

1

00:00:01,398 --> 00:00:11,393

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:11,393 --> 00:00:21,388

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

3

00:00:22,387 --> 00:00:37,380

Three thousand years ago, a nine-year-old boy was crowned king of Egypt, an empire which was one of the most powerful in the ancient world.

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00:00:37,380 --> 00:00:48,374

He would become a relatively unimportant pharaoh, involved more with the passions of life than the details of state.

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00:00:48,374 --> 00:00:56,370

Yet in death, Tutankhamun would play a role in history far more significant than anyone could have imagined.

6

00:01:10,363 --> 00:01:16,360

Few places in the world are as forsaken and unchanging as the Sahara Desert.

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00:01:19,358 --> 00:01:26,354

People's lives are simple, uncomplicated by modern measures of time and mortality.

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00:01:26,354 --> 00:01:37,349

The peasants mark the passing of their lifespans by the annual rotation of pasture lands and by the seasonal tilling, planting and harvesting of their meager crops.

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00:01:37,349 --> 00:01:43,346

For most, the present and future exist in the shadow of the past.

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00:01:49,343 --> 00:01:56,339

The desert is the place where the desert is located.

11

00:02:04,335 --> 00:02:11,331

Symbolic of ancient Egyptian civilization are the enigmatic pyramids which dot the desert landscape.

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00:02:12,331 --> 00:02:21,326

Giant monoliths, they are silent tributes to the genius of a bygone civilization.

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00:02:26,324 --> 00:02:32,321

Many are now falling into ruin, but their crumbling walls reveal little of the purposes for their original existence.

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00:02:33,320 --> 00:02:41,316

Most scholars are convinced that they were constructed as giant tombs for dead pharaohs.

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00:02:44,314 --> 00:02:57,308

It is also documented that they became easy prey for grave robbers who either found or constructed their own passages within the mammoth walls so that they could strip the chambers of their precious artifacts.

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00:02:58,307 --> 00:03:09,302

Realizing that the pyramids were being desecrated, the high Egyptian priests began diligently searching for a location where their royal tombs would go unnoticed and undisturbed.

17

00:03:12,300 --> 00:03:22,295

Across the Nile and 400 miles south of modern-day Cairo, the priests found what they had been looking for, a valley with imposing cliffs.

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00:03:23,294 --> 00:03:29,291

An area that because it could conceal countless tombs would later become known as the Valley of the Kings.

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00:03:31,290 --> 00:03:36,288

It was here that the modern quest would begin for the tomb of Tutankhamun.

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00:03:37,287 --> 00:03:44,284

Just after the turn of the century, Egypt remained the keystone of the proud yet slowly diminishing British empire.

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00:03:45,283 --> 00:03:50,281

Egypt's positions straddling the Suez was still all important to English military strategists.

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00:03:50,281 --> 00:04:02,274

Yet for many Britons, the sprawling Sahara desert that dominated the country represented either a warm dry vacation spot or a land rich in archaeological treasure.

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00:04:03,274 --> 00:04:13,269

The Rosetta Stone, discovered by Napoleon in 1799 and deciphered some 20 years later, finally provided the key to solving the riddle of the hieroglyphs.

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00:04:14,268 --> 00:04:21,265

Written in Greek, Coptic, and in hieroglyphics, scholars were finally able to understand the tiny symbols.

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00:04:23,264 --> 00:04:29,261

From pictographs and hieroglyphs unearthed during later digs in Egypt, part of the story of Tut would emerge.

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00:04:31,260 --> 00:04:35,257

In search of cameras, wood from these facts recreate the days of King Tut.

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00:04:36,257 --> 00:04:44,253

The boy had become crowned Pharaoh in approximately 1500 BC. Information about his reign remained sketchy.

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00:04:45,252 --> 00:04:53,248

All that was known was that the priestly court advisors probably extended a great deal of control over the young boy called Tutankhamun.

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00:04:54,248 --> 00:05:04,243

But one significant portion of the story had not been recorded. The whereabouts of King Tut's tomb.

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00:05:05,242 --> 00:05:19,235

The Valley of the Kings had already yielded the tombs of many other Pharaohs. Thus it seemed a logical place to begin the search for the final resting place of the boy monarch.

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00:05:24,232 --> 00:05:39,225

By 1921, Egyptian workers had excavated more than a dozen sites in the Valley of the Kings, vainly searching for Tut's tomb.

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00:05:40,224 --> 00:05:49,219

The dream of finding gold, jewels, and other great riches in King Tutankhamun's grave seemed more and more an archaeologist's folly.

