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The President’s Papyrus

Greetings to my fellow Amarnaphiles and happy New Year! As most of you have observed in the news, this is a truly historic period in the evolving history of modern Egypt. It is our sincere hope that the aspirations of the Egyptian people will be achieved peacefully and as quickly as possible and that the antiquities of this great civilization will continue to be respected and preserved for all generations to come.

I think that you will find this edition of the Sun most interesting and informative. We have three excellent articles all well illustrated. The first is by our TARP board member David Pepper telling the story of Lord Amherst and his Amarna antiquities collection. The second is by Marsha Hill detailing the history of the Metropolitan Museum’s acquisition of that collection and the significance of some of its pieces. The third article is a report by Barry Kemp on the latest season’s work. I think that you are going to enjoy all of them and find them informative.

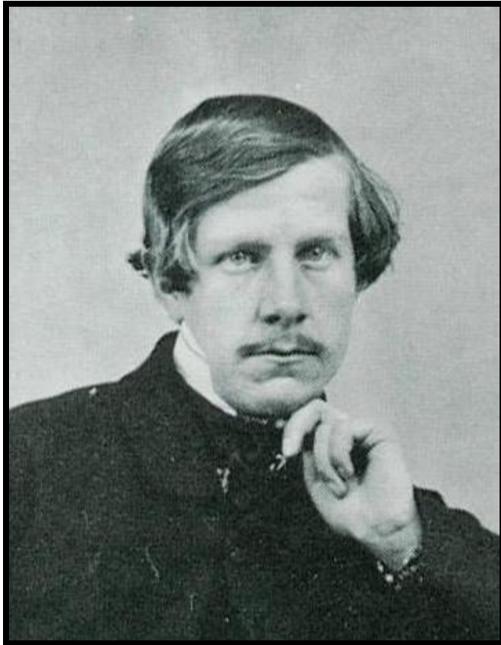
Furthermore, I hope to invite other Amarna specialists to submit articles for publication in the Sun. In addition to that, I have commenced working on a newly designed Amarna Research Foundation website. So stay tuned for information about this new development. I think you will be pleased.

In closing, I want to thank you for supporting the mission of this foundation and ask that you continue to do so for we cannot do it without your help. I wish you all, our faithful members, a most happy and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,
Floyd Chapman
President

LORD AMHERST, DIDDLINGTON HALL, AND AMARNA

By David Pepper



William Tyssen-Amherst, 1st Baron Amherst of Hackney¹ & His Family Crest²

In early 1891, John Newberry (brother of Egyptologist Percy Newberry) received a letter from Francis Llewellyn Griffith at the British Museum asking him to search for an artist who would be willing to travel to Egypt to sketch paintings inside the tombs at Beni Hassan.

John Newberry recommended a young artist named Howard Carter, whom he had met at Baron Amherst's Diddlington Hall in West Norfolk (some 45 miles from Cambridge). John Newberry had been retained to update the design of the gardens at Diddlington where he had met seventeen year-old Howard Carter and his father.³ Carter's father, Samuel, was an artist who had been hired to create a painting of Diddlington Hall.



Diddlington Hall, Norfolk⁴



The West Wing of Didlington and its Boat House⁵

Howard Carter stated that "... [It is] to Lord and Lady Amherst of Hackney ... [that] I owe an immense debt of gratitude for their extreme kindness to me during my early career. ... It was the Amherst Egyptian Collection at Didlington Hall, Brandon, Norfolk, perhaps the largest and most interesting collection of its kind then in England, that aroused my longing for that country. It gave me an earnest desire to see Egypt."⁶



Egyptian artifacts in the Old Museum at Didlington Hall⁷

The Egyptian collection at Didlington started in the 1860's when William Tyssen-Amherst bought two Egyptian collections, one from Church of England priest, the Rev'd R.T. Lieder, and another from the distinguished antiquarian Dr. John Lee.⁸ Amherst later purchased an Egyptian collection from the estate of Count James Alexandre Pourtalès-Gorgier of Paris⁹. Amherst continued to add to his collection until he passed away in 1909.

In late 1891, Carter arrived in Egypt to sketch for Percy Newberry, first at Beni Hassan and then a few months later at el Bersha (where Carter sketched the famous scene in the tomb of Djehutihotep of that noble's huge seated statue being dragged on a sled). During the latter half of that same year (1891), the Egypt Exploration Fund's Amelia Edwards commissioned British archeologist Flinders Petrie to excavate at Amarna. In January 1892, Howard Carter found himself assigned to work under Petrie at Amarna, as Amherst's "agent." Lord Amherst had provided £200 to the Amarna excavation and in return he was to receive antiquities for his Egyptian collection at Didlington Hall.¹⁰

Carter described his good fortune at being able to learn excavation techniques from Petrie: “Petrie’s training during those months of hard work transformed me, I believe, into something of the nature of an investigator – to dig and examine systematically.”¹¹

The excavation at Amarna had 22 workmen assisting the two British archeologists. Carter describes one piece he found at Amarna in a letter to Newberry, “I found a very interesting tablet with Khuenaten (Akhenaten) seated upon a throne dancing the queen on his knee with the two princesses upon her lap. I am sorry to say that the heads are broken off; Petrie says he does not know of anything like it in Egypt.”¹² This piece became one of the treasures of the Amherst collection. It is now in the Louvre.



