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The Petty Foundation

The Presidents Papyrus

The Amarna Research Foundation is funding two projects this year that should help to solve two ancient mysteries: First, why were only “young” people found in the commoners’ cemetery at Amarna? And second, why was Amarna-style pottery found at the mortuary temple of Tausert on the west Bank at Thebes?

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Barry Kemp’s Spring 2006 season excavated the largest of the private cemeteries of the Amarna Period that have been located in recent years. The cemetery is on a sandy terrace that runs behind tomb number 25, that of the god’s father Ay. Under the supervision of archaeologists Mary Shepperson and Lindsay Ambridge, groups of bones were found, mapped, and then removed. Professor Jerry Rose from the University of Arkansas studied the bones and found that they showed people injuring themselves through carrying heavy loads, and suffering diet deficiencies in childhood. Surprisingly, the dead were mostly of a very young average age (20 years or so) - but more work is to be done this next season, as more remains are unearthed. Look for more information on this mystery in the next issue of the Akhetaten Sun.

Tausert was the 19th dynasty queen who ruled Egypt around 1200 BC, some 150 years after the Amarna Period. Richard Wilkinson’s team has been working at her temple since 2004. First briefly examined by Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie in 1896, Wilkinson’s excavations have demonstrated that Petrie’s work at the site was far from thorough. Numerous artifacts have already been recovered from previously unexcavated areas along with evidence that the temple was further developed than previously believed. The Amarna Research Foundation has funded a study that will try to determine if the Amarna style artifacts unearthed at this site are heirlooms, or copies earlier period objects. Dr. Wilkinson describes the discovery of the “Amarna Blue Ware” in this issue.

Exciting discoveries are being made at Amarna, conservation work continues, and the Amarna site Museum site is well on the way to completion. Thank you for your generous contributions in 2006. I hope 2007 is a prosperous and happy year for all.

David Pepper

Fieldwork at Amarna, late 2005 to early 2006

Barry Kemp

The work of the last twelve months was spread over a longer time, in two main stints: December 2005 and March/April 2006. It is good to see the house and the opportunities it offers for direct contact with the site and its finds being used more extensively. An important addition to the house itself was an extension to the antiquities store (the 'magazine'), built to provide laying-out space for objects intended for the new site museum. This was built entirely from donations from ARF members who responded to a special appeal. More on the museum below.

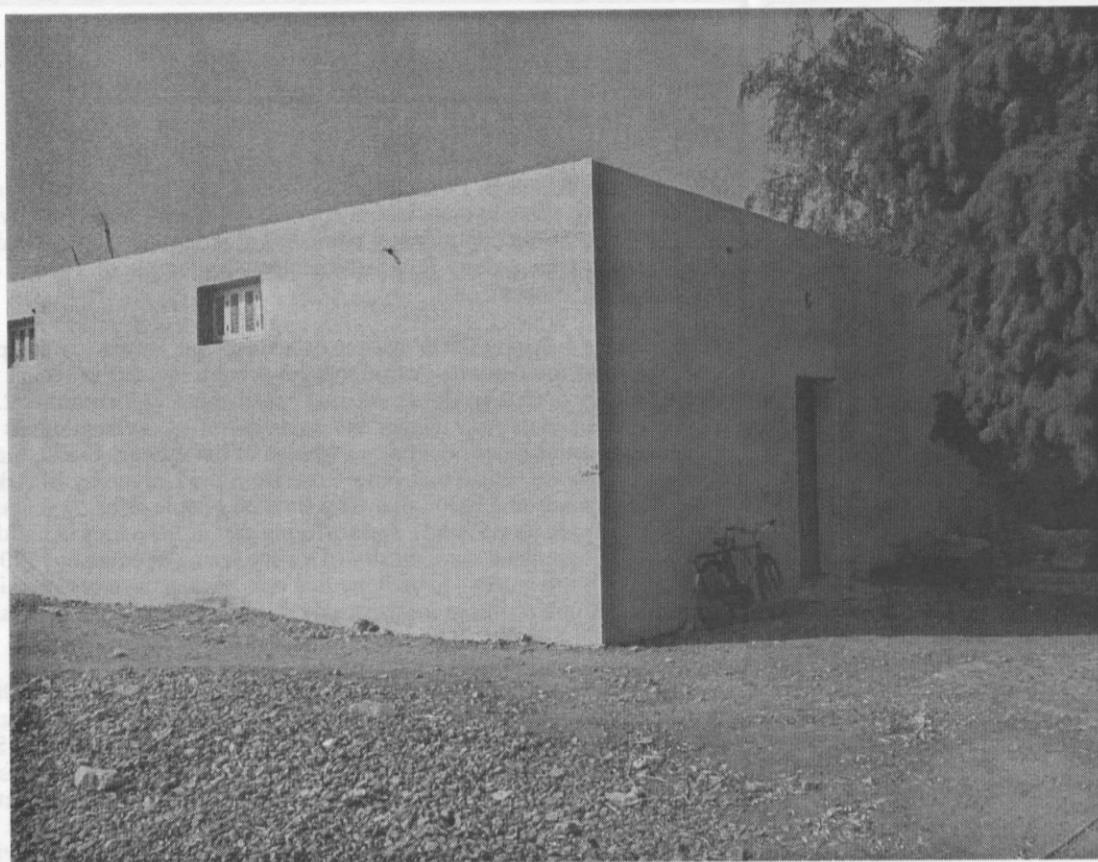


Fig. 1. The newly built extension to the antiquities store at the expedition house.

