

AY AND THE DAHAMUNZU AFFAIR

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful wife, Erika, and to our children: Jenía, Marcus, Isaiah, Anika, Mariska, Amaya, Nicolette, and Baby (on the way). Their patience and support made this work possible.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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The Daḥamunzu Affair is an event in Egyptian and Hittite history that took place during or after the Amarna era. The name “Daḥamunzu,” which appears in a Hittite text known as *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, refers to an unnamed Egyptian queen whose husband, Nibḥururiya, recently died. She wrote letters to Hittite king Šuppiluliuma, asking him to send one of his sons to Egypt to become her husband and rule as pharaoh. Although the majority of scholars identify Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya as Akhenaten and Nefertiti or Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun, the pharaoh Ay is worthy of

consideration as a possible candidate for Nibḥururiya. In addition to *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, other primary sources for this event include the Amarna Letters, Muršili's "Plague Prayers," the Šattiwaza Treaty, and other Hittite and Egyptian records. An analysis and comparison of the various texts associated, or potentially associated, with the Daḥamunzu Affair indicates that Daḥamunzu was Tutankhamun's wife, Ankhesenamun. Furthermore, Nibḥururiya was either Tutankhamun or Ay. Because Ay married or co-ruled with Ankhesenamun after Tutankhamun's death, he provided immediate succession and stability. After his death, however, Ankhesenamun was the last remaining member of the dynasty and in a vulnerable position. Her refusal to marry Horemheb may have led her to write the Daḥamunzu letters to make peace with the Hittites and perpetuate the dynasty. The chronology of events in Egypt, Ḫattuša, and Syria suggest that Ay is at least as good a candidate for Nibḥururiya as Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, or Tutankhamun.

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I. INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Daḥamunzu Affair is an event that took place at the end of the Amarna period of Egyptian history. It is well-known to Egyptologists and Hittitologists, but there are many details of the event that are unclear and have been debated by scholars for over a century. The foremost uncertainties regarding this event are the identities of Daḥamunzu, the Egyptian queen named in the Hittite sources, and Nibḥururiya, her deceased husband. Although the majority of scholars who have written on this subject identify Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya as Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun, the pharaoh Ay is worthy of consideration as a possible candidate for Nibḥururiya.

THE DAḤAMUNZU AFFAIR

The Daḥamunzu Affair involves correspondence between an unknown Egyptian queen, named Daḥamunzu in the Hittite sources, and Hittite ruler Šuppiluliuma I, who reigned during the fourteenth century BC.¹ According to the Hittite sources, Daḥamunzu's husband, a pharaoh identified as Nibḥururiya in the Hittite text, had died and had no sons to inherit the throne. Daḥamunzu noted that she did not want to marry a commoner, so she hoped that Šuppiluliuma would send one of his many sons to Egypt to

¹ The dating of Šuppiluliuma's reign is a long-standing point of historiographical debate. Historians have developed numerous chronological frameworks, most of which are relative chronologies rather than absolute chronologies. The length of his reign is another point of historiographical contention, with most scholars attributing between twenty and forty years to his reign. See two examples of the varying interpretations of Hittite chronology in K. A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs: A Study in Relative Chronology* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1962), 23, and Trevor R. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154.

marry her and become pharaoh. Such a request turned typical diplomatic marriage on its ear, and Šuppiluliuma was understandably skeptical. After some additional correspondence and some investigation, Šuppiluliuma eventually sent one of his sons, most likely Zannanza, to Egypt. Zannanza died en route, perhaps murdered, sparking outrage and military retaliation from Šuppiluliuma against Egyptian-controlled territory in Syria. Šuppiluliuma's military reprisals and the Egyptians he captured during his campaigns exposed the Hittite Empire to a plague that eventually took the lives of Šuppiluliuma and his successor. Relations between the Hittites and Egyptians remained hostile for decades to follow, climaxing in Ramses II's famous Battle of Kadesh.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Daḥamunzu Affair occurred in the shadow of Akhenaten's failed attempt to transform Egypt's religion and culture by abandoning the worship of Egypt's traditional gods, most notably Amun, in favor of the sun-disc Aten. He built a new capital called Akhetaten, now known as Tell el-Amarna, to facilitate the worship of the Aten for him, his family, and his court. This caused considerable problems for the priests of the temples of Amun, who lost state-sponsored financial support, not to mention the banishment of their religious views. Akhenaten's religious shift may have disrupted the Egyptian economy, which was heavily intertwined with the religious establishment.² Excavations at Amarna show evidence of resistance to Atenism and the failure to fully repress the old religion of Amunism. Amunism made a resurgence at Amarna upon the accession of

² Bob Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen: A True Story*, rev. ed. (New York: Berkley Books, 2005), 50.

Tutankhamun, and Atenism quickly fell out of favor.³ Eventually, the worship of Aten was abandoned altogether, as was the city of Akhetaten.

Amid the resulting religious, cultural, and economic turmoil in Egypt, various territorial possessions in Syria began to slip out of Egypt's control. This gave rise to a tug-of-war between various powers, most notably the Hittites, the Mitanni, the Amorites of Amurru, and the Babylonians, which upset the traditionally Egyptian-dominated balance of power in the region. The Hittites expanded their sphere of influence under Šuppiluliuma I, aided by Egypt's preoccupation with domestic affairs in the wake of the collapse of Akhenaten's failed religious and cultural revolution at Amarna. The growth of Šuppiluliuma's Hittite empire at Egypt's expense made Daḥamunzu's diplomatic and military position precarious.

Although pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty often reached the throne by marrying a royal female, Egypt's great power typically rested with ruling males.⁴ Daḥamunzu, while no doubt a powerful woman, understandably felt vulnerable without a male beside her on the throne. After all, the Great Kings of the powerful kingdoms of the Near East formed a diplomatic "brotherhood" that involved gift-giving and reciprocal favors.⁵ This system, in large part, formed the basis of diplomatic relations in the Near East. The death of Nibḥururiya left Daḥamunzu alone in this traditionally male-dominated brotherhood system. In addition to Daḥamunzu's foreign policy predicament,

³ W. M. Flinders Petrie et al., *Tell El Amarna* (Warminster, England: Methuen, 1894; repr., London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 29.

⁴ Hatshepsut and, perhaps, Nefertiti are notable exceptions.

⁵ For a thorough explanation of the brotherhood of Near Eastern kings during this period, see Amanda H. Podany, *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), as well as Trevor R. Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

the loss of her husband placed her in the uncomfortable position of enduring the jockeying among relatives and suitors at court for her hand. Daḥamunzu's hand in marriage meant accession to the throne as Egypt's next pharaoh, so she likely had no shortage of ambitious men waiting in the wings.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The traditional candidates for Daḥamunzu, based on published scholarship since the story was first translated nearly a century ago, have been Ankhesenamun, Nefertiti, Meritaten, and Kiya. The traditional candidates for Nibḥururiya have been Tutankhamun, Akhenaten, and Smenkhkare. However, scholars have generally overlooked or dismissed the possibility that Ay, Tutankhamun's vizier and eventual successor, could have been Nibḥururiya. The purpose of this project is to investigate the possibility that Ay was Nibḥururiya, with Ankhesenamun as Daḥamunzu. Although the preponderance of the available evidence supports the majority view among scholars that either Akhenaten or Tutankhamun was Nibḥururiya, various pieces of textual, archaeological, and circumstantial evidence from the period allow for the possibility that Ay was Nibḥururiya, thus making him worthy of further consideration.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun became the favorite candidates for Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya as soon as scholars first translated the Hittite texts at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1915, Eduard Meyer and Friedrich Hrosný published “Die Entzifferung der hethitischen Sprache” and “Die Lösung des hethitischen Problems,” respectively, in which they equated Tutankhamun with Nibḥururiya.⁶ Archibald H. Sayce, an early Hittitologist, was the first to equate Ankhesenamun with Daḥamunzu in his 1922 article, “Texts from the Hittite Capital Relating to Egypt.”⁷ Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun remained the primary candidates for Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya for several decades. Howard Carter,⁸ Josef Sturm,⁹ Elmar Edel,¹⁰ and other early Egyptologists and Hittitologists looked almost exclusively to Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun as Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya. One notable exception was Keith Seele, who entertained the possibility that Ay could have been Nibḥururiya in his 1955 article, “King Ay and the Close of the Amarna Age.” While generally agreeing with the majority of Egyptologists and Hittitologists that Tutankhamun was most likely Nibḥururiya, Seele

⁶ Eduard Meyer, “Die Entzifferung der hethitischen Sprache,” *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 56 (December 1915): 15, http://idb.uni-tuebingen.de/diglit/MDOG_1915_056; Friedrich Hrosný, “Die Lösung des hethitischen Problems,” *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 56 (December 1915): 36, http://idb.uni-tuebingen.de/diglit/MDOG_1915_056.

⁷ Archibald H. Sayce, “Texts from the Hittite Capital Relating to Egypt.” *Ancient Egypt* (Part 3, 1922): 67, <https://books.google.com/books?id=u6EYAQAAMAAJ>.

⁸ Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tutankhamun: Discovered by the Late Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter*, vol. 1, *Search, Discovery and Clearance of the Antechamber* (London: Cassell, 1923; repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 33.

⁹ Josef Sturm, “Wer ist Pipl: Jarurias?” *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* 2, no. 13 (1933): 161-176.

¹⁰ Elmar Edel, “Neue Keilschriftliche Umschreibungen ägyptischer Namen aus den Boğazköytexten,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 1948): 11-24, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/542570>.

notes that the Daḥamunzu letter could have been written after the death of Ay, who may have ruled as co-regent with Ankheseenamun after Tutankhamun's death.¹¹

Seele's suggestion that Ay could have been Nibḥururiya was exceptional, as most scholars in the early- and mid-twentieth century continued to assign the identities of Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya to Ankheseenamun and Tutankhamun. Kenneth Kitchen wrote *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs: A Study in Relative Chronology* in 1962, which is one of the most important analyses of the Amarna and post-Amarna periods. While Kitchen identifies Nibḥururiya with Tutankhamun, his chronology puts Šuppiluliuma's death at five years after the death of Tutankhamun.¹² As Ay reigned for about four years, his death had to have taken place during the last year or two of Šuppiluliuma's reign. Chronologies proposed by other scholars, however, place key events pertaining to the timing of the Daḥamunzu Affair before the death of Tutankhamun, aligning more with Akhenaten's death. Alan Schulman, for example, wrote "Ankheseenamūn, Nofretity, and the Amka Affair" in 1978, building a case for either Ankheseenamun or Nefertiti based on evidence found in the Amarna Letters, particularly EA 170.¹³ Schulman notes that his interpretation of EA 170 and other Amarna Letters is "more attractive" than other interpretations because it does not require textual emendation.¹⁴ Furthermore, Schulman notes that his interpretation of the evidence eliminates Ay as a possible candidate for Nibḥururiya.¹⁵

¹¹ Keith C. Seele, "King Ay and the Close of the Amarna Age," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 3 (July 1955): 180 n. 76, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/542813>.

¹² Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 22.

¹³ Alan R. Schulman, "Ankheseenamūn, Nofretity, and the Amka Affair," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 15 (1978): 43-48, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40000129>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Historians throughout the 1970s and 1980s generally lined up behind either Ankhnesenamun and Tutankhamun or Nefertiti and Akhenaten as Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya. Perhaps the most influential text written during those decades was William Murnane's 1985 analysis, *The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak*.¹⁶ Murnane brought together the Amarna Letters, the Hittite texts, and archaeological evidence to develop the most thorough and complete chronology of the Daḥamunzu event to date. Murnane attributes the KUB 19.20 text "most probably" to Ay, essentially eliminating him as a possible Nibḥururiya in favor of Tutankhamun.¹⁷ Murnane discusses the various sources at length, especially EA 170 and *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, to all but eliminate the possibility that Akhenaten could have been Nibḥururiya.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Murnane admits that the sources do not allow us to know the chronology with "absolute certainty."¹⁹

Despite the detailed arguments for Ankhnesenamun as Daḥamunzu presented by Kitchen and Murnane, Nefertiti and other members of the Amarna family emerged as popular candidates for Daḥamunzu from the 1980s onward. Gernot Wilhelm and J. Boese attempted to construct an absolute chronology of Hittite history in their 1986 article, "Absolute Chronologie und die hethitische Geschichte des 15. und 14. Jahrhunderts v. Chr." According to their chronological interpretation, Meritaten could have been

¹⁶ William J. Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 42 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 24-51.

¹⁷ Ibid., 33 n. 40.

¹⁸ Ibid., 219.

¹⁹ Ibid., 224.

Daḥamunzu with Smenkhkare as Nibḥururiya.²⁰ Wilhelm and Boese's chronology seems to have inspired several historians in the 1990s and 2000s to look in new directions for answers to the Daḥamunzu riddle. Jared Miller agrees with Wilhelm and Boese in his 2007 article, "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibḥururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text," that Tutankhamun could not have been Nibḥururiya.²¹ However, Miller finds no reason why the Wilhelm and Boese chronology should exclude Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya in exclusive favor of Smenkhkare.²²

Hittitologist Trevor Bryce accepts some of Wilhelm and Boese's conclusions in his 1990 article, "The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath." However, he questions their assertion that Nibḥururiya could have been Smenkhkare.²³ Instead, Bryce joins the majority of historians in asserting that Nibḥururiya was Tutankhamun and Daḥamunzu was Ankhesenamun.²⁴ Furthermore, Bryce proposes in his 2005 book, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, that Tutankhamun launched an attack on Kadesh.²⁵ Tutankhamun's attack may have prompted retaliation from Šuppiluliuma, which ultimately led the Hittite king to Carchemish, where the Hittite sources state he received the Daḥamunzu letters. Thus,

²⁰ Gernot Wilhelm and J. Boese, "Absolute Chronologie und die hethitische Geschichte des 15. und 14. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.," in *High, middle or low? Part 1 - Acts of an International Colloquium on Absolute Chronology held at the University of Gothenburg, 20th - 22nd August, 1986*, edited by Paul Åström, 74-117 (Gothenburg, 1987), <https://opus.bibliothek.uni-wuerzburg.de/frontdoor/index/index/docId/7045>.

²¹ Jared L. Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibḥururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34, no. 2 (February 2007): 252-293, http://www.assyriologie.uni-muenchen.de/personen/professoren/miller/publ_miller/amarna_2007.pdf.

²² *Ibid.*, 276 n. 108.

²³ Trevor R. Bryce, "The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76 (1990): 102, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3822010>.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, 163.

according to Bryce, Tutankhamun precipitated the events that led to the Daḥamunzu letters, in which case Daḥamunzu would most certainly have been Ankhesenamun.

In contrast, Egyptologist Nicholas Reeves notes in his 2005 book, *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet*, what he calls “the final nail in the coffin of Ankhesenamun’s claims to involvement in the Suppiluliuma affair.”²⁶ Pointing to the mention of military action against the Amqi region in EA 170, Reeves notes that Amarna may have been abandoned too soon for EA 170 to have concerned Tutankhamun. Thus, according to Reeves, Ankhesenamun could not have been Daḥamunzu. Instead, it was Nefertiti who wrote the letters that ultimately led to the attack on Amqi referenced in EA 170.²⁷ Reeves does not successfully account, however, for the fact that Akhenaten and Nefertiti had at least one male heir, Tutankhamun. Tutankhamun’s existence, if indeed he was the son of Akhenaten, contradicts Daḥamunzu’s claim that she had no sons. Jacobus van Dijk used this as one of many points of argument to specifically reject Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya in his 1993 PhD dissertation, “The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis: Historical and Iconographical Studies.” Van Dijk notes that Tutankhamun was the only Egyptian king of the period who died without any male heirs.²⁸ Tutankhamun’s only known children were two female fetuses found mummified in his tomb during Howard Carter’s excavation.²⁹

²⁶ Nicholas Reeves, *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2005), 177.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Jacobus van Dijk, “The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis: Historical and Iconographical Studies,” (PhD diss., University of Groningen, 1993), 50 n. 134, <http://www.jacobusvandijk.nl/publications.html>.

²⁹ Douglas E. Derry, “Report Upon the Two Human Fœtuses Discovered in the Tomb of Tut·ankh·Amen,” in *The Tomb of Tutankhamun: Discovered by the Late Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter*, vol. 3, *The Annexe and Treasury* by Howard Carter (London: Cassell, 1923; repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 115-117.

Although van Dijk correctly notes that Tutankhamun had no heir and was thus succeeded by the commoner Ay, it is important to consider that the Ay was also succeeded by the commoner Horemheb, likely the result of not having a male heir at the time of his death. Aidan Dodson notes in his 2009 book, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*, that Ay's son was probably an official named Nakhtmin.³⁰ Unfortunately, it is unknown whether he outlived Ay and had any opportunity to seek the throne through patrilineal succession. Furthermore, it is unknown for certain whether he was truly Ay's son.³¹ After all, Ay's death was followed by Horemheb's accession, indicating the lack of a biological heir.

According to Dodson, Ay died while Šuppiluliuma still reigned over Ḫatti.³² If so, Ay's death could have inspired the Daḫamunzu letters, which set in motion the chain reaction that led to Zannanza's murder, Šuppiluliuma's military reprisal, and the capture of plague-infected Egyptians that ultimately caused Šuppiluliuma's death. Violetta Cordani wrote in her 2011 article, "One-year or Five-year War? A Reappraisal of Suppiluliuma's First Syrian Campaign," that the Hittite sources regarding Šuppiluliuma's reign are fragmentary enough to allow for various interpretations.³³ In fact, she offers the possibility that Nibḫururiya could have been "one of Akhenaten's successors," depending on the interpretation of the chronology.³⁴ The premise of her article is that the so-called

³⁰ Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 99.

³¹ Van Dijk argues that Nakhtmin may have been a grandson of Ay, not a son. If so, Nakhtmin could have been the product of an unknown daughter of Ay. For van Dijk's arguments concerning Nakhtmin, see Jacobus van Dijk, "Horemheb and the Struggle for the Throne of Tutankhamun," *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre of Egyptology (BACE)* 7 (1996): 33, http://www.jacobusvandijk.nl/docs/BACE_7.pdf.

³² *Ibid.*, 166.

³³ Violetta Cordani, "One-year or Five-year War? A Reappraisal of Suppiluliuma's First Syrian Campaign," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 38, no. 2 (2011): 241 n. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 243 n. 15.

“One-Year War,” also known as the First Syrian War,” was in fact a five-year war. The very nature of her argument adds four years to the chronology, which matches the length of Ay’s reign.

Very little is certain regarding the Daḥamunzu Affair. Particularly uncertain are the identities of Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya. While Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun are certainly long-standing candidates among scholars, other candidates are possibilities as well. Nefertiti and Akhenaten, Kiya and Akhenaten, Ankhesenamun and Akhenaten, Meritaten and Smenkhkare, and Ankhesenamun and Ay are all possible combinations that scholars have debated over the past century of Egyptian-Hittite scholarship. The combination of Ankhesenamun and Ay as Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya has received the least amount of historical investigation, yet the possibility that they could have been Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya is worthy of further investigation.

III. METHODOLOGY

There are several primary sources that are useful in analyzing the Daḥamunzu Affair and the events that preceded or followed it. The most important sources are found in various Hittite records and archives, the Amarna Letters, and in inscriptions and paintings on monuments and in tombs. Unfortunately, there are few extant sources that directly reference the Daḥamunzu Affair, posing a major problem for researchers. There are, however, several sources that appear to indirectly reference the event. While the use of indirect sources in constructing the details of the event is problematic and has generated much scholarly debate, the indirect sources are invaluable given the paucity of direct sources.

