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Howard Carter and the Discovery of Tutankhamun, H.V.F. Winstone, Constable, London, 1991, 333 pages. 20.00 pounds sterling (Cloth).

by

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This is a fascinating book dealing with a memorable character. To really understand all the trials and tribulations associated with the discover of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, one must read this book more than once.

This book should be read first as a character study of a complex individual who rose from humble beginnings in Norfolk, England, to perhaps the most famous archaeologist of this century. Howard Carter was a gifted child whose drawings of antiquities attracted the attention of Lord and Lady Amberst who sponsored his first trip to Egypt as an assistant draughtsman under the supervision of Flinders Petrie. Petrie had already established a reputation for himself as an Egyptologist and, unless one had the eye and skills as exhibited by Carter, there would have been little or no chance for such a job or assignment.

Carter had the eye as well as the feel for detail and color. A stickler for minutiae, he quickly earned the respect and admiration of those who relied upon him to supply what others may have considered chores and bores. The stress here is on "admiration" and "respect." rather than feelings of friendship and personal likes. Carter was not a man one could love - he was first and foremost a curmudgeon who, as time passed, became more and more conscious of his importance.

In 1907 Carter became a partner in the 5th Earl of Carnarvon. This partnership in itself makes for fascinating reading and one quickly gains the impression that this, indeed, was a strange as well as strained relationship. The interest of both men, however, were so closely interrelated that many of their public as well as private quarrels had to be patched up in order that the quest both were after had to be realized.

As anyone familiar with Egyptology and archaeology well knows, work under the conditions existing in Egypt, especially the Valley of the Kings, was slow. Perhaps the physical strains were not as relevant as the mental exhaustion and the stress suffered by those who felt they were about to discover something spectacular, only to be disappointed time and time again.

It will take no less than fifteen years of obstinate pursuit of a single goal that Carter and his team finally discovered the intact tomb of Tutankhamen. As both Carter and his team finally discovered the consequences of this discovery on November 4, 1922, were perhaps worse as far as stress was concerned than anything experienced heretofore.

This then brings us to the need for a second reading of this fascinating book. The reader should now concentrate on the mania which followed the discovery. It is at this juncture that Carter and his team were subjected to the worse pursuit by the press and curiosity seekers one can imagine. Carter, already a taciturn and lonely character, was now in the world's spotlight and, because of what he was, he was the last person who should have been subjected to these kind of pressures! The press, intrigues by the French and Egyptian governments, numberless "famous" visitors, international academic circles, all of these applied pressures Carter was ill suited to cope with or even tolerate. Thus, the second time around, the reader will soon discern, there were not many of these who did not become involved in quarrels and arguments with Carter. And thus it came about that, for the next ten years, Howard Carter grew more lonely and bitter. He could have achieved high honors, perhaps even a lordship, but his nature stood between honors and rewards.

In some respects, this is a sad book as one gets the feeling that the discoverer of Tutankhamun's tomb deserved better than just immortality connected with this discovery. Yet, at the same time, Carter was master of his fate and, perhaps, less stubbornness and greater tolerance may have resulted in more satisfactory years than he experienced as an embittered and lonely man.

This work offers a number of fields one can select - archaeological, psychological, political, overt and covert machinations, etc. All of them are elegantly covered by the author. All in all, this is a book which is a "must" in any library, be it private or public.

Perspectives on Southwestern Prehistory, edited by Paul E. Minnis and Charles L. Redman, Westview Press, Boulder. \$56.00 (Paper).

by

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This volume contains 23 papers by 41 contributors, divided into 5 sections: Hunters and Gatherers; Transitions to Sedentism; Elites and Regional Systems; Protohistoric Period: Transitions to History; and History of Southwestern Archaeology. Each section has an introduction, and there are commentaries for the second and fourth sections. Some papers are from symposia, others apparently were added to round out the collection. As the editors note (p. 3), "we made an explicit decision to include scholars working throughout the Southwest, from southern Utah is that coverage is extensive rather than intensive and spotty both geographically and chronologically; the volume also lacks a focus or theme so that the papers as a group, many of which are quite good, do not cohere.

In her introduction to Section I, Katharine Spielman notes that with the spectacular Pueblo sites, the Hohokam, and Casas Grandes, little attention has been paid to hunter-gatherers and the Archaic in the Southwest; no "pure" ethnographic examples of foragers are found for most of the Southwest (p. 11). Recently, however, there has been more attention focused on these prehistoric groups largely as a consequence of contract archaeology projects. Spielman then provides a brief review of the recent history of hunter-gatherer research in the Southwest. It should be noted that the Pueblo ethnographic and ethnohistoric literature is filled with data on hunting-gathering activities among the historic Pueblos, especially during these times when drought and other problems reduced cultivated food production. Although ethnographic analogies from historic practices to the Archaic would be inappropriate, some of the Pueblo seasonal patterns of occupation and movement might give clues to the sorts of remains one might look for in the earlier period.

Speth ("The Study of Hunter-Gatherers in the American Southwest: New Insights from Ethnology") does use recent data to discuss hunter-gatherer problems in general, but his examples are taken mainly from the IKung San. This is a useful review, but Speth doesn't relate it back to the Southwest, as his title suggests, except for a few ending questions that he notes might be examined using southwestern archaeological data. This is one paper that would have benefitted from at least a brief look at the Pueblo literature, as well as that for the Pima-Papago and other southwestern groups.