

PROPOSED EXCAVATIONS
AT
Tell el-Amarna

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EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY.

The proposed Excavations at
Tell el-Amarna.



1. Head of Akhenaten, of the refined type. From the German excavations. Berlin Museum. Cowley, *The Hittites*, Fig. 8 (from *M.D.O.G.*, No. 50). By permission of the British Academy.



2. Queen Nefertiti offering: the exaggerated type. Ashmolean Museum. From Prof. Petrie's excavations.

The proposed Excavations at Tell el-Amarna.

THE necessary breathing-space after the end of the war having elapsed, the Egypt Exploration Fund, under its new name, is now ready, with the help of its subscribers, to proceed with its work of excavating the still buried treasures of Ancient Egypt.

To signalize the resumption of our work the Committee of the Society has taken up an entirely new task, and one which has hitherto been carried on by our enemies in the late war. The shifting of the concession for the excavation of the site of Tell el-Amarna from the German Orient Society to our Anglo-American organization enables this important work to proceed without delay and assures to British and American Museums antiquities of an important and most interesting class that have hitherto gone to Berlin. The transference is an entirely appropriate one.

It should be quite understood that the Society has no intention of abandoning the work of excavating the Osireion at Abydos, discovered by Prof. Naville; the Abydos site is reserved for us and we propose to continue its excavation in due course.

We have now taken up the excavation of what is, from the point of view of art and archæology as well as of history, one of the most important and most interesting sites in Egypt. This is Tell el-Amarna, the place where, about 1370 B.C., the poetic dreamer-king Akhenaten or Akhnaton built his Utopia-city, or rather his Laputa, Akhetaten, "The Horizon of the Disk." Here he and his religious philosophers and his artists could live apart from the rest of mankind uncontaminated by the superstitions of their forefathers and unaffected by the fortunes of the empire, and give themselves up wholly to a life in an earthly paradise. At all periods of the world's history many men have, wearying of the incessant disputes of the vulgar herd, wished that they might live their life in such a walled-off garden. The fate of such communities has usually been tragic. And that of Akhenaten's city and of his religion was collapse within twenty or thirty years, and the eternal return to normal ways of existence.

The king's obsession was truth, the plain facts of things. His religion was a faith of plain fact as it appeared to him, and the adoration of the glory of the unknown one god that shone through the disk of the sun, causing all life upon the earth. In his art he wished the plain fact of his own personal peculiarities and those of his sister-queen and daughters, with their extraordinarily long jaws and artificially (?) deformed skulls, to be recorded, but whether these peculiarities were regarded as beautiful and were, so to speak, "fashionable," we do not know: in any case everybody else was made to have something of the same decadent, over-refined facial type and figure, something also of its grotesquerie.

The illustrations of this brochure will show both the delicate and the grotesque styles of the art of el-Amarna. The figure in relief (3), now at Berlin, of the king leaning on his staff with his legs crossed, while his queen offers him a lily to smell, is remarkably graceful, and reminds one of a Greek vase-painting. The two views of the beautiful little head of a princess (5) and that of the head of the king himself (1) are equally good examples of the refined style in the round. But there are also representations of this king and queen and their courtiers that are grotesque and repellent in their ugliness; the faces from being delicate and spiritual become decadent and animal (2). Here was some queer fashion, or some kink in the royal brain or in those of his followers that made ugliness appear beautiful and preferred exaggerated caricature to real truth.

Artists and students of art should be interested more than usually by this the earliest heretical "art-movement" in the history of the world, this oldest "Secession," and its moving spirit the artistic, delicate young king, with his aspirations after an æsthetic interpretation of truth. And to them the Society confidently appeals for help in its new work.

The Society also desires to throw further light on the intensely interesting question of the religion of Akhenaten. Appreciations of his faith will be found in Prof. Breasted's *History of Egypt*, Mr. Weigall's *Life and Times of Akhnaton*, and Dr. Hall's *Ancient History of the Near East*. This, the first monotheistic movement in the history of mankind, marks a decisive advance in the development of human religious thought, and logically prepared the way for the Jewish monotheism that appeared not so very long afterwards. And it may be by no means a mere coincidence that in Palestine, at Jerusalem or possibly at Bethshemesh, the monotheistic king set up a shrine of his one god, the Lord of the Disk, whose rays, terminating in hands, conferred life upon the king, his land, and all the earth (4). This religious development was the product of the priests of the Sun at Heliopolis and first put into actual practice by Akhenaten. Now Heliopolis is the ancient On, where Moses learnt all "the wisdom of the Egyptians."