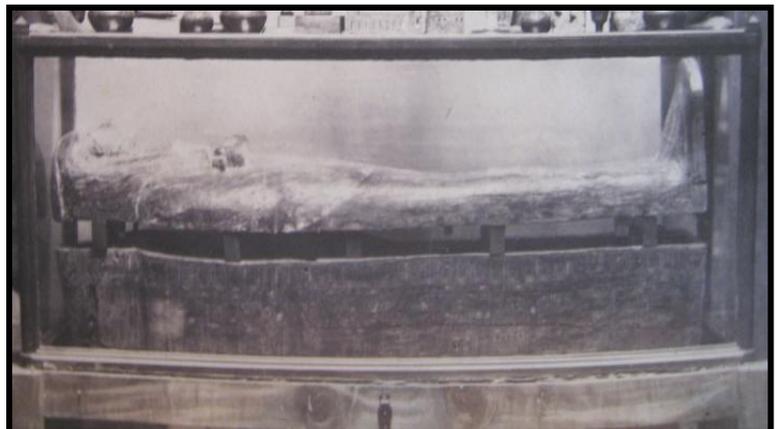
Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and two Princesses¹³

Work finished at Amarna in April of 1892, and in May of that same year, some 160 boxes of antiquities were dispatched by train to Cairo. Thus began the journey of the Amarna objects to Amherst’s museum at Didlington.¹⁴

At Didlington, seven Sekhmet statues flanked the wing which housed Amherst’s museum. These had been part of Dr John Lee’s collection acquired in 1865. These statues originally stood in the Temple of Mut at Karnak, and were probably brought to Europe by Belzoni.¹⁵



The Seven Sekhmets¹⁶



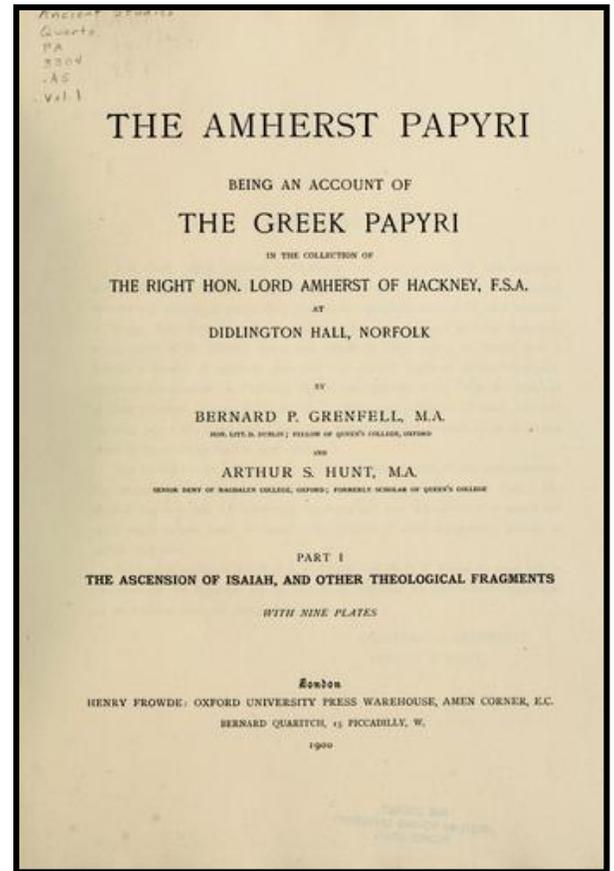
Mummy case on display at Didlington¹⁷

Percy Newberry stated: “The series of mummy cases, the bronzes, the amulets and ushabti figures are particularly noteworthy, and the collection of monuments from the historic site of Tell el Amarna is of unsurpassed interest.”¹⁸

Included in the collection were some important papyri. One detailed events of the Harem Conspiracy against Ramses III. In this story one of Rameses’ queens plotted to have the pharaoh killed and her son put on the throne in his place. There is a “happy ending” when the plot is uncovered and the conspirators summarily executed.

Another papyrus in the collection tells the story of the “Eloquent Peasant,” the tale of Sinuhe (who was the man who overheard a plot to kill pharaoh Amenemhet I and subsequently fled to Syria). Yet another papyrus details the capture and trial of tomb robbers who were caught pilfering the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings, during the reign of Rameses IX.

The Tyssen-Amherst family’s wealth came mainly from their estate which, due to William’s antiquarian passion, was left in the hands of his land agent. This proved to be a catastrophic mistake, as the agent embezzled Amherst’s money to fund his gambling habit. After massively depleting the family funds, the agent committed suicide in 1906.



Catalog of the Amherst Papyri¹⁹

The financial loss forced the Amherst’s to sell some of their possessions, including most of the books in the magnificent library.”²⁰ Within a few short years, in 1909 Lord Amherst was dead at age 74.



Didlington Library²¹



Didlington Ball Room²²

Lady Amherst sold the collection's seven great Sekhmet statues to the Metropolitan Museum in 1915.²³



Six of the seven Sekhmets in the Metropolitan Museum, NY²⁴

The remaining items in Amherst's Egyptian collection, cataloged by Howard Carter, were sold by Sotheby's in 1921. At that time, it was the third largest private collection in England. Many of the items were acquired by the Met, including the objects from Tell el Amarna which Carter himself had excavated under Petrie's guidance in 1892.²⁵ The next article, by Marsha Hill, discusses these items.

Endnotes:

¹ Photograph: [Howard Carter Before Tutankhamun](#) by Reeves & Taylor, p. 15

² Crest: from http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=1472422

³ Reeves & Taylor, *ibid*, p. 20

⁴ Photograph: http://lh.matthewbeckett.com/houses/lh_norfolk_didlingtonhall_info_gallery.html

⁵ <http://www.amhersts-of-didlington.com/index.html>

⁶ Reeves & Taylor, *ibid*, p. 20

⁷ Photograph: <http://www.amhersts-of-didlington.com/well1.html>

⁸ Howard Carter, *The Path To Tutankhamun* by TGH James, p. 10

⁹ See http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/gif-files/Amherst_01.jpg

¹⁰ James, *ibid*, pp. 30-32

¹¹ James, *ibid*, p. 36

¹² James, *ibid*, p. 37

¹³ Photograph: http://www.its.caltech.edu/~stumpfel/gallery/arh_120_files/egypt.html

¹⁴ James, *ibid*, p. 38

¹⁵ <http://www.amhersts-of-didlington.com/well1.html>

¹⁶ Photograph: <http://www.amhersts-of-didlington.com/taodh1.html>

¹⁷ Photograph: <http://www.amhersts-of-didlington.com/index.html>

¹⁸ The Amherst Papyri, 1899, pg vii, see <http://www.archive.org/details/amherstpapyribei00amhe>

