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THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE FOR DOMESTIC RELIGION AT AMARNA AND PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON ITS INTERPRETATION*

By ANNA STEVENS

The archaeological record at Amarna offers scope to enhance current understanding of domestic religion at this site. The material evidence suggests that conduct undertaken included offering rituals and the use of magic and amuletic images, and involved the royal family and Aten, some 'traditional' deities and private ancestors. Domestic religion appears to have interacted with daily, secular conduct and to have been subject to influence by a variety of factors. The picture of domestic religion at Amarna presented here has potential relevance for domestic religion in general in New Kingdom Egypt.

THE creation of theoretical subsets of religious conduct can be an important stage in the analysis and comprehension of ancient religions, whether in broad groupings, such as state or funerary religion, or more specific subsets, of which domestic and fertility religion can be considered examples. Domestic religion, defined here as religious conduct undertaken strictly within the confines of the house,¹ is a particularly useful subset for scholars using archaeological data. In this case, the basis upon which conduct is grouped—a common household environment—has a relatively direct archaeological correlate in the physical remains of the house and its contents. The potential of archaeological data to enhance understanding of domestic religion in ancient Egypt is illustrated particularly well at Deir el-Medina. The structure of domestic religion remains poorly understood, however, and the potential of the archaeological record to provide information on this realm has not been exhausted.

Amarna provides an appropriate context in which to explore domestic religion and is a site where the archaeological evidence is particularly significant, given the overall lack of direct textual and epigraphic sources. Archaeological evidence has certainly not been excluded from previous studies of 'non-state' religion during the Amarna Period

* This article derives from research being undertaken towards a PhD dissertation on the material evidence for non-state religion at Amarna in the Centre for Archaeology and Ancient History, Monash University, Melbourne. I would like to thank Colin Hope and Olaf Kaper for their very helpful comments on versions of this paper and Jo Aitken for proofreading a draft. I am also grateful for the advice I received from the *JEA* reviewers; their observations have had a significant impact on the structure and scope of this article. I wish to thank the Egypt Exploration Society, Barry Kemp and the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin, for permission to discuss a number of objects that are previously unpublished, or published in limited detail. Gratitude is also expressed to the EES, the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft and the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut for permission to reproduce the figures in the text.

¹ Conduct undertaken outside the house, including that which occurred in the garden or house compound, is excluded.

although, to date, discussion has often focused upon its significance in relation to the impact of Akhenaten's religious reforms.² There remains a need for clarification of the material evidence for domestic religion preserved at Amarna. In addition, there is scope for closer consideration of its role in contributing to understanding of the broader domestic religious system at the site, both in the period in which Akhetaten served as Egypt's capital, from the reign of Akhenaten into that of Tutankhamun, and during any subsequent occupation.³ The aim here is first to provide an overview of the evidence, of which two general categories can be identified: permanent cult emplacements and portable objects. The archaeological record offers the broadest scope to investigate two specific aspects of domestic religion, the nature of the conduct and the identities of the associated divinities.⁴ These are then examined. Whilst a reasonably high level of understanding of these areas exists, it is enhanced when the corpus of material is clarified and considered as a whole. This will ultimately have implications for understanding of the impact of Akhenaten's religious reforms and for the general understanding of domestic religion in the New Kingdom.

² Statues and stelae of the royal family and Aten have been discussed extensively. See, for example, L. Borchardt, *Porträts der Königin Nofret-ete aus den Grabungen 1912/13 in Tell el-Amarna* (Leipzig, 1923); J. Assmann, 'Palast oder Tempel? Überlegungen zur Architektur und Topographie von Amarna', *JNES* 31 (1972), 153; id., 'Die "loyalistische Lehre" Echnatons', *SAK* 8 (1980), 26; C. Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti* (London, 1973); R. Krauss, 'Die Amarnazeitliche Familienstele Berlin 14145 unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung von Massordnung und Komposition', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33 (1991), 7–36; D. Arnold, *The Royal Women of Amarna* (New York, 1996), 96–108. See also G. Pinch, 'Childbirth and Female Figurines at Deir el-Medina and el-Amarna', *Or* 52 (1983), 405–14; R. Hari, 'La religion amarnienne et la tradition polytheiste', in F. Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägypten zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* (Göttingen, 1984), II, 1043–6; S. Ikram, 'Domestic Shrines and the Cult of the Royal Family at el-Amarna', *JEA* 75 (1989), 89–101; A. H. Bomann, *The Private Chapel in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1991); B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London, 1991), 304–5; id., 'How Religious were the Ancient Egyptians?', *CAJ* 5/1 (1995), 30–2; H. Györy, 'Remarks on Amarna Amulets', in C. J. Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists* (OLA 82; Leuven, 1998), 497–507; E. Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), 111.

³ The nature and extent of occupation after the official abandonment of the city by the court early in the reign of Tutankhamun remains unclear. Evidence for later activity includes the sculpture fragments naming Horemheb and the hieratic inscription naming Horemheb and Seti I excavated in the Main City: F. G. Newton, 'Excavations at el-Amarna, 1923–24', *JEA* 10 (1924), 293; H. Frankfort, 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Tell el-Amarna', *JEA* 13 (1927), 210; B. J. Kemp, 'Tell el-Amarna', *LÄ* VI, 310. The Workmen's Village might have been occupied until the end of the reign of Tutankhamun (Kemp, *LÄ* VI, 310), whilst excavations at complex Q48.4 have revealed a building phase that could represent quite substantial activity some time into the reign of this king (C. Kirby, 'Report on the 1987 Excavations: The Excavation of Q48.4', in B. J. Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports*, V (EES Occasional Publications 6; London 1989), 15–55; B. J. Kemp, 'Appendix: Workshops and Production at el-Amarna', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* V, 63). The early excavators encountered additions to buildings that they attributed to 'squatter activity', for example, H. Frankfort and J. D. S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten*, II (MEES 40; London, 1933), 3 (hereafter *CoA* II); J. D. S. Pendlebury, 'Excavations at Tell el-Amarna: Preliminary Report for the Season 1933–4', *JEA* 20 (1934), 134–5. A number of later burials have been encountered, the earliest of which might date shortly after the official abandonment of the site, for example, L. Borchardt, 'Ausgrabungen in Tell el-Amarna 1911. Vorläufiger Bericht', *MDOG* 46 (1911), 29–30; F. Ll. Griffith, 'Excavations at el-Amarna', 1923–24', *JEA* 10, 302; J. H. Taylor and A. Boyce, 'The Late New Kingdom Burial From Beside the Main Chapel', in B. J. Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports*, III (EES Occasional Publications 4; London, 1986), 118–46.

⁴ Aspects such as the identities of the participants and the motivations behind the religious conduct, the place of domestic religion in the broader non-state religious system, and the impact of Akhenaten's religious reforms will be given closer consideration within my dissertation.

Permanent cult emplacements

Altars

Altars within houses comprise a significant category of evidence, although it is difficult to determine the original number present at the site, given the vagaries of preservation and problems identifying altars in the published plans. In 1923, Borchardt produced a preliminary study of the altars based on the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, in which he identified sixteen examples.⁵ When the structures excavated by the EES are considered, the number of altars can be increased to approximately 40. Most are located in the Main City and North Suburb, but they also occur in the Central City and possibly the Workmen's Village.⁶ Altars can be identified primarily in houses with a floor area of over 100 square metres.

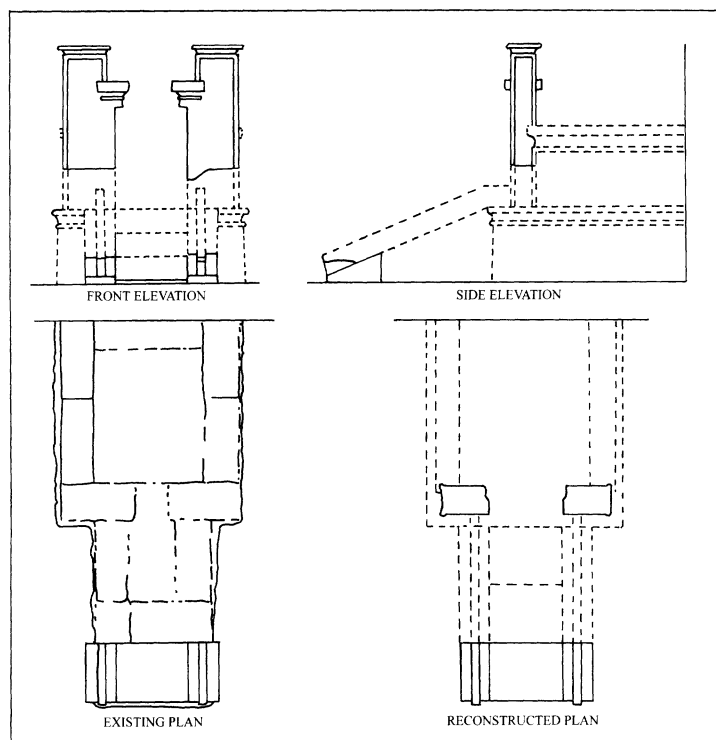


FIG. 1. Domestic altar from house T41.1 (after, *CoA* III, 27, fig. 6; courtesy of the EES).

⁵ *Porträts*, 20–4. The altars have also been considered briefly by Assmann, *JNES* 31, 153, n. 64; P. T. Crocker, 'Status Symbols in the Architecture of el-'Amarna', *JEA* 71 (1985), 56; and Ikram, *JEA* 75, 96–7, among others.

⁶ Houses J49.1, M50.1, M51.1, N48.14, N49.10, N49.21, N50.17, N51.2, O48.8, O48.11, O49.9, O49.16, O49.17, P47.5, P47.7, P47.11a, P47.22, P47.23, P48.2, P49.13, P49.15, Q44.1, Q46.1, Q46.3, Q46.9f, Q47.23d, R46.2, R46.3, T33.1, T35.6, T35.17, T36.5, T41.1, U35.3, U35.25, U35.26, U36.22, U37.1 and Long Wall Street 10: Borchardt, *Porträts*, 21–4, Abb. 15–16; Newton, *JEA* 10, 292, pl. xxv; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, I (MEES 38; London, 1923), 24, 84, pl. i (hereafter *CoA* I); *CoA* II, 12, 34–5, 42, 50, 68, pls. iii–iv, vi–x, xx.6, xxi.1; J. D. S. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten*, III (MEES 44; London, 1951), 26–7, fig. 6, pls. xi, xxx.1, xxxi (hereafter *CoA* III); L. Borchardt and H. Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*

The most elaborate altar is that from T41.1 in the Central City, the 'official residence' of the First Servitor of the Aten, Panehesy (fig. 1).⁷ This takes the form of a miniature chapel, fronted by a doorway with broken lintel and uraeus cornice, and was originally approached by a small flight of stairs or a ramp. Behind the doorway, projecting walls with a cavetto cornice extended to join the wall of the room in which the altar was located. The front face of the altar is decorated with scenes of Akhenaten, Nefertiti and three princesses worshipping the Aten. The shrine appears to have been approximately 1.5 m high originally. This is the only altar of this form in a private house identified to date.

Most of the remaining altars are made of mud-brick. At least eleven take the form of a rectangular platform approached by a staircase, or in a few cases possibly a ramp, flanked by balustrades that sometimes end in short returns (fig. 2).⁸ A parapet, of varying height, is often preserved around the top edge of the platform. These altars appear to have measured up to 1 m in width and to have been preserved to heights of between approximately 30 to 90 cm. Apart from patches of gypsum plaster on a few examples, they bore no preserved decoration.