December 2005 saw the start of a new field project. This is an examination of an enigmatic distant site in the desert, the Stone Village. It lies beyond the Workmen's Village, on a hill slope facing towards the entrance to the wadi that leads to the Royal Tomb. What has given the site its name is the fact that the area is strewn with natural rounded desert stones that seem to have been the major building material. From the air, and to some extent from the ground, some of the patches of stones seem to be following alignments. It has been turned over in modern times, the digging bringing to the surface pottery of the Amarna Period. Just like the Workmen's Village, it is circled by a set of the ancient desert track ways that seem intended to constrain whoever lived in both of the settlements.

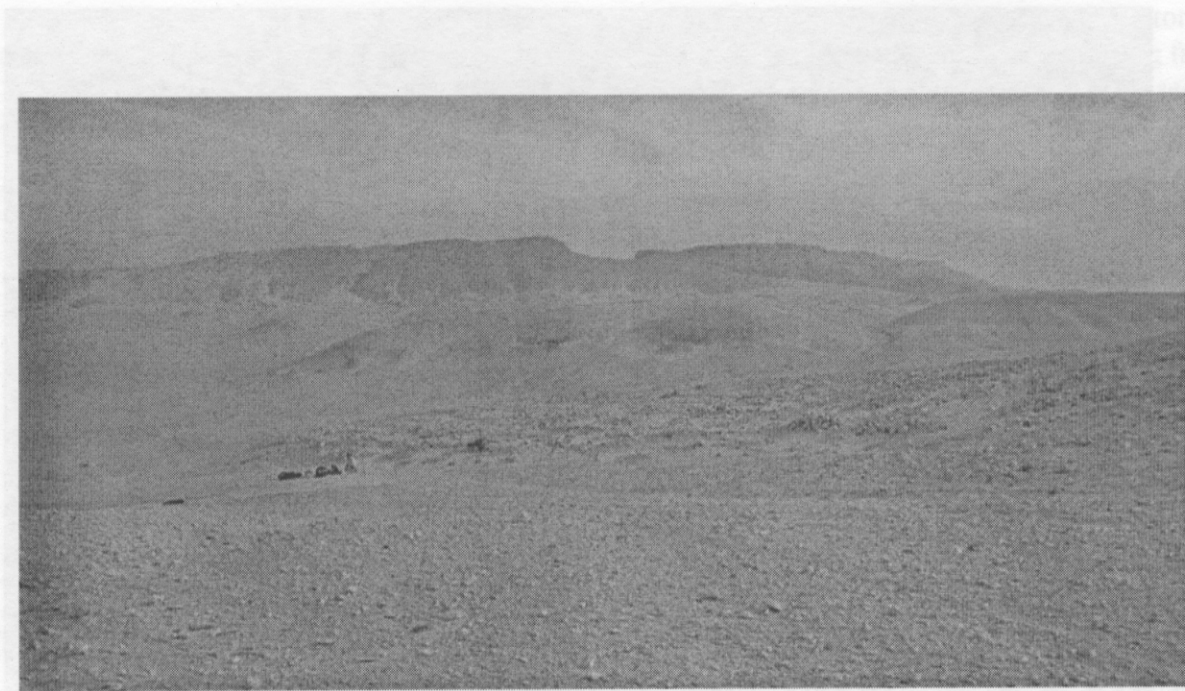


Fig. 2. View across the Stone Village towards the Amarna cliffs.



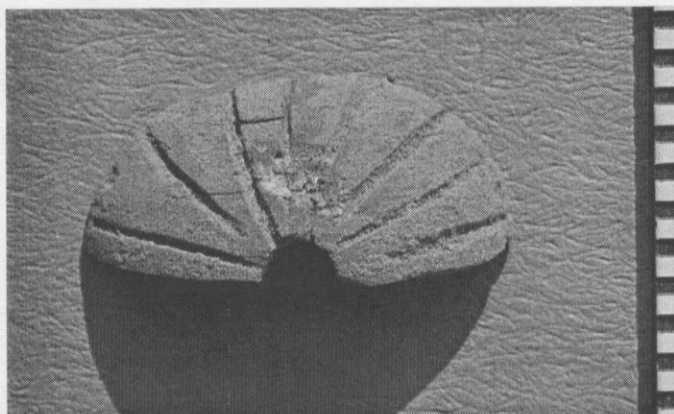
Fig. 3. Aerial view of the Stone Village. The large rectangle represents the area surface-planned; the smaller rectangle the trial excavation.



Fig. 4. Planning the Stone Village, one chill misty morning near Christmas '05.

The survey is a separately funded project of Dr Anna Stevens and Wendy Dolling. Using an electronic total survey station they began a stone-by-stone mapping of the surface. The danger with a site of this kind is that the loose stones that lie on the surface might be most of what survives, so that unless the stones are planned, by the time excavation has removed them there might not be much left. It is a time-consuming job that requires more than one season.

Towards the end of the month a single trial trench was dug across the northern edge. This demonstrated that the conditions of preservation of the site are very good, like those of the Workmen's Village, with wood and bone surviving. It revealed that the modern digging has not been thorough and that areas of original floor survive as do the bottom courses of walls. These are, not



surprisingly, of the same kind of stones that lie on the surface. The particular spot chosen for the trench came down on burnt ground and the remains of a cluster of ovens rather than on something that looked like a house. The site might not be a smaller version of the Workmen's Village but one that served some special purpose yet to be defined. The second season is due to begin in the middle of November 2006 and run for six weeks.

