end to the debate of the coregency in the light of the discovery of royal cartouches bearing the names of Nebmaatra Amenhotep III and Neferkheperura Amenhotep IV, found in the transversal colonnade of the tomb AT 28, property of the Vizier Amenhotep Huy<sup>34</sup>, concluding from all this that the coregency would have developed since, at least, the year 30 of Amenhotep III (thus, taking place for a period of nine years). However, this discovery should not be perceived as conclusive proof<sup>35</sup>, or original for that matter, of the long coregency, since more iconographical contexts where the two monarchs appear are known to us, like a lintel from the tomb of Huya at Amarna<sup>36</sup> (TA 1). In that scene we identify, in one hand, Akhenaten and Neferneferuaten Nefertiti under Aten and before four of their daughters and, on the other, Amenhotep III before Tiye and Baketaten, all under the rays of the Aten with his last didactic name (fig. 03). We should also consider an interesting scene found in the same tomb, where Akhenaten is holding his mother's hand, in the company of Baketaten, to enter the shut-Ra of Tiye<sup>37</sup>. In the inner most part of the building, we appreciate a papyri-shaped columned hall among which different statues of Nebmaatra and Tiye, and Akhenaten and Tiye are successively

23. Fairman (London, 1951), p. 157; his hypothesis was discussed by W. Helck, "Die Sinai-Inschrift des Amenmose", *MIO* 2 (1954), p. 196.

24. Giles (Warminster, 2001), pp. 25-137.

25. C. Vandersleyen, *L'Égypte et la Vallée du Nil. De la fin de l'Ancien Empire à la fin du Nouvel Empire*, vol. 2, (Paris, 1995), pp. 402-407.

26. E. F. Campbell, *The Chronology of the Amarna Letters, with Special Reference to the Hypothetical Coregency of Amenophis III and Akhenaten*, (Baltimore, 1964).

27. Hornung (Wiesbaden, 1964).

28. A long discussion about the supposed evidence of a long coregency can be found in Redford (Toronto, 1967), pp. 88-169.

29. R. Krauss, *Das Ende der Amarnazeit*, HÄB 7, (Hildesheim, 1978) pp. 6-9.

30. J. von Beckerath, "Eine Bemerkung zu der vermuteten Koregenz Amenophis'III. und IV.", *GM* 83 (1984), pp. 11-12.

31. Murnane (Chicago, 1977), pp. 123-169 (where he summarizes all the evidences), pp. 231-233 (where he expresses some conclusions about the uncertainty the evidence pose towards a long coregency).

32. J. Allen, "Further Evidence for the Coregency of Amenhotep III and IV?", *GM* 140 (1994), pp. 7-8.

33. J. Allen, W. Murnane, and J. Van Dijk, "Further Evidence for the Coregency of Amenhotep III and IV? Three View son a Graffito Found at Dahshur", *Amarna Letters* 3 (1994), pp. 27-30 y 152.

34. F. Martín y T. Bedman, "Proof of a "Long Coregency" between Amenhotep III & Amenhotep IV found in the Chapel of Vizier Amenhotep-Huy [Asasif Tomb 28] West Luxor", *Kmt* 25: 2 (2014), pp. 17-27.

35. Martín y Bedman, *Kmt* 25:2 (2014), p. 26; The authors talk about "definite evidence for proving a coregency between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV" "at least from year 30 of Amenhotep III until the time of his death, commonly agreed in the year 38/39 of his reign".

36. N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of el Amarna. Part III, The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes*, ASE 15, (London, 1905b), pl. XVIII; also see pl. XXI, where the chapel can be appreciated, along with inscribed columns where the cartouches of Akhenaton and Amenhotep III, followed by one another, can be identified.

37. Davies (London, 1905b), pp. 19-23, pl. IX-XI.

placed. The same pattern is repeated in the next hall and, in further spaces more statues of Tiye and the monarch appear, finishing, finally, in a set of stair risers in which four figures (that might correspond to Nebmaatira and Tiye, and Akhenaten and Tiye) should be recognized as statues (fig. 04).

Regarding the vizier Amenhotep Huy a few dated inscriptions are preserved. One of the year 31 (IV *akhet* 6)<sup>38</sup> and 35 (I *shemu* 1)<sup>39</sup> of Amenhotep III; as well as inscriptions that should be associated with the first *sed* festival of the monarch<sup>40</sup>. Also, this vizier is mentioned, as such, in the letter EA 71<sup>41</sup> sent by the governor of Byblos, Rib-Hadda, to Amenhotep Huy (referred in the letter as “Haya, the vizi[r]”<sup>42</sup>) in a moment when Abdi-Ashirta of Amurru became a destabilizing factor in the region. The events reflected might correspond to the final years of Amenhotep III, and would as well continue under Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten.

The fact the latest date attested of the vizier Amenhotep Huy coincides with the year 35 of Amenhotep III doesn't mean his career as vizier could not had developed longer in time<sup>43</sup>. Actually, there are no dated inscriptions of his in Malqata relating to the second *sed* festival, even though he would most certainly still be the vizier.

If we consider an inscription<sup>44</sup> from the temple of Amenhotep, son of Hapu<sup>45</sup>, the first *sed* festival of Amenhotep III ended in the year 30 III *shemu* 2. A study conducted by Van Siclen<sup>46</sup> indicates that the celebration of the three jubilees of Amenhotep III would had occurred, on every occasion, between IV *peret* 26 of a certain regnal year and III *shemu* 2 of the next<sup>47</sup>, which would then be comprised in a period of a little over two months, including the coronation date.

The coronation date of Amenhotep IV it's not known with certainty. Unfortunately, the only evidence referring to a coronation day is a precarious hieratic inscription from Amarna that reads “for the day of the appearance of the king”, with no trace of a specific date<sup>48</sup>. On that note, it would be interesting to investigate if, indeed, the coronation date of Amenhotep IV was associated to any of the celebration dates of the festivals of Amenhotep III.

According to Murnane<sup>49</sup>, the accession of Amenhotep IV to the throne should be placed somewhere in IV *peret* 1-8. However, Barta<sup>50</sup> proposes IV *akhet* 30 as the most likely coronation

38. C. Robichon and A. Varille, *Le Temple du Scribe royal Amenhotep fils de Hapou, I*, (Cairo, 1936), pl. 1.

39. G. Legrain, “Notes d'inspection IV. Sur l'architecte Aménòthès qui vécut sous Aménòthès III”, *ASAE* 4, (1903), pp. 197-212; the presence of the title of vizier, among other titles, made Legrain abandon the original idea of associating this Amenhotep with the known son of Hapu. So, we are in the presence of the vizier Amenhotep.

40. Hayes, *JNES* 10: 1 (1951a), fig. 9 n° 103, fig. 13 n° 185.

41. A.F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence. A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna based on Collations of all Extant Tablets*, W.M. Schniedewind (ed.), *HdO* 110, (Leuven, 2015), pp. 444-447.

42. It is probably the same Haya as referred in EA 101, also a missive sent by Rib-Hadda, to the king of Egypt; Rainey (Leuven, 2015), pp. 552-555.

43. For a similar view, A. Dodson, “The Coregency Conundrum”, *Kmt* 25: 2 (2014a), p. 34.

44. The inscription is not complete. However, it can be read “(year) x+10, III *shemu* 2”, which gives the understanding that the particular disposition of the 10 shall be read as (year) 30.

45. Robichon and Varille (Cairo, 1936), pl. 35.

46. C. Van Siclen III, “The Accession Date of Amenhotep III and the Jubilee”, *JNES* 32:3 (1973), pp. 290-300.

47. The first was celebrated in-between the years 29-30, the second in the years 33-34, and the third in the years 37-38.

48. M.A. Leahy, “The Hieratic Labels 1979-1982”, in: B.J. Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports II*, (London, 1985), pp. 68 y 82-83 (fig. 6.4 and 6.4a: number 22).

49. W.J. Murnane, “On the Accession Date of Akhenaten”, in: J. Johnson, E.F. Wente (eds.), *Studies in Honour of George R. Hughes*, SAOC 39, (Chicago, 1976), pp. 163-167.

50. W. Barta, “Thronbesteigung und Krönungsfeier als Unterschiedliche Zeugnisse königlicher Herrschaftsübernahme”, *SAK* 8 (1980), p. 43.

date. On the other hand, the Brooklyn papyrus 35.1453 A H/V<sup>51</sup>, allowed M. Gabolde<sup>52</sup> to state that this overly discussed date should be I *peret* 2. Krauss<sup>53</sup> estimated in a recent study that it should be placed between II *akhet* and IV *peret* 13, or after II *peret* and before IV *peret* 13. Be that as it may, it is worth mentioning that none of the suggested dates indicate that the coronation of Amenhotep IV concurred with any day of the Egyptian civil calendar when the three jubilees of Amenhotep III took place. If that were, indeed, the case, we could advocate for a non-direct relation between the celebration of the first *sed* festival of Amenhotep III and the coronation of Amenhotep IV.

There are only a few of the Amarna letters where a regnal year can be read. However, there are some of them quite significant to settle on the problematic long coregency. First off, we should consider the letter EA 27, sent by the king Tushratta of Mitanni to the king Naphurreya (Neferkheperura Amenhotep IV)<sup>54</sup>. The cuneiform text states that Amenhotep III was already deceased. On its lateral side, it has a dated hieratic inscription that reads:

[h3t]-sp 2 3bd 1 prt [sw...] jw.tw m nwt rsjt m p3 bhñ n h<sup>c</sup>-m-3hwt mjtt s š<sup>c</sup>t n<sup>c</sup>-h<sup>c</sup>-[r]j-n[<sup>c</sup>] jn.n wpwtj  
Pj-rj-sj wp[wtj trbr]

“[Yea]r 2<sup>55</sup>, I *peret*, [day 5 or 6<sup>56</sup>], when one (Amenhotep IV) was in the southern city, in the residence of ‘he who rejoices in the horizon’; copy of the letter of Naharina that the messenger Pirissi and the messeng[er Tulubri] brought”.