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00:05:54,217 --> 00:06:07,210

Their work had been directed by a young, obsessive British civil servant named Howard Carter. His one passion in life was to find the tomb.

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00:06:08,210 --> 00:06:18,205

Aiding him in his effort was Lord Canarbon, an English nobleman who had originally sought refuge from England's damp weather in the healthful dryness of the Sahara.

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00:06:23,202 --> 00:06:29,199

For five long years, Canarbon had funded Carter's fruitless efforts to find the elusive burial plot.

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00:06:30,198 --> 00:06:39,194

Despite the find of a new, more promising dig site, Canarbon decided to return to England, threatening to cut off financial support.

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00:06:39,194 --> 00:06:52,187

For another year, hundreds of workers labored over the new site that Carter had found.

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00:06:53,187 --> 00:07:05,181

Then, in November 1922, Carter made an extraordinary breakthrough. He wired Canarbon, at last, made wonderful discovery in Valley.

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00:07:09,178 --> 00:07:13,176

Together, Carter and Canarbon descended the steps to the tomb.

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00:07:14,176 --> 00:07:24,171

Both trembled with nervous anticipation. For each man, the passing moments meant that he was closer to fulfilling a dream. But what would they find?

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00:07:25,170 --> 00:07:28,169

Would it indeed be the undisturbed sarcophagus of Tut?

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00:07:28,169 --> 00:07:38,164

The royal seals had remained untouched. But did that mean that the tomb and its contents had stayed just as they were when hidden 3,000 years before?

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00:07:45,160 --> 00:07:49,158

Finally, Carter felt the last bits of mortar give way.

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00:07:49,158 --> 00:07:58,153

He peered inside and was stunned by the site before him.

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00:07:58,153 --> 00:08:19,143

What do you see, asked Canarbon? There was a pause. Then Carter softly replied, wonderful things.

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00:08:28,138 --> 00:08:51,126

It took the British and Egyptian governments the next 11 years to carefully remove and painstakingly catalog all of the objects from inside the tomb.

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00:08:52,126 --> 00:08:55,124

But Lord Canarbon would not see even half of the treasure.

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00:08:56,124 --> 00:09:02,120

By 1923, he would be stricken under mysterious circumstances.

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00:09:07,118 --> 00:09:11,116

Prior to his return to England, Canarbon suffered a mosquito bite.

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00:09:12,115 --> 00:09:19,112

Normally, such an occurrence would not cause great alarm. But the bite became infected and he finally succumbed to its effects.

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00:09:20,111 --> 00:09:28,107

Interestingly enough, legend had said that the priests had cursed the Pharaoh's tomb and that those who disturbed it would die.

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00:09:35,104 --> 00:09:42,100

Newspapers around the world announced Canarbon's death. Then, mysteriously, others began dying.

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00:09:43,099 --> 00:09:51,095

Coincidentally, each person had either been associated with the tomb's opening or the examination of the objects found inside.

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00:09:52,095 --> 00:10:04,089

For a while, the curse seemed very real. But the papers neglected to mention that Carter, who was the first to enter the tomb and hundreds of others associated with Tut, remained robust and alive.

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00:10:05,088 --> 00:10:24,078

Today, there seems little fear of the curse. More than 7 million people in six American cities pushed their way into the Tut exhibit, eager to view the objects which had so astounded Carter and Canarbon, and there were no reports of mysterious deaths attributed to the curse.

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00:10:25,078 --> 00:10:43,069

The nearly untouched tomb of King Tut that Carter and Canarbon had unearthed was unmatched in history. It spoke of beauty and elegance in a vanished civilization.

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00:10:44,068 --> 00:10:55,063

The romance of Tutankhamen's curse unfortunately obscured the more significant story of Tut for nearly 50 years.

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00:10:57,061 --> 00:11:05,057

We are just beginning to realize that his death may have contributed to one of the most powerful religious movements in history.

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00:11:14,053 --> 00:11:29,045

Many Egyptologists believe that the pyramids provided final earthly protection to royalty during their transition from the material world to that of eternal peace.

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00:11:31,044 --> 00:11:37,041

Dr. James Brashler heads the Institute of Antiquities and Christianity at Claremont College.

61

00:11:38,040 --> 00:11:50,034

For the ancient Egyptian, death was simply a transition from one theater of existence or one arena of life to another arena, which they called the West.

62

00:11:51,034 --> 00:12:00,029

It was the land to which one went after existence in this life came to a conclusion.