Fig. 5. Part of a decorated spindle whorl from the trial excavation, the grooves containing blue pigment.

At the same time as the Stone Village survey I worked in the dig house alongside two illustrators, Andy Boyce and Mary Shepperson, sharing out the task of drawing everything worth drawing from the 2005 excavations in the houses of Grid 12. We have set a deadline of December 2007 for seeing the volume of publication of the Grid 12 excavations in print.

The excavation of the March/April season was the first on the largest of the private cemeteries of the Amarna Period that have been located in recent years. It lies on a sandy terrace beside a desert wadi that runs behind tomb no. 25, the one that belongs to the god's father Ay. Six weeks were devoted to it, under the supervision of archaeologists Mary Shepperson and Lindsay Ambridge. A single trench was laid out and dug across the full width of the site, 5 metres wide and 35 long. The cemetery had been made in loose sand. It has also been methodically robbed, probably not too long after the burials had been made to judge from the fact that, when dragged from their pit graves, muscle tissue still held much of the bodies together although arms and legs were often left behind. The softness of the sand and the disturbance meant that no amount of careful observation allowed the detection of the original grave cuts. The graves could not be identified as pits and excavated separately. All the sand, including what had originally been between the graves, had to be removed. As it was, groups and clusters of bones appeared, were mapped, and then removed. Finally, and mainly towards the north end, the bottoms of several graves were detected, where the ground was stained and portions of leg still remained in their original positions. At the very end of the work, all of the layered drawings were put together to give a plan of the cemetery showing where all the bones lay and where the remains of original graves were situated.

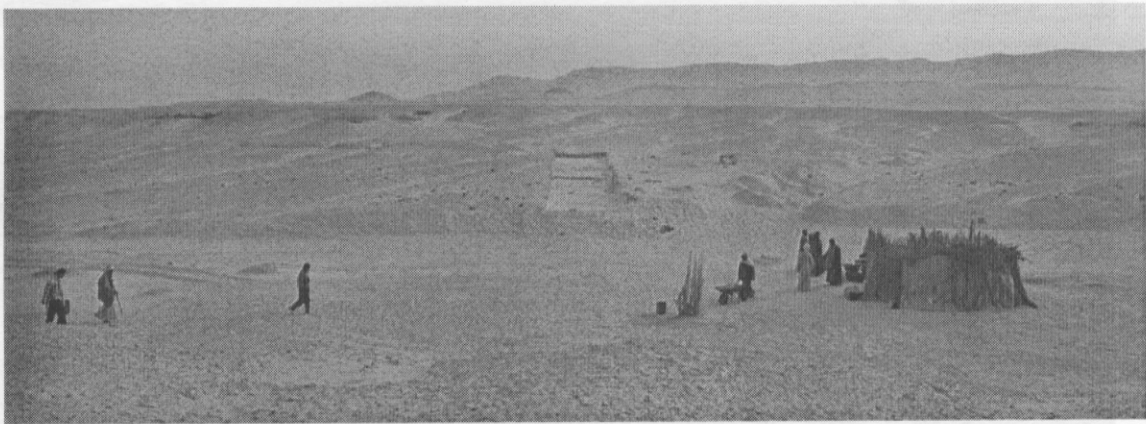


Fig. 6. View of the trench in the cemetery (Grid 14).



Fig. 7. View of excavation in the cemetery trench.

