



Assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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PORTFOLIO, PART 1: ABSTRACT

For completion by marker:

Comments:

Marker's signature:

Date:

Provisional mark:

NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.

Project: To consider some of the practicalities of urban living along with whether and how they were addressed, and for whom - using Amarna as a case study.

Urbanisation comes with many concomitants that are not usually of concern in more dispersed rural or nomadic societies. Childe (1950) listed a number of changes that come to a society with urbanisation. These changes included the growth of very large settlements, the emergence of craft specialists, the collection of surplus for the king or temple which was then unequally distributed, and stratification of society became very pronounced. Along with those changes there also arose practical problems resulting from large numbers of people living long-term in close proximity to each other; the sort of problems which can have a significant knock-on effect on both quality of life and life expectancy. They include sanitation, rubbish disposal, disposal of corpses, animals (domestic and otherwise), safety, privacy, noise, protection of people and of property, and access to food and water, as well as access to important services such as medical care or support (or its local equivalent). These same kinds of practical problems arise in any urban society, but the way they are addressed is not always the same between cultures, or even within a culture. Much can be learned about a society from discovering which of these issues was deemed to be important enough to be addressed, along with how they were dealt with, and for whom. This helps us to understand how people lived, and to discover what were, for them, normal, everyday attitudes and behaviours.

Amarna provides a unique opportunity to gain a direct insight into these aspects of society at a particular time in Egyptian history. Being a newly-constructed city which only lasted one generation, Amarna provides a clear snapshot in time and place, as there was no subsequent building to cover it up, and also no previous history of building to provide either constraint or precedent with respect to how Amarna's homes and villages were designed and built. The people who constructed Amarna and set up its various systems brought the ideas, beliefs and habits of New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty Egypt to a new location and created a city from the ground up, while also transplanting the habits and attitudes of their society. As a result, their city is now providing us with a unique view of their lives, and many of their attitudes and priorities, from palace to workmen's village.

Mostly using written resources coming from the archaeologists who have worked the site, I will analyse and compare the evidence from different areas in Amarna which show that some of these urban-living-related issues were deemed important enough to address, along with how this was done. The archaeology indicates that the solutions put in place were usually not the same at every level of society. Instead, those solutions, along with their physical context, form part of the picture of how Egyptian society was systematically structured, thereby helping to provide evidence of the class structure of that society and how it worked at each level.

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