

horizon

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The Amarna Project and Amarna Trust newsletter



A busy year

The second half of 2012 continued a particularly busy year at Amarna, largely allowing us to make up for ground lost during the previous year following the January 25, 2011 Revolution.

We were able to run a considerably larger excavation at the South Tombs Cemetery (see pages 2–3). An anthropology field school in the early summer covered the human remains from the previous season. As reported in the last issue of *Horizon*, we began a new project of cleaning, study and repair at the neglected site of the Great Aten Temple, done partly as a conventional piece of fieldwork in the spring, and more recently as a major element in a field school run in the autumn for a group that comprised Egyptian antiquities inspectors and foreign archaeology students (see pages 6–8).

Our increased activity has meant increased expenditure. We are fortunate to be supported by enthusiastic members of the public who continued to donate through the year and who responded with further generosity to the Christmas fund-raising scheme (see page 10). On behalf of all who work for the Amarna project I wish to say a big “thank you”.

Barry Kemp, Chairman

Found in the Lower Site of the South Tombs Cemetery during the recent excavations: a mud coffin for a child, still wrapped in its original rope binding.

contents

Excavations at the South Tombs Cemetery	2
Object digitisation project	4
New publications	5
Reclaiming the House of the Aten	6

Amarna in Berlin: the exhibition	9
Fund raising	10
Tours	10
The Amarna Trust	11



Conservator Lucy Skinner and archaeologist Melinda King work to clean and support a decorated coffin for a child before it is lifted out of the ground.



Slawomir Jedraszek and Emma Gonzales Gil clean skeletons at the Lower Site.

The 2012 excavations at the South Tombs Cemetery

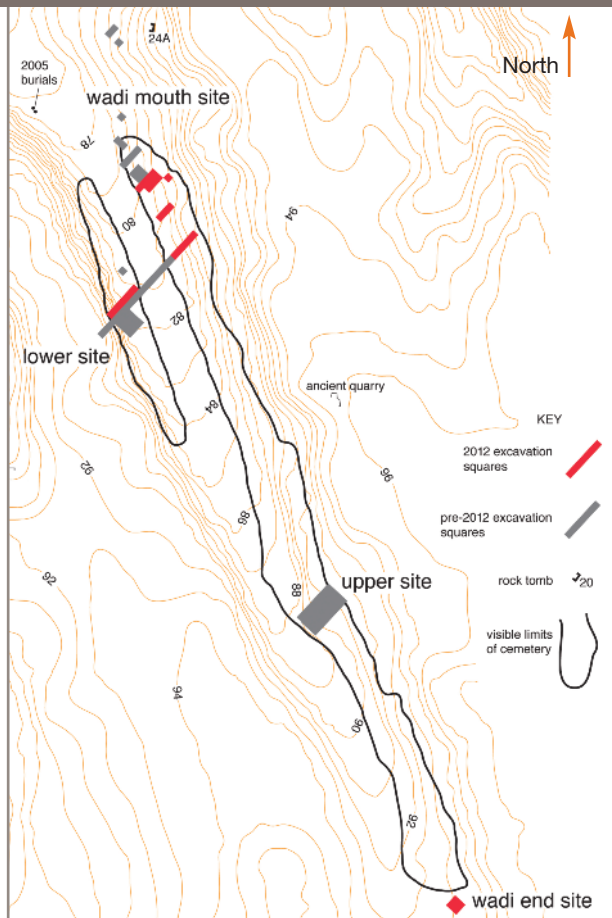
Since 2006, the Amarna Project has been working at one of the ancient cemeteries of Amarna, collecting and recording human remains, burial goods and graves to try to better understand the health, life experiences and funerary beliefs of Akhenaten's people. Anna Stevens reports on the most recent fieldwork.

The South Tombs Cemetery occupies a long sand-filled *wadi* (dried watercourse) on the southeast outskirts of Amarna. The *wadi* is filled with several thousand simple pit graves containing the skeletal remains of the people of Amarna. The seventh season of excavations ran from 28 October to 20 December, 2012, and was a particularly successful one. We worked in four different parts of the

cemetery, focusing on two areas quite close to the mouth of the *wadi*, the Lower Site and Wadi Mouth Site. A little work was undertaken deeper within the valley, at the Upper Site, and a small area was opened at its very end, the Wadi End Site, to test for variation in burial practice here.

