

**Volume 15, Number 1  
Spring 2009**

Copyright 2009, The Amarna  
Research Foundation

Publication of the Akhetaten Sun  
is supported by a grant from  
The Petty Foundation

**Table of Contents**

| Article - Author   | Page |
|--|------|
| Egypt's Foreign Relations<br>During the Amarna Period -<br>Richard Wilkinson | 2    |
| Current Work at Amarna -<br>Barry Kemp                                       | 4    |
| Boundary Stelae and Body<br>Cartouches - Kristin Thompson                    | 11   |

**Officers and Directors**

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

**The President's Papyrus**

The annual meeting of TARF was held in September 2008 and while most of the board is the same, we have a new president. So the first thing for me to do is introduce myself. I am a retired computer nerd (DBA for those of you who know the IT business). I've been a member of TARF many years and either working on publications or actually on the board for what seems like a long time. In addition to TARF, I've been active in the Egyptian Study Society in Denver, on that board and even served two terms as president.

Bill Petty is taking some time to explore new directions, but he has agreed to be available for special projects. We are all so grateful for all his contributions over the years.

Barry Kemp and Kristin Thompson were here for the annual meeting and updated us on their work at Amarna. It's so energizing to visit with them personally and hear about their current projects and hopes for the future.

The partnership with the University of Arkansas for both the bone studies and the 3D scans is exciting. It really is a wonderful time to be involved with research at Amarna even if peripherally.

The dates on Kristin's article are not a mistake. What with multiple changes in our process and people for publishing the SUN, Kristin's article was temporarily misplaced. I apologize to Kristin and you and hope you enjoy her article.

Here's to a really great year!

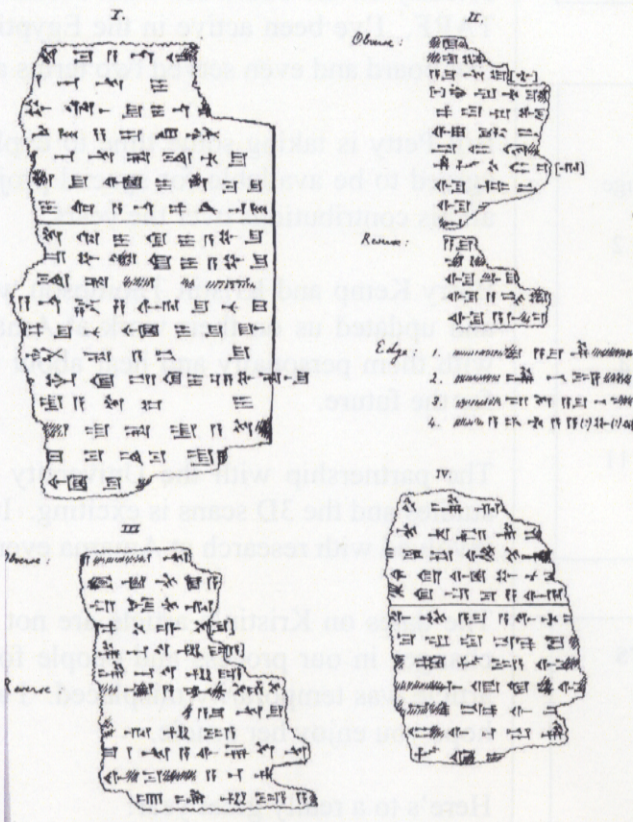
*Anita*

# Egypt's Foreign Relations During the Amarna Period: Recent and Future Research

*Richard H. Wilkinson*

It is a truism that Amarna Period studies tend to be more about questions than answers. And, as though the student of Egypt's Amarna Period did not have enough unresolved historical problems to deal with in Egypt itself, a large number of questions exist which center on Egypt's relations with other nations during that time. Egypt's foreign relations were particularly important during the New Kingdom, of course, but the often accepted picture of a kind of cessation of external relations during the Amarna Period – due especially to Akhenaten's focus on religious issues and the resulting reestablishment of the traditional cults - is hardly accurate.

A number of recent studies have underscored the reality of this situation. Beginning back in 1992, William L. Moran's English translation of *The Amarna Letters*<sup>1</sup> brought new interest in these documents and at the close of the 1990's, Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook brought together a team of specialists to explore the world of ancient Near Eastern statecraft portrayed in these letters. The resulting volume, *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*,<sup>2</sup> established a growing field of scholarship in Egypt's foreign relations during this important period. Old questions were revisited and new questions emerged. This process has been ongoing and much has changed in the last decade of Amarna era scholarship through the study of Egypt's external interrelations.



