

temporary and goes back to the man himself. His teaching is revealed to us by him alone, with no intermediaries, and it is subject to falsification only by modern interpretations" (p. 17).

In a similar vein, Hornung writes, "For the first time in history, we have a close-up view of how a deity originated. It is as though the Aten suddenly emerged from the traditional form of the sun god and then quickly shed the last vestiges of his origin" (p. 34). For Hornung, Aten is not the solar disk, "but rather the *light* that is in the sun and which, radiating from it, calls the world to life and keeps it alive" (p. 54; and note the title of the book).

As the above two paragraphs illustrate, Hornung is especially effective in situating Akhenaten and the new religion within the study of the history of religions, often with simply a quick aside that the educated reader will comprehend. As additional examples: the founding of a new capital, Akhenaten, "was above all a religiously motivated *hegira* on the part of the religious reformer, one that did not take him to any of the old centers, but to this remote locale" (p. 51); and "Akhenaten left no holy scripture, so what he founded does not belong to the religions of the book. And a 'Word of God' is altogether inconceivable in this new religion, for the newly promulgated god remained silent. The Aten himself did not speak; rather, his preacher Akhenaten spoke about him" (p. 52).

On the question of monotheism, Hornung notes that, while Karnak was converted to the worship of Aten, and the worship of Amun in general was suppressed, other temples devoted to other gods persisted in their traditional manner. Only fifteen miles from Akhetaten, for example, Khnum, Thoth, and Osiris were worshipped at Neferusi. Furthermore, the divine triad persists, albeit with the royal couple of Akhenaten and Nefertiti as members, accompanying Aten (thereby replacing the traditional divine triads associated with Thebes, Memphis, etc.).

In light of this evidence, Hornung concludes: "Like so many concepts, monotheism cannot be defined with absolute strictness or effectuated in reality. But with its relentless rigor, this religion of light was the simplest and clearest religion that had ever been devised!" (p. 94). One can agree with the second sentence, certainly a truism for the 14th century B.C.E., but one must issue a strong demurrer vis-à-vis the first sentence, especially when Hornung adds that "Akhenaten's thinking is more radical than that of Deutero-Isaiah ('Besides me there is no god,' Isaiah 44:6) or that of Islam. . . . Not until Christianity was there a renewed attempt to eliminate the plethora of deities in favor of the One!" (ibid). Clearly, mono-

theism can be defined with "absolute strictness," even in antiquity, and indeed the examples of Second Isaiah and Islam give clear voice in that direction. Moreover, since Second Isaiah and Second Temple Judaism in general precede Christianity by half a millennium, the reference to the later religion is quite bewildering.

On the topic of Judaism, I agree fully with Hornung's statement, "The temporal interval is too great to infer a direct influence from the Amarna Period on the monotheism of the Hebrew Bible. But undercurrents that remain hidden to us might certainly have exercised an influence; perhaps the author of Psalm 104 indeed drew upon the Great Hymn to the Aten" (p. 122).

Notwithstanding the slender nature of this volume, every issue relevant to Akhenaten is touched upon in some fashion. There is an especially excellent treatment of Amarna art. Hornung's clear and concise style is exemplified by the following: "Everything that had been static, fixed in place for eternity, is now set in motion" (p. 44). Similarly, the coregency and succession issues are treated in fine manner. Hornung concludes that there is no certain evidence pointing to coregencies, neither with his predecessor Amenhotep III nor with his successor Smenkhkare. The physical appearance of Akhenaten also is discussed, though Hornung dismisses the attempts to associate the king's condition with specific ailments (epilepsy, premature old age, Fröhlich's syndrome, etc.).

In sum, Hornung has written a very readable monograph on one of ancient Egypt's most fascinating personalities. Hornung's book may be recommended to anyone, especially to those outside professional Egyptological circles, as a convenient treatment of the subject. In addition, a series of black-and-white photographs and line drawings enhance the discussion. Finally, note that because the work is essentially an essay, it is not encumbered with footnotes; instead, the author has included a very useful annotated bibliography at the end.

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Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations. By RAYMOND COHEN and RAYMOND WESTBROOK (eds.). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xvi + 307.

