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THE PRESIDENT'S PAPYRUS

I am honored to have been selected as President of The Amarna Research Foundation. In its few years of existence, TARF has gained a reputation for the grants it has made in the furtherance of the research into the preservation of Egypt's Amarna period. I intend to continue and build on the reputation we have thus far gained.

There are a couple of specific topics I would like to address at this time.

1) The Board of Trustees recently adopted a simple, but more formal, application form to be used when requesting grants. To supplement this, I have asked that a local member work with each applicant, acting in the capacity of facilitator and advocate, to assist in making sure all the paperwork (including excavation reports) is in order and help in reduce the burden on the applicant.

2) We have occasionally had members (and others) submit unsolicited articles for inclusion in the Akhetaten Sun. We have not been able to honor these requests because the Sun is the official publication of the organization intended to provide excavation and related reports and was never envisioned as a general interest publication. However, we always appreciate the thoughts of our members. I have, therefore, decided to add a Members Forum to our web site. Members are encouraged to submit information or original articles concerning the Amarna Period, which would be of general interest, for inclusion. Beginning in November, we will publish those that time and space permit.

I look forward to the next year and am confident it will be a productive and interesting one.

Bill Petty

EES FIELD DIRECTOR'S REPORT, SPRING 2002

■ Barry Kemp ■

I travelled to Minia with the first group on Thursday, February 28th. The el-Minia inspectorate, under its new general director, Mr. Samir Anis, made us welcome, and later that day we set foot on the Amarna desert and moved into the dig house. On the Saturday the magazines and the site itself were declared open to us, and all the little routines that make the season work got under way. Our inspector, as last year, was Mr. Helmi Hussein, whose home is the village of el-Till itself.

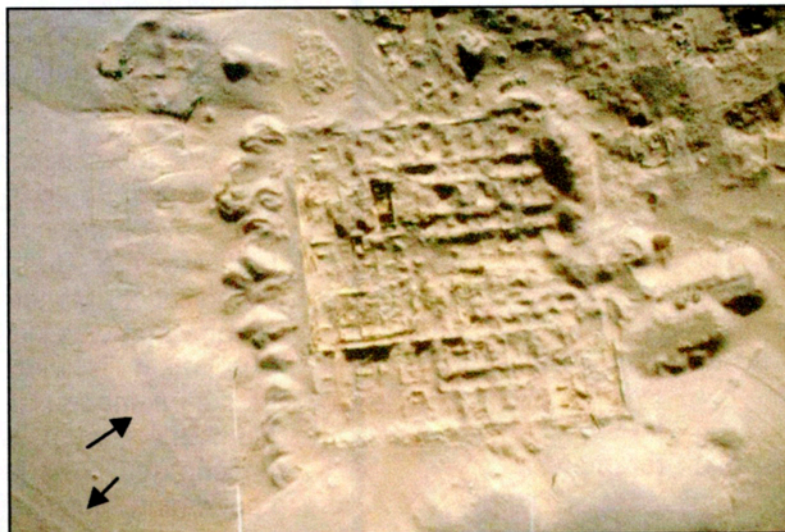
Desert Survey

A few days later Helen Fenwick the GPS surveyor arrived, armed with a new and more compact model of the differential GPS logger, a spin-off, interestingly enough, of the involvement of the head of her department in a popular British television series about archaeology called 'Time Team'. The main target for this year's survey was the low gravelled plateau that reaches out from the cliffs, across the middle of the Amarna desert rather like a ragged sleeve from the end of which protrude a set of fingers pointing towards the city. Snugly set between some of the fingers (in reality rounded valleys with sandy bottoms) is the Workmen's Village and its chapels. This is where I began to excavate at Amarna, back in 1979. We have detailed plans of virtually everything you can see there, even down to lines of stones. There is no point in surveying it all again.

But what is needed is a proper contour survey of the whole plateau into which our existing detail plans can be dropped, as it were. The combined result can then be joined up to the areas surveyed last year. There was new material to add, as well. Last year I described the ancient roadways that criss-cross the desert in front of the North Tombs.



GPS survey of the Amarna hinterland (March 2002). Surveyor Helen Fenwick sets up the differential GPS equipment above the Workmen's Village.



Workmen's Village: The walled village itself. Two of the ancient roads can be seen along the left edge of the picture (arrows).

Some of them head southwards, and are then lost where they have been swept away by the floodwaters of desert wadis, only to reappear as they climb towards the plateau and the Workmen's Village. Once on top they join another intricate pattern, which in part centres on the village.

The present desert surface around the base of the plateau has been much churned up by bulldozers in modern times. This makes the job of picking out the remains of the ancient roads quite tricky. As last year, one of the team, Corinna Rossi scoured the desert making sketch maps and numbering the fragments of roads as a way of speeding up Helen's work.



The aerial survey balloon. For taking it greater distances it can be towed by a small truck.

Having people up at the village provided us with an opportunity to do other useful things there. Although it lies only about half an hour's walk away from the dig house we do not often get there, in part because of the need to make prior arrangements with our police garrison. Over a number of days we transported the new balloon up to the village, using one of the local pickup trucks for part of the way, and then simply walking it the rest of the way to the top of the slope. The weather was still and clear and we managed a series of virtually trouble-

free runs, back and forth across the undulating landscape around the village, until all was covered. Since being back, I have studied some of the pictures closely.

The most intriguing series takes in the tops of the plateau and valleys behind the village to the east. The normally smooth surface of the desert has been disturbed by people looking for tombs, probably in the early part of last century. On the ground the result looks a mess, but the aerial photographs show that these diggings follow a rough pattern. They look much more like a real cemetery and imply that more tombs were dug and so more burials made than either I or anyone else realised. Once Helen's maps are available it will be possible to rescale the photographs, fit them over the maps, and transfer the new cemetery data to them.