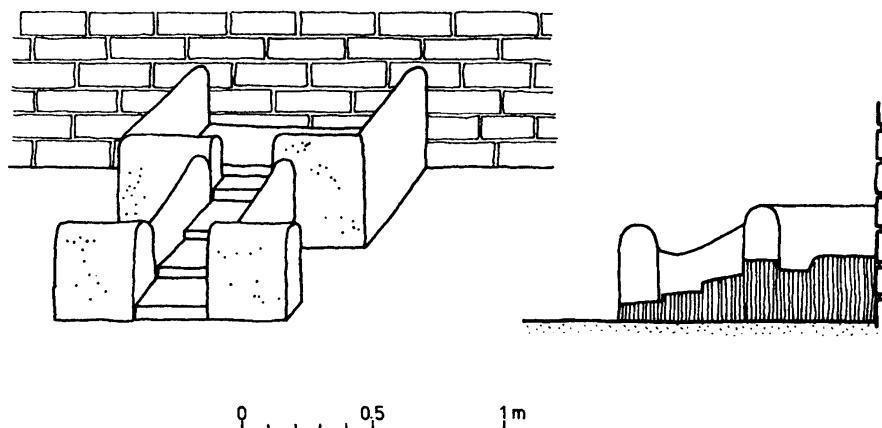


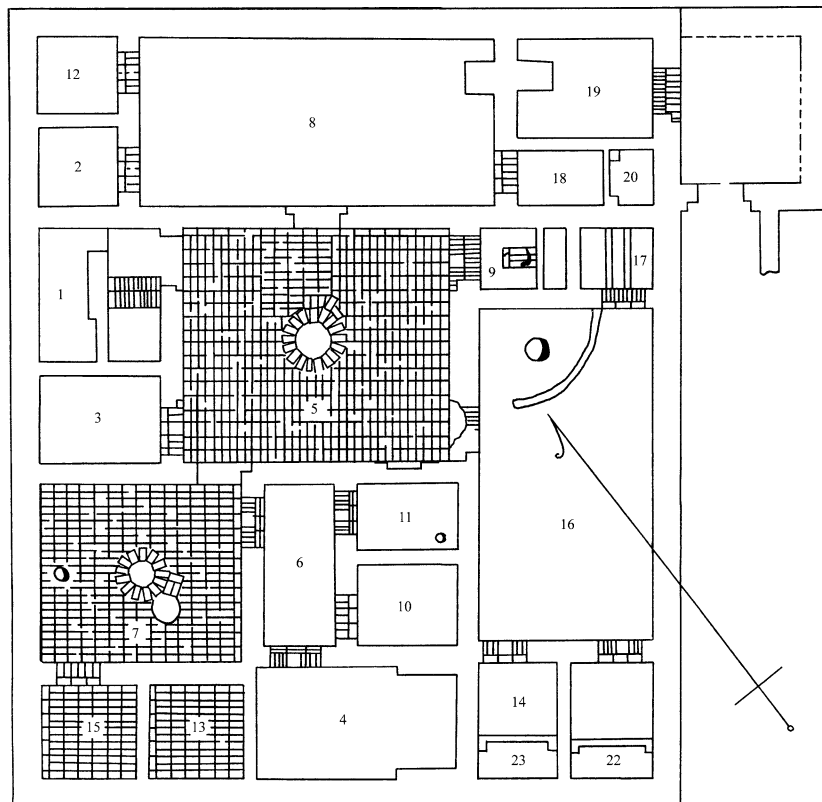
FIG. 2. Domestic altar with approaching staircase in house P47.22 (after Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 132, Abb. 18; courtesy of the DOG and the DAI).

in *Tell el-Amarna* (WVDOG 91; Berlin, 1980), 24, 30, 50, 103, 107, 113, 132, 134, 165, 187, 208, 219, 228, 247, 255, 275, 278, 280–1, 306, 328, Abb. 18, 30, 38, Tafeln 13A, 18B, Hauspläne 2, 4, 12–13, 28–30, 32–3, 49, 55, 60, 63, 68, 78, 82, 90–1, 93, 101, 109; B. J. Kemp, 'Wall Paintings from the Workmen's Village at el-'Amarna', *JEA* 65 (1979), 49, 52. See B. J. Kemp and S. Garfi, *A Survey of the Ancient City of el-'Amarna* (EES Occasional Publications 9: London, 1993) for the layout of the site.

⁷ *CoA* III, 26–7, fig. 6, pls. xi, xxx.1, xxxi. The altar is now reconstructed in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 65041).

⁸ Houses M51.1, N49.21, O49.16, O49.17, P47.5, P47.22, P47.23, P48.2, P49.15, Q46.1 and T36.5: *CoA* I, 24, pl. i; Borchardt, *Porträts*, 21–3, Abb. 15–16; *CoA* II, 50, pls. ix, xx.6; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 24, 103, 132, 134, 219, 255, 278, 281, Abb. 18, 30, 38, Tafeln 13A, 18B, Hauspläne 2, 29, 32–3, 63, 82–3, 91, 93.

Few features are present or can be identified on top of most altars, both those with and without steps. In at least one case, the back of the altar platform is raised (fig. 2). It is possible that the raised area formed a pedestal for an object such as a stela or statue, or that a stela or structural element was inserted in the depression along the front. The mud-brick altars are unlikely to have supported stone elements on the scale of the Panehesy shrine, which was set on plaster foundations.



¹⁰ That in house Q47.23d: Borchardt, *Porträts*, 21; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 165, Hausplan 49.

Three possible mud-brick altars take a different form. They are rectangular pedestals spanning the entire width of the small room in which they are located. In M50.1, this emplacement is situated in a room opening off the central room (fig. 3). In J49.1, it is in a room in the eastern corner of the house, opening off the 'north loggia', whilst in O49.9, it lies in a room in the western corner of the house.¹¹ In all these cases, the 'altar' appears to comprise the central feature of the room; that in M50.1 occupies most of the room. This structure has a parapet along its front edge and is approached by a staircase flanked by balustrades. Central projections adjoining the other two examples might be the remains of similar staircases. The altar in M50.1 measures 1.50 m in length and was preserved to a height of 0.30 m, whilst that in O49.9 was preserved to a height of between three and four courses of brickwork. There are no published details of the decoration of these structures; presumably none was preserved.

A few miscellaneous emplacements may also have served as altars, although their identification as such is particularly tentative. For example, Kemp has noted that a 'square bin' located beneath a painting of a group of women and children in Long Wall Street 10 at the Workmen's Village could have been the foundation of a small offering table.¹² At Q44.1, raised mud-brick blocks flanking a mastaba in the central room have been suggested as pedestals for statues.¹³ At O48.8, a white-washed, rectangular, mud-brick structure with parapet was built directly against the inner recess of a vertical niche in the central room. Similarly, at U37.1 a rectangular, mud-brick emplacement with a possible stone step was erected on a stone slab beside a vertical niche in the central room. The niche itself did not continue below the level of the mud-brick structure, which bore traces of gypsum plaster.¹⁴ The excavators again suggested this served as an altar.

Borchardt stated that the altars were generally located on the eastern wall of the central room 'sodaß der von den Altar Tretende sich der aufgehenden Sonne zuwendet', but observed that they occasionally appeared in other rooms.¹⁵ In the final report of the DOG excavations, it was noted that 'Raum und Himmelsrichtung sind fast in jedem Hause, in dem ein Altar gefunden wurde, verschieden'.¹⁶ When the altars excavated by the EES are also considered, both assessments emerge as partially accurate. In up to 22 houses, the altar is located in the central room, whilst in those houses that do not conform to the 'standard' Amarna house type, it is situated in one of the larger, central rooms.¹⁷ Altars also appear in other rooms, with up to four in the 'square room',¹⁸ one perhaps in the 'north loggia',¹⁹ one possible example in the 'bedroom',²⁰ two possibly

¹¹ Borchardt, *Porträts*, 22; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 228, 247, 280, Hauspläne 68, 78, 93.

¹² Kemp, *JEA* 65, 49.

¹³ Newton, *JEA* 10, 292, pl. xxv.

¹⁴ See Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 202, Hausplan 60 on O48.8, and *CoA* II, 12, pl. iii on U37.1

¹⁵ Borchardt, *Porträts*, 22.

¹⁶ Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 255–6.

¹⁷ Houses M51.1, N49.21, O48.11, O49.16, P47.5, P47.7, P47.23, P48.2, R46.2, T33.1, T36.5 and T41.1; and perhaps N48.14, O48.8, P47.11a, Q44.1, Q47.23d, T35.17, U35.3, U35.26, U36.22 and U37.1: *CoA* I, 24, pl. i; Newton, *JEA* 10, 292, pl. xxv; *CoA* II, 12, 34, 50, 68, pls. iii–iv, vi, viii–x; *CoA* III, 26–7, pl. xi; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 50, 103, 107, 113, 134, 165, 187, 202, 208, 219, 255, 281, Hauspläne 13, 28–30, 33, 49, 55, 60, 63, 82, 93.

¹⁸ Houses P49.15 and Q46.1, and possibly N51.2 and Q46.3: Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 24, 30, 278, 328, Hauspläne 2, 4, 91, 109.

¹⁹ House N50.17: Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 306, Hausplan 101.

²⁰ House P49.13: Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 275, Hausplan 90.

in the 'second entrance hall',²¹ up to seven in small or larger rectangular rooms off the central room, sometimes in the corner of the house,²² and two in rooms in the corner of the house, opening off a loggia.²³ The possible altar in the front room of Long Wall Street 10 at the Workmen's Village has been noted. The decision to erect altars in places other than the central room appears to have been rarely influenced by limitations of space in the central room. It is not always possible to determine the orientation of the altars from the published reports, but at least fourteen are built against an east wall, ten against a north wall, eight against a south wall and up to two against a west wall. Thus, whilst the altars tend to conform to certain locations and orientations, there is significant variation. There is also greater variation in their form than is reflected in Borchardt's preliminary study.

The only material recorded in close association with domestic altars were fragments of lamp stands excavated near that in house Q46.1 and pottery vessels sunk in the ground near those in P49.15 and P47.22, although objects such as stelae were occasionally found in the same house complex.²⁴

Domestic altars of varying forms have been identified at a number of other settlements; the Deir el-Medina *lits clos* are particularly well known. There remains some debate whether the *lits clos* functioned as beds, possibly with particular ritual significance during sexual intercourse or childbirth, formed a focus of active religious rituals as altars, or were used for a combination of such purposes.²⁵ In this respect, the form and location of the larger stepped structures in J49.1, M50.1 and O49.9 may be significant. It has been proposed that the Amarna altars and the Deir el-Medina *lits clos* differed in terms of scale, the latter being larger, and in the sense that the *lits clos* were enclosed to a greater degree, possessing more substantial perimeter walls.²⁶ This comparison is based on the smaller, stepped podiums at Amarna (fig. 2). The emplacements in J49.1, M50.1 and O49.9 provide closer parallels as they are of similar size to those at Deir el-Medina, whilst their location in a separate room possibly enhanced the sense that they were enclosed or isolated. If the interpretation of the latter as altars is correct, these parallels provide further evidence that the *lits clos* also functioned as such.

