

Message from Barry Kemp

Some figures from the past lived lives or imparted teachings that still reach out and affect the emotions and spiritual yearnings of people. King Akhenaten is probably the earliest of them all.

I have worked for over 30 years in the shadow of Akhenaten, privileged to direct an archaeological expedition at Tell el-Amarna, the site he chose as the proper home for his his god, the Aten. I am an archaeologist, rather than a historian of ideas. My main aim from the beginning has been to establish a clearer understanding of the place and of the lives of the people who found themselves living there for a time-span that was much less than a single generation.

Amarna is a harsh setting for a city, and was even more so in his day, a tract of pure desert, beautiful but austere and, according to his own words, deliberately chosen for its sense of being uncontaminated by prior association with human life. A place for a fresh start. This natural setting helps to define the nature of the man: uncompromising in his vision of what was true, however we interpret the nature of that truth.

I am delighted to be associated with Clarinda Karpov's play, and wish to express my thanks that it is able to help maintain the current archaeological work at Amarna. I hope to see you all at Amarna some time in the future.

Good luck with the performance – Barry Kemp