¹⁹ http://openlibrary.org/books/OL21880177M/The_Amherst_papyri

²⁰ http://lh.matthewbeckett.com/houses/lh_norfolk_didlingtonhall.html

²¹ Photograph: <http://apling.freeservers.com/Didlington/Library.htm>

²² Photograph: <http://apling.freeservers.com/Didlington/TheBallRoom.htm>

²³ <http://www.joanlansberry.com/met-muzm/mmasekmt.html>

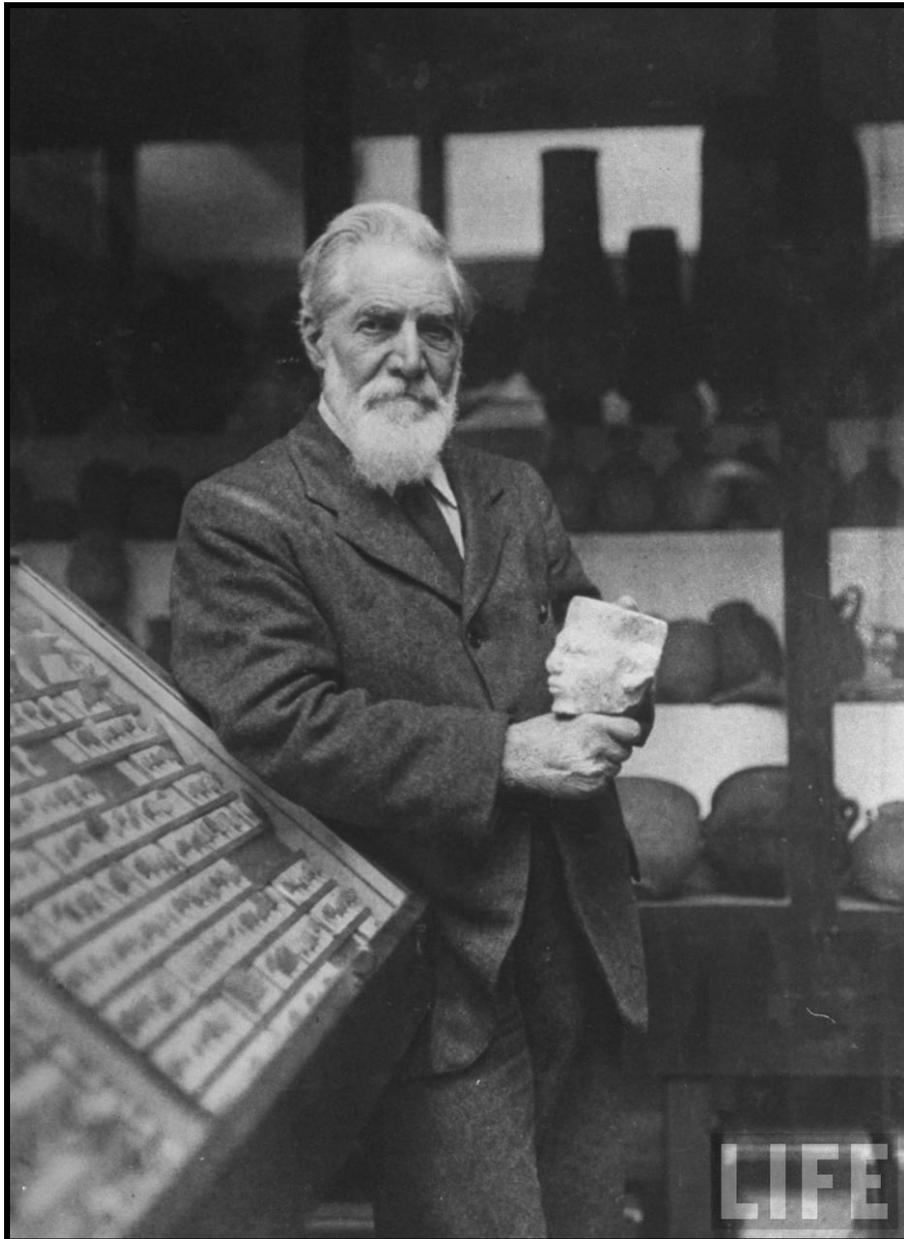
²⁴ Photograph: <http://www.amhersts-of-didlington.com/taodh1.html>

²⁵ James, *ibid*, p. 240

Petrie, Amarna, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art

By Marsha Hill

Included among the large Amarna collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is an important body of material from Flinders Petrie's excavations at the site in 1891-1892.



Sir Flinders Petrie (photo by Life Magazine)

(from <http://images.google.com/hosted/life/f?imgurl=5453b6c3ca0383f5>)

The museum had no Egyptian Art department at the time of Petrie's excavations, but was able to acquire the excavated group some thirty years later at the sale of the Amherst collection in London. Lord Amherst had contributed toward Petrie's work at Amarna in 1891-1892, including offering personnel in the form of Howard Carter, and received a portion of Petrie's finds in return. After the family suffered reverses, the Amherst collection was dispersed at auction in 1921 in a sale at Sotheby's London; the Metropolitan acquired the large lots of excavated sculpture fragments and a number of other lots including "sculptors' models," and faience molds.

When Carter started at Amarna in January 1892, he was given as his special province, parts of the town and the Great Temple (the Great Aten Temple). Petrie's mandate to the young Carter, rare references to Carter in his text, and correlations of Petrie's text with findspot information included in the Amherst sale catalog written by Howard Carter, establish what excavation information we have for the material in the Metropolitan – poor by modern standards but fortunate even so.

In general, the specifics of Carter's work in the town areas are as obscure as those of Petrie himself. The only town locale that Petrie specifically mentions Carter having excavated was Building 12 (Petrie, Tell el Amarna 24-25; M50.18), a circular building which proved difficult to identify. This building was re-excavated and supplemented by the discovery of a second building alongside by the EES in 1924 (M50.17), but it is now judged to probably be a well (Kemp and Garfi, Survey 73).

