

horizon

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The Amarna Project and Amarna Trust newsletter

The balance of priorities

The Amarna expedition has long sought to follow a path that allows for discovery on the one hand, and pays attention to the current needs of the site, particularly the cleaning and repairing of long-exposed buildings, on the other. During the last three months of 2011 it was possible to divide our resources so that both concerns were addressed.

This issue of *Horizon* reports on a further season of excavation at the South Tombs Cemetery and of the completion of the current phase of repairs to the North Palace. The latter opens the way for deploying the teams of local builders who carry out this work to the Central City, with the aim of starting a major scheme in the spring to clean and clarify what remains of the front area of the Great Aten Temple (see page 7).

Barry Kemp, Chairman



The final stage in the current repair schedule to the North Palace.

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The North Palace

Winding down the current phase of cleaning and repairs

On 1 December we called a halt to our work at the North Palace. The ensuing pictures illustrate our scheme to consolidate and to make more presentable the key north-eastern area of the palace (begun in 1997 though not pursued every year). It should be made subject to inspection and repair in five years' time. Much of the work was done under the supervision of Surésh Dhargalkar.



As it was, in 1996. The area of the bathroom and adjacent room on the west, viewed to the north-east. The sandstone tank in the background is all that remained of the bathroom.



Re-laying mud-brick features that have all but vanished above ground level. At work is the building team led by Shahata Fahmy (on the right).



It was felt necessary to replace missing door thresholds, some originally of limestone blocks and some of sandstone slabs. Here imitation sandstone slabs cast in reinforced concrete are being set in place, a project supervised by Simon Bradley (left).



The private suite, that includes a bathroom and (on the left) a bedroom, viewed to the south.



The animal houses on the north side, viewed to the west.



General view of the main rear part of the palace, viewed to the south. In the centre lies the hypostyle hall, the main room of the palace.



General view of the main rear part of the palace that takes in the garden court, viewed to the south. The 'Green Room', location of the nature painting of a papyrus marsh, is at the left edge.

The South Tombs Cemetery

Site formation processes

Much of what we have done so far at the South Tombs Cemetery has contributed towards a profile of the health and longevity of the people buried there, and has provided insights into the ideas that came to the fore when preparations were made for burial. The season of excavation that finished on December 28th (under the direction of Anna Stevens) takes us a step forward in understanding the nature of the cemetery viewed more broadly.

In 2010 a 5 m wide trench had been excavated down much of the length of the hill slope on the (local) west side, at the location we call the Lower Site. It captured the upper limit to the cemetery, where bedrock reaches the surface and people were disinclined to dig into it. At the lower end, as the ground flattened out towards the wadi floor, there was no sign of the cemetery ending or having been washed away by storm torrents. This year the trench was extended further, to a point where it was rising up the far (eastern) slope, so covering the floor of the wadi entirely (Figure 1).

In the time available it was not possible, across the eastern part, to do more than excavate down to the level at which the mouths of grave pits appear. Once recorded, they were protected with a layer of cloth and covered with sand, to await full excavation next season (set for 2013). What

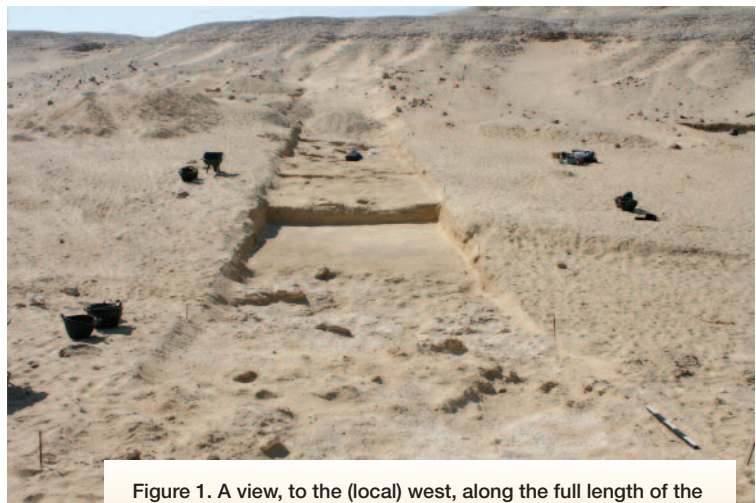


Figure 1. A view, to the (local) west, along the full length of the trench at the Lower Site. In the foreground, although not well defined, lie two graves that have been cut into the fragmented bedrock. Beyond comes a gap in the spread of burials.