In the one hundred plus years since their discovery in 1887, the Amarna letters have served as a crucial

resource for scholars of the Semitic languages. As is well known, the numerous departures from the norms of Akkadian grammar, along with the glosses in the native language of the scribes, provide Semitists with an important window to the Canaanite language of the Late Bronze Age. Clearly, this has been the most significant contribution of the Amarna letters to scholarly research.

At the same time, the Amarna letters are an important source for historical research, though clearly they have been underutilized in this regard, especially, I think one may safely say, among Egyptologists. The prime reason for this underutilization has been the relative inaccessibility of the material. First, the letters are written in Akkadian, a language that few Egyptologists know. Secondly, the classic edition of the texts by J. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (Leipzig, 1915) has been sorely out-of-date for several generations. The latter situation is due to two factors: a) our knowledge of Akkadian in general and Amarna Akkadian in particular has advanced by leaps and bounds in the intervening years, and b) new Amarna texts were published in the years since Knudtzon's volume.

The wider study of the Amarna letters received a great boost with William L. Moran's *Les Lettres d'El-Amarna* (Paris, 1987) = *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore, 1992), exemplary works presenting fresh translations of all the texts. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, the editors of the book under review, note this fact and inform the reader that Moran's volume "provided the key stimulus to the present project" (p. 1).

With the Amarna letters now available to a broad audience, the editors conceived of a unique conference, held at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center of the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy, on September 17–19, 1996. In attendance were "eight historians of the ancient Near East, eight scholars from the social sciences specializing in contemporary international relations, and two working diplomats" (p. 2). The primary goal was "to shed new light on the documents themselves and on the system of diplomacy they depict, to reconstruct the international relations of the ancient Near East, and to identify universal features of international politics (ibid.). The result is a most successful volume, unique, I believe, in the annals of ancient Near Eastern scholarship. Readers of this journal will no doubt be attracted to the articles by specialists whose names they recognize (Liverani, Murnane, Na'aman, etc.), but the essays by the other contributors (professors of foreign policy, conflict resolution, security, etc.) are of equal importance for the numerous insights brought to the subject of Amarna diplomacy.

Cohen and Westbrook provide two jointly written essays which serve as bookends for the collection: "Introduction: The Amarna System" and "Conclusion: The Beginnings of International Relations." Between these two articles are sixteen contributions from the academics involved in the conference (the editors inform us that the academics benefited greatly from the presence of the two diplomats at the conference, but that the latter did not contribute articles to the volume), divided into five categories. They are as follows:

I. *The International System*: M. Liverani, "The Great Powers' Club"; Westbrook, "International Law in the Amarna Age"; R. Ragionieri, "The Amarna Age: An International Society in the Making"; S. R. David, "Realism, Constructivism, and the Amarna Letters."

II. *Foreign Policy*: B. M. Bryan, "The Egyptian Perspective on Mittani"; Cohen, "Intelligence in the Amarna Letters."

III. *Imperial Policy*: W. J. Murnane, "Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power"; A. James, "Egypt and Her Vassals: The Geopolitical Dimension"; N. Na'aman, "The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence."

IV. *International Transactions*: C. Zaccagnini, "The Interdependence of the Great Powers"; K. Avruch, "Reciprocity, Equality, and Status-Anxiety in the Amarna Letters"; S. A. Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages"; D. Druckman and S. Güner, "A Social-Psychological Analysis of Amarna Diplomacy."

V. *Diplomacy*: C. Jönsson, "Diplomatic Signaling in the Amarna Letters"; P. Artzi, "The Diplomatic Service in Action: The Mittani File"; G. Berridge, "Amarna Diplomacy: A Full-fledged Diplomatic System?"

The contributors all recognize that international relations existed for at least a thousand years before the Amarna Age, especially in Western Asia, from which we possess two 3rd millennium treaties, one between Ebla and Abar-SAL, and the other between Akkad and Elam. But these are isolated cases, with no long-range (either over time or space) consequences. By contrast, the Amarna period reflects a *full-fledged international system*, with great powers (Egypt, Mittani, Babylonia, Hatti, Assyria), independent states (Arzawa, Alashiya), and vassal states (Amurru, Byblos, Ugarit, etc.) all interacting, covering a vast area and lasting for about two centuries.