In the year 2 under Amenhotep IV, with a deceased Amenhotep III, the text indicates that the Egyptian monarch lived in Thebes<sup>57</sup>. It is important to bear in mind that in the year 2 the city of Akhetaten was yet to be founded. On the other hand, this would also explain why numerous letters from the time of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV were found in the archives of the city. These letters may have been originally received and archived in the complex of Malqata and, later on, transferred to the city of Aten<sup>58</sup>. In his [1]2 year, however, we would usually expect to find the

51. V. Condon, “Two Account papyri of the Late Eighteenth Dynasty (Brooklyn 35.1453 A and B)”, *RdE* 35 (1984), pl. V.

52. M. Gabolde (Paris, 1998), p. 15.

53. R. Krauss, “The Azzi eclipse and Hittite-Egyptian Chronology”, in: J. van Dijk (ed.), *Another Mouthful of Dust: Egyptological Studies in Honour of Geoffrey Thorndike Martin*, OLA 246 (Leuven, 2016), pp. 335-370.

54. Rainey (Leuven, 2015), pp. 283-295.

55. This year has been greatly discussed, since before the number “2” presents a gap that includes part of the term “year”. Hence, some authors have reconstructed the inscription as “[Yea]r [1]2” in an attempt to confirm a 12 year long coregency. For example, C. Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna*, AOAT 17, (Neukirchen, 1973), pp. 43-44 n. 205; however, a more recent study of the hieratic inscription seems to confirm a “year 2”. See W. Fritz, “Bemerkungen zum Datierungsvermerk auf der Amarnatafel KN 27.”, *SAK* 18, 1991, pp. 61-87, especially the photograph in plate VII, where a more close-up caption of the inscription is presented.

56. Kühne (Neukirchen, 1973), p. 44 n. 207.

57. It is interesting to point out that the “residence of he who rejoices in the horizon” mentioned in the letter EA 27 could be related to the construction of a structure in Karnak, build in his early days of kingship, dedicated to this form of Ra-Horus-akhty, that uses as epithet what will later become the didactic name of Aten.

58. It is also important to know that “(Petrie) found fragments of 18 further tablets. All but one were in two pits beneath internal walls (...) Whether the bulk of the tablets also came from the pit in this room cannot be known, though it is likely. This implies that chests of documents (...) began to arrive before the building was finished and the opportunity was taken to bury some of those thought less likely to be needed in the future”, B. Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Amarna and its People*, (London, 2012), p. 128.

pharaoh in his new residence in Akhetaten. We should also consider another one of the so few dated letters from Amarna, the EA 23<sup>59</sup>, that contains a hieratic inscription referring to a year 36 under Amenhotep III, when the monarch was in Malqata: *[h3]t-sp 36 IV 3bd [...] tw.tw m p3 bhn rsj Pr-h<sup>c</sup>* “Yea[r] 36, IV month, (day) 1, when one was in the southern residence, the *Pr-h<sup>c</sup>*”<sup>60</sup>. Moreover a hieratic inscription found in the antechamber of the WV 22, the tomb of Amenhotep III in the western Valley of the Kings, has a “year 3, III *akhet 7*”<sup>61</sup> inscription. The position of the text (the only hieratic inscription found in the tomb walls), in the entrance to the antechamber, might be connected to the sealing of the tomb<sup>62</sup> during the time of Amenhotep IV, although it cannot be verified. In fact, the date could also be related to a possible re-burial of Queen Tiye<sup>63</sup> at her husband’s tomb after the abandonment of Amarna, so this year 3 could be even linked to the queen-pharaoh Ankhethkeperura Neferneferuaten<sup>64</sup>.

Among the approximately 1500 inscriptions recovered from Malqata we can sort out many dated documents (especially hieratic labels on pots) and, not by coincidence (since it indicates the time of habitat in the complex), among them are dated inscriptions relating to every regnal year of Amenhotep III between the year 28 to 38, even one document mentioning a year 1 that should refer to Amenhotep IV<sup>65</sup>. This sequence of years, with no reference to a year 39 or 40, although it’s not definite evidence by itself it is significant nonetheless, since it seems to confirm the length of the reign of Amenhotep III in 38 years.

One of the most interesting documents in this long coregency feud is a set of papyrus<sup>66</sup> in which the principal character is a herdsman from the Fayum called *Msj*. The main recurrent character is, in fact, this man, which would indicate that the papyrus must come from a private archive. The p. Berlin 9784 contains various dates in just a few sentences (fig. 05), although Gardiner<sup>67</sup> pointed out that “the whole seems to have been written continuously on a single occasion, in spite of various dates”. The first date refers to the “year 27, III *shemu 20*”, under the king Amenhotep III<sup>68</sup>. The text goes on from the line 14 with the date “Year 2, [...] *peret 27*”, under Amenhotep IV<sup>69</sup> and, from line 20 with the date “year 3, birth of Isis (4<sup>th</sup> *epagomenae*)”, of the king Amenhotep IV<sup>70</sup>.

59. Rainey (Leuven, 2015), pp. 186-187.

60. Another date letter is the EA 254, although there have been some doubts about whether it should be read as “year 32” under Amenhotep III or “year 12” under Akhenaten. See, A. Dodson, *Amarna Sunrise. Egypt from Golden Age to Age of Heresy*, (Cairo, 2014b), p. 81; Rainey (Leuven, 2015), p. 1033 indicates a “year 10 + 2 (+ X?)”.

61. Kondo (Tucson, 1995), p. 29 fig. 3.

62. N. Reeves and R.H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, (London, 1996), p. 110.

63. M. Gabolde (Paris, 1998), p. 138.

64. M. Gabolde, *Toutankhamon*, (Paris, 2015), p. 86.

65. Hayes, *JNES* 10: 1 (1951a), fig. 16.

66. A.H. Gardiner, “Four papyri of the 18th dynasty from Kahun”, *ZÄS* 43, (1906), pp. 27-47.

67. Gardiner, *ZÄS* 43 (1906), p. 28.

68. From line 1 to line 13 of the reverse of the papyrus, the first contract law case is presented, mentioning the herdsman *Nb-mhj* to whom *Msj* provides with different provisions in exchange of some serving labor. Everything is agreed in front of witnesses, and written by the scribe *tt*.

69. It states how in that day *Nb-mhj* went back to *Msj* to ask for a cow, before some witnesses, the resulting agreement being written by the scribe *tt*, mentioned in the previous text.

70. The son of *Mn-hpr*, *3t*, is mentioned going to *Msj*, and offering the service of *hnwt*. As witnesses, a high amount of people are mentioned. Once more, the text is written by *tt*.

On the other hand, the papyrus Gurob II,1 in the first sentence we can distinguish the date “year 33, I *akhet* 5” under Amenhotep III, whereas the papyrus Berlin 9785, which begins with the date “year 4, II *akhet* 7” of Amenhotep IV, mentions *Msj* again.

TABLE 2: Characters mentioned in the p. Berlin 9784, p. Gurob II, 1 and p. Berl’n 9785

p. Berlin 9784	p. Berlin 9784	p. Berlin 9784	p. Gurob II,1	p. Berlin 9785
Year 27, III <i>shemu</i> 20 Amenhotep III	Year 2, [...] <i>peret</i> 27 Amenhotep IV	Year 3, 4° ep. Amenhotep IV	Year 33, I <i>akhet</i> 5 Amenhotep III	Year 4, II <i>akhet</i> 7 Amenhotep IV
Costumer herdsman <i>Nb-mhj</i>	Costumer herdsman <i>Nb-mhj</i>	Costumer <i>3t</i>	Costumer herdsman <i>Msj</i>	Accused <i>h3t</i>
Seller herdsman <i>Msj</i>	Seller herdsman <i>Msj</i>	Seller herdsman <i>Msj</i>	Seller Citizen <i>Pjhy</i> (?) wab <i>Mnj</i>	Prosecutor herdsman <i>Msj</i>
Services Servant <i>hnwt</i> Servant <i>hryt</i> (Servant) <i>Mrj-rmt.f</i> Servant <i>Nh-st(h)j</i>		Services Servant <i>hnwt</i>	Services Servant <i>hnwt</i> Servant <i>hryt</i>	Services Servant <i>M3<sup>c</sup>t-nfrt</i>
Witnesses herdsman <i>ꜥpr</i> , herdsman <i>Nn</i> , <i>Pn</i> <i>tj</i> , <i>st(h)j</i> <i>K(?)f</i> [...] <i>Jtf(?)jt</i> , <i>Mt(?)</i> , <i>Ky</i> , the nubian <i>Mrkst</i> ,	Witnesses <i>J<sup>c</sup>h-ms</i> , <i>Nn</i> <i>Nb-Jmnw</i> , <i>Jttt</i> , <i>Jw.f-<sup>c</sup>nh</i> , <i>hy</i>	Witnesses <i>ꜥpr</i> , <i>Nn</i> , <i>Pn</i> , <i>tj</i> , boatman <i>st(h)j</i> , soldier <i>Nb-mhj</i> , <i>Mj</i> , <i>stj</i> , <i>Pjh(?)</i> , <i>Jt</i> , wab <i>Jrr</i> , <i>Nfrrw</i> , <i>Pthmj</i>	Tribunal priest <i>t3y</i> , priest <i>h<sup>c</sup>y</i> wab <i>h3wt</i> , wab <i>P3w3h</i> , wab <i>R<sup>c</sup>w-ms</i>  Witnesses <i>Jwy</i> [...] <i>R<sup>c</sup>w</i> <i>dy</i>	Tribunal wab <i>J</i> [...] wab <i>Jrr</i> , chief medjai <i>Jp3j</i> ,  Witnesses scribe <i>h3tjy</i> herdsman <i>ꜥprtj</i> herdsman [...] <i>Mj</i>
scribe <i>tt</i>	scribe <i>tt</i>	scribe <i>tt</i>	Contract Scribe <i>Wn-nfr</i> .	written Scribe <i>t3</i> [...]

