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***THE SECRET
OF THE
GOLD COFFIN***



*"Nauka" Publishing House
Central Department of Oriental Literature
Moscow 1978*

9(М)03
П-27

Перепелкин Ю.

П 27 Тайна золотого гроба (на англ. яз.). Пер. с русского., М., Главная редакция восточной литературы издательства «Наука».

167 с. с ил.

In 1907, a gold coffin was found in a tomb of the royal necropolis at Thebes. It has been ascribed, in turn, to one or another royalty of the Eighteenth dynasty, yet modern science has not been crowned with any remarkable success in solving the question of the ownership of the coffin, as none of the theories advanced has been supported by decisive evidence.

The book reveals the mystery of the gold coffin. The central figures are the two royalties of Pharaonic Egypt most popular today: Amenhotpe IV (Akhenaten) and his wife Queen Nefertiti. As a result of the study, a third personage has emerged—the pharaoh's concubine Kia; her story has come to light from the darkness of centuries, where she had been thrust by her extraordinary yet unhappy lot.

П 10605-032
013(02)—78 -БЗ-37-13-77

9(М)03

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	4
Note on the Signs Used in the Translations of Inscriptions	6
The Hidden Tomb	7
Inscriptions on the Coffin	26
Queen Nefertiti	36
The Royal Estate	58
A Key to the Three Puzzles	73
The Second Pharaoh	85
The Queen's Rival	108
The Last Puzzle	131

PREFACE

This book* is an attempt to outline certain facts pertaining to the most extraordinary event in the history of Ancient Egypt—the revolution that shook the country more than 33 centuries ago. It is associated with the name of Amenhotpe IV (Akhenaten), who came to power when Egypt was a world empire. The revolutionary reforms connected with the name of the pharaoh laid the deepest marks on almost every aspect of Egypt's life: economic, social and state affairs, manners and customs, religious beliefs, fine arts and architecture, writing and language.

Students of the history of Ancient Egypt have long been attracted by the force and scope of the revolution of Amenhotpe IV. Quite a number of attempts have been made in a continuous flow of books and articles on the subject to indicate the nature of the revolution and to reconstruct the course of its main events. But since the evidence is incomplete and the sources available are specific, it is inevitable that intensive and meticulous work is required in the field.

It is to be hoped that an attempt of this kind has been made in our volume *The Revolution of Amenhotpe IV*, Part I (Part II is in print). The subject-matter of the present book deals with the two personages of the Eighteenth dynasty so popular at present: the reformer Amenhotpe IV and his spouse Queen Nefertiti.

As a result of the study, a new personage has joined the royal couple, her story having come to light from the darkness of centuries, where she had been thrust by her extraordinary and yet unhappy lot.

* The English translation was made from the Russian edition published in 1968 (Y. Y. Perepelkin, *Taina zolotogo groba*, Moscow, 1968).

The discussion centres around the gold coffin which has fascinated many a scholar's imagination ever since it was discovered in the Valley of the Kings more than 70 years ago, around the question of the ownership of the coffin and the mysterious mummy which it held. We are going to deal with the four magnificent canopic jars adorned with finely carved heads belonging to an unknown royalty, the modifications made in the royal estate in the south of Akhetaten (the new capital of Amenhotpe IV), which were associated with Nefertiti, the modifications in the northern palace of the capital, with the renamed monuments from different parts of the country and the strange representations showing Amenhotpe IV in the company of an unnamed pharaoh.

All these elements add to the mystery of the gold coffin, and the methods of investigation employed are like those described in detective stories, the main difference being that the subject of our investigation is 33 centuries old.

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ТАЙНА
ЗОЛОТОГО ГРОБА
(на англ. яз.)

*Утверждено к печати
Институтом востоковедения
Академии наук СССР*

Редактор *Е. Я. Бессмертная*
Младший редактор *М. В. Ходакова*
Художник *А. Г. Кобрин*
Художественный редактор *Э. К. Эрман*
Технический редактор *З. С. Теплякова*
Корректор *Н. Б. Осягина*

ИБ № 13093

Сдано в набор 1/VI 1977 г.
Подписано к печати 13/XII 1977 г.
Формат 84×108^{1/2}. Бумага № 1.
Печ. л. 5,25. Усл. печ. л. 8,82.
Уч.-изд. л. 11,08. Тираж 10.000 экз.
Изд. № 4042. Зак. 464. Цена 85 коп.

Главная редакция восточной литературы
издательства «Наука»
Москва К-43, ул. Жданова, 12/1

1-я типография Профиздата,
Москва, Крутицкий вал, 18