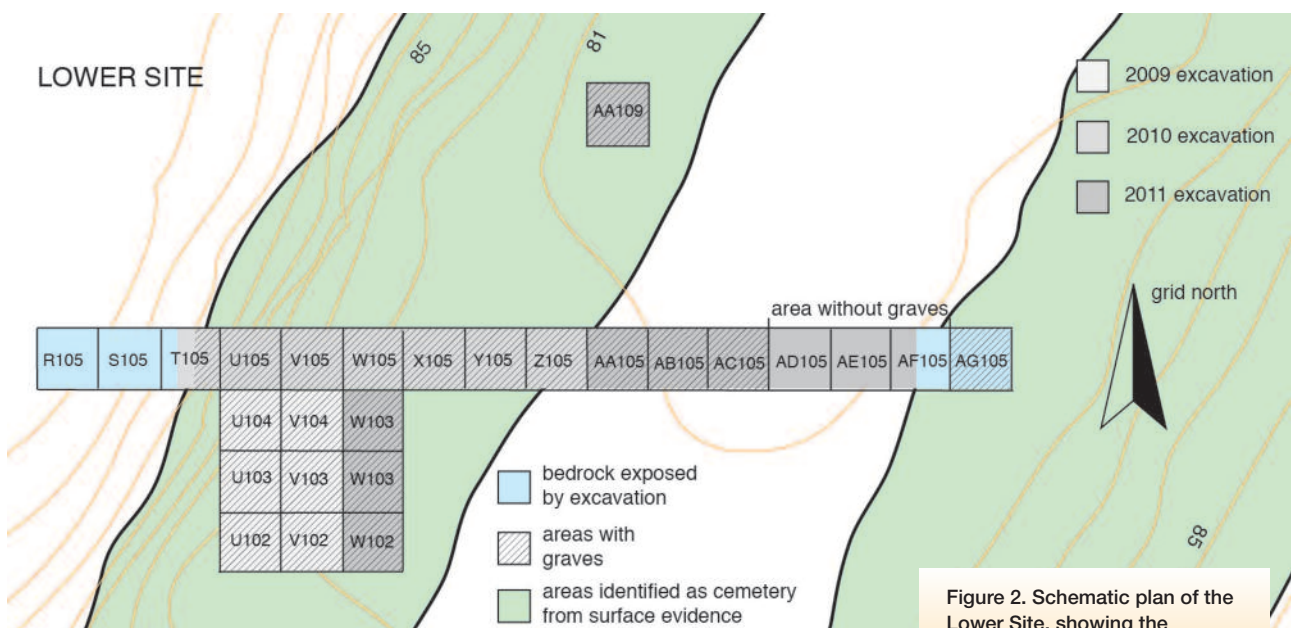


Figure 2. Schematic plan of the Lower Site, showing the discontinuous spread of graves.

was exposed suggests that, although the cemetery extended across the wadi floor, it was not continuous from one side to the other (Figure 2). Beyond the halfway point the graves stopped, for a distance of around 15 m, the last few metres taken up with the reappearance of solid limestone bedrock (absent from the equivalent position on the west). One possibility is that the gap is the result of a greater degree of destruction from occasional flash floods, although the deposits did not give the impression of belonging to a channel that corresponded with the gap. A more likely explanation – one that obviously needs to be explored further – is that the extreme length and density of the cemetery demanded that a pathway be left to allow burial parties and subsequent visitors access to the upper reaches.

The realisation that hundreds of burials might lie on the wadi floor takes us back to the observations that led to the identification of the cemetery in the first place. Human bones were first noticed on the flat surface of the desert for a considerable distance in front of the wadi (Figure 3), the spread narrowing when followed until it became more like a trail leading up the wadi itself. When it was realised that the sloping sandy sides of the wadi were where graves had been, the assumption was made that the wider extent of surface bone had first been washed out from the sides and then propelled further down the wadi and out on to the plain beyond.