The sources related most directly to this event come from Hittite records. Many of the tablets and fragments of greatest significance for this project were found in Boğazköy, now known as Boğazkale, in central Turkey. It is the location of the ruins of Ḫattuša, the capital of the Hittites. The most pertinent of these are KBo 5.6, KUB 14.8, and KUB 31.121a. The “seventh tablet” of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I as Told by His Son, Mursili II* is labeled KBo 5.6.³⁵ It contains the most directly related and most complete account of the Daḥamunzu Affair, as well as an account of some of the events that preceded and followed it. That fragments of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* contain an account of Daḥamunzu’s plight, her plea for a son, Šuppiluliuma’s skepticism, his deliberation, his eventual acquiescence to fulfill Daḥamunzu’s request, and his

³⁵ KBo = *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*, which is German for “cuneiform texts from Boghazköi.”

lamentation over the death of his son.³⁶ The most relevant portions of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* are as follows:

While my father was down in the country of Carchemish, he sent Lupakki and Tarḫunta(?)-zalma forth into the country of Amka. So they went to attack Amka and brought deportees, cattle and sheep back before my father. But when the people of Egypt heard of the attack on Amka, they were afraid. And since, in addition, their lord Nibḫururiya had died, therefore the queen of Egypt, who was Daḫamunzu(?), sent a messenger to my father and wrote to him thus: “My husband died. A son I have not. But to thee, they say, the sons are many. If thou wouldst give me one son of thine, he would become my husband. Never shall I pick out a servant of mine and make him my husband? I am afraid!” When my father heard this, he called forth the Great Ones for council (saying): “Such a thing has never happened to me in my whole life!” So it happened that my father sent forth to Egypt Ḫattuša-ziti, the chamberlain, (with this order): “Go and bring thou the true word back to me! Maybe they deceive me! Maybe (in fact) they do have a son of their lord! Bring thou the true word back to me!” (In the meantime) until Ḫattušaziti came back from Egypt, my father finally conquered the city of Carchemish.³⁷

...

But when he had e[stablished] Carchemish, he [went] back into the land of Ḫatti and spe[nt] the winter in the land of Ḫatti. But when it became spring, Ḫattušaziti [came back] from Egypt, and the messenger of Egypt, Lord Ḫani, came with him. Now, since my father had, when he sent Ḫattušaziti to Egypt, given him orders as follows: “Maybe they have a son of their lord! Maybe they deceive me and do not want my son for the kingship!” – therefore the queen of Egypt wrote back to my father in a letter thus: “Why didst thou say ‘they deceive me’ in that way? Had I a son, would I have written about my own and my country’s shame to a foreign land? Thou didst not believe me and has even spoken thus to me! He who was my husband has died. A son I have not! Never shall I take a servant of mine and make him my husband! I have written to no other country, only to thee have I written! They say they sons are many: so give me one son of thine! To me he will be husband, but in Egypt he will be king.” So, since my father was kindhearted, he complied with the word of the woman and concerned himself with the matter of a son.³⁸

...

{Šuppiluliuma to Ḫani} [“...”] I [myself] was [.....] friendly, but you, you suddenly did me evil. You [came(?)] and attacked the man of Kinza whom I had

³⁶ Perhaps the most authoritative translation of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* is found in Hans G. Güterbock, “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10, no. 2 (1956): 41-68; no. 3 (1956): 75-98; no. 4 (1956): 107-130. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* refer to Güterbock’s 1956 translation.

³⁷ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 1’-27’.

³⁸ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 E₃ iii 21’-24’, A iii 44’-54’, A iv 1’-15’.

[taken away(?)] from the king of Hurri-land. I, when I heard (this), became angry, and I sent [forth] my own troops and chariots and the lords. So they came and attacked your territory, the country of Amka. And when they attacked Amka, which is your country, you probably were afraid; and (therefore) you keep asking me for a son of mine (as if it were my) duty. [H]e will in some way become a hostage, but [king] you will not make him!” [Thus] (spoke) Hani to my father: “Oh my Lord! This [is] our country’s shame! If we had [a son of the king] at all, would we have come to a foreign country and kept asking for a lord for ourselves? Nibhururiya, who was our lord, died; a son he has not. Our lord’s wife is solitary. We are seeking a son of our Lord for the kingship in Egypt, and for the woman, our lady, we seek him as her husband! Furthermore, we went to no other country, only here did we come! Now, oh our Lord, give us a son of thine!” – So then my father concerned himself on their behalf with the matter of a son. Then my father asked for the tablet of the treaty again, (in which there was told) how formerly the Storm God took the people of Kuruštama, sons of Hatti, and carried them to Egypt and made them Egyptians; and how the Storm God concluded a treaty between the countries of Egypt and Hatti, and how they were continuously friendly with each other. And when they had read aloud the tablet before them, my father then addressed them thus: “Of old, Hattuša and Egypt were friendly with each other, and now this, too, on our behalf, had taken place between t[hem]! Thus Hatti and Egypt will continuously be friendly with each other!”³⁹

...

[When] they brought this tablet, they spoke thus: [“The people of Egypt(?)] killed [Zannanza] and brought word: ‘Zannanza [died(?)!’” And when] my father he[ard] of the slaying of Zannanza, he began to lament for [Zanna]nza, [and] to the god[s....] he spoke [th]us: “Oh gods! I did [no e]vil, [yet] the people of Egy[pt d]id [this to me], and they (also) [attacked] the frontier of my country!”⁴⁰

...

[.....] before [..... And the gods helped my father]: the Sun Goddess of Ari[nna, the Storm God of Hatti, the Storm God of the Army, and Ištar of the Battlefield, (so that)] he defeated the enemy. [..... he burned down (the towns of)]⁴¹

Nibhururiya and Daḥamunzu are named in lines 7-8 respectively of A iii of KBo

5.6. While Nibhururiya is mentioned again later in the text, Daḥamunzu is not named anywhere else in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*. Because Daḥamunzu and her letter are the focus of this project, KBo 5.6 A iii 7-8 are the most important lines of text from *The*

³⁹ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 E₃ iv 1’-39’.

⁴⁰ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 31 5’-11’.

⁴¹ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 34 1’-3’.

Deeds of Šuppiluliuma. One important note concerning the various translations of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* is that the name “Daḥamunzu” seems to be used as either a personal name or as a title, depending on the translation. For example, Güterbock’s 1956 translation states, “And since, in addition, their lord Nibḫururiya had died, therefore the queen of Egypt, who was Daḥamunzu(?), sent a messenger to my father.”⁴² In contrast, Sayce’s 1926 translation states, “Now their lord Bibkhourias had recently died, so the Egyptian queen whose name was Dakhamūn dispatched an envoy to my father.”⁴³ The Sayce translation indicates that Daḥamunzu was the Egyptian queen’s name, while the Güterbock translation is less clear about this point.

Walter Federn wrote about the controversy surrounding the word “Daḥamunzu” in his 1960 article “Daḥamunzu (KBo V 6 iii 8),” suggesting that Daḥamunzu was used by the Hittite scribe as a title, not a personal name. According to Federn, Güterbock placed a question mark behind the name Daḥamunzu because he “knew of no Egyptian equivalent for it, and thought that it may be faulty.”⁴⁴ However, Federn contends that it may be “an appellative” rather than a personal name. If so, “it emerges as an exact rendering of the Egyptian title *T’, ḥm(·t) nsw*, “The King’s Wife” – which was also the prototype of *Tahpenes* I Kings 11: 19,20, *Thekemina* in the Septuagint.”⁴⁵ Federn compares the Hittite text to Assyrian and Akkadian texts, noting similarities in the

⁴² *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 7’-9’.

⁴³ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 7’-9’ in Archibald H. Sayce, “What Happened after the Death of Tut’ankhamūn,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 12, no. 3/4 (October 1926): 170, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3854383>.

⁴⁴ Walter Federn, “Daḥamunzu (KBo V 6 iii 8),” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 14, no. 1 (1960): 33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1359072>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

rendering.⁴⁶ What Federn fails to account for, however, is the structure of the sentence. The sentence structure makes it more likely that Daḥamunzu was meant to be a personal name, most likely a misspelling of Ankhesenamun. Interestingly, Nicholas Reeves notes Federn’s argument that Daḥamunzu was a title and not a personal name as evidence to promote his own theory that Daḥamunzu was Nefertiti.⁴⁷ What Reeves may have ignored, however, is that Federn did not develop his argument as a means of choosing anyone other than Ankhesenamun as a candidate for Daḥamunzu. In fact, Federn notes that it was indeed “Ankhes-en-Amon [who] wrote her ill-fated letter to Suppiluliuma.”⁴⁸ The debate over the use of Daḥamunzu as a personal name or a title is yet another matter of interpretation for historians.

KUB 14.8, particularly lines 13-34, from Muršili’s “Second Plague Prayer,” echoes a portion of the Daḥamunzu story found in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, but with much less detail.⁴⁹ While KUB 14.8 does not use the term “Daḥamunzu,” it does continue the story beyond the endpoint of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, adding the plague as a consequence of Šuppiluliuma’s retaliation for his son’s death.⁵⁰ The most relevant portion of KUB 14.8, notably lines 13-34 of the obverse of A, is as follows:

The second tablet dealt with the town of Kurustamma: how the Storm-god of Hatti carried the men of Kurustamma to Egyptian territory and how the Storm-

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 176.

⁴⁸ Federn, “Daḥamunzu (KBo V 6 iii 8),” 33; for more discussion on this topic, see Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 194; Francis Breyer, “Egyptological Remarks Concerning Daḥamunzu,” *Ägypten und Levante / Egypt and the Levant* 20 (2010): 445, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23789951>.

⁴⁹ KUB = *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*, which is German for “cuneiform documents from Boghazköi.”

⁵⁰ Emmanuel Laroche published an authoritative translation of KUB 14.8 in his 1971 *Catalogue des textes hittites* as CTH 378.II. An English translation of KUB 14.8/CTH 378.II was published with commentary in Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 57-61. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of Muršili’s “Second Plague Prayer” refer to Singer’s 2002 translation.

god of Hatti made a treaty between them and the men of Hatti. Since the men of Hatti and the men of Egypt were bound by the oath of the Storm-god of Hatti, and the men of Hatti proceeded to get the upper hand, the men of Hatti thereby suddenly transgressed the oath of the gods. My father sent infantry and chariotry, and they attacked the borderland of Egypt, the land of Amqa. And again he sent, and again they attacked. When the men of Egypt became afraid, they came and asked my father outright for his son for kingship. But when my father gave them his son, as they led him off, they murdered him. My father was appalled and he went to Egyptian territory, attacked the Egyptians, and destroyed the Egyptian infantry and chariotry.

At that time too the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, by his verdict caused my father to prevail, and he defeated the infantry and the chariotry of Egypt and beat them. But when the prisoners of war who had been captured were led back to Hatti, a plague broke out among the prisoners of war, and [they began] to die. When the prisoners of war were carried off to Hatti, the prisoners of war brought the plague into Hatti. From that day on people have been dying in Hatti. When I found the aforementioned tablet dealing with Egypt, I inquired about it to the god through an oracle saying: “Has this matter been brought about by the Storm-god of Hatti because the men of Egypt and the men of Hatti had been put under oath by the Storm-god of Hatti?”⁵¹

As in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, KUB 14.8 places the Egyptian request for a son from Šuppiluliuma after the Hittite attack on the Egyptian territory of Amka. However, KUB 14.8 differs from the account in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, stating, “When the men of Egypt became afraid, they came and asked my father outright for his son for kingship.”⁵² Note that KUB 14.8 credits the request of a son with the “men of Egypt,” with no mention of the queen making the request herself. While one must avoid reading too much into what may be a minor omission due to the passing of time, it is worth considering whether this text indicates whether the powerful men surrounding Daḥamunzu at the Egyptian court orchestrated her plot to seek a son from Šuppiluliuma. The vulnerability of the young and childless Ankhesenamun supports the possibility.

⁵¹ KUB 14.8 A obv. 13'-34'.

⁵² KUB 14.8 A obv. 20'-23'.

KUB 31.121a, from Muršili's "Fifth Plague Prayer," contains even less detail about the Daḡamunzu Affair. It does, however, reference a letter written to Šuppiluliuma from the widowed Egyptian queen upon the death of her husband.⁵³ It does not, however, explain the queen's reason for writing the letter. The content of KUB 31.121a, while minimal, closely matches the events of the Daḡamunzu Affair as described in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, making it unlikely that it could reference any other event. The relevant portion of KUB 31.121a, notably lines 6-20 of column ii, is as follows:

[...infantry and] chariotry of Hatti [...]. [...] He (i.e. Suppiluliuma) sent out Lupakki and Tarhunta-zalma, and they attacked those lands. The king of Egypt died in those very [days]. I was still a child, so I did not know whether the king of Egypt lodged [a protest(?)] to my father about those lands, or whether he [did] nothing. And since the wife of the king of Egypt was a widow, she wrote to my father. [...] to talk with women [...]. I, in those [...] I was not seen(?) [...].⁵⁴

As in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, KUB 31.121a states that Šuppiluliuma sent out his generals, named identically as Lupakki and Tarhunta-zalma. However, while *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* states that the generals attacked Egyptian-controlled territory, KUB 31.121a does not mention the target of the generals. KUB 31.121a does, however, link the death of the Egyptian king with the widowed queen's letter to Šuppiluliuma. It does not, however, mention a request for a son as do *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 14.8. Unfortunately, the remainder of KUB 31.121a is too fragmentary and is badly damaged or missing.

⁵³ KUB 31.121a was published in Laroche's *Catalogue des textes hittites* as CTH 379. For an English translation of KUB 31.121a/CTH 379 with commentary, see Singer, 66-69. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of Muršili's "Fifth Plague Prayer" refer to Singer's 2002 translation.

⁵⁴ KUB 31.121a ii 6'-20'.

In addition to the key Hittite texts described above, namely KBo 5.6, KUB 14.8, and KUB 31.121a, there are other Hittite texts which may offer useful information about the Daḥamunzu Affair and the events that preceded and followed it. One of the most curious of these is KUB 19.20, which is a letter from an unnamed Hittite, presumably the king, to an unnamed Egyptian, presumably the pharaoh. Obviously, the major stumbling block posed by KUB 19.20 is the lack of the names of both the sender and the addressee. Nevertheless, its content appears to be a formal complaint from a Hittite king to an Egyptian pharaoh regarding the death of the Hittite king's son. This quite clearly matches the likely circumstances surrounding the death of Hittite prince Zannanza. Most scholars understandably identify the Hittite king as Šuppiluliuma, but the Egyptian pharaoh's identity is less certain. Historians who favor Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya generally associate the addressee of KUB 19.20 with Smenkhkare or Tutankhamun, while historians who favor Tutankhamun as Nibḥururiya associate the addressee with Ay.⁵⁵ As Šuppiluliuma's reign likely continued after the death of Ay, Horemheb must also be considered as a possible addressee. The relevant portion of KUB 19.20 is as follows:

“You, the king of E[g]ypt (?) continually write”
 “to interrogate”
 “to ask a question.”
 “[Concerning w]hat you wrote, ‘Your son died...,’”
 “...if you, however, [...] my son [X] sent away [...] he held them in sin
 [...] but because my son [...]”
 “...since there was formerly no [bloo]dshed [...] to do [X] is not right.
 With (or By?) blood(shed) they [...] now even if mine [...] you did [X] and you
 even killed my son...”
 “[...troops and] horses you continually extol. Since I will [...] the troops
 [...] and encampments. For me my lord [...and the sun goddess] of Arinna, my

⁵⁵ The most notable discussions of the possible sender and addressee of KUB 19.20 include: Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 26-33; Bryce, “The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath,” 97-105; Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 100. Murnane offers useful commentary alongside his translation of the text. He also attempts to fill in the numerous gaps in the fragmentary text.

lady, the queen of the lands. It will happen [..., my lord], and the sun goddess of Arinna will judge this. [...] you have said much, in heaven [...] as important (or big) as a pitturi (functionary?) [...] because we will make it”

“it does [...] because a falcon [kills (?) a chick (?) ...] a falcon alone does not hunt”

“[Concerning what] you wrote, ‘You would come for brawling, for against you brawl [...] I take (?) a brawl away [...],’ let you take (it) away to the Storm-god, my lord [...] behind [X], he who is behind [...]”

“those who reject [him (?)] for lordship, let them do [...], those who went before you [...]”

“[...] in brotherhood you write [...] I will make against [...] brotherhood I continually write [...] our [...forme]rly (?) were [...] between [...]”

“nothing” (or “no way”)⁵⁶

Murnane interprets the opening statements concerning continually writing, interrogating, and questioning as evidence that KUB 19.20 was written in response to previous correspondence concerning the death of the Hittite king’s son.⁵⁷ In addition, Murnane suggests that the interchange may indicate that the sender is suspicious of the addressee and does not accept the addressee’s claim of innocence.⁵⁸ Certainly, the content of KUB 19.20, while fragmentary, matches what the other key Hittite texts in a few important ways. While KUB 19.20 does not address the Daḥamunzu letters or the death of the Egyptian king, it does have the supposed murder of the Hittite king’s son as a focal point.

Another Hittite text that may allude to events surrounding the Daḥamunzu Affair is KUB 19.9. Unlike the texts described above, it does not concern the Daḥamunzu Affair directly, but rather opens up the chronology to allow the possibility that Tutankhamun or

⁵⁶ KUB 19.20 obv. 19’-28’, rev. 1’-36’ in Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 27-30. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of KUB 19.20 refer to Murnane’s 1985 translation.

⁵⁷ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Ay could have been Nibḫururiya. The relevant portion of KUB 19.9, notably i 6'-23', is as follows:

These (i.e. all the lost Anatolian territories), my grandfather Šuppiluliuma brought back until he had reduced them to order. And he took 20 years until he had reconquered them. But when my grandfather Šuppiluliuma entered the Hurri-land, then he vanquished all the Hurri-lands, and he fixed the boundary on yon side, (at) the land of Qadesh (and) the land of Amurru, and vanquished the king of Egypt. But on this side, he destroyed the land of Irrite (and) the land of Suta and made the Mala river (=Euphrates) his boundary. And these (lands) he thus took into vassalage on the spot. And what was beside the Mala river, he vanquished by force. And his sons he made kings:- in the land of Aleppo he made Telipinus king, in the land of Carchemish he made Piyassilis king. My grandfather Šuppiluliuma tarried in the land of Amurru because the lands were strong (i.e. refractory), and he took 6 years until he had reduced them to order. But behind (his back), the land of Iṣḫupitta became hostile, and it stirred up all the lands, and all the lands became hostile.⁵⁹

KUB 19.9 offers an expanded interpretation of the length of time Šuppiluliuma campaigned in Syria, pushing back the date Šuppiluliuma was in Carchemish to receive the Daḫamunzu letter.⁶⁰ While open to various interpretations, the expanded interpretation of KUB 19.9 may expand the chronology of Šuppiluliuma's Syrian campaigns from 20 years to 20+6 years, with a gap between. Kitchen argues that the dates of the First Syrian War and the Six-Year Hurrian War were separated by "not many years," but enough to account for Šuppiluliuma's presence in Carchemish at the time Tutankhamun died.⁶¹ Murnane's chronology allows for "a number of years" to have

⁵⁹ KUB 19.9, notably i 6'-23' in Kitchen, *Šuppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 3; for additional commentary on KUB 19.9, see also Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 223, as well as Cordani, 241-242. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of KUB 19.9 refer to Kitchen's 1962 translation.

⁶⁰ Recall the opening lines of KBo V 6 A iii, which set up the circumstances of the Daḫamunzu letter, "While my father was down in the country of Carchemish, he sent Lupakki and Tarḫunta(?) -zalma forth into the country of Amka."

⁶¹ Kitchen, *Šuppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 2.

intervened between the two wars.⁶² Because Ay reigned for only four years, even a small expansion of the chronology should allow the possibility that he could have been Nibḫururiya.

The Šattiwaza Treaty is another Hittite text that may lend support to expanding the chronology of Šuppiluliuma's Syrian campaigns.⁶³ The Šattiwaza Treaty identifies a one-year period in which Šuppiluliuma claims to have "plundered all of these lands [i.e. the Syrian vassals of Mittani] in one year."⁶⁴ The relevant portion of the Šattiwaza Treaty, notably A obverse 38'-47', is as follows:

When I went to the land of Nuhashshi, I captured all of its territory. (Its king) Sharrupshi alone escaped, but I captured his mother, his brothers, and his children, and I brought them to Hatti. I installed Takip-sharri, subject of Sharrupshi, in kingship over the city of Ukulzat. I went to the land of Apina, but I did not seek to attack the land of Kinza. But (its king) Shutatarra, together with his son Aitaqqama and his chariotry, came against me for battle. I drove him off, and they entered the city of Abzuya. I invested Abzuya, and I captured Shutatarra, together with his children, his chariot warriors, his brothers, and [his possessions], and I brought them to Hatti. I went to the land of Apina, and his noblemen Wambadura, Akparu, and Artaya, came against me for battle. I brought all of these, together with their land and their possessions, to Hatti. Because of the presumptuousness of King Tushratta, I plundered all of these lands in one year and brought them to Hatti. From Mount Lebanon and from the far bank of the Euphrates I made them my territory.⁶⁵

There seems to be a connection between the Šattiwaza Treaty and *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*. The treaty identifies an attack on Kinza (Kadesh) that may coincide with the attack on Kadesh that prompted Šuppiluliuma to attack Amka. The Amka attack

⁶² Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 223-224.