We would know more of this "wisdom of the Egyptians," and try to trace the connexion, if there is one, between it and the monotheistic



3. Akhenaten and his queen Nefertiti.

Berlin Museum.

HALL, *Ancient History of the Near East*, pl. xix.

By permission of Methuen & Co.



4. Akhenaten seated on a throne. Above are the sun-rays with hands giving life.

British Museum.

HALL, *Ancient History of the Near East*, pl. xix.

by permission of Methuen & Co.



5. Head of a statuette of a Princess, one of the daughters of Akhenaten.
From the German excavations, Berlin Museum.



6. Wall Painting: two of Akhenaten's daughters in the harim.
From Prof. Petrie's excavations, Ashmolean Museum.

Jewish worship on which our own Christianity is based. And for this we appeal to the religious, both Christian and Israelite, and to those interested in religious matters and in the history of religion generally, to help us in the quest for fresh evidence, which the soil of el-Amarna should furnish.

To the historical as well as the religious student should appeal the fact that it was in the reign of this king, in all probability (the fact is not by any means certain), that the Israelites were entering Canaan. The tribes of the *Habiru* who, we know from the famous Tell el-Amarna letters, were invading Palestine at this time, are credibly identified with the Hebrews. And so in the history of the commotion caused in Canaan by their arrival we perhaps may see the story of the conquest of the Promised Land told from another point of view. Nothing could be of greater interest than a renewed discovery of "Tell el-Amarna Tablets," which should tell us more of this fascinating subject, and perhaps resolve our doubts for ever. These tablets, as most of us know, were discovered in the ruins of an ancient house of Akhenaten's Utopia-city in the years 1887 and 1891, and are now divided between the Museums of London, Berlin, Cairo and Oxford, with a few specimens elsewhere. They are baked clay tablets, in the Babylonian style, inscribed in cuneiform characters (9) with a series of royal and other letters and despatches interchanged by the kings of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and the Hittites, and by their ministers, reports from governors and princes of Palestine, etc. (published *in extenso* by the Norwegian scholar Knudtzon), all dealing with the confused politics and wars of the time, the invasion of the *Habiru*, and the situation caused by the artist-king's resolute pacificism which, by allowing Egyptian authority in Palestine to go by the board, caused more chaos and more disaster probably than resolute warlike interference might have done. But this was a feature in his character; he was perhaps the first pacificist in the history of the world.

Now it would indeed be fortunate if the spades of our excavators should reveal another *cache* of tablets. It is not impossible, and we ask for monetary assistance in order to help us to make such another find for historical knowledge.

And there is another external relation of the el-Amarna epoch in which excavations at Tell el-Amarna should interest students not only of Egyptian and Near Eastern civilisation, religion, history and art, but also those of early Greece, namely, the connection with Minoan Crete and the "Mycenaean" mainland of Greece. We know that in Akhenaten's time the great epoch of Knossian culture, revealed to us by Sir Arthur Evans, had reached its end, and the centre of the civilization of the Greek Bronze Age had been transferred from Crete to the mainland of Greece, where the heroic princes of "golden Mycenae" held sway. At el-Amarna have been discovered fragments of imported pottery of Mycenaean style (10), and it is probable, from what we know from other sites, that there was a Greek or other foreign settlement there, probably of art workers and

decorators, who must have exercised considerable influence over Akhenaten's artists. The mutual relation of the realistic Egyptian sculpture and wall-painting of Akhenaten's day with the free and untrammelled art of Minoan and Mycenaean Greece is a matter of the greatest interest, and since it is possible that important objects of Mycenaean art lie buried at el-Amarna, we go there in the hope that our excavations will throw more light, not only on ancient Egypt, but also on the art and civilization of heroic Greece, in the days when the Perseids, probably, ruled at Mycenae, the tragedy of the Atridae had not yet begun to be played and the warriors of the Trojan war were as yet unborn.