Ninety-two skeletons were recovered, providing a significant boost to the assemblage of human remains now available for study, and bringing the total number of individuals recovered from the cemetery to around 370 (of a target of 400).

An exciting discovery at the Lower Site was an anthropoid coffin for a child, made from coarse mud, the first so far found at the cemetery. The work at the Wadi Mouth Site also produced two decorated but very fragile wooden coffins, one for a child and one for an adult, bringing to just seven the number of decorated wooden coffins found at the site. The larger coffin was decorated with scenes of offering bearers and columns of hieroglyphic text, and so is a particularly important artefact for the study of funerary belief in the Amarna Period. Conservators Julie Dawson and Lucy Skinner joined the excavation team to lift the coffins and return them to the dig house, where they will require many more hours of treatment before being ready for study, storage and display. The work on the coffins was partly funded by money raised through an online fundraising campaign earlier in the year, to which many of you very generously donated.



Plan of the cemetery showing the new areas of the autumn 2012 season. Contour survey by Helen Fenwick.



Delphine Driaux records a burial at the Wadi End Site.



A wedjat-eye painted on the side of the larger of the decorated coffins excavated in 2012.

It was an interesting season, too, in terms of the quantity and range of burial goods encountered. Amongst the most significant were two limestone stelae, presumably grave markers, with the distinctive pointed tops that characterise stelae from the cemetery. Unfortunately, neither preserved any original decoration. Several pieces of jewellery were recovered, including faience and glass beads, earrings in glass and stone, and a small number of pendants, including some in the form of the deities Taweret and Bes. The burial of a child from the Wadi Mouth Site contained a necklace of blue, red and white disc beads, still partially strung together, an unusual find at Amarna. Another Wadi Mouth burial, of an infant, contained two well-made pendants in the shape of seed-heads, one in carnelian and the other in glass. Several burials contained a single scarab or decorated bead, sometimes held in the left hand. At the Lower Site, fragments of a metal ring with an image of a duck above a papyrus clump were recovered, whilst an unusual find from the Wadi End Site was a copper alloy 'toe ring'. Another unexpected find was a small limestone table-like object, found at the foot end of an undisturbed burial of a child; a small pottery jar had been placed at the head end of the burial.

The excavations reinforced several aspects of burial practice observed previously. One is the lack of obvious social patterning across the site; burials of adults, young and old,

children and infants, for example, are intermingled. Another is the general sense of simplicity and uniformity in approach to burial: grave goods remain rare, burial architecture is almost non-existent, and the bodies are interred singularly, in a regular posture and often a uniform orientation. This is especially apparent across the Wadi Mouth Site and Lower Site, and now also the Wadi End Site. At the Upper Site, however, some of these trends are less apparent; multiple burials, for example, are not uncommon. Here, the archaeology suggests a sense, perhaps, of more deaths than usual, and of conditions of diminished order at the time of burial. The study of the human remains from the Upper Site also reveals an unusual pattern, with more juvenile deaths than in other parts of the cemetery (and more than can be expected for a normal population). Might this part of the cemetery have been used at a time when the population of Amarna was under attack by some kind of epidemic disease? One more season of fieldwork is planned at the site, in Spring 2013, before we turn to the final publication and try to answer the many interesting questions that the excavations have raised.

The description of other small finds from the cemetery, promised in the last issue of *Horizon*, has been held over to the next issue.



Object digitisation project

For three weeks in September-October, 2012 a group of four enthusiastic volunteers, Melanie Pitkin from Australia, Reinert Skumsnes from Norway, Ashley Hayes from the UK and Megan Paqua from the USA, participated in a new object digitisation project under the direction of Dr Anna Stevens at Amarna.

The purpose of this project, which is expected to run over the next 12–18 months, is to transfer all the information that has been recorded on hard copy index cards since the current Amarna expedition began excavations in 1979 into an electronic database. These index cards, which have been filled out on site during each season for the past 30+ years (and therefore amount to some 24,000+ cards), contain important information pertaining to the objects' material, description, dimensions, location, date of excavation and frequently, also, a detailed illustration. The objects come from 16 different excavation grids at Amarna, including the Main City, the Small Aten Temple, the Workmen's Village, Stone Village, Kom el-Nana, the North Palace, the South Tombs Cemetery and the Central City, and include everything from beads and pendants to metalwork, jar labels, seals, architectural elements, gaming

pieces, ring bezels and shanks, weighing equipment, leatherwork and stone and pottery vessels.

