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Book Reviews: Popular Books Section



[Page 2 - Excerpts Section (*Who Killed King Tut? Using Modern Forensics To Solve A 3,300-Year-Old Mystery*, by Michael R. King and Gregory M. Cooper with Don DeNevi)]



THE INVESTIGATION

Who Killed King Tut? Using Modern Forensics To Solve A 3,300-Year-Old Mystery by Michael R. King and Gregory M. Cooper with Don DeNevi. Illustrations, Hard Cover, 6" x 9". Illustrations, Notes, Index.
Prometheus Books, 59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, New York 14228-2197, USA. or . Publication Date 2004. 258 pages, Category: History, ISBN 1-59102-183-9. Price $25.00 [$16.50 from amazon]

Official site of this book: http://www.prometheusbooks.com/catalog/book_1452.html

Please the linked page (page002) to read review of this book.

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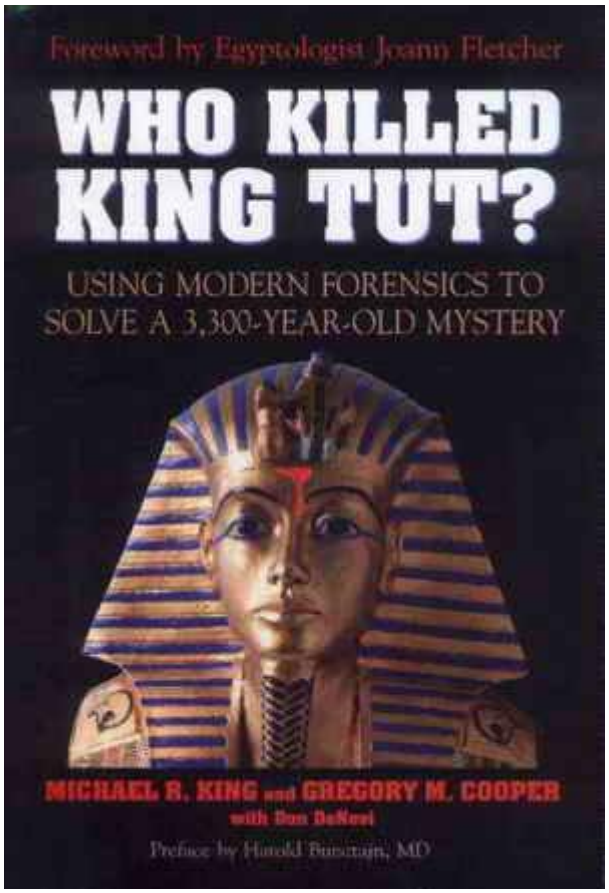


It is fashionable for historians to dwell on causes of deaths of celebrity kings, queens, soldiers and other famous persons of the past. In most cases the so-called historians are actually scientists, who clutch on contemporary records - often meagre - and try to derive information as exactly and accurately as possible. Let me tell you, this is not an easy task. One of the most famous such derivations is that Socrated died of Hemlock poisoning. Nobody is sure, what poison was given to him (Hemlock indeed was the state poison of the Greeks, but there are no records indicating Socrates indeed was given this poison). His student Plato recorded the symptoms as he was dying and recorded them in the closing pages of his classical *Phaedo*. He describes a slowly ascending paralysis, beginning in his (Socrates') feet and creeping steadily up his legs toward his chest, with Socrates' mind remaining clear until the end. Death arrived calmly and peacefully. This has long been interpreted by scientists and historians as death by Hemlock. This view has repeatedly been challenged though, with William Ober in his challenging the very authenticity of Plato's recording [see Ober WB. Did Socrates die of hemlock poisoning? N Y State J Med. 1977 Feb;77(2):254-8].

Please click here to read review of this book.