Petrie noted only an ill-formed headrest from that building, but subsequent surface finds and excavations indicate a dispersed glass and faience industry lay in this area (Kemp and Garfi, Survey 73) which could have been one source for the numerous Amherst lots of such materials noted to be from town 'manufactories' or private houses. Although he was not noted as being present by Petrie, it is also possible that Carter was involved in the excavation of Petrie's 'sculptors' workshop near the south end of the town (Petrie, TA 30), since Petrie's plate XI/2, certainly from there, and I 8/9 which seems from the language to be from there, are both in the Museum via the Amherst sale or indirectly as numbers 22.2.6 and 21.9.13, respectively. [A number of Metropolitan Museum pieces are illustrated herein, the others are viewable at <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/>.] It is likely, however, that in the case of structures from the 'town,' Lord Amherst simply received a selection of finds.



Sculptor's work piece
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1922, 22.2.6; photo by Bill Barrette)



Tell el Amarna plate XI/2: the piece lost its lower right corner before reaching the Museum

As to Carter's work in the Great Aten Temple, Petrie is explicit (Tell el Amarna 18):

The Great Temple occupies a large space, nearly half a mile long...And though the temple proper [now usually termed the sanctuary] only covers a small fraction of the space, at one end of the area, yet the whole length is strewn with fragments of stonework... The site of the temple, or shrine [again, the sanctuary], which was entirely excavated by Mr. Carter, is marked by heaps of broken pieces of mortar and stone... Mr. Carter turned over nearly all of this without finding anything more than two or three blocks of the great stele. This was built up of small blocks, and bore a life-size figure of Akhenaten (of which the head was found, and doubtless similar figures of the queen and princesses, whose titles were also found). [Author: The head is quite unknown; the other blocks are actually talatat, see further below.]

The absence of all sculptures was partly explained on searching the heap that lay just outside of the temenos wall, on the south of the temple. Here were found portions of seventeen limestone statues of the king and queen, probably those that are represented in porticos in the drawing of the temples, beside about a ton of fragments...

The formation and history of Petrie's "heap," or the dump, has been clarified through pottery survey and analysis of patterns by Barry Kemp (Kemp and Garfi, Survey 52-53). In this area of the temenos wall there was at least one gate through which cattle would have entered from the domain of Pahnesy, as superintendent of the cattle of the Aten, and passed to the Butcher's Yard for slaughter before being offered in the sanctuary.

From the sanctuary itself, another pathway led outside the temenos through this gate to bring cult detritus in the form of incense bowls, beer jars and offering stands to a dump outside the wall. The same dump served for statuary removed from the temple at the time of its destruction; statuary was seemingly both destroyed in the sanctuary itself and at the dump site after being dragged out of the sanctuary along the same pathway that had been used for cult debris.

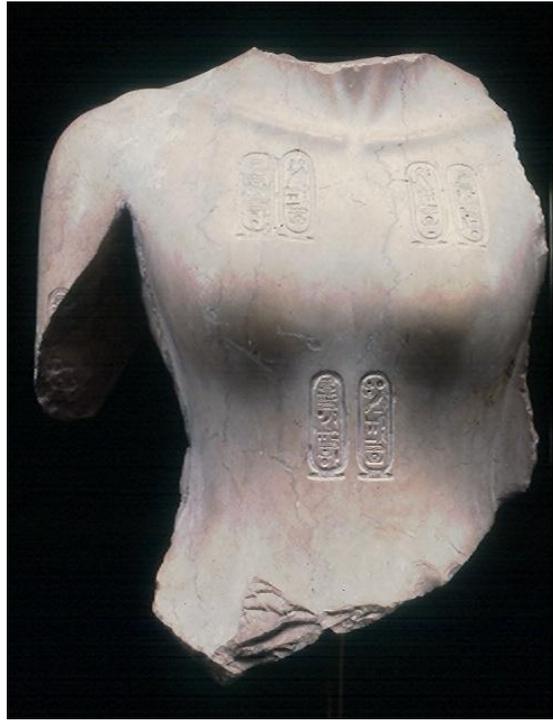


Aerial photograph of the Great Aten Temple, taken after clearance in 1935. North is towards the top, so the entry from the main road and the Long Temple are at the left; the sanctuary mounds are visible toward the right. The dump discussed below is the fainter disturbed area directly below and outside the wall

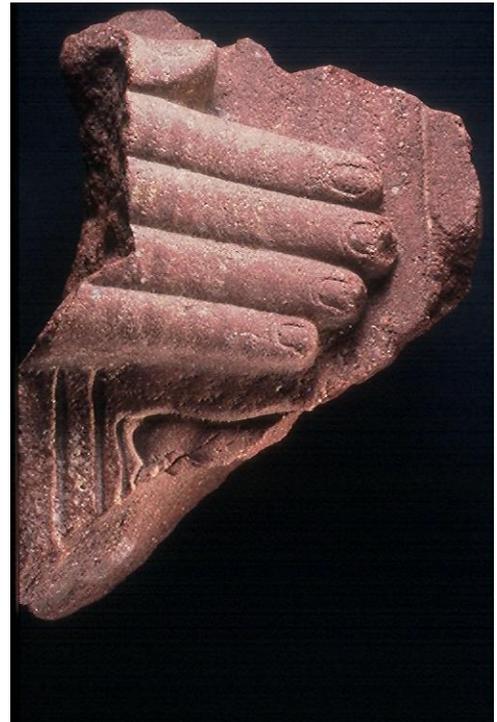
(From: http://www.amarnaproject.com/pages/amarna_the_place/central_city/index.shtml)



Amarna Sanctuary Mounds Today (Photo by the author)



**Sculptural fragment, Metropolitan Museum of Art: king's bust
(Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1921, 21.9.3).
Photograph by Bill Barrette.**



**Sculptural fragments, Metropolitan Museum of Art:
Left, king's head composed of several fragments (Gift of Sherman E. and Ruth Lee, 1992, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1957, 57.180.78); right, king's hand against the side of a stela where part of his Horus name is visible (Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1957, 57.180.76).
All photos by Bill Barrette.**

The documented pattern of finds by the EES in the 1920s and 1930s in the sanctuary area of the Great Aten Temple, the sanctuary dump, and the “Stela” area just outside the sanctuary (its identification based on the depictions of a stela and large statue of the king in this area in a number of Amarna tomb scenes), as well as actual joins of some of these pieces to the Petrie/Carter finds, confirms the origin of the indurated limestone fragments in the sanctuary. It also reveals that the red quartzite, a group not mentioned in Petrie’s account but fortunately recorded as being from the dump in Carter’s lot descriptions, originates in the Stela Emplacement.