Drawings of Amarna tablets found by W.M. Flinders Petrie. Over one hundred years since their discovery, tablets such as these still continue to provide valuable clues and information regarding Egypt's foreign relations during the Amarna Period. (After W.M. Flinders Petrie. *Tell el Amarna*. London, 1894, pl. XXXI)

### *New Facts and New Questions*

A case in point is the celebrated question of “Who was Nibhururia of the Amarna letters?” – the deceased pharaoh whose wife wrote to the Hittite king Suppiluliuma asking for a Hittite prince to become her husband and pharaoh of Egypt. The story is well known for its historical importance and because it is based on a situation in which palace intrigue, secret messages and assassination plots were the order of the day. However, Egyptological scholars have long argued whether Tutankhamun, Akhenaten or Smenkhare, was the deceased Nibhururia of the story. Although many scholars felt that Tutankhamun was the best candidate (especially considering the attractiveness of the equation of the throne name of Tutankhamun, Nebkhepera = Nibhururia), recent work has shown this to be unlikely. In an article published at the end of 2007, Jared L. Miller<sup>3</sup> utilized a recently reconstructed Hittite document to show that the 'Arma'a of the Hittite text was very probably the Egyptian general Horemheb and that a number of facts pointed away from Tutankhamun in the identification of Nibhururia with Tutankhamun. Miller also pointed out that the writing of Nibhururia is found used in at least one Amarna letter, and maybe two, addressed to Akhenaten. Akhenaten is, in fact, Miller's choice for Nibhururia and his arguments are fairly compelling. This would make Nefertiti or possibly Merytaten the widow who solicited Suppiluliuma for a husband. The discussion is perhaps not over, however, and only more evidence will eventually settle this question for sure. Other questions relating to Egypt's Amarna age foreign relations have flourished as new and better translations of cuneiform and other texts have appeared, as well as studies of Egypt's New Kingdom political, military, trade, religious and cultural relations with her neighbors. Far more papers are being read at conferences and are appearing in scholarly journals on these topics than has been the case in past decades.

### *New Venues for Questions and Answers*

In this regard, established, new, and planned newsletters and journals can only help to bring focus and further information to the ever present body of Amarna-related questions. In addition to *The Akhetaten Sun*, the occasional journal *Amarna Letters* has provided one such focal point, of course. The recent establishment of the *Journal of Egyptian History (JEH)* by Professor Thomas Schneider of the University of British Columbia – although much broader in scope - will also provide a venue for new research in this area as time goes along. Publication of material which might throw new light on the Amarna Period also should be encouraged soon by another new journal which will focus entirely on Egypt's relations with the nations that surrounded it and with which it interacted in the ancient world. The planned journal will be the *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* and will be published by the University of Arizona. *JAIEI* will be an on-line journal that will carry peer-reviewed scholarly articles and reviews and which will offer extremely rapid publication of new material (a few weeks to a couple of months compared to the one or more years often taken by traditional printed journals). Although Amarna era relations will only be one part of the scope of *JAIEI*, the journal will help bring added focus to Egypt's foreign interactions in this era and will be a natural venue for Amarna Period materials. In spite of – or perhaps because of – the many historical questions that plague the student of the Amarna age, this period of Egyptian history remains a fascinating one for its devotees. The recent increase in research and publication focus for Egyptian and foreign material which might be brought to bear on Amarna questions bodes well for continued improved understanding of this area. Amarna studies are by no means static, and this is especially true of the study of Egypt's foreign relations and interconnections in this period.

### *References:*

1. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
2. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (eds.), *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
3. Jared L. Miller, "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibhururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34:2 (December 2007), pp. 252-93.

## Current Work at Amarna

*Barry Kemp*

I am writing mid-way through a very long period of work and residence at Amarna. It really began in November, when the Stone Village team began their two-month season. I joined them in December and stayed until early January, working on material in store in the magazine. After a short break, I came again to start the excavation at the South Tombs Cemetery. This finished on March 12th. After a quiet period of recording in the dig house, the outdoor work is about to resume (April 11th), namely the repairs at the North Palace. This is a long-standing project supported by the Amarna Research Foundation. Finally, from mid-May to mid-June, Prof. Jerry Rose and his assistants from the University of Arkansas will run a field school, in the dig house, on the human bones from this year's excavation. This will be the longest time the expedition has remained at Amarna.

