

eighteenth dynasty, whose royal residence was Thebes, had married several Asiatic wives who introduced foreign customs into the court. When he died his son, a lad of thirteen years, succeeded to the throne. This boy-king was completely under the control of his mother, an Asiatic and a woman of strong imperious will. The occupants of the palace openly revolted against Amen worship and advocated Sun worship. A new city of Tell Amarna was built, to which the court removed and where a temple was erected in the interests of this religion. So eager was the king to establish the new cult that he changed his name to Chu-en-Aten, "the lustre of the solar disk." He destroyed temples and monuments and sacred books to remove, if possible, every vestige of the traditional faith. But his efforts were fruitless, and his brief reign of twelve years was succeeded by a period of anarchy. In course of time the foreign faith was suppressed, the new capital was forsaken, and the Egyptian gods were again worshipped as of old.

In 1887 one of the native women, when searching for antiquities among the ruins at Tell el-Amarna, the modern name of Khuen-Aten, discovered on the site of the royal palace some curiously marked clay tablets which scholars at once recognized as containing a writing in the cuneiform character. Subsequent search yielded a total find of upwards of 300 tablets, either whole or fragmentary. The Royal Museum at Berlin, the British Museum, and the Museum at Bulak in Egypt now contain these precious documents. Orientalists have examined them and found that the language as well as the script is generally Babylonian. These tablets were written during the reign of Amenophis, the father and the son, and consequently date so far back as the fifteenth century before Christ. They were sent from Babylonia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. They contain messages bearing upon social and political questions which are discussed with true oriental diplomacy. They also contain reports from Egyptian officials who had charge of distant subject states.

Eleven tablets exhibit a correspondence carried on between two kings of Babylonia and two of Egypt. The main subject discussed is intermarriages between the two courts. The elder Amenophis had already married the sister of the contemporaneous