It is then on many counts that we appeal for help to all who are interested in religion, in art, and in history, to enable us to carry on the work begun by the Germans at Tell el-Amarna. Like them we wish to work on the ruins of the town. The Society has already done good work at Amarna in its publication of the copies of the sculptured scenes and inscriptions on the boundary-stelae (12) and in the rock-tombs (11-14), made by the practised hand of Mr. N. de G. Davies (*The Rock-Tombs of El-Amarna*, Vols. I-VI, London, 1903-1908; Egypt Exploration Fund, Archaeological Survey). The tombs of the magnates of Akhenaten's court yielded material for six volumes of this publication of ours, which is among the most interesting and important of its kind that we have issued. In Mr. de Garis Davies' drawings we see over and over again represented the houses and gardens of Akhetaten, in which the king's grandees lived; we see the king and queen and their daughters (they had no son) driving in their chariot along the broad roads of the new capital; we see them on the balcony of their palace bowing to the people and dispensing favours to those whom the king delighted to honour; we see the royal bodyguard marching and countermarching, and the royal workmen at their labours, and on a small coloured stela (7) we have a charming little picture of the royal scribe Ani being driven to court by his charioteer Zai.

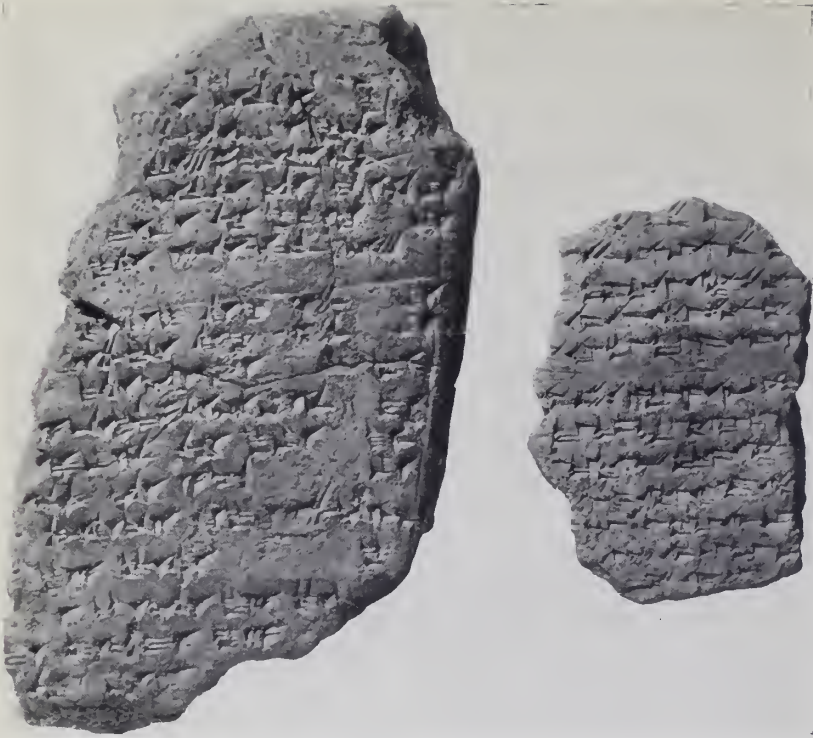
Professor Petrie was the first to excavate the actual buildings of the king's palace and town in 1891. He found more cuneiform tablets (now at Oxford), and the wonderful painted pavement of the royal palace, (since destroyed), the famous wall-painting of the princesses (6), now at Oxford, and a large number of most interesting fragments of the art of the time (2, 8), which first revealed to us what might be expected from continued exploration, and laid the foundation for further work. This did not materialize until the excavators of the German Orient-Gesellschaft went there in 1907. It was not, however, until 1911 that work was carried on systematically, and from that time to the outbreak of war it continued with regular periodical publication in the useful pages of the *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, with photographs and plans. The House of the High Priest of the Sun-disk is one of the most interesting of those uncovered, with its halls, its garden, kiosks, and lake. A large number of these noble houses of the period have been brought to light, and this is a side of our work that



7. The royal scribe Ani being driven to court by his charioteer Zai : a painted memorial stela from Tell el-Amarna. E. E. F. Arch : Survey. N. de G. Davies, *El-Amarna*, v. pl. xvi.



8. The Sleeping Watchman : an Amarna relief.
From Prof. Petrie's excavations. Ashmolean Museum.



9. Cuneiform Tablets from el-Amarna: a letter from a North-Syrian chief to the King of Egypt (Knudtzon 43) and from the Court of Egypt to the Syrian prince Itakama (Knudtzon 190).

From Prof. Petrie's excavations.

Ashmolean Museum.



10. Mycenaean Pottery-fragments from el-Amarna.

From Prof. Petrie's excavations.