Workmen's Village: cemetery to the south-east of the village. The circular pits are where tombs have been dug out in the past (1920's and before). The narrow trenches are where the 1921-22 expedition looked for more tombs.

Tucked away in another of the little sandy valleys is a second village, which looks directly towards the cleft in the hills, which leads to the Royal Wadi. I first noted it back in 1977 and dubbed it the Stone Village, simply because it seems to have been largely built from rounded natural stones. We have never been able to fit a proper investigation into our plans, but at least we now have a better surface record. Helen plotted in the outlines as part of her survey, and we took the balloon over it. From the air some of the interior looks more regular than you would guess



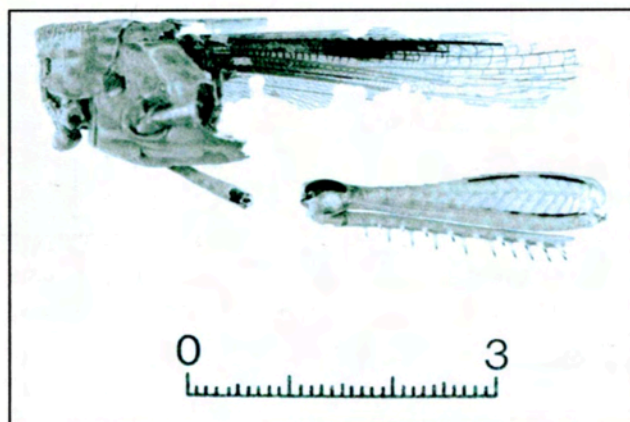
The Stone Village (March 2002) The site lies on a marked slope, fanning downwards from the lower left to the top right corner.

from the ground. One can start to discern the outlines of individual buildings. Will there be time, one day, to undertake a proper investigation?

House of Ranefer

Each year the Amarna team contains a group whose expertise lies in environmental archaeology, that is, the study of ancient plants, animal bones, and insects. Amarna is now quite famous for the unusual degree to which the desert sands preserve such fragile remains, and the group has been very productive in its scientific publications. Important for their work is careful comparison across different parts of the site. We have rich samples from the Workmen's Village and from Kom el-Nana, but the main city has so far yielded very little. It occurred to me last year that one good place to look for deep, dry and undisturbed deposits of soil, which might be suited to organic preservation is a series of soil layers underneath one of the houses dug back in 1921. This is the house of Ranefer (N49.18), towards the southern end of the main city. The excavator of that year, T.E. Peet, had dug two holes in the floor and discovered that Ranefer's house had been built over both an earlier house and an adjacent pit filled with earth. So for two weeks Paul Buckland, an environmental specialist, and some of his colleagues had the house cleaned of its sand.

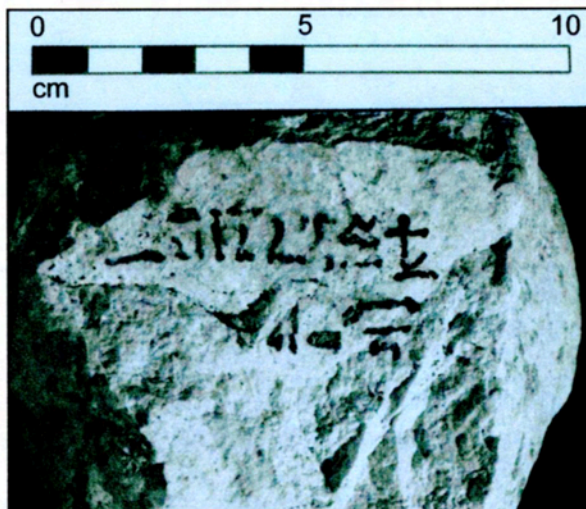
Ranefer's house has survived reasonably well since 1921. There has been some loss of brickwork, stone column bases have been rolled around, and some of the floors have been turned over. But the underlying debris seems more or less as it was when Peet saw it. The soil layers are there, and do indeed contain plant and insect remains. An amazingly well preserved 18th Dynasty locust was one such find. Moreover, there is more of the



18th Dynasty Locust

underlying house to explore. It was smaller than Ranefer's and of course raises an intriguing question. Ranefer was an officer in Akhenaten's chariotry. Did he rebuild his house when times got better for him, or did he move into the city after it was established and buy up a plot with a small house in order to replace it with a larger one?

By the end of the two weeks the house was clean and we planned and photographed it. But the really detailed work of examining what lies underneath, by looking beneath the rest of Ranefer's floors and also outside in his garden, is left until next year. This has the makings of an exciting small-scale investigation. We already have one intriguing find from Ranefer's foundations, a roughly spherical piece of hard limestone bearing a short hieratic inscription. One of the team, Egyptologist Dan Lines from Birmingham University, reads the text as a name and title 'the guardian (?) of the abode (?) of Kener'. Was Kener the name of the owner of the previous house?