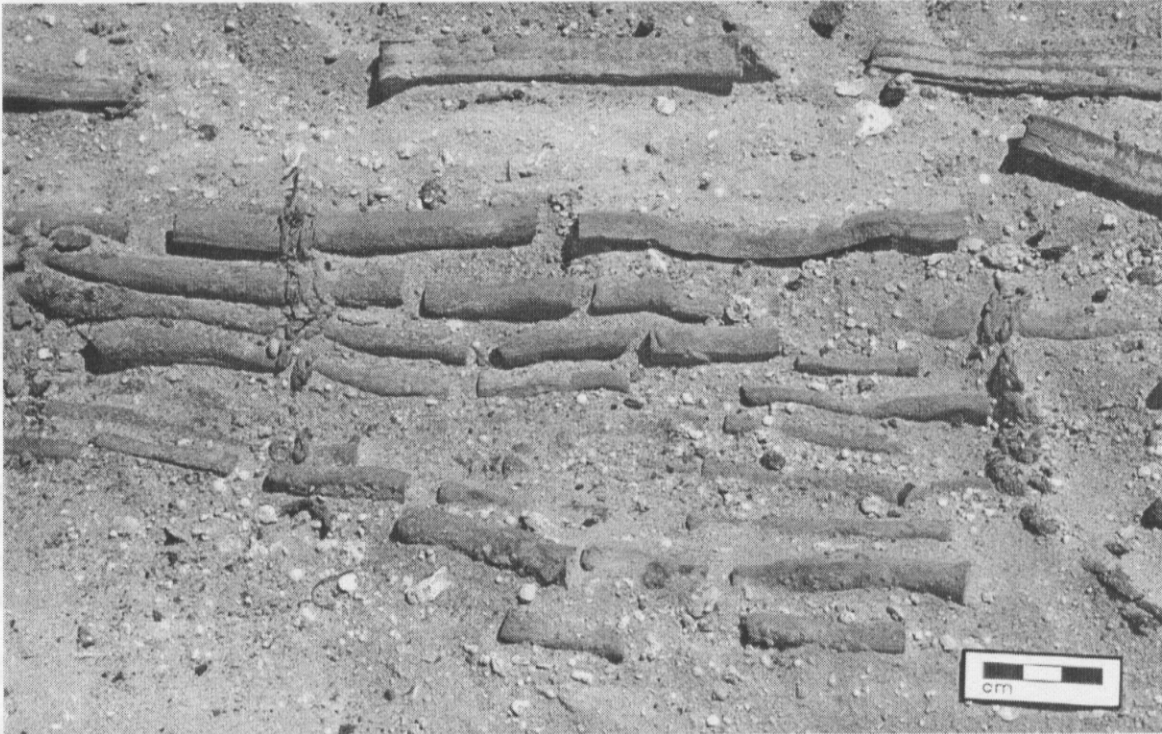


Fig. 8. In several instances the floor of the grave pit remained. Here it is covered with the remnants of a cheap coffin made from sticks bound with rope.



Fig. 9. This burial, for a juvenile, had been made in a narrow wooden coffin. A pottery jar lies beside one corner.



Fig. 10. Several of the skulls retained their hair, in this case made into plaits.

One thing to notice is the casualness of orientation. Some people buried their relatives facing north, some facing east, and mostly these directions are very approximate. The direction has nothing to do with Akhenaten's religion. It is the same in other New Kingdom cemeteries, at other places.

The cemetery had been robbed, but robbers, especially when working in loose sand, are never thorough. Some things get left behind. Our people probably were truly poor for there were few things to find. In total about 90 beads and pendants were recovered, a couple of scarabs, and also two odd limestone stelae found close together. Both had been decorated by inserting a panel of a different material (wood or bronze), which had perhaps shown an image of the deceased, into a shallow recess on the front. The inserted panels had gone. One of the stelae had been carved as if the top was a row of mountains, a most unusual design

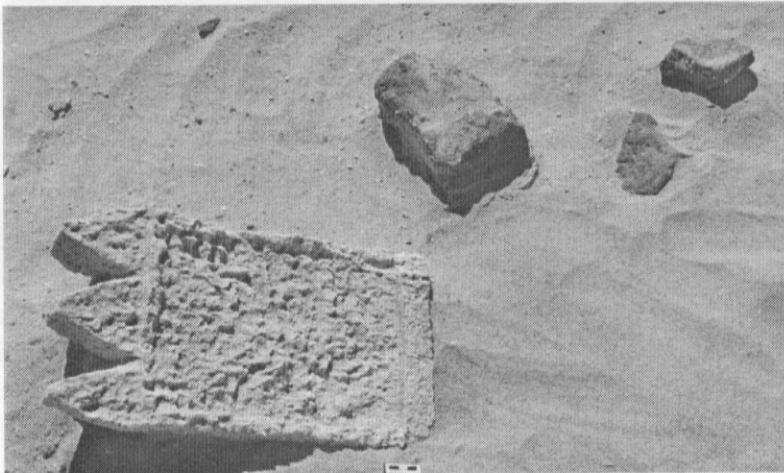


Fig. 11. One of the two limestone stelae from the cemetery. Originally a plaque in another material would have been inserted into the recess on the face.

At the end of each day's work the bones were taken back to the dig house in big plastic baker's trays that we buy in Cairo. Our bone expert is Prof Jerry Rose from the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville). He had come out the year before to study the bones from the cemetery that we had collected from the surface before excavation.

He reassuringly found that this year's excavated bones told the same stories as those he had seen before: people dying young (hardly anyone surviving beyond 35), injuring themselves through carrying heavy loads, and suffering diet deficiency in childhood. Given that this was the capital city at ancient Egypt's most prosperous moment the condition of life of the average person looks to have been surprisingly harsh.



Fig. 12. Part of a backbone that has fused after a compression injury.

We still have only a very small sample, however. We made a more careful survey of the cemetery this year and it seems to stretch further than at first sight seemed the case. There could be hundreds of burials in the ground. The evidence from the human remains alone justifies continuing the work, for this is a very rare instance in which we know that the people in a large cemetery all lived at around the same time. Many of them must have been neighbours. In having the remains of a single population we have the prospect of establishing a benchmark record of human life at this point in time.

For much of the season our GPS surveyor, Helen Fenwick, continued her seemingly endless tramping across the desert, taking thousands of topographic readings. This is actually the last of her major seasons. She has sufficient readings for a detailed topographic and archaeological map of the Amarna plain, south as far as Boundary Stelae R and S. It would have been nice for her to do the far southern reaches of the site, as far as el-Hawata but, as is so often the case, the money has run out. She will return for a few short visits in the future to collate her readings, but now her main work lies in England, compiling the final versions of the maps.

This year, as she walked back and forth in the vicinity of stelae R and S she found another one. It is not hidden, nor very far from a track that is used regularly. It is a broad niche cut into a low rise in the ground. At the back is a raised panel for the stela itself and beside it the rounded, weathered remains of a statue group. It lies on the exact line of the group P, Q, R and S. We have called it Stela H. The rock is of very poor quality, full of coin-like fossils. Any carving of hieroglyphs or of statue details must have been done in a thick coating of gypsum. None of that survives, however, at least above the sand that partly fills the niche. The sand has clearly been dug over by someone in the past (not an archaeologist), bringing to the surface sherds of the 18th dynasty, and stone tools and even a piece of a limestone seat. The front of the stela is thus a little occupation site and needs a careful excavation at some time in the future.