Figure 3. The desert plain in front of the South Tombs Cemetery during the surface collection of human bones in 2005, prior to the start of the excavations in 2006.

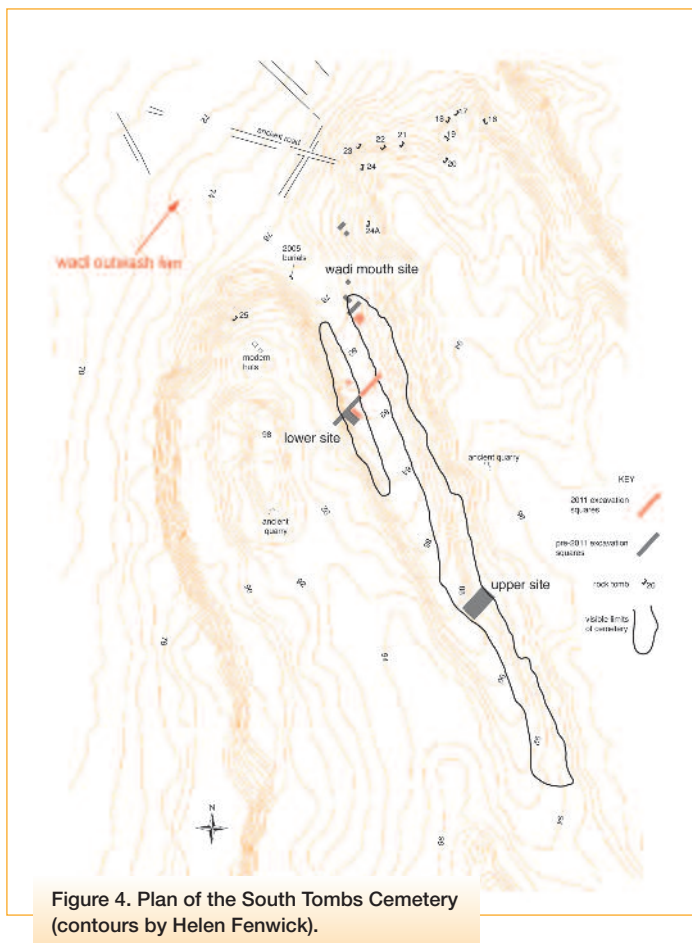


Figure 4. Plan of the South Tombs Cemetery (contours by Helen Fenwick).

The process of site formation is now starting to look rather different. When torrential rain does fall, the volume of water cannot be quickly absorbed by the ground, but it also does not flow long enough to create a channel of significant depth. What it does do is to surge along the surface with sufficient force to remove and to carry material on or close to the surface and then quite rapidly, as it loses its force, to dump it further downstream.

In the cemetery's heyday, there is no reason to think that the graves on the wadi floor were not marked on the surface in the same way as those along the sides, with grave-sized cairns of stones, sometimes supporting a carved memorial stone at one end. But there are very few stones on the wadi floor, and this year's trench found not even a fragment of a carved memorial stone. The likely reason: the stones, worked and unworked, have all been washed further downstream, perhaps out on to the desert plain beyond, where they now lie buried. A look at the contour map (Figure 4) lends plausibility to this idea. In front of the wadi mouth, the contours mark the presence of a subdued delta- or fan-like rise in the ground level, now wholly covered with sand (in which human bones are also to be seen). This is the area marked 'wadi outwash fan' on the general map. It, too, is now worth exploring.

Progress of the 2011 season

The slow, methodical excavation of graves took up most of the time (Figure 5) and, by the end of the season, parts of at least 40 skeletons had been recovered, 26 from the Lower Site and 14 from the Wadi Mouth Site. They await study by the Arkansas University anthropology team in the late spring.



Figure 5. Excavation in progress at the Lower Site, whilst conservation work proceeds on the wooden coffin. To enable this to take place, the grave pit has been enlarged.



Figure 6. The conservators (Julie Dawson, left, and Lucy Skinner, right) at work on the coffin.

