

**Volume 14, Number 1
Spring 2008**

Copyright 2008

The Amarna Research
Foundation
Robert Hanawalt, Founder
Publication of the Akhetaten Sun
is supported by a grant from
The Petty Foundation

Table of Contents

| Article - Author | Page |
|--|------|
| President's Papyrus - Bill Petty | 1 |
| The Beliefs of Amarna's Workers - Barry Kemp | 2 |
| Lecture Notes - David Pepper | 8 |

Officers and Directors

President – Bill Petty, PhD
Vice President – David Pepper
Secretary – Floyd Chapman
Treasurer – Evan Mitchell
Vice President, Membership –
Jill Taylor Pepper
Vice President, Publications –
Anita McHugh
Founder – Robert Hanawalt

The President's Papyrus

The annual meeting of TARF was held in September and several significant changes have been made to streamline our operations and reduce overhead.

- 1) The number of directors was reduced to seven (including our founder Bob Hanawalt). In addition, all directors are now officers with specific responsibilities in the operations of the foundation.
- 2) Officers are no longer limited to the number of terms they can serve in any position on the board. The change was necessitated by the difficulty in getting volunteers to serve (this seems to be a common problem with many organizations).
- 3) We decided to reduce the number of board meetings from four per year to two, with the option of having more if required by circumstances.

With the reduction in the number of board members, several of our previous (and in some cases, long serving) members are no longer on the board. During the past year Kristen Thompson, Chris Advincula, Tom Cassidy, Linda Anderson and Ellen Leblanc served on the board. I want to thank them for all of their work in our endeavors. Their efforts have been greatly appreciated.

I just returned from nine weeks in Egypt. While there I, along with a group of about 8 traveling companions, visited Barry Kemp at Amarna. He gave us a very informative talk (along with a showing) of his current work at the workers cemetery. I encourage everyone to visit Amarna if you get to Egypt.

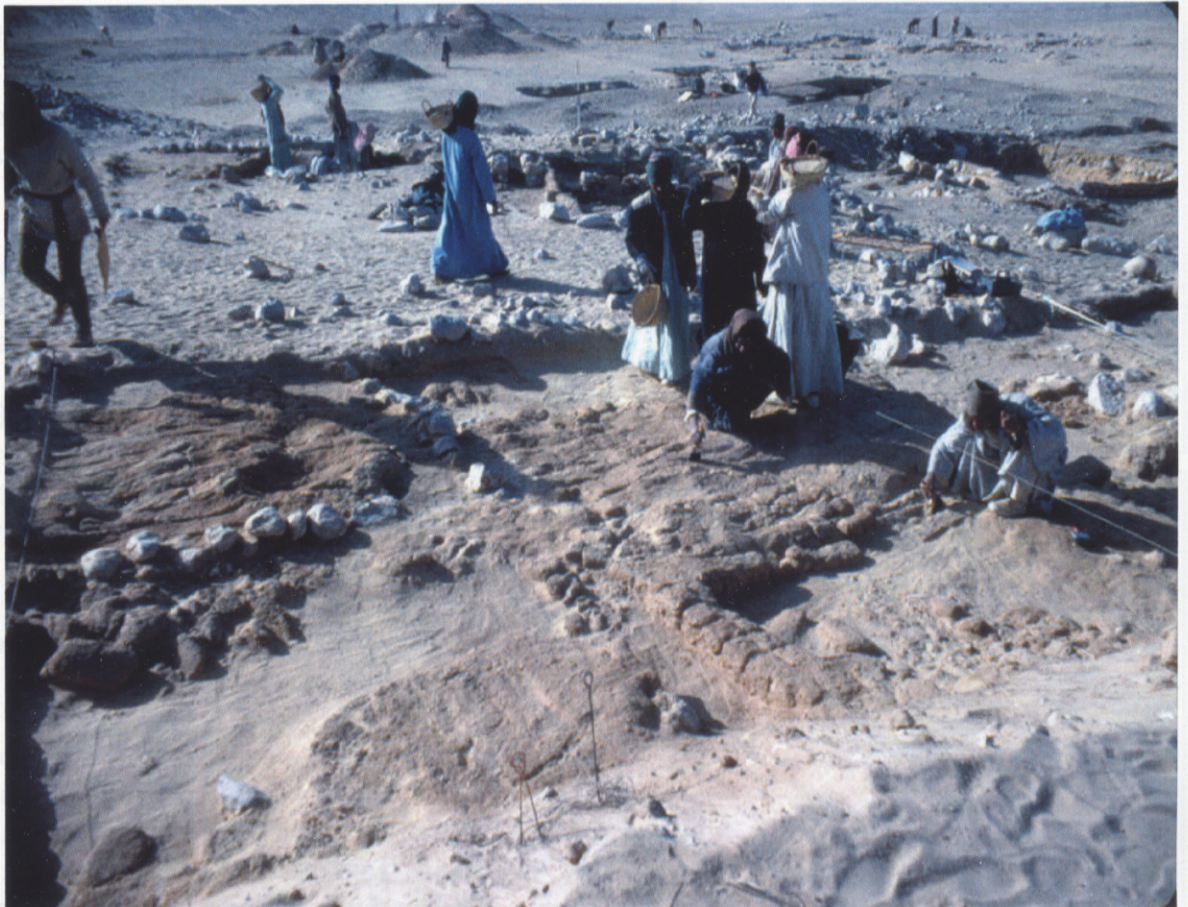
Here's to a really great year!

