

STATUARY 2005

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Work on the statuary fragments at Amarna proceeded this season in three areas. First, registration of the fragments already in the magazine continued. An additional 232 pieces received numbers this year. These pieces included all of those found during the excavation of the Kom el-Nana (1989 to 1993), which had up to now been labeled only with field inventory information. In addition, registration was completed on all the fragments in granodiorite and travertine from the North House Dump, buried by the Egypt Exploration Society's expedition in the 1930s. The registration of the large number of remaining pieces of granite will take perhaps another two or three seasons to complete.

The second area of activity involved the travertine fragments from the North House Dump. While the vast majority of the fragments in other hard stones come from statuary in the round, the travertine pieces originally formed parts of reliefs. As these were sorted, it became apparent that most of them came from a single scene. A preliminary attempt was made to lay out these fragments and to investigate its content. Although only a relatively small portion of the original relief survives and only half a dozen joins were found among the fragments, it is evident that the scene depicted Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and one or more daughters offering to the Aten and that the offerings included a large bouquet.

The closest parallel to this piece is another travertine relief of the royal family offering, discovered by Sir William Flinders Petrie during his 1891–1892 season at Amarna and now in the Petrie Museum in London (UC401). Petrie found the fragments of that relief (since reconstructed) in the Great Palace, and the pieces from the North House Dump are from the same building (as evidenced by labeled pot sherds also found in the Dump and by the letters PAL written on some of the travertine fragments). Another parallel would be the section of balustrade in high-quality limestone in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (RT 30.10.26.12), also discovered by Petrie in the Great Palace. Thus the travertine fragments registered this season probably formed part of the same decorative scheme, with a series of similar reliefs in hard white stone adorning the balustrades of ramps in the Palace. Future investigation and work may permit the mounting of these pieces in a frame with the missing portions of the scene drawn in.

The third and final area of progress was a follow-up to last year's successful search for worked stone fragments on the surface of the Great Aten Temple. The area of the ancient dump where Howard Carter found numerous statuary fragments during the 1891–1892 season was again surveyed, and 35 additional pieces were picked up. Few of these were as significant as the ones recovered during the 2004 season, but they include some interesting items, such as a piece of a stele or offering table with small portions of two fingers surviving and a fragment of a quartzite statue base containing the hieroglyphs for "daughter." It is not clear that this ancient dump has been investigated since Petrie's day, and a possible future project of sifting the heaps in this area of the Great Aten Temple would undoubtedly yield many more small stone fragments.

During this season, an additional 21 matches between stone fragments were made, including three involving pieces that were returned to Amarna from the Egyptian Museum in 2002.