Returning to the Stone Village, this is a semi-independent project run by Anna Stevens and a group from Australia. This was her fourth season. Part of it was spent on a further excavation inside the area of dense surface stones that gives the village its modern name. This time it was towards the top of the site (Fig. 1). An area of walls enclosing small spaces was revealed, the degree of preservation of the walls relatively good. But are they from a dwelling?



Fig. 1. General view of the Stone Village towards the end of the 2008 season, viewed to the west. The new area of excavation is towards the top of the hill.

One room showed the remains of an emplacement for the grinding of grain, but the complex does not easily fit into conventional house plans of the period (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. The remains of an emplacement for the grinding of grain at the Stone Village



More time was spent looking at areas outside the village, particularly on the slopes of the opposite low hill. The surprising discovery was made of a small cemetery, the graves neat little rock-cut chambers reached by stairs (Fig. 3). This gives to the site a somewhat different character. In the past it has been possible to interpret the site in various ways, including as a temporary camp or staging post perhaps connected with work on the royal tomb.

Suddenly it is revealed as a place of occupation which the inhabitants seem to have regarded with some sense of permanence. Another part of the same hillside had been dug back in sections as if in the making of small quarries.

One of them had then been neatened with a cross wall to create a small chamber. On the hilltop above lies a group of stone huts and these were also examined. They interrupt the ancient 'trackways' or boundary lines that tightly surround the site, but it remains unclear whether huts and tracks belonged in one system or if one replaced the other.

Fig. 3. Wendy Dolling excavates a tomb chamber belonging to a small cemetery attached to the Stone Village.



Fig. 4. View of the new, lower area of excavation in the South Tombs Cemetery towards the end of the 2009 season

February brought the start of the six-week ‘set piece’ excavation at the cemetery of Amarna’s people located along the sides of a narrow valley behind the tomb of Ay. This year we doubled the size of the digging team and worked two areas simultaneously. One of them was the next strip of our original area; the other was a block of ground much lower down the valley, on the opposite slope, close to the valley mouth (Fig. 4). Here the ground sloped more steeply downwards. Perhaps because of the slope the graves tend to follow a common alignment, at right angles to the valley, more than they do at the upper site, where the past pattern of multiple alignments maintained itself this year. Here and there the graves cluster, hinting perhaps at family plots.

The results from the first seasons gave the impression of a cemetery of poor people. It has been extensively robbed, but in sand you can’t recover everything without methodical fine sieving, and the paucity of finds points to few having been present originally. A few graves were undisturbed and they, too, contained little or nothing. Then last year came the fragmentary remains of a heavy wooden anthropoid coffin for the ‘mistress of the house’ Maiiai, that pointed to a greater variety of social standing and willingness to incur expense in making burials. The lower site has added to the sense that the cemetery catered for people whose circumstances varied. They were not all poor.

The most notable find was a tiny ring in the grave of a child, bearing the incised design of a horse (Fig. 5). It had the colour of uncorroded copper and a surface that still shone in places, a sign that it is made of an alloy of copper and gold that was in vogue during the Amarna Period. A bracelet of stone and glass beads was also mixed with tiny metallic beads, shiny and uncorroded and so perhaps of a similar material (Fig 6).

Another unexpected find was two sherds from an imported Mycenaean vessel (Fig. 7) and broken pieces from alabaster vessels, one probably in the shape of a fish. At the upper site, the last day of excavation revealed a woman with a long plait of hair buried with a copper/bronze mirror and a long wooden spatula, heavily rounded at the far end.



Fig. 5. Copper/gold ring from the grave of a child found in the lower area of excavation. (object 39447)



Fig. 6. Cowroid bead from the grave of a woman , bearing the design of the eye of Horus. (object 39449)



Fig. 7. Mycenaean sherd from one of the graves in the lower cemetery. (object 39401)

More limestone grave markers were recovered (Fig. 8). One has the form of a pyramid, carved as if a tiny stela has been inset into one face. Another has two peaks carved along the top and a third is a rough flake of limestone on which a triangle has been lightly incised over a smoothed area. A fourth, instead of being made from stone, has been shaped from gypsum and retained some of the gypsum mortar that helped to keep it upright. None was in its original location but they came only from the lower site, reinforcing the idea that perhaps it had been used by people of somewhat higher status, though last year's decorated wooden coffin and the brick-lined burial chamber from the 2006 season were both from the upper site.