Repairs to Ancient Buildings

Suresh our architect was also one of the first at the dig house, travelling down with me from Cairo. He came armed with the lists of his workmen from the previous year and, as far as we could, we took on the same two teams of men, one for the North Palace and one for the Small Aten Temple. An urgent task each year is to open up the huge garage where we keep the heavier outdoor equipment, the wheelbarrows, the oil drums for water, the shovels and so on; then to check it over, divide it into two piles, and send it all off to the two sites on the pickup truck. Because



Small Aten Temple – Second pylon entrance. Originally the doorway between the pylon towers was paved with limestone blocks. The plan is to relay the floor with new limestone blocks of a similar size to that of the ancient ones.

we need to keep making new bricks, each of the two sites needs a separate water supply and regular deliveries of materials. Suresh's tried and tested recipe for a good brick uses vegetation-enriched earth, pebbles, gravely sand, a bit of ash, a bit of animal dung and, most important, quicklime. This is mixed with water in the drums and so seethes and bubbles for a while, and then the earth and other ingredients are added



Third pylon entrance. An experimental area of stone flooring was laid in an previous season. It remains to extend it in other direction, to the front and rear lines of the pylon towers.

and mixed and the whole is left to soak for a day. We have our local suppliers for all of these things. The water supply remains a bit of a problem. Usually we rent a large blue tanker from the Antiquities Inspectorate, which is regularly towed off by a tractor to be refilled. This serves the North Palace. But there is only one tanker. For the Small Aten Temple two men spend the

working day carrying water, two buckets each, from a hand-pump beside the fields over to

our brickyard beside the temple, a journey of about two hundred and fifty yards on the map but which always seems much further on the ground.

At the Small Aten Temple, there is always much to do to define more sharply the various brick elements, particularly the pylon towers, the gates beside the pylons, and the towers that lined the enclosure wall on the outside. Our aim is that visitors will gain an early impression of the layout with a few sweeps of the eye. Originally the wide gateways between all three of the pairs of brick pylons, and the side gates, too had been floored with limestone blocks. The blocks have long since gone, but a bed of gypsum concrete marks where they had been. I have often noticed that the replacement of even a small amount of stonework, door thresholds, for example, has a marked effect on the eye, and in making the site look more cared for perhaps encourages people's respect for it. If all the main gates at the temple were to be refloored the effect would be quite striking, not least in immediately defining the rising ground level from front to back as one progresses through the temple. I therefore purchased several hundred limestone blocks of roughly the correct ancient size, and these are now stacked beside the gateways awaiting our return in 2003.



Second pylon entrance. In the foreground is the northern side gateway and new brickwork recently completed.

At the North Palace our builders completed their work on the next set of rooms along the rear, repairing old eroded brickwork and replacing missing elements, including a set



North Palace - Rooms north of the central columned hall during repairs. March/April 2002



North Palace – Rooms north of the central columned hall, after repairs to the brickwork. March/April 2002

of square brick roof-supports, which had eroded down almost to nothing. One builder also worked his way along the outside of the rear enclosure wall, filling in a deep horizontal groove caused by differential erosion. All this brings us to the suite that occupies the centre of the palace. It includes a small throne-room at the rear, and a large hall in front. That hall is now an almost blank square of dusty ground. Two stone column bases stand in one corner, but we know from previous excavation that they are all that survives of an original set of 26, which made up a veritable hypostyle hall. Here the policy of replacing missing stone items would make a dramatic difference. The first step would be to have a rigid mould made in which new column bases could be cast in a white stony concrete. We have done this successfully before. Our existing moulds, however, are for bases of not quite the right size for this set. I am therefore, at the time of writing, investigating having a new one made.

Amarna Statue Fragments

Whilst the work goes on outside, many members of the expedition spend their days in study on the mass of material we have in store. Last year Kristin Thompson, one of the TARF Board Members, began the labour of cataloguing the many fragments of broken hard-stone statues of the Amarna royal family, mostly retrieved from the dumps of previous excavators. Both Kristin and I wrote a bit about this project in last September's issue of the *Sun*. In that report, I mentioned that one group of fragments had been transferred to the Cairo Museum in 1982. The idea had been growing steadily in my mind of how nice it would be to get them back, so that they could join their fellows found in subsequent years. It is a great pleasure to report that the Director (Dr Mamduh el-Damati) and staff of the Egyptian Museum Cairo acknowledged the desirability of returning the pieces, and enabled this to happen. Kristin and myself were allowed down into the museum basement store where we located the big crates containing the 1982 pieces (around two hundred). Late in the evening of the last day of work at Amarna (March 30th) the trucks containing the crates arrived at the dig house and, with much



Old Excavation dump behind the EES house in the North City. Collecting fragments of hard stone statue left shallowly buried in the 1930's and now exposed on the desert surface. Kristen Thompson supervises the collection.

difficulty (they are massively heavy), were transferred to the magazine, where they await our arrival in March. We must now have by far the largest collection of Amarna statue fragments anywhere.

One source of the fragments is an area some way behind the site of Pendlebury's old northern dig house. Over the years we have brought collections of them back to the house. This year Kristin went out with a few workmen and

lots of plastic trays and made a thorough job of bringing back the remainder. She got the men to dig down a little way into the desert but it seems that the pieces had not been buried but just left strewn on the surface.

Are there still more to come? I have known for some time that the area beside the northeast corner of our own expedition house had been used by the EES expeditions of the early 1920s as a place for sorting carved stones obtained from Maru-Aten and also for burying surplus antiquities. We recovered one cache in 1992. This year a start was made on a more methodical clearance. Many more pieces of carved stone came to light, together with a few smaller finds. From the occasional excavator's mark we can deduce that it is a mixture of material from Borchardt's and early EES excavations. The latest pieces derive from 1924, when the southern house was abandoned in favour of the newly built house in the North City. The



Site of the 'south house dump' of buried artefacts from early excavations at Amarna. The four red numbers mark the positions of most of the buried materials. Nos. 1 & 2 contained most of the stonework. Nos. 3 & 4 contained most of the pottery.

stonework probably comes mainly from Maru-Aten but the few 1924 pieces come from the house of Panehsy, excavated by Griffith. By an attractive coincidence many broken pieces from Ranefer's front doorframe also came up and I hope next year we can restore them in-to vessels assembled in the early EES seasons. These are the vessels on which the drawn pottery corpus published in *City of Akhenaten* Volume I is based. Many bear clearly legible ink a large gap in the new pottery corpus being prepared by Pamela Rose.