The hope of the Museum in acquiring the fragments in 1921, and continuing to pursue the remaining lots over the years, was to reconstruct the sanctuary statuary. The material is, however, much too shattered and incomplete, owing especially to the violence of its destruction and its long history of exposure. However, study of the Petrie/Carter fragments in conjunction with sanctuary and dump material collected earlier – for example, by the Englishman John Perring – and of related pieces discovered by the EES and now in many museums, reveals much about the original forms and styles of the statuary. The opportunity to visit Amarna itself to compare material and discuss and examine aspects of the site has clarified much about the statuary in the sanctuary of the Great Aten Temple and the Stela Emplacement in comparison to that from the palace or outlying temples under work by Kristin Thompson. But many questions remain to be studied further, such as the precise nature of the Stela Emplacement given what we know from the red quartzite fragments, or the question of the placement of the statuary in the sanctuary and the modification and change of the statuary program over time. These are subjects that require consideration of any evidence that might illuminate the relief program of the temple. Alongside efforts to conceptualize the economic and social role of the vast spaces of this temple, the statuary can only contribute to a better understanding of this centrally important building.



Quickbird satellite image of the Great Aten Temple, taken in 2006, with the sanctuary mounds at the right margin and the dump directly below

(From: http://www.amarnaproject.com/pages/amarna_the_place/central_city/index.shtml)

CURRENT WORK AT AMARNA

By Barry Kemp

Bringing 2011 to a successful conclusion

After a year marked by the turbulence and uncertainty unleashed by the Revolution that began on January 25th it is with considerable relief that I can report that it has been possible to complete most of our planned fieldwork at Amarna. The last day, when the cemetery excavation closed down, was December 28th.

Farewell, for a while, to the North Palace

One goal that I had set was to complete the current phase of cleaning and repair at the North Palace, which has been proceeding intermittently since 1997. When we began, seventy years of exposure to the elements, following the initial excavation in 1923 and 1924, had significantly eroded the relatively soft mud brickwork of which the palace was built. The rear part, standing higher than the rest, looked close to major collapse. The repairs we have carried out have regularly been supported with grants from the Amarna Research Foundation, and this was the case in 2011.

Our first seasons were devoted to the rear parts, where what was needed was fairly discrete strengthening of standing walls, as far as possible keeping the original brickwork visible. Over large parts of the palace enclosure, however, many of the walls have all but disappeared. In this condition they are actually stable. All that can be done by way of enhancement is to rebuild on the original foundations to make the layout visible. It would be possible to do this over the entire palace. Whether or not this is desirable in itself – it might be visually overwhelming – it can be questioned whether there is any urgency to do so, when comparison is made with the state of other parts of Amarna, especially the Central City, which is far less protected than the North Palace and faces more serious threats.



Figure 1: Our building teams laying out the lines of eroded walls and brick pillar bases at the North Palace.

What we have done, therefore, is to set a limit to our repairs at the North Palace. The repairs to the standing brickwork at the rear are now matched by a roughly equal area of low rebuilding of almost vanished walls along the north side. This should allow visitors to compare the two styles of intervention, and to use the area of actual rebuilding as a cue to visualizing what the rest of the palace might look like if rebuilding were fully carried out.

The area in question is a series of three animal houses that occupied part of the northern side of the palace enclosure. Traces of decoration (now long vanished) and the closeness of the buildings to the royal residential area suggest that their purpose was something almost theatrical, namely, the creation in solid form of the idyllic landscape of papyrus marsh and animal life that so enchanted the ancient Egyptians and which was a recurrent theme in the art and architecture of Amarna.

The building up of walls along the lines of their foundations was not done to a common height. As Figures 1 and 2 show, we have to some extent tapered the heights of the walls towards a central low point where erosion of the walls has been greatest. Part of each of the three animal house possessed roofs supported on square brick pillars. These, too, we have rebuilt to varying heights.



Figure 2: The same area, at the end of the work. Note the new door thresholds made to imitate sandstone.

A distinctive feature is the unusual widths of the doorways, up to 3 metres (9.8 feet). Each was paved in stone. The majority had used slabs of sandstone, that had been shipped in from quarries at Gebel Silsila, south of Luxor and 450 km (280 miles) south of Amarna. These quarries are now closed, and enquiries revealed that modern sources of sandstone are, by their appearance, not suitable and, in any case, too expensive for us to buy. In place of real sandstone we have manufactured slabs from concrete coloured with desert clay, and laid them in the doorways (Figure 3). This was the work of Simon Bradley, a theatrical sculptor (who, many years ago, made the replica column that stands in the Small Aten Temple).

Our restorations are also, of course, impermanent. Our own mud bricks erode from the annual assaults of sandy wind and rains, and regrettably from time to time minor acts of vandalism occur. Once a piece of work like this is finished, it is necessary to think of a perpetual cycle of maintenance. Five years from now, the areas where we have worked in the palace should be checked with a view to a further round of repairs, and perhaps an expansion of repairs into another part.

Over the years we have trained and employed teams of brickmakers and builders from the local villages who have become very experienced in repairing Amarna's buildings, working in both stone and mud brick. They represent a valuable asset and an important element of the expedition's resources. My plan now is to deploy them on a larger project in the Central City, the place where this kind of work is most needed. In the late spring I hope to start the reclamation of the Great Aten Temple, a task that will take several years to accomplish but one I believe to be very worthwhile.



