

illustrated with maps, photographs, and explanatory tables, this book by a significant scientist unlocks the mysteries of the ultimate Bible story in a fascinating and convincing way.

Bibliography:

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Gerald O'Farrell, *The Tutankhamun deception: The true story of the mummy's curse*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2001, 233 pages, US\$18, ISBN 0283072938.

Reviewed by Ian McDowell

The thesis of this book is that Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter gained access to the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings (KV62) across the Nile from Luxor in Egypt, some years before the accepted entry year of 1922. They did this using postulated passages connecting KV62 to adjoining tombs, notably that of Ramses V & VI (KV9), which were shown to them by the infamous tomb robber family El-Rassul. Carter supposedly constructed the passage by which the tomb is entered today, as part of a detailed recent misdirection.

Your reviewer, an engineer, is skeptical, for various reasons. One is that the tombs in the Valley of the Kings certainly do not display uniformity of levels, which connecting passages capable of installing the KV62 shrines would require. Another is that actual such passages between KV9 and KV62 have not been found. And another is, where are the large quantities of allegedly looted items?

The supposed early entry was for the purpose of despoiling the tomb of most of its treasures secretly. These included papyri which identified Tutankhamun closely with the monotheistic Aten cult of his close relative, Akhenaten, and cast doubt on the historicity of Moses and, by inference, of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Here the book becomes somewhat fanciful. The early deaths of Carnarvon and others, attributed by the media to "the curse of the pharaohs", it is claimed, were caused by persons unknown, with vested interest in denying accepted Christian beliefs.

At the same time, it must be said that the archaeological methods of even Carter's day were suspect. A variety of questions relating to Tutankhamun remain to be answered. An empty tomb of Akhenaten is shown at Amarna. The tomb KV55 in the Valley of the Kings near that of

Tutankhamun was probably prepared for Smenkhkare, a close relative of Akhenaten and Tutankhamun, all Dynasty XVIII pharaohs. But for reasons yet undiscovered, royal funeral honours were withheld from Smenkhkare, and his tomb furniture used for Tutankhamun, including one inscribed canopic coffin. The most notable such item is Smenkhkare's gold funerary mask, which seems to have been used for the second of Tutankhamun's famous masks, being markedly different in appearance from the younger and thinner faces on Tutankhamun's first and third masks, and leaving Smenkhkare's mummy bereft.

It has long been thought that Tutankhamun was murdered at the instigation of polytheistic Amun interests. To this notion the O'Farrell thesis adds latter-day anti-monotheism proponents dedicated to the suppression of the alleged missing papyri. Tutankhamun's mummy has been treated with scant respect since the discovery. Interestingly, Egypt's archaeology chief, Zawi Hawass, recently arranged for CAT scans of the remains, some of which have appeared in the media. We await the detailed findings with interest. Perhaps Dr. Hawass could establish or otherwise the existence of the putative tunnels between the tombs also.

The O'Farrell thesis is acknowledged as derived from that of Thomas Hoving's 1978 book, "Tutankhamun, the Untold Story". Perhaps O'Farrell would have entertained us more if he wrote the story as conspiracy theory fiction like "The da Vinci Code", itself derived from an earlier speculative pseudo-scholarly work.