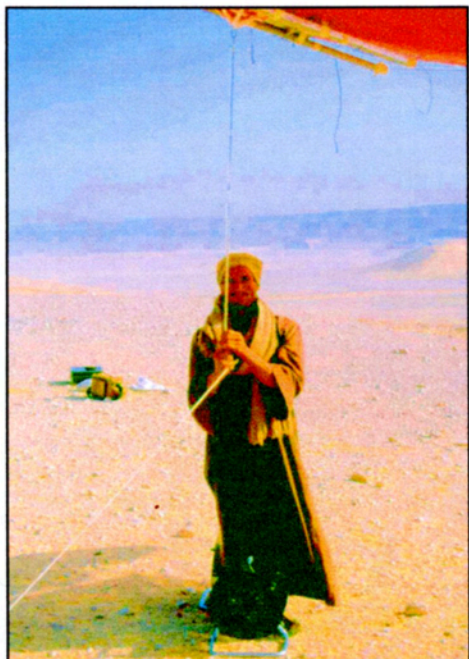
The Balloon

I mentioned earlier that, as the desert survey progressed, aerial photographs taken from the expedition's balloon accompanied it. This is a wonderful TARF gift. Conditions on the desert are, however, tough for a thin plastic helium envelope (or skin). Ultra-violet rays from the sun, together with the dust and sand that are everywhere, in time wear it thin

and so the helium, which we bring down from Cairo in big heavy cylinders, begins to leak out. Last autumn the TARF board generously agreed to an emergency request for extra funding to cover the cost of a new envelope. I took it out in January, and in March, when our photographer Gwil Owen joined us; we mounted it in its frame, filled it, and took it on its maiden flight over the house of Ranefer. It is actually a bit longer than its predecessor and so gives us a little bit of extra lift as well. I wish it a long life and many successful flights. And thank you, TARF members, for boosting our resources in this way, and for your continuing support of the fieldwork in general, which is run under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Society and with a permit from the Supreme Council of Antiquities through your generous



The North City: area around the north dig house. The red arrow marks the location of the 'north house dump' of stone fragments.



The aerial survey balloon. It is a valuable adjunct to GPS hinterland survey, here above the Stone Village (March 2002) with assistant. Hosni Osman Mohenni.



The aerial survey balloon. Filling the replacement balloon envelope for the first time (March 2002). Lift is provided by helium gas.

grants.

The current plan is that Suresh will spend a few weeks at the house in January seeing to urgent improvements to the plumbing, and the main expedition will descend on Amarna at the end of February. As last year I hope to set up our email

connection at the house and so be in a position to send out the news as it happens.

THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS: THE AMARNA ROYAL TOMBS PROJECT

■ Geoffrey T. Martin ■

The Valley of the Kings! A magical name, conjuring up a picture of lavishly decorated pharonic royal tombs, buried treasure, spectacular terrain, ancient plunderers, and modern explorers and archaeologists. It is all of this of course, but there is more to it than that.

The Amarna Royal Tombs Project came into being five years ago, mainly as the brainchild of Dr. Nicholas Reeves, whose books on the Valley of the Kings and the tomb of Tutankhamun will be well known to most readers. The present writer, who has worked on archaeological expeditions in the Sudan and Egypt each year since 1963, came on board as joint Field Director with Nicholas Reeves in the Valley in 1998. My own interests in Egyptology are wide-ranging, but I have a special interest in Amarna studies, having recorded and published the tomb of Akhenaten and the minor tombs in the royal necropolis there.

The Amarna Royal Tombs Project has a strong Amarna focus, since our belief is that the burials of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, most of their daughters and other members of the royal family, including Queen Tiye, were decanted from their tombs at Amarna once the court quitted the Horizon of the Aten during the reign of Tutankhamun, and were reburied in specially prepared cache tombs in the ancestral burial grounds at Thebes – the Valley of the Kings. You may well ask why this should have occurred. The reason must be that the Royal Tomb and other tombs in the Amarna equivalent of the Valley of the Kings were too remote to guard adequately once the administrative officials left Amarna to return to Memphis and other cities. With little doubt the royal tombs in the Amarna cemeteries would have been plundered, and it is conceivable that they were in fact partly disturbed, even before the transfer was undertaken.



Amarna studies are inevitably Akhetaten-oriented. This is not surprising, since the bulk of the archaeological and inscriptional evidence derives from that site, the only comparable source being the Aten temple area at East Karnak. The Amarna Period is full of controversies, which remain to be resolved. Each scholar and every 'enthusiast' has his or her own opinion on the history, chronology, religion and private funerary cult, art, daily life, etc. with regard to this period. Some of the conundrums will doubtless be resolved, and new ones created, by archaeological excavations at the town site. But there are other places also to investigate, and the ARTP believes the Valley of the Kings is a prime one, even though it is not automatically associated with Akhenaten and his family.

Concrete evidence at our disposal includes the contents of the notorious Tomb KV55, excavated (if that is the right word) in 1907 under the auspices of Theodore Davis, and the evidence from the neighbouring tomb of Tutankhamun (who was after all a member of Akhenaten's family, probably his son). We feel that somewhere in the roughly triangular area of terrain in the middle of the Valley there remains to be located crucial evidence concerning the reburials, and of the ultimate fate of the Amarna royal family. Theodore Davis' discovery showed conclusively that KV55 was destined to receive the reburials of Akhenaten and his mother Queen Tiye. Interestingly, they were likewise together in the Royal Tomb at el-Amarna. The question is: where are all the others?