⁶³ The Šattiwaza Treaty was published in Laroche's *Catalogue des textes hittites* as CTH 51. For an English translation of the Šattiwaza Treaty/CTH 51 with commentary, see Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2nd ed., Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 41-54. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of the Šattiwaza Treaty refer to Beckman's 1999 translation.

⁶⁴ Šattiwaza Treaty A obv. 45'-46'; Cordani, 242.

⁶⁵ Šattiwaza Treaty A obv. 38'-47'.

scared the Egyptians, prompting Daḥamunzu to write her letter to Šuppiluliuma. If the attack on Kadesh noted in the Šattiwaza Treaty is the same attack that led Šuppiluliuma to attack Amka and led to the Daḥamunzu letter, the “one year” in which Šuppiluliuma claims to have plundered “all of these lands” because of the “presumptuousness of King Tushratta” is significant. Violetta Cordani asserts that this so-called One-Year War (First Syrian War) was actually a five-year war. She notes, “a projection of the pattern of Muršili’s Annals onto CTH 51 would imply that this campaign lasted up to four years, each year corresponding to a section ending with the mention of booty. Taking into account the ‘preliminary’ year from late summer to winter spent by Suppiluliuma in Isuwa, mentioned in [*Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*] 25, the total number of war years rises to five.”⁶⁶ If true, the expansion from one to five years in the chronology allows for the four years of Ay’s reign, making it possible, if not likely, that Ay was Nibḥururiya.

Aside from the Hittite records, there are some Egyptian sources that may relate to the Daḥamunzu Affair, if only indirectly, as a means of establishing a historical context and assisting in developing the chronology of associated events. The Amarna Letters, the most notable Egyptian source for this project, are clay tablets found in Akhetaten (Tell el-Amarna). They are generally considered to date from the reign of Amenhotep III to the early years of Tutankhamun’s reign, spanning just a few decades in the mid-1300s BC. The Amarna Letters are problematic for the possibility that Tutankhamun or Ay could have been Nibḥururiya because Amarna was likely abandoned during the early years of the reign of Tutankhamun, perhaps within his third or fourth year.⁶⁷ However, the

⁶⁶ Cordani, “One-year or Five-year War?” 249.

⁶⁷ Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 47.

chronology of the events described in the individual Amarna Letters is open to various interpretations and has generated much scholarly debate since their translation and analysis began in the late-1800s.⁶⁸

One of the first scholars to analyze the Amarna Letters was Flinders Petrie, who noted the variations of the names used for Egypt's pharaohs and the uncertainty it created for his analysis.⁶⁹ In addition, the formulaic nature of the greetings presented Petrie, as it presents scholars today, with challenges in interpretation. For example, the greeting of EA 29 states, "For your sons, for your magnates, for your chariots, for [your] hors[es, for your troops, for] your [country], and for whatever else belongs to you, may all go very, very well."⁷⁰ According to Petrie, the sender of the letter, "Dushratta," probably Tushratta of Mitanni, sends his greetings to the Egyptian king "Napkhuriria," who Petrie identifies as Akhenaten.⁷¹ Dushratta sends greetings to Napkhuriria's "sons." However, Petrie notes that no monument shows any "trace of any son [of Akhenaten], and had there been one it is unlikely that he would have been ignored and only a long string of daughters put forward."⁷² Thus, the greeting to the king's "sons" is, according to Petrie, merely a

⁶⁸ For detailed information on the discovery, themes, organization, and literary style of the Amarna Letters, see Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East*, 232-235.

⁶⁹ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *A History of Egypt*, vol. 2, *During the XVIIth and XVIIIth Dynasties* (London: Methuen, 1896; repr., London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 260.

⁷⁰ EA 29 4'-5' in William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 92. Moran edited and translated an authoritative collection of the Amarna Letters in 1987 as *Les Lettres d'El-Amarna*, which was subsequently translated into English in 1992 as *The Amarna Letters*. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of the Amarna Letters refer to Moran's collection.

⁷¹ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Syria and Egypt from the Tell el Amarna Letters* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898; repr., London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 33.

⁷² *Ibid.*

“conventional presumption.”⁷³ Certainly, the Amarna Letters are open to various interpretations.

William L. Moran, editor and translator of an authoritative collection of the Amarna Letters, notes that the Amarna Letters pose a “tissue of problems” with regard to correlating their data to the history of the Hittites.⁷⁴ The primary reason for this is the uncertainty of whether a particular letter was written during the time of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, or Tutankhamun. For example, Moran notes the multiple possible interpretations of a single event, such as the Šuppiluliuma’s Six-Year Hurrian War in Syria. According to Moran, one interpretation places the early stages of the war at the time of the death of Tutankhamun. Other interpretations point to Akhenaten or Smenkhkare as the dead king mentioned during the early stages of the war. After all, it is inconceivable that one of the Amarna Letters could have referenced an event at the end of Tutankhamun’s life if the city of Akhetaten (Amarna) was abandoned early in Tutankhamun’s reign. For Moran, the various possible interpretations of the content of the Amarna Letters highlight the importance of the data they contain.⁷⁵

Exemplary of the chronological problems of the Amarna Letters is EA 170, primarily because it mentions a Hittite attack on Amqi and Hittite generals Lupakku and Zitana, perhaps the Lupakki and Tarḫunta-zalma of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 31.121a. Lines 14-35 of EA 170 are as follows:

Moreover, troops of Ḫatti under Lupakku have captured cities of Amqu, and with the cities they captured Aaddumi. May our lord know (this).

⁷³ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁴ Moran, *Amarna Letters*, xxxviii.

⁷⁵ Ibid., xxxviii-xxxix.

Moreover, we have heard the following: Zitana has come and there are 90,000 infantrymen that have come with him. We have, however, not confirmed the report, whether they are really there and have arrived in Nuḥašše, and so I am sending Bet-ili to him. As soon as we *meet with* them, I will immediately send my messenger so he can report to you whether or not it is so.⁷⁶

According to Moran, EA 170 was written to Aziru of Amurru during his stay in Egypt. Because the Amarna archive was likely closed long before Tutankhamun's death, the similarities between EA 170 and the events reported in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 31.121a appear to favor Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya. However, EA 173-176 also reference an attack, or a series of attacks, on Amqi. Thus, it is possible that the Amqi region was attacked on more than one occasion over a period of years. Furthermore, while Lupakku seems a likely match for the Lupakki of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 31.121a, Zitana may not have been Tarḥunta-zalma. Scholars have not found consensus regarding EA 170's description of an attack on Amqi, although Murnane makes a convincing argument that there were multiple attacks on Amqi, which allows for the possibility that EA 170 references an earlier attack than the attack in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 31.121a.⁷⁷

An additional letter in the Amarna archive that may be appropriate in a discussion of the Daḥamunzu Affair is EA 41.⁷⁸ It is a letter from Šuppiluliuma to an Egyptian king named Ḥuriya. The letter has a somewhat scolding tone in which Šuppiluliuma questions why his gifts had not been reciprocated by the Egyptian king, in accordance with the brotherhood of kings. While most scholars claim that the letter was addressed to

⁷⁶ EA 170 14'-35'.

⁷⁷ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 219-221.

⁷⁸ Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 114-115.

Akhenaten just after his accession following Amenhotep III's death, a few scholars associate the text with Tutankhamun or Smenkhkare.⁷⁹ Lines 1-5 and 14-22 of EA 41 are as follows:

[Thus the Sun], Šuppiluliumaš, G[reat] King, [king of Ḫat]ti. Say to Ḫuriy[a, the king of Eg]ypt, my brother:

...

Why, my brother, have you held back the presents that your father made to me when he was al[iv]e?

Now, my brother, [yo]u have ascended the throne of your father, and just as your father and I were desirous of peace between us, so now too should you and I be friendly with one another. The request [that] I expressed to your father [*I shall express*] to my brother, too. Let us be *helpful* to each other.⁸⁰

The text of EA 41 certainly matches the stereotypical view of Akhenaten as a ruler generally detached from diplomacy. However, EA 41 could very well have been written in the early days of Tutankhamun's reign in the wake of Akhenaten's death, the failure of the Amarna experiment, and the accession of a boy king.

While the Hittite records and the Amarna Letters are open to various interpretations due to their fragmentary nature and lack of clarity, they are still valuable in constructing a generally reliable account of the events surrounding the Daḫamunzu Affair when considered alongside other sources. For example, a potentially important source in establishing the chronology and circumstances of the Daḫamunzu Affair is the so-called "General's Letter" from Ugarit (RS 20.33/Ugaritica V No. 20). The relevant portion of the General's Letter, notably lines 9-32 of the reverse, is as follows:

... It was within the fortress that
they were fighting; and one man among them was captured,

⁷⁹ For examples of scholarly opinion regarding the addressee of EA 41, see the following: Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 115, n. 2; Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 22; Bryce, "The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath," 103; Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, eds., *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

⁸⁰ EA 41 1'-5', 14'-22'.

and I interrogated him about the king of Egypt. He (said) thus:
 “The king of Egypt is going forth, but he is going unaccompanied.
 In the coming Eššešu-day his equipment will be moving,
 and the king will come after the equipment.”
 So, may the king send troops and chariots that will stand forth,
 may he send Heaven forbid that the king of Egypt
 should arrive quickly; then we shall not (be able to) overpower (him)
 by force. Heaven forbid that the king of Egypt
 should come forth! Should he not come forth, and it is the *pdt*-troops
 that come forth, then I shall (be able to) overpower (them) by force.
 So, may the king assign troops and chariots,
 in order that [we] (can) fight against them
 and (will be able to) overpower (them) by force. If, now,
 it is the *pdt*-troops that come,
 and I do not fight with them, then be it known to my lord
 that every year they will come out here,
 that every day he will keep sending (troops) against us.
 Hence, we must surely now get in contact with them,
 (just) as they start their sorties again.
 And if the gods permit us,
 then we shall smash his belly in the enemy’s country,
 and once and for all my enemies will be annihilated.⁸¹

The letter fails to mention the name of the Egyptian king, complicating any attempt to accurately date the letter. However, linguist Schlomo Izre’el notes that his analysis of the text makes it likely that it belongs to the Amarna period, and was written in Amurru Akkadian.⁸² In addition to linguistically pinpointing the scribe’s location at Amurru during the Amarna period, Izre’el notes that the scribe’s writing “reveals some glosses” which may have been borrowed from the Hittites, given their relation to the “Akkadian scribal traditions of Bogazköy.”⁸³ Thus, Izre’el links the General’s Letter with Nibhururiya and the Daḥamunzu Affair. Itamar Singer, Izre’el’s collaborator, used an

⁸¹ General’s Letter 9’-32’, in Schlomo Izre’el and Itamar Singer, *The General’s Letter from Ugarit: A Linguistic and Historical Reevaluation of RS 20.33 (= Ugaritica V No. 20)* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1990), 25-27.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 85.

examination of historical context to build a convincing case that the General's Letter fits within the timeframe of the Daḥamunzu Affair. Like other scholars who have studied the Daḥamunzu Affair, Singer notes what he terms the "Nipḥururiya Problem."⁸⁴ The General's Letter, if it is indeed associated with the Daḥamunzu Affair, raises numerous questions and answers few questions for scholars. Nevertheless, its obvious similarities with other documents associated with the Daḥamunzu Affair make it worthy of further investigation.

The General's Letter, the Amarna Letters, and the Hittite records each offer small pieces of information from which historians can construct the events of the Daḥamunzu Affair. These primary sources and the circumstances surrounding the Daḥamunzu Affair allow for the possibility that Ay could have been Nibḥururiya, but scholars have largely ignored or dismissed Ay for various reasons. Certainly, the sources and circumstances are open to various interpretations, including the problem with reliably synchronizing the Egyptian, Hittite, and Syrian chronologies in the post-Amarna age. Depending on one's interpretation of extant written sources, such as KUB 19.20, the "General's Letter," the Šattiwaza Treaty, and *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, a later date for the Daḥamunzu letters, allowing for the possibility of Ay as Nibḥururiya, is certainly possible.

Interpretations offered by Singer, Petrie, Moran, Kitchen, van Dijk, and others exemplify how the nature of the sources invites a certain amount of variety in interpreting the data they contain. In addition, a historian's specialization in Egyptology or Hittitology can cause him or her to favor one chronology over another, creating the potential for bias.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 166-169.

Thus, it is important for scholars to critically evaluate the sources from the Egyptian and Hittite perspectives with an understanding that every chronology proposed in the past century has required adjustments, sometimes major adjustments, based on new discoveries or innovative ways to interpret familiar sources. A fresh examination of the currently available sources allows Ay to emerge as a viable candidate for Nibḥururiya, along with the traditional candidates of Tutankhamun, Akhenaten, and Smenkhkare.

IV. RESULTS – OTHER CANDIDATES

The most important problem for scholars regarding the Daḥamunzu Affair is the identification of the principal actors. While the current project favors Ankhesenamun and either Tutankhamun or Ay as the most likely candidates for Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya, historians who subscribe to an early chronology of events favor Nefertiti, Meritaten, or Kiya as Daḥamunzu with Akhenaten or Smenkhkare as Nibḥururiya. Each will be examined briefly here. Unfortunately, a detailed analysis of every argument or counterargument concerning the candidates for Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya is beyond the scope of this project; however, the salient points concerning each candidate will hopefully provide sufficient evidence to allow the reader to draw his or her own informed conclusions.

NEFERTITI

Nefertiti was Akhenaten's Great Queen, so she enjoyed an elevated status compared to lesser queens and concubines. Moreover, she may have enjoyed a special status that made his death even more devastating for her. Tomb art and various stelae indicate that she enjoyed far more status and had a much higher position than most Egyptian queens before her, perhaps co-ruling Egypt with Akhenaten. She is often shown alongside her husband at nearly equal size and participating in the same activities as the pharaoh.⁸⁵ Such depictions, and there are many, testify to Nefertiti's prominent position

⁸⁵ The "House-shrine" or "Hausaltar" stela, housed in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin as item 14145, shows the royal couple sitting together with their children in a playful family portrait scene. Another well-known

in the royal family, in Egyptian government at Amarna, and in the religion of Atenism. Akhenaten's death would have disrupted her family, severed her pharaonic link to governmental power, and removed the high-priest and earthly representative of the Aten.

Proponents of Nefertiti as a candidate for Daḥamunzu point to two primary reasons why she could have been Daḥamunzu, the timing of the Daḥamunzu Affair in conjunction with events in Syria and her vulnerability after Akhenaten's death. The attack on Amka mentioned in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, the Amarna Letters, and other Hittite and Egyptian sources seems to build a chronology that fits Nefertiti better than any other candidate. Furthermore, she was left alone in the midst of the end of Amarna and the failure of Atenism as a replacement for Egypt's traditional religious order. Nefertiti owed her special status to Akhenaten, and his death jeopardized her status. After all, previous pharaohs do not appear to have allowed their queens to rule alongside them.

Supporters of Nefertiti as Daḥamunzu often point to EA 170, which mentions military action against Amka. A Hittite attack on Amka preceded Daḥamunzu letters, according to *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*. *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* states, "While my father [Suppiluliuma] was down in the country of Carchemish, he sent Lupakki and Tarḫunta(?) -zalma forth into the country of Amka. So they went to attack Amka and brought deportees, cattle and sheep back before my father. But when the people of Egypt heard of the attack on Amka, they were afraid." According to Reeves, the statement in EA 170, "Moreover, troops of Ḫatti under Lupakku have captured cities of Amqu, and with the cities they captured Aaddumi. May our lord know (this)," is a reference to the

stela, item 17813 in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, shows Nefertiti and Akhenaten side-by-side as if ruling together as equals.

same event.⁸⁶ Reeves notes that Amarna was abandoned as Egypt's administrative center by the end of Tutankhamun's reign, making it Nefertiti the best fit for Daḥamunzu.⁸⁷ Furthermore, his contention that Nefertiti may have written to Šuppiluliuma with the "naïve" goal to "prop up Egypt's economy with funds from abroad," fits the situation of an attack on Amka.⁸⁸

While Nefertiti's supporters point to the Amka attack as a smoking gun that discounts Ankhesenamun in favor of Nefertiti, their evidence rests on the presupposition that there was only one attack on Amka. It is certainly possible that Amka was attacked on multiple occasions, allowing for the possibility that it was also attacked when Ankhesenamun was queen under Tutankhamun or co-regent with Ay. Murnane's interpretation of EA 170 and *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, juxtaposed against Muršili's "Second Plague Prayer," KUB 14.8 / CTH 378.II, indicate attacks on Amka that were separated by several years.⁸⁹ Singer's translation of Muršili's "Second Plague Prayer" states, "My father sent infantry and chariotry, and they attacked the borderland of Egypt, the land of Amqa. And again he sent, and again they attacked. When the men of Egypt became afraid, they came and asked my father outright for his son for kingship."⁹⁰ The statement, "And again he sent, and again they attacked," certainly indicates that there were multiple attacks on Amka over a period of time.

⁸⁶ Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 177.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 221.

⁹⁰ KUB 14.8 19'-21'.

Nefertiti's primary vulnerability after Akhenaten's death, according to her supporters, was the lack of a male heir. Extant monuments depicting the royal family show no trace of any sons, and only the six royal daughters are shown. Contradicting the monuments, EA 29, which was likely addressed to Akhenaten, states in its greeting, "For your sons...may all go very, very well."⁹¹ As noted above, Petrie identified the sender of the letter as Tushratta of Mitanni, who likely included the mention of "sons" in the greeting a "conventional presumption."⁹² If she bore only daughters for Akhenaten, a male son born to the pharaoh by a lesser wife or concubine could have imperiled Nefertiti's status and hold on power.

DNA evidence does not adequately answer the question of whether Tutankhamun was born of Nefertiti or another woman. Results of a 2010 study, led by Zahi Hawass and published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, indicates that Tutankhamun's mother was KV35YL (the "younger lady" of the two unidentified female mummies found in tomb KV35). The DNA results further indicate that Tutankhamun's father was the unidentified male mummy found in KV55. Furthermore, KV35YL and KV55 were brother and sister.⁹³ That KV55 is Akhenaten seems likely given the study's further indications that the father of KV55 was Amenhotep III (KV35) and his mother was KV35EL (the "elder lady" of the two unidentified female mummies found in tomb KV35). Because the bodies of Nefertiti, Ankhesenamun, Kiya, Akhenaten, and Smenkhkare have not been conclusively identified due to the lack of intact cartouches

⁹¹ EA 29 4'-5'.

⁹² Petrie, *Syria and Egypt*, 34.

⁹³ Zahi Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)* 303, no. 7 (February 2010): 641. <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/185393>.

and other means of identification, there is no way to know for certain whether KV55 is, in fact, Akhenaten and whether KV35YL is Nefertiti. Petrie's theory that Nefertiti was of Mitanni birth, identified as the diplomatic bride Tadukhipa (Tadu-Ḥeba in Moran) in EA 22 and EA 29 would certainly eliminate Nefertiti as a possible KV35YL.⁹⁴ However, an inscription crediting Ay's wife Tiye as "Wet-nurse of the Great King's Wife, Nefertiti, Nurse of the Goddess, Ornament of the King" indicates that Nefertiti was not a diplomatic bride from Mitanni, but was born in Egypt.⁹⁵ The identity of KV35YL is still in doubt.

If KV35YL was not Nefertiti, then it seems clear that another woman bore Tutankhamun for Akhenaten. The presence of a male heir that she did not produce might have compromised Great Queen Nefertiti, especially in light of any backlash that might have followed the failure of Amarna and of Atenism. If Nefertiti was of foreign birth, a longshot given the lack of corroboration in other sources, this would have been compounded by her lack of a blood connection to the royal line after the death of Akhenaten. Supporters of Nefertiti as Daḥamunzu cite such evidence as a partial explanation of how she could have accurately stated that she had no sons and her statement could have passed the vetting of Ḥattuša-ziti, Šuppiluliuma's chamberlain and investigator charged with verifying Daḥamunzu's story.

If KV35YL was Nefertiti, then her grief at losing her husband, her pharaoh, and the head of the Aten religion would have been compounded by the grief of the loss of her own biological sibling. The possibility that KV35YL was Nefertiti may help explain why

⁹⁴ Petrie, *A History of Egypt*, 207.

⁹⁵ Seele, "King Ay and the Close of the Amarna Age," 169-170.

she was depicted as a near equal with Akhenaten in Amarna art. Thus, the possibility remains that KV35YL was Nefertiti and that she was the mother of Tutankhamun. However, if Nefertiti was Tutankhamun's mother, as identifying her with KV35YL would presume, it seems quite odd that she would so strongly insist in the Daḥamunzu letters that she had no son. Furthermore, it seems almost inconceivable that Ḥattuša-ziti could have missed Tutankhamun during his investigation into the veracity of her claim of having no son.