Vertical niches

Vertical recesses built into internal walls were relatively common features of Amarna houses. These could be either one or two bricks deep with single- or double-rebated

²¹ Houses P47.5 and R46.3: Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 50, 103, Hauspläne 12, 29.

²² Houses M50.1, O49.17, P47.22 and possibly N49.10, Q.46.9f, T35.6 and U35.25: CoA I, pl. i; CoA II, 35, 42, pls. vi–vii, xxxi.1; Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 37, 132, 255, 280, Hauspläne 7, 32, 83, 93.

²³ Houses J49.1 and O49.9: Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 228, 247, Hauspläne 68, 78.

²⁴ On the vessels, see Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 24, 26, 132, 278, Hauspläne 32, 91. The stelae comprise primarily an example depicting Taweret from N49.21 (CoA I, 25, pl. xii.2) and a stela with no preserved decoration from Q46.3 (Borchardt, *Porträts*, 22–3; Krauss, *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33, 35).

²⁵ B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1934–1935). Troisième Partie: le village, les décharges publiques, la station de repos du col de la Vallée des Rois* (FIFAO 16; Cairo, 1939), 61–4; Kemp, *JEA* 65, 52; J. F. Romano, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians* (Pittsburgh, 1990), 26–7; F. D. Friedman, 'Aspects of Domestic Life and Religion', in L. H. Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers: The Villagers of Deir el Medina* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 97–111; L. Meskell, 'An Archaeology of Social Relations in an Egyptian Village', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5/3 (1998), 223; id., *Archaeologies of Social Life* (Oxford, 1999), 99–102.

²⁶ Friedman, in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 110. The *lits clos* measure, on average, 1.7 × 0.8 m and 0.75 m in height (Bruyère, *Rapport (1934–1935)*, 56).

edges, although the backs of the niches appear to have been flat, with no further internal recesses. The niches measured up to approximately 1.5 m in width and seem to have been around the same height as the doorways originally.²⁷ Although it is again sometimes difficult to identify examples from the published plans, they can be recognised in approximately 136 houses, many of which contain more than one niche. Approximately 125 niches can be identified within the central room,²⁸ around 37 in the front hall or north loggia,²⁹ up to 15 in the square room,³⁰ 5 in the west loggia,³¹ 1 in the bedroom³² and at least 3 in other rooms.³³

The discovery of these niches prompted considerable debate over whether they functioned simply as architectural counterweights or possessed religious significance.³⁴ Support for the first interpretation can be found in the fact that the vast majority are located opposite a doorway or so as to balance a doorway on the same wall, whilst a limited number are placed opposite or so as to balance another niche.³⁵ In only a small number of cases niches do not appear to balance other architectural features.³⁶ A few niches are also decorated with modelled mud plaster to imitate the panels of doors.³⁷

Possible evidence that the niches possessed religious significance is to be found primarily in the painted reliefs found around and within them. Niches in houses K50.1, M50.16 and P47.19 bore decoration that included prayers to the Aten and possible scenes of worship of the royal family.³⁸ These scenes were located in the upper portion of the niches, above painted red and yellow panels, and further examples have probably

²⁷ Petrie, *Tell el-Amarna*, 21; *CoA* I, 42.

²⁸ For example, house V37.6: *CoA* II, 9, pl. iii.

²⁹ For example, house N49.18: *CoA* I, 10, pls. i, ix.3.

³⁰ Houses J49.1, O49.20, P47.19, P47.33, Q46.2, Q48.1, R46.3, V36.1, V36.5 and possibly Q46.3 (*CoA* I, 36, pl. ii; *CoA* II, 11, pls. iii, v; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 28, 30, 50, 127, 224, 228, 258, Hauspläne 3–4, 12, 23, 66, 68, 84).

³¹ Houses K50.1, M47.3, O48.14 and P47.19: *CoA* I, 7, 43, pl. iii; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 58, 126, 212, Hauspläne 17, 23, 61.

³² House R46.3: Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 51, Hausplan 12.

³³ Houses R46.3, U36.39 and V37.4: *CoA* II, pls. iii–iv; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 50, Hausplan 12. All are in rooms off the central room apart from in R46.3, where there is a possible niche in a narrow room in the south-west corner of the house.

³⁴ For example, Borchardt, *MDOG* 46, 22; ‘Excavations at Tell el-Amarna, Egypt, in 1913–1914’, *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution* (1915), 451; C. L. Woolley, ‘Excavations at Tell el-Amarna’, *JEA* 8 (1922), 65; *CoA* I, 42–3; F. W. F. von Bissing, ‘Zur Geschichte der “roten Nischen” in el-Amarna’, *AfO* 3 (1926); S. R. K. Glanville, ‘The Decoration of the Houses’, in H. Frankfort (ed.), *The Mural Painting of el-Amarna* (London, 1929), 39–40, 50; *CoA* II, 9.

³⁵ Borchardt, *MDOG* 46, 22; id., ‘Ausgrabungen in Tell el-Amarna 1911/12. Vorläufiger Bericht’, *MDOG* 50 (1912), 18–19; id., ‘Ausgrabungen in Tell el-Amarna 1912/13. Vorläufiger Bericht’, *MDOG* 52 (1913), 15; id., ‘Ausgrabungen in Tell el-Amarna 1913/14. Vorläufiger Bericht’, *MDOG* 55 (1914), 20–1.

³⁶ Consider the possible niches in J49.2, O49.12 and U36.1: *CoA* II, pl. iii; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 229, 250, Hauspläne 69, 80.

³⁷ H. Frankfort, ‘Preliminary Report on the Excavations at el-Amarna, 1928–9’, *JEA* 15 (1929), 147, n. 1, pl. xxvi.2; *CoA* II, 32, pl. xviii.6.

³⁸ Woolley, *JEA* 8, 65; *CoA* I, 6, 19, 43; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 124, 127; S. Seidlmayer, ‘Die Inschriften’, in Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 342–5. Niches preserving fragments of the name and titles of the house owner were also found in N49.18 and Q46.1 (T. E. Peet, ‘Excavations at Tell el-Amarna: A Preliminary Report’, *JEA* 7 (1921), 171–2; Woolley, *JEA* 8, 65; *CoA* I, 10, pl. ix.3; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 24).

been destroyed.³⁹ The significance of such decoration is difficult to determine, however, as some doorways also bore prayers to the Aten, scenes showing the worship of the royal family and Aten, and the names and titles of the house owners.⁴⁰ Decoration was preserved on at least 45 additional niches. The majority were either painted red with a central yellow panel or were entirely red, occasionally with a white border.⁴¹ There are no published details of the decoration of the remaining examples; in many cases, it was probably not preserved.

A small number of objects and emplacements were also excavated in association with niches. A pottery vase was found buried in front of a niche in K50.1, where fragments of a hymn to the Aten were located. The excavators suggested this was a receptacle for offerings.⁴² The association of possible altars with vertical niches at houses O48.8 and U37.1 has been noted, but there are no published details of the decoration of the niches in either house. A stepped structure interpreted as an altar was also built against a niche with red and yellow painted panels in the central room of N49.21. The excavators identified the structure as an addition to the room not built during the same construction phase as the niche.⁴³

‘[B]emalte Falkenköpfe aus Nilschlamm’ were also excavated in the vicinity of a double niche in the central room of O49.1.⁴⁴ Borchardt implied that these formed part of a frieze and suggested that the niche was decorated in a similar manner to the double niches in the chapels of the temple of Seti I at Abydos, which were topped with carved uraeus friezes.⁴⁵ Although he later favoured the idea that the niches were purely architectural balances, on the basis of their location, he cited this parallel initially as evidence that some possessed religious significance. In the list of objects from O49.1 in the final report of the DOG excavations is a mud ‘Fledermauskopf (?)’, gelb mit blauer and schwarzer Bemalung’ (excavation number 11/303).⁴⁶ A painted mud model with this excavation number from Amarna is in the collection of the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin. In the opinion of the author, it resembles the bust of a falcon more closely than a bat and is probably one of the falcon heads found at the niche.⁴⁷ The

³⁹ The vertical preservation of houses is rarely recorded in the early excavation reports, but those in the city proper generally do not seem to have been preserved to a substantial height when excavated (Kemp, *JEA* 65, 51).

⁴⁰ *CoA* I, 9, 22, 26, 33, 37, 42–3, pls. x.4, xxxiii.6; II, 109, pl. xxiii.4; III, 27, 189, pl. lx.4; Borchardt, *MDOG* 46, 19; Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 57, 62, 112, 137, 241, 262, Taf. 26; Seidlmayer, in Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 342; id., ‘Zur einigen Architekturinschriften aus Tell el-Amarna’, *MDAIK* 39 (1983), 183–206.

⁴¹ *CoA* I, 18, 22, 24, 28–9, 34, 43; II, 9, 11, 15, 21, 32–3, 38–9, 27, 49, 51, 56, 68, 77; III, 117; Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 28, 60, 187, 191, 211.

⁴² *CoA* I, 43.

⁴³ *CoA* I, 24, pl. i. In contrast to most stepped altars, the steps of this structure run along the wall rather than project out from it. The niche is incorporated into the side of the structure rather than the back, which gives the impression that it was not intended as a focal point of the installation.

⁴⁴ Borchardt, *MDOG* 46, 22.

⁴⁵ *MDOG* 46, 22. The parallel is again suggested in Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 239, where the falcon heads are stated directly to have been part of a frieze. See also the discussion in *CoA* I, 42–3. On the niches at the temple of Seti I, see A. M. Calverley and M. F. Broome, *The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos, II: The Chapels of Amen-Re, Re-Harakhti, Ptah, and King Sethos* (London, 1935), pls. 9, 25.

⁴⁶ Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 241.

⁴⁷ The model was examined in the museum magazine by the author in May 2000, at which time it was not accessioned. I would like to thank Prof. Wildung and the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung for

base of the bust is roughened, but it is not clear whether this resulted from attachment to another object or surface. If joined to a wall as part of a frieze, it would project directly outwards and be oriented parallel to the floor. This seems unusual; the bust might be expected to face outwards. Thus, there is some question about Borchardt's reconstruction of the niche and the validity of parallels drawn between it and the niches in the temple of Seti I, both in terms of appearance and religious significance. The possibility remains, though, that the figures were used in religious conduct that focused upon the niche.⁴⁸

There is also evidence of domestic niches with cult significance at Deir el-Medina, where vertical niches with rebated edges often occurred, particularly in the second room, and occasionally balanced doorways. Some appear to have been decorated with cult scenes, such as the worship of Ahmose Nefertari and Amenhotep I, whilst others bore traces of red and yellow paint, the latter in a central band.⁴⁹ A number of scholars have noted the similarity between domestic niches and false doors in tombs used to facilitate the movement of the *k3*; ⁵⁰ Meskell has raised the possibility that the red- and yellow-painted niches at Deir el-Medina served as points of contact with deceased ancestors.⁵¹ The function of the Amarna niches cannot be confirmed, but the possibility that some possessed religious significance must remain, particularly given the presence of possible cult emplacements at a few examples and the apparent cult significance of those at Deir el-Medina.

Rectangular or round-topped niches

The excavators occasionally noted that smaller niches were also cut into the walls of the houses. These were recorded in particular during excavations at the Workmen's Village.⁵² Unfortunately, the published reports provide few details of these emplacements. They were generally interpreted as receptacles for lamps, and the blackening inside some niches supports this identification.⁵³ It is possible, however, that others served as emplacements for cult items such as stelae and figurines. The niches

permission to discuss it here. There are no other artefacts in the list of objects from this house in the excavation report that match the description of the falcon heads, although these are mentioned in the description of the complex itself; see n. 45.