It is of course conceivable that the reburials themselves were relocated by plunderers during the course of the Valley's history. However, if this had been so one would have expected a sprinkling of objects, broken or otherwise, to have emerged during excavations in the Valley from the time of Belzoni in the early nineteenth century down to the time of Howard Carter. Yet there is virtually nothing. Plenty of objects naming Akhenaten, Neferneferuaten and other members of their family were found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, having been commandeered and sometimes reinscribed by the officials responsible for the interring, at short notice, of the youthful king. Some of these objects were doubtless once in tombs in the royal necropolis at el-Amarna. But that is another story.



Members of the ARTP team with sponsor Barbara Mertz and Dennis Forbes © Georae Johnson

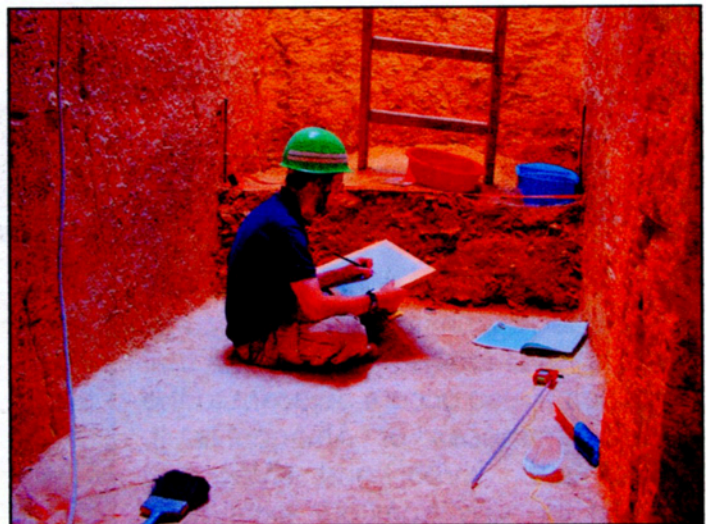
If our team, which is international in makeup, with members from the USA, Egypt and Japan, as well as Great Britain, is fortunate enough to locate even one of the 'missing' cache tombs, imagine how much knowledge would accrue, with careful excavation, about the Amarna Period and the royal family. And if that tomb turned out to be that of Queen Nefertiti ('King' Neferneferuaten/Smenkhkare?) ...!



Photogrammetry of Ramessid workmen's houses on site 1. © ARTP

In the meantime we have more prosaic but still fascinating material to record for science. Our excavation area is 'sensitive', and it is virtually certain it has not hitherto been excavated to bedrock. It is in the most congested part of the Valley from the touristic point of view, with thousands of visitors trudging past our trenches every day during the excavating season and most, understandably, want a view of what is going on. Thus we can only work slowly and painstakingly, which is how it should be. But in the small area so far partially cleared, between the tombs of Ramesses III and Ramesses VI, we have recovered material of extraordinary interest, throwing entirely new light on the history of the Valley.

Beneath several feet of modern 'landscaping' debris, excavators' spoil and ancient chippings from the cutting of tombs lie the remains of a workmen's settlement. This is a counterpart of the village of Deir el-Medina just over the mountain to the east, though our hutments are far simpler than the Deir el-Medina houses, which after all were permanent living quarters. In the hutments no doubt squatted the necropolis guards who protected the royal valley by night, and the foremen and gangs of workmen – masons, plasterers, draughtsmen, artists – who were in the Valley daily to carry out work on a newly commissioned royal tomb. It seems practically certain that such houses cover the floor of most of the Valley. Howard Carter, in looking for Tutankhamun, encountered just such houses (they adjoin our excavation site), and when he excavated beneath them ...! Our difficulty at the moment is that, because of the restricted nature of the area in which we are working, we have not been able to go deep enough without risk to life and limb. The acquisition and erection of a metal bridge in 2002 (a generous loan from a Japanese construction company working in Kajima, Egypt) means that we have managed at last to penetrate deeper without hindering tourist access to the inner part of the Valley and the spectacular tombs there: Tuthmosis III, Amenophis II, Horemheb and the others.



Drawing a section in the shaft of KV56 © ARTP



Large limestone ostracon in Amarna style from ARTP site 1. © ARTP

I have already mentioned both ancient and modern debris, and even the latter is filled with pieces of royal tomb equipment overlooked by previous researchers. Much of this is a real addition to our knowledge of this corpus of artifacts, even though it is fragmentary. It was nice to be able to rejoin a portion (found in one of our early seasons) of the sarcophagus of Horemheb to the sarcophagus itself, which is still situated in his magnificent tomb adjacent to our concession. A fragment of his alabaster canopic chest in Cairo emerged soon after. In the settlement levels as well we are finding evidence revealing more of the daily life of the Valley workforce. These finds included: in situ hearths, pottery, food remains and the like, as well as plenty of evidence of their 'extra-curricular' activities in the form of drawings and sketches on fragments of limestone (ostraca), one of which was rendered in obvious Amarna style. Other ostraca turn out to be

administrative in nature. In the houses too we encounter artifacts called by Egyptologists 'jeux de nature', pieces of natural flint and limestone resembling either the voluptuous female form (often embellished in paint by ancient artists in the Valley) or the omnipresent Sun rising over the horizon. These objects are very probably cultic in nature, and relate to the beliefs of the people living in Deir el-Medina and working in the Valley of the Kings. These are just some of the classes of objects we have uncovered in our first four shortish seasons of excavation. There is still much to do.