Within a short time of starting, the top of another decayed wooden anthropoid coffin appeared (in square AA105), not far from where the two examples were found in 2010. With those, the pieces were removed directly and as carefully as was possible and transferred to the site magazine. This time the team included two conservators, Julie Dawson (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) and Lucy Skinner. Their first task was to begin consolidation of the 2010 coffin pieces, but the appearance of the new coffin took them immediately into the field to deal with it. (Figure 6).

The new coffin was, if anything, in an even more fragile condition. Julie and Lucy worked with a remarkable first-aid conservation chemical, cyclododecane. When dissolved in warm water and applied to fragile surfaces it forms a firm, opaque white waxy cover that can be reinforced with gauze. The wonder of its properties is that subsequently, when exposed to air, the chemical slowly 'sublimates', in other words, vanishes of its own accord, leaving the wood to be consolidated in the laboratory. It took a week to conserve the coffin in the ground in this way, but at the end, it was possible to lift the sides as single pieces. Wrapped to be airtight, the pieces are in the site magazine awaiting further treatment.

There is a short-term disadvantage: the coffin surfaces are initially exposed in only small patches before the cyclododecane and gauze are applied, at which time the surfaces become invisible. One only sees the decoration through small and temporary portholes. The sides were decorated in the way that the other coffins were, with vertical columns of hieroglyphs separating striding figures (Figure 7). The hieroglyphs are very faint, so much so that it was not possible to read them in their brief moments of exposure, and they do not show up well on photographs. But one of the windows brought a surprise. The head of one of the striding figures was particularly clear, drawn in thin red paint lines

with yellow fill. The head was not human, but unmistakably canine (Figure 8). It could be Anubis or Duamutef, the jackal-headed member of the Four Sons of Horus. Both appear on the sides of coffins during the New Kingdom. Good examples are those of Yuya and Tuyu, the parents of Queen Ti, from the Valley of the Kings.

So far, the decoration of the three coffins found in previous seasons (the first found in 2008) conforms to the Amarna rule (as accepted in modern interpretations) that funerary depictions avoided Osiris and associated deities, including Anubis and the Four Sons of Horus. It has never been clear, however, whether this was because Amenhotep ordered it or because it was a logical outcome of people's acceptance of Akhenaten's ideas. Thus, in finding an exception to the rule, we cannot tell if it represents a violation of a royal order, or the retention by one family of older ideas which many of their contemporaries had left behind, the latter implying the not unreasonable existence of a measure of personal choice in such matters.

Other finds from the excavation were few, but not without interest. They will be previewed in the next issue of *Horizon*.



Figure 7. A briefly visible patch of the coffin side revealing columns of faint hieroglyphs.



Figure 8. A composite image of the canine-headed deity, visible successively in two windows between excavation and applying the protective covering.