In table 2, we can appreciate a list of the characters mentioned in these papyri. It is quite impossible not to focus our attention on the fact that in just a few sentences in the Berlin papyrus 9784 we distinguish three dates: the year 27 of Amenhotep III, and the years 2 and 3 of Amenhotep IV, giving us the impression of an immediate continuity, especially considering that most of the characters involved during the year 27 of Amenhotep III were also present in the year 3 of Amenhotep IV (besides *Msj*, a servant, five witnesses and the scribe). Following the postulates of Aldred and Johnson on the beginnings of the long coregency, the distance in years between the first date and the last date would be only of 2 or 3 years. However, if there were no coregency, the distance should be increased in thirteen or fourteen years.

It is important to consider the papyrus Gurob II,1 dated in the year 33 of Amenhotep III, since it mentions two servants already referred to in the year 27, with different witnesses, but with a

tribunal. Besides, if we were to suppose a long coregency we should search for an explanation as to why we find in a same text, like in the papyrus Berlin 9784, the year 27 of the great king Amenhotep III only to be immediately followed by a year 2 of the young coregent Amenhotep IV, instead of a new year of Amenhotep III in the peak of his power (such is the case in the p. Gurob II,1), or even a double date. Thus, the coincidence in the names may be related to the fact that all these transactions occur in a reduced community. On the other hand, it also seems very significant that in the second line of the papyrus Berlin 9784 is written as *nomen* of Amenhotep III not Amenhotep Heqawaset but Amenhotep Netjerheqawaset, that is, the epithet of Amenhotep IV has been used erroneously instead of the epithet of Amenhotep III. We can suppose, therefore, that it is an error made by a scribe who in the time of Amenhotep IV wrote all this list of judicial cases.

Taking the evolution of Amenhotep IV kingship as a reference, we have a series of facts that are easy to situate in a chronological sequence: the change of his name, and the development of the didactic names of the god Aten.

The changes in the name of the atenist monarch constitute a good chronological reference. He begins his rule with the *nomen*, Amenhotep Netjerheqawaset, and his *praenomen*, Neferkheperura Waenra. In his early stages as king we also find scarabs where he is mentioned as “Neferkheperura Setepenamun” (BM EA 37778 and BM EA 29236)<sup>71</sup>, so, with the epithet “chosen of Amun”, but also as “beloved of Amun” (BM EA 66781) (fig. 06). The king’s original cartouches, with less important variations, are attested until year 5. In that regard, the papyrus Gurob I, 1<sup>72</sup> dated in “year 5, III, *peret* 19”, includes the last citation known of his *nomen* Amenhotep. In IV *peret* 13 of the same year, less than a month later, the Amarna<sup>73</sup> stelae X, M and K, that include the original proclamation text, already contain the new name of the king, Akhenaten.

In his early phase as king Amenhotep IV undeniably continues with the unfinished works of his predecessor. Among other examples, this can be observed in a relief from the entrance hall to the third pylon in Karnak<sup>74</sup>, with the traditional Egyptian iconography of the pharaoh smiting his enemies, today preserved in the open museum in Karnak, which is also of great interest for the coregency debate<sup>75</sup>.

It is precisely in the reliefs dated in the first years of his reign, where the artistic trend of the Amarna age it is yet to be developed, that the name of the solar divinity doesn’t appear within the cartouches. Such is the case, for example, of a block used as filler in the tenth pylon at Karnak (Berlin ÄM 2072)<sup>76</sup>, where the hieracocephalus form of Ra-Horus-akhty can be appreciated, crowned by the sun-disk, and related to the first didactic name of the Aten [R<sup>c</sup>w-h]rw-[3htj h]j m

71. W.J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (Atlanta, 1995), p. 42; D. Laboury, *Akhenaton. El primer faraón monoteísta de la historia*, (Madrid, 2012), p. 118 (but not BM EA 29263).

72. F.L.I. Griffith, *The Petrie Papyri: Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob (Principally of the Middle Kingdom)*, (London, 1898), p. 91 (vol. 1), pl. XXXVIII (vol. 2).

73. Murnane (Atlanta, 1995), p. 73; W.J. Murnane and C.V. van Siclen III, *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten*, (New York, 2011), pl. 3 (stela K), pl. 6 (stela X).

74. R. Saad, “Les travaux d’Aménophis IV au IIIe pylône du Temple d’Amon Rê à Karnak”, *Kêmi* 20 (1970), pp. 187-193.

75. This relief was left unfinished. It is difficult to explain, envisioning a long coregency scenario, that a relief situated in the façade of the third pylon in Karnak (which then was the main entrance to the temple complex of Amun) remained unfinished for the last ten years of Amenhotep III. However, from the long coregency point of view the opinion would differ, see D. Forbes, “Circumstantial Evidence for an Amenhotep III/IV Coregency”, *Kmt* 25:2 (2014), pp. 42-44.

76. Also in J.K. Hoffmeier, *Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism*, (Oxford, 2015), pp. 73-74.

3ḥ[t] m rn.f šw ntj [m] Jtn, without any cartouches. An inscription in Gebel Silsila (from the initial years of his reign as well) reminds of the order of the king Amenhotep IV to extract sandstone from the quarry in order to build the “great *benben* of Ra-Horus-akhty in his name of Shu who is in the Aten in Karnak”<sup>77</sup>, in a context presided by the figure of Amun. This inscription may probably refer to the same building that the Berlin block refers to.

In the tomb of Ramose (TT 55), before an image of Amenhotep IV, in a similar style to the Berlin block, we have the figure of the vizier repeated four times as a divine emblems bearer and, just behind the first figure (which brings an Amun emblem), we can distinguish the figure of the vizier about to carry an object of the god, which was never carved, but the associated inscriptions speak of the didactic name of the Aten, without cartouches: “Living Ra-Horus-akhty who rejoices on the horizon in his name of Shu who is in the Aten”<sup>78</sup>. The chronology of the scene might be the same as the Berlin block ÄM 2072 and the Gebel Silsila inscription.

Although the reused reliefs of Amenhotep IV in Karnak do not present any date<sup>79</sup>, we can trace the evolution of the didactic names of the Aten through further evidence. Thus, despite a linen cloth from the tomb of Tutankhamun has the didactic name of Aten in the year 3 of Amenhotep IV (JE 62705 – Carter 281a)<sup>80</sup>, it appears with no cartouches; but, in another one (JE 62703 – Carter 291a)<sup>81</sup>, dated in the year 4, II *shemu*, the name appears placed inside two cartouches. Hence, sometime between year 3 and 4 of Amenhotep IV, the didactic name of Aten was inscribed inside cartouches.

From the chronological perspective, this change occurred before the Aten sun-disk appeared as the iconographic form of the sun god. Thus, in the Museum of Edinburgh, the stela of Kia<sup>82</sup> still shows a seated figure of the hieracocephalus Aten with his initial didactic name in two cartouches, much as like in a graffito in Aswan where the god appears standing<sup>83</sup>, close to the well-known graffito of the sculptors Men and Bak<sup>84</sup> before Akhenaten and a statue of Nebmaatra. Also, it is interesting to observe that the Amarna style will appear even before Aten abandons his traditional appearance and begins to be represented as a sun-disk<sup>85</sup>.

In addition, the appearance of the amarnic form of Aten is reasonably well placed in the chronological perspective thanks to some graffiti preserved in the wadi Hammamat (specifically, in the Wadi Abu Kua). In one of them appear the two cartouches of Amenhotep IV and Nefertiti under the exhilarating rays of the sun-disk of Aten<sup>86</sup> (fig. 07). On the left, in a column, it reads “the company Ra of the governors, the standard-bearer Ry”. In short distance we found another

77. Murnane (Atlanta, 1995), pp. 29-30.

78. N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose* (London, 1941), pl. XXX.

79. An exception is a block that bears the date “[...] *akhet* 10”. Unfortunately, the relief is incomplete. See J.-L. Chappaz, “Le premier édifice d’Aménophis IV à Karnak”, *BSEG* 8 (1983), p. 31.

80. H. Beinlich and M. Saleh, *Corpus der hieroglyphischen Inschriften aus dem Grab des Tutanchamun*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 131.

81. Beinlich and Saleh (Oxford, 1989), p. 133.

82. C. Aldred, “The Beginning of the El-Amarna Period”, *JEA* 45 (1959a), fig. 1, pl. III.

83. A. Dodson, *Amarna Sunrise. Egypt from Golden Age to Age of Heresy*, (Cairo, 2014), p. 91 fig. 75.

84. L. Habachi, “Varia from the Reign of King Akhenaten”, *MDAIK* 20 (1965), pp. 85-92, pis. 27-31.

85. D. Redford, *Akhenaten. The Heretic King*, (Chicago, 1984), p. 65 fig. 4.6.

86. C.R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, B. VI A. III, (Berlin, 1849-1859), pl. 91g; Su. Redford and D. Redford, “Graffiti and Petroglyphs Old and New Kingdom from the Eastern Desert”, *JARCE* 26 (1989), p. 45 fig. 87-88.

inscription of Amenhotep IV<sup>87</sup> which mentions the *jdnw Jmnw-msj* of the “company Ra of the governors, and the house of life”. Although these graffiti are not dated, we can consider them to be chronologically close to one dated inscription<sup>88</sup> found at the wadi Hammamat that reads: “Year 4, III *akhet* 11, under the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt [Nefer]Kheper[ur]a waenra, the son of Ra Amen[hotep Netjerheqawaset], when it was ordered to the High Priest of Amun May<sup>89</sup> to fetch *bekhen* stone for a statue of the lord, life, prosperity and health”<sup>90</sup>. Furthermore, the expedition to the greywacke quarries in year 4, III *akhet* 11 doesn’t just show us the last known appearances of the name of Amenhotep IV<sup>91</sup>, but also allows stating that the appearance of the sun-disk of Aten can be placed at least from year 4.