Rock inscriptions adjacent to our site may furnish another piece of evidence about the possible existence of undiscovered caches in or near our present work. A necropolis scribe called Wanennefer has scratched his name several times nearby. No doubt he was one of those responsible for the security of the royal tombs. It transpires that his name also occurs adjacent to the tomb entrances of Amenophis II, Horemheb, KV58, and KV56 just along the way from our excavation area. Can it be that he was mainly responsible for the area included in our excavation concession, and that hidden tombs or cached

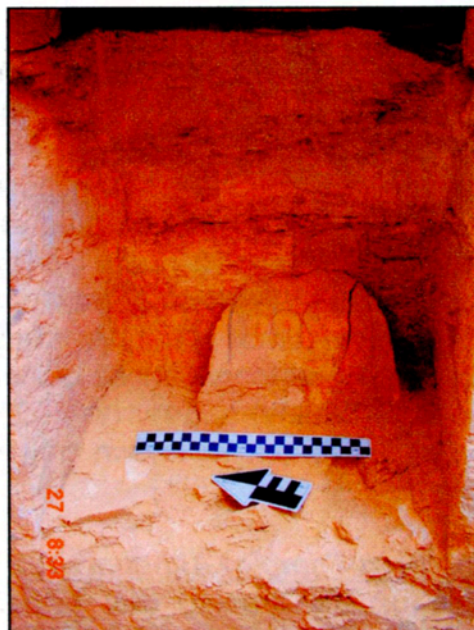


Rock cut shrine on ARTP site 4 as discovered. © ARTP

under his feet he knew that there were other burials? Only time will tell.

In the meantime we have much to assimilate and masses of material of all kinds to record and analyze. We have in fact enough for a preliminary publication. I have only touched on some of the aspects of our work. A bonus at the very end of the 2002 season in late February was the discovery of a small niche or rock-cut shrine not far from the entrance of the tomb of Ramesses III. Only one other such shrine is known in the Valley, in an inaccessible spot below the tomb of Tuthmosis III. The walls of our niche are decorated and a votive stela was still inside.

Searching for cached burials and investigating the settlement pattern of the Valley of the Kings are now our two main objectives. We are also concerned about the protection of the monuments in the Valley from flash floods (hence the total removal or partial redistribution of flood-borne and excavators' debris is crucial), and the pressing need for the re-excavation and recording of tombs that were somewhat hurriedly dealt with in the past. These concerns prompted our work in KV56, which was originally cleared by Theodore Davis, who found a magnificent cache of gold jewellery there. The tomb turns out to be a large and impressive chamber approached by a deep shaft.



Interior of rock cut shrine with stela to Meretseger in situ. © ARTP

Aside from the find plan and sections we now have at our disposal, we also excavated copious sherd material there, and more pieces of gold jewellery still remained to be discovered, the first to have been excavated in the Valley since the discovery of Tutankhamun. The jewellery elements, discovered by Theodore Davis, are part of the Ramesside parure now in the Cairo Museum. The tomb could have been one of the 'cache' tombs I have already mentioned more than once.



Gold plaque with cartouches of Sethos II from KV56 – part of the suspension. © ARTP

Readers will doubtless see from these few brief words that we have a unique chance to advance the knowledge of many aspects of the Valley of the Kings over the coming years. We have the generous approval and logistical and administrative support of our friends and colleagues on the Supreme Council of Antiquities, in Cairo and in Luxor.

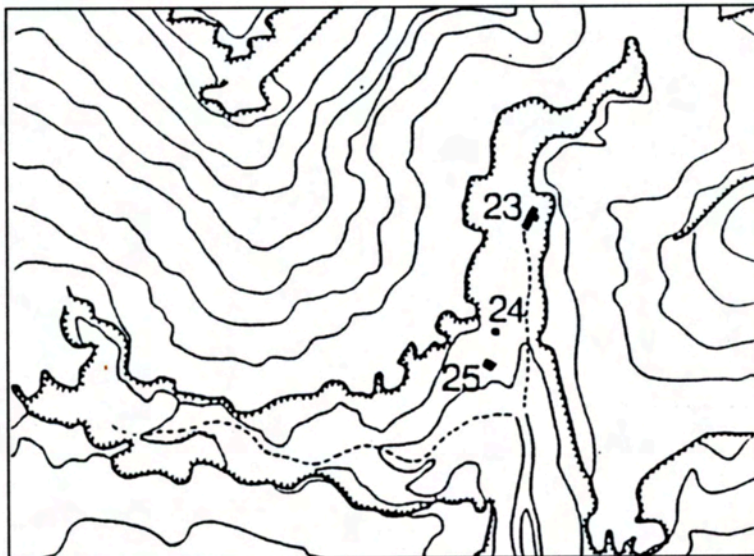
[Perhaps of interest to our general readership is this description of the jewellery from KV56 mentioned above. "The finds recovered from within K56 included a circlet, earrings, several finger-rings, bracelets, a series of necklace ornaments and amulets, a pair of silver 'gloves' and a silver sandal." C.N. Reeves, *Valley of the Kings*. Kegan Paul, 1990. pg.131. DAH]

**The Identity of the Amarna Age Tomb WV 25
in the Western Valley of the Kings**
■Richard H. Wilkinson■

The University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition has worked in the Valley of the Kings since 1989 and has excavated and studied a number of royal tombs there over the course of the past 13 years. During that time the Expedition has spent several seasons working in the Western branch of the royal necropolis – the so-called West Valley – studying the tombs of the Amarna age kings found there. Although both the earliest and latest of these tombs, those of Amenhotep III (WV 22, referring to tomb number 22 in the West Valley) and Ay (WV 23), were decorated and inscribed for their occupants, the uninscribed tomb known only as WV 25 which lies between them has long been an enigma.

The First Tomb of Akhenaten?