Other celebrities, whose causes of death have been debated endlessly include Alexander the Great, Sir Isaac Newton, Beethoven and Napoleon. Hairs of many celebrities have been examined for poisons, long after they have been dead. Some well-known celebrities whose hair have been examined are (i) Napoleon [Found to have arsenic] (ii) Beethoven [Found to have lead. No mercury, showing he did not have syphilis] (iii) Newton [Found to have mercury] (iv) U.S. President Zachary Taylor [no Arsenic found] and (v) William Butler Yeats [Ref: Drugs of Abuse - Body fluid testing, edited by R.C.Wong and H.Y.Tse, Humana Press, 2005: page 19]

View this book on Amazon

It must be realized however that all these deductions are open to challenges. And there are bound to be controversies. The writers of the current book "*Who Killed King Tut*" must be congratulated for trying to deduce the cause and manner of death of yet another celebrity - Tutankhamen (original name Tutankhaten; he changed his name to Tutankhamen perhaps in the fourth year of his reign), king of Egypt who reigned between 1333-23 BC. He is now known chiefly for his intact tomb discovered in 1922. To the best of my knowledge, not many investigators have tried investigating his cause and manner of death before, and in as much as this, the writers need to be congratulated. In 1999, a book on this topic did come. It was entitled "*Murder of Tutankhamen*" and was written by Bob Brier. It was good, but somehow it failed to arouse interest.

In writing this book - quite undoubtedly - King and Cooper have stirred up a hornet's nest. Their book is certainly going to raise a controversy. Our expert reviewer - a hard core forensic pathologist - is one of the many who are going to differ with the authors. But that does not take any credit from the authors. As I said earlier, all books of this nature are bound to raise controversy, and therein perhaps lie their value. Even the question of the cause of death of Napoleon - despite researchers having found arsenic in his hair - is far from having been settled.

RECAPITULATION

The authors Mike and Greg with Dr. Zahi Hawass in the tomb of Horemheb located near Saqqara (the picture appears on page 163 of this book)



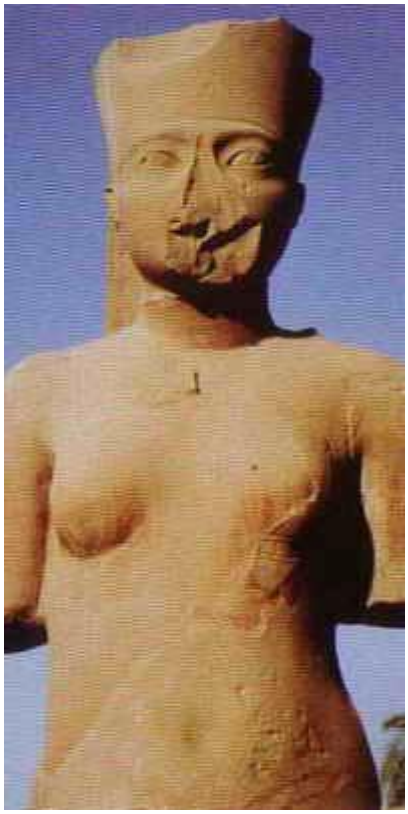
A little recapitulation first. Ancient Egypt is known to have been ruled by at least 31 dynasties (From the First Dynasty in 3050 B.C. till the end of 31st dynasty in 332 B.C. For details of dynaties, readers may want to the linked page (egyptdynasties)). Tutankhamen belonged to the Eighteenth Dynasty. He ascended to the throne when he was just nine; was married to Akhenaton's third daughter, probably the eldest surviving princess of the royal family; and because at his accession he was still very young, his vizier and regent, *Ay*, who had ties with the royal family, and the general of the armies, *Horemheb*, became his chief advisers.

During the ninth year of his reign, under Horemheb, the Egyptians marched into Syria to assist Egypt's old ally, the Mitannian kingdom of northern Syria, which was embroiled in hostilities with vassals of the Hittites. As reinforcements sent by the Hittite king hastened to aid his vassals, Tutankhamen died unexpectedly. He was just 18 year old at that time. Because none of his children survived, Ay succeeded him, marrying his widow. This makes Ay suspect number one in the opinion of the authors. They have built up an interesting - although rather controversial - theory that Ay killed Tutankhamen.

Please click here to read review of this book.

Akhenaton, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamen, and Ay are known as "Amarna Kings", as they built a new capital at *Tel El Amarna* on the east bank of the Nile twenty-five miles north of modern Asyut. The 19th Dynasty rulers didn't like the rulers of the 18th Dynasty, and so in the 19th dynasty these "Amarna kings" were stricken from the royal lists and publicly condemned. As a result, the location of Tutankhamen's tomb was forgotten.