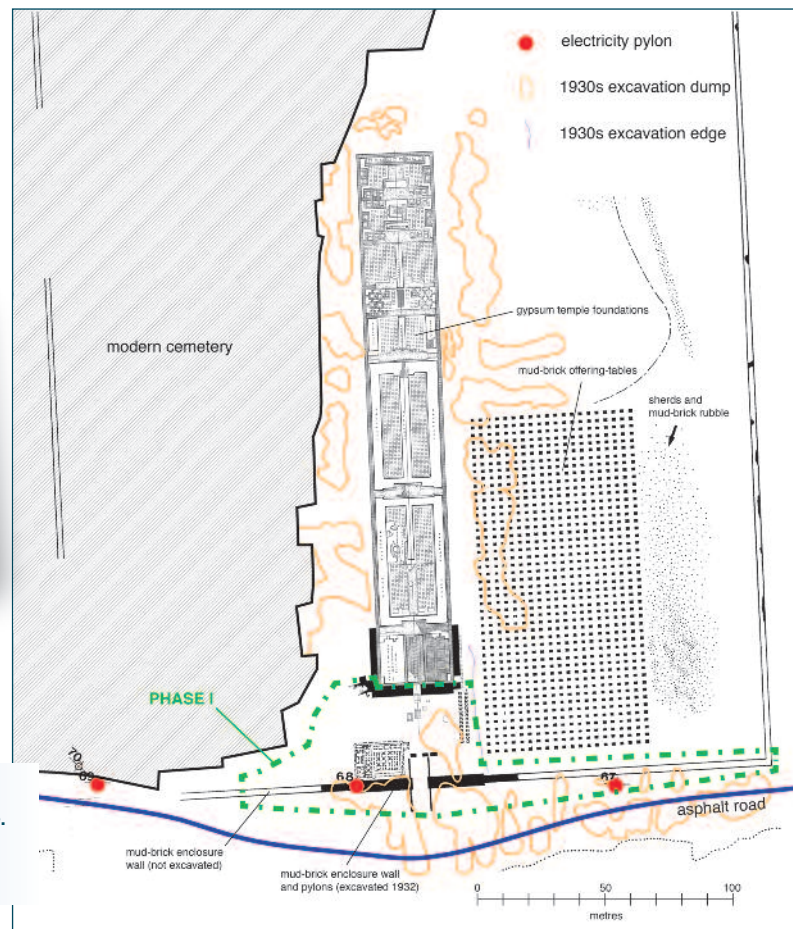
The launch of a new project

The Great Aten Temple – the ‘House of the Aten’ – was of great consequence at Amarna. Its chief priests were some of the city’s most prominent officials, artists carved enormously detailed scenes of its architecture inside some of the rock tombs, people prayed that their spirit would receive food from its altars in the hereafter. Today, however, visitors pass by without noticing it; village rubbish accumulates over its front part, and an adjacent village cemetery creeps ever closer to what is left. We cleared some of the rubbish in December 2008 (*Horizon* 8, 6) but it is coming back.

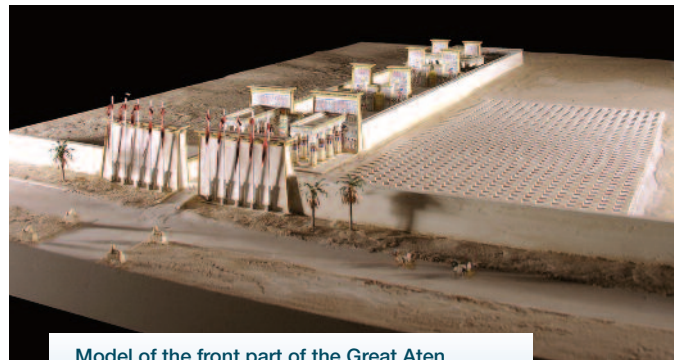
The expedition has now been granted permission by the Ministry of Antiquities to commence a clean-up that will lead to a programme of repair accompanied by low-key architectural clarification. It will take several years to accomplish. To begin with, the work will concentrate at the front, where the priority will be to re-establish the mud-brick enclosure wall and pylons as the site’s boundary.

The scheme will stretch our resources.
We need *your* help
to accomplish a project that will reclaim
an important piece of Amarna.
Details of how to donate are given
on pages 11 and 12.

Map of the front part of the Great Aten Temple enclosure. The green broken line marks where the project will begin.



View northwards along the line of the mud-brick enclosure wall (taken in 2006) where the work will begin. The green-painted electricity pylon is no. 68 on the map.



Model of the front part of the Great Aten Temple, commissioned by Mallinson Architects and made by Eastwood Cook for the Amarna Visitor Centre.

They worked at Amarna Thomas Whittemore

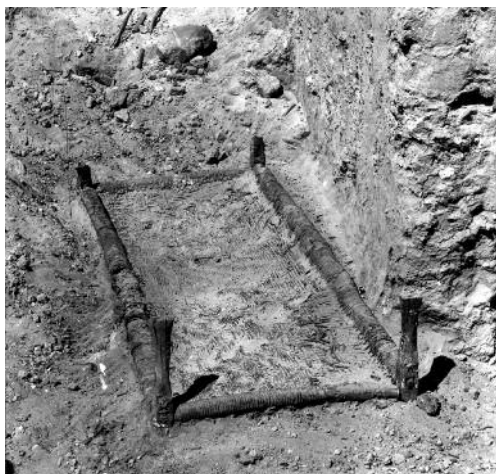
For a few years during an adventurous life – being fascinated by Orthodox Christianity, he accompanied Evelyn Waugh to Ethiopia, assisted Russians who had fled to Constantinople from the Bolsheviks and played a major role in the restoration of the mosaics in the Hagia Sophia – Thomas Whittemore (born 1871, in Cambridgeport, Mass.) excavated in Egypt for the Egypt Exploration Society.