Fig. 8. Collection of grave markers from the South Tombs Cemetery. The two toward the top left of the picture were found in 2006

The anthropology team from the University of Arkansas, led by Jerry Rose, are not due to arrive until the middle of May, when they will run a graduate field school on the bones from this season. Two members of the digging team, however, were conversant with human remains from archaeology and made preliminary assessments as the excavation progressed. From these it does look as though the pattern of early deaths and strikingly hard lives is as much represented as in past seasons. It will now become more important to check health assessments against signs of relative wealth. The new material amounts to a minimum of 52 individuals, a considerable increase over previous seasons.



Whilst the excavation was progressing, for ten days a group from the University of Arkansas, Center for Applied Spatial Technology, carried out a survey of parts of the North City. They brought with them two pieces of special equipment: a magnetometer and a ground-penetrating-radar unit. After some experimentation and calibration, they looked at two areas.

The first was around the old northern expedition house of the Egypt Exploration Society at the southern end of the North City (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. The University of Arkansas geophysics team working with ground-penetrating radar equipment beside the old Pendlebury dig house at Amarna.

We know that in the late 1920s and 1930s the expedition buried or dumped surplus finds, including broken pieces of statuary, many of which we have recovered over the years, lying on the surface at various distances from the house.

With the help of the geophysical equipment, the hope is to locate more of this material that is perhaps buried more deeply. The most promising results came from a depression in the ground to the south of the house. At the time of writing this report, however, the results of the ground-penetrating radar had not been processed.

The house and its surrounding ground is, in its way, now an archaeological site of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century AD as well as of the Amarna Period. It is relatively undisturbed and deserves a research project all of its own. Just how, in material terms, did the Pendlebury team live?

The area was further to the north, over a part of the city that has never been excavated. A block of 28 grid squares, each measuring 20 x 20 metres, was covered by the magnetometer (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Christopher Goodmaster calibrates the magnetometer at the North City

Before leaving, the team made a preliminary map of the results. It picks up the northern end of the inner wall of the double enclosure wall of the North Riverside Palace. It distinguishes between areas of housing and the blank strip that is the ancient roadway that continues northwards. The most interesting part is the housing on the east side of the roadway. The map picks out larger houses and gives them a fairly clear outline; it is less successful in distinguishing smaller houses though some individual walls can be recognised. Towards the south-east corner is a pattern of small dark circles that lie on a flat open part of the site. These look like pits of soil made for trees in a formal garden.

The map is only a preliminary one, that will be refined with further processing. The magnetometry sees things that are not visible on the ground (which is very broken and uneven and much disturbed in places). Yet so much is also visible on the ground that each magnetometry feature needs careful checking by eye and by reference to aerial photographs. It is a powerful investigative tool, but at least at Amarna, there needs to be much backup work to get the most from the data. It is not fully self-explanatory. I hope very much that it can continue and that we are only at the beginning of a prolonged survey of the extensive areas of the city that have not been excavated.

We remain, as an expedition, very largely dependent upon the personal support of interested individuals, including the dedicated band that makes up the membership of The Amarna Research Foundation. The North Palace repairs that start tomorrow, and the Arkansas geophysical survey are both primarily funded by the Foundation. I would like to thank you all again for your interest and generosity.

Amarna, 10 April 2009

# Body Cartouches and Boundary Stelae

*Kristin Thompson*

The 2005 season at Amarna was unusually long, but I spent my standard three weeks there in March, dealing as always with the statuary fragments. It was my fifth year, and before describing new work, this might be a good occasion to briefly summarize what had been accomplished to that point.