Using the program FileMaker Pro, the new database provides an enormous amount of flexibility in terms of categorising objects – for example, by type, material, colour and find location – to maximise the capacity to search, filter and cross-reference records. There are also fields for photographs and illustrations, publications, inscriptions and Petrie's typologies, along with the capability to add to these, with future plans to include the individual and skeletal data when finds can be associated with particular burials.

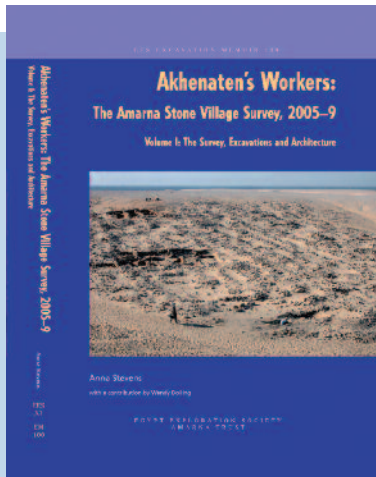
During the three week season, we entered, cross-checked, updated and improved the documentation on over 12,000 index cards. Given that there have been many people involved in recording these finds over a long

period, another objective was to standardise the range of terms used to describe the objects so that researchers can sort and search the data more effectively.

The ultimate plan for the database is to make it available online not only to enable wide access, but also to increase the opportunity for further research on Amarna. The database will also serve as an important backup should the object cards be damaged, and there is a view to link the artefact corpus to a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) framework for the study of artefact distribution across the site as a whole. Another potential use for the database is to link it with other Museum collection databases from around the world holding objects from Amarna.

Melanie Pitkin

New publications

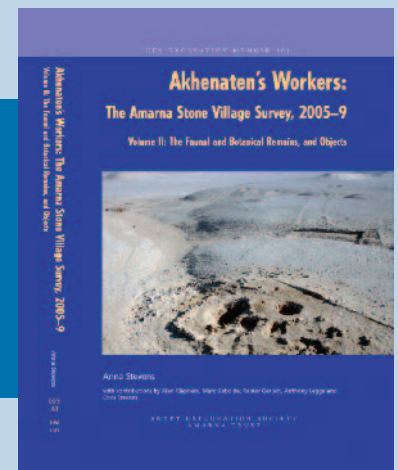


A. Stevens, *Akhenaten's Workers: The Amarna Stone Village Survey, Volume I: The Survey, Excavations and Architecture.*

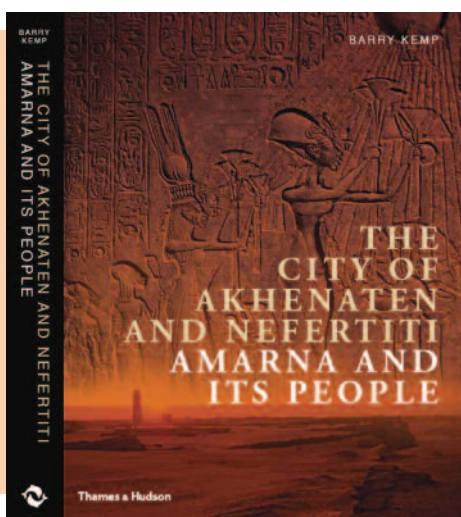
EES Excavation Memoir 100, London: Egypt Exploration Society and Amarna Trust (2012). With a contribution by Wendy Dolling.

A. Stevens, *Akhenaten's Workers: The Amarna Stone Village Survey, Volume II: The Faunal and Botanical Remains, and Objects.*

EES Excavation Memoir 101, London: Egypt Exploration Society and Amarna Trust (2012). With contributions by Alan Clapham, Marc Gabolde, Rainer Gerisch, Anthony Legge and Chris Stevens.