The very existence of Tutankhamun as a biological son of Akhenaten, whether or not he was Nefertiti's biological son, creates serious problems for supporters of Nefertiti as Daḥamunzu. Tutankhamun's royal birth made him a prince and a male heir of Akhenaten, as the DNA evidence suggests. Smenkhkare, who is very mysterious, may also have been one of Akhenaten's sons. While it is understandable that Nefertiti's grief and despair following Akhenaten's death would have been overwhelming, she had at least one son, Tutankhamun, who was able to take his father's place on the throne. The biological link between Akhenaten and Tutankhamun makes it hard to reconcile Daḥamunzu's statement, "My husband died. A son I have not. But to thee, they say, the sons are many. If thou wouldst give me one son of thine, he would become my husband. Never shall I pick out a servant of mine and make him my husband? I am afraid!" if Daḥamunzu was Nefertiti.⁹⁶

Nefertiti, even after Akhenaten's death, was in a position that makes Daḥamunzu's statement, "I am afraid!" incompatible with Nefertiti as Daḥamunzu. It is

⁹⁶ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 10'-15'.

hard to imagine why Nefertiti would fear having to marry a commoner with Tutankhamun in position to rule. Nefertiti could have ruled through a young Tutankhamun as Hatshepsut ruled as regent for the young Thutmose III. Furthermore, Nefertiti was likely supported at court by the powerful vizier, Ay. As noted above, Ay's wife served as Nefertiti's wet-nurse. Cyril Aldred claims that there "is little doubt" that Nefertiti was the daughter of Ay, who was Akhenaten's Master of Horse.⁹⁷ Like Yuya under Amenhotep III, Ay under Akhenaten was titled "Father-in-law of the King."⁹⁸ If true, and only the discovery and proper identification of Nefertiti's mummy could prove the relationship, the presence of Ay at court should have given Nefertiti little cause to be afraid following Akhenaten's death. Ay provided continuity and stability, while Tutankhamun provided an avenue of succession. Many scholars contend that Nefertiti's power may have been such that she ruled as king of Egypt on her own as Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten or as the mysterious Smenkhkare.⁹⁹

There are simply too few reasons to explain why Nefertiti could have felt insecure enough after the death of Akhenaten that she decided to write a bleeding-heart letter to the Hittites, the primary enemy of Egypt, essentially groveling for a Hittite prince to come to Egypt to become pharaoh. Nefertiti had a male heir to succeed Akhenaten, whether Tutankhamun was her biological son or not. She was likely under the protection of Ay, whether because of a biological relationship or because she was nursed by Ay's wife, so she had a powerful governmental and religious figure in her corner. Nefertiti

⁹⁷ Cyril Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 19.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹⁹ Joann Fletcher, *The Search for Nefertiti: The True Story of an Amazing Discovery* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 327.

may have been so powerful that she ruled Egypt as co-regent with Akhenaten, or possibly in her own right as pharaoh Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten or Smenkhkare. There is little that connects her with the seemingly terrified Daḥamunzu, who sought a Hittite husband to avoid marrying an Egyptian commoner in the wake of a Hittite attack against Egyptian-controlled Amka.

MERITATEN

Some historians believe that Nefertiti died or lost her status as Great Queen before the death of Akhenaten, elevating their daughter Meritaten to the position Great Queen.¹⁰⁰ In such a scenario, Nefertiti could not have been Daḥamunzu. Meritaten was the eldest daughter of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, and she is depicted numerous times with her parents and younger sisters on various monuments. As the eldest daughter, Meritaten would have been a sought-after avenue to the throne following Akhenaten's death, particularly by her brother(s).

Most scholars contend that Meritaten became the consort or co-regent of Smenkhkare before Akhenaten's death rather than after his death.¹⁰¹ Thus, her position as Great Queen, which she likely continued to hold under Smenkhkare, made Meritaten's position secure. Certainly, DNA evidence indicates that Tutankhamun was at least her half-brother through Akhenaten.¹⁰² Smenkhkare, whose mummy has yet to be identified, may also have been a brother. She may have followed the tradition of sibling marriage to

¹⁰⁰ Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology," 273, n. 93; Marc Gabolde, *Akhenaton: Du mystère à la lumière*, Découvertes Gallimard Histoire 478 (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 86.

¹⁰¹ For examples, see Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 20; Fletcher, *The Search for Nefertiti*, 327; Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology," 275.

¹⁰² Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," 641.

consolidate family power, choosing Smenkhkare as consort. Having taken a consort before Akhenaten's death, it seems unlikely that she would have been so desperate as to write the Daḥamunzu letters. The smooth transfer of power from Akhenaten to his successor was already underway, so Meritaten had little to fear. Furthermore, she likely had the services and advice of Ay, who may have been her grandfather.

That Meritaten and Smenkhkare were married or served as co-regents is attested in several inscriptions, including a joined set of cartouches.¹⁰³ Marc Gabolde uses these cartouches as part of his body of evidence that links Meritaten with Daḥamunzu, even going so far as to draw a relationship between the mysterious Smenkhkare and the Hittite prince Zannanza.¹⁰⁴ Because Smenkhkare's body is unavailable for DNA analysis, his connection to the royal family remains a mystery. While equating Smenkhkare with Zannanza could certainly help explain why so little is known about Smenkhkare and why there are no known depictions or records of him before his accession, one must first consider that Tutankhamun was likewise undepicted and unrecorded before his accession to the throne. Jared Miller attempts to explain the absence of Smenkhkare and Tutankhamun in Amarna art by speculating that the boys were born of one of Akhenaten's secondary wives, but his theory is indeed mere speculation due to the lack of corroborating evidence.¹⁰⁵

Gabolde and Miller both point to the chronology proposed in 1986 by Gernot Wilhelm and J. Boese, which allows for the possibility that Meritaten could have been

¹⁰³ Gabolde, *Akhenaton: Du mystère à la lumière*, 88.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 86-89.

¹⁰⁵ Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology," 273.

Daḥamunzu with Smenkhkare as Nibḥururiya.¹⁰⁶ While the chronology does indeed allow for either Nefertiti or Meritaten to have been Daḥamunzu, the events referenced in the chronology do not exclude the remaining candidate, Ankhesenamun.

Further complicating our understanding of Meritaten and her family life is a scene on the walls of the Amarna tomb of royal scribe Meryre II (TA2). The scene is typical of the many in Amarna which depict Akhenaten and Nefertiti with the rays of the Aten coming down on the royal couple. However, this particular scene in TA2 is labeled “King Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare-djeserkheperu and his Great Wife, Mery(et)aten.”¹⁰⁷ Because Nefertiti may have ruled as pharaoh under the name Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten or as Smenkhkare, the name Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare-djeserkheperu is perplexing. If Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare-djeserkheperu was Nefertiti and if Meritaten ruled alongside her mother, it seems curious that the inscription in Meryre’s tomb identifies Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare-djeserkheperu as a male with a Great Wife. Unless Nefertiti ruled as a male in the style of Hatshepsut, it seems more likely that Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare-djeserkheperu was a different person, a male.

There are many problems with any association between Meritaten and Daḥamunzu, the greatest may be that too little is known for certain about her. Gabolde’s interesting theory that Smenkhkare was Zannanza is imperiled by fragment 31 of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, which states, “[When] they brought this tablet, they spoke thus: [“The people of Egypt(?)] killed [Zannanza] and brought word: ‘Zannanza [died(?)!’” And when] my father he[ard] of the slaying of Zannanza, he began to lament for

¹⁰⁶ Wilhelm and Boese, “Absolute Chronologie und die hethitische Geschichte,” 74-117.

¹⁰⁷ Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 29.

[Zanna]nza.”¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Sayce’s 1926 translation of Muršili’s “Second Plague Prayer” KUB 14.8 states, “Accordingly thereupon my father gave them his son; thereupon they conducted him (to Egypt). Then they murdered (him). And he was buried (?) there.”¹⁰⁹ Most of the other translations of KUB 14.8 state that the son was murdered, but do not mention the burial.¹¹⁰ It is an interesting bit of information because it at least indicates that Zannanza made it to Egypt. If *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and Muršili’s “Second Plague Prayer” reference the same event, as they appear to, they both imply that Zannanza’s murder and burial occurred shortly after Šuppiluliuma sent his son to Egypt.

Neither these sources nor KUB 19.20, the apparent formal complaint from an unnamed Hittite king to an unnamed Egyptian pharaoh regarding the death of the Hittite king’s son, mention anything about the son living in Egypt for any length of time before being killed. If Smenkhkare was Zannanza, one would certainly expect to find some mention in the sources that he lived in Egypt for a time, was successfully married to the queen, and ruled as pharaoh. Unfortunately, the sources are mute on all accounts. There are no records of wedding gifts sent, no diplomatic exchanges between father and son, and no known artifacts that indicate that Egypt was ruled by a foreigner during this period, especially a Hittite. We are left only with a statement that the Hittite king sent his son and that the son was murdered by the Egyptians.

¹⁰⁸ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 31 5’-11’.

¹⁰⁹ KUB 14.8 22’-23’ in Sayce, “What Happened after the Death of Tut‘ankhamūn,” 168.

¹¹⁰ For example, see Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, 58.

KIYA

While little is known for certain about Meritaten, less is known about Kiya. She was depicted with the same Nubian wig as Nefertiti, but she was never shown with the royal uraeus cobra.¹¹¹ Thus, she may have been a secondary wife of Akhenaten and not a member of the royal family.¹¹² Noting a picture on a block found at Hermopolis, Reeves contends that Akhenaten and Kiya are shown at virtually the same size, testifying to her importance.¹¹³ As noted above, Nefertiti enjoyed such status in Amarna art. Historians can only speculate as to the meaning of Kiya's portrayal, whether this points to Nefertiti's death before Akhenaten or whether Kiya was elevated for another reason.

Kiya's elevated status may have flowed from her connection with the royal family as the mother of a male heir, Tutankhamun.¹¹⁴ If true, she must be the "younger lady" found in KV35.¹¹⁵ Since DNA evidence indicates that KV35LY was a sibling of KV55 (father of Tutankhamun, probably Akhenaten), that would open the possibility that Nefertiti was the daughter of Ay, as discussed above. It would also mean that Nefertiti's mummy has yet to be found or has not been identified.

If Nefertiti was still alive at the time of Tutankhamun's birth, as is likely based on Tutankhamun's age compared to the ages of the daughters depicted in Akhenaten and Nefertiti's royal family scenes, Kiya's ability to produce a male heir may have threatened the Great Queen.¹¹⁶ If, instead, Meritaten had already taken Nefertiti's place as Great

¹¹¹ Fletcher, *The Search for Nefertiti*, 272.

¹¹² Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology," 263.

¹¹³ Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 159.

¹¹⁴ For a lengthy discussion of Kiya and the possibility that she bore Tutankhamun, see Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 81-83.

¹¹⁵ Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," 641.

¹¹⁶ Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 159-160.

Queen or if Meritaten had already begun her rule with Smenkhkare, Kiya's ability to produce a male heir may have threatened Meritaten's position as well. Either way, Kiya's ability to produce a male heir would have made her quite vulnerable upon the death of Akhenaten. Perhaps she even feared Ay, particularly if he was Nefertiti's father. Certainly, such vulnerability could have caused her to fear those around her, leading her to write the Daḥamunzu letters.

While Kiya appears to be a good fit for Daḥamunzu with Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya, such identification is not without a host of problems. The most important strike against Kiya as Daḥamunzu is that she was almost certainly not a member of the royal family. Because she was never the Great Queen, it is hard to imagine why Šuppiluliuma eventually acquiesced to her request for a son. According to *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, "therefore the queen of Egypt, who was Daḥamunzu(?), sent a messenger."¹¹⁷ Other translations of KBo 5.6 iii also identify Daḥamunzu as "the queen of Egypt" or "the Egyptian queen." Because the text identifies Daḥamunzu as "the" queen of Egypt, and because Kiya was never depicted as a ruling queen, it seems quite unlikely that Šuppiluliuma or his scribes would have identified her as "the queen." This is particularly the case considering the investigation Ḫattuša-ziti conducted at Šuppiluliuma's request.

In addition to her common origins, perhaps the most important reason to doubt that Kiya was Daḥamunzu is found in evidence which suggests that she died before Akhenaten. If so, it is inconceivable that she could have been Daḥamunzu. Kiya's name

¹¹⁷ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 8'-9'.

no longer appeared on monuments after Akhenaten's 9th year, at about the time when Tutankhamun was born. The reason for her untimely death, according to Bob Brier and other historians, is that she may have died in childbirth.¹¹⁸ Evidence of Kiya's early death may be found in "mourning scenes" on the walls of room Y of the Royal Tomb at Amarna. The scenes appear to show Akhenaten and Nefertiti in mourning over a presumably dead girl on a bed. Someone in the background holds a baby, who is shielded from the sun by an umbrella and who is suckling from the woman holding him or her. Bob Brier contends that the scene shows the death of Kiya, the suspected mother of Tutankhamun, during childbirth. The baby would therefore be Tutankhamun.¹¹⁹ If Brier is correct, Kiya could not have been Daḥamunzu because she died while Akhenaten and Nefertiti still lived. Jacobus van Dijk, however, contends that the dead girl on the bed is Meketaten, a younger sister of Meritaten and Ankhesenamun, and not Kiya. Rather than the Tutankhamun, van Dijk claims that the baby being carried away is the *ka* of the dead princess.¹²⁰ If van Dijk is correct, there must be another explanation for Kiya's absence from monuments after Akhenaten's 9th year. Nevertheless, it appears that Kiya was no longer in the picture at the time of Akhenaten's death, so she could hardly have been in a position to write the Daḥamunzu letters.

¹¹⁸ Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 83.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹²⁰ Jacobus van Dijk, "The Death of Meketaten" in *Causing His Name to Live: Studies in Egyptian Epigraphy and History in Memory of William J. Murnane*, edited by Peter J. Brand and Louise Cooper (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 88.

AKHENATEN

The case for Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya hinges almost exclusively on the identification of Daḥamunzu. As demonstrated above, there are serious problems with Nefertiti, Meritaten, and Kiya as Daḥamunzu, which casts serious doubt on Akhenaten as a candidate for Nibḥururiya. However, since Akhenaten is the favored candidate of many scholars, it is worthwhile to examine his candidacy for Nibḥururiya independently from Daḥamunzu, particularly with regard to chronology.

According to a compact interpretation of Egyptian, Syrian, and Hittite chronology, the sources could support the possibility that Akhenaten was Nibḥururiya. For example, several of the Amarna Letters seem to tie into the events of the Daḥamunzu Affair, particularly those regarding Aziru of Amurru and Hittite attacks on Amka.¹²¹ As noted above, *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* state that the death of Nibḥururiya occurred before a Hittite attack on Amka, causing the Egyptians to become afraid, and prompting Daḥamunzu to write her letters. Šuppiluliuma sent his generals Lupakki and Tarḥuntazalma to attack Amka, the same generals also named in KUB 31.121a. According to EA 170, Hittite generals Lupakku and Zitana attacked Amka. Supporters of Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya point to the similarities of the names of the Hittite generals in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, KUB 31.121a, and EA 170 as evidence that the three sources reference the same attack on Amka. Supporters of Akhenaten also claim that EA 170 was probably addressed to Aziru during his stay in Egypt at the request of Akhenaten, thereby

¹²¹ In particular, see EA 140, 170, 173-176, and 363.

connecting *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 31.121a with EA 170 and with Akhenaten.

A problem with linking *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, KUB 31.121a, and EA 170 through Lupakki (Lupakku) and Tarḫunta-zalma (Zitana) is that it is possible, if not likely, that Lupakki (Lupakku) and Tarḫunta-zalma (Zitana) attacked Amka on more than one occasion. Muršili's "Second Plague Prayer" states, "The second tablet dealt with the town of Kurustamma: how the Storm-god of Hatti carried the men of Kurustamma to Egyptian territory and how the Storm-god of Hatti made a treaty between them and the men of Hatti."¹²² Muršili does not mention why the "men of Kuruštama" entered the Egyptian-controlled Amka region. However, he mentions that their entrance into Amka ended in a treaty, which indicates that the men of Kuruštama had military motives when entering Amka. This is especially likely since the treaty was brokered through the "Storm-god of Hatti," one of the warrior gods of the Hittite pantheon. Further indication that the men of Kuruštama were part of a military expedition is that Muršili mentions their incursion into Amka and the subsequent treaty as his introduction to his description of the Amka attack that sparked the Daḫamunzu letters and created the circumstances that brought plague to Hatti. Thus, it seems likely that the men of Kuruštama, perhaps led by Lupakki, were soldiers who attacked Amka and were forced to negotiate a treaty with Egypt. Then, at a later time, Šuppiluliuma sent Lupakki to attack Amka again, this time prompting the Daḫamunzu letters.

¹²² KUB 14.8 A obv. 13'-17'.

It is certainly possible that the Amka attack in EA 170 occurred earlier than the Amka attack described in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 31.121a, which describe a second attack. The earlier attack in EA 170, also led by Lupakki, may have involved the men Kuruštama. After Daḥamunzu wrote her letters and after Ḫattuša-ziti's successful investigation into Daḥamunzu's claim of having no son of her own, Šuppiluliuma found inspiration in the Kuruštama Treaty that prompted him to send his son to Egypt. It must, therefore, have been an important treaty regarding Egyptian-Hittite relations. *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* states, "So then my father concerned himself on their behalf with the matter of a son. Then my father asked for the tablet of the treaty again, (in which there was told) how formerly the Storm God took the people of Kuruštama, sons of Ḫatti, and carried them to Egypt and made them Egyptians; and how the Storm God concluded a treaty between the countries of Egypt and Ḫatti, and how they were continuously friendly with each other."¹²³ Certainly, the statement, "carried them to Egypt and made them Egyptians," is puzzling and indicates some long-ago migration rather than a military expedition. Nevertheless, the fact that a treaty was concluded indicates unrest, confrontation, or warfare. At the very least, the treaty shows that Amka was a place of contention between the Hittites and Egyptians on multiple occasions over many years, likely before and after Akhenaten's reign.

The second Hittite attack on Amka, which ultimately led to the Daḥamunzu Affair, may have been prompted by an Egyptian attack on Kadesh. Kadesh had previously been under Egyptian control, but Egyptian weakness and Hittite strength

¹²³ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 E₃ iv 25'-31'.

caused the ruler of Kadesh, Aitakama, to ally himself with the Hittites. He then attacked some Egyptian-controlled cities in Amka and tried to persuade other neighbors to join him in support of the Hittites.¹²⁴ Several of the Amarna Letters, particularly EA 53, 55, 174-176, 363, and several others state that Aitakama and the Hittites captured and burned several Egyptian-controlled cities in Amka, presumably over a long period of time. In many cases, the besieged cities and their neighbors sent letters to the pharaoh for aid, but aid was not forthcoming. For example, EA 363 pleads in desperation, “May the king, my lord, take cognizance, and may the king, my lord, give archers that we may (re)gain the cities of the king, my lord, and dwell in the cities of the king, my lord, my god, my Sun.”¹²⁵

The large number of Amarna Letters that describe Aitakama of Kadesh’s attacks and the many pleas for help indicate that several years passed without a response from the pharaoh. The plea for help in the General’s Letter was likely within this long period of apparent silence. Perhaps Akhenaten was preoccupied with his religious revolution and his Amarna project. It is also possible that he was already dead, and the administration of young Tutankhamun and his vizier Ay spent those years restoring the Egyptian religion and rebuilding the economy and military. Tutankhamun’s Restoration Stela is certainly both a harsh criticism of his father’s ineffectiveness and a statement of his own effort to reclaim Egyptian greatness.¹²⁶ The Restoration Stela was no doubt fashioned under the guidance of Ay, so perhaps the words indicate Ay’s ambitions more than that of the

¹²⁴ For example, Aitakama tried to persuade Akizzi of Katna to join the Hittites, see EA 53 11’-16’.

¹²⁵ EA 363 15’-23’.

¹²⁶ William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, ed. Edmund S. Meltzer, Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 212-214.

young and inexperienced Tutankhamun. The attack on Kadesh may have been part of the restoration. Akhenaten's apparent aversion to military activity, as the numerous unanswered pleas for aid in the Amarna Letters indicate, strongly supports the possibility that the Egyptian attack on Kadesh came from one of his successors.