Bill

The Beliefs of Amarna's Workers

One of the truisms of archaeology is that discoveries have little value if they are not properly published. They might then have been better left in the ground to await another archaeologist with more resources. The completion of a publication is therefore not only a pleasure; it carries a sense of cleared conscience as well. As I write this, a 420-page monograph is making its way through a printer's presses in the UK with a fair chance that it will be out and available by the end of December. It reports on a discovery of the 1980s, but a twenty year delay is still pretty good for archaeology. The discovery was of the largest of the private chapels at the Workmen's Village. Not only was it well preserved (it had fortuitously been buried beneath a large excavator's dump of 1921 and so had escaped a major robbing phase of the mid-20th century) but amidst the layers of rubble from the collapsed walls were hundreds of fragments of mud wall plaster bearing brightly colored designs.

Discoveries stretch resources. All those fragments needed to be carried back to the expedition house and properly stored, so many shallow wooden trays had to be made, and special racks to



The side annex of the Main Chapel in the course of excavation (1984), viewed to the south.

hold them. Paint on mud plaster easily flakes off, so each piece needed to be treated to reduce the risk. There remained the huge job of re-fitting. The plaster had not fallen off in sheets. As the standing walls decayed and collapsed, most of the plaster was lost, but in places areas had flaked off and fallen. What we had, therefore, was only a series of patches, mostly from towards the tops of walls, that had broken up when they hit the ground. To make sense of them needed patience, an eye attuned to the niceties of ancient Egyptian wall art, and a retentive memory for details seen. The expedition was very lucky to have the services, over many years, of Fran Weatherhead. She combined all these qualities with training and experience in conservation, and the graphical skills of an accomplished artist. The book is very much a record of her genius.

Fran attended to every single piece, no matter how small. Gradually she built up a picture of the subject matter depicted and roughly where, on the chapel walls, each theme would have been placed. She photographed and drew all of the key groups. As a final tribute to their importance and to the striking visual impact that some of the groups would have made, she reconstructed five of them into display panels. All her results, including the detailed line drawings of the fragments, are now incorporated into an Egypt Exploration Society monograph. The full citation is: F. Weatherhead and B. Kemp, *The Main Chapel at the Amarna Workmen's Village and its wall paintings*. Excavation Memoir 85. London, Egypt Exploration Society 2007.

The Main Chapel (for such we called it) rose up the slope of the hill that overlooks the walled village on the east side. It was really two buildings side by side. On the right (south) was an annex for mundane activities. At the back was a small open space containing a much-used oven and a platform into which were built soil compartments for the growing of plants. A second oven lay in another room. Other spaces



Fran Weatherhead working on the plaster fragments in the Amarna expedition house.



View eastwards along the main axis of the Main Chapel. Note the brick benches on either side

were perhaps for the keeping of animals. The relevance of this to the other half of the building — the chapel proper on the left (north) — is that meals were eaten in the latter. Its outer hall had low benches along the side walls. When we carefully examined, layer by layer, a patch of floor in front of one of them, we found fish bones embedded in the mud, some in articulated groups. It looks as though people came here, arranged themselves on the benches, and ate meals, perhaps in commemoration of ancestors.

