

**3200**

*Torso of Akhenaten*

**James Romano:** In the middle of the fourteenth century B.C., a young man came to the throne of Egypt, a young man by the name of Amunhotep IV. Not long after, he started to do some highly unusual things. First of all, he began building shrines around the Egyptian capital of Thebes. These shrines were not to any of the familiar gods of the 18th Dynasty but were to an obscure version of the sun god called the Aten. After five years of living at Thebes, Amunhotep IV moved the capital two hundred miles north to a new site called Amarna and changed his name from Amunhotep IV to Akhenaten.

In front of you is a fragmentary statue of Akhenaten. When Akhenaten died, subsequent kings were so enraged by what he had done to traditional Egyptian art—traditional Egyptian religion—that they literally destroyed everything in Akhenaten's capital city. They took his statues and smashed them to the ground. Look on the front of this statue. You'll see six long ovals. We call those ovals cartouches. They held the names of kings and queens and gods. In this case, they held six different versions of the Aten's name. Notice how meticulously and maliciously the agents of a later king have hacked out all trace of the Aten from Akhenaten.