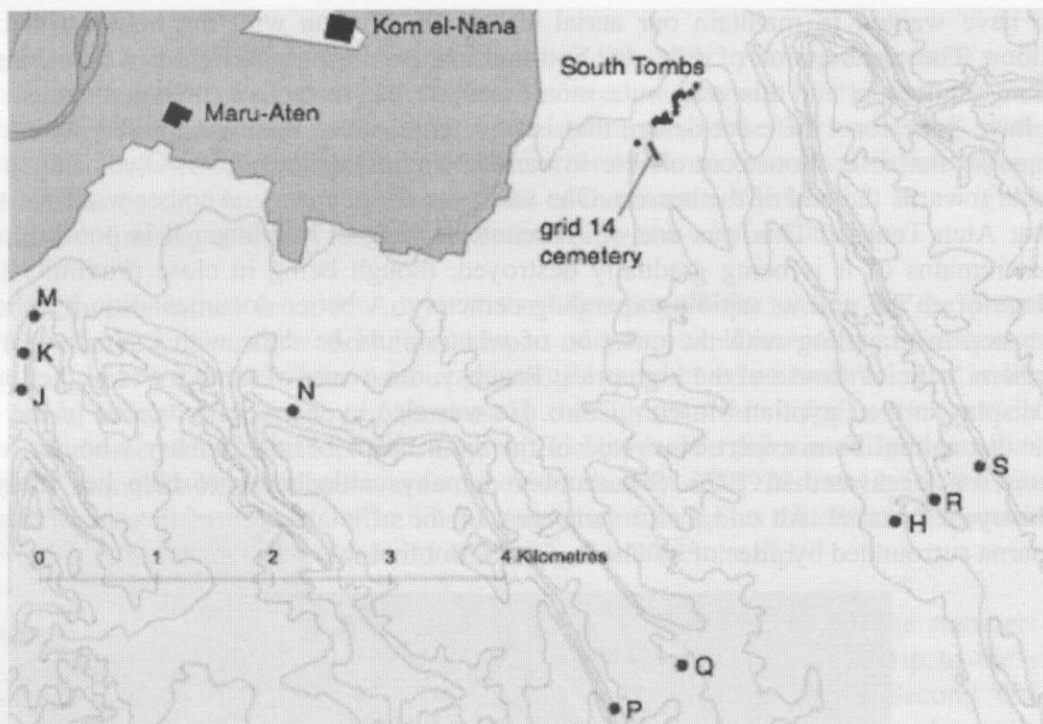


Fig. 13. As the desert survey nears its end, it has led to the recognition of an extra boundary stela, which we have designated 'H'.

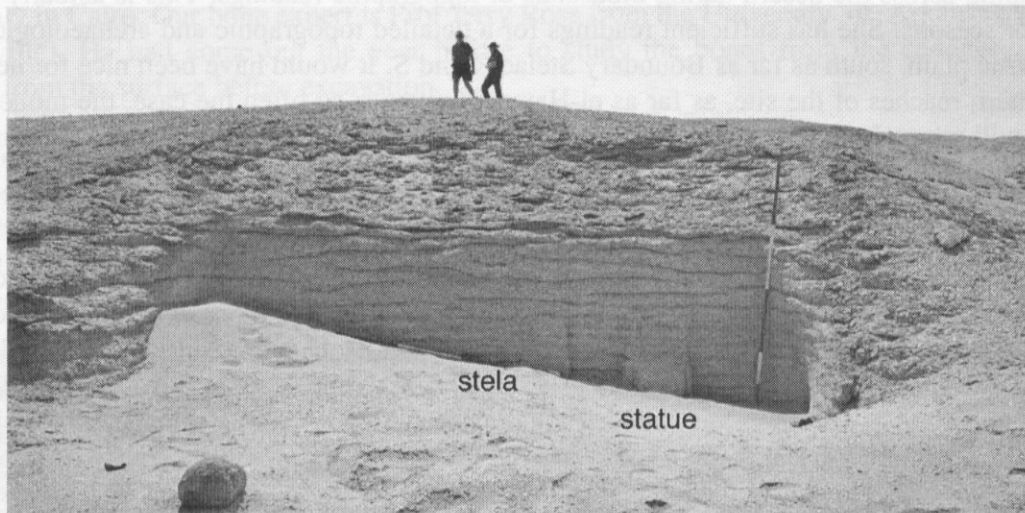


Fig. 14. The newly recognised boundary stela (Stela H) in its niche.

We have wanted to maintain our aerial survey of Amarna with the helium-filled photographic balloon. The combination of dust, dry heat and intense ultra-violet light is a punishing environment for any equipment and this year, once more, we have had to replace the balloon envelope. This time we have gone for a different design that is of a more robust material and has a more aerodynamic shape, so that it is more controllable in varied wind conditions. Gwil Owen ran some successful flights towards the end of the season. One was over the cemetery. Another was over the area of the Great Aten Temple. This was one of Akhenaten's biggest buildings. It is poorly understood, and what remains of it is being gradually destroyed, though being in close proximity to the modern village of el-Till and its rapidly expanding cemetery. A better documentation by photography is a first step in grappling with the question of what should be done with it. In the same area is the northern 'official' house of the high priest Panehsy, the owner of tomb 6 and of the limestone shrine on display in the Egyptian Museum Cairo. He was also in charge of the cattle of the Aten, and this year our animal bone expert excavated in the spoil heaps beside Panehsy's house, made when the house was excavated in 1926. She recovered many cattle bones to help her study of the meat industry of Amarna. An odd picture emerges, of the official house of the one of the great men of Amarna surrounded by piles of butcher's debris. But that was what ancient Egypt was like.