Beyond an inner hall a short flight of brick stairs rose to a narrow transverse corridor. At the back were three openings, originally closed by wooden doors. Behind each was a tiny cell containing a waist-high shelf, all of mud brick and whitewashed. These were shrines where, so one imagines, statues, stelae and other sacred items were placed. To one side and on a lower level stood a separate side chapel, also with benches and a brick shelf.



Inner Hall: View northwards across the Inner Hall, showing the stairs leading up to the Sanctuary, and a low limestone slab set in the floor, probably an offering-table

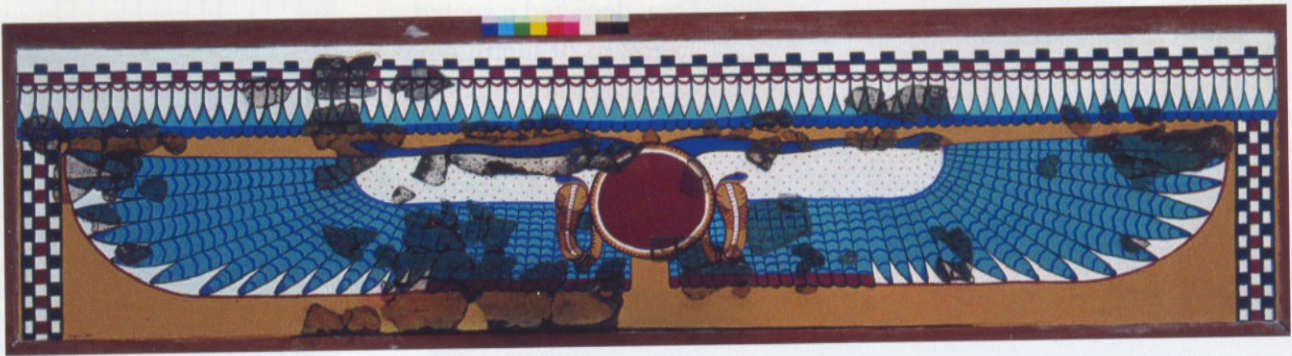
The rear parts of the chapel were the best preserved and this is

where most of the painted fragments were found. In Fran's reconstruction a brightly-painted winged sun-disc with cobra head spread across the top of the door to the middle shrine. Brightly-painted vultures with outspread wings, their claws grasping feather fans and the symbol of eternity, occupied equivalent positions above the doors to the adjacent shrines. Other wall surfaces were painted with bright bouquets of flowers. Nowhere was



The southern most of the shrines in the Sanctuary.