Eventually, whether under Tutankhamun or Ay, Egypt attacked Kadesh. Curiously, the Amarna Letters do not mention the attack. Supporters of Akhenaten as Nibḥururiya use the omission to show that Akhenaten initiated the attack and that the attack was a failure.¹²⁷ Perhaps this prompted Tutankhamun's statement in his Restoration Stela, "The gods were ignoring this land: if an army [was] sent to Djahy to broaden the boundaries of Egypt, no success of theirs came to pass."¹²⁸ While it is certainly possible that the attack was a failure, Rameses II's famous Battle of Kadesh is one of many examples in which pharaohs used spin-doctoring to turn failure into success for propaganda purposes. Thus, it is thus unlikely that failure was enough reason for the battle's omission from the Amarna archive. A more likely reason the Amarna Letters are mute on the Egyptian attack on Kadesh is that it occurred under the reign of Tutankhamun or Ay. Perhaps the ambitious Tutankhamun, whose Restoration Stela clearly indicates military ambitions, initiated the attack. Perhaps Ay, who likely dictated the Restoration Stela on behalf of the young Tutankhamun, initiated the attack. What is clear, based on Güterbock's structuring of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, is that Egyptian attack on Kadesh led to Šuppiluliuma's attack on Amka.

¹²⁷ Schulman, "Ankhesenamun, Nofretity, and the Amka Affair," 45.

¹²⁸ Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, 213.

According to *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, there may have been a substantial delay between Aitakama's attacks on behalf of the Hittites and the Egyptian attack on Kadesh. When the Egyptian ambassador Ḫani delivered the second letter from Daḫamunzu, Šuppiluliuma replied, "I [myself] was [.....] friendly, but you, you suddenly did me evil. You [came(?)] and attacked the man of Kinza."¹²⁹ Because it is inconceivable that Šuppiluliuma was unaware of Aitakama's activities, the logical conclusion is that considerable time passed. Perhaps the Šattiwaza Treaty belongs chronologically at this point. The treaty states, "I did not seek to attack the land of Kinza. But (its king) Shutatarra, together with his son Aitaqqama and his chariotry, came against me for battle."¹³⁰ Perhaps Šuppiluliuma's attack on Kadesh pressured Aitakama to support the Hittites instead of the Egyptians. Aitakama may have had little choice given Hittite strength and Egyptian weakness. The Šattiwaza Treaty's mention of Šuppiluliuma's attacks on other cities in Amka may have been part of the reason for Egyptian delay. If, as Cordani suggests, the one year period of Šuppiluliuma's attacks was actually five years, the likelihood of an Egyptian delay increases substantially.¹³¹

Thus, the Egyptian attack on Kadesh, which may have been initiated by Tutankhamun or Ay based on the expanded chronology discussed above, may have been an effort to restore Egyptian sovereignty in Amka. The passage of time, however, may have caused Šuppiluliuma to lose sight of Egypt's prior claim to Kadesh. Thus, the delayed Egyptian attack seemed out of place and unwarranted to Šuppiluliuma. He retaliated by sending Lupakki and Tarḫunta-zalma against Amka to reclaim land he

¹²⁹ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 E₃ iv 1'-3'.

¹³⁰ Šattiwaza Treaty A obv. 40'-41'.

¹³¹ Cordani, "One-year or Five-year War?" 249.

thought belonged to him. Muršili wrote in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, “To the country of Kinza, which my father had conquered, troops and chariots of Egypt came and attacked the country of Kinza.”¹³²

When Šuppiluliuma’s anger finally abated, he then ruminated over the Kuruštama Treaty and offered his son to Daḥamunzu. Šuppiluliuma’s dramatic change of heart may have come when the Kuruštama Treaty reminded him that Kadesh had formerly been an Egyptian vassal state, and that the Egyptians merely attempted to take back what was rightfully theirs under the treaty. By attacking Amka in retaliation for the Egyptian attack on Kadesh, Šuppiluliuma realized that he had overstepped his bounds and broken the treaty. Perhaps fearing divine retribution from the Storm-god, Šuppiluliuma sought to atone for breaking the treaty by agreeing to answer Daḥamunzu’s request and sending his son to Egypt. This scenario, if true, would explain why Muršili wrote his Plague Prayers as a *mea culpa* on behalf of his deceased father.

This scenario also adds considerable time to the chronology of the Hittite incursion into Amka at the hands of the “men of Kuruštama,” the Kuruštama Treaty, Aitakama of Kadesh’s attacks on Egyptian-controlled Amka, the delayed Egyptian attack on Kadesh, and Šuppiluliuma’s attack on Amka that sparked the Daḥamunzu letters. Certainly, enough time passed to cast serious doubt on Akhenaten as a candidate for Nibḥururiya. Furthermore, given the serious problems with identifying any of Akhenaten’s wives as Daḥamunzu, Akhenaten seems an unlikely candidate for Nibḥururiya.

¹³² *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A ii 21’-23’.

SMENKHKARE

Unlike Akhenaten, far too little is known for certain about Smenkhkare to make any definitive connection between him and Nibḥururiya. As a successor of Akhenaten, the scenarios described above concerning the Kuruštama Treaty and the Egyptian attack on Kadesh could allow that Smenkhkare initiated the attack on Kadesh and was therefore Nibḥururiya. Therefore, the challenge in identifying or rejecting Smenkhkare as Nibḥururiya is less about chronology and more about understanding Smenkhkare's mysterious reign.

Howard Carter called Smenkhkare a “dim princeling,” testifying to the lack of available information about the pharaoh.¹³³ Carter was certain, however, that Smenkhkare's reign showed evidence that the religious transition back to the cult of Amun was underway.¹³⁴ One example of the transition involves Smenkhkare's name, which ends with Re, often combined with Amun as the god Amun-Re. In contrast, Meritaten's name retained the Aten ending. Unlike Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun, whose childhood references identify them as Ankhesenpaaten and Tutankhaten, Meritaten seems to have kept her heretical Aten name and is nowhere identified as “Meritamun” or “Meritre.” Carter points out, however, that Tutankhamun's ecclesiastical throne shows elements of both Aten and Amun side by side.¹³⁵ Therefore, it is clear that

¹³³ Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tutankhamun: Discovered by the Late Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter*, vol. 3, *The Annex and Treasury* (London: Cassell, 1923. Reprint, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 11.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

Tutankhamun's reign was affected by the religious transition as well. There is much we do not know about the post-Amarna period.

One of the greatest mysteries surrounding Smenkhkare is the association between the names Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare and Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten. Because Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten is sometimes identified as Nefertiti, some Egyptologists speculate that Nefertiti changed her name from Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten (or simply Neferneferuaten) to Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare (Smenkhkare) to rule as a male.¹³⁶ If Nefertiti changed her name to rule as the male Smenkhkare, she could not have been Daḥamunzu with Akhenaten as her Nibḥururiya. In fact, Nefertiti's rule as a pharaoh all but eliminates her entirely from consideration as Daḥamunzu. The power she would have wielded as pharaoh, as noted above, gave her the security that Daḥamunzu appears to have lacked. Furthermore, it is quite unlikely that she would have freely chosen to bequeath such power to a husband, especially a Hittite. It is important to recall, however, that Meryre II's Amarna tomb depicts the royal couple "King Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare-djeserkheperu and his Great Wife, Mery(et)aten."¹³⁷ It makes little sense that Nefertiti, if she were Smenkhkare, would have taken a Great Wife. Hatshepsut, who ruled as a male and donned the false beard to look the part, did nothing of the sort. Thus, Smenkhkare was likely a male.

Smenkhkare's origins, if he were indeed a male, are unknown. Like Tutankhamun, Smenkhkare was not pictured in the family scenes with Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and the daughters. However, again like Tutankhamun, this does not exclude the

¹³⁶ Fletcher, *The Search for Nefertiti*, 327.

¹³⁷ Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 29.

possibility that he was a member of the family or extended family. Therefore, it seems quite unlikely that Šuppiluliuma's chamberlain, Ḫattuša-ziti, did not find Smenkhkare during his investigation into the veracity of Daḫamunzu's statement that she had no sons. Thus, as noted above, the Daḫamunzu Affair probably occurred during his reign during the reigns of Tutankhamun or Ay.

Dating Smenkhkare's reign is challenging due to the lack of information on him, but it is quite likely that he co-ruled with Akhenaten for a few years and may have ruled alone for a brief time. Wilhelm and Boese, who equate Smenkhkare with Nibḫururiya, cite EA 41 as evidence that Smenkhkare outlived Akhenaten.¹³⁸ Thus, Smenkhkare could have been Nibḫururiya. As noted above, EA 41 is a letter from Šuppiluliuma to an Egyptian king named Ḫuriya, in which Šuppiluliuma questions why his gifts had not been reciprocated by the Egyptian king, in accordance with the brotherhood of kings.¹³⁹ Wilhelm and Boese's attempt to link Smenkhkare with EA 41 is problematic, as its contents are quite general and there are no people or events named to help identify exactly when and to whom it was written. In it, Šuppiluliuma notes the friendly relationship he enjoyed with Ḫuriya's father, particularly with regard to the exchange of gifts. Šuppiluliuma writes, "Whatsoever your father said to me, I *indeed* did absolutely eve[ry]thing. And my own request, *indeed*, that I made to your father, he never refused; he game me absolutely everything."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Wilhelm and Boese, "Absolute Chronologie und die hethitische Geschichte," 97.

¹³⁹ Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 114-115.

¹⁴⁰ EA 41 10'-13'.

The references to Huriya's "father" in EA 41, if it was addressed to Smenkhkare, point to a relationship between Smenkhkare and Akhenaten. However, EA 41 also fits Tutankhamun, especially given the known DNA relationship between Tutankhamun and other members of the royal line.¹⁴¹ Therefore, there is no other strong evidence to support that Smenkhkare was EA 41's Huriya or that he outlived Akhenaten. In addition, the tremendous lack of information on Smenkhkare and the confusion regarding his reign and the reign of Neferneferuaten point instead to the likelihood that Smenkhkare co-ruled with Akhenaten and/or Nefertiti and could not possibly have been Nibhururiya.

David Aston's analysis of wine and oil jars supports the likelihood that Smenkhkare ruled briefly, perhaps only as a co-regent of Akhenaten or with a very short period of sole rule. According to Aston, the wine and olive oil jars indicate no more than four years of rule for Smenkhkare.¹⁴² Since Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten appears to have ruled as co-regent within Akhenaten's reign, the wine docketets give Smenkhkare/Neferneferuaten a reign of at least three years and Meritaten a reign of at least one year. In addition, Aston notes that a maximum of four wine harvests elapsed between Akhenaten's death and Tutankhamun's move to Memphis.¹⁴³ Because Kitchen and other scholars calculate that Tutankhamun abandoned Amarna three years after Akhenaten's death, Aston's data may indicate that Smenkhkare/Neferneferuaten and Meritaten ruled as co-regents with Akhenaten throughout the entirety of their reigns or

¹⁴¹ Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," 641.

¹⁴² David A. Aston, "In Vino Veritas: A Docketed History of the New Kingdom between Year 1 of Tuthmosis III and Year 1 of Rameses II," in *Another Mouthful of Dust: Egyptological Studies in Honour of Geoffrey Thorndike Martin*, ed. Jacobus van Dijk (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 11.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12.

perhaps just a short time after his death.¹⁴⁴ Since Aston notes that Tutankhamun was not buried with wine docketts for his years 1-3, those years were probably spent at Amarna.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, if a maximum of four wine harvests elapsed between Akhenaten's death and Tutankhamun's move to Memphis, and if Tutankhamun ruled his first three years at Amarna, the four years that Smenkhkare/Neferneferuaten and Meritaten ruled must have been alongside Akhenaten in coregency with Tutankhamun's reign following Akhenaten's immediately or within just a few months. Thus, there is little chance that Smenkhkare could have been Nibḥururiya given the length of time it took for Daḥamunzu to send two letters, with Ḥattuša-ziti's investigation taking place between them.

SUMMARY

The evidence supporting Nefertiti, Meritaten, Kiya, Akhenaten, and Smenkhkare as Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya is difficult to refute, testifying to the brilliant research and reasoning of Nicholas Reeves, Gernot Wilhelm, Marc Gabolde, Joann Fletcher, and other scholars. Nevertheless, the evidence they cite in support of Nefertiti, Meritaten, Kiya, Akhenaten, and Smenkhkare struggles to overcome contradictory evidence such as the chronology of events in Syria, DNA analysis, inscriptions and art, wine docketts, and circumstantial evidence. Neither of the candidates above fits the circumstances surrounding the Daḥamunzu Affair as well as Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun or Ay. Furthermore, because Ay was perhaps the only consistent and stable presence in Egypt

¹⁴⁴ Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 33; Kitchen states that Akhenaten and Smenkhkare died in the same year, Akhenaten's 17th regnal year.

¹⁴⁵ Aston, "In Vino Veritas," 13.

during the tumultuous years between Amenhotep III's death and the Daḥamunzu Affair, Ay's death may have been the hardest loss for Egypt to endure. Ankhesenamun was left as the only surviving member of the royal family. Perhaps it was Ay's death that prompted Ankhesenamun, now truly alone and vulnerable, to do the unthinkable. She asked Egypt's most powerful enemy for one of its princes to rule Egypt as the next pharaoh.

V. RESULTS – ANKHESENAMUN, TUTANKHAMUN, AND AY

Despite Howard Carter's amazing discovery of Tutankhamun's intact tomb in 1922, remarkably little is known about Tutankhamun's life. Less is known about his Great Queen Ankhesenamun and his successor Ay. What is clear is that Tutankhamun's death left Ankhesenamun in a very precarious position. If Ay was Nefertiti's father, he was the only other surviving person biologically connected to the royal family. If not, Ankhesenamun was the last surviving member of the family, and she had to find a way to perpetuate the Eighteenth Dynasty. Evidence suggests that Ay quickly stepped into the role of pharaoh, joining forces with Ankhesenamun through coregency or marriage. However, she drops out of the historical record shortly thereafter. If she survived Ay, she would have lost her parents, her husband, and the father-figure that guided her all her life. It might have been Ay's death that led Ankhesenamun to seek a diplomatic marriage alliance to save Egypt from the growing Hittite threat and to save herself from marrying Egypt's internal threat, Horemheb.

ANKHESENAMUN

Ankhesenamun was Tutankhamun's Great Queen and his only known wife. Unlike Tutankhamun, whose childhood years were not depicted in art or attested to in texts, Ankhesenamun's image and name are found along with her sisters and her parents throughout Amarna. According to Flinders Petrie, her numerous depictions indicate her

great importance, likely due to her lineage as a daughter of Akhenaten and Nefertiti.¹⁴⁶ Ankhesenamun was their third daughter, after Meritaten and Meketaten. Howard Carter echoed Petrie appraisal of her importance, adding that the depictions show Ankhesenamun as a graceful figure, who appears to have loved her husband.¹⁴⁷ This is illustrated, according to Carter, in the depiction of Ankhesenamun anointing Tutankhamun with perfume and the depiction of the couple on a hunting expedition.¹⁴⁸ As with Akhenaten and Nefertiti's "House-shrine" stela, artwork found in Tutankhamun's tomb typically shows Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun as near equals of the same size. Clearly, powerful women who shared power with their pharaoh husbands was a feature of the late-Eighteenth Dynasty at Amarna.

In addition to the power and security Ankhesenamun enjoyed as Great Queen, she also had the guidance and support of Ay. Because Akhenaten died when Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun were still quite young, Ay was, according to Carter, the "power behind the throne" in the early years of the young couple's rule.¹⁴⁹ As noted above, he may have been biologically related to Ankhesenamun through Nefertiti, giving the young queen an added layer of security. Ankhesenamun was the third or fourth Egyptian queen under Ay's watch as vizier, following Amenhotep III's queen Tiye, Nefertiti, and perhaps Meritaten. Therefore, Ankhesenamun had an experienced and capable veteran to administer Egypt for her and her younger brother. If Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, or Tutankhamun was Nibḥururiya, it is quite possible that Ay devised or had knowledge of

¹⁴⁶ Petrie, *A History of Egypt*, 238.

¹⁴⁷ Carter and Mace, *The Tomb of Tutankhamun*, 31.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

the plan for Daḥamunzu to write to Šuppiluliuma. He was in the position to help Daḥamunzu secure a Hittite prince to make peace with a powerful adversary and ensure the continuation of the dynasty, and he was also in the position to thwart the proposed diplomatic marriage for his own benefit to claim the throne.

If Ay was Nibḥururiya, his loss must have been completely devastating for Ankhesenamun. After the deaths of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun, Ay was perhaps the last surviving member of her family. In addition, he was a pillar of continuity that stretched back to the reign of Amenhotep III. Ay knew how to run Egypt and how Egypt ran. Without him, Ankhesenamun was truly alone. In addition, she had to deal with members of the brotherhood of kings, who were likely aware of Egypt's vulnerability. She may also have had a greater threat from within Egypt, the powerful general Horemheb. Although a commoner with no known biological relationship to the royal family, Horemheb's monuments and titles indicate that he considered himself the rightful successor of Tutankhamun. Because Ay succeeded Tutankhamun for reasons not yet entirely clear, Horemheb may have seen Ankhesenamun as his avenue to pharaonic power after Ay's death. Perhaps Horemheb was the "commoner" Daḥamunzu refused to marry.

Ankhesenamun became the favored choice for Daḥamunzu among early Egyptologists and Hittitologists because of the similarity between the names "Ankhesenamun" and "Daḥamunzu." Archibald Sayce wrote of the connection between them, "the queen of Tut-onkh-amen was Onkh-s-pa-aten, altered to Onkh-s-amen. A form

Ta-onkh-s-amen might yield Da-kh-amen.”¹⁵⁰ In 1926, Sayce translated KBo 5.6, fragment 28, A iii 7-9 of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* as follows, “Now their lord Bibkhourias had recently died, so the Egyptian queen whose name was Dakhamūn dispatched an envoy to my father.”¹⁵¹ Hans Güterbock’s 1956 translation states, “And since, in addition, their lord Nibḫururiya had died, therefore the queen of Egypt, who was Daḫamunzu(?), sent a messenger to my father.”¹⁵² The Sayce translation clearly indicates his contention that “Daḫamunzu” was the Egyptian queen’s name. In addition to the obvious situational similarities between “Ankhesenamun” and “Daḫamunzu,” Sayce no doubt noticed the linguistic similarities between the names.¹⁵³ Many scholars today adhere to the theory that the Hittite scribe used “Daḫamunzu” as a title for the Egyptian queen and not as a personal name. Walter Federn proposed the title theory in 1960, noting the similarity of “Daḫamunzu” to the Hittite rendering of the Egyptian title *T’*, *ḫm(-t) nsw*, “The King’s Wife.”¹⁵⁴

While it is certainly possible that “Daḫamunzu” was used as a title, the context in which the word appears in KBo 5.6 A iii 8 indicates that it was included as a personal name, likely a rendering of “Ankhesenamun.” First, one must consider the fact that communications between the Hittites and Egyptians during this period included personal names in the greetings. For example, both Šuppiluliuma’s and Šattiwaza’s versions of the Šattiwaza Treaty use the personal names of the respective kings in addition to their titles

¹⁵⁰ Sayce, “Texts from the Hittite Capital Relating to Egypt,” 67.

¹⁵¹ Sayce, “What Happened after the Death of Tut’ankhamūn,” 170.

¹⁵² *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 7’-9’.

¹⁵³ Note that the “ḫ” in Daḫamunzu contains “k” and “h” sounds as in Sayce’s “Dakhamūn.”

¹⁵⁴ Federn, “Daḫamunzu (KBo V 6 iii 8),” 33.

in the opening greetings. Šuppiluliuma’s version of the treaty begins, “When My Majesty, Suppiluliuma, Great King, Hero, King of Hatti, Beloved of the Storm-god, and Artatama, king of the land of Hurri, made a treaty with one another.”¹⁵⁵ Šattiwaza’s version begins, “[Thus says] Shattiwaza, son of Tushratta, king of [the land] of Mittanni.”¹⁵⁶ The same pattern of personal name and title used together is a common feature of other treaties and records. The Amarna Letters follow the same pattern, indicating that the use of both personal name and title in greetings was common practice. For example, EA 41 begins, “[Thus the Sun], Šuppiluliumaš, G[reat] King, [king of Ḫat]ti. Say to Ḫuriy[a, the king of Eg]ypt, my brother”¹⁵⁷ Given the ubiquity of the use of personal names in conjunction with titles in other Hittite and Egyptian texts, the phrase “the queen of Egypt, who was Daḫamunzu,” with “the queen of Egypt” as the title and “Daḫamunzu” as the personal name, follows common practice. In fact, it would seem quite out of place if “the queen of Egypt” and “Daḫamunzu” were both titles and used without also including the queen’s personal name.