My original task when I began in 2001 had been simply to register the statuary fragments that had already been found in the North and South House Dumps (see *Akhetaten Sun* 5, 2 and 7, 1). The work expanded considerably from the beginning and over the next few years. First, there was the discovery that a set of a couple hundred granodiorite fragments all belonged to the same statue, an unfinished dyad showing Akhenaten and Nefertiti seated side by side. The reconstruction of that statue, about half of which survives, occupied part of my time during my first three seasons (*Akhetaten Sun*, 8, 2). Current plans are to mount the statue on a frame similar to the one used for the large statue of Amen and Mut which many readers will have seen in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The granodiorite pair statue, now known to have come from the Thutmose workshop, will, if current plans go forward, be on exhibition in the new site museum being created at Amarna.

Another expansion of my duties came in 2002 and 2003 with the further clearance of hundreds of stone fragments from the North House Dump. In 2002, over two hundred further pieces that had been sent to the Egyptian Museum in 1981 were returned to the Amarna magazine in the hopes that I could find matches with other pieces from the same source. Chunks of statues seemed to be accumulating faster than I could register them!

In 2004, Marsha Hill of the Metropolitan Museum visited Amarna, helping immeasurably with the sorting of the largest single group of stone, the granite fragments. These, also from the North House Dump, came mostly from colossal statues that stood in the Broad Hall of the Great Palace. Marsha and I also walked over the Great Aten Temple and found a few dozen worked pieces, ranging from small decorative border elements or hieroglyphs to recognizable portions of indurated-limestone statues of Akhenaten and Nefertiti.

In the wake of all these additions to the collection, 2005 promised to be a season for catching up with the registration. It did not begin well, with a weather delay grounding me in Montreal overnight and making me miss a day in Egypt. Fortunately I was able to alert Barry by email that I would be late, and he was able to reschedule the car to take me and other members of the team from Cairo to Amarna. Finally arriving at the hotel on March 9, I was in the happy situation of being able to set out for the site the very next morning, avoiding a day in Cairo and going instead directly to the peace and beauty of Amarna.

My fellow passengers on that trip were two eager graduate students, who for the first time made me feel quite the old Amarna veteran. Boris Trivan, a pottery specialist from Serbia, had actually been to the site before, surviving baking heat the previous August with Paul Nicholson's team. Jacquelyn Williamson, a master's candidate studying under Betsy Bryan at John Hopkins University, was visiting to do research on her thesis on body cartouches, particularly of the Amarna period. After a pleasantly uneventful drive along the western desert road, we reached the lanes through the lush fields on the west bank, then the familiar village ferry, and finally the expedition house.

The large number of statuary pieces still to be registered made it obvious that I would not be able to finish the task that season. I set as my goal getting through all the types of stone from the North House Dump except the granite. But first I discovered two humble-looking little pieces that had been picked up by team members a few months earlier in the vicinity of the old North Expedition House. One was a fragment of an offering table from a relief, in a lovely tan quartzite with hints of pink running through it. (We have fragments of a colossal osirid

statue of Akhenaten in this same stone—the one statue I would most love to reconstruct, if only we could find more of it.) The other was simply a stretch of body surface covered by pleats from a statue in brown quartzite. Not much in themselves, and yet they may be evidence for what we suspect: that there is at least one additional dump in the North House area waiting to be located.

Those were the first I registered before moving on to the limestone, granodiorite, and travertine (usually called *travertine*) fragments from the North House Dump.

The travertine, oddly enough, proved to be the most interesting material I dealt with during the season. This type of stone, with its large, loosely cohering crystals, shatters easily, and most of the pieces from the Dump are fairly small. Nevertheless, in examining them for registration, I realized that many of them seemed to come from the same object, not a statue in this case but a relief. Although clearly most of the pieces were missing, a few yielded clues as to what the original must have depicted. Most crucially, a section showing a triangular lotus bouquet with two adjacent buds suggests an offering scene. There are a number of reliefs where Akhenaten is shown holding up such a bouquet toward the Aten.



A preliminary attempt to lay out the pieces of travertine in an approximation of the original composition.

A probable parallel to the travertine relief at Amarna exists in the Petrie Museum in London, and it gives a sense of what the North House Dump relief probably looked like. (The Petrie relief is reproduced on page 69 of *Excavating Egypt*, the exhibition catalogue published by the Michael C. Carlos Museum in 2005, and on the Petrie's website<sup>1</sup>) The Petrie relief, which has been reconstructed from fragments, is far more complete than the one at Amarna, but it is entirely missing the top portion.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk/detail/details/index\\_no\\_login.php?objectid=UC401&accesscheck=%2Fdetail%2Fdetails%2Findex.php](http://www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk/detail/details/index_no_login.php?objectid=UC401&accesscheck=%2Fdetail%2Fdetails%2Findex.php)

In contrast, the Amarna travertine fragments are scattered across all parts of the composition, a large section showing Nefertiti's hips and thighs and several bits with Aten rays and hands.