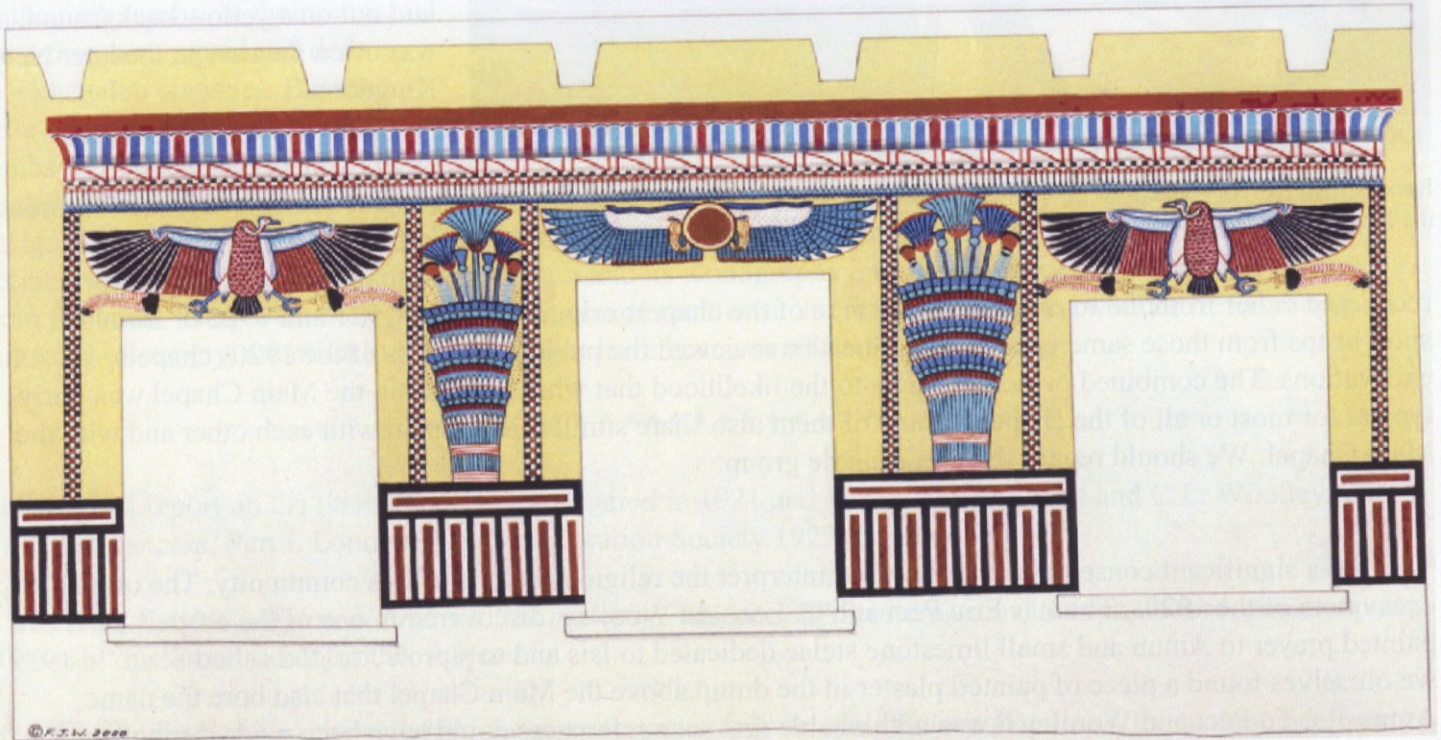
there a hint of Atenism or of anything else that one would associate with Akhenaten. Only a few objects were found in the vicinity. The most striking was a small wooden plaque with rounded top, painted on both sides, probably the top of the kind of standard that identified groups of policemen or soldiers. Pictures of two running policemen were painted on one side and of a man kneeling in adoration of a dog-like god on a standard on the other.



Reconstruction into a panel of the winged sun-disk from the Sanctuary.



Reconstruction into a panel of one of the two vultures from the Sanctuary.



Fran Weatherhead's reconstruction of the wall at the back of the Sanctuary. Each of the doors opened into a shrine.

The side walls of the Inner Hall (which was not provided with benches) had also been painted. The scenes are of a familiar kind. They depicted a seated couple probably being waited on by a priest. Vertical columns of hieroglyphs above them contained conventional prayers and also the names and titles of the people depicted. Only scraps of these texts survived. But they tell us that one person shown was a scribe, and that either that same person or another was called Sennefer. The side chapel had also been decorated, with pictures of grapes on trellises, and flying ducks



Reconstruction into a panel of a couple in festal attire, ready to receive offerings. From the long north side wall of the Inner Hall.

recovered either from the re-excitation of some of the chapels originally dug in 1921 and 1922 or from the spoil heaps from those same excavations. She also reviewed the published results of the 1920s chapels excavations. The combined evidence points to the likelihood that what survived in the Main Chapel was fairly typical for most or all of the chapels. Many of them also share similarities of plan with each other and with the Main Chapel. We should regard them as a single group.

This has a significant consequence for how we interpret the religious beliefs of this community. The original excavators of the 1920s, Thomas Eric Peet and C. Leonard Woolley, discovered in one of the chapels parts of a painted prayer to Amun and small limestone stelae dedicated to Isis and to a protector god called Shed. In 1979 we ourselves found a piece of painted plaster in the dump above the Main Chapel that also bore the name Amun-Ra. To Peet and Woolley it was unthinkable that such references could have been made during Akhenaten's lifetime. They argued that some of the chapels, at least, dated to the short interval between his death and the abandonment of Amarna. For a long time I accepted that interpretation. Attractive though the idea is, however, it does not work. The chapels as a group are an integral part of the whole complicated layout of the



Reconstruction into a panel of a floral bouquet.

The paintings had all been executed with great skill and with a vivid palette of colours, the scenes laid out on a yellow background, as was often the case in the later New Kingdom.

As part of her study, Fran recorded in the same way groups of fragments of painted plaster

Workmen's Village. The Main Chapel occupies a prominent space, and several of the chapels and animal pens were built with knowledge of its existence. Only by very special pleading can one argue otherwise. If the chapels belong after the death of Akhenaten, then so does the whole village with its cemetery, and the layout of desert roads that was also made to accommodate the village. That is too far-fetched to be credible.