The fact that “Ankhesenamun” and “Daḫamunzu” are similar but not exactly the same is to be expected given the scribal variations of the time. Because the Daḫamunzu letters were repackaged into *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* at a later date, the differences between the names “Ankhesenamun” and “Daḫamunzu” can be explained by the scribal variations common to other documents that were copied, translated, and recopied by scribes. Flinders Petrie offers the following example from the Amarna Letters, “The

¹⁵⁵ Šattiwaza Treaty A obv. 1’-4’.

¹⁵⁶ Šattiwaza Treaty B obv. 1’-2’.

¹⁵⁷ EA 41 1’-3’.

throne name Amenhotep III, which we render as Neb-maat-ra, was variously vocalized by the cuneiform scribes as Nimmuria, Nammuria, Nimutriya, or Mimmuria; these variations show how little exactness can be expected in cuneiform versions of names.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, a rendering of “Ankhesenamun” as “Daḥamunzu” falls within the norm, and the similarity between the names is a significant indication that they are the same personal name.

Güterbock’s transliteration of KBo 5.6 A iii 8 is inconclusive in settling the debate regarding the name “Daḥamunzu.” According to Güterbock, line 8 states, “*im-ma-ak-ku* BA.BAD *nu* SAL.LUGAL ^{URU}Mi-iz-ra ku-iš ^{SAL}Da-ḥa-mu-un-zu-us(?)”¹⁵⁹ Because “^{SAL}Da-ḥa-mu-un-zu-us” can be broken into SAL=great, DAM=wife, many scholars see evidence that Daḥamunzu was used as a title.¹⁶⁰ However, the preceding word, “ku-iš” or “kuiš,” can be translated as “whose name was,” indicating that “Daḥamunzu” was a personal name. The simple fact that “Ankhesenamun” and “Daḥamunzu” contain so many similarities complicates this matter and allows scholars to continue the debate. Because other similar Hittite and Egyptian documents include both the personal name and the title, the name “Daḥamunzu” must be a rendering of the personal name “Ankhesenamun.”

If Ankhesenamun and Daḥamunzu were one and the same, Ankhesenamun’s circumstances following the death of either Tutankhamun or Ay corroborate what

¹⁵⁸ Petrie, *Syria and Egypt*, 27.

¹⁵⁹ Güterbock, “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma,” 94.

¹⁶⁰ The Linguistics Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin has a useful Hittite linguistics resource known as “Hittite Online,” trans. Sara E. Kimball, Winfred P. Lehmann, and Jonathan Slocum, <https://lrc.la.utexas.edu/eieol/hitol>.

Daḥamunzu wrote in her letters to Šuppiluliuma. Daḥamunzu wrote, “My husband died. A son I have not.”¹⁶¹ Although pharaohs often had multiple wives and concubines in a harem, the Great Queen had just the pharaoh for a husband. If she failed to please him, or if she was unable to provide an heir, she had little say in the pharaoh’s exploits with other women in the harem. We will probably never know whether Tutankhamun took advantage of such options or whether the loving depictions of the young couple indicate that the two were a monogamous pair, but we are fairly certain that the couple did not produce any viable heirs. Tutankhamun was entombed with two female fetuses, mummified as if they were dear to the deceased king.¹⁶² DNA analysis of the fetuses has proven problematic due to their deteriorated state, but the results do indicate a likely familial connection between Tutankhamun and the fetuses.¹⁶³ Although not completely conclusive, DNA evidence indicates a possible familial connection with KV21A (one of two female mummies found in tomb KV21).¹⁶⁴ Thus, the probability that KV21A is Ankhesenamun is strong. If the DNA indications are correct, and given the lack of any other evidence that other children came from Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun, Daḥamunzu’s claim of having no son fits Ankhesenamun perfectly. Ḫattuša-ziti’s investigation would have verified the lack of heirs easily.

Daḥamunzu continued her letter with the curious statement, “Never shall I pick out a servant of mine and make him my husband? I am afraid!”¹⁶⁵ If Ankhesenamun was the only surviving member of the royal bloodline after the death of Tutankhamun,

¹⁶¹ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 10’-11’.

¹⁶² Derry, “Report Upon the Two Human Foetuses,” 115-117.

¹⁶³ Hawass et al., “Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun’s Family,” 641.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 14’-15’.

she presumably had the right to ascend to the throne in her own right. She could have taken a lover, as Hatshepsut did with Senenmut, or a consort from among one of the many powerful individuals in Egypt. After all, she had Ay to guide her through the complexities of domestic administration and Near Eastern diplomacy and warfare. It makes little sense, especially given Ay's presence, that she feared marrying a servant. That is, unless the servant was Ay. This seems highly unlikely given Ay's role throughout her life. Ay was undoubtedly a father-figure for her, whether he was her grandfather or not, who guided her and Tutankhamun after Akhenaten's death. He provided stability for the two young royals and was the "power behind the throne," presumably for her entire life. Thus, it is hard to imagine that the "servant" she feared marrying was Ay. In addition, her power as the only remaining member of the dynasty, combined with the continuity and stability Ay provided, make it unlikely that Ankhesenamun would have felt compelled to marry anyone else not of her choosing.

Whether by choice or by default, Ankhesenamun appears to have joined forces with Ay following Tutankhamun's death. A painting on the north wall of Tutankhamun's tomb shows the high priest of Amun performing the Opening of the Mouth ceremony on the deceased pharaoh. This important ceremony symbolically opened the mouth of the deceased so that its soul could reenter the now mummified body.¹⁶⁶ While the priest is shown wearing the traditional priestly leopard skin, he also has a pharaonic uraeus (cobra) on his headdress. Ay, perhaps in an effort to legitimize his succession, is depicted performing the Opening of the Mouth ceremony on his deceased predecessor.¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁶⁶ T. J. C. Baly, "Notes on the Ritual of Opening the Mouth," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 16, no. 3/4 (November 1930): 177, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3854205>.

¹⁶⁷ Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 94.

significance of the Opening of the Mouth tomb painting is that there appears to have been no gap between the death of Tutankhamun and Ay's accession. Ay was already pharaoh before Tutankhamun's tomb was sealed, and Ankhesenamun was almost certainly his pathway to the throne.

Although Ankhesenamun nearly disappears from the historical record after Ay's accession, there is some evidence that she lived in the background during his reign. One key piece of evidence is the so-called Newberry Ring. Percy Newberry observed a blue glass finger-ring with an engraved bezel bearing the cartouches of Ay and Ankhesenamun. According to Newberry, the side by side appearance of Ay and Ankhesenamun's names on the "Newberry ring" indicates an alliance, most likely through marriage.¹⁶⁸ Other scholars, such as Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, propose that the couple did not marry but instead ruled through coregency.¹⁶⁹ Curiously, Ankhesenamun is not depicted on the walls of either Tutankhamun's or Ay's tombs. Instead, Ay's tomb depicts his wife Ty, with no references to Ankhesenamun. Bob Brier notes this peculiarity as evidence that Ay usurped the throne at Ankhesenamun's expense.¹⁷⁰ While certainly possible, it is also possible that the couple never married, and their alliance through coregency was merely Ay's effort to do what he had done for decades, administer Egypt's foreign and domestic affairs.

Because the only potential extant reference to Ankhesenamun in Egyptian-Hittite correspondence is the Daḥamunzu letters, it is difficult to establish a relative chronology

¹⁶⁸ Percy E. Newberry, "King Ay, the Successor of Tut'ankhamūn," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 18, no. 1/2 (May 1932): 50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3854904>.

¹⁶⁹ Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, *Tutankhamen: Life and Death of a Pharaoh* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1963), 277.

¹⁷⁰ Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 189.

of Ankhesenamun's life with respect to events in Syria and elsewhere. Thus, while it is possible to exclude Nefertiti and Meritaten as candidates for Daḥamunzu based on chronological evidence, it is more difficult to use chronology to establish Ankhesenamun's connection to the Daḥamunzu Affair. Nevertheless, the scant evidence of her life does indicate that she survived the reigns of Akhenaten, Neferneferuaten, Smenkhkare, and Tutankhamun. She may also have survived Ay. If for no other reason, Ankhesenamun must remain a candidate for Daḥamunzu because she was present throughout both the early and late chronologies of the events surrounding the Daḥamunzu Affair. In addition, her name closely matches "Daḥamunzu," she had no sons of her own, and her alliance with Ay indicates that she tried to keep the dynasty alive. The combination of such evidence makes her the most likely candidate for Daḥamunzu, particularly with Ay as Nibḥururiya.

TUTANKHAMUN

Tutankhamun's youthful accession to the throne, his lack of male heirs, and his young widow make him a convenient choice for Nibḥururiya. In addition, Howard Carter's discovery and the subsequent "Tutmania" created a household name recognition and nostalgia that no doubt lingers to encourage a certain bias toward the boy king. Notwithstanding such caveats for identifying Tutankhamun as Nibḥururiya, the case for Tutankhamun is very strong. His unusual tomb and the timing and nature of his burial lend support to the possibility that he was Nibḥururiya. The chronology of events in Syria concerning Egypt and the Hittites also favors Tutankhamun, as it aligns more precisely with him than with Akhenaten or Smenkhkare. However, there is much we still do not

know about the young king. Horemheb's *damnatio memoriae* campaign erased nearly all traces of the Amarna pharaohs and has made it difficult or impossible to reconstruct the lost history.

Tutankhamun's parentage is uncertain, but the identity of his parents is significant to his identification as Nibḥururiya. If he was indeed the son of Akhenaten, his death meant that Ankhesenamun was the last female member of the dynasty. Thus, her options regarding prospective spouses determined the fate of the dynasty and of Egypt's future stability, the preservation of *maat*. As noted above, DNA evidence indicates that he was the son of the KV55 mummy (Akhenaten?) and the grandson of the KV35 mummy (Amenhotep III?).¹⁷¹ Thus, he was a member of the royal family and likely a brother or half-brother of Ankhesenamun. Tutankhamun was not depicted with his sisters in the "House Shrine" image or similar portraits of the royal family, but was named as a prince on a block found at Hermopolis. The inscription states, "King's son, of his body, his beloved, Tutankhaten."¹⁷² His mother was KV35YL, who might have been Nefertiti, but could also have been Kiya or another lesser wife of Akhenaten.¹⁷³ Regardless of his mother's identity, the combination of DNA evidence and archaeological evidence makes a biological link between Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun almost certain.

If Tutankhamun's death meant the loss of her husband and brother, Ankhesenamun may have felt distraught enough to write the Daḥamunzu letters.

¹⁷¹ Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," 641.

¹⁷² Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 81; see also Dodson's analysis of the block with an image of it in Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 15.

¹⁷³ Hawass et al., "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family," 641; Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 82.

However, such speculation requires substantiation by the sources. One of the most important pieces of source evidence that suggests that Tutankhamun was Nibḥururiya is his prenomen *nb ḥprw rʿ* or *neb kheperu ra* “Nebkheperure,” translated as “the possessor of the manifestations of Re.”¹⁷⁴ Because the prenomen, or throne name, was typically used in correspondence with the members of the brotherhood of kings, the similarity between “Nebkheperure” and “Nibḥururiya” is significant. Akhenaten’s prenomen *nefer kheperu ra, wa en ra* “Neferkheperure-waenre” is much harder to equate with “Nibḥururiya.”¹⁷⁵ Likewise the other candidates for Nibḥururiya have prenomens that bear little resemblance to “Nibḥururiya.” They are as follows: Neferneferuaten = *ankh kheperu ra* “Ankhkheperure,” Smenkhkare = *semenekh ka ra, djoser kheperu* “Smenkhkare-djoserkheperu,” Ay = *kheper kheperu ra, ir maat* “Kheperkheperure-irmaat.”¹⁷⁶ Only Tutankhamun’s prenomen “Nebkheperure” is a close match for Daḥamunzu’s late husband, Nibḥururiya.

Along with Tutankhamun’s prenomen, the circumstances of his life also make him a likely candidate for Nibḥururiya. As addressed above with Ankhesenamun as the author of the Daḥamunzu letters, Tutankhamun had no known surviving biological heirs. The fetuses found in his tomb are likely his daughters, and no other archaeological or textual evidence indicates that he had a biological heir. Under such circumstances, Tutankhamun may have looked to Ay and Horemheb as potential heirs. Tutankhamun

¹⁷⁴ Ronald J. Leprohon, *The Great Name: Ancient Egyptian Royal Titulary*, ed. Denise M. Doxey, Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 106; for an image of the cartouche and for additional discussion regarding Tutankhamun’s name, see Nicholas Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 25.

¹⁷⁵ Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 104.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

appointed Ay as “king’s eldest son,” perhaps to ensure that his lifelong mentor could ensure the stability that only Ay could provide.¹⁷⁷ This may indicate that Ay served as Tutankhamun’s co-regent, perhaps as Tutankhamun’s insurance that his succession would be secure until the birth of a son or as Ay’s effort to position himself to assume power.¹⁷⁸ Perhaps Tutankhamun also positioned Horemheb as a possible successor, which makes sense given Ay’s advanced age. An inscription on statues of Horemheb and Mutnodjmet at the Egyptian Museum in Turin state that Tutankhamun appointed Horemheb as “Supreme Chief of the land in order to carry out the laws of the Two Lands as Hereditary Prince of this entire land.”¹⁷⁹ While it is certainly possible that the evidence that Ay and Horemheb positioned themselves as heirs to usurp Tutankhamun’s throne, it is also quite likely that Tutankhamun hand-picked Ay and Horemheb as potential successors in the event of his untimely death. Either way, such evidence makes it certain that Tutankhamun had no heirs of his own, making him a strong candidate for Nibḥururiya.

Tutankhamun’s death and the peculiarities surrounding his burial and succession may also provide evidence that he was Nibḥururiya. Bob Brier proposed an interesting theory, in his book *The Murder of Tutankhamen: A True Story*, that Ay may have murdered the boy king to seize the throne.¹⁸⁰ Brier’s theory helps answer many questions regarding Tutankhamun’s unusual burial and the reason for the Daḥamunzu letters.

However, recent analyses of Tutankhamun’s skull and spine have challenged Brier’s

¹⁷⁷ Donald B. Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 216.

¹⁷⁸ Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 188.

¹⁷⁹ Van Dijk, “Horemheb and the Struggle for the Throne of Tutankhamun,” 35-36.

¹⁸⁰ For a summary of Brier’s arguments, see Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 207.

theory that a blow to the head led to the king's eventual death.¹⁸¹ CT scans and other tests indicate that Tutankhamun's most likely cause of death was a combination of diseases, including malaria, as well as complications from a complex fracture in his right knee.¹⁸² Whether it was murder, infectious disease, or a fatal fracture, it is clear that Tutankhamun's death was unexpected and premature, suggesting that some scrambling at court invariably followed his abrupt death.

The design of Tutankhamun's tomb is somewhat unique for a pharaoh. It lacks the descending stairways and corridors that were typical of tombs following the model inspired by the tomb of Thutmose III. KV62 also lacks piers in the burial chamber and a tomb robbers' shaft or "well room."¹⁸³ According to Marianne Eaton-Krauss, Tutankhamun's tomb was originally meant for someone else, as it was more suitable for lesser members of the royal family than for the pharaoh himself.¹⁸⁴ The walls of the tomb do not contain the abundance of murals and inscriptions that decorate other pharaonic tombs, and the paintings contain blotches of mold that now mar the images.¹⁸⁵ Hasty painting without sufficient drying time before the tomb was sealed may explain the minimalist nature of the artwork, as well as the mold.

¹⁸¹ For example, see Richard S. Boyer et al., "The Skull and Cervical Spine Radiographs of Tutankhamun: A Critical Appraisal." *AJNR (American Journal of Neuroradiology)* 24 (June/July 2003): 1145, <http://www.ajnr.org/content/24/6/1142.full>.

¹⁸² Kais Hussein, Ekatrina Matin, and Andreas G. Nerlich, "Paleopathology of the Juvenile Pharaoh Tutankhamun--90th Anniversary of Discovery," *Virchows Archiv* 463, no. 3 (June 2013): 477, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy1.apus.edu/docview/1433081120?accountid=8289>.

¹⁸³ Marianne Eaton-Krauss, *The Unknown Tutankhamun* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 92.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁸⁵ For color photographs of Tutankhamun's wall art, see Zahi Hawass, *Discovering Tutankhamun: From Howard Carter to DNA* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2013), 96-97; for a description of the mold on the paintings, see Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun*, 72.

In addition to the tombs peculiarities, perhaps as much as 80% of the funerary objects within the tomb appear to have been designed for someone else, perhaps Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten or Nefertiti.¹⁸⁶ In fact, the most well-known of all of Tutankhamun's tomb artifacts, his golden mask, was likely made for the female Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten as well.¹⁸⁷ The grave goods may have been usurped from its previous owner(s) due to the lack of time available to create such objects for the unexpectedly deceased Tutankhamun. If Nefertiti ruled as female pharaoh under the name Ankhkheperure Neferneferuaten or Ankhkheperure Smenkhkare, her rule may have made her grave goods and her tomb an easy target for reuse to fill the tomb of her son or step-son.¹⁸⁸

Tutankhamun's tomb and grave goods point to scrambling, disorder, and desperation in the wake of his death, the sort of "damage control" that could have led Ankhesenamun to write the Daḥamunzu letters. The unusual circumstances of his burial may also provide clues to establish whether Tutankhamun's death fits into the chronology of the Daḥamunzu Affair. Percy Newberry spent considerable time examining the botanical finds in Tutankhamun's tomb, particularly the floral collar that rested upon the innermost coffin around the golden facemask. The flowers were blue and yellow, with faience rings and red and yellow fruits, matching the collars worn by Tutankhamun and

¹⁸⁶ Nicholas Reeves, "The Burial of Nefertiti?" (Amarna Royal Tombs Project, 2015), 4.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., "Tutankhamun's Mask Reconsidered," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 19 (2015): 519.

¹⁸⁸ Thutmose III had Hatshepsut's cartouches and images chiseled out, perhaps in response to her rule as a female pharaoh. It is important to note that historians are not in agreement as to Thutmose's motives regarding the defacing of Hatshepsut's name and images.

Ankhesenamun as depicted on Tutankhamun's golden throne.¹⁸⁹ Newberry's examination led him to believe that Tutankhamun was buried sometime between mid-March and the end of April.¹⁹⁰ Given the traditional seventy-day mummification process, Tutankhamun must therefore have died sometime between the beginning of January and mid-February.

The chronology of Tutankhamun's death and burial must be compared to the evidence of the Daḥamunzu Affair in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and sources such as KUB 19.9 to establish a relationship between Tutankhamun and Nibḫururiya. Fragment 28 of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* states in section A, column i, "And when [Šuppiluliuma] had reestablished [the country of Ištaḫara], he came back to Ḫattuša to spend the winter."¹⁹¹ Column ii continues the story, "Tribal troops came in multitude and attacked [Telipinu's] army by night. Then the gods of his father helped my brother, (so that) he defeated the tribal troops of the enemy and [slew] them."¹⁹² Several towns subsequently submitted to him out of fear, but Carchemish resisted. So, Telipinu left 600 troops under command of Lupakki in nearby Murmuriga to hold the region while Telipinu traveled to Ḫattuša to consult with Šuppiluliuma. With Telipinu gone, Hurrian troops surrounded Lupakki's forces at Murmuriga and "were superior to the troops and chariots of Ḫatti who were (there)."¹⁹³ Then, Mušili continues *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* with the account of the Egyptian attack on Kadesh. Šuppiluliuma, hearing

¹⁸⁹ F. Nigel Hepper, *Pharaoh's Flowers: The Botanical Treasures of Tutankhamun* (London: HMSO, 1990), 9.

¹⁹⁰ Percy E. Newberry, "Report on the Floral Wreaths found in the Coffins of Tut·ankh·Amen," in *The Tomb of Tutankhamun: Discovered by the Late Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter*, vol. 2, *The Burial Chamber* by Howard Carter (London: Cassell, 1923. Reprint, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 140.

¹⁹¹ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A i 48'-50'.

¹⁹² *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A ii 1'-3'.

