Bill Murnane had many admirable qualities, but the one that impressed me most was his open-mindedness as a scholar. Bill was always concerned about facts, and he valued them much higher than theories. He was always ready to embrace new interpretations if they could be shown to be more consistent with the facts than previous ones, even at the expense of his own theories, published or otherwise. This article treats a subject for which hard facts are few and theories many. It concerns a period of Egyptian history that interested Bill more than any other, one that his own work has significantly elucidated. I don’t know whether he would have agreed with its interpretations or not, but I wish he were here to discuss them with.

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THE SCENE OF FOREIGN TRIBUTE in the tomb of Merire II at Amarna, often called the “durbar,” provides the last clear view we have of the Amarna Period before the accession of Tutankhamun. Dated to the second month of Akhenaten’s twelfth regnal year, it shows Akhenaten and Nefertiti together with their six daughters, Meritaten, Meketaten, Ankhnesenpaaten, Neferneferuaten Jr., Neferneferure, and Setepenre.1 The scene provides the last securely dated appearance of all seven women as well as the first dated attestation of the later name of the Aten.2 Between this point and the accession of Tutankhamun, the events of Amarna history are much less lucid.

Most of the questions in this shadowy period center on the identity behind two sets of pharaonic cartouches, both characterized by the element ’nh-hprw-r’ in the prenomen. One set, belonging to a king named Smenkhkare, always has the form (’nh-hprw-r’) (smnhk-k3-r’ dsr-hprw); the other, of a king named Neferneferuaten, regularly appears as (’nh-hprw-r’ plus epithet) (nfr-nfrw-jtn plus epithet); the epithets usually identify this king as “desired of Akhenaten,” using one of the two parts of Akhenaten’s prenomen (’nh-hprw-r’ w’-n-r’). In the second set, elements of both cartouches are occasionally marked as feminine: the prenomen as ’nht-hprw-r’ and the relative form “desired” in the epithets as mrt; in addition, the epithet “desired of Waenre” in the nomen is occasionally replaced by iht n h(j).s “effective for her husband,” and the names can be followed by the feminine attributes ’nh.tj dt “alive forever” and m3t hrw “justified.”3

Both sets of cartouches are associated with Akhenaten. In the case of Smenkhkare, the two kings appear together on one object only, a calcite jar from the tomb of Tutankhamun on which Smenkhkare’s cartouches follow those of Akhenaten, both subsequently erased (Carter 405, Fig. 1).4 Evidence for Neferneferuaten’s association with Akhenaten is more substantial: apart from the epithets noted above, her cartouches follow his on at least two objects, a box from the tomb of Tutankhamun (Carter 1k, Fig. 2) and a calcite jar from the tomb of Smenkhkare ( confronting Akhenaten’s cartouches with Smenkhkare’s).5 It seems likely that Smenkhkare was Akhenaten’s successor, perhaps as a coregent with Akhenaten. Smenkhkare is known to have been on the throne in the period of the tomb of Akhenaten at Amarna.6

2 The Aten’s name was changed sometime after its last attestation in the colophon of the Later Proclamation on boundary stelae A and B at Amarna, dated to the last day of Month 12 in Regnal Year 8. It is possible that the change occurred even later than Regnal Year 12: see M. Gabolde, D’Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon (Collection de l’Institut d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Antiquité vol 3 (Lyon & Paris: Université Lumière-Lyon 2, 1998), pp. 110-18. I thank M. Gabolde for his comments on an earlier draft of the present article.
4 C.E. Loeben, “No Evidence of Coregency: Zwei getilgte Inschriften aus dem Grab von Tutanchamun,” BSEG 15 (1991), pp. 82-90; idem, “No Evidence of Coregency: Two Erased Inscriptions from Tutankhamun’s Tomb,” Amarna Letters 3 (1994), pp. 105-109. See Gabolde, D’Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon, pp. 224-26. Fig. 1 is based on Loeben’s reconstruction; darker signs represent those for which traces are preserved.
fragmentary stela found at Amarna. Smenkhkare and Neferneferuaten are each associated as well with Meritaten as chief queen, the former in a scene in the tomb of Merire II at Amarna and the latter (together with Akhenaten) on the box just cited. At least one of these kings have served for a time as coregent with Akhenaten. The primary evidence for Smenkhkare as coregent is the jar that once displayed his cartouches side by side with those of Akhenaten. The juxtaposition, however, is not conclusive proof of a coregency; the jar could have been dedicated by Smenkhkare in memory of his deceased predecessor. Examples of Neferneferuaten’s cartouches together with those of Akhenaten are subject to the same caveat.

A relief found at Memphis, apparently showing a male king behind a larger figure, has often been cited as evidence of a coregency between Smenkhkare (as the smaller figure) and Akhenaten (as the larger). The identification of the smaller figure as Smenkhkare was based on a second block from the same site, which preserves the ends of his cartouches and that of a queen, probably Meritaten. The cartouches, however, are juxtaposed directly with those of the Aten, at the same level and approximately the same size, which must indicate that Smenkhkare was depicted as the primary figure in the scene below. Both blocks are preserved only in drawings; additional drawings of the first block, recently published, indicate that the scene probably depicted an Amarna princess behind one of her parents.

Several stelae from the end of the Amarna period show a male and female king, who must be Akhenaten and Neferneferuaten (Figs. 3-4). These have been interpreted as anachronistic scenes carved after Akhenaten’s death, but the nature of the

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6 Davies, Amarna II, pl. 11; Gabolde, D’ Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon, pp. 178-83. Gabolde argues that the names of Neferneferuaten and Meritaten on the box denote the same person, but a reference to two individuals remains the simplest and most transparent interpretation of the evidence: see W.J. Murnane, “The End of the Amarna Period Once Again,” OLZ 96 (2001), col. 18.
7 See Murnane, Ancient Egyptian Coregencies, pp. 213-15.
8 P.E. Newberry, “Akhenaten’s Eldest Son-in-Law ‘Ankhheperure’,” JEA 14 (1928), p. 8 Fig. 3.
9 Newberry, JEA 14 (1928), p. 8 Fig. 4. For the seated woman at the end of the queen’s cartouche, cf. Harris, AO 36 (1974), pp. 13 (1a) and 17 (2a, 2d).
10 The scene seems to depict the king presenting a building to the Aten: see, however, B. Lörh, “Ahanjâti in Memphis,” SAK 2 (1975), p. 158. If so, it is unlikely that he was facing another figure of comparable size on the other side of the Aten.
12 Berlin 17813: here Fig. 3, reproduced from Gabolde, BSFE 155 (2002), p. 38. Berlin 20716: here Fig. 4 (author’s drawing). The sex of the junior king was first noted by J.R. Harris, “Nefertiti Rediviva,” AO 35 (1973), pp. 5-9. On the “Coregency Stela” (UC 410 + Cairo JE 64959), the secondary addition of Neferneferuaten’s cartouches over that of Nefertiti (see n. 5, above) seem to refer to the figure below them: R. Krauss, “Neues zu den Stelenfragmenten UC London 410 + Cairo JE 64959,” BSEG 13 (1989), pp. 83-87; Allen, JARCE 25 (1988), pp. 117-21; Gabolde, BSEG 14 (1990), pp. 33-47, and D’ Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon, pp. 162-66. Nothing but the figure’s rear lower leg is preserved, but it presumably represented Nefertiti in the original and therefore a female king in the altered version of the stela. See the drawing in Gabolde, D’ Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon, pl. 24a.