A new relative chronological element is introduced in the moment the didactic name of Aten evolves<sup>92</sup>. So, if we look exclusively at the dated monuments, we see how the Amarna border stelae, even the ones that contain the last oath of the year 8, I *peret* I of Akhenaten, bear the same didactic name of Aten, the original as mentioned in previous lines. However, in the year 12, II *peret* 8 (as can be observed from different dated reliefs in the tombs of Huya<sup>93</sup> and Meryra II<sup>94</sup>), the name of Aten has already changed<sup>95</sup>. In the known *durbar* scene the name of the Aten is: “may Ra live, the governor of the horizon who rejoices on the horizon in his name of light which comes from the Aten”. Therefore, this change took place in a moment between year 8 and 12. The second didactic name of Aten can also be detected in the room  $\gamma$  of the Amarna tomb TA 26, where the demise of Maketaten is represented<sup>96</sup>. In contrast, in the room  $\alpha$ , where the eastern wall reproduces the first version, in the southern wall, where there is a possible reference to the deaths of Setepenra and Neferura, it is not clear if the version represented is the first or the second<sup>97</sup>. The same name

87. S. Redford and D. Redford, *JARCE* 26 (1989), p. 47 fig. 90-91.

88. G. Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres du Wadi Hammamat*, (Paris, 1957), pp. 106-107, l. 25 y 31.

89. The tomb of this High Priest of Amun seems to had been recently identified in the necropolis of Dra Abu el-Naga. D. Polz, E. Mähltz, U. Rummel, and A. Seiler, “Bericht über die 9. bis 12. Grabungskampagne in der Nekropole von Dra’ Abu el-Naga / Theben-West”, *MDAIK* 59 (2003), pp. 373-374.

90. The inscriptions of Amenhotep IV in the wadi Hammamat are, after those of Thutmose III, the earliest ones of the New Kingdom in the region. See: T. Hikade, “Expeditions to the Wadi Hammamat during the New Kingdom”, *JEA* 92 (2006), p. 154.

91. Along with the papyrus Gurob I,1, dated in the “year 5, III *peret* 19”, before the name of Akhenaten is attested in year 5, IV *peret* 13

92. About the three forms of Aten attested in the tomb of Akhenaten, see M. Gabolde (Paris, 1998), p. 105-1077; if we observe closely to the cartouches of Aten, however, only two major changes can be appreciated, although there are a few variants.

93. Davies, N. de G., *The Rock Tombs of el Amarna. Part III, The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes*, ASE 15, (London, 1905b), pl. XIII.

94. N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of el Amarna. Part II, The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II*, ASE 14, (London, 1905a), pl. XXXVIII.

95. Obviously, the preparation of the relief may be later than the date indicated, so it can not be guaranteed that the variant of the name of Aten used was already in effect in that year 12.

96. G.T. Martin, *The Royal Tomb at El-Amarna, II. The Reliefs, Inscriptions, and Architecture*, (London, 1989), pls. 68-69.

97. Martin (London, 1989), II, pl. 58; M. Gabolde (Paris, 1998), pl. III a and e; it would be expected to find the second version of the cartouches of Aten, given that in the *durbar* scene the six daughters are represented, Neferneferura and Setepenra included.

can be observed (although with little written variations in the cartouches) related to his “year 16, I akhet 15” in a graffito recently found in Deir Abu Hennis<sup>98</sup>.

Taking into account all the dated documents that we’ve mentioned along these lines, and the chronological casing they bring, we can date the execution of some Theban tombs where Amenhotep IV appears, but we cannot associate it to any date; such is the case of the tomb of Ramose (TT 55) or the tomb of Parennefer (TT 188)<sup>99</sup>. On that subject, the tomb of Ramose, it is recurrent the use of the didactic name of Aten without cartouches and the iconographic style used by the time of Amenhotep III, but there is also the presence of the Amarna style with the first didactic name of Aten inside cartouches, and the sun disk, but the name of Akhenaten doesn’t appear; instead, it bears his original name, Amenhotep. All of these elements put together allow building up the premise that the decoration of the tomb took place between the beginnings of the reign of Amenhotep IV until, at the latest, early year 5. The fact that Amenhotep III is absent is pretty significant because, according to those in favor of the long coregency, in this chronological frame he would have celebrated his first and, for some others, the second, *sed* festival. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the vizier Ramose is represented in the temple of Amenhotep III at Soleb<sup>100</sup>, apparently next to the vizier Amenhotep<sup>101</sup>, in honor of the celebration of his festival; there is also evidence of his involvement in the first *sed* festival of Amenhotep III<sup>102</sup> at the complex of Malqata. Regarding the tomb of Parennefer<sup>103</sup>, the TT 188, the representation of the sun disk with the two cartouches of Aten<sup>104</sup>, as well as the use of the name Amenhotep, establishes the same limited chronology as observed in the tomb of Ramose. Besides, in his tomb at Amarna the cartouches with the first didactic name of Aten<sup>105</sup> are also present.

The same principle should be considered for the tomb of Kheruef<sup>106</sup> (TT 92), which has been carefully studied by Dorman<sup>107</sup> concerning the question of the coregency. This tomb, bigger in size

98. A. Van der Perre, “The Year 16 graffito of Akhenaten in Dayr Abu Hinnis. A Contribution to the Study of the Later Years of Nefertiti”, *Journal of Egyptian History* 7 (2014), p. 72. The second cartouche bears the following inscription: *m rn.f m R'w [...] jy m Jtn*, “in his name of Ra [...] who comes as Aton”; see also the corrected transcript offered by M. Gabolde (Paris, 2015), p. 59.

99. S. Redford, “Preliminary Report on The Akhenaten Temple Project’s On-going Work in the Tomb of Parennefer (TT 188)”, *ASAE* 75, 1999-2000, pp. 245-256; a recent publication about the tomb: A.F. Redford, *Theban Tomb No.188 (the Tomb of Parennefer): A Case Study of Tomb Reuse in the Theban Necropolis*, (Pennsylvania, 2006).

100. M. Schiff Giorgini, *Soleb V. Le Temple. Bas-reliefs et inscriptions*, (Cairo, 2002), pl. 42.

101. A. Gordon, “Who was the Southern Vizier during the Last Part of the Reign of Amenhotep III?”, *JNES* 48:1 (1989), p. 21 figs. 1-2. pp. 15-23; the discovery of the tomb of the vizier Aper-El in Saqqara, where different materials from the time of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV had been found, implies supposing, from the nonexistent coregency perspective, that this character reached the vizier post after the death of Amenhotep III and, probably, the vizier Amenhotep Huy as well. B. Gessler-Löhr, “Bemerkungen zur Nekropole des Neuen Reiches von Saqqara vor der Amarna-Zeit, I. Gräber der Wisire von Unterägypten”, in: D. Kessler, R. Schulz (eds.), *Gedenkschrift für Winfried Barta*, MÄU 4 (Frankfurt, 1995), p. 151 n.7; A.-P. Zivie, *Découverte à Saqqarah: le vizier oublié*, (Paris, 1990).

102. Hayes, *JNES* 10: 1(1951a), fig. 8, number 92.

103. This individual has another tomb in Amarna, the TA 7. In that tomb, an inscription reminds us that he was a “servant to the king, when he only was an hereditary prince”, which brings us to later than year 30 of Amenhotep III, when the prince Amenhotep would have been designated as heir to the throne. See N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna, Part VI. The Tombs of Parennefer, Tutu and Ay*, ASE 18, (London, 1908), pl. III.

104. N. de G. Davies, “Akhenaten at Thebes”, *JEA* 9 (1923), pl. XXIII.

105. Davies (London, 1908), pl. IV.

106. Epigraphic Survey, *The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192*, OIP 102 (Chicago, 1980).

but similar in structure as the nearby tomb of the vizier Amenhotep Huy, possess an iconographical set of great value. In the lintel of the doorway to the open courtyard, Amenhotep IV, accompanied by his mother, gives offerings to Atum and Ra-Horus-akhty<sup>108</sup>. His coronation name, Neferkheperura waenra, works as central element of the scene. The style used in this relief is the same one that we can observe in the Berlin block ÄM 2072 or in the relief in the tomb of Ramose with a scene of Amenhotep IV with the goddess Maat. If for those last examples we can propose a chronological margin set up between year 1 and 2 of Amenhotep IV, for the example in the tomb of Kheruef we should assume the same chronology or, rather, year 1, given that not only Aten is absent but Ra-Horus-akhty associated to what will become the first didactic name of Aten without cartouches. On the other hand, it's quite significant that the reliefs associated to the *sed* festival of the year 37 under Amenhotep III (west wall of the courtyard, north side) present a greater definition in its execution than those of the year 30 (west well of the courtyard, south side) which indicates, as pointed out by Dorman, that they were both made almost at the same moment, but not before the year 37 of Amenhotep III. If we were to suppose a long coregency, it would be imperative to explain why a tomb registering events of the year 37 (build in relief as early as that year) doesn't just represent a single element of the atenist world<sup>109</sup>, but also why the name of Amenhotep IV is not altered in the entrance to the funerary complex. Also, it would be noteworthy the fact that (in the case of a long coregency) in other tombs with a decoration related to the first *sed* festival of Amenhotep III, like the tomb of Khaemhat (TT57), doesn't mention Amenhotep IV.

In Serabit el-Khadim, in the Sinai, different dated inscriptions from the end of the reign of Amenhotep III have been preserved. One of them, written in the "year 36, II *peret* 9", belongs to the scribe Amenmose<sup>110</sup>, and refers to a dispatch to fetch turquoise for the monarch's third *sed* festival. However, it is curious that after that date there is no sign or register of any activity that might have taken place in that region neither under Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten nor any of the immediate successors<sup>111</sup>, which means that mining activity in the zone must have ceased for some time right in the end of the reign of Amenhotep III.