Figure 3. Setting one the new thresholds into position. The man on the right is Shehata Fahmy, one of our long-time builders from El-Till.

Cemetery Excavation

The delayed excavation at the South Tombs Cemetery began in mid-November and ran to December 28th. Anna Stevens, the expedition's assistant director, was in charge. With a smaller team than planned it was necessary to reduce the areas explored, but the intriguing results made the excavation worthwhile.

In past years we have worked in three separate areas of the cemetery (Figure 4). We have called them the Upper Site (begun in 2006), the Lower Site (begun in 2009) and the Wadi Mouth Site (begun in 2010). This time, all resources went into the last two, and particularly into the Lower Site. Last year's excavation at the Lower Site took the form of a five-metre-wide trench laid down the hill slope, to the edge of the wadi floor. Burials were found down most of its length, except towards the top, where the outcropping of rock at the surface had deterred people from digging graves. At the bottom, the hard gravelly surface at which the grave cuts became visible dropped somewhat, and the graves themselves continued to the very end of the trench. This pointed to the likelihood that not only had graves originally spread across the wadi floor, but that they had, at least to some extent, not been washed away by occasional violent flash floods.

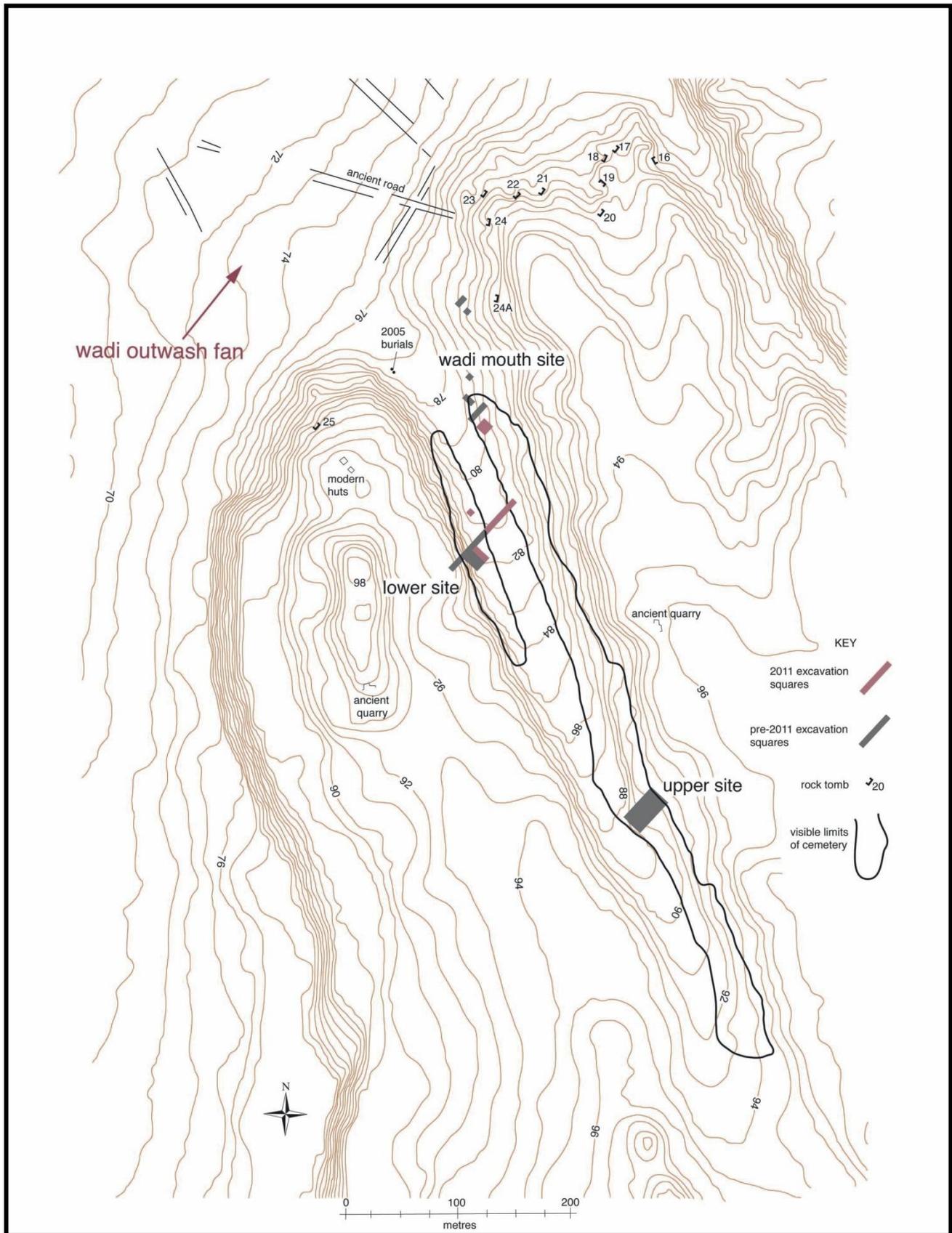


Figure 4. General map of the South Tombs Cemetery, updated to show the location of the 2011 excavations. Also marked is the area where the contours imply the existence of a deposit of material swept from the surface of the cemetery by a past flood.

It was natural this year, therefore, to extend this same trench out into the wadi floor. In the end, the trench was carried across to the far side and for a short distance on to the opposite slope. We now have a complete profile across the wadi, 80 metres (262 feet) long (Figures 5 and 6). The first step in the excavation was to remove the top layer of sand and gravel, to the depth where the outline of grave pits became visible. Those at the western end were fully excavated but time did not allow for the excavation of those at the eastern end; they were protected with cloth and backfilled.