¹⁹³ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A ii 19'-20'.

about the plight of Lupakki at Murmuriga and the attack on Kadesh, sent his son Arnuwanda and a “chief pretorian” named Zita to attack the Hurrians.¹⁹⁴ A battle ensued, and the Hittites prevailed. Šuppiluliuma then traveled to the region. However, instead of engaging the Hurrians, he traveled to Carchemish. *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* are fragmentary at the bottom of column ii, but it appears Šuppiluliuma captured and occupied the city.¹⁹⁵ Column iii begins with the setup for the Daḥamunzu Affair, “While my father was down in the country of Carchemish, he sent Lupakki and Tarḫunta(?) - zalma forth into the country of Amka... But when the people of Egypt heard of the attack on Amka, they were afraid. And since, in addition, their lord Nibḫururiya had died, therefore the queen of Egypt, who was Daḥamunzu(?), sent a messenger to my father.”¹⁹⁶ If all of the above events occurred in the first few months of the year, after Šuppiluliuma wintered in Ḫattuša, a great deal of activity preceded Šuppiluliuma’s entry into Carchemish and reception of the Daḥamunzu letters. Given that Tutankhamun died in January or February and was buried in March or April, as his tomb flowers suggest, the events of Fragment 28 A of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* make it possible that Tutankhamun was Nibḫururiya.

KUB 19.9 may provide additional insight into the chronology of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*. KUB 19.9 states, “These (i.e. all the lost Anatolian territories), my grandfather Suppiluliuma brought back until he had reduced them to order. And he took 20 years until he had reconquered them. But when my grandfather Suppiluliuma entered

¹⁹⁴ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A ii 29’-30’.

¹⁹⁵ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A ii 42’-46’, E₂ 6’-13’.

¹⁹⁶ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 1’-9’.

the Hurri-land, then he vanquished all the Hurri-lands, and he fixed the boundary on yon side, (at) the land of Qadesh (and) the land of Amurru, and vanquished the king of Egypt.”¹⁹⁷ Certainly, the mention of the Hittite defeat of the Hurrians and retaliation against Egypt for its attack on Kadesh matches Fragment 28 A of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*. However, recall that Šuppiluliuma sent his son Arnuwanda and the “chief pretorian” Zita to attack the Hurrians, while Šuppiluliuma himself bypassed the Hurrians to attack Carchemish instead. *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* states, “when, however, my father came down into the country, he did not meet the enemy from the Hurrian country... So he went down to (the town of) Carchemish and surrounded it.”¹⁹⁸ KUB 19.9 states, “Šuppiluliuma entered the Hurri-land, then he vanquished all the Hurri-lands.” Thus, *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and KUB 19.9 appear to disagree as to Šuppiluliuma’s actions. Perhaps KUB 19.9 equates Šuppiluliuma’s attack on the Hurrians with Arnuwanda and Ziti’s attack at his request, but the differences in the text make it possible that the sources describe two separate events.

If Šuppiluliuma did not attack the Hurrians himself, he may have had adequate time to reach Carchemish to receive Daḥamunzu’s letters sometime between January and April, a timeframe dictated by the flowers in Tutankhamun’s tomb. One would expect that his campaign force did not leave Ḫattuša until after the winter snows had melted and conditions favored travel. If so, Šuppiluliuma was probably still wintering in Ḫattuša when Tutankhamun died. Unless Daḥamunzu wrote her letters before Tutankhamun’s death, in the event he lingered in a terminal state for a period of time, she would have had

¹⁹⁷ KUB 19.9 i 6’-10’.

¹⁹⁸ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A ii 42’-46’.

to arrange for messengers to take the letters to Šuppiluliuma. It seems almost inconceivable that Šuppiluliuma would have had enough time to wait for favorable weather, ready his army, travel out of Ḫattuša, help Telipinu fight the “tribal troops,” and reach Carchemish, given that he received the Daḫamunzu letters there. If he did in fact attack the Hurrians on the way to Carchemish, as the Šattiwaza Treaty may indicate, it is even less likely that Šuppiluliuma reached Carchemish within the January to April window.

A great chronological problem regarding Tutankhamun as Nibḫururiya is that *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* places an intervening winter between the Daḫamunzu letters, particularly between the time Šuppiluliuma sent Ḫattuša-ziti to investigate her claim and the time he returned from Egypt with Ḫani and the second letter. According to *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, “(In the meantime) until Hattusaziti [*sic*] came back from Egypt, my father finally conquered the city of Carchemish... But when he had e[stablished] Carchemish, he [went] back into the land of Ḫatti and spe[nt] the winter in the land of Ḫatti. But when it became spring, Ḫattušaziti [came back] from Egypt, and the messenger of Egypt, Lord Ḫani, came with him.¹⁹⁹ It is difficult enough to imagine that the gap between Tutankhamun’s death in January-February and his burial in March-April could allow enough time for Šuppiluliuma to reach Carchemish, receive the first Daḫamunzu letter, send out Ḫattuša-ziti to investigate, receive Ḫani with the second Daḫamunzu letter, and send out Zannanza before Ay had himself painted on Tutankhamun’s tomb wall and succeeded to the throne before the tomb was sealed in March-April. The

¹⁹⁹ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 26’-27’, E₃ 24’-25’, A iii 44’-45’.

chronology is virtually impossible if Šuppiluliuma traveled back to Ḫattuša for the winter in the middle of those events. It seems quite unlikely that Egypt was without a king for an entire year. It is, of course, possible that Ankhesenamun ruled Egypt alone for that time, as her mother and/or sister did as Neferneferuaten/Smenkhkare. It is also possible that Ay co-ruled with Ankhesenamun for the year, perhaps orchestrating the Daḫamunzu Affair as a way of securing Ankhesenamun's place on the throne and securing peace with Ḫattuša. However, neither of these solutions accounts for Ay's portrait, with him wearing the royal uraeus on his forehead, painted on Tutankhamun's north wall in a tomb that should have been sealed seventy days after his death. A year-long exchange of letters and ambassadors seems completely out of place.

Tutankhamun is clearly the strongest candidate for Nibḫururiya, despite the chronological problem of his death and burial. The similarity of his throne name "Nebkheperure" to "Nibḫururiya" is, for some scholars, reason enough to link the young king to the Daḫamunzu Affair. Furthermore, his marriage to Ankhesenamun, the strongest candidate for Daḫamunzu, makes the likelihood that Tutankhamun was Nibḫururiya stronger still. Chronologically, it is entirely possible that Tutankhamun initiated the attack on Kadesh that ultimately sparked the Daḫamunzu Affair, as described in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and the Šattiwaza Treaty. His Restoration Stela may reflect his desire to seek bold military action to counteract his father's military weakness. The unusual nature of Tutankhamun's burial point to shock as to the untimeliness of his death, as well as desperation and scrambling to fill the void. The tone of the Daḫamunzu letters echo such trauma. However, Tutankhamun is not a perfect fit for Nibḫururiya. Ay was clearly ready to claim the throne, and Ankhesenamun had little to fear from the man

who raised and guided her and may have been her grandfather. Ay's apparently immediate accession to the throne provided almost no time for Ḫattuša-ziti to successfully investigate Daḫamunzu's claim, especially in light of the winter Ḫattuša-ziti appears to have spent in Egypt. Therefore, it is worth considering another possible candidate for Nibḫururiya, Ay.

AY

Because we know so little about Ay, particularly in light of Horemheb's *damnatio memoriae* campaign against him, it is difficult to determine his possible connections to the Daḫamunzu Affair. Historians generally place Ay after the events associated with Daḫamunzu, focusing instead on Akhenaten and Tutankhamun. However, Ay matches many of the same criteria as the Nibḫururiya of the Daḫamunzu letters. Ay was pharaoh with Ankhesenamun, the leading candidate for Daḫamunzu, as his queen or co-regent. Ay's death left Ankhesenamun without a lifelong mentor and father-figure, as well as the realization that she was the last living member of the royal family. Ay died without a biological heir, allowing Horemheb, a general with no known connection to the royal family, to take the throne. Furthermore, Ay's short reign of four years fits within the chronology of events in Syria that surround the Daḫamunzu Affair. While equating Ay with Nibḫururiya is problematic in some respects, his throne name, "Kheperkheperure," is one example, there are far too many similarities between Ay and Nibḫururiya to dismiss him as a candidate.

Howard Carter described Ay as, “Chief Priest, Court Chamberlain, and practically Court everything else.”²⁰⁰ His career may have stretched throughout the reigns of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, Neferneferuaten, Smenkhkare, and Tutankhamun. It is also possible, as the scant archaeological evidence of his life suggests, that he had a biological connection to the royal family. As discussed above, Ay may have been Nefertiti’s father. Because Nefertiti’s mummy has not been found or has not been properly identified, establishing a DNA connection is impossible. Jacobus van Dijk, therefore, pieced together various clues to establish a familial relationship between Ay and Tiye, the Great Queen of Amenhotep III. One of them was the inscription naming Ay’s wife (also named Tiye) as “Wet-nurse of the Great King’s Wife, Nefertity, Nurse of the Goddess, Ornament of the King.”²⁰¹ According to van Dijk, Ay was likely the brother of Queen Tiye and brother-in-law of Amenhotep III, which placed his wife in a position to serve as Nefertiti’s wet-nurse.²⁰² If Ay’s wife, Tiye, served as Nefertiti’s wet-nurse, it seems unlikely that Ay and Tiye were her parents. However, Ay held the prestigious title, “God’s Father,” which he retained when he became pharaoh.²⁰³ Because Yuya, Queen Tiye’s father, held the similar title, “Father-in-law of the King,” it is certainly possible that Yuya and Ay held similar positions of power in the family.²⁰⁴ Thus, Ay’s relationship to Nefertiti is unclear.

²⁰⁰ Carter and Mace, *The Tomb of Tutankhamun*, 28.

²⁰¹ Seele, “King Ay and the Close of the Amarna Age,” 169-170.

²⁰² van Dijk, “Horemheb and the Struggle for the Throne of Tutankhamun,” 32.

²⁰³ Seele, “King Ay and the Close of the Amarna Age,” 172.

²⁰⁴ Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, 19.

Ay may have had a familial connection with Nefertiti through his wife, Tiye, who is depicted in Ay's tomb as almost equal in status. Keith Seele suggests that Tiye may have had a biological connection to the royal family in addition to her connection as Nefertiti's wet-nurse, and Ay owed his position at court to her.²⁰⁵ If so, this may explain why she is depicted so prominently in his tomb, with no depictions of Ankhesenamun. Tiye's status and the lack of depictions of Ankhesenamun may indicate that Ay and Ankhesenamun did not marry after Tutankhamun's death, but ruled instead as co-regents. Without the mummies of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Ankhesenamun, we may never know Ay's connection to the royal family with any real certainty. However, it seems clear that Ay had some sort of intimate connection to the royal family and became an integral part of the royal court.

Tutankhamun's death offered both tragedy and opportunity to Ay. After the death of Akhenaten and the failure of Amarna, Ay no doubt acted as a father-figure for both Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun. Tutankhamun's untimely death left Ankhesenamun, who may have been his granddaughter, without a husband and without an heir to help her rule in the midst of the Near Eastern brotherhood of kings. Some historians, notably Bob Brier, have hypothesized that Ay exploited this opportunity to usurp the throne.²⁰⁶ The oddness of Tutankhamun's tomb, some suppose, may indicate that Ay usurped the KV23 tomb originally intended for Tutankhamun and gave the young king KV62 instead, perhaps originally meant for Ay. While certainly possible, the fact that Tutankhamun appointed Ay as "king's eldest son" may indicate that Ay's accession was legitimate

²⁰⁵ Seele, "King Ay and the Close of the Amarna Age," 171.

²⁰⁶ Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 207.

according to Tutankhamun's wishes.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, it is also possible that KV23 was not yet complete when Tutankhamun died unexpectedly. Thus, Ay was forced to find another suitable burial chamber and prepare it quickly during the seventy-day mummy preparation period.²⁰⁸

The rush to secure a finished tomb and to have it painted and stocked within seventy days may indicate that Ay continued to serve Tutankhamun as a faithful father-figure after the boy king's death. It may also explain why Tutankhamun's burial was somewhat unconventional, not due to foul play and usurpation but due to the seventy-day time constraint. In addition to the minimalism of Tutankhamun's tomb art and the mold that grew on it, as discussed above, there are other curious features of the king's burial that suggest a race against time. The coffin appears to have been shaved down and resized to fit into the sarcophagus.²⁰⁹ The burial chamber, treasury, and annex were crammed with gifts and other objects, some of which were obviously intended for Ankhkheperure.²¹⁰ Ay appears to have worked very hard to ensure that Tutankhamun was buried in a tomb befitting a pharaoh, however unconventional, and he pulled it off in seventy days.

One of the major strikes against Tutankhamun as Nibhururiya is that Ay was pharaoh before Tutankhamun's tomb was sealed, as evident from the Opening of the Mouth ceremony depicted on the north wall. Thus, there appears to have been no gap between Tutankhamun's death and Ay's ascendancy. This was standard practice in

²⁰⁷ Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 216.

²⁰⁸ Hawass, *Discovering Tutankhamun*, 47.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

pharaonic succession. William Murnane explains, “The royal myth of Pharaonic Egypt maintained that, on the death of the old king, his successor ‘arose’ the next morning on the Horus Throne of the Living.”²¹¹ Because Ay was already hand-picked by Tutankhamun as successor, the transfer of power was automatic. Thus, there would have been little or no opportunity after Tutankhamun’s death for Ankhesenamun to write her Daḥamunzu letter to Šuppiluliuma, entertain Ḫattuša-ziti’s investigation, write a second letter, send it via Ḫani to Šuppiluliuma, and await Šuppiluliuma’s decision within the seventy-day mummification process. Because Akhenaten also had successors waiting in the wings, the same would have been true following his death. After Tutankhamun died, the position of pharaoh was already filled, and Ḫattuša-ziti would have reported the news of Ay’s accession to Šuppiluliuma. He had no such news to report.

The situation was different after Ay’s death. Ay may have had a son named Nakhtmin, who served as generalissimo. Nakhtmin donated shabtis to Tutankhamun’s collection of grave goods.²¹² One broken statue states that Nakhtmin was “King’s Son [...],” which could be finished, “of his Body,” indicating Ay’s son. The statement could also be finished “of Kush,” making him a Nubian viceroy instead. Historians disagree on this point, but Aidan Dodson believes Nakhtmin was Ay’s son.²¹³ Nakhtmin referred to himself as “King’s Son.”²¹⁴ If he was Ay’s son and heir to the throne, the reality is that Ay was succeeded by Horemheb, not Nakhtmin. It is possible that Nakhtmin died before Ay, perhaps from the plague that swept through Egypt and eventually killed

²¹¹ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 229.

²¹² Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 99.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Van Dijk, “Horemheb and the Struggle for the Throne of Tutankhamun,” 33.

Šuppiluliuma or from any number of other reasons. Van Dijk offers the hypothesis that Nakhtmin's mother was Iuy, a priestess of Min and Isis from Akhmim, making it more likely that he was a grandson of Ay rather than a son.²¹⁵ Because Nakhtmin was Ay's only suspected offspring, and because Ay had no other known children, the only person waiting in the wings to accept the immediate transfer of power upon his death was general Horemheb, the other of Tutankhamun's two appointed successors. If Ankhesenamun outlived Ay, she had few options.

That Ankhesenamun lived long enough to survive Ay is a point of debate among scholars. As noted above, she is nowhere depicted in Ay's tomb, despite the fact that Ay reached the throne by marrying or co-ruling with her. One possible explanation for this is that Ankhesenamun may have been relegated to the status of a minor queen in favor of Ay's original wife, Tiye. Ay was an old man at his accession, and he was married to Tiye for a long time given that she was Nefertiti's wet-nurse. As pharaoh, Ay had the right to choose his Great Queen. If Ankhesenamun was his granddaughter, or if he saw her as a lifelong daughter-figure, he may have continued to look on Tiye as his only wife and Great Queen. Another possibility is that Horemheb, upon his accession, successfully removed Ankhesenamun's images and cartouches from Ay's tomb before it was sealed as part of his *damnatio memoriae* campaign. This is especially likely if he learned about her traitorous Daḥamunzu letters, the success of which would have placed a Hittite on the throne that he hoped to claim for himself. If Ankhesenamun's attempt to avoid marrying

²¹⁵ Van Dijk, "Horemheb and the Struggle for the Throne of Tutankhamun," 33.

Horemheb as the “servant” Daḥamunzu feared, it could explain why her name was obliterated from the historical record.²¹⁶

Horemheb held the titles of “regent” or “King’s deputy” during the reign of Ay, which Tutankhamun may have granted his generalissimo. This indicates that Tutankhamun attempted to establish Horemheb as a possible successor, much as he had done with Ay. The fact that Horemheb appears to have retained the titles during Ay’s reign may indicate that he was unhappy that Ay became Tutankhamun’s successor and had no intention of relinquishing his claim to succeed to the throne. Events in Syria at the time of Tutankhamun’s death may have kept him out in the field, and Ay seized the throne before Horemheb had the opportunity. Such a theory may provide additional explanation for the rushed and frenzied nature of Tutankhamun’s burial. Another possible explanation is that Ay and Horemheb had an understanding that the aged Ay would take the throne for his few remaining years, and that Horemheb would succeed him. Geoffrey Martin offered this theory to explain Horemheb’s retention of the titles “regent” or “King’s deputy,” which would ordinarily have been inappropriate under the circumstances.²¹⁷ Martin’s theory, however, does not adequately explain why Horemheb defaced or usurped many of Ay’s monuments and cartouches. Nakhtmin’s statues were also damaged or destroyed.²¹⁸ If Ay and Horemheb had an agreement, Horemheb’s extreme actions toward Ay’s monuments make little sense.

²¹⁶ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 14’-15’.

²¹⁷ Geoffrey T. Martin, *The Hidden Tombs of Memphis: New Discoveries from the Time of Tutankhamun and Ramesses the Great* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 50.

²¹⁸ van Dijk, “The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis,” 63.

Horemheb's *damnatio memoriae* campaign targeted monuments and depictions of everyone associated with the Amarna heresy and Atenism. Horemheb attempted to erase the Amarna period and the post-Amarna period completely. In fact, he went so far as to usurp the regnal years of Akhenaten, Neferneferuaten, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamun, and Ay.²¹⁹ Horemheb was, apparently, most successful at erasing Ankhesenamun. In fact, her body has not been found or has not been positively identified. Not only was she erased from Ay's tomb, if that indeed accounts for her absence from it, but her mummy was stripped of identification as well.

Horemheb could not, however, erase the copious references to Ankhesenamun and other Amarna-era figures from Tutankhamun's tomb. It is curious that Horemheb spared Tutankhamun's tomb from destruction when Tutankhamun's depictions and monuments outside of his tomb were defaced or usurped. Stephen Cross proposed a theory that explains why Tutankhamun's tomb was spared, and why Howard Carter found the tomb intact. Cross's theory is that a flash flood shortly after Tutankhamun's burial covered his tomb at KV62, as well as the nearby KV55 and KV63 tombs.

According to Cross, the lack of Aeolian deposits from wind-blown sand, which build up quickly in Egypt, "indicates there was no long time gap between the sealing of the tomb, the robberies, the resealings, and then the flood. Geologically speaking, the flood therefore must have occurred very soon after the final sealing of Tutankhamun's

²¹⁹ Theodore M. Davis, Gaston Maspero, George Daressy, and Lancelot Crane, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatânkhamanou* (London: Archibald Constable, 1912. Reprint, London: Gerald Duckworth, 2001), 33; Maspero claims that the 59 years attributed to Horemheb at Saqqara is a usurpation of the regnal years from the establishment of Atenism until Tutankhamun abolished it and returned to Amunism.

tomb.”²²⁰ In addition to analyzing stratigraphy and hydrology, Cross also examined the numerous seals on Tutankhamun’s tomb, comparing them to seals on other tombs. Cross speculates that the reason why there was no cartouche on seal type H in Tutankhamun’s tomb, while there was a cartouche in Thutmose IV’s tomb, is that there was no reigning king when Tutankhamun’s tomb was sealed.²²¹ The sealing may have taken place during an interregnum between his death and his successor’s coronation. According to Cross, Ankhesenamun’s letter to the Hittite king may have caused an interregnum while she waited for an answer. Furthermore, the flood probably took place shortly after the funeral, so “the interregnum period must have been the time between Tutankhamun’s death and Ay’s formal accession and coronation.”²²²

On the surface, Cross’s timeline for the flood strongly suggests that Tutankhamun was Nibḥururiya, a point Cross makes based on his interpretation of the evidence.²²³ This may account for a longer interregnum between Tutankhamun’s death and his burial. However, Cross’s analysis does not appear to allow the necessary one-year gap between Tutankhamun’s death and burial, which *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*’s record about the intervening winter would require. By the time Ḫattuša-ziti returned from Egypt with Ḫani and the second Daḫamunzu letter in the spring, a year after Tutankhamun’s January-February death, the flood would already have buried the painting of pharaoh Ay performing the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. Ay was already pharaoh, a fact that

²²⁰ Stephen W. Cross, “The Hydrology of the Valley of the Kings,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 94 (2008): 309-310, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40345878>.

