Akhenaten and his family are perhaps not among Richard's best friends from ancient Egypt; in fact, with his inimitable turn of phrase, he likes to refer to them as "the Freak, the Freakess, and the Freakettes." But when they make a surprise appearance at his favourite site, they cannot simply be ignored, and since he actually wrote an introduction to the art of the Amarna Period, albeit a long time ago,\(^1\) it does not seem wholly inappropriate to publish these finds here as a tribute to a great scholar, intrepid excavator, remarkable survivor, and treasured friend.

With the removal to the Karnak Open Air Museum of the two massive alabaster stelae\(^2\) set up by Ramesses II in front of what was once the First Pylon of Temple A, in the northeast corner of the Mut Precinct, it became possible for the Brooklyn Museum Expedition to resume the excavations in this part of the site, which had been begun in the late 1970s.\(^3\) At that time, it had already been established that the towers of the pylon, very little of which remains, were constructed of mud brick faced, at least on their interior (east) side, with reused limestone blocks, and that its threshold consisted of a very large reused slab of pink granite. In the early days of February 2005, excavations in the pylon entrance revealed some further blocks of pink granite immediately adjacent to the north side of the large slab and forming the north end of the threshold. One of these turned out to be the base of a statue, reused upside down to provide a flat surface. When it was turned over, three pairs of feet became visible, one large and two small. The extraordinary shape of the large feet in particular made it immediately obvious that we were dealing with a work of the Amarna Period, and shortly afterwards this was confirmed by a study of what remains of the inscription on the back pillar. A further granite block proved to be the very badly decayed remains of the head of a royal statue of the same period, and both pieces can probably be linked to a fragment found in the same general area in 1978 which bears an inscription mentioning the Gem-pa-Aten, the sed-festival temple built by Amenhotep IV-Akhenaten at East Karnak.

A. The Statue Base (Figs. 1–5)

The base (Excav. No. 19ME.1) is a fairly tall, rectangular block of granite 77.5 cm wide and 95 cm deep.\(^4\) The height of the base without the remains of the statues is c. 42 cm; the latter are

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\(^2\) The one on the north is the famous Hittite Marriage Stela found in 1924–1925 by Maurice Pillet, while its southern counterpart was discovered by the Mut Expedition in 1979; see the account in Richard Fazzini et al., *The Brooklyn Museum—American Research Center in Egypt Expedition to the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at Southern Karnak. Preliminary Report* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1979), 30–35 and figs. 44–47. The text published there, although it bears a preliminary character, is a remarkable achievement, since it was recorded bit by bit by tunneling under the 44-ton stela, which had fallen face down. Both stelae were carved from what was originally the side walls of a shrine of Amenhotep II from the Amun Precinct, which has recently been reconstructed at the entrance to the Open Air Museum by the Centre franco-égyptien d’étude des Temples de Karnak.


\(^4\) Detailed measurements of the base and the head have kindly been provided by Mrs. Elsie Holmes Peck. In the description which follows, “left” and “right” refer to the figures’ proper left and right.
preserved to a maximum height of 15.5 cm, resulting in a total preserved height of 57.5 cm. The base originally supported three figures, a large one roughly in the middle, flanked by two much smaller ones. The large figure is broken off just above the ankles, although the feet themselves, shown parallel to each other, are also damaged. These feet are exceptionally long and narrow: they measure 47 cm from the most advanced (second) toe to the heel and their greatest width is 15 cm. The toes, too, are very long. Most striking, however, is the fact that the five metatarsal bones and the joints connecting them to the phalanges (toe bones) have been sharply defined on the top surface of the feet. Elongated feet are de rigueur in Amarna art, and in New Kingdom sculpture articulated metatarsals can occasionally be found in works from the end of the 18th Dynasty, but the exaggerated form shown here and the rendering of the joints are, to the best of my knowledge, unparalleled. They are matched, however, by similarly over-emphasized collar bones and neck muscles in some other early statues of Akhenaten, most famously perhaps in the magnificent alabaster torso in the Brooklyn Museum. These extraordinary feet may be seen as additional evidence for the theory, persuasively advocated by Alwyn Burridge, that Akhenaten suffered from Marfan’s Syndrome, one of the symptoms of which is arachnodactyly (elongated extremities with slender, spidery fingers and toes). Skeptics have argued that the deformities shown in Akhenaten’s physical portrayal (and by extension that of his wife and children) are not to be read literally, and that “their common denominator is a symbolic gathering of all attributes of the creator god into the physical body of the king himself.” However, although more general aspects like the combination of male and female characteristics might be interpreted along those lines, it is hard to see how spidery feet could be a symbolic rendering of an aspect of the creator god.