It is usually thought that WV 25 may be the first tomb begun by Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten before that king moved to his new city of Akhetaten and built his famous royal tomb there. This presumed identity of the uninscribed tomb is based on its general position in the West Valley and on the size and design of its architectural



Map of the end of the western branch of the Valley of the Kings showing the locations of tombs WV 23, 24, and 25.

features, all of which would seem to place the monument chronologically between those of Amenhotep III and Ay. The tomb was discovered by Giovanni Belzoni in his explorations of 1816-17 along with the tomb of Ay and the shaft tomb known as WV 24 which lies between Ay's tomb and WV 25 (and which may have been cut originally as a storage annex for WV 25 in the same way that Amenhotep III's tomb had a similar storage annex "tomb" known as WV A).

Although Egyptology is indebted to Belzoni's persistent and profitable work of search and discovery, it is also hampered by the fact that, in the mode of his day, the Italian strongman sought artifacts rather than archaeological features, and the latter were sometimes jeopardized or destroyed in the frenzied effort to find the former. This is particularly clear in Belzoni's famous use of a battering ram to open WV 25, a procedure that accomplished its goals but with little regard for the tomb itself. Belzoni's damage to the architectural record of WV 25 did not begin with the ram, however, and the intrepid explorer may well have unintentionally destroyed some key evidence for this tomb.

A Way to Solve the Enigma

Evidence from within the tomb that could be used to ascertain the owner or builder of WV 25 is entirely lacking. The tomb is unfinished and undecorated. It appears that, for some reason, the construction of the tomb was halted abruptly and the workmen never returned. One way in which the enigma of WV 25's origin might be solved would be the discovery of a foundation deposit pit or pits containing inscribed objects providing clear identification of the tomb's owner. Such pits were constructed for a number of New Kingdom royal tombs, including the tomb of Amenhotep III in the same valley. If the supposition that WV 25 represents the very next royal tomb cut in the West Valley is correct, which it would be if it is indeed the first tomb begun for Akhenaten, then it seems likely that foundation deposit pits could exist for that tomb also. While earlier excavations conducted in front of the tomb and cursory examinations of the surface levels at the sides of the tomb did not uncover any such pits, the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition decided that the area should be searched thoroughly in order to make an archaeological determination of this situation.



Part of the University of Arizona team excavating the western side of Tomb WV25.

In the spring of 2000, the Expedition requested and was granted permission by the Supreme Council of Antiquities to conduct a thorough search of the areas around this tomb in the hope of finding foundation deposit pits. This work was funded by a number of gifts of support including a generous grant from The Amarna Research Foundation (TARF). Unfortunately, however, work conducted in the summer of 2000 provided only a testament to Belzoni's probing of the slopes to the west of WV 25.



Richard Wilkinson pointing out stratigraphic levels in one of the few areas where they were clear on the heavily disturbed western side of the tomb.

The stratigraphic sequence of this area, or what is left of it, begins with a layer of surface debris consisting mainly of dirt and rocks of various sizes (Level 1) deposited by numerous floods over the centuries. Beneath this surface layer was a layer of clean white limestone chips of various sizes (Level 2), which represented the stone that was removed and dumped in the course of the construction of tomb 25. Below the layer of tomb chips was a layer of undisturbed dirt, which would have

been the level of the surface at the time the tomb, was constructed (Level 3). This third level ended at the hard packed level of rock and *tafl* that represents the upper surface of the bedrock limestone *gebel* (Level 4).

But in most of the area excavated to the west of the tomb, these stratigraphic levels had been churned in the past, almost certainly by Belzoni in the course of his discovery of tomb 25. Our excavations turned up only small fragments of artifacts in this disturbed area and no sign of a foundation pit was discovered, although given the degree of the area's disturbance, this was hardly surprising.

Major Stratigraphic Levels Common to Excavated Areas Around Tomb WV-25

Level 1: Post-New Kingdom level ⇨ Loose packed surface debris

Level 2: Tomb construction level ⇨ Limestone chips cut from tomb

Level 3: Pre-tomb ground level ⇨ Mostly similar to Level 1 above

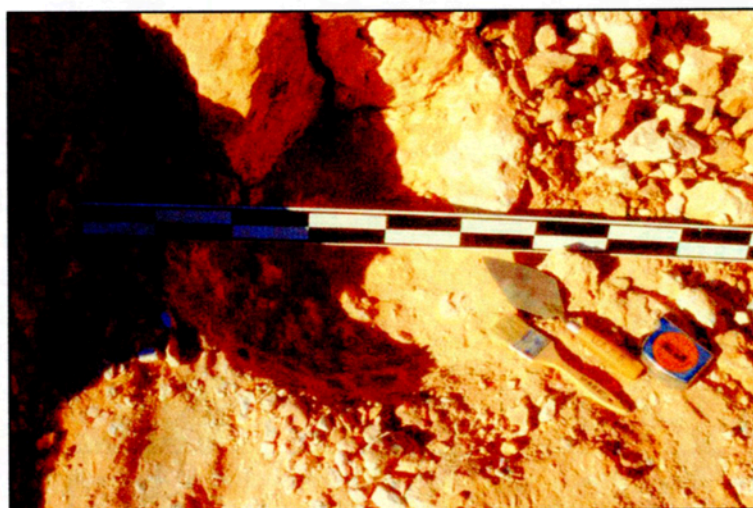
Level 4: Underlying *gebel* ⇨ Hard-packed rock and limestone beds

Foundation Pit

Our summer 2001 season's work on this project, again supported in part by TARF, therefore involved searching the remaining unexplored area to the eastern side of the entrance to tomb WV 25. This area exhibited the same stratigraphic sequence, but in contrast to our excavation of the heavily disturbed areas to the west of the tomb, only a small amount of disturbance was evident.

In the course of excavating this area, Nubie Abd el-Basset, our Expedition's *reis*, discovered a feature that we soon realized represented the remains of a foundation deposit pit. This feature was located 2.7 meters from the axis line at the center of the tomb entrance in exactly the area one would expect a pit to have been dug.