²²¹ Ibid., “Tutankhamen, the Re-Sealing of his Tomb, KV62,” *Ancient Egypt* 10, no. 2 (October/November 2009): 18.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

Ḫattuša-ziti could not have missed. Any interregnum, if one existed, was therefore of much shorter duration to account for a flood in October-November of the same year Tutankhamun died.²²⁴ Certainly, an intervening winter could not have taken place. Furthermore, Tutankhamun had already established both Ay and Horemheb as successors, making any lengthy interregnum unnecessary.

One additional strike against the possibility of a lengthy interregnum is that the seventy-day period between a pharaoh's death and his burial was a long-established tradition. The only recorded exception from the seventy-day burial tradition was from the Fourth Dynasty, one thousand years before Tutankhamun.²²⁵ Because Tutankhamun, with Ay's guidance, rejected the religion of Atenism in favor of a return to the traditional gods of Egypt, particularly Amun, it seems inconceivable that Ay would circumvent a tradition with such long roots. Thus, the wet paint in Tutankhamun's tomb that allowed the growth of mold, the sparse decorations, the painting of pharaoh Ay as Amun priest performing the Opening of the Mouth, and the flash flood all suggest that Tutankhamun was buried within seventy days as usual. His tomb was subsequently robbed shortly thereafter, resealed, and then, all in the same year, buried by a flash flood for the next 3,300 years.

The timing of Ḫattuša-ziti's investigation, the intervening winter in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, the seventy-day burial process, the flash flood, and Horemheb's *damnatio memoriae* campaign make it more likely that Ay, not Tutankhamun, was Nibḫururiya. As noted above, the great chronological problem regarding Tutankhamun as Nibḫururiya is that *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* places an intervening winter between the two

²²⁴ Ibid., 19.

²²⁵ Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings*, 190.

Daḥamunzu letters, specifically between the time Šuppiluliuma sent Ḥattuša-ziti to investigate her claim and the time he returned from Egypt with Ḥani and the second letter.²²⁶ If Tutankhamun died in January-February and was buried in March-April, as the flowers in his tomb indicate, there is little possibility that a winter intervened between Daḥamunzu's first letter following his death and her second letter the following spring if Tutankhamun was Nibḥururiya. This is especially true given the seventy-day embalming and mummy preparation period between death and entombment. Because Ay is portrayed on Tutankhamun's north wall painting wearing the royal uraeus on his forehead, it is certain that Ay was in control within the seventy-day mummification period and tomb sealing. Furthermore, a flash flood in October-November of the year Tutankhamun died makes it virtually impossible that he could have been Nibḥururiya. The arguments presented above concerning Akhenaten and Smenkhkare remove them as candidates for Nibḥururiya as well, leaving Ay as the remaining candidate.

Because Ay died without a male heir, the only other known claimant for the throne was Horemheb, whose exceptional thoroughness in damaging or defacing depictions and monuments of Ankhesenamun and Ay indicate that he sought revenge against them. Ankhesenamun's letters to Šuppiluliuma could have flowed from her solitude as a second-time widow, her isolation as a female in the Near East "brotherhood," the very real Hittite threat against Egypt and Egyptian possessions in Syria, and the prospect of an obligation to marry the commoner Horemheb because of his status as a chosen successor of Tutankhamun, and perhaps Ay. If Horemheb resented

²²⁶ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 26'-27', E₃ 24'-25', A iii 44'-45'.

Ay's accession before his own, Ankhesenamun had reason to fear him. After the death of Tutankhamun and Ay, and with no other successors, Horemheb was perhaps Ankhesenamun's only option. Horemheb was not a member of the royal family and was not the father-figure vizier who looked after her and Tutankhamun. That was Ay. Horemheb was truly a commoner with a prior claim to the throne, and Ankhesenamun was the sole remaining carrier of the royal bloodline. As Egypt's foremost military general, Horemheb had the means to secure his claim, and Ankhesenamun would have little choice but to marry him. Daḥamunzu's statement, "My husband died. A son I have not... Never shall I pick out a servant of mine and make him my husband? I am afraid!" fits Ankhesenamun's likely concerns about Horemheb perfectly, making Ay the likely Nibḥururiya.²²⁷

To identify Ay with Nibḥururiya, it is essential to determine whether Šuppiluliuma lived long enough to still reign over Ḫatti at the time of Ay's death. The widespread belief among Egyptologists is that Ay reigned for no more than four years. Ay's monuments attest to years 3 and 4 of his reign, while wine docketts attest only to years 1 and 2.²²⁸ Kitchen's chronology puts Šuppiluliuma's death at five years after the death of Tutankhamun, which places Ay's death before Šuppiluliuma's.²²⁹ Dodson's chronology also calculates that Ay died during Šuppiluliuma's reign.²³⁰ The fragmentary nature of documents relating to Šuppiluliuma's reign and death, however, should caution against overconfidence in accepting Kitchen's and Dodson's calculations, as Cordani

²²⁷ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 28 A iii 10'-15'.

²²⁸ Aston, "In Vino Veritas," 13.

²²⁹ Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 22.

²³⁰ Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*, 166.

warns.²³¹ Nevertheless, the available evidence supports the likelihood that Šuppiluliuma outlived Ay, allowing the possibility that Ay's death could have sparked the Daḥamunzu letters.

Ay's brief reign falls within the expanded interpretation of chronology as discussed above. Cordani's contention that the so-called One-Year War (First Syrian War) referenced in the Šattiwaza Treaty was actually a five-year war expands the chronology significantly.²³² Because Ay reigned no more than four years, the expansion from a one-year war to a five-year war provides adequate time for Ay's reign and death as Nibḥururiya. KUB 19.9 offers another expansion of the chronology, perhaps enough to allow for Ay as Nibḥururiya. KUB 19.9 states, "These (i.e. all the lost Anatolian territories), my grandfather Suppiluliuma brought back until he had reduced them to order. And he took 20 years until he had reconquered them. But when my grandfather Suppiluliuma entered the Hurri-land, then he vanquished all the Hurri-lands, and he fixed the boundary on yon side, (at) the land of Qadesh (and) the land of Amurru, and vanquished the king of Egypt."²³³ KUB 19.9 also states, "My grandfather Suppiluliuma tarried in the land of Amurru because the lands were strong (i.e. refractory), and he took 6 years until he had reduced them to order."²³⁴ Kitchen argues that the dates of the First Syrian War and the Six-Year Hurrian War were separated by "not many years."²³⁵ However, Murnane's chronology allows for "a number of years" to have intervened

²³¹ Cordani, "One-year or Five-year War?" 241 n. 4.

²³² *Ibid.*, 242.

²³³ KUB 19.9 i 6'-10'.

²³⁴ KUB 19.9 i 19'-21'.

²³⁵ Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 2.

between the two wars.²³⁶ If the attack on Hittite attack on Kadesh in which Šuppiluliuma “vanquished the king of Egypt” was the first of two attacks, as discussed above, the intervening years added to the chronology could accommodate the four years of Ay’s reign.

Unfortunately, *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* are too fragmentary to chronologically position the Kuruštama Treaty, the attack(s) on Kadesh, the Šattiwaza Treaty, and other events that help date the Daḥamunzu Affair with Šuppiluliuma’s death. In fact, it is not entirely clear from the fragmentary conclusion of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* that Zannanza was the son Šuppiluliuma sent to Egypt in response to Daḥamunzu’s letter. However, it is clear that Šuppiluliuma did send a son and that the son was murdered. Regarding the Hittite prince, *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* states, “[When] they brought this tablet, they spoke thus: [“The people of Egypt(?)] killed [Zannanza] and brought word: ‘Zannanza [died(?)!’” And when] my father he[ard] of the slaying of Zannanza, he began to lament for [Zanna]nza.”²³⁷ Muršili’s “Second Plague Prayer,” KUB 14.8, states, “But when my father gave them his son, as they led him off, they murdered him.”²³⁸ It is only combining *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 31 5’-11’ with KUB 14.8 A obv. 22’-23’ that Zannanza becomes the Hittite son Šuppiluliuma sent in response to Daḥamunzu. Because it is likely that Šuppiluliuma only lost one of his sons to the Egyptians through murder, Zannanza is the most likely possibility. Although KUB 19.20 fails to name the sender or addressee, its contents help to bridge the gap between *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 31 5’-11’ and KUB 14.8 A obv. 22’-23’.

²³⁶ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 223-224.

²³⁷ *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, frag. 31 5’-11’.

²³⁸ KUB 14.8 A obv. 22’-23’.

While Zannanza is not named in KUB 19.20, the text certainly appears related to the other two texts. KUB 19.20 obv. 24'-28', rev. 1'-11' states,

“[Concerning w]hat you wrote, ‘Your son died...’”

“...if you, however, [...] my son [X] sent away [...] he held them in sin [...] but because my son [...]”

“...since there was formerly no [bloo]dshed [...] to do [X] is not right. With (or By?) blood(shed) they [...] now even if mine [...] you did [X] and you even killed my son...”

“[...troops and] horses you continually extol. Since I will [...] the troops [...] and encampments. For me my lord [...and the sun goddess] of Arinna, my lady, the queen of the lands. It will happen [..., my lord], and the sun goddess of Arinna will judge this. [...] you have said much, in heaven [...] as important (or big) as a pitturi (functionary?) [...] because we will make it”

“it does [...] because a falcon [kills (?) a chick (?) ...] a falcon alone does not hunt”

“[Concerning what] you wrote, ‘You would come for brawling, for against you brawl [...] I take (?) a brawl away [...],’ let you take (it) away to the Storm-god, my lord [...] behind [X], he who is behind [...]”²³⁹

If KUB 19.20 was sent from Šuppiluliuma to an Egyptian pharaoh as an angry rebuke for Zannanza’s murder, as is likely given its content, the identity of the Egyptian pharaoh is the key to identifying Nibḫururiya. The content of KUB 19.20 indicates that it was part of a volley of letters between sender and addressee, of which only KUB 19.20 is extant. If KUB 19.20 referred to the death of Zannanza, it was at least the second letter following his murder.²⁴⁰

Murnane identifies the Egyptian pharaoh as Ay, equating Tutankhamun with Nibḫururiya.²⁴¹ However, the tone of KUB 19.20 indicates that the sender, likely Šuppiluliuma, is responding to previous aggression and threats from the addressee. Šuppiluliuma states, “[...troops and] horses you continually extol,” as if the addressee

²³⁹ KUB 19.20 obv. 24'-28', rev. 1'-24'.

²⁴⁰ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 32.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 33 n. 40.

had previously boasted about his army, perhaps threateningly. If Ay was the addressee, assuming that Tutankhamun was Nibḥururiya, it would be shocking indeed to expect the elderly Ay to boast about his military in the midst of a diplomatic crisis. The statement makes more sense if Horemheb was the addressee, assuming that Ay was Nibḥururiya. Horemheb spent much of his career fighting the Hittites, while Ay had spent much of his career as a diplomat and vizier. A threatening boast about the Egyptian military is more befitting of Horemheb, the generalissimo. Šuppiluliuma's statement, "because a falcon [kills (?) a chick (?) ...] a falcon alone does not hunt," is open to various interpretations. One is that Šuppiluliuma must have known that Horemheb was a military man, a "falcon," who worked with his men to kill Zannanza, the "chick." Another statement open to various interpretations is, "[Concerning what] you wrote, 'You would come for brawling, for against you brawl [...] I take (?) a brawl away [...].'" The statement indicates that the addressee's previous letter expressed a willingness to fight. If the Horemheb was the addressee, assuming that Ay as Nibḥururiya, Šuppiluliuma's statement makes sense. Horemheb was more a soldier than a diplomat, and it much more likely that he would have responded aggressively to Šuppiluliuma's supposed first accusatory letter. One would expect Ay to have been more apologetic and less belligerent, particularly given Egypt's precarious position amidst the growing strength of the Hittites.

Although KUB 19.20 fails to name the sender and addressee, *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* identifies Daḥamunzu's dead husband as "Nibḥururiya." Despite the many reasons to identify Ay with Nibḥururiya, the most obvious problem is Ay's prenomen,

kheper kheperu ra, ir maat “Kheperkheperure-irmaat.”²⁴² “Kheperkheperure” bears little resemblance to “Nibhururiya.” Perhaps this is where the case for Ay as Nibhururiya falls apart. However, there are some possible explanations that could account for *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*’s use of the name “Nibhururiya,” although speculative. The simplest possibility is that Muršili II or his scribes used the wrong pharaoh’s name when writing *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*. Because Ay ruled for only a few years, it is not hard to imagine that he was overlooked. Tutankhamun’s reign is nearly devoid of extant diplomatic correspondence, indicating that there was little communication between Egypt and Ḫatti at the time. If Tutankhamun led an attack on Kadesh, his actions provide additional evidence that Egypt and Ḫatti were not on speaking terms. Because Ay’s reign is also a black hole for historians, it is likely that the silence continued through his reign as well. According to Kitchen, years four to eight of Tutankhamun’s reign provide no historical details for Syria: the Amarna Letters had finished, *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* are too fragmentary, and no Egyptian texts exist.²⁴³ Because Ay’s reign is similarly dark, textually speaking, it is entirely possible that the Hittites were unaware that he ascended to the throne at all.

If there was correspondence between Egypt and Ḫatti during Ay’s reign, which has since been lost, it is possible that Ay interacted with the other members of the Near Eastern brotherhood of kings under Tutankhamun’s prenomen. It is important to remember that Ay was not in the royal bloodline, so his ascendancy to the throne may have caused other members of the brotherhood of kings to see him as a usurper. Given

²⁴² Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 105-106.

²⁴³ Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*, 47.

the instability of the Eighteenth Dynasty due to problems with succession, the growth of Hittite power, and Egypt's weakening position in Syria, Ay could not afford a second-class standing in the Near Eastern brotherhood. As the lack of diplomatic records in Egyptian and Hittite archives suggests, the usual exchange of ambassadors and messengers may have stopped completely for several years. Ḫattuša-ziti and Ḫani could very well have been the first diplomats to travel to between Egypt and Ḫatti since Tutankhamun's reign.

Because the Hittite scribes who wrote *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* used the name "Nibḫururiya" for Daḫamunzu's dead husband, almost certainly a rendering of Tutankhamun's prenomen, the only way to further Ay's candidacy for Nibḫururiya is to explain away the use of "Nibḫururiya" as a textual accident or an oversight. Nevertheless, the requirement of such a textual accident or oversight is no different than the oversights, emendations, and chronological creativity necessary to identify Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, or Tutankhamun as Nibḫururiya. Therefore, the use "Nibḫururiya" in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* should not reject Ay as a candidate for Nibḫururiya, especially considering the evidence that favors him.

SUMMARY

While the case for Tutankhamun as Nibḫururiya is extremely strong, Ay is also a strong candidate for many reasons. One of the most important is that he solves the timing problem of the intervening winter between the Daḫamunzu letters. Given the likely dates of Tutankhamun's death and burial, as well as the flood that buried his tomb shortly thereafter, Tutankhamun's candidacy for Nibḫururiya is questionable. After

Tutankhamun's death, Ay had the experience and expertise to guide Ankhesenamun through the complex diplomatic world of the Near Eastern brotherhood. Although Ay's tomb lacks any trace of Ankhesenamun, the "Newberry ring" indicates that she ruled along with him. It was, therefore, Ay's death that left Ankhesenamun completely alone and vulnerable. Ay had no biological heir, and Horemheb no doubt wanted to exercise the right of succession he felt was his. Ankhesenamun may have written the Dahamunzu letters as a means of negotiating peace with the threatening Hittites and to perpetuate the dynasty without having to marry Horemheb. Certainly, Horemheb's claim to the throne as one of Tutankhamun's successors and his career fighting against the Hittites to maintain Egypt's Syrian possessions would have made Ankhesenamun's diplomatic marriage proposal hard to swallow for the long-time general. Horemheb likely had no intention of serving under a foreign pharaoh, much less a Hittite. Horemheb may have assassinated Zannanza to foil Ankhesenamun's scheme and to take the throne for himself. He may have married Ankhesenamun despite her efforts to avoid it, or he may have claimed the throne through a military coup or by acclamation of his army. Horemheb's *damnatio memoriae* campaign created the impression of legitimacy to his reign, while it also removed the remnants of Ankhesenamun's treason and her father's heresy.

VI. DISCUSSION

The Daḥamunzu Affair is one of ancient history's most well-known mysteries. The discovery and translation of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and related texts over a century ago answered many questions about the Amarna era, but the mystery of the identities of Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya remains. Their proper identification may help solve other mysteries regarding the Amarna era, such as the identities of mummies KV55 and KV35YL. In addition, proper identification would place the Daḥamunzu Affair in the correct chronological context, which would help Egyptologists and Hittitologists develop better relative chronologies of events in Syria and elsewhere in the Near East.

While many scholars accept Ankhesenamun as Daḥamunzu, Ay is not a traditional candidate for Nibḥururiya. The arguments in favor of Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, and Tutankhamun as Nibḥururiya are very convincing, and the historians who support one candidate over another masterfully analyzed archaeological findings and constructed chronologies that have withstood scholarly debate for decades. Arguments in favor of Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, and Tutankhamun presented by Kitchen, Gabolde, Reeves, Dodson, van Dijk, Murnane and other scholars are difficult to refute. The arguments in favor of Ay, as detailed above, are also strong. However, the arguments have not received the attention of Egyptologists and Hittitologists that they deserve. While the purpose of this project was to offer the arguments for Ay as Nibḥururiya, as well as to analyze and scrutinize them, further study of the textual sources and the archaeological evidence is needed.

It is always possible that a future archaeological discovery will one day solve the Daḥamunzu mystery. If so, and if Ay was indeed Nibḥururiya, the existing chronologies of the Near Eastern kingdoms could use the Daḥamunzu Affair in *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* to firmly establish the chronology of Šuppiluliuma's reign. Because he had documented military contact with so many cities and kingdoms, the Egyptian and Hittite sources could be better aligned. This would also help align the Egyptian and Hittite chronologies with the chronologies of Babylonian, Amurru, Assyria, and other Near Eastern civilizations. As it is now, many historians develop low, middle, or high chronologies because there are so many unknowns.

Although many historians have written about the Daḥamunzu Affair, the event remains a popular topic of discussion. Nearly every book about Akhenaten or Tutankhamun includes the story. For Bob Brier, the Daḥamunzu Affair was a key event in his theory that Tutankhamun was murdered.²⁴⁴ For William Murnane, the Daḥamunzu Affair was an integral part of his construction of the events that eventually led to Ramses the Great's famous Battle of Kadesh.²⁴⁵ Most historians, however, include the event only in passing. The fact that it still receives mention testifies to its significance and its mysterious nature as part of the fascinating story of Akhenaten's attempt at monotheism, Tutankhamun's untimely death and unusual burial, and Horemheb's *damnatio memoriae* campaign. Regardless of Nibḥururiya's identity, the story adds to the fascinating Amarna era.

²⁴⁴ Brier, *The Murder of Tutankhamen*, 175-207.

²⁴⁵ Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh*, 24-41.

While finding the true identities of Daḥamunzu and Nibḥururiya would take away the charm of a 3,000-year-old mystery, historians are eager to find the answers in the hopes that other questions about the Amarna era will be answered as well. Perhaps additional research will lead scholars to a breakthrough. As DNA analysis improves over time, it would help to know whether any biological connection indeed exists between Ay and Yuya, the father of Amenhotep III's queen Tiye. Additionally, it would be interesting to see if any connections exist between Ay and KV21a, a possible candidate for Ankhesenamun. These connections could help determine whether Ay was biologically related to Ankhesenamun. If Ay was a biological relative, it is unlikely that Ay was the commoner Daḥamunzu feared marrying. When Nefertiti's mummy is found or properly identified, DNA testing may help establish whether Ay was related to her as well.

Because many of the texts relating to the Amarna era are either damaged or lost, the discovery of a cache of copies would be a boon for historians. The fragmentary nature of *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma*, KUB 19.20, and the General's Letter make it difficult to glean reliable and verifiable information from them. While we are grateful to have the documents that are extant, historians hope for more complete copies and for additional sources that will help answer the many questions concerning the Daḥamunzu Affair. For now, the existing sources, both textual and archaeological, point to Ankhesenamun as Daḥamunzu and either Tutankhamun or Ay as Nibḥururiya. Depending on how one interprets the evidence, Ay could certainly have been Nibḥururiya.

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