Fig. 15. The new balloon flies above the dig house.

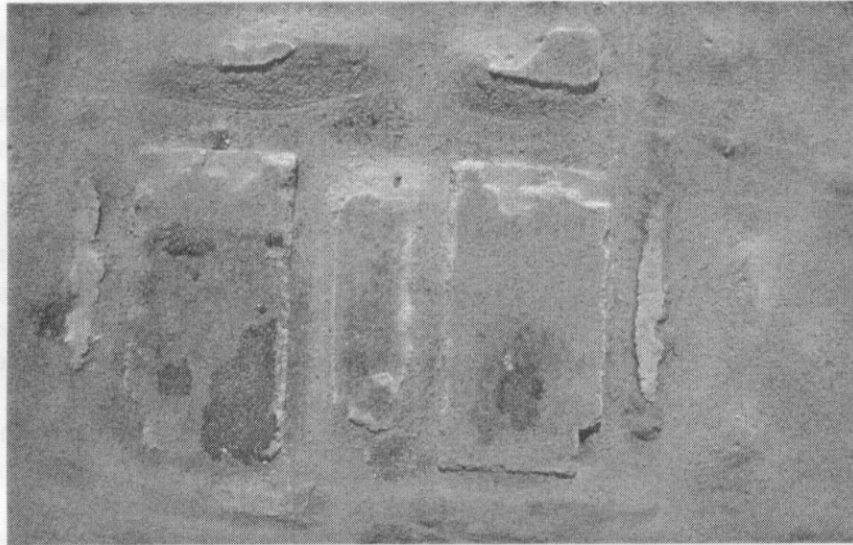
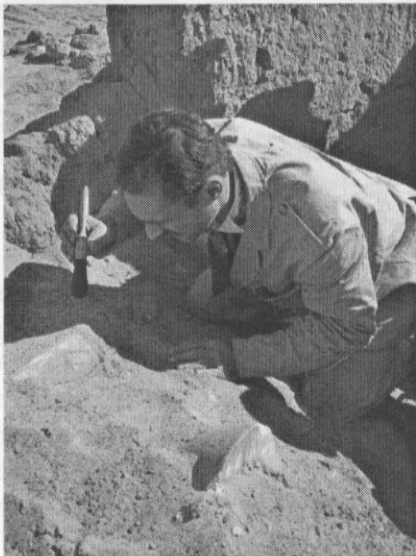


Fig. 16. Great Aten Temple aerial photograph. These are the concrete foundations for large columns at the front of the temple.

Every year we try to carry out repairs to the ancient buildings. This year, on account of a shortage of funds, we were limited to a relatively short period of work at just one of the sites, the Small Aten Temple. Suresh Dhargalkar took charge and supervised repairs to the enclosure wall at the rear of the temple. This included rebuilding the north-east corner of the enclosure wall where a gap, down to ground level, has become an easy way into and out of the temple. We felt that securing the interior of the enclosure, limiting access to the original entrances, was a worthwhile task.

We were much entertained for a few days at the beginning of the season by the presence of a German/Egyptian television crew there to make part of a very well researched documentary on the discovery and subsequent fate of the famous painted limestone bust of Nefertiti now in Berlin. The director, Luise, brought a fine copy of the bust to the site (and left it for us as a present), and a German actor dressed himself to look like Ludwig Borchardt. We did some filming at the house of the sculptor Thutmose where the bust was found, and turned an old 1920s mud-brick hut near the dig house into a temporary film set so that Borchardt could discover Nefertiti all over again. Which he did.



The film was completed in Germany over the summer. I joined them for a few days in Berlin, and for a trip to the salt mine where, for a short time at the end of the Second World War, Nefertiti was hidden in a cavern, not far from the total gold and currency reserves of Hitler's Germany. The story, for once, had a happy ending. Nefertiti and the hidden treasure were captured by the American army and handed back to the government of the new Germany.

Fig. 17. A diversion: a German film team rediscovers the head of Nefertiti.

The building of the new site museum proceeds with speed. It is nearly finished. If it is not to remain an embarrassing empty shell for years an awful lot of work must be done on site, in the magazines, to press on with sorting and labeling the pieces needed for the displays. The prerequisite for this is a secure area where pieces can be sorted and put into groups. This is the purpose of the magazine extension that ARF members have paid for.

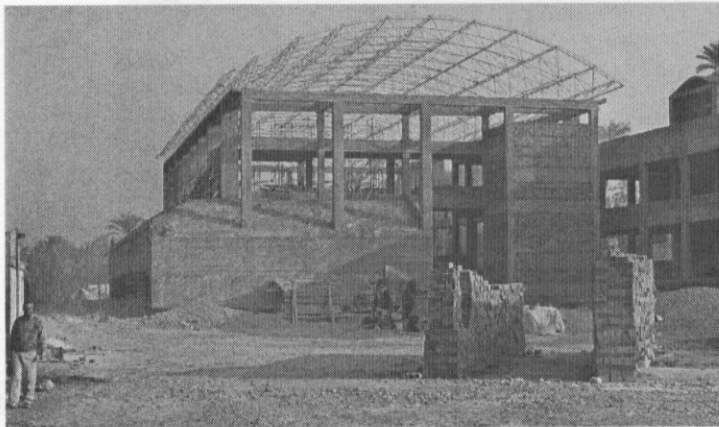


Fig. 18. The new site museum, now with the struts of its roof in place (10 December 2006).