I tried to lay out the pieces in some semblance of the original composition, though the sandstone relief that I improvised was distinctly smaller than the original relief would have been. It seems apparent that the sandstone is quite similar to the Petrie example. Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and at least one of the daughters stood toward the right, with an offering stand in front of them and an Aten disk above. Isolated portions of hieroglyphic inscriptions that would have identified the figures also survive. I was able to make about half a dozen joins among the pieces, but clearly too much is missing to have the composition come together in any substantial way. Perhaps in the future, using an outline drawing to scale, the pieces that survive could be fitted into some sort of frame to give an idea of the original. Presumably this relief (as well as a possible second one of which we have only a few pieces) were among a series that adorned balustrades bordering ramps in the Great Palace.

While I was dealing with the registration and investigation of the North House Dump pieces, Jacquie pursued her research into body cartouches. Such cartouches on the bodies of Nefertiti and Akhenaten are common in statuary and reliefs in such museums as the Metropolitan, the Petrie, and the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin. Unfortunately, we happened to have almost none among the hundreds of pieces at Amarna. Indeed, at the beginning of the season the only example I had run across was one of the pieces of travertine relief. This represents much of Akhenaten's torso, and tiny cartouches have been scratched rather clumsily into the surface. The scale is too small for them to contain any hieroglyphs. Jacquie was also interested, however, in the depiction of body cartouches in the tomb reliefs. She spent a great deal of time minutely inspecting the battered stone surfaces and managed to find faint traces of apparent examples of such cartouches that had been overlooked by Norman de Garis Davies when he made his splendid set of drawings for *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*.

Fortuitously, I discovered in the course of the season that the Amarna magazine contained another example of body cartouches. Apart from dealing with North House Dump material, I decided also to register statuary pieces that had been found during excavations at the Kom el-Nana (probably the "sun-shade" temple of Nefertiti). The pieces had received field inventory numbers at the time, but they had never been entered into the main stone-fragment registry. The Kom el-Nana was a relatively small building, and it had yielded only a single tray's worth of fragments, some of them quite lovely. Two quartzite pieces depicting hands on a small scale, for example, are the equal of the ones now on display in Berlin (and I expect that the ones from the Kom el-Nana will eventually go into the Amarna site museum).

For both of our guests and me, one of the highlights of the 2005 season was an opportunity to travel to the rarely visited southern end of the site. Helen Fenwick has been on the team at Amarna exactly as long as I have been, and she is slowly making her way over the entire site taking GPS readings and creating a highly accurate contour map of the areas surrounding the ancient city. Helen needed to take some preliminary readings at the five southern boundary stelae near the riverside, J, K, L, M, and N. (P, Q, R, and S are located further away from the Nile, at either side of the broad, long valley that stretches away behind the South Tombs—or were located there. What remains of Boundary Stele S now resides in the magazine at Amarna, awaiting the creation of a conservation facility that will permit its reconstruction.)



A rare visit to the southern end of the site. Helen Fenwick and her assistants take a GPS reading, watched by Jacquelyn Williamson. At right is Dimitri Laboury, and beyond him is the road that leads out of the Amarna plain southward along the Nile.

Dimitri, Jacquie and I seized the opportunity and tagged along with Helen. We set out in a pickup truck (the usual means of local transportation for the team) and followed an indirect route, going out into the desert toward the South Tomb and then turning westward again. We skirted the south cliffs, driving along a paved road that turns south near the Nile. Boundary Stele M, one of the first three that were carved at the founding of Akhetaten, in the sixth year of Akhenaten's reign, is located at the same point, where the cliffs also turn and parallel the river. We found it fairly quickly, along with the nearby L. (William J. Murnane and Charles C. Van Siclen III suggest in *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten* that L commemorated some sort of visit by the King to the southern area of Akhetaten, since it is small and contains neither the earlier nor the later proclamation.) In the indirect morning light, we could only detect a couple of hieroglyphs remaining on L.