The main goal of this volume is to explain how and why this remarkable system was able to sustain itself. As Cohen and Westbrook state in their final essay, "Despite competition for power and prestige, vigilance to potential threats, and the domestic glorification of prowess in battle, the Great Powers mostly succeeded in avoiding war. They negotiated rather than fought, with rare exceptions, and succeeded in

accommodating each other's needs and ambitions while facilitating trade and cultural contact. How did they do it?" (p. 234). The key word that repeats again and again in the form of an answer to this question is diplomacy. The editors' final words summarize the volume: "Without it [diplomacy], there could have been no brotherhood of Great Kings. Despite its shortcomings, exchanges were conducted, disputes contained, dynastic ties promoted, and on the whole, peace preserved. Diplomacy created the conditions for international relations to flourish" (p. 236). The various contributors emphasize the different aspects of diplomacy (Westbrook on law, treaties, etc.; Bryan and Meier on international marriages; Liverani and Artzi on exchanges of gifts; and so on), all of which were necessary for the system to operate smoothly.

The editors are to be congratulated for conceiving of the innovative conference and the ensuing volume. And all the authors deserve our thanks for their input and their stimulating essays. The net result is a pioneering project that should serve as a model for future endeavors of joint cooperation between humanists and social scientists.

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Late Antique Egyptian Funerary Sculpture. Images for This World and the Next. By THELMAS K. THOMAS. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Pp. xxv + 163, figs. 126.

This surprisingly small book with its 83 pages of text is a most significant contribution to one's understanding of certain classifications of relief sculpture which are traditionally classified as examples of "Coptic art" in the discipline's literature. Well written, easy to read, and thoroughly documented and illustrated, Thomas's work begins with a preface on the theme of "Leda Christiana," one of the objectives of which is to trace the development of the historiography of so-called Coptic art in order to expose the unsupportable foundations upon which conclusions about its universal Christian overtones have been erroneously based. Sifting through excavation reports, which were apparently only superficially consulted by earlier commentators, Thomas later demonstrates that although a frieze depicting "naked nymphs cavorting" was indeed discovered in a wall of the Memphite Monastery of Apa Jerimias, it was a re-used worked block "not meant to be seen or remarked upon" by the faithful. Her attention to detail reveals how cavalier some of these earlier presentations of such archaeological evi-

dence was and how unfounded and forced the resulting interpretations of these putatively visible reliefs as examples of early Christian art really are. She further demonstrates how many of those same scholars, in their ardent desire to maintain the purported "Christian" messages of such works of art, manipulated the images in their line drawings to reduce their salacious, visual impact. (It might be productive to consider such manipulations as a whole because they appear in other areas of the discipline as well where they have also contaminated the record [inter alia, Malek, in *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson 2* [1996], pp. 553–59; and Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor* [1993], comments to plate 54.)

Nevertheless, Thomas does not deny that there are Christian overtones in some of the works of art in her corpus. In a tightly argued sequence of chapters, she separates those works created for the elite, wealthy Hellenes which served Christian needs from those which served pagan needs. These conclusions are reached after she has divided these works into categories and attempted to define a diachronic development within each. Her discussions are amplified by appropriate references not only to contemporary epigraphical evidence (the text in the Tomb of Isidora at Hermopolis), but also to citations from ancient authors (Nonnos of Panopolis) and to relevant Christian sources.

A careful reading of her opus reveals that these works of art fall within the ambit of the tenets governing pharaonic art in general. The reliefs were produced for an elite by artisans working within a canonical tradition which deprived them of any independent authority (so, too, the Theban tomb painters, see now, Robins in *JARCE XXXVI* [1999], p. 69). When these works are decidedly Christian, the deceased is often not represented, "Christian works without portraits," is her phrase. Here again, the debt to pharaonic Egypt appears to be great because the presence of the deceased, who very often is not depicted, is nevertheless implicit (see on this subject O'Connor, in *Studies . . . Simpson 2* [1996], pp. 621–33. The cumulative effect of this evidence calls into question the conclusion reached on this matter by Roth, in *JARCE XXXVI* [1999], p. 53.). Furthermore, the boundaries between the living and the dead are extremely fluid within her corpus of examples, a conclusion which is neatly congruent with that arrived at in a recent study of the so-called Faiyum portraits (Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt* [1995], pp. 74–76).

Because the objects in her study are works of art, Thomas attempts to validate their aesthetic appeal by references to their missing polychromy and in so