

A Note on House Q45.45 at Amarna¹

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Addendum

17/12/2006

On a message directed to the EEF on December 11, 2006, Lynn Douglas reported that an enquiry to Anna Stevens (Amarna Project Research Assistant, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge) revealed that the reading of the hieratic label found in House Q45.45, as reported in the online database of small finds from Amarna, was indeed incorrect. That label in fact should read "Year 9. Wine of the house of the Divine Father Ay" instead of the previous and erroneous "Wine of the house of the Queen's father Ay". This misreading had in fact been the original cause for the interest in House Q45.45 and partly the justification for this short note. It must be said that even if the new and correct reading reduces the historical significance of Q45.45 and renders useless some of the final and original comments of this note, nonetheless all the archaeological background related to this pottery label remains correct and unchanged. Therefore it is felt that this note, complemented by this essential addendum, should be left as it was written initially.

A final remark should be added. Even if the new reading of the hieratic label is much less of historical bombast than the erroneous older one, it must be recorded that no other similar jar label has ever been found. To my knowledge, no personal estate of Ay has ever been registered in inscribed material before.

Building Q45.45 in the residential Main City district of Amarna was excavated by the EES in 1923; the team of excavators for the 1923-24 campaign comprised F. G. Newton (director October-November 1923, after that being enrolled at the BM expedition at Ur), F. Ll. Griffith (director January-February 1924), T. Whittemore, S. R. K. Glanville, W. B. Emery, Mrs. N. Griffith and Miss R. Moss. Preliminary reports on the 1923-24 campaigns were published, as usual, in the JEA.² Responsible for the excavation of Q45.45 was Emery. Unfortunately no published details exist about the excavation of the entire Q45 square, only some archival material at the EES being available.³ A tentative map of the buildings in Q45 was published in 1993⁴ based on EES Archive Plan F.

Q45.45 appears to be a relatively big building, most probably a private house, located to the South-West of the big house of Panehesy and to the North of the s.c. "Weihnachtshouse", on the Western side of the East Road South. The dimensions of Q45.45 are 14 x 16 m at maximum⁵, for a total of about 224 square meters. Q45.45 then appears to belong to the tail of the distribution curve of houses, meaning it was larger than the average which has been estimated to be about 100 square meters.⁶

¹ This note was prompted by a message by Gerard Passera to EEF on 21/11/2006.

² F. G. Newton, *Excavations at el-Amarnah, 1923-24*, JEA 10 (1924), 289-298. F. Ll. Griffith, *Excavations at el-Amarnah, 1923-24*, JEA 10 (1924), 299-305.

³ For the history of such material see B. J. Kemp, S. Garfi, *A Survey of the Ancient City of el-Amarna*, London 1993, pg. 30-33.

⁴ B. J. Kemp, S. Garfi, *A Survey of the Ancient City of el-Amarna*, London 1993, pg. 96, Sheet #6.

⁵ 16 x 11 m at minimum.

⁶ B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilization*, London 1989. P. T. Crocker, *Status Symbols in the Architecture of el-Amarna*, JEA 71 (1985), 52-65. C. Tietze, *Amarna. Analyse der Wohnhäuser und soziale Struktur der Stadtbewohner*, ZAS 112 (1985), 48-84, ZAS 113 (1986), 55-78. For the Lotka-Volterra model and the Pareto statistical

A list of the 20 registered items found in Q45.45 may be obtained searching the Ruffle/Moignard/Simpson database of small finds from Amarna, maintained by Anna Stevens (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge).⁷

Here is a summary of such a list:

1. green faience floral pendant (24/819);
2. a clay mould for a ring bearing the Aten cartouche (24/821, probably now in New Zealand);
3. a lead ear-ring (24/822);
4. the base fragment of a travertine jar (24/823);
5. a blue faience ring with the name of Akhenaten (24/877);
6. a blue faience ring with the name of Tutankhamun (24/878);
7. the corner of the cavetto cornice of a limestone stela, with the names of the Aten (24/879, two fragments);
8. a black basalt cosmetic palette (24/880, probably now in Australia);
9. a blue faience cowroid amulet with the Ankh sign (24/881, probably now in Bristol);
10. 2 bronze wires (24/882, probably now in Australia);
11. a bronze kohol stick (24/883);
12. a non-royal round-topped limestone stela, unfinished, showing two uraei or human figures (?), 24 x 17 cm (24/884, probably now in the British Museum);
13. bronze tweezers (24/899, probably now in Bolton);
14. a bronze cosmetic tool (24/900, probably now in Cincinnati);
15. a quartz scarab mounted on silver frame with Ankh sign (24/901, probably now in the British Museum);
16. a pottery disc (24/902, probably now in Bolton);
17. a green quartzite wedjat amulet (24/903, now probably in Australia);
18. a pottery jar label with hieratic text "wine of the House of the Queen's father Ay" (25/98, EES negative #021, discovered in 1925?);
19. a green faience floral pendant (24/793, perhaps in New Zealand, provenance from Q45.45 not sure);
20. a bronze fish hook (24/820, perhaps in the Ashmolean Museum, provenance from Q45.45 not sure).

It appears that the most relevant finds are the two rings bearing the names of Akhenaten (#5.) and Tutankhamun⁸ (#6.) respectively, and the jar label (#18.) which reports the hieratic text "wine of the House of the Queen's father Ay". This last object is very important because it records the otherwise unknown title of Queen's father held by Ay. The title itself is not listed among those recorded by Taylor.⁹ If the text is to be taken literally then it is a proof that Ay might have been the father of Nefertiti, as has been claimed long ago by some scholars.¹⁰ It might also be argued that Ay's daughter Mutnodjimet became Horemheb's queen and that the text in turn could refer to Mutnodjimet instead of Nefertiti. This is perhaps less probable because apparently Horemheb married Mutnodjimet later in his life, maybe after the death of his first wife Amenia,¹¹ when he was to become king. What is learnt from the text upon label #18. is:

- Ay had an estate in his role of Queen's Father;
- this estate produced wine;

analysis see also A. Y. Abul-Magd, Wealth distribution in an ancient Egyptian society, *Physical Review E* 66 (2002), Issue 5.

⁷ http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/Projects/Amarna/2004_res/Object_index/sfdatabase.htm

⁸ It is not clear if it bears Tutankhaten or Tutankhamun.

⁹ J. A. Taylor, *An Index of male non-royal Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the 18th Dynasty*, London 2001.

¹⁰ For an introduction to this see C. Aldred, *Akhenaten King of Egypt*, London 1988, chapter 19.

¹¹ See EEF archives for February 1998.

- a label of a jar containing this wine was found in a commoner's house in Amarna;
- up to now only one example of such a label has been found, implying that this was a rather rare type.

Another relevant thing to be taken in mind while analyzing the text upon label #18. is the title held by Tiye in relation to Nefertiti. In EA Tomb 25 (Ay's tomb) it is written "The favourite of the Good God, the nurse who nourished the Goddess (= the queen), the king's ornament, Tiye, justified".¹² It is also relevant to note that in the same scene which reports this title of Tiye, also Mutnodjemet appears, described as "the sister of the King's Chief Wife", accompanied by her two dwarves Hemetnisweterneheh and Mutefpra. Mutnodjemet, in her quality of Queen's sister, is shown in the following other EA tombs:

- EA 7, Parennefer, West wall;
- EA 6, Panehesy, thickness of outer wall, West side;
- EA 14, May, entrance, lintel North end;
- EA 8, Tutu.¹³

In view of all this it would be extremely useful if the EES publishes the archival photograph of the jar label from Q45.45. And indeed most important would be if the EES could publish in a consistent way all the extant archival material related to the still unpublished portions of excavations at Amarna so that complete archaeological contexts can be available to the scholars.

¹² W. J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, Atlanta 1995, text 58-B.3.

¹³ Only depictions of Mutnodjemet without texts survive here.