Jointly produced by the Amarna Trust and the Egypt Exploration Society, these two volumes, respectively of 468 and 398 pages, are available through the Egypt Exploration Society, see <http://ees.ac.uk/news/index/199.html>



Barry Kemp,
*The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti:
Amarna and its People.*

London: Thames & Hudson, and Cairo: American University Press (2012)

ISBN 9780500051733

24.70 x 18.50 cm • Hardback • 320pp

287 Illustrations, 53 in colour, including plans and maps

£19.16 from Amazon

Reclaiming the House of the Aten (continued)

In the Spring of 2012, a long-term project was begun at the site of the Great Aten Temple – the ‘House of the Aten’ – with two aims. One is to make a fresh study of the remains (first excavated by the Egypt Exploration Society in 1926, 1932 and 1933), and the other is to make them more visible, mainly by marking out the lines of the vanished walls in fresh stone. A first report was included in *Horizon* 11. In the autumn (between 15 October and 13 November) it proved possible to do more.

This time the work was done as part of a field school in survey methods, attended by seven inspectors from the Ministry of State for Antiquities and five non-Egyptians. The field school was organised in co-operation with the Institute for Field Research (California). A key role in the teaching was played by Dr Hans Barnard. An ideal location was the gypsum foundation bed within the first court of the temple. The court had been filled with rectangular stone offering-tables, and these had left their outlines in neat rows on the gypsum surface.

The gypsum concrete foundation



An example of one of the a...
an offering-table foundation



Aerial photograph (by Miriam Bertram and Sue Kelly) of the area of the cleaning in the first court of the Great Aten Temple.

Before the work began, the gypsum foundation layer was either still exposed and visible or covered by sand and rubble. Some of the sand had blown in but some, mixed with stones, had collapsed from the long ridges of ancient fill that had been left in place in 1932. Cleaning began where the gypsum was already exposed. As areas became clear, a five-metre grid was laid out, the intersections marked by limestone blocks in which nails had been inserted, a method that avoided marking, or in any way damaging, the ancient gypsum surface. By the end, an area measuring 17 m wide (north–south) by 23 m long (east–west) had been thoroughly cleaned.

The condition of the surface varied considerably. Where it had been protected by sand, principally along the west, south and north edges, preservation was good, with the details of ancient markings looking sharp and fresh. In other areas the surface had become powdery or broken into patterns of drying cracks, probably formed after rain had fallen. A large strip running down the central axis was missing altogether (as it had been in 1932).

The rows of offering-tables formed two east–west sets, with four rows in each, leaving a broad space between the two sets running down the main axis of the temple. The rectangles had first been marked by black ink lines (with,

An example of one of the areas marked for the construction of an offering-table foundation, still retaining a patch of the gypsum mortar bearing the impression of the underside of two blocks.

Foundation platform at the end of the cleaning, viewed to the north-east.



The south-west corner of the platform, showing one of the larger offering-table bases and the remains of a temporary mud-brick construction built directly on the gypsum surface. View to the south.



The field school was not limited to planning the Great Aten Temple. Weekly visits to parts of Amarna were to develop appreciation of archaeological landscapes. Here the class write their descriptions of the area around the house of the sculptor Thutmose.



Lower aerial photograph (by Miriam Bertram and Sue Kelly) of the northern half of the cleaned area.



Cleaning and planning the gypsum surface. View to the west.

here and there, short red lines) and then by v-profile grooves cut into the gypsum surface along these lines. Each rectangle was 1.06 x 0.90 m, except at the west end, where they were replaced by two pairs of larger rectangles, 2.70 x 1.30 m. The ground level rises slightly from west to east. At intervals, a low step was formed in the gypsum foundation platform to allow for this. The first step crossed the site towards the eastern end of the cleared area. It had been made without reference to the layout of the offering-tables, which had straddled the step on either side.

During the cleaning, many fragments of carved stone were found, either in the material that had collapsed from the side baulks and spread over the gypsum foundation layer or actually within the baulks as they were cut back for short distances. The fact that they came from material that was the original ancient fill, put down as part of the construction for the final phase of building the temple, shows that the breakage did not take place after the Amarna Period. The

most likely explanation is that the pieces belonged to stonework from the first phase of building, the remains of which were found in 1932 and which had occupied the area at the west end of what became the first court of the temple.

The fragments came primarily from architectural elements in travertine (alabaster), indurated limestone, conventional limestone and granite. There were also inlays in grano-diorite and red quartzite, mostly from a large cavetto cornice the background of which was made from indurated limestone. One or two pieces (one of them made from basalt) seemed to come from balustrades.

When planning and photography were completed, a 10 cm layer of sand was spread over the gypsum surface to protect it. It will ultimately be more deeply buried as we return the ground level to where it was when the temple was in use.