⁴⁸ Potential parallels include the unprovenanced model mud vultures and ram-heads in the British Museum (for example, EA 61670, 61915) suggested to have been connected with the New Kingdom cults of Mut and Amun at Thebes: S. Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (London, 1992), 8, fig. 2; L. Giddy, *The Survey of Memphis*, II: *Kom Rabi'a. The New Kingdom and Post-New Kingdom Objects* (EES Excavation Memoir 64; London, 1999), 19. Similar mud vulture and ram-heads were found near the temple of Ramesses II at Abydos: D. O'Connor, 'Abydos: A Preliminary Report on the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition, 1967', *Expedition* 10/1 (1967), 17. The Amarna figure is simpler in form than these.

⁴⁹ Bruyère, *Rapport (1934-1935)*, 67-9, pl. xii; D. Valbelle, 'Les ouvriers de la tombe': *Deir el-Médineh à l'époque ramesside* (BdE 96; Cairo, 1985), 261; Meskell, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5/3, 231-2.

⁵⁰ W. M. F. Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1898), 34-5; Bruyère, *Rapport (1934-1935)*, 67; von Bissing, *AfO* 3, 175-6.

⁵¹ *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5/3, 231-2.

⁵² Woolley, *JEA* 8, 57; *CoA* I, 63, 81, 87, 89-90. The fact that fewer examples were noted from the city proper may be due again to the poorer vertical preservation of houses beyond the village; see n. 39.

⁵³ For example, Woolley, *JEA* 8, 57; *CoA* I, 63, 81.

themselves provide little direct evidence to support such a function, although some were round-topped, perhaps in imitation of a round-topped stela.⁵⁴ In some cases, the dimensions of the niche might also indicate cult use. At West Street 13, a round-topped niche measuring 45 cm in height, 30 cm in width and 10 cm in depth was cut into the north wall of a chamber beneath the staircase.⁵⁵ This niche was perhaps too shallow to hold a lamp, but it could have accommodated an object such as a stela. There is also some indirect evidence for the use of niches as cult emplacements: the presence of gypsum plaster on the back of the royal family stela in Berlin (ÄMP 14145) could indicate that it was erected in a niche.⁵⁶

The use of small niches as emplacements for cult objects is also well attested at shrines, where they have been found with votive stelae *in situ* or in close association. At Amarna itself, stelae were apparently found in round-topped niches in the tomb of Any.⁵⁷ The houses at Deir el-Medina had small rectangular and round-topped niches, some of which seem to have been cult emplacements, and domestic shrines at Askut incorporated small niches; one was found with a stela *in situ*.⁵⁸ Niches in some Roman Period houses might also have been used as shrines, as terracotta figurines of this period depicting deities in shrines that possibly represent niches with moulded decoration are known from Karanis and other sites.⁵⁹

Cultic cupboards

There has been some confusion as to whether the Amarna domestic altars incorporated cupboards. Peet and Woolley noted that a fertility figurine, a stela depicting Taweret and two model beds were found 'in the small cupboard beneath the stairs' in house N49.21.⁶⁰ N49.21 contained a probable domestic altar with an approaching staircase in the central room, but also incorporated a full-scale staircase leading to the roof of the house. Some scholars have interpreted the excavators' statement to mean that the objects were found in a cupboard beneath the stairs of the altar,⁶¹ and it has been implied that these spaces were used for the storage of cult equipment.⁶² The excavators made no

⁵⁴ CoA I, 86, 89–90.

⁵⁵ CoA I, 86.

⁵⁶ Krauss, *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33, 7–9, Abb. 2; Arnold, *Royal Women*, 97–8.

⁵⁷ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, V. *Smaller Tombs and Boundary Stelae* (EES Archaeological Survey 17; London, 1908), 9. See L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Šaḥu-Re*, I (Leipzig, 1910), 126, Abb. 171, for examples from a temple context.

⁵⁸ Bruyère, *Rapport (1934–1935)*, 76–7, 193–6, 332, figs. 86, 204, pls. xv–xx; F. D. Friedman, 'On the Meaning of Some Anthropoid Busts from Deir el-Medina', *JEA* 71 (1985), 83; id., in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 113, 115; A. G. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt: Laundry Lists and Love Songs* (Oxford, 1999), 103; S. T. Smith, *Askut in Nubia: The Economics and Ideology of Egyptian Imperialism in the Second Millennium B.C.* (London, 1995), 66, 139–47, fig. 6.3, pls. 7, 15–17.

⁵⁹ D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 1998), 134–5.

⁶⁰ CoA I, 24–5. Two fertility figurines are listed from this context in the field notebook (Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 346, n. 64).

⁶¹ Pinch, *Or* 52, 414; id., *Votive Offerings to Hathor* (Oxford, 1993), 216; G. Robins, 'Dress, Undress and the Representation of Fertility and Potency in New Kingdom Egyptian Art', in N. Boymel Kampen (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art* (Cambridge, 1996), 29.

⁶² See Meskell's discussion of niches at Deir el-Medina in *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5/3, 223. She identifies these as cultic cupboards, based partially on the incorporation of a similar cupboard in the

reference to a cupboard within the altar itself, however, and none of the other altars at the site seems to have incorporated such a feature. It is more likely that the artefacts were actually found in the alcove beneath the staircase leading to the roof.⁶³

The concentration of cult material in the staircase alcove in N49.21 raises the question of whether these spaces should be considered cult emplacements. These alcoves appear to have been common at the site.⁶⁴ In most cases, access to them was gained through an entrance from the central room, in which emplacements such as altars were sometimes located, but there is no evidence of a close physical link between these installations. There are few details available of the architecture of specific alcoves, and the possible significance of the round-topped niche in that in West Street 13 has been noted. The material found in the alcoves may give some indication of their function. The published excavation records provide details regarding the contents of the alcoves in the Workmen's Village. These contained a range of material, including plant and animal matter, vessels, jar sealings, textiles, furniture and miscellaneous items such as fragments of molten glass. Whilst some of this can be associated potentially with religious conduct, the only artefacts that can be assigned with relative confidence to this sphere are a rudimentary female figurine and a headrest decorated with protective deities from Long Wall Street 12 and West Street 13 respectively.⁶⁵

Thus, there is little evidence that the alcoves at the Workmen's Village were used exclusively for the storage of ritual goods, although this may have occurred in some cases. If they were used for the general storage of belongings upon abandonment of the site, however, we will be witnessing the material remnants of abandonment processes, rather than of everyday activity. The lack of space in the village houses is also significant. It seems unlikely that a significant proportion of the available space would be devoted to the storage of cult equipment, at least exclusively. Hence, there remains a degree of uncertainty regarding the extent to which the situation at the Workmen's Village is typical of the site as a whole.

Lustration slabs

Over 40 stone 'lustration slabs' in houses in the North Suburb and Main City, predominantly in the central room, can be identified from the excavation records.⁶⁶ They can again be difficult to identify in the published plans and additional examples may have been removed.

Amarna altar. On the latter, she cites A. A. Loose, 'Woonhuizen in Amarna en het domein van de vrouwen', *Phoenix* 38/2 (1992), 23; Robins, in Boymel Kampen (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, 29.

⁶³ Cf. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 305.

⁶⁴ For example, Newton, *JEA* 10, 292; B. J. Kemp, 'Report on the 1985 Excavations: Work Inside the Walled Village', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* III, 7, 16–19.

⁶⁵ *CoA* I, 86, pls. x.2, xxiii.1. On the contents of the alcoves in general, see Woolley, *JEA* 8, 55, 59; *CoA* I, 71, 78–9, 83, 85–6, pls. x.2, xix.4, xx.2.

⁶⁶ *CoA* I, 7, 21, 29, pls. i, iii, v.4; II, 8, 11, 16, 34, 42, 69, 71–2, 76, pls. iii–iv, vi, xi; III, pl. xi; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 17, Hauspläne 1–2, 9, 12, 16, 23, 26, 44, 51, 54, 63, 65, 69, 73, 83, 94, 96, 103, 107; P. T. Crocker, *Social and Spatial Groupings among the Domestic Quarters at el-Amarna, Egypt* (Cambridge, unpublished MPhil dissertation, 1984), 11; C. Tietze, 'Amarna: Analyse der Wohnhäuser und soziale Struktur der Stadtbewohner', *ZÄS* 112 (1985), 69. Examples in or near rooms thought to have served as bathrooms are not included.

They generally take the form of a low, rectangular platform with a slightly raised edge. A short, central projection often, but not always, occurs at the front. A vessel or rectangular stone trough is sometimes sunk in the ground adjacent to the edge of the platform; other examples have depressions cut out of the surface of the platform itself. The vessels and depressions appear designed to collect liquid run-off. Few dimensions of the platforms are recorded, but they seem to have differed slightly in size.⁶⁷ Lustration slabs can occasionally be identified in the same house or room as altars. There is again generally little indication of a close association between these emplacements, although a 'whitewashed "altar" on a lustration place' was recorded from T35.6 in the North Suburb.⁶⁸

There is little evidence to link the slabs directly with cult; they have generally been interpreted as emplacements for water jars, possibly associated with washing.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the importance of purification and libation rituals in state and funerary cult raises the possibility that the slabs were associated with similar rituals in the domestic sphere.⁷⁰ There is no indication that they were necessarily linked exclusively or intimately with cult, but it is conceivable that they functioned in preparatory rites prior to a main ritual, for example.

Domestic reliefs and inscriptions

Domestic reliefs and inscriptions can be considered, on the one hand, as documentary evidence of religious belief or practice, and on the other to have possessed religious significance in their own right as, for instance, foci of cult or amuletic images. Along with the reliefs and inscriptions relating to the cult of the Aten or royal family found around doorways and associated with vertical niches as noted above, a small number of painted scenes relating to the royal family were excavated in the Workmen's Village. Painted images of royal figures, in both cases possibly Tutankhamun, were found in West Street 2/3 and Long Wall Street 7.⁷¹ Peet and Woolley suggested that fragments of painted plaster from Main Street 9 formed part of a scene of Aten worship, although the fragments may have derived from a private birth arbour scene.⁷² Scenes relating to cults or religious activity in domestic contexts other than that involving the Aten and royal family are preserved only in a few painted representations in the Workmen's

⁶⁷ One example measured approximately 1.5 m in width and 80 cm in depth (Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, Taf. 19A).

⁶⁸ CoA II, 42. The exact nature of this emplacement is uncertain.

⁶⁹ CoA I, 6; T. Kendall, 'The House', in E. Brovarski, S. K. Doll and R. E. Freed (eds), *Egypt's Golden Age: The Art of Living in the New Kingdom* (Boston, 1982), 30; Crocker, *Social and Spatial Groupings*, 11; Tietze, *ZÄS* 112, 69–70; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 295–6.

⁷⁰ See A. M. Blackman, 'Purification (Egyptian)', in J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, X (Edinburgh, 1918), 476–82; H. W. Fairman, 'Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 37 (1954), 173–86; J. F. Borghouts, 'Libation', *LÄ* III, 1014–15.

