

Amarna Royal Clothing: Tradition andAdaption

Hussein Bassir¹ and Tamer Fahim²

Introduction

The Amarna Age is a period of ancient Egyptian history distinguished by changes of many traditions. Clothing is a strong cultural marker since it reflects very personal habits, as well as family, religious, or ethnic traditions, and often designates certain stages within life. Clothing was among the tools which Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton and his ruling family members adopted to promote the Atenism. The king was depicted wearing traditional royal clothing and added new fashionable features to distinguish himself, Nefertiti, and the princesses according to his revolutionary concepts.³ For instance, he changed the design of the royal kilt, added decorative elements to his clothing, and utilized the pleated sunrays as the most common feature in his representations. As the potential partner and supporter of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton, Nefertiti assimilated the king's royal clothing, while the princesses were portrayed wearing the same clothing of their mother. Although Amarna royal clothing was unique in the artistic representations, it did not depart totally from standard Egyptian iconography.

¹University of Arizona. Email: hussein@email.arizona.edu

²Fayoum University. Email: tme00@fayoum.edu.eg

³D. B. Redford, *Akhenaten. The Heretic King*, 1984, 63-64.