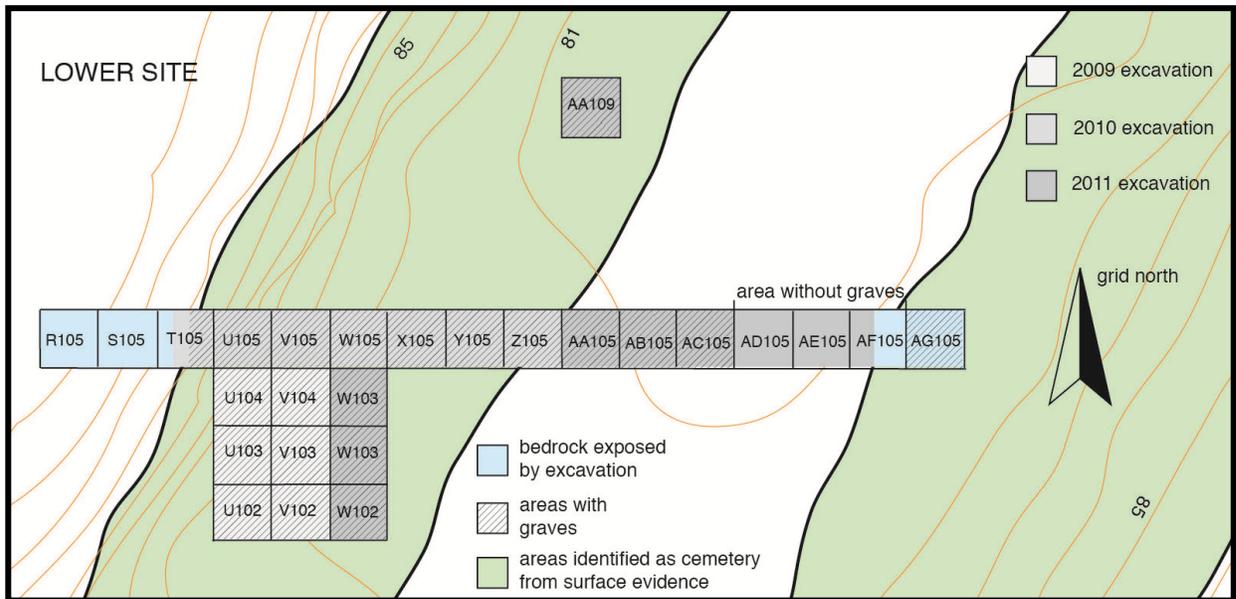


Figure 5. Schematic plan of the main excavation of 2011, intended to show the relation of the spread of graves to the topography.



Figure 6. General view towards the local west along the line of the excavation trench, taken at the end of the excavation. The further end of the trench has been largely backfilled.

At the eastern end, where the ground begins to rise to form the eastern slope of the wadi, bedrock unexpectedly reappeared, and so, in conformity to the ancient disinclination to dig graves into the rock, there are none. Although as soon as the rock becomes broken and soft, the graves begin again (represented by a minimum of two in the furthest square, AG105). In all, three adjacent squares (AD105–AF105) were devoid of graves but the presence of bedrock close to the surface only explains a small part of this absence. Across most of this area the material beneath the surface was the same mixture of sand and gravel that is common to the other squares on the wadi floor. In part, this might be due to the burials having been washed away during the flood(s) that created the channel, but this is unlikely to account entirely for their absence. It may be that these squares span some kind of thoroughfare or access route that allowed burial parties to pass through to the higher reaches of the cemetery. Discovering how people actually used the cemetery is one of the aims of our work.



Figure 7. Square AA105 in the course of excavation. The pit containing the coffin has been enlarged to enable conservator Lucy Skinner to work from the sides.

Within a short time of our starting, the top of another decayed wooden anthropoid coffin appeared (in square AA105), not far from where the two examples were found in 2010. With those, the pieces were removed directly and as carefully as was possible and transferred to the site magazine. This year the team included two conservators, Julie Dawson (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) and Lucy Skinner. Their first task was to begin consolidation of the 2010 coffin pieces, but the appearance of the new coffin took them immediately into the field to deal with it. (Figure 7).

The new coffin was, if anything, in an even more fragile condition. Julie and Lucy worked with a remarkable first-aid conservation chemical, cyclododecane. When dissolved in warm water and applied to fragile surface it forms a firm, opaque white waxy cover that can be reinforced with gauze. The wonder of its properties is that subsequently, when exposed to air, the chemical slowly ‘sublimates’ - in other words, it vanishes of its own accord, leaving the wood to be consolidated in the laboratory. It took a week to conserve the coffin in the ground in this way, but at the end, it was possible to lift the sides as single pieces. Wrapped to be airtight, the pieces are in the site magazine awaiting further treatment next year.

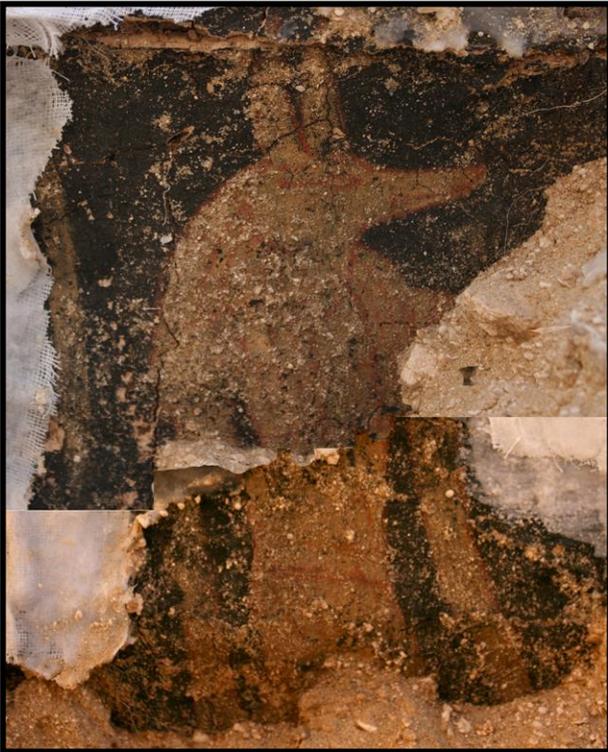


Figure 8. A composite picture of one of the painted figures on the side of the coffin, made from two of the ‘porthole’ photographs taken as patches were cleaned and then covered with conservation materials.