Statue of Ankhesenamun at Karnak (the picture appears on one of the several color plates in this book)



In the 20th dynasty, when the tomb of Ramses VI was cut immediately above that of Tutankhamen, the stone rubble dumped down the side of the valley covered the young king's tomb with a deep layer of chips. The workers of the 20th dynasty came close to Tutankhamen's tomb and clearly had no knowledge of it. This was the reason that Tut's tomb escaped the great series of robberies at the end of the 20th dynasty and was preserved until a systematic search of the Valley of the Kings revealed its location.

Another reason that King Tut's tomb had been forgotten was that he had been quite an unimpressive ruler. The combined effect was that his tomb was perfectly hidden from robbers and we can now deduce much about his life from the treasures hidden in his tomb.

In Chapter 12 entitled "Why Ay? Presenting the indictment", the authors summarize why they suspect Ay murdered Tut. This is what they have to say on pages 195-7..

Chapter 12: WHY AY? PRESENTING THE INDICTMENT

Pages 195-7

Meanwhile, Horemheb, the great warrior, surely must have watched in horror as his young king, stricken by illness and physical handicaps, was perceived weak by the enemies of the kingdom.

First and foremost a patriot, the general could be driven to murder, believing that the gods and country were behind him. Horemheb could easily have orchestrated an accident or an ambush, even though there is no evidence to suggest that he was around at the time of Tut's death. In fact, he was far from home, probably dispatched by the prime minister, Ay. Tut was most likely already buried, or near burial, at the time of Horemheb's return. By then, Ay had been confirmed as the new pharaoh.

The authors Mike and Greg pause before reentering Ay's final burial tomb (the picture appears on page 153 of this book)



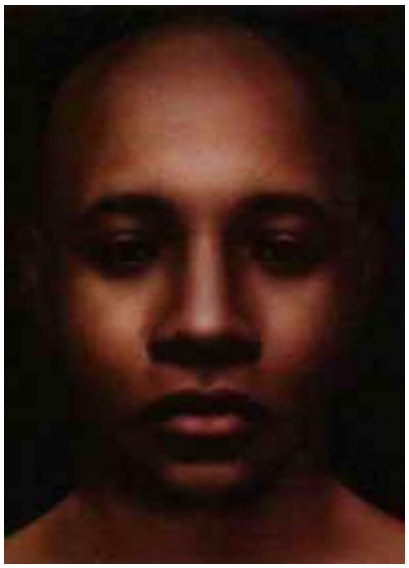
When Horemheb's opportunity to reign as pharaoh came several years after Tut's death, he immediately ordered the defacing of Ay's tomb and any remembrance of him. In addition, he ensured that the monotheistic beliefs of Akhenaten were not revisited. It's possible that all of this was done upon learning of Ay's actions, but it doesn't seem likely that Horemheb killed Tut.

This leaves us with our final suspect in this intriguing mystery. As our final specks of evidence fall to the ground, and as the sifting completes, one character remains in the forefront-Ay.

Ay may well have known about the assassination attempts on King Akhenaten as recorded on the tomb walls of Akhenaten's police chief Mahu. Ay was one of the leading officials to the heretic Akhenaten, who stripped the Amun priests of their power and relocated the government to Amarna. Could Ay have been secretly playing both sides of the fence? Did he promise allegiance to Akhenaten and promise to keep the Amun priests "at bay" while secretly conspiring with those same priests to kill Akhenaten and return the Amun priesthood to power?

Shortly after Akhenaten's death, Ay was prime minister. During this time (where very little information is recovered), it appears that the mysterious pharaoh Smenkhkare disappears from history. Who was left at the time? Ay.

The reconstruction of Tut's Head (the picture appears on one of the several color plates in this book)



After Smenkhkare's departure, Ay might have demanded that the country should place the experienced high official into power as pharaoh. But luck didn't swing his way. Instead, probably to his anger, the nine-year-old son of Akhenaten was crowned the pharaoh. Wisely Ay convinced the young king to keep him on as vizier. Thus, the conniving Ay maintained his power and control over Tut for many years, convincing him to denounce his father and his father's religion. He sold the kid on the idea he'd get a huge reception, plus accolades, if he denounced his father and returned the kingdom seat to Thebes. Ay probably orchestrated the overwhelming Opet Festival, the return of the pharaoh to Thebes, and the return and restoration of the Amun priesthood.