It remains once more for me to say 'thank you, all' for your support. Now and in the future, more than ever, your support is needed.

Barry Kemp

The Persistence of Amarna Era Ceramic Motifs: A Late 19th Dynasty Example

Richard H. Wilkinson

The vast majority of the Nile silt ware pottery made during the Egyptian pharaonic period was undecorated, though the fine blue-painted ware first found at Amarna¹ and later at several sites in Egypt is a happy exception to this rule.

This type of pottery, variously known as "Blue Painted Ware", "Amarna Blue Ware" or even "Malqata Ware", is distinctive for its utilization of regular bands or registers of decoration made up of floral elements such as lotus petals, buds, leaves, or other plant parts, usually depicted in blue paint (sometimes with minor details in red and/or black) on a plain background - giving a striking appearance. Vessels of this type were almost always decorated before firing. The decorative elements appear to imitate floral garlands which were probably placed around vessels for special occasions. Some very fine examples of this kind of pottery have been discovered: for example, a beautifully decorated biconical jar, some 70 cm. high, found at el-Amarna and now in the British Museum (EA 56841).

Although frequently associated with the Amarna era and its major sites, blue-painted wares of this type were actually quite widespread in both time and space. Arnold and Bourriau² have suggested that the wares originated in Memphis and examples have been found at several sites in Egypt. While much of this pottery does date from the mid-18th Dynasty, blue-painted ware is first attested under the reign of Amenhotep II; but the type remains rare until the time of Amenhotep III when it increases in frequency. Its heyday is the Amarna Period and the early 19th dynasty, and then it steadily decreases until its last known example is found in association with the tomb of Ramesses IV.³

The pottery type seems to have been made primarily at royal residences and palaces by a small number of craftsmen in not more than a few workshops and, although Bourriau *et al*⁴ have stated that blue painted pottery was also found in poorer areas at Amarna, there appears to have been a clear qualitative difference in the decoration. It seems likely that “poorer” blue-painted vessels were simply typed on the more expensive vessels of the time. The blue paint is usually cobalt blue which may have been obtained from alum deposits in the Kharga and Dakhleh oasis areas. Both the paints themselves, as well as the level of skill utilized in producing these vessels, indicate that they were expensive items frequently intended for elite users and/ or special occasions. There is also some evidence that some fine blue-painted vessels were valued as decorative or votive items rather than simply used as containers.

A Late 19th Dynasty Example

In the 2006 season of the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition’s excavation of the Tausert temple site,⁵ we discovered the shattered remains of an example of this type of blue-painted vessel in a particularly important context. The vessel, which could be partially reconstructed, was a large biconical jar, of Nile silt (Nile D) with a cream slip, decorated in blue, red and black with a vibrantly colored floral motif. Rexine Hummel, the Expedition’s ceramicist for the season,⁶ stressed that the vessel exhibits at least three motifs found in Amarna age blue-painted ware: the blue-petal frieze, registers of separate petals (Fig. 1), and a third, much rarer, motif depicting blue cornflowers.



Fig. 1. The first sherd of the blue-painted vessel discovered in the 2006 season – showing the blue-petal frieze and, below, a row of separate petals and stamens.

Blue lotus petals form a tightly delineated frieze on the shoulder of the jar and Hummel notes that to accomplish this decorative element the artist first painted a wide blue band around the vessel and then painted, in black, a row of tightly-grouped stylized lotus petals. Two narrow red bands were painted across the petals. This type of frieze is extremely common and is found in royal installations at Amarna, Malqata and as far north as Giza, Saqqara, and Qantara during the late 18th and 19th dynasties. A jar found in the tomb of Ramesses IV also appears to have a sloppily rendered blue frieze of this type. Rows of large blue petals separated by red stamens or inverted red triangles also occur tapering upwards - especially on vessel necks - or tapering downward following the curve of the vessel body (Fig. 2). These rows of petals occur slightly less frequently than the shoulder frieze described above but are also found at Amarna and Malqata. An additional motif that dates to the Amarna Period, but which is much rarer, is the row of pendant cornflowers with black dots on the edges of their petals (seen on the lower part of the vessel’s shoulder in Figs. 2 and 3).

The vessel found in our 2006 season exhibits all of these motifs and therefore, as Hummel has noted, its artist clearly felt comfortable using the traditional Amarna style patterns. The fact that the decorative elements are quite stylized reflects the 19th dynasty date of our own vessel and, while the flaring neck of the jar (Fig. 3) is a little unusual (most of the globular jars of this type have a vertical

neck), the flared neck is found on many larger blue-painted vessels – such as the example in the British Museum cited above.