The pit, which was cut into the New Kingdom surface layer and underlying hard pack at the base of the limestone chip level, was just over 30 cm deep on its northern edge, although it had been dug through on its southern half at some point. The edges of that half of the pit were, therefore, less distinct, but it was clear that the feature had been nearly circular in plan ⇨ about 45 cm across on its east-west axis.



The remains of the foundation deposit pit discovered on the east side of the entrance to WV 25.

The surface level around the lip of the pit had been carefully smoothed and exhibited numerous cut marks where harder areas had been leveled. Small stones and hard pack on the sides and base of the pit also exhibited cut surfaces. Most of the pit was lined with fine, clean, yellowish-grey river sand — totally unlike the surrounding soil type — and not mixed with any other substance although the pit itself was filled with intrusive limestone chips from the layer above.

The horizontal and vertical loci, size, shape, and river sand lining of this feature clearly indicated that it represented the remains of a foundation deposit pit dug through (and doubtless emptied of its artifactual contents) at some time, and almost certainly by Belzoni's workmen in the course of their probing of the area at the time of WV 25's discovery.

Empty - But Not Without Value

This discovery leads us to believe that, just like the tomb of Amenhotep III which lies a little distance away, foundation pits may well have been placed around WV 25, probably directly in front of the tomb on the axis of the tomb entrance and on each side of the entrance itself. The first of these could have been destroyed by Belzoni's digging or even placed in the area in which New Kingdom workmen's huts were later built, if those structures were built after WV 25 was constructed. Any pit directly on the west side of the tomb entrance was doubtless destroyed in the course of Belzoni's thorough probing, as revealed by our excavation of that area. The damaged pit that we discovered on the east side of the entrance was most likely the only surviving example of such pits for this particular tomb.

Although the remains of the one surviving pit were clear enough, the tomb which was probably Akhenaten's first funerary monument remains, like Akhenaten himself, as mysterious and enigmatic as ever. On the other hand, despite the fact that the pit had been emptied, depriving us of conclusive evidence of the ownership of WV 25, our excavation nevertheless established the existence of a deposit pit or pits for this intriguing monument and provided another link in the history of foundation deposits associated with New Kingdom royal tombs.

Certainly the knowledge that WV 25 did originally have one or more foundation deposit pits was worth the time spent carefully excavating the area around the tomb. The Amarna Research Foundation's support of this project was therefore both worthwhile and of great help in achieving this understanding.

Dr. Richard H. Wilkinson is a professor at the University of Arizona and is the Director of the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition.

MOTIF ALIGNMENT PROJECT

In addition to its excavation work, the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition also conducts another ongoing project in the Valley of the Kings: the Motif Alignment Project, which aims to understand the underlying symbolism of the way in which the decoration of the royal tombs was organized. This orientational symbolism of New Kingdom royal tombs has been little studied until recent years and the project is finding many aspects of royal tomb decoration that have not been noted or understood before. While it is known that as early as the 18th dynasty, the ancient Egyptians considered the entrance to the royal tomb to be symbolically located in the south (despite actual cardinal directions), a good deal of evidence indicates that during the 19th dynasty another symbolic orientation was utilized in which the royal tomb was considered to lie on an east-west axis.

The Motif Alignment Project is collecting and studying the evidence for this symbolic re-alignment and its influence on the decoration of the Ramesside tombs and also applying what is learned to the tombs of the Amarna Period. For the past few years, the Expedition has conducted seasons of photography and recording in various New Kingdom royal tombs and is producing a CD-ROM, which will allow full study of motif alignment in the Valley of the Kings.

Comparison of Three Years Revenue and Expenses for The Amarna Research Foundation

	Fiscal Year 2000	Fiscal Year 2001	Fiscal Year 2002
Beginning balance	\$ 703	\$ 2,895	\$ 8,328
Donations received	13,099	18,225	15,446
Expenses	(3,091)	(1,880)	(2,382)
Grants	(7,816)	(10,912)	(1,308)
Ending balance	\$ 2,895	\$ 8,328	\$ 20,084

Balance Sheet for The Amarna Research Foundation As of September 30, 2002

Assets	\$ 20,084.64	Liabilities	\$ -0-
Total assets	\$ 20,084.64	Total liabilities	\$ -0-
Fund balance			
From previous year's operations	\$ 23,774.98		
For current year	(3,690.34)		
Fund balance	\$ 20,084.64		

Note: This balance sheet reflects cash items only and does not include non-items such as amortization and depreciation. This balance sheet has not been audited.

**Treasurer's Report
For the Period Ending September 30, 2002**

To: Board of Trustees
The Amarna Research Foundation

From: Evan H. Mitchell

Date: September 30, 2002

At the close of the fiscal year which ended on September 30, 2002, The Amarna Research Foundation had cash in the amount of \$20,084.64. Donations received during the year were \$15,446.40 with expenses of \$2,382.59 and grants made totalling \$1,307.75.

The expenses for the year by category were:

Foundation publications, including postage	\$ 1,417.59
Advertising for new members	940.00
Other (Bi-annual state fee)	25.00

There was no compensation made to any trustee. All served in a voluntary capacity.

Grants made this year were:

American Friends of Cambridge University	\$ 543.00
Equipment purchased by TARF and shipped to the EES directly from the dealer	764.75

A further grant to the American Friends of Cambridge University in the amount of \$9,000.00 was approved in September 2002. When paid, this grant will reduce the fund balance by an additional \$9,000.00.

Money donated to the American Friends of Cambridge University was earmarked for the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research with the request that such funds be allocated to the Amarna Project under the direction of Barry Kemp.

Evan H. Mitchell
Treasurer, The Amarna Research Foundation