The Royal Tombs of Egypt: The Art of Thebes Revealed by Zahi Hawass

Breathtaking

A lavishly illustrated survey of the remarkable wall paintings in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, all specially photographed and accompanied by a detailed analysis of ancient Egyptian society and beliefs.

The Valley of the Kings is famous throughout the world as the burial place of the great New Kingdom pharaohs. It was here, in 1922, that Howard Carter stumbled upon the virtually intact tomb of the boy-king, Tutankhamun. And here, in recent months, that archaeologists discovered a new tomb with its wooden sarcophagi, painted funeral masks, and alabaster jars.

The royal tombs, tunneled into the Theban cliffs, represented both gates to the Netherworld and the womb of the Great Goddess. Many of them contain wall paintings of the king with various gods and goddesses, as well as papyri, mummies, decorated coffins, and other artifacts.

This is the first book to reproduce the wall paintings and murals in full. It explores in great detail the most deeply-held beliefs of the ancient kings and queens who are buried here, beliefs that provided the impetus for the building, decoration, and equipping of these magnificent tombs. Beautifully illustrated in full color, with thirty foldouts, it allows the reader to join the pharaohs of the New Kingdom on their journeys to immortality. 300+ color illustrations, including 30 foldouts.

My Personal Review:
As a lover of all things Egyptian and a trained Egyptologist I had high expectations for this book.... and it delivered in every way. The fold-out pages give a fantastic view of the insides of the tombs that the average tourist isn't permitted to take photos of. And instead of viewing a small section at a time you have entire vistas laid out for you. The high quality photography shows the smallest details so clearly that you can see the individual bushstrokes and even places where the painter accidentally dripped some paint and forgot to clean it up. Every time I turned a page memories of my time in Egypt came flooding back.

If I have to make one complaint it would be that there are not enough images of the tomb of Nefertari, and perhaps also the tomb of Seti I. The images that there are are quite selective and do not give an overall impression of their beauty. Admittedly, the focus is on the Valley of The Kings, but Nefertari was a queen and henceforth royal, too.

All in all, this is a MUST have book for anyone who loves Egypt.

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