Thomas Whittemore, standing in the porch of the southern expedition house at Amarna. (c) Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Washington, DC.

He joined the Amarna expedition on November 21st, 1923 and worked at the North Palace as an assistant to the director, Francis Newton. He returned as part of the team for the second North Palace season, which began at the very end of 1924. Within a short time, Newton died in Asyut hospital (see *Horizon* 1, October 2006, 9–10) and Whittemore took over and directed the excavation to its conclusion.

Whittemore eventually became founder and director of the Byzantine Institute in 1930. After his death in 1950, his papers were transferred to the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, DC and the Bibliothèque Byzantine at the Collège de France in Paris. Amongst the materials at Dumbarton Oaks, which are housed in the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, there are a few records from his Amarna days, including a set of 36 photographic prints. Whittemore



An upturned wooden bed found and photographed in 1921 in the Main Street at Amarna, outside house Main Street 3. Photo published in T.E. Peet and C.L. Woolley, *City of Akhenaten I* (London, EES 1923), Pl. XVIII.2.



Two years later it was still there, and was photographed by Thomas Whittemore. (c) Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Washington, DC.

probably took them all during his month-long stay in 1923, when he would first have lived in the southern expedition house and then moved to take up residence at the newly completed northern house, which was much closer to the North Palace. The pictures mostly record trips he made from the southern expedition house. You can tell that he wandered around the houses excavated in the previous two years by Peet and Woolley (including the house of Ranefer), he went out to the Workmen's Village (also dug in 1921 and 1922), he made the much longer excursion to the Royal Tomb and managed to see boundary stelae R and S.

The recently excavated buildings were then still standing, much as Peet and Woolley had left them, and his pictures, devoid of human figures, have a haunting quality that brings home the decay and loss that long exposure has since wrought.

Further reading on Thomas Whittemore:

Natalia B. Teteriatnikov, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul: the Fossati Restoration and the Work of the Byzantine Institute*. Dumbarton Oaks for Harvard University 1998, 31–4; Robert S. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press 2004. Chapter 7. 'Unveiling the mosaics: Thomas Whittemore and his American Patrons', 155ff.

Acknowledgment:

Copies of the pictures were sent to me by Shalimar White of the Byzantine Institute, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC. Thanks to the Institute for permission to reproduce two of the pictures.

More on Major Timme

(see *Horizon* 9, Summer 2011, 9–10)

Borchardt team.



Rainer Gerisch has, through internet searches, shed a little more light on the career of Major Paul Timme, the military cartographer responsible for the fine survey maps of Amarna published in 1917. In 1898/9 Timme was a member of a military survey team charged with making a topographic map, subsequently published, of the mountainous hinterland to the colony that Germany had only recently established on the Chinese mainland at Qingdao (Tsingtao, the short-lived German presence still commemorated by Tsingtao beer, set up as a brewing company by German settlers in 1903).

See www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/geo_0003-4010_1903_bib_12_65_7847. The item number is 591B, a review in *Annales de Géographie* for 1903.

As Hauptmann (captain) Timme he is listed as a commander of the 2nd regular German naval (infantry) battalion for 1907/8.

See www.marine-infanterie.de/html/3_9_2.html.

It is now possible to fit a face to the name. Dr Lars Petersen, of the Department of Archaeology, University of Freiburg, is investigating a set of pictures taken when the Duke of Saxony, Johann Georg, visited Borchardt's excavations on the day that the painted bust of Nefertiti was discovered (6 December 1912). A group photograph of Borchardt's team is amongst them, and he has kindly allowed it to be published here. It was taken in front of Borchardt's expedition house (the same that we now occupy), looking west towards the river. Depicted are, from left to right, Karl Friedrich Breith, Major Paul Timme, Hermann Ranke, Ludwig Borchardt, Walter Honroth and Paul Hollander.

