

Cast Down the Heretic

Nile

Blasphemer, Heretic, Defiler of the Sacred Ones.
Thou art Deprived of Your Limbs.
Thy Nose Shall be Split.
Thou art Cast Down and Overthrown.
Ra-Harmakhis Destroyeth Thee.
He Damneth Thee and Driveth Hooks into Thy Body.
Isis Sayeth in Mighty Voice,
"The Number of Thy Days are Cut Short.
Thy Bones are Broken to Splinters Thy Vertebrae are Severed."
Horus Hammereth Thy Head.
The Sons of Heru Smash You with Their Blows.

Thou Art Decimated by Their Violence.
Thou Fallest Backwards as Thou Retreateth Like unto Apep.
The Great Company of Gods Gather in Retribution.
They Hath Passed Judgment upon Thee.
They Cast Down Your Heresy.
They Spit Upon Thee and Thy Rebellion And Turn Their Back upon Thee.
Horus Repulseth Thy Crocodile.
Sut Defileth Thy Tomb.
Nephthys Hacketh Thee in Pieces.
The Sons of Horus Speareth Thee.
The Gods Repulse Thee.
The Flame of Their Fire is Against Thee.
Cursed Art Thou, Impaled Thou Art, Flayed Art Thou.
Heretic Thou Art Cast Down.

Blows are Rained upon Thee.
Dismemberment and Slaughter are on Thee.
Thy Crocodile is Trampled under Foot.
Thy Soul is Wrenched from its Shade.
Thy Name is Erased.
Thy Spells are Impotent.
Nevermore Shalt Thou Emerge from Thy Den.
Thy City Armana Lays in Ruin.
Damned Art Thy Accursed Soul and Shadow.
Die O One, which Art Consumed.
Thy Name is Buried in Oblivion.
Silence Covereth Thee and Thy False One.
Down upon Thy Belly.
Be Drowned, Be Drowned, Be Vomited Upon.

The Gods have Pronounced Thy Doom.
They Scorn Thee and Thy False Aten.
The Ancient Ones Turn Their Backs upon Thee.
Thou Art Cast Down, Overthrown.
Thy Reign of Heresy is Ended.
Those Thou Hast Driven Out Have Risen Against Thee.

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Khnemu Draggeth Thy Spawn to the Block of Slaughter.
Sick Shalt Thou be at the Mention of Thine Own Name.
Sekhmet Teareth Out Thy Bowels and Casteth Them into Flames.
She Filleth Thine Orifices with Fire.

Uadjit Shutteth Thee in the Pits of Burning.
Nevermore Shall You Breathe or Procreate.
Neither Thy House or Tomb Exist.
Thou Shalt Drive Thy Teeth into Thine Own Body.
Heretic, Thou Art Cast Down.
Overthrown, Ended, Hacked in Pieces, Slaughtered, Butchered.
Ra Hath Made Thoth to Slay Thee Utterly.

["Cast Down the Heretic" concerns the Pharaoh Akhenaten, who ruled Egypt from 1379 to 1362 B.C. The son of Amenophis III and Tiye, Amenophis IV changed his name to Akhenaten (which most likely means "Servant of the Aten") in Year 5 of his reign, indicating his allegiance to Aten (a creator god symbolized by the Sun's disc).

Akhenaten's unique contribution to Egypt was to ensure that Aten's cult approached a form of Monotheism. Akhenaten regarded Aten as unique and omnipotent - a universal, supreme and loving deity symbolized by the life-giving Sun. Akhenaten, as the god's sole earthly representative, became virtually interchangeable with Aten, and spent his days communing with the god. Akhenaten was most likely prompted by political, as well as religious motives, as this may have been an attempt to curb the far-reaching political influence of the priesthood of Amen-Ra.

In Year 6 of his reign, Akhenaten moved the religious and political capital of Egypt from Thebes to a new site (commonly called Amarna), in large part due to the inability of his monotheistic cult to exist alongside the other long-established and institutionalized gods of Egypt. Akhenaten closed down all the other temples, disbanded their priesthoods and diverted their revenue to the Aten's cult. In addition, the names of all the old official deities were erased - Aten became the exclusive royal god.

Akhenaten's reign was not to last. His rule was weak, and with his exclusive devotion to his religious/mystical interests, internal political strife and rebellion ran unchecked.

Akhenaten has been blamed for allowing Egypt's empire in Syria to disintegrate while he pursued his religious reforms, as well as Egypt's decline in overall influence in the region. Not only that, but the military became weak, and the borders unstable. (In the Amarna Letters, the diplomatic correspondence found in the ruins at El Amarna, vassal Princes begged in vain for Egyptian aid against the predatory ambitions of the region's other great powers. At home, internal organization had begun to crumble, and the counter-revolutionary insurgencies - incited by the old deposed priesthoods - sought to restore the old order.)

Akhenaten was soon overthrown, proclaimed a heretic and a disastrous ruler. Every effort was made to expunge his name from the records and return Egypt to religious orthodoxy.

For several years, many people have suggested that I write a Nile song concerning Akhenaten, but I have stayed away from it, not only because of the much-vaunted Philip Glass Opera concerning Akhenaten, but also because I was unsure of how to treat the subject matter given the usual Nile lyrical stance, and how to interpret Akhenaten's vain and ill-fated attempt to reform the old ways to a new Monotheism. It was not until a friend, Deni of Anubis Records, made the suggestion to me in such a way as to fire my imagination.

Although exact details of Akhenaten's overthrow, deposition and execution are scarce, it does not take a genius to figure out that his demise at the hands of the old priesthood of Amen-Ra was certainly long-awaited and most likely gruesome. Akhenaten had, after all, thrown out an entire country's priest class - men who enjoyed wealth and political influence. To my thinking, Akhenaten's demise would have been, aside from a certain grand revenge satisfi-

ction for Amen-Ra's priesthood, a political necessity - not merely for the stability of the country, but also for the future survival of the priest classes of the entire "Old Order". Akhenaten's death would need to be so grisly as to ensure that no Pharaoh would ever again be foolish enough to politically challenge the priesthood of Amen-Ra. It is quite easy to imagine Akhenaten's execution done in as legendary a fashion as would be any of the great enemies of Ra (perhaps similar to the ceremonial destruction of evil enacted in the stylized ritual found in "The Book of Overthrowing Apep).

I believe that history somewhat bears out this lesson, as later conquerors/rulers of Egypt - Alexander, Ptolemy, Caesar - did not interfere whatsoever with the old established religious ways. They allowed the people to practice their religious beliefs (even aligning themselves with the Egyptian gods), thus avoiding extraneous political turmoil and unrest.]