It can only be surmised how Tut died. But it appears likely that as he reached his seventeenth to twentieth year he became quite confident in his own abilities to lead. Perhaps there was discussion between Tut and his queen that together they could make better decisions than the elderly, "old-fashioned," Ay. We even theorize Tut may have put Ay in his place, explaining something to the effect, "No, Ay, we won't do it your way. I am the pharaoh, and you are just a servant." Imagine the anger a comment like that, or even such a perceived belief, would have raised in the man.

Nonetheless, either at the hands of murderers or by accident, Tut died. It appears from the way that Ankhesenamun reacted that the death was due to murder because she immediately writes the Hittite king regarding concerns of marrying a "servant."

Originally at the Karnak temple, the sculpture of Akhenaten is now housed in the Cairo Museum (the picture appears on one of the several color plates in this book)



A tried and tested statement we've used repeatedly in our work reminds us, "Past behavior predicts future behavior." For a moment, consider the following:

When Akhenaten dies, Ay is there!

When Smenkhkare dies, Ay is there!

When Nefertiti (Ankhesenamun's mother and Tutankhamen's stepmother and potential heir to the throne after Akhenaten's death) dies, Ay is there!

When Tutankhamen dies, Ay is there!

When the Hittite king's son sent to marry Ankhesenamun is murdered, Ay is there!

When Ankhesenamun disappears from history Ay is there!

And when Ay dies, the mysterious deaths seem to stop.

The manipulative master of deceit, Ay is present at every stage of mystery and death. He secretly planned and coveted the throne of pharaoh. He spent his entire life in pursuit of the position, and like most psychopathic personalities, figured, "1 want it. They have it. I deserve it. I'll take it." He then spent the remainder of his time as pharaoh trying to convince himself and the gods that he was a commoner who rose to the greatness of pharaoh. In reality, he was a murderer who crushed anyone in his way.

We reflected on Daniel Troyer, a serial killer of eight elderly women. He once explained to us, "Let's put it this way. Let's say that I hate my brother-in-law. In fact, I hate him so badly that I decide 1 want to kill him. The problem is my mother loves my brother-in-law. I, in turn, love my

mother, and I wouldn't do anything to hurt her. Nonetheless, I hate my brother-in-law, and I want to kill him. The answer is easy. I must first kill my mother because I would never do anything to make her feel bad. Once she is dead, I can kill my brother-in-law without the fear of hurting mother."

Ay lived for power, dominion, and control. He was no different than any other murderous psychopath who roams the streets today. The only solace in solving this thirty-three-centuries-old murder is the knowledge that the eternities do continue. Howard Carter, the Egyptologist who brought King Tutankhamen into the light and made him the most famous of all pharaohs, brought Tut the gift of fame. We look forward to one day meeting the pharaoh knowing we brought him the gift of justice. Now, perhaps, King Tut can rest in peace in the Valley of the Kings.

I am not giving the several arguments forwarded by the authors explaining how they zeroed in on Ay from among several suspects. That would perhaps spoil your fun. There are also arguments explaining why Tut's death is not a suicide, accident or death by natural causes.

Please click here to read review of this book.

Undoubtedly a number of readers would differ with the authors, as has our expert reviewer. But the book nevertheless is fun to read and explains the analytical and logical thinking that goes into solving a murder.

This book - in short - is highly recommended, if you love forensics as much as I do. Go and read this book if you want to read and enjoy all the arguments provided by the authors in full.

Editor-in-Chief

Order this Book by clicking below.

Who Killed King Tut?

A very interesting paper has been written on "The Skull and Cervical Spine Radiographs of Tutankhamen" by Richard S. Boyer, Ernst A. Rodin, Todd C. Grey, and R. C. Connolly in June - July 2003 issue of *American Journal of Neuroradiology*. Full text of this paper can be downloaded free of cost from their site. Interested readers may click here to reach ANJR site, from where this paper can be downloaded. Go to the section entitled "HEAD AND NECK". Seventh paper is the one on Tutankhamen. King and Cooper give the entire text of this paper in their book in Appendix 3.

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