⁷¹ CoA I, 83; B. J. Kemp, 'The Amarna Workmen's Village in Retrospect', *JEA* 73 (1987), 44; F. Weatherhead, 'Report on the 1986 Excavations: Fragments of a Painted Royal Figure with Artist's Grid from West Street 2/3', in B. J. Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports*, IV (EES Occasional Publications 5; London, 1987), 17–29.

⁷² CoA I, 59–60, 80, pl. ix.2; Kemp, *JEA* 65, 51. A scene in the front hall of Long Wall Street 7 possibly also depicted a birth arbour (CoA I, 83; Kemp, *JEA* 65, 52). For fragments of plaster with a possible offering formula from Main Street 10, see B. Gunn, 'Inscriptions of 1922', in CoA I, 146–7; Kemp, *JEA* 73, 45.

Village and these have been discussed by Kemp.⁷³ The most notable is part of a scene depicting Bes figures and probably Taweret in the front room of Main Street 3. In the front room of Long Wall Street 10, was the lower part of a scene depicting a number of human figures, all probably women and girls, perhaps participating in a celebration or ritual associated with childbirth. There was a structure that possibly served as a simple altar beneath.

Portable objects

A link with the religious sphere can sometimes be suggested for portable objects excavated at Amarna, primarily on the basis of iconography, textual or epigraphic parallels, or the presence of similar material in distinct cult contexts elsewhere. This material might not always have functioned as a central component of religious ritual, or served solely in the religious realm, but this is not necessary for it to have possessed a degree of religious significance. The linking of portable objects with potential religious associations specifically to the domestic sphere is problematic. Although these objects were often excavated amongst residential areas, the fact that they were readily transportable creates uncertainty as to whether they were actually used in domestic contexts. In other cases, material was found in areas that served other functions, such as workshops. Problems regarding the dating of these objects are also significant, particularly as early excavators rarely investigated the stratigraphy of the site.⁷⁴ It can be assumed that a proportion of the material was deposited during the period in which the city served as Egypt's capital, but there is little opportunity to investigate the quantity or range of material deposited at that time.

Offering tables

At least eighteen intact and fragmentary offering tables have been recorded from domestic contexts in the Workmen's Village and the Main City.⁷⁵ The majority measure approximately 15–25 cm in length. One miniature example from West Street 17 measured 6.6 × 6 cm.⁷⁶ The offering tables can be rectangular or square in shape, and both spouted and spoutless examples occur. A possible example found in the central room of M50.13 was raised on legs and had five large, basin-shaped depressions in its upper face. This was of considerable size, measuring 73 × 59 × 36 cm.⁷⁷ Another probable offering table with short legs and five circular depressions was excavated outside house L51.1.⁷⁸

⁷³ JEA 65, 47–53.

⁷⁴ I. Shaw, 'Sifting the Spoil: Excavation Techniques from Peet to Pendlebury at el-Amarna', in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds), *Studies in Honour of H. S. Smith* (EES Occasional Publication 13; London, 1999), 284–5.

⁷⁵ CoA I, 18, 66, 68–7, 71, 73, 75, 77–8, 81, 87–9, 102, pls. vi.2, xiv.5, xxiii.3; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 20, 164, 217. Some fragmentary examples possibly derived from statues of the royal family; see F. Ll. Griffith, 'Excavations at Tell el-'Amarnah, 1923–4. A. Statuary', JEA 17 (1931), 181.

⁷⁶ CoA I, 88. Details of its dimensions and decoration, not mentioned in the excavation report, are provided on the original object registration card in the EES Amarna Archive; no. 22/132. I am grateful to the EES for permission to cite this.

⁷⁷ CoA I, 18, pl. vi.2.

⁷⁸ CoA I, 18. Consider also the limestone block with in-built bowls containing 'grease' from a room beside the bathroom in T36.11 (CoA II, 25, pls. xii, xix.3, xx.3; B. J. Kemp, 'Chapel Group 528–531', in B. J. Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports*, II (EES Occasional Publications 2; London, 1985), 50).

Many offering tables bore no trace of decoration, but at least one had images of birds and flowers.⁷⁹ The miniature offering table was decorated with six *nfr*-signs. An example found in East Street 1 at the Workmen's Village bore a head incised on the back, and a fragment excavated at Q47.22 was decorated with a prayer to Osiris around its edge.⁸⁰ Fragments of a 'table', perhaps an item of cult equipment, from M50.13 bore ink drawings of the early form of the name of the Aten, possibly an additional cartouche and 'meaningless lines'.⁸¹

Basins

Stone basins or troughs and large stone bowls were occasionally recorded from domestic contexts.⁸² There is little direct indication in the excavation reports that any served religious functions and there is a range of utilitarian, secular purposes for which they would have been suitable. Details regarding these receptacles are limited, and it is difficult to assign any function to them. A chalkstone basin found in the central room of P47.17 bore a figure of a worshipper, which suggests that this example at least functioned in cult.⁸³

Indirect evidence of a religious role for some of these receptacles can be seen in the significance afforded libation and purification rituals in temple and funerary cult. Some basins and bowls found in public areas of temples and tombs, including examples from the Amarna private chapels, are thought to have held liquids such as water for lustration rituals, or functioned as receptacles for libations.⁸⁴ A number of fragments of stone basins and bowls were also found amongst houses at Deir el-Medina, occasionally bearing decoration including prayers to deities, images of worshippers and *ḥ iqr n R^c*-formulae.⁸⁵

Shrines and naoi

There is little clear evidence of portable shrines or naoi in domestic contexts in the excavation records, although as these were generally made of wood, they would have been particularly prone to destruction. A small number of wooden uraei were excavated in residential areas. These were possibly decorative elements of shrines similar to an example from the House of the King's Statue,⁸⁶ although wooden uraei could also be

⁷⁹ Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 20.

⁸⁰ CoA I, 66, 71; Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 164. The former apparently had 'nothing to do with the cult of the Aten' (CoA I, 66).

⁸¹ CoA I, 19.

⁸² For example, CoA I, 26, 30; II, 65; Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 119.

⁸³ Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 119, Hausplan 31.

⁸⁴ J. Jacquet, 'Un bassin de libation du nouvel empire dédié à Ptah. Première partie: l'architecture', *MDAIK* 16 (1958), 161-7; H. Wall-Gordon, 'A New Kingdom Libation Basin Dedicated to Ptah. Second Part: The Inscriptions', *MDAIK* 16 (1958), 168-75; L. Habachi, 'Varia from the Reign of King Akhenaten', *MDAIK* 20 (1965), 70-3; Bomann, *Private Chapel*, 21, 29, 32; Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 301-2.

⁸⁵ Bruyère, *Rapport (1934-1935)*, 210, 237-335; R. J. Demarée, *The ḥ iqr n R^c-Stelae: On Ancestor Worship in Ancient Egypt* (Egyptologische Uitgaven 3; Leiden, 1983), 146-53, 287.

⁸⁶ Uraei were recorded from O47.14, P47.17, S39.1 and T33.10: CoA II, 70; III, 22; Borchardt and Rieke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 86, 122. On the shrine at the House of the King's Statue, see CoA III, 141, pl. lxxix.7; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 283-5, fig. 95.

incorporated into objects such as statues and staves. Pieces of decorated wood and fragments of boxes are also mentioned in the excavation reports, some of which could have been parts of shrines or naoi.⁸⁷ A wooden Hathor head was found in the Workmen's Village, which the excavators suggested derived from a casket. It possibly originated from a shrine similar to an example with Hathor-headed columns from Deir el-Medina.⁸⁸

Statues, stelae, figurines, ostraca, implements, vessels and miscellaneous materials

A range of additional objects with potential significance for domestic religion has been excavated in residential areas, including jewellery, figurines, statues, stelae, ostraca, implements, vessels and other miscellaneous materials.⁸⁹ The corpus of jewellery, most of which is made of faience, includes images of divinities, animals, anthropomorphic figures, various hieroglyphic motifs and royal names; *wedjat*-eyes and Bes images occur most frequently.⁹⁰

Amongst the figurines are anthropomorphic images, particularly fertility figurines; animals, often cobras or monkeys; deities including Taweret and Bes images; and non-figurative objects, such as model balls.⁹¹ Most figurines are made of pottery or unfired clay, but faience and stone examples also occur. Images of the royal family dominate the statuary, but deities such as Thoth and possibly Ptah occasionally appear, as do private individuals.⁹² Images of the royal family and Aten also occur most frequently on stelae, where divinities such as Taweret, Thoth, Ptah, sacred animals and private individuals are also represented.⁹³ Similar images occasionally appear on ostraca.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ For fragments of wood with the names or images of the Aten and royal family, see *CoA* III, 32; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 303. See Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 27, 290, for other decorated fragments; and *CoA* I, pl. xix, fig. 4, for a 'box lid' that is possibly the door of a shrine.

⁸⁸ See *CoA* I, 72, pl. xx.1, on the Amarna fragment, and E. Leospo, 'Woodworking: Furniture and Cabinetry', in A. M. Donadoni Roveri (ed.), *Egyptian Civilization: Daily Life* (Turin, 1988), fig. 215, on the Deir el-Medina shrine. For wooden Hathor columns and sistra, see C. Tutundjian, 'A Wooden Sistrum Handle', *VA* 2 (1986), 73–8; Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 140–1.

⁸⁹ It is beyond the scope of the current article to provide a comprehensive discussion of this material. The reader is referred to the excavation reports and the examples in the following footnotes.

⁹⁰ For example, Petrie, *Tell el-Amarna*, pls. xiv–xx; *CoA* II, pls. xlix–l; III, pl. cxii; A. Boyce, 'Collar and Necklace Designs at Amarna: A Preliminary Study of Faience Pendants', in B. J. Kemp (ed.) *Amarna Reports*, VI (EES Occasional Publications 10; London, 1995), 336–71; Györy, in Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress*, 497–507.

⁹¹ For example, *CoA* I, 84, pl. xxiii.5; II, 35, pl. xxxviii.1–3; Pinch, *Or* 52, 405–14.

⁹² Over 300 fragments of statues have been recorded from beyond the Central City, most of which appear to have represented members of the royal family; see n. 2 for examples. On statues of deities and private individuals, see Borchardt, *MDOG* 50, 26; J. D. S. Pendlebury, 'Preliminary Report of the Excavations at Tell el-'Amarnah', *JEA* 19 (1933), 117–18, pls. xvii–xviii; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 48, 253; M. M. el-Damaty, 'Squatting Statues in the Cairo Museum', *MDAIK* 46 (1990), 5, pl. 5.D, E; J. L. Haynes, 'Statuette of Thoth and a Scribe', in R. E. Freed, Y. J. Markowitz and S. H. D'Auria (eds), *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamun* (Boston, 1999), 258, no. 185.

⁹³ For royal family stelae, see Borchardt, *Porträts*, 2–24, Abb. 5; id., *MDOG* 50, 26–8, Abb. 9; F. Ll. Griffith, 'Stela in Honour of Amenophis III and Taya, from Tell el-'Amarnah', *JEA* 12 (1926), 1–2; *CoA* II, 46, pl. xl.7; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 143, 160, 182, 310; Ikram, *JEA* 75, 89–101. For examples showing other deities, see *CoA* I, 25, 66, 80, 85, pls. xii.2, xxiii.4; II, 48, 66, 76, pl. xxxv.3,5,6; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 78, 248, 295. On a stela depicting a private individual, see *CoA* I, 66, 68; Demarée, *The 3h ikr n R'-Stelae*, 164, pl. xix.C7.