Items of news

New shelf units for the expedition house antiquities store (magazine)

The original shelving units were imported from the UK, through the good offices of Alf Baxendale, now one of our trustees. Needing more of them, we have found a blacksmith business in Mallawi (the brothers Adel and Mohammed Anwar Abd el-Rahman) which can produce very reasonable equivalents.

Members of the Sussex Egyptology Society (through the good offices of Janet Shepherd) raised the funds to pay for three units; Jerry Rose and Dolores Burke contributed the cost of the fourth.



Autumn field school

Last January the expedition hosted a field school in geophysics, organized by the University of California (Los Angeles) in conjunction with the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies of the University of Arkansas. We plan to host a second field school on the same theme, for five weeks between October 14th and November 22nd. This time the organizing body is the California-based Institute of Field Research and instruction will again be provided from the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, University of Arkansas.

The application process is now open, through the web site www.ifrglobal.org.

Grant Award

It is a great pleasure to record that the National Geographic Society has made an award to Prof Jerry Rose of the Department of Anthropology, University of Arkansas, in support of the project (that includes excavation) 'Epidemic Disease at Amarna, the Capital City of Egypt's Heretic Pharaoh, Akhenaten'.



Amarna Trust chairman honoured

The Chairman of The Amarna Trust was invested with the order of Commander of the British Empire (CBE) by HM Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace on November 15th, 2011, for 'Services to Archaeology, to Education and to International Relations'.



Popular or vernacular images of the Aten are very rare, despite the simplicity of the design and its ubiquity in the official art of Akhenaten's reign. This example (object no. 836) was found at the Workmen's Village, in a rubbish deposit in front of the walled village, N17 (17). It has been sketched on a broken piece from a pottery amphora and looks not to have been part of a scene, although one of the sunrays on the right-hand edge holds the ankh-sign signifying 'life', that normally accompanies scenes of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. It is now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JdE 97376. Width 8.6 cm.

The Amarna Trust

The Amarna Trust is registered with the **Charity Commission** as no. **1113058**. Its registered address is

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The Amarna Trust submits an annual set of accounts to the UK Charities Commission. None of its income is used in the furtherance of raising funds. Its overheads are modest.

The objectives of the Trust are:

To advance public education and to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the ancient city of Tell el-Amarna, Egypt and the surrounding area for the benefit of the public in particular but not exclusively by:

- i) creating a permanent facility for study (the research base – The Amarna Centre);
- ii) undertaking and supporting field research (and publishing the useful results of such research);
- iii) promoting training in archaeological field skills;
- iv) providing, and assisting in the provision of, lectures and publications in furtherance of the stated objects;
- v) developing displays and exhibitions at a site museum for the benefit of the public and an educational outreach programme for the benefit of pupils at schools; and
- vi) working in partnership with the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt to maintain the ancient city for the benefit of the public.



The Lower Site digging team at the South Tombs Cemetery. All of the men employed on the excavation and for the repairs to ancient buildings come from the nearby villages.

The Trust invites donations from individuals or from corporations. Donations can be earmarked for particular purposes or they can be allocated by the Trust in pursuit of the stated objects of the Trust. The Trust is able to benefit from the present UK tax legislation by reclaiming tax on donations from UK tax-payers under the Gift Aid scheme, which increases the value of the gift by nearly a third. For this it is necessary to accompany each donation with a Gift Aid declaration form or a similar letter. There are further tax advantages for donors who pay at higher rates.

For residents of the USA, donations can be made either to the Amarna Research Foundation or to the Cambridge in America Foundation (both 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organisations) with the request that the donation be made into a grant for The Amarna Trust.

Further information, including downloadable forms, are available at www.amarnatrust.com where you can also donate on-line. Donations can also be made via www.justgiving.com/amarnatrust



Ancient World Tours run regular tours that include Amarna and we are proud to be sponsors of the excavations carried out by the Amarna Trust. Contact AWT on 020 7917 9494 or at www.ancient.co.uk or at amarna@ancient.co.uk



All work done at Amarna relies upon the support and agreement of the Ministry of State for Antiquities of the Arab Republic of Egypt. We are indebted to its personnel, both local and in Cairo.

Thanks to those who have recently supported the Amarna Project

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