Nevertheless, there are two other stelae<sup>112</sup> from that period of Amenhotep III from Serabit el-Khadim. In both, the inscriptions speak of Amenhotep Heqawaset – Nebmaatra, which can also be observed in the decoration of the king's tomb at the Valley of the Kings. There is neither any trace of the Amarna art nor of Aten. If that wasn't enough, in one of the stelae, dated in the year 36, the cartouche that includes the coronation name also bears the epithet "*stp-n-Jmnw*", therefore, "chosen of Amun" (fig. 08).

The events of the year 36 clearly contrast with a sequence of documents from Amarna where Amenhotep III is only mentioned by his coronation name and the use of the epithet "*stp-n-Jmnw*" is not attested. Thus, we have to keep in mind that in the tomb of Huya, Amenhotep III is only

107. P.F. Dorman, "The Long Coregency Revisited: Architectural and Iconographic Conundra in the Tomb of Kheruef", in: P.J. Brand, L. Cooper (eds.), *Causing his Name to Live: Studies in Egyptian Epigraphy and History in Memory of William J. Murnane*, (Leiden, 2009), pp. 65-82.

108. Epigraphic Survey (Chicago, 1980), pl. 9.

109. Keeping in mind that the year 37, according to the long coregency theory, could equal to the year 8 or 11 of Akhenaten!

110. *Urk* IV, 1891, 1; W. Helck, "Die Sinai-Inschrift des Amenmose", *MIO* 2 (1954), pp. 189-207.

111. A.J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt. Scope and Roles of Informal Writing (c. 3100-332 BC)*, (Leiden, 2001), p. 77.

112. Lepsius III, AIII. B1 71, c and d.

mentioned as Nebmaatira, in contexts where he only used the second version of the cartouches of Aten, but with a variation of the third version of the definite protocol of Aten (according to Gabolde's classification). In the Men and Bak graffito in Aswan, where Amenhotep III is depicted as a statue, the monarch uses the name Nebmaatira for both his cartouches.

In addition, in the controverted stela BM EA57399<sup>113</sup> recovered from the house R.44.2 of Panehesy, Amenhotep III is depicted seated next to Tiye, but he is mentioned in both his cartouches as Nebmaatira, under the rays of Aten which, at the same time, uses his second didactic name in cartouches (and a variant of the third name protocol). This stela, found in a private context, is probably an indicator of the existence of a private cult to the deceased king. In that case, it's possible that Tiye would have died as well, if we consider that her death occurred at the time where the second didactic name of Aten was in use in cartouches, as well as the definite protocol, as we can observe, for example, in the reconstruction of her sarcophagus and sepulcher found in KV 55<sup>114</sup>. In the so-called "coregency stela" (UC 410)<sup>115</sup>, we also encounter that definite protocol.

## 2. *The Absolute Chronology on the Long Coregency*

In the last few years significant advances have been made on the absolute chronology, thanks in part to the results of the combination of archaeoastronomical studies, astronomical data<sup>116</sup>, and the improvement of the New Kingdom relative chronology due to the discovery and reinterpretation of Egyptian and Hittite sources.

The study and reconstruction, carried out by Miller<sup>117</sup>, of some tablet fragments from the reign of Mursil II (son and second successor of the great Suppiluliuma), brought him to conclude that the person the Hittite king is referring to, called *Ar-ma-a*, is no other than the general Horemheb<sup>118</sup>. This hypothesis carries important consequences in the chronological perspective. The most evident is that the deceased king mentioned, Nipkhururiya, in the well-known letter (KBo V 6 among others<sup>119</sup>) where the Egyptian Dahamunzu asks for a son to the Hittite king Suppiluliuma cannot be Tutankhamun, rather Akhenaten. On the other hand, KBo 50.24 relates of a war that the Egyptians had in the region of Amurru, possibly in the year 9 of Mursil III, in a time when a new king (Egyptian?) sat upon the throne<sup>120</sup>.

113. R. Freed, Y.J. Markowitz, and S.H. D'Hauria (eds.), *Pharaohs of the Sun. Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*, (Boston, 1999), p. 254 n° 169.

114. M. Gabolde (Paris, 1998), pl. XVIII and pl. XXVII.

115. M. Gabolde (Paris, 1998), pl. XXIV a.

116. It must be borne in mind, however, that some scholars propose to revise the dates derived from the observations of the heliacal rising of Sirius. For example, recently: R. Gautschy, "Sirius im Alten Ägypten", *ZÄS* 138 (2011), pp. 116-131.

117. J. Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibhururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text", *AOF* 34 (2007), pp. 252-293.

118. Against this opinion see, Z. Simon, "Kann Arma mit Horemheb gleichgesetzt werden?", *AOF* 36 (2009), pp. 340-348.

119. M. Gabolde (Paris, 2015), pp. 64-68.

120. E. Devicchi and J. Miller, "Hittite-Egyptian Synchronisms and their Consequences for Ancient Near Eastern Chronology", in: J. Myránová (ed.), *Egypt and the Near East. The Crossroads* (Prague, 2011), p. 157 "What name is to be restored in l. 2' of KUB 19.15+KBo 50.24 thus remains a matter of speculation. Of the suggestions put forth thus far, Ay's throne name *Ḫeper-ḫepu-re* can be considered a leading candidate. The events of col. ii, likely to be dated to

The Egyptian chronology of the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty has suffered a significant improvement, partly encouraged by the study conducted by Van Dijk<sup>121</sup>, who concluded that the reign of Horemheb should not be extended to more than 15 years.

On that new chronological subject, on one side, we have the reduction of the reign of Horemheb and a synchronism between the death of Akhenaten and the final days of the reign of Suppiluliuma; and, on the other, the fact that the general Horemheb (predictably under Tutankhamun) was a contemporary of Mursil II in his year 9. We also have to consider the possibility that the text KUB 14.4 from the annals of Mursil II compiles an omen of a solar eclipse that occurred when the Hittite king was in a military campaign in Azzi, in his tenth year of reign<sup>122</sup>. This possible eclipse, in those circumstances, would very well match with the one recorded on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June of the year 1312 BC; thus, in absolute chronological terms, we would have the tenth year under the Hittite king and his accession on the throne.

A new element that also plays a significant role in the new chronology is provided by the archaeoastronomical study that connects the alignment of the longitudinal axis of the Small Temple of Aten with the wadi Abu Hassa el-Bahri (where the tomb of Akhenaten is located), with the foundation date of the year 5, IV *peret* 13 that appear in the border stelae at Amarna<sup>123</sup>. This combination implies that the alignment might have taken place in the year 1335 BC with an error margin of 4 years.

This chronology has a solid position on which to stand, which is the determination, again in absolute chronological terms, that makes the year 1 of Ramesses II equal to the year 1279 BC<sup>124</sup>, a date that seems to be corroborated by some lunar dates, from the year 7 of Ramesses III (III *shemu* 9), the year 7 of the queen Tawsert (II *shemu* 28), and the year 52 of the same Ramesses II<sup>125</sup> (II *peret* 27), taking into account that the first two dates coincide with a lunar day 1 / 2 and the last date with a lunar day 1.

If we take this position as a starting point, and combining the absolute dates mentioned above with the length<sup>126</sup> and order of the rulers before Ramesses II, along with new lunar dates, we will find a more precise chronological frame. Thus, for Sety I we have as the latest dates the year 9 (III

Muršili's 9th year, would thus have taken place while Horemheb was not yet pharaoh, perhaps shortly after Ay ascended the throne of Egypt".

121. J. Van Dijk, "New Evidence on the Length of the Reign of Horemheb", *JARCE* 44 (2008), pp. 193-200.

122. P.J. Huber, "The Solar Omen of Mursili II", *JAOS* 121:4, 2001, pp. 640-644. This author supposed that the most likely dates for that eclipse were, keeping in mind the chronology used back then, between the years 1340 and 1335 BC.

123. L. Gabolde, "L'horizon d'Aton, exactament?", *Cahiers Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne*, 2 (2009), p. 154, for a lower chronology 1335 a.C.; J.A. Belmonte, *Pirámides, templos y estrellas*, (Barcelona, 2012), p. 340; against this idea, E.W. Castle, "The Foundation Ceremony at Akhetaten", *SAK* 44 (2015), pp. 43-82.

124. P.J. Huber, "The Astronomical Basis of Egyptian Chronology of the Second Millennium BC", *Journal of Egyptian History* 4:2 (2011) pp. 172 – 227; according to this scholar, however, the most convincing astronomical chronology for the beginning of the reign of Ramesses II is 1315 BC.

125. R. Krauss and D.A. Warburton, "The Basis for the Egyptian Dates", in D.A. Warburton (ed.), *Time's up! Dating the Minoan eruption of Santorini*, (Athens, 2009), pp. 133-134.

126. Obviously, unless we have documents that indicate the date in which a monarch dies, the highest dates of his reign only ensure the minimum duration of the reign of a particular monarch, but not necessarily the total duration of his reign. That is, we fear a degree of uncertainty. However, the combination of relative chronology and absolute chronology data can provide a more accurate result.

*shemu* 20) and 11 (IV *shemu* 12 or 13)<sup>127</sup>, for Ramesses I his year 2 (II *peret* 20)<sup>128</sup>, for Horemheb his year 14<sup>129</sup>, for Ay year 4 (IV *akhet* 1)<sup>130</sup>, and for Tutankhamun the year 9<sup>131</sup>, or a debatable year 10<sup>132</sup>. Before Tutankhamun, we have three isolated years where we could place Smenkhkara<sup>133</sup> and Ankhethkeperura Neferneferuaten<sup>134</sup> and, before all of them the latest attested date for Akhenaten, the year 17<sup>135</sup>.

