

STATUARY 2004

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Given the many hundreds of statuary fragments that have come into the Amarna magazine in recent years, three main projects were undertaken during the 2004 season. First, the work of emptying the North House Dump of the pieces remaining there and the work on reconstructing the shattered granodiorite dyad of Nefertiti and Akhenaten found in the South House Dump had slowed the process of registration which Kristin Thompson had begun in 2001. The intention was to register a substantial number of pieces. Second, as part of an ongoing study of the statuary programme at Amarna, Thompson undertook systematically to gather samples of all the types of hard-stone from among the unworked pieces scattered about the sites where statuary fragments have been found in situ. Third, further sorting and study of the pink-granite fragments from the North House Dump was undertaken. This latter process was greatly aided during part of the season by the presence of Marsha Hill, a statuary expert from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Further work on the granodiorite dyad yielded no matches, and unless additional pieces are found, the work of reconstruction is essentially finished. It is hoped to mount the results, which represent perhaps half of the original statue (apart from the base) on a base or framework that would permit its eventual display.

One unexpected result of Thompson's examination of the major Amarna buildings in search of stone samples was the discovery (with Hill's aid) of an additional 44 pieces of statuary in situ, most of them from The Great Aten Temple, as well as a partial talatat relief in that building.

Registration

272 additional fragments were registered this season, including all the new surface finds, all the quartzite pieces from the North House Dump, and a small portion of the pink-granite pieces from that same source. This still leaves hundreds of pink-granite fragments to process, which will probably take at least another two seasons. By the time that all the pieces are registered, a systematic study of a large amount of information on various aspects of the site's statuary will be possible. For example, we should be able to estimate the minimum number of statues represented by fragments at Amarna and in museums around the world. Because nearly all of the many fragments at Amarna can be traced to specific buildings, we can also begin to discern patterns in the types of stone, poses, and scales associated with statuary in different parts of the city.

Survey of Stone Types

In order to gather as complete a list as possible of the various hard-stones used in statuary in the various major buildings at Amarna, Thompson walked over the Great Aten Temple, Small Aten Temple, Great Palace (in the area around the bridge), the King's House, the Kom el-Nana enclosure, and the workshop of the sculptor Thutmose. (The North Palace has yielded no statuary fragments.) Apart from the King's House and Kom el-Nana, these buildings were littered with pieces of granite, granodiorite, indurated limestone, and various colours of quartzite. One piece of each type of stone found was collected, and the results were labelled, bagged by locale, and are now stored in the magazine as a study and reference collection. In some cases, a type of stone not represented by any statuary pieces known to come from that building was found. The Small Aten Temple, for example, had numerous pieces of quartzite lying about, and yet no worked piece made of that stone has been found in there.

Similarly, pink granite, which is usually not associated with the Thutmose workshop, in fact lies scattered about the complex of buildings in fairly substantial pieces.

Studying the North House Dump Pieces

One of the most spectacular groups of fragments found at Amarna came from the North House Dump, though their original find-spot was the Broad Hall area of the Great Palace. These pieces come from several statues, mostly on a large scale and some almost certainly in an Osirid pose comparable to that of the East Karnak sandstone colossi. Just over 200 pieces from the Dump (including some quartzite fragments) had been returned to Amarna in 2002 by the Egyptian Museum, with the purpose of allowing a search for joins among them and the larger number of pieces from the Dump that were stored in the Amarna magazine. Fifteen of the pieces from the Museum have now been matched: in one case two Museum pieces fit together, but all the other matches were made with pieces from the magazine. This represents a match rate of 7% for these returned pieces—a substantial number given the small proportion of any one statue preserved in the North House Dump collection. Additional matches will probably be found.



Figure 1. The North City: area behind the North Dig House (top right-hand corner). The red arrow marks the location of the 'North House Dump' of stone fragments. North is to the bottom of the image.

Hill sorted hundreds of the granite pieces, finding a number of back-pillar fragments that fit together, as well as joins among pieces of crooks and colossal legs. In addition, she identified a number of types of regalia represented by small fragments. It seems clear that, like the East Karnak colossi, the ones from the Great Palace wore a variety of crowns and headdresses, including the white crown, the nemes, and some form of feathered crown. Most likely at least one of the colossi represented Nefertiti.

Not enough pieces from any one pink-granite statue survive to make possible a reconstruction of the kind achieved with the granodiorite dyad. Nevertheless, many clues regarding pose, scale, and the identity of the person represented have been found and will aid greatly in the more general study of the statuary programme.



Figure 2. Red quartzite toe from a colossal statue, from the North House Dump.



Figure 3. Fragment from a red granite statue from the North House Dump. It shows part of a leg clad in a pleated garment.

Surface Finds during the Stone Survey

Although some of the pieces of worked stone discovered during the surface search for samples were simply flat surfaces or border elements of back-pillars, some were recognizable as portions of human bodies. One important find in the front, or Gem-pa-Aten portion of the Great Temple was a small piece of pink granite with a small area of kilt-pleats preserved—the first indication of granite statues of the king or queen in this front part of the Temple. The dump of statue fragments discovered during the 1891-92 season by Howard Carter working under Petrie turned out not to be exhausted, and even the Pendlebury dumps in the Sanctuary area yielded some pieces. Surface finds in indurated limestone included a vertical slice of a shoulder from a life-sized statue and a piece at about one-third life-size preserving the back of a blue crown and the top of a back-pillar. A small but beautifully preserved portion of a foot with sandle-strap, in grandiorite, was also picked up, as was a piece of a quartzite statue-base with an almost wholly erased inscription. Two sections of limestone containing sunk hieroglyphs were found, one with a rare instance of the late didactic name of the Aten. A fragment of talatat in poor-quality limestone carried a relief of offerings.

Finds elsewhere included a life-sized elbow in indurated limestone in the Small Aten Temple, a segment of a bare lower leg from Kom el-Nana, and an uninscribed section of a back-pillar in indurated limestone in the Great Palace—only the third piece of statuary in that material found in the Palace.

The 2004 season has yielded both new finds and information based on the study of previous finds. A huge number of fragments now form part of the collection, and most of them can be provenanced to a specific building, though given the scattering caused by ancient destruction and modern investigation that provenance must remain approximate. Future years will concentrate on evaluating this evidence and building as precise a picture as possible of the statuary programme in the ancient city.