⁹⁴ For example, *CoA* II, 19, 83; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 22, 174, 241, 310.

Implements excavated amongst residential areas that were conceivably used in domestic cult include possible sistra and bronze tongs.⁹⁵ A link can be suggested between some vessels and cult. These sometimes bear images such as Bes figures, Hathor heads or modelled cobras.⁹⁶ Miniature pottery vessels and tall pottery stands are identifiable in a few domestic contexts. Although both vessel types conceivably fulfilled a variety of functions, a cult use for some is suggested by their excavation in defined cult contexts whilst, in religious scenes, the stands are sometimes depicted holding incense and other goods.⁹⁷ Shallow bowls with traces of resin, including those with out-turned rims, also occur in residential areas. Although essentially a utilitarian form, the use of such bowls as censers for the burning of incense is attested again in representations of offering scenes.⁹⁸ Finally, materials such as plant remains, shell, semi-precious stones and pieces of wax-like substances occur. The original function of these is generally unclear. However, as there is evidence that they could be used in religious contexts, particularly in magical rituals, often in a manner that would leave little trace in the archaeological record,⁹⁹ their presence at the site should be noted.

Interpretations of the archaeological record

In investigating domestic religion from the archaeological record in general, deposits associated with identifiable cult spaces are particularly significant. These can be identified with relative confidence as having entered the archaeological record as a direct result of religious conduct. Such deposits are rare at Amarna, however, and it is necessary to interpret the evidence in terms of its general nature and on the basis of conduct reflected in alternative sources. Thus, whilst a broad picture of the domestic religious system can be obtained, there is little opportunity to examine isolated instances of religious conduct.

⁹⁵ Newton, *JEA* 10, 289; *CoA* II, 19, 24, 58 74, 77; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 142, 201, 278; P. Lacovara, 'Tongs with Hands', in Freed et al. (eds), *Pharaohs of the Sun*, 251, no. 158.

⁹⁶ Kemp, *JEA* 67, 14, fig. 6; P. J. Rose, 'Report on the 1987 Excavations: The Evidence for Pottery Making at Q48.4', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* V, 91-2; C. A. Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', *CCE* 2 (1991), 17-92.

⁹⁷ On miniature vessels, see *CoA* II, 78-9, 82-3, 86-90; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 106, 176, 179. On offering stands, see *CoA* I, 103, 105, 108, pls. xxvii.1, xlvi; L. Hulin, 'Pottery Cult Vessels from the Workmen's Village', in B. J. Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports*, I (EES Occasional Publications 1; London, 1984), 175; P. J. Rose, 'The Pottery Distribution Analysis', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* I, 140; id., 'Pottery from the Main Chapel', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* III, 101; Bomann, *Private Chapel*, 9, 11, 15-16. A few intact and fragmentary pottery lamp stands that were possibly tall offering stands were also recorded from the DOG excavations, such as those excavated near the altar in Q46.1 (Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 26, 175, 325).

⁹⁸ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna, I: The Tomb of Meryra* (EES Archaeological Survey 13; London, 1903), 25, pl. xii; id., *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna, IV: Tombs of Penthu, Mahu, and Others* (EES Archaeological Survey 16; London, 1906), pl. xv; G. Nagel, *La céramique du Nouvel Empire à Deir el Médineh*, I (DFIFAO 10; Cairo, 1938), 176-81; Rose, in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* I, 140; id., 'The Pottery from Gate Street 8', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* IV, 135; M. Serpico and R. White, 'The Botanical Identity and Transport of Incense During the Egyptian New Kingdom', *Antiquity* 74 (2000), 889-90.

⁹⁹ For example, J. F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden, 1978), 16-19; M. J. Raven, 'Wax in Egyptian Magic and Symbolism', *OMRO* 64 (1983), 9-32; id., 'Resin in Egyptian Magic and Symbolism', *OMRO* 70 (1990), 10-18.

The archaeological evidence indicates that several types of conduct were undertaken. The occurrence of rituals involving the offering of goods is suggested first by the presence of appropriate emplacements for perishable and non-perishable offerings, particularly offering tables and probably domestic altars. The receptacles built into some of the former might indicate the specific offering of liquids.¹⁰⁰ Traces of whitewash on some altars could reflect simply the ritual purity of the structure, but may also indicate the use of liquid libations. As already noted, some stone basins possibly functioned in rituals involving liquids, perhaps libation or purification rituals; lustration slabs could have been used in similar rites. The small number of identifiable pottery stands constitute potential evidence of offering rituals involving incense. Many vessel types conceivably functioned as containers in offering rituals, such as the bowls with traces of resin. The pottery bowls with three-dimensional cobra figures might have combined a divine image with a receptacle for offerings in a single object. This is supported by the association of the cobra image with several divinities, the occurrence of free-standing cobra figurines that possibly served as cult images, and the wavy rim of the bowls, which suggests that they were intended to hold liquids. Several categories of evidence also occur that were probably used as offerings themselves, such as figurines and items of jewellery. Although individual examples used as such cannot be identified, it is noteworthy that similar objects have been excavated in votive deposits at shrines beyond Amarna,¹⁰¹ and these were conceivably suitable components of offering rituals in the domestic sphere.

The use of amulets and talismans is presumably reflected in the presence of jewellery and small figures, particularly those with motifs such as divinities, hieroglyphs, animals or body parts. A range of other objects may have been perceived to possess prophylactic properties, although individual examples that functioned as such are again unidentifiable. For example, vessels with motifs such as Bes images and Hathor heads, even if not used directly as elements in religious ritual, might have been understood to possess protective properties in a household context similar to headrests decorated with divinities. Statues, stelae, figurines and ostraca may sometimes have been perceived similarly, whilst domestic reliefs such as those of the Bes images and Taweret figure, and women and girls, were conceivably prophylactic images.¹⁰²

Several types of items occur that could have been used during magical rituals, particularly those that required the manufacture or manipulation of images. Figurines from the site are regularly broken and sometimes show signs of burning, although there is little indication that this resulted from the deliberate breakage or burning during magical rites. The use of figurines and other images as components of magical rituals is well attested in spells, however, and examples are known that record the use of images that occur at Amarna, such as cobra and anthropomorphic figurines.¹⁰³ The fact that

¹⁰⁰ Gypsum-coated receptacles that possibly contained ritual liquids or oils were also built into benches in Building 528, part of a chapel complex at the Workmen's Village: Kemp, in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports II*, 43–5, 50, figs. 4.1–5; Bomann, *Private Chapel*, 19, 61.

¹⁰¹ For example, Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 160–300.

¹⁰² See Kemp, *JEA* 65, 53, on the possible protective qualities of the latter.

¹⁰³ Consider the well-known spell against nightmares in which the use of four clay uraei is prescribed (R. K. Ritner, 'O. Gardiner 363: A Spell Against Night Terrors', *JARCE* 27 (1990), 25–41); and the spell for protection against scorpions preserved primarily in P. Turin 1993, in which Isis models a serpent from the earth (Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, 51–5, no. 84). Anthropomorphic images are also well attested as components of spells, for example, Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, 32, 39, nos. 48, 60–1.

many figurines from the site are hand-modelled, often from materials with potential magical properties such as clay, and unfired, could be explained by their actual manufacture during magical rituals. The inherent magical qualities of small amulets such as scarabs, beads and *wedjat*-eyes also rendered them appropriate components of magical rituals in general.¹⁰⁴ The use of material such as resins and plant matter in magical rituals, and the presence of such material at the site, has been noted. Religious conduct involving the use of such materials was presumably more widespread than can now be recognised.¹⁰⁵

Some domestic religious conduct at Amarna clearly focused upon cult images and spaces, sometimes probably through the direct worship of the former. This is suggested by the presence of probable cult images and of permanent and temporary cult emplacements. Amongst the corpus of material preserved, statues and stelae of high quality can be identified as the most likely examples of cult images, but figurines, simple stelae, figured ostraca and vessels such as cobra bowls could sometimes have served as such, particularly for those unable to acquire higher quality images. Altars and offering tables constitute the clearest examples of domestic cult spaces, but the limited evidence for smaller niches, pottery offering stands and wooden shrines is noteworthy. The presence of vessels and altar-like constructions that could have served as offering emplacements at some vertical niches and at the painted scene of the females in the Workmen's Village raises the possibility that these also served as cult foci.¹⁰⁶ A greater number and a wider variety of both cult images and emplacements were probably once present than is reflected in the archaeological record. Many examples are likely to have been removed or destroyed, whilst the cult significance of some is likely simply to be unrecognisable. For example, the origin of the stone offering table in the Old Kingdom appears to have been the combination of a *hṭp*-loaf and a vessel placed on a mat.¹⁰⁷ There is little reason to suppose that the use of mats or baskets for the placement of objects used in religious ritual was completely superseded by the introduction of the offering table. These may have provided an affordable and accessible means of delineating a sacred, relatively clean space within a domestic setting.¹⁰⁸

Scenes of Amarna houses preserved in a few reliefs are also of significance in this respect. In an Amarna house depicted on a block found at Hermopolis, is a free-standing, rectangular feature with a rounded object, seemingly on top. This is not dissimilar to the hieroglyphic *hṭp*, although the base is higher; it may represent a stone offering table or altar.¹⁰⁹ In an apparent representation of the house of the official Meryra in his Amarna tomb, a raised shrine-like structure with flared cornice, seemingly approached by steps or ramps with balustrades, is also depicted in the central

¹⁰⁴ For example, Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, 23, 36–7, nos. 30, 55.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Kemp, *CAJ* 5/1, 26.

¹⁰⁶ *CoA* I, 43; Kemp, *JEA* 65, 49.

¹⁰⁷ C. Kuentz, 'Bassins et tables d'offrandes', *BIFAO* 81 (1981), 244; Bomann, *Private Chapel*, 106.

¹⁰⁸ I am indebted to Barry Kemp for this suggestion. For the *hṭp* at Deir el-Medina, apparently baskets or mats, see J. J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period* (Leiden, 1975), 160–1; note the relatively low price of some examples. See also Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 321, on the use of baskets as receptacles for offerings at Hathor shrines.

¹⁰⁹ J. D. Cooney, *Amarna Reliefs from Hermopolis in American Collections* (Brooklyn, 1965), 74–5, no. 47. He identified this as a representation of the service quarters of the Great Palace, but Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 298, fig. 100, has interpreted it as a house.

room.¹¹⁰ Simple wooden stands are shown supporting vessels in representations of Amarna Period houses on *talatat* from Karnak, including some being presented as offerings to the Aten, probably in an outdoor shrine.¹¹¹ Such stands could also have been used as portable altars.

The apparent lack of cult emplacements in another possible representation of an Amarna house in the tomb of Mahu serves as a reminder that these were probably not uniform features,¹¹² and that domestic religion is unlikely to have always focused upon defined physical spaces. Indeed, whilst the offering of votive goods or the undertaking of magical rites was probably often done at defined cult spaces, other forms of religious conduct were presumably constrained to a lesser degree by physical boundaries. The wearing of amuletic items of jewellery illustrates this.

