

THE LEGEND DETECTIVE

Legends are legends but they hold the truth

A time traveller I will be,
would you care to come with me?



Cairo Museum. Mummified body of Maiherpri, found in Tomb KV 36.

**Is this the face of Memnon, Black prince of Ethiopia,
killed by Achilles at Troy.**

It was a cold and stormy night. Persephone and returned to her husband Hades and now was the winter of my discontent. Winter was here and Egypt's sunshine would have to wait. So, what I am about to relate, is what's called an armchair expedition.

I was researching tombs, mainly Queen Tawosret's, when I came across this item that in tomb KV 36 in the valley of the Kings, they'd found that the body was that of a Nubian, that he had two coffins that should have gone one inside the other but as they didn't fit, so the outer and inner coffins were left side by side. As one archaeologist said 'When the owner was tired of sleeping in one, he could go and sleep in the other'.

So, it was a light came on inside my head, for I had heard of the legend of Prince Memnon killed by Achilles at Troy. So black this young fellow might be in tomb KV 36 but it was the two separate coffins that made me ponder. It meant the first, that did fit the body, had been made at some distance from where the second coffin had been made, otherwise they'd have got the measurements right. So, could the first one have been made at Troy, and the second in Egypt. A long shot it might be, but it's longshots that sometimes brings up some unexpected results.

Now Egypt was nearly my second home if not in time spent there at least in spirit. I had been before to stand and stare 70 ft upwards' at the shattered faces of the two great statues, familiar to all tourist of Egypt, as the Colossus of Memnon, except they weren't. Who they were, was not difficult to find, for they were the mortuary statues of the pharaoh Amenophis III. (1479- 1424 BC) and nothing whatsoever to do with Memnon and if he had lived, I suggest would have dated him between 1216 -1192. As to who was, Memnon, the black prince of Ethiopia, nobody to date had seriously discovered if he was a myth or did he live.



The Colossus of Memnon, actually Amenophis III, grandfather to Tutankhamen.

You might say, but Memnon was Ethiopian and not Egyptian but that's not necessarily the Ethiopia we know today. Ethiopia, in ancient times, was Nubia in southern Egypt. According to Herodotus, Merowe situated down the Nile, was it's capital and according to Josephus Flavius, Moses went on an expedition into Ethiopia, marrying as his reward, an Ethiopian princess. Whilst many pharaohs would have had Ethiopian or Nubian wives or concubines. So, to all intents Ethiopia was the name for southern Egypt and not to be confused with the Ethiopia that is Abyssinia.

So, in endeavoring to finding my Memnon, let's start with the legend of Aurora and Tithonus, which is mentioned in the Iliad. It was Tithonus who was the husband to Aurora, the goddess of the dawn, also know to the Greeks, as Eos. Tithonus was the father of her son, the dark-skinned Prince Memnon, who was killed at Troy by the Greek hero Achilles. Memnon had come with a great army, to assist the Trojans fighting the Greeks. Tithonus, according to legend had a strange fate for (Eos) Aurora asked Zeus to make him immortal, to which Zeus agreed but she had not thought to ask Zeus to make him remain young. So, as he grew older and older he still could not die. Older he became until he could not help himself, could not move hand or foot and prayed daily for death but there was no release. At last, in pity the goddess laid him in a room, shutting the door behind her and there he babbled on endlessly without meaning, until only a dry husk of a man remained.

