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## Akhet-Aten, The City of Akhen-Aten

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### Abstract

Akhet-Aten took four years under construction before Amen-Hotep IV announcement that the deity is "Aten". That was manifested in the orientation of his temple to receive the sun rise on its longitudinal central part, on January the 2nd, in the fifth year of his reign. In that moment, Amen-Hotep IV changed his name to Akhen-Aten. Almost the same concept – to have the sunrays enter the interior- was applied to the city house design, to let the sun's rays illuminate the central hall's alter all the day; and that required to have the square house design tilted to the north and, to have the central hall's roof higher .

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### 1. Introduction

Moving the capital city of Egypt from "Thebes" to a new site by order of the King "Amen-Hotep IV" in the fourteenth century B.C. was a big risk. After four years of reigning from Thebes, the king moved to the new site leaving behind all the Amen's religion power to be secretly built up, waiting the right moment to regain position. The move time coincided with the time of shifting the theological centre of the country from "Amen" to "Aten", and consequently changing the Royal name of the king to "Akhen-Aten" (The glory of the Sun's Disk). Though the city lasted in his reign for sixteen years or so, it was soon abandoned after his disappearance, and Amen powerfully prevailed anew. Thanks God, the city was well preserved for the last 3370 years, under the sandy winds until it was uncovered in our times to be thoroughly studied.

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The appointed place of the new city was chosen east of the Nile (fig 1), and was planned to have three streets running from south to north, parallel to the adjacent Nile stream.

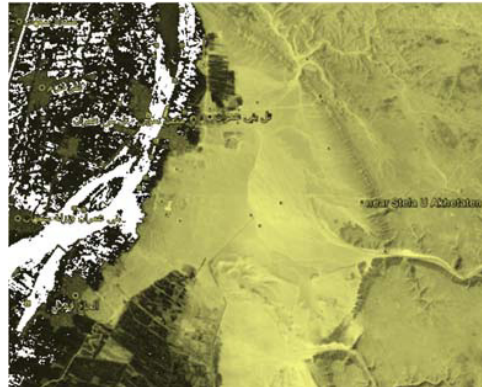


fig 1 The site of Akhet-Aten

The closest to the Nile street was kept to the royal family transport- it is called now "Sikket al-Sultan", the two others were left for people movements, of which the eastern one was called - after the German expedition- "The Priests way". All of the built up area of the city extended north from the central area, where were the main residential complex of the King "The Northern Suburb" mentioned by Aidan[1] "incorporated the royal family's regular residence". It also extended south, only making one and half kilometer width for the built up area of the city. Actually, the site took the shape of half a circle, 9 km. in diameter with continuous triple streets running along the Nile side, and the continuous curve of hills to the east. Within the hills there was a valley through which the flooded water of the olden times flushed from the eastern desert, then to spread in a delta shape over that site of the city. So the site was almost a horizontal flat bed, with an east-west distance 4400 meters from "sikket al Sultan" to the opening of the valley. Here is the point of the importance of this valley. From this opening of the valley, sun light starts the day to shine on the place (fig 2).

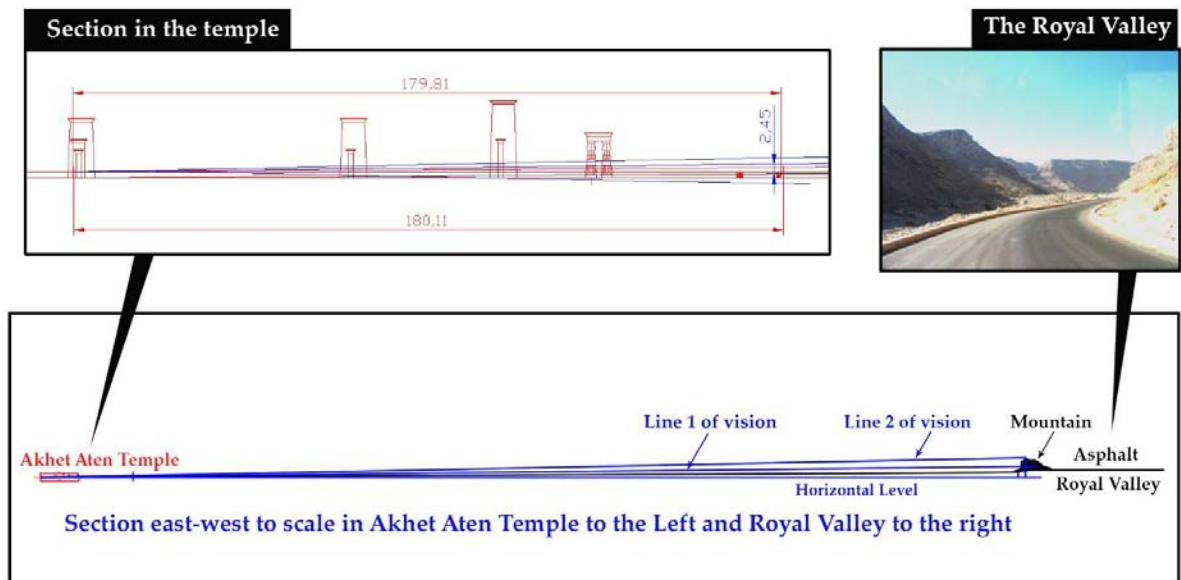


fig 2 A cross section in the city passing by the small temple, and ends at the royal valley.

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