Attempts to identify the divinities associated with domestic religious conduct at the site are complicated by the fact that whilst divinities are sometimes represented or named directly on the material, this is not always the case. Interpretations of the domestic altars have generally been polarised between their association with the royal family and Aten and, less frequently, with the cults of traditional, 'minor' deities, particularly those linked with human fertility.¹¹³ There has also been a tendency to assign a single interpretation to the altars as a whole in terms of the divinities venerated. The imagery of the Panehesy altar indicates a clear association with the cult of the royal family and Aten, whilst the east-west orientation of some mud-brick altars may reflect a similar link with the solar cult, as was noted by Borchardt. It is also noteworthy that open-air, stepped podiums are features of 'Sunshades of Re', or Re-Chapels,¹¹⁴ whilst at Amarna itself, podiums with a ramp or staircase appear frequently in official cult and ceremonial contexts, as throne platforms, Windows of Appearance and altars. The latter include examples in probable 'Sunshades of Re', which may have been associated particularly with female members of the royal family at the site.¹¹⁵ This suggests a potential link between the stepped domestic altars and solar cults in general, or the official Aten cult of the Amarna Period specifically. Simple, unstepped altars also occur in official cult contexts at Amarna.¹¹⁶ The possibility that the state had considerable

¹¹⁰ Davies, *El Amarna* I, 38–9, pls. xxv, xxxiii.

¹¹¹ C. Traunecker, 'Les maisons du domaine d'Aton à Karnak', *CRIPEL* 10 (1988), 74–5, 81–5, figs. 1–3.

¹¹² See Davies, *Rock Tombs* IV, 17, pls. xxv, xxviii, although note that the scene is not preserved fully.

¹¹³ On the link with the former, see Borchardt, *Porträts*, 20–4; Aldred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, 102, 130, 168; Assmann, *JNES* 31, 153; id., *SAK* 8, 26; R. Stadelmann, 'Altar', *LÄ* I, 146; Crocker, *JEA* 71, 56 (although see Crocker, 'Uses of Space in Amarna Architecture: Domestic and Royal Parallels', *BACE* 3 (1992), 15); Krauss, *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33, 35–6; Friedman, in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 110–11. For their association with traditional cults, see Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 216; Robins, in Boymel Kampen (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, 29–30.

¹¹⁴ R. Stadelmann, 'šwt-R'w als Kultstätte des Sonnengottes im Neuen Reich', *MDAIK* 25 (1969), 159–78; P. A. Spencer, *The Egyptian Temple: A Lexicographical Study* (London, 1984), 121–5; B. J. Kemp, 'Outlying Temples at Amarna', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* VI, 454–5.

¹¹⁵ On stepped podiums, see Davies, *Rock Tombs* I, 30, 39, pls. x.A, xii, xxxii; B. J. Kemp, 'The Window of Appearance at el-Amarna, and the Basic Structure of this City', *JEA* 62 (1976), 89; id., in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* VI, 454–5; I. Shaw, 'Balustrades, Stairs and Altars in the Cult of the Aten at el-Amarna', *JEA* 80 (1994), 109–27. On 'Sunshades', see W. H. Fairman, 'The Inscriptions', in *CoA* III, 200–8; Stadelmann, *MDAIK* 25, 162–6; and Kemp, in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* VI, 454–5, 458–61.

¹¹⁶ Davies, *Rock Tombs* I, 41, pls. x.A, xi–xii, xxv, xxvii–xxviii, xxxii–xxxiii; *CoA* III, 15–16, pl. iv.

influence on the design of houses at the site also exists.¹¹⁷ This could indicate that, if erected at the time of construction of the house, the altars were at least intended to be associated with the official cult.

Conversely, both stepped and unstepped altars occur in contexts that did not necessarily have links with the official religious doctrine of the Amarna Period or with solar cults in general. For example, altars in houses of Second Intermediate Period to Eighteenth Dynasty date at Lisht took the form of simple, unstepped platforms. Altars in some houses at Medinet Habu, apparently of late Eighteenth Dynasty and Third Intermediate Period date, were stepped, as were the *lits clos* at Deir el-Medina.¹¹⁸ This raises the possibility that some mud-brick altars were erected as 'generic' cult emplacements, suitable for a range of cult, rather than imitations of official cult structures or simplified versions of the Panehesy-type of shrine. Further support for this can be found in the fact that they were not open to the sun and were not always oriented east-west.¹¹⁹

The decoration preserved on the vertical niches suggests that if these did possess cult significance, at least some were associated with the royal family or Aten. Although additional scenes relating to the royal family and Aten may have been destroyed, it cannot be assumed that all niches with traces of decoration originally bore such scenes. Given the parallels with false doors in funerary contexts, the possibility that some were associated with funerary or ancestor cults should be considered. It is impossible to determine whether the smaller niches, if used for religious purposes, were cult-specific. There is also little indication in the decoration of offering tables found amongst residential areas that these were intended to serve particular cults. It is noteworthy that they generally lack the inscriptions relating to the royal family and Aten present on at least some offering tables from state complexes in the Central City, and on some offering tables held by statues of the royal family.¹²⁰ If the identification of the wooden uraei as fragments of shrines is correct, the excavation of the uraeus-topped shrine at the House of the King's Statue and the scenes depicting the royal family within shrines with uraeus friezes are noteworthy.¹²¹ However, representations of both deified royalty and other deities in shrines with uraeus friezes in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasty private tombs could indicate that the three-dimensional versions were not associated exclusively with the official cult during the Amarna Period.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Cf. Traunecker, *CRIPEL* 10, 92–3.

¹¹⁸ A. C. Mace, 'Excavations at Lisht', *BMMA* 16 (1921), 12, fig. 2; U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, II. *The Temples of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (OIP 41; Chicago, 1939), 68–9, figs. 54, 56; id., *The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, V. *Post-Ramessid Remains* (OIP 66; Chicago, 1954), 7, fig. 6, pl. 6.i; Bruyère, *Rapport* (1934–1935), 61–4.

¹¹⁹ Although the garden shrines at the site are also not always so oriented. Ikram, *JEA* 75, 101, has suggested this may be explained by their dedication to the royal family, instead of the Aten. Note also Kemp's observation, in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* VI, 455, that stepped platforms at Amarna have been found to be 'frequently and unexpectedly oriented towards the north and south'. There could also have been a greater degree of flexibility in the orientation of solar shrines in private contexts than in the official cult sphere.

¹²⁰ See *CoA* III, 67, 81, pl. lxiv.4–6.

¹²¹ On the latter, see Davies, *Rock Tombs* I, pl. vii; id., *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, II: *The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II* (EES Archaeological Survey 14; London, 1905), pls. xxxii–xxxiv.

¹²² See J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, IV (Paris, 1964), 544–71; S. Johnson, 'Uraeus Statuettes', in S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara and C. H. Roehrig (eds), *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1988), 144.

Therefore, although the preserved decoration of a small number of cult emplacements indicates that they were intended to serve the cult of the royal family and Aten, there is little surviving evidence that the majority were cult-specific installations. If they were actually perceived as generic installations by the residents of the city, associations with particular cults were presumably conveyed primarily through the erection of cult images. In turn, there may have been considerable variation in the conduct undertaken at similar emplacements located in different households at the site and at individual emplacements on different occasions.

The royal family and Aten are the most frequently represented subject matter which most likely acted as cult images. A small number of statues and stelae that possibly served as cult images relating to other divinities also occur. If objects such as figurines, ostraca and vessels were sometimes worshipped directly, the number of cult images associated with the latter would be increased. Potential foci for royal ancestor cults include statues of Eighteenth Dynasty royalty and the well-known stela depicting Amenhotep III and Tiye (BM EA 57399). These have been discussed most recently by Johnson.¹²³ In addition, a number of objects appear to have served as foci of private ancestor cults. A stela excavated opposite Main Street 4 at the Workmen's Village has been identified by Demarée as an *ḥ iqr n R*-stela.¹²⁴ Amongst the sculpture fragments recovered from P47.4, a house complex located in the vicinity of the workshops of the sculptor Thutmose, were fragments of the back half of a chalkstone anthropoid bust, now reconstructed in the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin (25847; pl. IX, 3). The figure wears a long, straight wig and, although the top of the head is not preserved, it does not appear to have worn a crown or other royal headwear. It measures 17.6 cm in height and is 12.0 cm wide.¹²⁵ It does not resemble the other royal busts excavated at the site,¹²⁶ but is similar to the anthropoid busts known from Deir el-Medina and elsewhere. There is some debate over the function of the latter, but they are generally thought to have been associated at least in part with private ancestor cults.¹²⁷ At T35.4 in the North Suburb, an 18 cm high limestone figure of a seated man wearing a kilt and holding a lotus flower across his chest was discovered. A similar statuette of a seated male in a kilt and clasping a lotus bud against his chest measuring 8.9 cm in height appears to have been excavated in the North City.¹²⁸ In contrast to that from

¹²³ W. R. Johnson, 'Amenhotep III and Amarna: Some New Considerations', *JEA* 82 (1996), 72–80. On the inscriptional evidence for 'houses', 'mansions' and 'sunshades' of Eighteenth Dynasty royalty at the site, see Fairman in *CoA* III, 199–205.

¹²⁴ Demarée, *The ḥ iqr n R-Stelae*, 164, pl. xix.c7. Note also the votive stelae from the tomb of Any that attest to at least the commemoration of this individual (Davies, *Rock Tombs* V, 9–11, pls. xxi–xxiii; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 304).

¹²⁵ The bust was recorded in the excavation report as the 'hintere Hälfte einer Büste' (Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 102, exc. no. 1912/13,601). It was examined in the museum magazine by the author in May 2000, and I am grateful again to Prof. Wildung and the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung for permission to discuss it here.

¹²⁶ See W. Kaiser, 'Zur Büste als einer Darstellungsform ägyptischer Rundplastik', *MDAIK* 46 (1990), 280–3, pls. 65–6.

¹²⁷ J. L. Keith-Bennett, 'Anthropoid Busts: II. Not from Deir el Medineh Alone', *BES* 3 (1981), 43–72; Kaiser, *MDAIK* 46, 270–2; Friedman, *JEA* 71, 82–97; id., in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 114–17. The excavation of a 'Frauenbüste' at P47.4 might also be noteworthy; see Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 102, exc. no. 1912/13,576.

¹²⁸ See *CoA* II, 43, pl. xxxvii.1–4, on the former; and T. Whittemore, 'The Excavations at el-'Amarna, Season

T35.4, it is not sculpted in the Amarna style. It has been proposed that these statuettes were placed in domestic shrines,¹²⁹ but their function can possibly be identified more closely. They appear to belong to a group of sculptures suggested to be three-dimensional representations of figures on *šh iqr n R*-stelae and possible forerunners to the ancestor busts. These are typically in the form of seated figures holding lotus flowers to their chests.¹³⁰ A headless figurine of a seated individual, probably male, from U33.1, might also be of this type.¹³¹

Amongst material such as figurines and models, small stelae of relatively low quality, ostraca and items of jewellery, the quantity of objects that can be associated with divinities other than the Aten and royal family increases. Bes, Hathor, Taweret and probably one or more cobra deities feature most prominently on such material from residential areas, but other cults appear in a more limited quantity and range of evidence, including Amun, Anukis, Heqet, Min, Serqet and Thoth.¹³² At least fifteen pendants in the shape of anthropoid busts have also been excavated at the Workmen's Village, North Suburb, Main City, Central City and Kom el-Nana, although not always within houses.¹³³ Pendants of this form are generally thought to be related to the larger bust sculptures,¹³⁴ and comprise further evidence of an ancestor cult.