As pointed out by Krauss<sup>136</sup>, the sum of years from year 1 of Ramesses II to year 1 of Akhenaten equals 59 years. Let us remind once more that the year 1 of Ramesses II took place, with great probability, in 1279 BC, and that the rule of Mursil II might have been developed between 1321 and 1312 BC (for his years 1 to 10, keeping in mind the date provided by the solar omen KUB 14.14); thus, placing the accession of Ay in 1314/1313 BC (acknowledging the interpretation given to KBo 50.24, referring to the accession of a new king, previously considering the presence of Horemheb as general in KBo 50.24 and KUB 19.15), the alignment of the Small Aten Temple in year 5 of Akhenaten in 1337 BC<sup>137</sup> and, consequently, the year 1 of this king in 1341 BC.

From this point forward, the study carried out by Krauss<sup>138</sup>, keeping lunar dates and festivities in mind, acquires a crucial importance in precisising the absolute chronology even further and, as a consequence, being able to fit better the periods of Ramesses II predecessors.

Considering that the coronation of Ramesses II occurred in III *shemu* 27<sup>139</sup>, Krauss calculates that the year 34, IV *shemu* 24 (a date a scribe left in the “day of the feast of Ptah” in the complex of

127. E. Hornung, “The New Kingdom”, in: E. Hornung, R. Krauss, D. Warburton (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, (Leiden, 2006), p. 211; P. Brand, *The Monuments of Seti I. Epigraphic, Historical & Art Historical Analysis*, (Leiden, 2000), pp. 305-309; although the year 11 attested in Gebel Barkal is debatable. Van Dijk proposes that the date shown in this stele is not year 11 but year 3, while he assumes that, probably, the highest date of the reign of Seti I is year 9 according to the wine labels found in KV 17. See J. Van Dijk, “The Date of the Gebel Barkal Stela of Seti I”, in D. Aston, B. Bader, C. Gallorini, P. Nicholson, and S. Buckingham (eds.), *Under the Potter’s Tree. Studies on Ancient Egypt Presented to Janine Bourriau on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday*, OLA 204, (Leuven, 2011), pp. 325-332; also D.A. Aston, “Radiocarbon, Wine Jars and New Kingdom Chronology”, *ÄuL* 22-23 (2012-2013), p. 295.

128. *KRI*, I, 2,9.

129. Van Dijk, *JARCE* 44 (2008), pp. 193-200.

130. *Urk* IV, 2110, n° 820, 13.

131. J. Černý, *Hieratic Inscriptions from the Tomb of Tut’ankhamun*, (Oxford, 1965), 1-3 (year 10, p. 3 and 24, V: 24).

132. P. Tallet, “Une jarre de l’an 31 et une jarre de l’an 10 dans la cave de Toutânkhamon”, *BIFAO* 96, 2010, pp. 375-383.

133. If not coregent of Akhenaten. For Smenkhkara there is only a year 1 registered (CoA III 36), although it is an inscription registering “year 1, wine of the domain of Smenkhkara [...]”. See R. Krauss, “Zur Chronologie der Nachfolger Achenatens unter Berücksichtigung der DOG-Funde aus Amarna”, *MDOG* 129 (1997), p. 239.

134. In TT 139 we find the inscription “year 3, III *akhet* 10” for this king. *Urk* IV, 2024, n° 771, 14.

135. Hornung (Leiden, 2006), p. 206; J.D.S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten, Part III: The Central City and the Official Quarter. The Excavations at Tell el Amarna during the Seasons 1926-1927 and 1931-1936*, (London, 1951), vol. II, lám. XCV, n° 279.

136. I would like to thank Rolf Krauss his humbleness in allowing me to use the chronological results he obtained, months before their publication.

137. Belmonte suggests that the alignment could have been searched on purpose in 1337 BC. See: J.A. Belmonte, “DNA, Wine & Eclipses: the Dakhamunzu Affaire”, *Anthropological Notebooks* 19 (sup.), (2014), p. 439.

138. R. Krauss, “The Azzi eclipse and Hittite-Egyptian Chronology”, in: J. Van Dijk (ed.), *Another Mouthful of Dust: Egyptological Studies in Honour of Geoffrey Thorndike Martin*, OLA 246, (Leuven, 2016), pp. 335-370.

Khendjer<sup>140</sup>, under the rule of Ramesses II) coincided with a fourth lunar day (LD) of a XII lunar month (LM)<sup>141</sup>. In the pyramid of Netjerkhet there is another graffito<sup>142</sup> of Ramesses II, year 47, II *peret* 25 which also correspond to a fourth lunar day (LM VI)<sup>143</sup>.

If we interpret KUB 14.14 as a reference to the solar eclipse of June 24, 1312 BC in year 10 of Mursil II and KBo 50.24 as the enthronement of Ay a year earlier, then we can assume that the beginning of Tutankhamun's reign (counting 9 years of reign) took place in 1322 BC. In that case, and not by coincidence, the day that a scribe left in Saqqara a graffito that states a year 4 (1319 BC), IV *shemu* 2 of Tutankhamun<sup>144</sup>, is also a LD 4 of a XII LM. Therefore, it would also fall during the celebration of the lunar festivities of Ptah<sup>145</sup>.

To Akhenaten is attributed another graffito in the step pyramid of Saqqara<sup>146</sup>, dated in "year 14, II *peret* 2 (?)". If between the year 14 of Akhenaten and the beginning of the reign of Tutankhamen (1322 BC) we assume a difference of 7 years, then II *peret* 2 would coincide with a LD 23. But if this difference was of 6 years (that is, if the year 14 of Akhenaten corresponds to the year 1328 BC), then we meet again with the suspicious coincidence of finding another graffito in Saqqara made in a LD 5 or 4.

Assuming that, in terms of absolute chronology, the year 14 of Akhenaten fell in 1328 BC, the date "year 14, II *peret* 2 (?) "would once again coincide with a LD 4/5 of a VI LM. Therefore, the year 1 of Akhenaten would rise up to 1341 BC<sup>147</sup>.

If we have situated the beginning of the rule of Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten in 1341 BC, considering the length of Amenhotep III rule up to 38 years, we should contemplate that the rule of the latter should have started in 1379 BC, without considering coregency. Fortunately, there is a graffito from the time of Amenhotep III, found in the funerary complex of Netjerkhet in Saqqara, which helps in conveying the chronology of the moment. The graffito is dated in the "year 10, III

139. Hornung (Leiden, 2006), p. 211.

140. J.C. Jéquier, *Deux pyramides du Moyen Empire*, (Cairo, 1933), pp. 14-15.

141. The distance between Ramesses II year 52, II *peret* 27 (LD 1) and year 34, IV *shemu* 24, is 6,758 days. Taking into account that the average lunar month is 29.53 days, the previous figure is equivalent to 288 LM plus 25.159 days, from which we deduce that year 34, IV *shemu* 24 corresponds to an LD 4.

142. C.M. Firth and J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara: The Step Pyramid*, I, (Cairo, 1935), p. 82-83; A.J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt. Scope and Roles of Informal Writing (c. 3100-332 BC)*, (Leiden, 2001), p. 99.

143. The distance between Ramesses II year 52, II *peret* 27 (LD 1) and year 47, II *peret* 25, is 1797 days, that is, 60 average lunar months and 25,1999 days. From this we deduce that the year 47, II *peret* 25, corresponds to an LD 4.

144. Firth and Quibell (Cairo, 1935), p. 78.

145. Note that if that year 4 of Tutankhamun's reign did not correspond to the year 1319 BC, then IV *shemu* 2 would not equal LD 4. Thus, for example, if year 4 of Tutankhamun was equivalent to the year 1320 BC, IV *shemu* 2 it would coincide with an LD 23, while if it were equivalent to 1318 BC it would coincide with an LD 14. Therefore, this coincidence in the year 1319 with an LD 4 should be seen as a significant result. In order to place the year 4 of Tutankhamun in 1319 BC (respecting the year 1 of Ramesses II in 1279 BC and, therefore, assuming a difference of 39 years between them) we must add 3 years to the sum of 36 years that we obtain if we assume a reign of 9 years for Tutankhamun and consider the highest dates of reign of the following pharaohs, that is, 4 years for Ay, 14 years for Horemheb, 2 years for Ramesses I, and the conflicting 11 years of Seti I. This can be assumed, because not necessarily the highest dates of reign documented indicate the true length of the reign of each monarch.

146. Peden (Leiden, 2001), p. 63 n. 21.

147. So, verifying the absolute date of the solar alignment of the Small Aten Temple that makes the year 1337 BC coincide with the year 5 of Akhenaten.

*shemu* 13”<sup>148</sup>. This date is of great importance. We shall keep in mind that 309 lunar months equal to 25 years in the Egyptian civil calendar<sup>149</sup>; thus these dates helps to specify the chronology once we have a more or less concrete chronological frame to fit them in. Besides, it can be observed that many of those studied graffiti in the Saqqara area coincide with a specific lunar date, predominantly LD 4.

The “year 10, III *shemu* 13” of Amenhotep III falls precisely, in 1370 BC (so, in the tenth year of his reign starting in the year 1379 BC, as previously stated), in a LD 4 (bearing in mind that the year 14 of Akhenaten is equivalent to 1328 BC, and the 38 years of rule of Amenhotep III would end in 1342 BC). The evident consequence of this would be to discard the alleged long coregency, as seen in table 3.