Figure 9. Object 39992, two pieces of folded gold sheet. The one on the right seems to have original edges, as if from a narrow band; the piece on the left appears to bear impressed decoration. They have not yet been studied and recorded in detail.

There is a short-term disadvantage: the coffin surfaces are initially exposed in only small patches before the cyclododecane and gauze are applied, at which time the surfaces become invisible. One only sees the decoration through small and temporary portholes. The sides were decorated in the way that the other coffins were, with vertical columns of hieroglyphs separating striding figures. The hieroglyphs are very faint, so much so that it was not possible to read them in their brief moments of exposure, and they do not show up well on photographs. But one of the windows brought a surprise. The head of one of the striding figures was particularly clear, drawn in thin red paint lines with yellow fill. The head was not human, but unmistakably canine (Figure 8). It could be Anubis or Duamutef, the jackal-headed member of the Four Sons of Horus. Both appear on the sides of coffins during the New Kingdom. Good examples are those of Yuya and Tuyu, the parents of Queen Tiy, from the Valley of the Kings.

So far, the decoration of the three coffins found in previous seasons (the first found in 2008) conforms to the Amarna rule (as accepted in modern interpretations) that funerary depictions avoided Osiris and associated deities, including Anubis and the Four Sons of Horus. It has never been clear, however, whether this was because Akhenaten ordered it or because it was a logical outcome of people’s acceptance of Akhenaten’s ideas. Thus, in finding an exception to the rule, we cannot tell if it represents a violation of a royal order, or the retention by one family of older ideas which many of their contemporaries had left behind, the latter implying the not unreasonable existence of a measure of personal choice in such matters.

It should be noted that the style of painting, the fine, assured red lines painted over a cream or yellow blocking of the shape, is the same as that on the coffin fragments found in 2008. Both of these coffins, incidentally, also included a single large eye towards the head end of the coffin side. There is no reason, on this basis, to think that this latest coffin was an old one brought to Amarna, having been made before Akhenaten’s time. The other figures seemed, whilst momentarily visible before disappearing under their chemical protection, to be human-headed, which is an option for this period. But we will have to wait until at least later this year before getting a second and better look.

Readers might wonder what is going to happen to these coffins. They are important records of what people thought and did at Amarna. Wouldn't it be nice to see them publicly displayed, once they are conserved? For a while it was planned to use the Visitor Centre at Amarna as an actual museum, with original objects displayed. This had to be dropped, initially because the SCA did not want it, but underlying that was the fact that the budget was not nearly large enough. Professional museum display is not cheap. Perhaps things will change. In the meantime, enough material for a set of displays that illustrate the archaeology of Amarna lies securely stored in the site magazines.

Other finds were very few. They include a second wooden coffin, from the Wadi Mouth Site, rectangular and seemingly in better condition than the others. It had to be left in the ground until next season, but it appears to be decorated. Two pieces of folded gold sheet were found mixed in with the disturbed bone of Individual 232, but probably found elsewhere and dropped into this grave by the robbers (Figure 9). They are another sign that not everyone in the cemetery was poor. A copper-alloy ring found on the fourth finger (the 'ring finger') of the left hand of Individual 229 bore a bezel inscribed with a probable image of Re-Horakhty.

A second copper-alloy ring, simply made and without a bezel, was on the second toe of the right foot of Individual 230 (Figure 10). The right femur of the skeleton was markedly bowed, raising the possibility that the ring was a magical or medical device connected with this deformity rather than a piece of jewelry as such.



Figure 10. Copper-alloy ring (object 3993) on the second toe of the right foot of Individual 230.

The tally of small finds from the cemetery has been modest from the outset of the work. This is not only a result of ancient robbery since undisturbed graves often also contain no grave goods. Even so, the rarity of finds this year has been particularly marked, in that no worked stone grave markers (stelae or pyramidions) were found at all. We have, from the beginning, noted that the extent of the cemetery along the sides of the wadi is revealed by a fairly close scatter of rough stones, often grey in colour, which are the remains of piles or cairns of stones that marked the positions of individual burials (marked in green on Figure 5). On the floor of the wadi they scarcely appear, and few were found in the trench on the wadi floor. The likely explanation is that, after the cemetery had been abandoned (and after the phase of grave robbing), a torrential flood has swept down the wadi and carried away the top surface including the stones. In January of this year three days of heavy rain fell at Amarna, and short-lived streams formed in some of the wadis, including the large one that leads to the royal tombs. The South Tombs Cemetery wadi, however, absorbed the rainfall entirely, and no pools formed. It must have been a deluge of extraordinary magnitude to have created a flowing torrent with sufficient force to sweep the wadi floor clear of stones.

We know, from initial surveys, that human bones are scattered across the desert plain for some considerable distance in front of the wadi mouth. The contour map (Figure 4) has picked up a slight swelling of the desert surface here, that probably marks the presence of a slight outwash fan or delta formed from debris washed out from the wadi and now covered by wind-blown sand. Somewhere in this formation there is likely to lie, shallowly buried, the stones, worked as well as unworked, together with small artefacts, washed from their original locations. This is another direction in which to pursue future investigations.

So, all in all, a successful outcome after a difficult start. We already have our permit to work at Amarna in 2012, but for a while I want to work in the Cairo office, working on publications, most urgently the final report on the North Palace. The fieldwork is due to begin again at the end of March and to take us into early May. As I explained at the beginning, we will be setting up a schedule of cleaning and repair at the Great Aten Temple. Although excavated in 1932 by the EES Pendlebury expedition, it would be surprising if there is not more to learn about a building that, on the basis of what has been published before, takes a bit of explaining.

As always, the expedition owes a great debt to the Amarna Research Foundation for its continued support.



Figure 11. Conservators (Julie Dawson, left, and Lucy Skinner, Right) stabilizing coffin sides

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