Little material beyond architectural spaces and cult images can be related directly to the official cult, although the names or images of members of the royal family and the names of the Aten do appear on objects such as jewellery and vessels.¹³⁵ The presence

1924-5', *JEA* 12 (1926), 12, pl. viii, on the example from the North City. Both statuettes have been published recently with colour photographs by R. E. Freed, in Freed et al. (eds), *Pharaohs of the Sun*, 255, nos. 172-3.

¹²⁹ Freed, in Freed et al. (eds), *Pharaohs of the Sun*, 255, nos. 172-3; E. Pischikova, in Freed et al. (eds), *Pharaohs of the Sun*, 255, no. 174.

¹³⁰ A. R. Schulman, 'Some Observations on the *šh iqr n R*-Stelae', *BiOr* 43 (1986), 307-8; J. R. Ogdon, 'A Fragmentary New Kingdom Statue at Buenos Aires', *GM* 119 (1990), 65-72; Friedman, in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 113, 179, n. 55.

¹³¹ This figure, preserved to a height of 4 cm, appears to hold an elongated object to its face (*CoA* II, 72, pl. xlv.7).

¹³² Bomann, *Private Chapel*, 57-79, suggested that the deities worshipped at the private chapels probably included Amun, Aten, Hathor, Isis, Min, Nut, Re, Re-Harakhty, Renenutet, Shed and Wepwawet. Only the cults of Amun, Aten, Isis and Shed are represented by inscriptional evidence.

¹³³ *CoA* II, 84, 86, 92, 96; III, 85, 104; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 89, 166. EES Amarna Archive object registration card 24-5/15 also seems to record a pendant of this form; I would like to thank the EES for permission to mention it here. In addition, object numbers 1789, 2998, 3364, 4665 and 30250 from the current EES excavations at the site are pendants of this form. These were examined on site by the author in May 2000, and I am again grateful to the EES and to Barry Kemp for permission to list them here. All originate from the grounds immediately south of the Workmen's Village, apart from 30250, which was excavated at Kom el-Nana. Petrie, *Tell el-Amarna*, pl. xvii.277-8, also illustrated an anthropoid bust amulet and mould from the site; see Keith-Bennet, *BES* 3, 44-5. Pendants thought to have originated from Amarna are in the Petrie Museum (U.C. 2400: Keith-Bennett, *BES* 3, 45), Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery (D.1925.35) and Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Amarna Room, Case 55525), whilst moulds are in the Petrie Museum (U.C. 2031) and Ashmolean Museum (1893.1-41(684)). Some of these may provide additional examples to those mentioned in the excavation records.

¹³⁴ Keith-Bennett, *BES* 3, 46, 52-4, 63.

¹³⁵ I. Shaw, 'Ring Bezels at el-Amarna', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* I, 124-32; E. Shannon, 'Ring Bezels with Royal Names at the Workmen's Village', in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* IV, 154-9; Borchardt and Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser*, 18, 174, 185. On jewellery with the names of deceased rulers such as Amenhotep II and Thutmose III, again potential evidence of royal ancestor cults, see Shannon, in Kemp (ed.), *Amarna Reports* IV, 156.

of a royal name could indicate simply that an object was manufactured in a state workshop,¹³⁶ or was distributed on an official occasion, but such material may nonetheless have been considered to possess amuletic properties or to be an appropriate component of rituals. In the state sphere, the Aten was provided with offerings such as flowers, incense, food and gifts in the shape of cartouches of the god, whilst the Aten is depicted offering symbols including *w3s*- and *ḥh*-signs and images of uraei to the royal family.¹³⁷ The extent to which knowledge of images connected with the official cult spread into the private realm and to which their use was considered appropriate in the latter is unclear. It is conceivable, though, that material incorporating motifs such as these, and hence a greater quantity of material beyond cult images and spaces, was originally linked with the cult in the private domestic sphere.

Conclusions

Although the quantity of material from Amarna that can be linked with absolute confidence to domestic religion is limited, particularly in comparison to that excavated at Deir el-Medina, there is a greater quantity and variety of potential evidence than is often recognised. The material suggests that a range of domestic religious activity occurred at the site. This included the offering of perishable and non-perishable goods. The exact manner in which these were used is difficult to isolate, but goods could have been offerings to sustain a cult image or votive gifts to a divinity, with some perhaps used in rituals intended to purify cult images, spaces or participants. Other forms of activity probably included the use of amuletic images and the undertaking of magical rituals. Domestic religious conduct sometimes focused upon defined cult spaces and images, probably with the worship of the latter, but this is unlikely always to have been the case.

Although the explicit presence or direct influence of a divinity was probably not required in all forms of religious conduct, in other cases divinities were clearly involved. The material evidence relating to the cult of the royal family and Aten, and to a lesser degree that of traditional deities, has long been recognised. The presence of a private ancestor cult at the site has been suggested,¹³⁸ but there is a greater quantity and variety of evidence for this than recognised previously. It is possible to envisage a number of scenarios under which additional material relating to such a cult has been removed or is unidentifiable, particularly if its material components extended beyond images of the deceased and included generic cult objects.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Cf. Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 329.

¹³⁷ Davies, *El Amarna* I, 25, 29, pls. x.A, xxviii; II, pls. v, xii; IV, 19, pls. xxxi, xlv; id., *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, VI: *Tombs of Parennefer, Tutu, and Ay* (EES Archaeological Survey 18; London, 1908), 4, pl. iv; A. M. Blackman, 'A Study of the Liturgy Celebrated in the Temple of the Aton at el-Amarna', in *Recueil d'études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion* (Paris, 1922), 517–23; C. Aldred, 'The Beginning of the el-'Amarna Period', *JEA* 45 (1959), 24–5.

¹³⁸ Bomann, *Private Chapel*, 58, 68, 74, proposed that ancestor cults figured prominently at the private chapels at the Workmen's Village, on the basis primarily of the occurrence of such cults at Deir el-Medina, and the fact that whilst the chapels appear to be connected with the funerary sphere, their large number in relation to tombs suggests they were not all funerary chapels. See also Demarée, *The 3ḥ ikr n R'-Stelae*, 164; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 305.

¹³⁹ Consider the possibility that fertility figurines excavated in the outer areas of tombs were offerings to the dead (Pinch, *Votive Offerings*, 218).

There was at least the facility for conduct that focused directly upon cult images of the royal family and Aten in some houses. However, the presence of images of traditional deities and private ancestors, and the likelihood that some cult emplacements were generic installations suggests that such behaviour was not restricted to the royal family and Aten. It can be implied from the relative prominence of Bes, Taweret and Hathor on personal items such as jewellery, and the occurrence of Bes and Taweret on a domestic relief, that they were favoured as protective images. The anthropoid bust pendants seem to indicate that private ancestors were sometimes also perceived as sources of protection for the individual, whilst the possibility that the royal family and Aten were sometimes viewed similarly must remain, given their presence on items of jewellery in particular.

It is generally inappropriate to comment on the popularity of particular types of conduct on the basis of archaeological data, as the degree to which evidence has been preserved and can now be identified is unlikely to be uniform. The same is true regarding assessments of the popularity and roles of particular divinities. Given the problems dating the material, it is also largely unclear whether there were differences in the prominence of certain cults or types of conduct during specific periods within the phase of occupation under Akhenaten and Tutankhamun. This is particularly true for cults and forms of conduct reflected in a limited amount of material or predominantly on portable objects.

Hence, the impact of Akhenaten's religious reforms on domestic religion is difficult to assess from the archaeological record. The significance of the Amarna material for understanding these reforms cannot be discussed fully here, but it is noteworthy that many aspects of the domestic religious system reflected in it can be paralleled at other sites, such as Deir el-Medina. The range of conduct reflected is similar to that attested at Deir el-Medina, whilst the types of divinities represented can also be paralleled to an extent, particularly when the evidence of a private ancestor cult is included.¹⁴⁰ This raises the possibility that at Amarna, Akhenaten's religious reforms did not penetrate the existing domestic religious system to the extent that is sometimes suggested.

These parallels also increase the significance of the Amarna material as a source for domestic religion in general in New Kingdom Egypt. In particular, the range of conduct at the site and the potential variation in the degree to which forms of conduct required a strict physical focus are presumably of wider relevance. There are also two broader features of domestic religion conveyed by the archaeological record at Amarna that are of note in this respect. The first is a sense that domestic religious and secular conduct interacted to a significant degree. This is reflected in the evidence for behaviour such as the wearing of amulets or talismans, in which minimal physical or conscious effort of the human participant was required, and which would leave them able to participate physically and consciously in secular activity. It is also suggested by the incorporation of religious imagery on items of daily use such as headrests, and in the presence of objects and emplacements that potentially functioned in both the secular and religious realms, including vessels and perhaps lustration slabs. The overall association between identifiable, permanent cult emplacements such as altars and the central room is also significant. This room has generally been viewed as a focus of communal, possibly

¹⁴⁰ See Friedman, in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 95–117; J. F. Borghouts, 'Magical Practices among the Villagers', in Lesko (ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, 119–30.

family-oriented, activity, although highly mundane tasks were presumably undertaken beyond its limits when space allowed.¹⁴¹ The possession of the altars such as they survive appears to have been the prerogative of those of relatively high socio-economic status,¹⁴² and their location in an area in which they would have been noticed by visitors could have been prompted in part by status-related concerns. Nonetheless, the lack of strict delineation between cult and secular space in these houses is noteworthy. A sense of integration with secular conduct has again been identified as a feature of domestic religion at Deir el-Medina.¹⁴³

The second overall feature is a sense of variation in conduct across households at the site. The possibility that most emplacements were not cult-specific and that a variety of potential images could have been erected at these installations has been cited as evidence for such variation. This variety may also be reflected in the differences in the location of cult emplacements. Although these frequently occur in the central room, this is not always the case. One interpretation of the presence of altars in rooms of their own, for example, is that in these houses religious conduct was segregated from general household activity to a greater degree than in those where the altar was located in the central room. The factors that caused such differences are difficult to identify, but possibly included social aspects and more pragmatic elements, such as the amount of space available in the home.

By clarifying the material evidence for domestic religion at Amarna, it is possible to increase understanding of the associated divinities, and also of the range of conduct undertaken at this site. When parallels are then drawn between the Amarna material and that at Deir el-Medina in particular, the significance of the former as a source of information for Akhenaten's religious reforms and for domestic religion in general in the New Kingdom is enhanced. This process of clarification, comparison and interpretation of the Amarna material has not been exhausted, but if its full potential is to be realised, it will be necessary for there to be greater consideration of domestic religion and its material manifestations at other settlement sites.

¹⁴¹ See B. J. Kemp, 'The Character of the South Suburb at Tell el-'Amarna', *MDOG* 113 (1981), 82-4; id., *Ancient Egypt*, 295-7; Crocker, *JEA* 71, 60; id., *BACE* 3, 14-17.

¹⁴² Cf. Crocker, *JEA* 71, 56, 63, Table 2; I. Shaw, 'Ideal Homes in Ancient Egypt: The Archaeology of Social Aspiration', *CAJ* 2/2 (1992), 161.

¹⁴³ Meskell, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5/3, 237-9.



1. Three-quarter view



2. Full-face

Head with the Blue Crown, private collection, Germany (photographs courtesy of the Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich).

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE BLUE CROWN IN THE NEW KINGDOM (pp. 117–41)



3. Reconstructed back of an anthropoid bust from P47.4 (ÄMP 25847).

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