

From the Director

THE AMARNA EXHIBIT

ON NOVEMBER 12, 2006, Penn Museum opened a new exhibit, *Amarna, Ancient Egypt's Place in the Sun*. It is an important exhibit for many reasons, all of which exemplify the nature of the Museum's research and outreach.

First, the materials in this exhibit are from our own collections. These have been curated by three of our Egyptologists—David P. Silverman, Eckley Brinton Coxe, Jr., Professor of Egyptology and Curator-in-Charge, Egyptian Section; Josef W. Wegner, Associate Professor and Associate Curator, Egyptian Section; and Jennifer Houser Wegner, Adjunct Assistant Professor and Research Scientist. This exhibit develops a complex and intriguing story about Pharaoh Tutankhamun, his probable father (the heretic Pharaoh Akhenaten), and the latter's new political and religious center at Amarna. In both the exhibit and its accompanying book, *Akhenaten and Tutankhamun*, the curators explore the nature of religious change and the evolution of political power in Egypt during the mid-2nd millennium BCE, examining possible explanations.

Second, this exhibit creates an alliance with an important Philadelphia sister institution. The Franklin Institute Science Museum will host the blockbuster show, *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs*, opening February 3, 2007, which is expected to attract more than a million people over the course of its seven-month run. Our partnership includes joint marketing efforts, cooperative programs for buying tickets, and a "Tut Trolley" connecting The Franklin Institute, the Museum,


and several hotels in a continuous loop through downtown and West Philadelphia. We have great hopes that many people will continue their exploration of ancient Egypt with a visit to *Amarna* at Penn Museum.

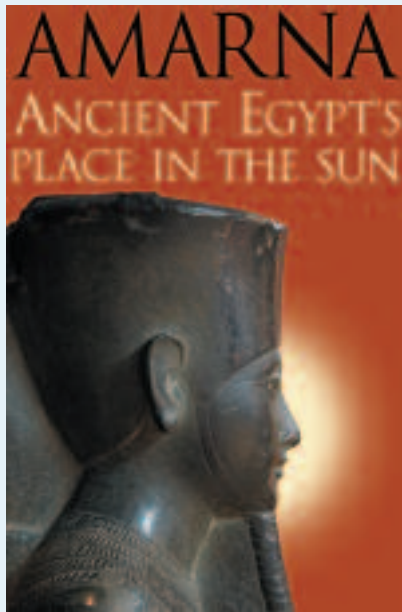
Penn Museum's exhibit complements the Tut exhibit in providing a more detailed and nuanced discussion of this period in ancient Egypt. Many artifacts presented in

Amarna are not the spectacular remains of ancient Egypt. Instead, they tell the story of this new city from the viewpoint of its sculptors and builders rather than just its leaders.

Finally, it is important to see our *Amarna* exhibit as a model for the Museum's critical outreach and research. Penn Museum annually supports more than 80 anthropological and archaeological research projects around the world. It is essential that the information gathered from the field along with the interpretations of expert analysts be part of the Museum's outreach. The professional academic community is an important constituency for this outreach, but if anthropology and archaeology are to continue into the future with real funding and value

for the community, we must connect our findings both to people's interests and to events in today's world.

Amarna, Ancient Egypt's Place in the Sun provides such a connection—a research-oriented exhibit, structured for the general public. We invite you to come see it! 



Richard M. Leventhal

RICHARD M. LEVENTHAL, PH.D.

The Williams Director