63

00:12:01,029 --> 00:12:11,024

Death was simply the opening up of a new kind of life that seems to have been conceived of in terms of a paradise.

64

00:12:15,021 --> 00:12:23,017

There was a pedigree of gods to be pleased and elaborate rituals had to be performed successfully before one could enter the Egyptian Garden of Eden.

65

00:12:24,017 --> 00:12:39,009

The common citizen did not possess such knowledge. Only the priests could guide people to life everlasting and their special skills gave them an extraordinary hold over the lives of the Egyptians.

66

00:12:44,007 --> 00:12:51,003

Whether ancient Egyptians thought that they could defeat death itself through the mummification process is not known.

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00:12:52,003 --> 00:12:55,001

Scientists have carefully examined the mummies of Egyptian royalty.

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00:12:56,000 --> 00:13:02,997

Despite concerted efforts, researchers remain mystified by the methods utilized by the ancients to preserve the body.

69

00:13:09,993 --> 00:13:16,990

Three thousand year old stone reliefs depicted the immense power wielded by the priest class in ancient Egypt.

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00:13:17,989 --> 00:13:23,986

It was their responsibility to begin planning for a Pharaoh's death as soon as he became king.

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00:13:27,984 --> 00:13:35,980

At the time of Tutankhamen's coronation, the priests remained the single most powerful body within Egyptian society.

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00:13:47,974 --> 00:13:54,970

When Tutankhamen, a nine year old boy, came to the throne, the situation was ripe for change.

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00:13:55,970 --> 00:13:59,968

Gerald LaRue is a professor of religion at the University of Southern California.

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00:14:00,967 --> 00:14:07,964

Who worked with this malleable young man who helped to formulate his ideas we don't know.

75

00:14:08,963 --> 00:14:11,961

Perhaps the great court advisor I was involved in this.

76

00:14:11,961 --> 00:14:15,959

Perhaps there were priests from Thebes who reached him.

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00:14:16,959 --> 00:14:24,955

His predecessor, Akhenaten, had moved away from the traditional religions of ancient Egypt.

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00:14:25,954 --> 00:14:30,952

Egypt had enjoyed the freedom of worship of many gods in many different forms.

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00:14:31,951 --> 00:14:33,950

But Akhenaten had made a change.

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00:14:33,950 --> 00:14:40,947

He had moved from polytheism to monotheism, the emphasis on one god in one form.

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00:14:44,945 --> 00:14:50,941

Following the death of Akhenaten, it is generally accepted that his belief in one god disappeared.

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00:14:51,941 --> 00:14:57,938

The priests had discouraged its acceptance by the general populace because it threatened their position of power.

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00:14:58,937 --> 00:15:06,933

But some scholars theorize that small groups clung to monotheism and quite possibly spread the idea across the desert.

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00:15:08,932 --> 00:15:13,930

There was no way that the young child Tut could understand the religious turmoil which he had entered.

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00:15:14,929 --> 00:15:16,928

The affairs of state unquestionably rested with the priests.

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00:15:17,928 --> 00:15:23,925

With a child pharaoh on the throne, it would be easy for them to completely reinstate the old religion.

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00:15:23,925 --> 00:15:28,922

Meanwhile, Tut wrestled with the normal problems of growing into manhood.

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00:15:33,919 --> 00:15:41,915

Drawings made during Tutankhamen's reign often depict him with his young bride, the daughter of his predecessor Akhenaten and Nefertiti.

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00:15:43,914 --> 00:15:48,912

Tut married his young bride when she was 12 and he only nine.

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00:15:54,909 --> 00:16:01,905

Tut must have spent many carefree hours in the royal gardens involved with the whimsical delights that only young lovers can devise.

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00:16:02,905 --> 00:16:09,901

As Tut and his wife on Kensen Patten grew up together, they seemed to have possessed a great love for one another.

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00:16:11,900 --> 00:16:15,898

A poem read to Tut by his bride has survived 3,000 years.

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00:16:16,897 --> 00:16:25,893

My love to thee is like the acorn which I have planted with flowers in the manner of sweet smelling herbs.

94

00:16:27,892 --> 00:16:35,888

And in the acre is a pool that in the cool of the north wind it is a lovely place where I walk there.

95

00:16:36,887 --> 00:16:43,884

Your hand upon mine, my body satisfied and my heart glad that our going together is as intoxicating as to hear thy voice.

96

00:16:44,883 --> 00:16:46,882

And my life depends upon hearing thee.