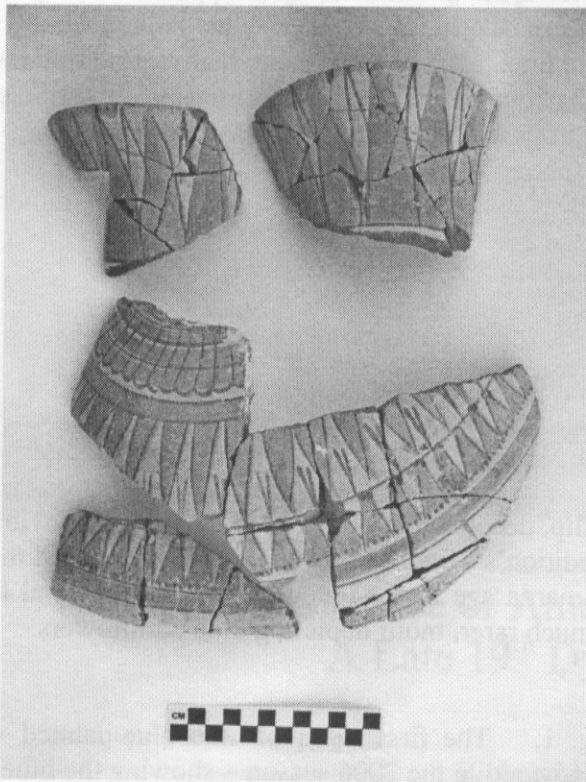


Fig. 2. Some of the larger fragments of the blue-painted vessel joined and arranged for study. Most of the vessel's neck and much of the shoulder area are represented here.

The remains of this elaborately decorated vessel were found on, and even embedded in, the 19th dynasty surface next to one of the most important features found in our 2006 season. This was a large stone foundation block, *in situ*, and with a single building block placed on top of it. The foundation block revealed an inscription in large hieratic characters naming the temple and giving the date of the monument's founding (or more likely, expansion). The area was clearly that of an important foundation ritual for the temple, and the presence of the blue-painted vessel in this area suggests that the jar may well have been utilized in the foundation ceremonies in some way.

The manner in which the sherds were impacted into the surface might indicate that the vessel was deliberately smashed, though the possibility that it was accidentally dropped must also be considered. In either case, the proximity of the vessel's remains to the foundation inscription certainly imply an important role for this jar commensurate with the frequent royal use, since the Amarna Period, of blue-painted vessels of this type.

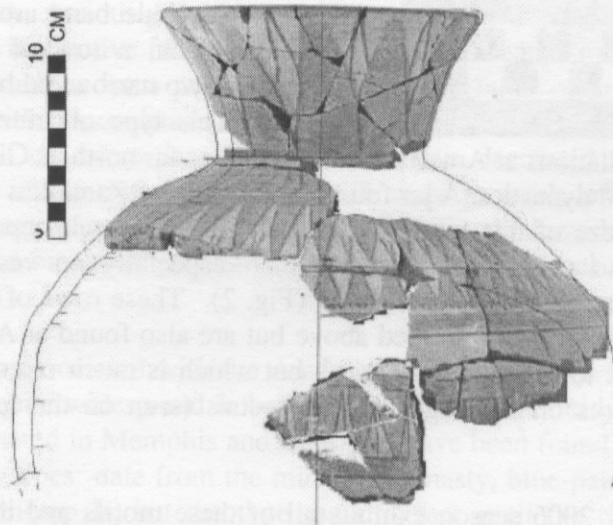


Fig. 3. Computerized reconstruction of the blue-painted vessel by Lyla Pinch-Brock. This vessel may have been utilized in the temple's foundation rituals, though its exact use is unknown.

Notes:

1. C. A. Hope, "Blue-painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna", *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 2 (1991), 17-93.
2. D. Arnold and J. Bourriau, eds. *An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pottery* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1993).
3. C. A. Hope, "Some Memphite Blue-Painted Pottery of the Mid-18th Dynasty" in J. Phillips, ed., *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean and the Near East: Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell* (San Antonio: Van Siclen Books, 1997), 253
4. J. D. Bourriau, P.T. Nicholson, and P.J. Rose, "Pottery", in P. T. Nicholson and I. Shaw, eds., *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 121-147.
5. R. H. Wilkinson, "The Tausert Temple Project: 2004 and 2005 Seasons", *The Ostrakon* 16:2 (Summer 2005), 7-12. and "The Tausert Temple Project: 2006 Season", *The Ostrakon* 17:2 (Fall 2006), in press.
6. During May, 2006, Rexine Hummel studied and recorded and Lyla Pinch-Brock illustrated the ceramic material from the first three field seasons of the Tausert Temple Project. I would also like to acknowledge Rexine Hummel's kind input for the present article.

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Treasurers Report
For the period ending
September 30, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees
The Amarna Research Foundation

FROM: Evan H. Mitchell

DATE: September 30, 2006

At of the close of the fiscal year, which ended on September 30, 2005
The Amarna Research Foundation had cash in the amount of \$5,740.58
Donations received during the year were \$12,449.60, with expenses of
\$2015.21, and grants made totaling \$15,040.00

This necessitated that the five thousand dollar bequest given to The Amarna Research Foundation from the estate of Erlene P. Hansen, which had been placed in a ninety day revolving certificate of deposit, be redeemed and put in the general fund. When sufficient funds become available, they will be used to purchase another Certificate of Deposit.

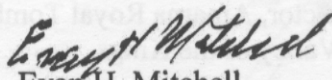
The expenses for the year by category were:

Foundation Publications including postage	\$1038.71
Advertising for new members	\$940.00
Other (Wire transfer fee, Bank svc. Chg)	\$36.50

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

Grants made this year were:

Cambridge in America	\$4,500.00
Amarna Museum Project	\$8,040.00
SSEA, L. Pinch Brock	\$2,500.00


Evan H. Mitchell
Treasurer, The Amarna Research Foundation