Hiking further south, we soon found K, which is somewhat better preserved than the others. Although K originally had a group of statues similar to the ones familiar to visitors from stelae A and U, virtually nothing remains now but some of the lower legs and feet. J proved more elusive, but luckily a local man who happened to be passing guided us straight to it. On the way back, we stopped at N, which is by itself in the southern cliffs away from the river and faces north. The bottom of the monument is covered in nearly two feet of sand, which is just as well in terms of preservation, if a bit disappointing from the viewpoint of the tourist.



Boundary Stele K, where the many rays of the Aten fill the best-preserved portion.

A longer, very interesting excursion took place on one of our Fridays off. One of the advantages of working at Amarna is that there are a number of sites in the area that are off the usual tourist itinerary. This season our Roman and Coptic expert Gillian Pyke wanted to visit a medieval keep that survives in good condition at the Holy Virgin St. Mary Monastery in Al-Muharraq.

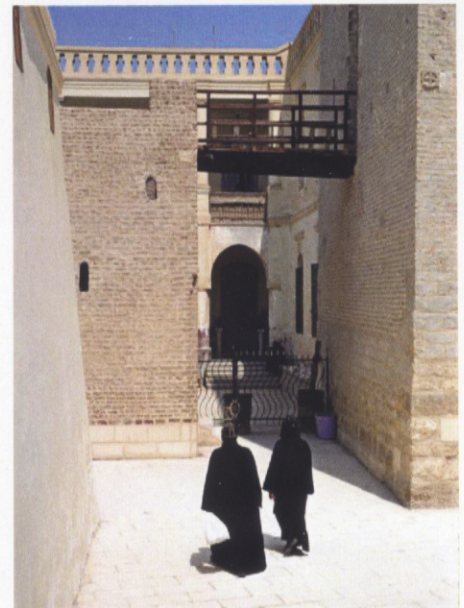
Gillian felt that this building would be the closest thing currently in existence to the Kom el Shimon's ruined Coptic church, the painting fragments from which she has worked on extensively. She kindly arranged the trip, including the nearby Middle-Kingdom tombs at Meir for those of us more interested in the past.



The site of the Middle-Kingdom tombs at Meir

The area lay south, on the west bank of the Nile. We started with the monastery, where we were warmly welcomed by the monks and given a tour of the keep. The tower stands in the middle of a large, serene, enclosed complex with beautiful gardens. Then it was on to Meir, where many of the tomb reliefs proved to be very familiar, seemingly supplying half the examples one sees in books on Egyptian art and hieroglyphs of this period. One tomb was half-finished, with its walls covered in grids containing reliefs and paintings in various stages of execution.

By the end of my stay at Amarna, I had registered an additional 233 fragments, achieving my goal of getting through all the types of stone apart from the granite ones, which I left for 2006. It is good to see that the pieces are not simply being numbered and stored away on shelves. Within only a few years after the commencement of the project to deal with the statuary pieces, researchers are coming to get them out again and study them. The most interesting of the fragments seem destined to go on view to visitors when the site museum eventually opens. Perhaps most importantly, the sheer volume of the fragments recovered from the two Dumps, as well as more recent surface finds, have yielded numerous important clues as to the statuary program in the ancient city. A systematic analysis of those clues should lead eventually to a significant publication on the subject.



The medieval keep preserved on the grounds of the Holy Virgin St. Mary Monastery in Al-Muharraq.

## orary Trustees of the Amarna Research Foundation

**D**  
rwood Curator  
Near Eastern Art,  
e Arts, Boston

**H**  
ed  
ish  
**BE, FBA**  
gyptian Collection

**ayme Johnson, PhD**  
ector Ep nic Survey,  
Oriental In. University of Chicago

**Barry J. K**  
Field Direct narna Expedition  
Egypt Explor on Society (EES) &  
Retired Professor of Egyptology,  
Cambridge University

**Geoffrey Martin, PhD, LittD, FSA**  
Field Director  
Amarna Royal Tombs Project,  
Valley of the Kings  
Christ's College, Cambridge University

**Jeffrey Stephenson**  
Collections Manager  
Denver Museum of Nature & Science

**Dietrich Wildung, PhD**  
Director  
Egyptian Museum, Berlin

**Richard 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](mailto:RTomb10@comcast.net)

Phone: (303) 693-7512