To the left of the main figure are the feet of a much smaller figure, which are also shown parallel to each other, but although the proportions are more or less the same, there is no sign of the exaggerated articulation of the bone structure seen in the main figure. This small figure stands close to the left-hand edge of the statue base and quite far away (57 cm) from the front. On the other side of the main figure is an even smaller pair of feet. This figure, broken off halfway down the shins, is shown standing with its left foot advanced and is considerably further forward (at a distance of 31.2 and 32.8 cm, resp., from the front of the base) than its companion on the left. In good light, traces of vertical lines representing the pleating of a linen dress can be observed on the left leg. This figure does not stand close to the right-hand edge of the base, but some 15 cm away from it. This creates the impression that the whole group is off centre, although the feet of the main figure are in fact positioned in the middle of the base. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the back support that joins the three figures, at least at this low level, does not continue beyond the small figure on the right to encompass the full width of the statue base.

The back support originally appears to have been inscribed with a single column of text in incised hieroglyphs running down the centre behind the main figure. Unfortunately, only the lowermost parts of the very last signs survive (fig. 5), but these nevertheless provide an additional clue for dating the statue: the word in question is nḫh, written with a deeply cut sun-disk sign with uraeus and, indicated in shallow sunk relief, the ankh sign hanging from it, a sure indication that we are dealing with a monument from the reign of Amenhotep IV-Akhenaten.

B. The Head (Fig. 6)

The head (Excav. No. 19ME.1a) found next to the statue base is in a very sad state; it has in fact been almost entirely reduced to an amorphous lump of crumbling pink granite. Only the left foot to each other, but although the proportions are more or less the same, there is no sign of the exaggerated articulation of the bone structure seen in the main figure. This small figure stands close to the left-hand edge of the statue base and quite far away (57 cm) from the front. On the other side of the main figure is an even smaller pair of feet. This figure, broken off halfway down the shins, is shown standing with its left foot advanced and is considerably further forward (at a distance of 31.2 and 32.8 cm, resp., from the front of the base) than its companion on the left. In good light, traces of vertical lines representing the pleating of a linen dress can be observed on the left leg. This figure does not stand close to the right-hand edge of the base, but some 15 cm away from it. This creates the impression that the whole group is off centre, although the feet of the main figure are in fact positioned in the middle of the base. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the back support that joins the three figures, at least at this low level, does not continue beyond the small figure on the right to encompass the full width of the statue base. The back support originally appears to have been inscribed with a single column of text in incised hieroglyphs running down the centre behind the main figure. Unfortunately, only the lowermost parts of the very last signs survive (fig. 5), but these nevertheless provide an additional clue for dating the statue: the word in question is nḫh, written with a deeply cut sun-disk sign with uraeus and, indicated in shallow sunk relief, the ankh sign hanging from it, a sure indication that we are dealing with a monument from the reign of Amenhotep IV-Akhenaten.

5. Large toe: 10.0 cm; second toe: 10.2 cm; third: 9.7 cm; fourth: 8.2 cm; fifth: 5.0 cm.
6. See, for example, the statue on a sledge of Amenhotep III from the Luxor Temple cachette, Mohammed El-Saghir, Das Statuenversteck im Luxortempel (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1992), 23, fig. 49, and 26, fig. 54.
10. Length of left foot: 9.7 cm, greatest width: 3.2 cm.
11. Length of left foot: 9.0 cm, greatest width: 3.1 cm.
12. It is 65 cm wide, leaving an “open” space of 12.5 cm to the right of the right-hand small figure.
13. Measurements: h. 60 cm, w. 35 cm, d. 29 cm.