The alternative is to accept that they belong within the Amarna Period and that the expression of religious belief at Amarna had a greater flexibility than is often allowed by modern writers. This is the view that emerges from a recent thorough study of the archaeological evidence for domestic religion from the main city (by A. Stevens). One can even catch traces of it in some of the rock tombs. In their outer parts the owners paid full deference to Akhenaten's wishes. But the little shrines at the back of their tombs were dedicated to a cult of a



Wooden plaque painted with a figure of a canine god. A man (in red outline) kneels in adoration below. It is probably part of a standard for a police or soldier's unit.

statue of themselves, the tomb owners, and the surrounding decoration was traditional. The decoration and design of the Main Chapel — seemingly done with no expression of interest in the Aten or its cult — help to define the limits of penetration of the Aten cult and its iconography into the life of people who lived separate from the court. They went their own way, they made their own choices. One can even wonder if, for people at this level of society, attention to the Aten might have been somewhat presumptuous.

The original report on the other chapels, investigated in 1921 and 1922, is in T.E. Peet and C.L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I. London, Egypt Exploration Society 1923, Chapter IV.

A. Stevens, *Private religion at Amarna; the material evidence*. BAR International Series, Oxford, Archaeopress 2006 is a foundation book for this subject.

Fran Weatherhead is also the author of the recent monograph: *Amarna Palace Paintings*. Excavation Memoir 78. London, Egypt Exploration Society 2007.

Lecture Notes by David Pepper

Egyptologist Barry Kemp presented his latest findings at Amarna in a lecture at Regis University in Denver on October 10, 2007. He described the recent excavations conducted at the workers cemetery that had been discovered beside the south tombs behind tomb 25 (which belonged to the gods father Ay). The graves were simple pits adorned with simple markers and containing few grave goods. Prof. Jerry Rose studied the bones of 68 individuals unearthed and not surprisingly there were few individuals who had lived beyond 35 years of age. In fact the average age at death seems to have been 15-16 years of age, middle age for the ancient Egyptian peasants. Prof. Kemp also described a re-creation of the discovery of the bust of Nefertiti at Sculptor Thutmose's house, which was created at Amarna for German Television. For more information on the world-wide-web of Barry's work at Amarna, see www.amarnaproject.com

Dr. Dietrich Wildung, the Director of The Egyptian Museum in Berlin, spoke to a group of Amarna Research Society members on October 29, 2007. Prof. Wildung first highlighted the extensive collection that is on display at it's current location in the *Altes Museum* on Museum Island. (For information on this museum, please see <http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/f01.php?fs=5>). The new museum, the *Neues Museum*, is being reconstructed nearby which will house the Egyptian collection next year. The art and culture of the Pharaohs will be shown spread over three floors (see <http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/e02.php>), after its reopening in 2009. The Berlin Egyptian museum also has a unique and extensive collection of art from the Amarna period (including the famous bust of Nefertiti). Dr Wildung then went on to describe the future layout of the Egyptian collection on the three floors of the new Museum, and then he described the ambitious new promenade that will contain monumental Egyptian sculptures in the walkway between the *Neues Museum* and the next-door *Pergamon Museum* (which contains the Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern collections). For an interesting guided tour of the Berlin Egyptian collection by Dr. Wildung go to <http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/f10.php>

Honorary Trustees of the Amarna Research Foundation

Rita E. Freed, PhD

Norma-Jean Calderwood Curator,
Egyptian, Nubian &
Near Eastern Art,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

T.G.H. James, CBE, FBA

Ret'd Keeper, Egyptian Collection
British Museum

Barry J. Kemp

Field Director, Amarna Expedition,
Egypt Exploration Society (EES)
Professor of Egyptology,
Cambridge University

W. Raymond Johnson, PhD

Director, Epigraphic Survey,
Oriental Institute,
University of Chicago

Geoffrey Martin, PhD, LittD, FSA

Christ's College,
Cambridge University

Dietrich Wildung, PhD

Director,
Egyptian Museum, Berlin

Richard H. Wilkinson, PhD

Director, Egyptian Expedition,
University of Arizona

The Amarna Research Foundation, Inc.

16082 East Loyola Place

Aurora, CO 80013

e-mail: RTomb10@comcast.net

Phone: (303) 693-7512