British Museum.

should appeal to architects who are interested in the history of their art and profession. Nowhere else, except at Pompeii, is there such an opportunity for studying the dwelling-houses of the ancients. El-Amarna, under the hands of the Germans, has developed into an Egyptian Pompeii. And like Pompeii it has yielded many of the artistic works, both decorative and moveable, with which the houses were ornamented. The museums of Berlin and Cairo have been greatly enriched by these relics of the art of el-Amarna, a few of which are illustrated here (1, 3, 5). We hope to find many more examples with which to repay our subscribers' help by gifts to the museums of Britain and America and to the museums of those foreign countries whose citizens send subscriptions. And it is a matter of interest that at el-Amarna as at Pompeii, we find these things in the houses in which they were actually used, not in the tombs where they, or imitations of them, undertaker's "properties," were laid as furniture for the dead. We have too, hitherto, been compelled in Egypt to work so much in the tombs, in the houses of the dead, that it is a relief as well as an increase of knowledge to turn to the dwellings of the living, and seek for knowledge in them rather than in the graves.

And among the most interesting "living" finds of this kind at el-Amarna was that of the "House of the Sculptor," with its numerous examples of the art of its ancient owner, Thutmes by name, and more especially its specimens of actual casts of the human form, showing that the Egyptian artist often used this aid in his work. The small head of a princess here illustrated (5) was one of the treasures recovered from the "House of the Sculptor."

Here former work ends. We intend in the coming month of January to take up the work where the Germans left off. Our chief excavator, Prof. T. Eric Peet, of Liverpool University, who is well-known as an excavator and archaeologist, will be in charge of our expedition, and we hope that with him may be associated Mr. A. G. K. Hayter, F.S.A., and, at any rate for part of the time, Mr. F. G. Newton, a capable architect who has planned the ruins of Palaikastro in Crete for the British School at Athens, of Bethshemesh for the Palestine Exploration Fund, and of the early Sardinian villages and *nuraghi*, and so has the previous archæological experience that is absolutely necessary to an architect if his results in this field are to be useful. Other assistants may also, we hope, be assigned to Prof. Peet as the work increases in size and scope, but this depends on the response to the appeal which the Society makes to all who are interested in this unique site and its possibilities.

A special form is attached to this brochure, and donations, large or small, for the furthering of this work should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Egypt Exploration Society, 13 Tavistock Square, London W.C.1., or to the Hon. Treasurer of the American Branch, 503 Tremont Temple, Boston 9, Mass, U.S.A.

Although we are at present appealing specially for funds for the excavations at el-Amarna it must not be thought that this is to be our only field of activity in the coming winter. Dr. A. M. Blackman, who has already edited three volumes on the Rock Tombs of Meir, is returning to Egypt to continue his survey work at Meir, in order that he may complete the series which he has in hand. The earlier volumes are already in the hands of our subscribers who can therefore judge for themselves the value of this work.

In addition to our work abroad lectures are being arranged for the benefit of members at home, and the work of publication is being carried on as rapidly as present conditions will allow.

Those wishing to become members of the Society should communicate with the Secretary, either at 13 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1., or 503 Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass., who will be pleased to send full particulars on application. The Entrance Fee is One Guinea (\$5),; the Annual Subscription is Two Guineas (\$10) and includes the quarterly Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, (published at 12/6 per part, in America \$3), or one of the Graeco-Roman Memoirs; a discount of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % off other publications of the Society; and a vote at the General Meetings.



11. The Forehall of a Tomb at el-Amarna. N. de G. Davies, *El-Amarna*, v. pl. xxiv.



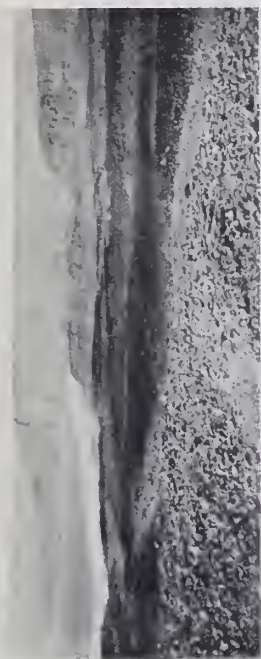
12. One of the Boundary-stelae that Akhenaten set up on the confines of the territory of Akhetaten. N. de G. Davies, *El-Amarna*, v. pl. xli.



14. The Tomb-hill of el-Amarna.



16. The Alabaster Quarry : el-Amarna.



13. El-Amarna, from the hills above the tombs.



15. The "Giants' Bowls" ; the desert near Tell el-Amarna.

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