TABLE 3: Years of reign and dates related to lunar days and absolute chronology

Reign year	King	Date	Lunar Day	Absolute year
Year 52	Ramesses II	II <i>peret</i> 27	LD 1	1228 BC
Year 47	Ramesses II	II <i>peret</i> 25	LD 4	1233 BC
Year 34	Ramesses II	IV <i>shemu</i> 24	LD 4	1246 BC
Year 1	Ramesses II	III <i>shemu</i> 27	LD 10	1279 BC
Ramesses II reign: 1279 – 1213 BC				
Year 1	Ay	Accession of Ay in year 9 of Mursil II (year 10 of Mursil II = 1312 BC)		1313 BC
Ay reign: 1313 -1310 BC				
Year 4	Tutankhamen	IV <i>shemu</i> 2	LD 4	1319 BC
Tutankhamen reign: 1322 – 1314 BC				
Year 17	Akhenaten			1325 BC
Year 14	Akhenaten	II <i>peret</i> 2	LD 5/4	1328 BC
Year 1	Akhenaten			1341 BC
<b>Akhenaten: 1341-1325 BC</b>				
Year 38	Amenhotep III			1342 BC
Year 10	Amenhotep III	III <i>shemu</i> 13	LD 4	1370 BC
Year 1	Amenhotep III			1379 BC
<b>Amenhotep III: 1379 – 1342 BC</b>				

If we accept, as Krauss has proposed, that it is not by chance that a good part of the New Kingdom graffiti found in the area of Saqqara coincide with a LD 4 (recognizing on this day a lunar holiday associated with Ptah that would have allowed the visit of scribes in this place), we find here a good method to solve the question of the coregency. Recall that if the year 38 of Amenhotep III ends in 1342 BC and the first of Amenhotep IV began in 1341 BC, the graffiti of year 10 of Amenhotep III (III *shemu* 13) coincides with a LD 4. Consider, for a moment, the possibility of a short coregency (see Table 4), accepting 1341 BC as the first year of Amenhotep

148. Peden (Leiden, 2001), p. 63 n. 21.

149. J. Lull, *La astronomía en el antiguo Egipto*, (Valencia, 2006), pp. 92-94.

IV. If the year 36 of Amenhotep III coincides with the first year of Amenhotep IV, then the graffiti of his year 10 took place in a LD 2. If it was the year 37, then the graffiti is of a LD 12, and if we assume that the last year of reign of Amenhotep III is equivalent to the first of Amenhotep IV, then the graffiti would have been inscribed in a LD 23. Is it casual, then, that if 1342 BC corresponds to year 38 of Amenhotep III his graffiti of year 10 coincides with a LD 4?

TABLE 4: Relationship between the LD of year 10, III *shemu* 13 of Amenhotep III in the case of a short coregency in which the year 1 of Amenhotep IV is equal to 1341 BC

Amenhotep IV	Amenhotep III	Year 10, III <i>shemu</i> 13	LD
Year 1 - 1341 BC	Year 36	1367 BC	2
Year 1 - 1341 BC	Year 37	1368 BC	12
Year 1 - 1341 BC	Year 38	1369 BC	23
1342 BC	Year 38	1370 BC	4

On the other hand, we should consider the year 1479 BC (as the year 1 of Thutmose III)<sup>150</sup> as a reference for another approach to the absolute chronology. In that case, the relative chronology between that year and 1279 BC (as the year 1 of Ramesses II) should fit reasonably well. Also, as will be discussed later, it seems very complex to accept a long coregency of 9 to 12 years.

For Thutmose III, we count with a more secured chronology provided by different lunar dates (the year 23, I *shemu* 21 *psdntjw*<sup>151</sup>, year 24, II *peret* 30 *psdntjw*<sup>152</sup>), and the indication delivered by the biography of Amenemheb<sup>153</sup> that indicates the year 54 as the last ruling year of Thutmose III. So, if we situate the end of the reign of Thutmose III in 1426 BC, we should count 47 years until the beginning of the rule of Amenhotep III in 1379 BC. In those 47 years, we have to position the reigns of Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV.

As for Amenhotep II, we know as his latest date the year 26<sup>154</sup>, according to a hieratic inscription on a jar found in his funerary temple. For Thutmose IV, however, his latest ruling year attested is the year 8<sup>155</sup>, in this case according to an inscription found at Knosso. This implies a lacuna of 12/13 years that should be completed by attributing more ruling years to those kings. However, if we were to suppose a long coregency<sup>156</sup>, the lacuna would significantly increase up to

150. R. Krauss, "Egyptian Chronology: Ramesses II through Shoshenq III, including an analysis of the lunar dates Thutmoses III", *ÄuL* 24 (2015), pp. 335-382. I would like to express my gratitude to the author for allowing me to comment on his article months before its publication.

151. *Urk* IV: 657: 2

152. *Urk* IV: 836: 2.

153. *Urk* IV: 895: 16.

154. *Urk* IV: 1365, n° 404 B: W.M.F. Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes 1896*, (London, 1897), pl. V; the inscription is anonymous, but considering the place where it was found it is usually related to him instead of Thutmose III.

155. *Urk* IV 1545: 6; J. de Morgan, *Catalogue des Monuments et Inscriptions de l'Égypte Antique*, I, (Wien, 1894), p.66; and a year 7 found both in Knosso (*Urk* IV 1555-1556) and in Serabit el-Khadim (*Urk* IV: 1564, n° 504 B).

156. Thus, inevitably anchoring the dates of Akhenaten in relation to the year 1279 BC as year 1 of Ramesses II.

22/25 years (considering year 1 of Akhenaten in 1341 BC), thus creating a more severe problem in the nature complex chronology of the period<sup>157</sup>.

### 3. Conclusions

With a relative chronology, a short coregency, inferior to two years in every case or even a whole year, it is more difficult to discuss and at the same time more difficult to discard. The date of the letter EA 27 (“year 2, I *peret* [...]”) doesn’t overturn this possibility. But if we accept, considering the combination of chronological and astronomical data, on the one hand, that the year 1341 BC corresponds to the first year of Akhenaten’s reign and, on the other, that a LD 4 is significant in Saqqara’s graffiti, then the fact that the graffiti of the tenth year of reign of Amenhotep III (1370 BC, III *shemu* 13) coincides with a LD 4 would discard any type of coregency.

As we have been discussing in this paper, the dated documents of the last decade of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten, or those that could be associated by its characteristics to a concrete relative chronology of either reign, are understood better when they are not overlapped. On that note, the tomb of Kheruef is paradigmatic. The referred letter EA 27, despite the gap it has, it seems to show almost certainly a year 2 written on the side of the letter, discarding a long coregency.

As we have indicated, there isn’t a direct relation between the celebration of Amenhotep III *sed* festivals and the moment when Amenhotep IV ascended upon the throne of Egypt. Furthermore, the hieratic inscription bearing the year 30 of Amenhotep III found by Petrie in Meidum doesn’t indicate the beginning of the coregency, rather the moment when the prince Amenhotep had been appointed as heir after the death of the prince Thutmose. So as we have seen in the first part of this article, there are numerous documents that allow us to lean towards a non-coregency.

Last but not least, the absolute chronology provided by a series of reinterpretations of Egyptian-Hittite sources in relation to astronomical elements, along with bright new ones as a result of the acknowledgement of lunar festivities related to the moment when a certain number of graffiti were written in Saqqara, turned out to be more precise in a chronology where, with the current knowledge, doesn’t seem to support a coregency between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten. Any chronological proposal shall consider a perfect combination of every astronomical date known, including the chronological consequences of the new lunar dates studied by Krauss, when they are applied to the specific chronology of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten.

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157. This lacuna could be completed if we accepted to increase the duration of the reign of Thutmose IV up to 33 years, as proposed by Wentz and Van Siclen, thus accepting the celebration of two *sed* festivals of this king. We shall keep in mind, however, that these authors, on one hand, initially did not accept the long coregency and, on the other, marked the beginning of the reign of Thutmose III in 1504 BC. See: E. Wentz and C. Van Siclen III, “A Chronology of the New Kingdom”, in: J. Johnson, E.F. Wentz (eds.) *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, SAOC 39, (Chicago, 1976), p. 218; against, see: B. M. Bryan, *The Reign of Thutmose IV*, (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 20-23.

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## 5. Figures



Figure 01: Inscription found in Malqata with the text “year 38, the fifth day upon the year (*epagomenae*), birth of Osiris” (from [http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/eg/original/17.10.2\\_EGDP011882.jpg](http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/eg/original/17.10.2_EGDP011882.jpg) Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of New York).

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Figure 02: Inscription of the “year 30” of Amenhotep III, where it speaks about the male offspring that seats upon the throne of his father (from W.M.F. Petrie, *Medum*, London, 1892, pl. XXXVI n° XVIII).

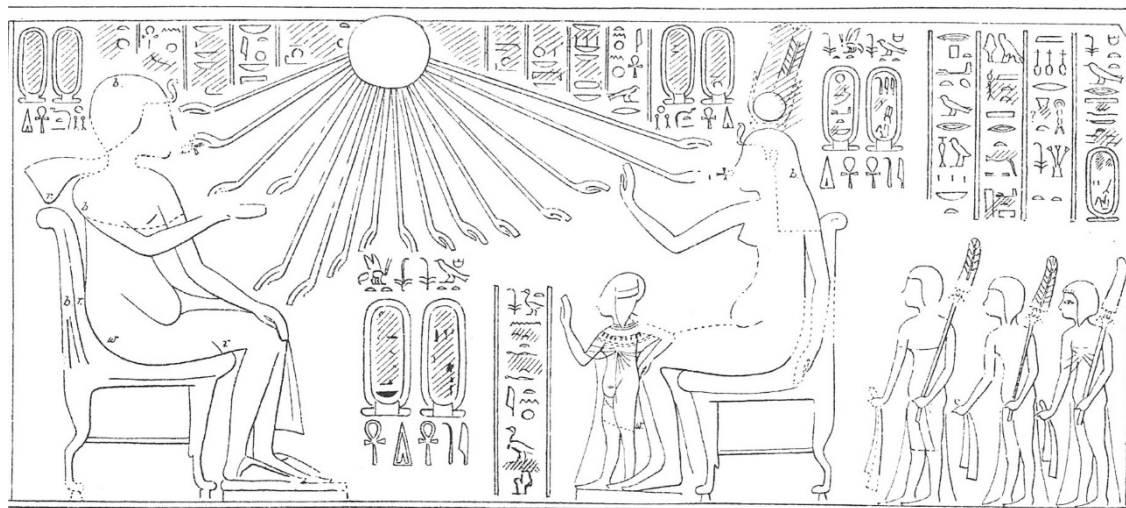


Figure 03: Lintel from the tomb of Huya at Amarna, with Nebmaatira next to Tiye and Baketaten (from N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of el Amarna. Part III, The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes*, ASE 15, London, 1905. pl. VIII).