Red granite, with (right) edge of cartouche of the Aten and Aten rays.



Basalt, with cartouche of the Aten. The slightly sloping line above suggests that it comes from a balustrade.



Travertine (alabaster), with cartouche of Nefertiti



Travertine (alabaster) with a feather design.



Amarna in Berlin: the exhibition

Im Licht von Amarna/In the Light of Amarna is the title of a major exhibition at the Neues Museum, Berlin that opened on December 6th, 2012. On this day, one hundred years earlier, Ludwig Borchardt, working for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, discovered the painted bust of Queen Nefertiti in the house thought to have belonged to the sculptor Thutmose.

Organised by the director of the Egyptian section, Dr Friederike Seyfried, the exhibition displays a fine and varied selection of objects, in an imaginative setting, accompanied by explanatory panels in English and German, and two videos (available for purchase on a DVD).

A 496-page catalogue volume, available in separate German and English editions and with the same name as the exhibition, is packed with illustrations, many of them of objects from Borchardt's excavations and illustrated for the first time. Edited by Friederike Seyfried, it contains essays by people who work in the field of Amarna studies.

The exhibition is currently planned to end on April 13th.

A lecture series, held in the nearby Humboldt University, accompanies the exhibition: 15.01 Barry Kemp; 29.01 Bénédicte Savoy; 12.02 Stephen Quirke; 26.02 Maren Ahrens, Klaus Schleiter and Jens Schubert; 12.03 Dorothea Arnold; 26.03 Pamela Rose; 9.04 Jan Assmann.

Dietrich Wildung, *The Many Faces of Nefertiti* (Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag 2013) includes much on the modern history of the Nefertiti bust as well as historical background. (With Arabic summary).

www.imlichtvonamarna.de
www.facebook.com/staatlichemuseenzuberlin
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Fund raising

In the autumn, the Trust signed up with the Big Give charitable fund-raising organisation. The aim is to raise £40,680 over the course of three years for the project 'Restoring the Great Aten Temple at Amarna, Egypt'. The first stage began with 'The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2012'. Through a combination of pledges, direct donations (concentrated in early December) and matching sums from the organisation itself, a total of £13,270 was raised. This magnificent result is a tribute to the generosity and interest of our supporters.

The Big Give web site remains open through the year for donations in support of the Great Aten Temple project. See: <http://new.thebiggive.org.uk/project/greatatentemple>

theBigGive.org.uk
helping your donations go further



An advance picture from the 2013 season: the arrival of corner blocks carved in Tura limestone for the outlining of part of the Great Aten Temple.

Tours

Ancient World Tours 'Cities of the Nile'

Saturday, 5th October to Saturday 19th October 2013.
 The tour will visit many of the ancient cities that stand on the banks of the Nile, from Aswan through Middle Egypt to Cairo. Two full days will be spent at Amarna. Barry Kemp will accompany the tour throughout.

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Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society 'Study Tour to Lower Egypt Including the Faiyum, Alexandria and the Delta'

A tour, run in conjunction with the Amarna Trust, is being planned for December 2013. Further details will be publicised later.

For more information please contact
chairman@tvaes.org.uk



Prof Tony Legge

It is sad to report the death in Cambridge, on February 4th, of Prof Tony Legge, who had, for several years, studied the animal bones at Amarna. Readers of *Horizon* might recall his short articles on the eating of hyenas (issue 6, p. 8) and the strange custom of deliberate piercing of the shoulders of pigs (issue 7, pp. 6–7), both practices of the ancient inhabitants of the Workmen's Village. As well as having an acute eye for detail and an inexhaustible fund of knowledge of past agricultural practices, Tony was a kind and entertaining companion who greatly enlivened the company at Amarna.



The southern expedition house at Amarna, in the spring of 1977. Built by Ludwig Borchardt in 1907, it was used by the Egypt Exploration Society in the 1920s, subsequently becoming a shelter for the Antiquities Service guards. Repairs began in 1978, and it currently serves as the base for the Amarna Project.

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.



Prompted by a local request, in the Spring of 2012 the Amarna Project paid for the erection of a small room beside the road that links the modern villages and runs through the Central City. It provides shelter for the guards employed by the Ministry of State for Antiquities to keep an eye on the site.

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



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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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