97

00:16:47,881 --> 00:16:52,879

Whenever I see thee, it is better to me than food and drink.

98

00:17:06,872 --> 00:17:13,868

Tut's great appreciation for life and his intense love for Akhenzen Patten would be cut short.

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00:17:14,868 --> 00:17:16,867

He would not live to his 20th birthday.

100

00:17:23,863 --> 00:17:27,861

Scholars are not at all certain what caused the death of Tuttakhamen.

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00:17:28,860 --> 00:17:37,856

The mummy itself was somewhat decomposed because of the excessive use of unguents and spices that the priests carried out.

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00:17:37,856 --> 00:17:42,853

And therefore the physical evidence is ambiguous.

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00:17:45,852 --> 00:17:55,847

Some who have investigated suggest then that the death of Tutnakhamen probably came as a result of respiratory ailments such as tuberculosis or pneumonia.

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00:17:56,846 --> 00:18:00,844

Still others believe that his death may have been hastened by poison.

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00:18:00,844 --> 00:18:07,840

I, the great court priest who was present when Tut was crowned, now watched over the young Pharaoh.

106

00:18:10,839 --> 00:18:16,836

Whether he was a member of a possible conspiracy with other court priests to terminate Tut's life is not known.

107

00:18:17,835 --> 00:18:20,834

Tut was now 19, an adult.

108

00:18:21,833 --> 00:18:27,830

It is possible that the priests feared they could no longer control him and he might return to the ways of Akhenaten.

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00:18:28,830 --> 00:18:34,827

Perhaps they wished him dead for his death, like his coronation, could serve them well.

110

00:18:37,825 --> 00:18:41,823

Their power over the religious direction of Egypt would continue.

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00:18:46,820 --> 00:18:51,818

The priest was left behind, now made a pantheon of deities, the gods of Egypt.

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00:19:16,805 --> 00:19:42,652

The

113

00:19:42,652 --> 00:19:47,649

more than 2,000 years ago to avoid persecution for his belief in one God.

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00:19:48,729 --> 00:19:52,966

It is possible that Moses was influenced by those who had faithfully held to

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00:19:52,966 --> 00:19:55,125

Akhenaten's belief in monotheism.

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00:19:56,045 --> 00:19:57,164

Once Tut died,

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00:19:57,564 --> 00:20:02,002

it can be assumed that the few believers who still remained faced the wrath of the

118

00:20:02,002 --> 00:20:02,841

priests.

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00:20:07,279 --> 00:20:12,037

It is very likely that they became a highly committed nomadic group who tenaciously

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00:20:12,037 --> 00:20:13,796

clung to their singular beliefs.

121

00:20:16,794 --> 00:20:21,272

Tut's death may have affected the entire sweep of Western thought and religion.

122

00:20:22,072 --> 00:20:26,349

Not even his priestly advisors could have envisioned such a dramatic place in

123

00:20:26,349 --> 00:20:28,548

history for their young king.

124

00:20:28,548 --> 00:20:41,142

The science of Egyptology is less than 100 years old.

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00:20:41,861 --> 00:20:45,500

While the glory of the Egyptian civilization has been well documented,

126

00:20:45,939 --> 00:20:49,657

there remains much to be uncovered and understood about its sophisticated

127

00:20:49,657 --> 00:20:53,216

culture. With the unearthing of each new artifact,

128

00:20:53,535 --> 00:20:57,094

our knowledge grows, not only about an ancient society,

129

00:20:57,453 --> 00:20:59,852

but its effect upon modern man as well.

130

00:21:00,652 --> 00:21:05,809

Only now are we beginning to appreciate how Tut's premature death may have had

131

00:21:05,809 --> 00:21:09,887

a significant impact on the development of the belief in one God.

132

00:21:17,003 --> 00:21:21,041

Coming up next in search of continues with a probe into the claim that the

133

00:21:21,041 --> 00:21:25,199

pyramids were not tombs for kings, but shelters against a holocaust.

134

00:21:25,599 --> 00:21:29,277

Then agents investigate the murder of mine workers union candidate,

135

00:21:29,277 --> 00:21:32,275

Jack Yablonsky and his family on FBI.

136

00:21:32,475 --> 00:21:35,034

The untold stories and later tonight,

137

00:21:35,194 --> 00:21:37,913

history's mysteries brings you the story of the roaring 20s,

138

00:21:37,913 --> 00:21:42,630

most successful robbers, the Newton boys at eight here on the history channel,

139

00:21:42,670 --> 00:21:44,309

where the past comes alive.