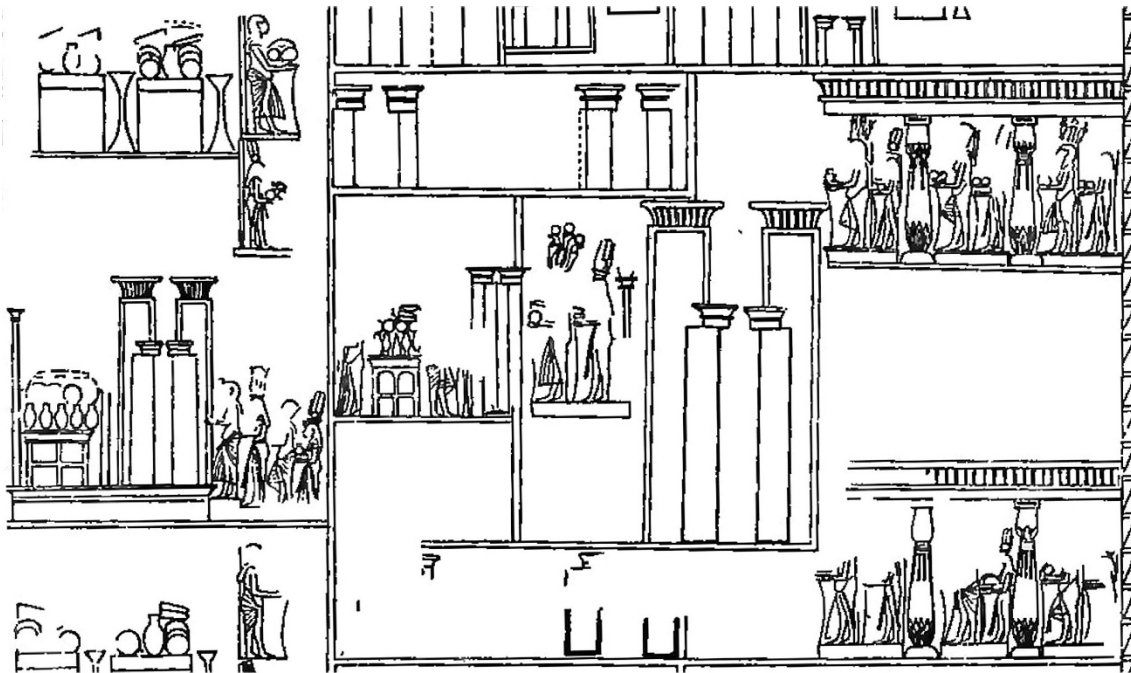


Figure 04: Detail of the shut-Ra of Tiye, as represented in the tomb of Huya (from de N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of el Amarna. Part III, The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes*, ASE 15, London, 1905. pl. XI).

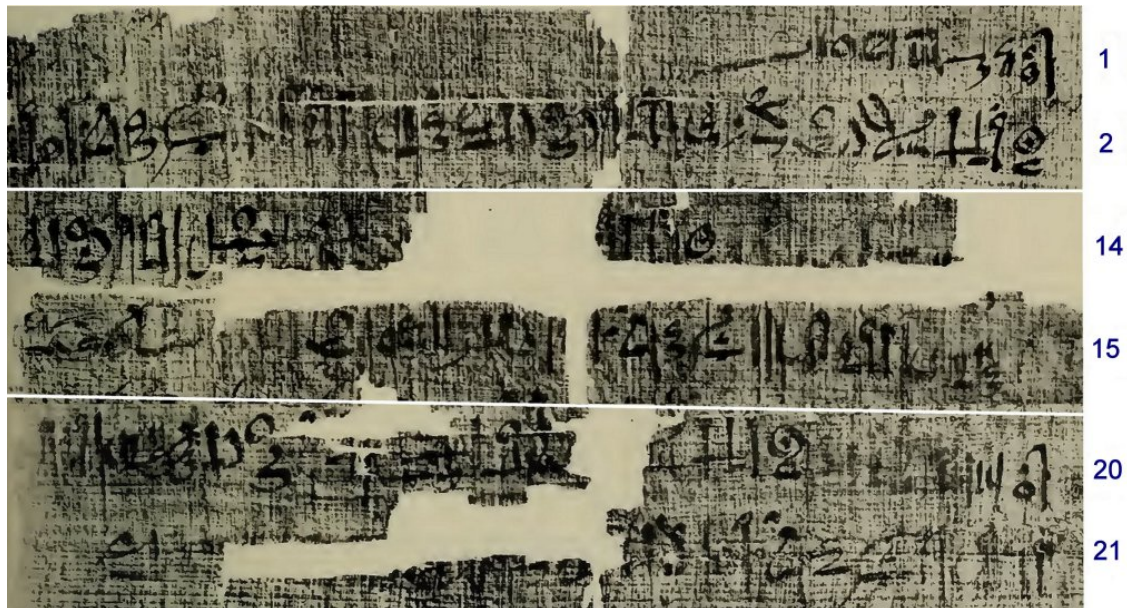


Figure 05: The lines 1-2, 14-15 and 20-21 of the papyrus Berlin 9784, with the dates “Year 27, III *shemu* 20”, of Amenhotep III, and “Year 2, [...] *peret* 27” and “Year 3, birth of Isis” of Amenhotep IV (from A.H. Gardiner, *ZÄS* 43, 1906, pl. 1-2).



Figure 06: Scarabs from the British Museum: EA 37778, 29236 and 66781 (Pictures taken by Daniel González León, Courtesy Trustees of The British Museum).



Figure 07: Graffito of Amenhotep IV in the wadi Abu Kua, next to the wadi Hammamat (picture courtesy of Karin Harzbecher).

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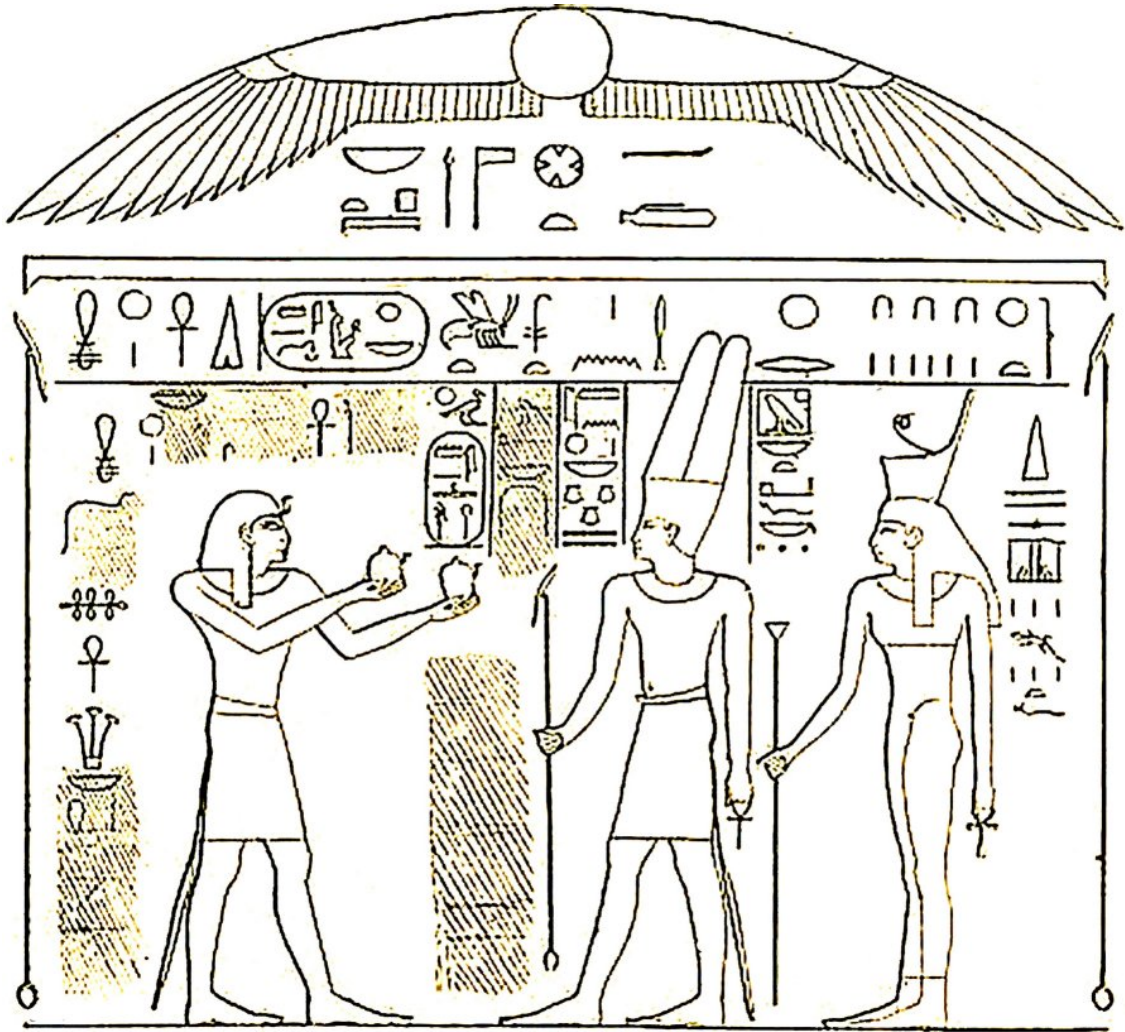


Figure 08. Stela of the year 36 of Amenhotep III found at Serabit el-Khadim (from *Lepsius Denkmaler*, AIII B1. 71d).