The story is interesting insofar that it is remembered by the two Colossal statues in Egypt, which can be seen to this day by any tourist visiting the valley of the Kings. There they stand guarding the entrance to the mortuary temple of Amenophis III, a temple which has long since vanished, although the 70 ft statues still remain. Statues that if you look carefully, you can still see graffiti written upon their feet, by none other than Hadrian, Emperor of the Roman world

Somehow this legend has got distorted in the telling and the telling has been by some Greek adventurer rather than an Egyptian, yet it holds some truth. Tithonus, I suggest, is the pharaoh Tuthmosis IV (1401 - 1391 BC) whether his wife was called the dawn goddess I cannot say, but all Egyptian Pharaohs were born of Ra, the sun. Therefore, it stands to reason, that Egyptian Princesses could have enjoyed similar titles. Whilst Tuthmosis IV is in fact the father of Amenophis III, (1391 - 1353 BC). As for Tithonus getting older and older until he is a mere husk, is to me, the observations of someone seeing, but not understanding, a mummified body within a tomb. A tomb that was already open to inquisitive eyes. Eye that saw but didn't understand, this to them was being made immortal, living forever and as it's a Greek legend, I assume the observer would be a Greek. As to when this observer lived it must have been about the time of the Trojan wars of 1200 - 1190 BC, as Mycenaean Greeks start to be used as mercenaries in Egypt about this time. Whilst after 800 BC, mummification would have been more familiar and not such a fascination to the Greeks. Therefore, as this legend relates to the Trojan war, it stands to reason that the legend had to be after the Trojan war of 1190 BC, when the saga of Memnon would have been hot on the lips of singers singing valiant songs.

By 800 BC Greeks were regular visitors to Egypt and in seeing these statues and having time to enquire, put two and two together and made five. Then again it could have been a quick minded Egyptian telling a good story. Or even Menelaus, one of the

Greek heroes of Troy, supposedly in Thebes (The Odyssey page 38) where he was given gifts by Alcandre and her husband Polybus. Gifts so expensive as to warrant they may have been given under duress, or at least protection money. It could also have been that great story teller and liar Odysseus, who says he was in Egypt, then says he wasn't, when I'm sure he was.

How nice for my theory, if Memnon was mentioned again, after the Trojan wars, and of course he was, for in book four of the Odyssey, it reads that Menelaus, who had returned from Egypt, and now taking supper in his palace, sitting beside the beautiful Helen. brought his audience to tears when talking of the death of Antilochus, whom (Memnon) the glorious son of shining Dawn had slain. I therefore suspect, it could be Menelaus himself who has named these statues, dedicated to Amenophis III into Greek legend, as the Colossus of Memnon. I further suggest that Menelaus could also see a mummy and had interpreted this, as how one gained immortality. Which of course to the Egyptians, it was.

Nevertheless, this doesn't help me find Memnon who had died quite late in the Trojan war about 1192 BC. Memnon had arrived at Troy with an army of 10,000 men There is no mention where he came from or who sent him. If he was Ethiopian then Egypt is the first clue. The Greeks his enemy admired his many courageous acts, and to the killing of Antilochus, son of Nestor, in single combat. Old Nestor had in turn, challenged Memnon to single combat but Memnon had politely turned him down, due to his venerable age. However, before the war was to end, Memnon was to also bite the dust, by the hand of Achilles, and if you should think I use this term from some old cowboy film, I will enlighten you, by saying this term of 'Biting the dust', was first used by Homer in the Iliad, the Trojan War, when Achilles slew Hector.

Now I have read the Iliad and can say, it would have been difficult for any present-day writer to have written so much detail, simply as fiction. It is my opinion, we are reading straight from the front, the war news of the day. War news passed orally from father to son, for I say this epic was never created by Homer, who in my humble opinion, only put the oral onto paper, some 400 years later.

So, I 'm assuming Memnon, which is the Greek way of remembering his name could have been the Egyptian name, Mery-Amun, meaning Beloved or blessed of Amun. But this need not be his real name, being more of a title than a name. Whilst his real name, is anyone's guess, whilst mine is Maiherpri and for that you must read on.

So, whoever Memnon was, he has nothing to do with these statues. However, the legend survived, has have the 70ft statues.

These two statues after some 3400 years, are a little worse for wear, for in 27 BC the most northerly of the statues was damaged by an earthquake, resulting in a curious phenomenon. Every morning, as the sun rose, touching the statue, it gave forth a musical ringing noise, like the twang of a harp. So, a further legend grew up that this was Memnon greeting his mother, the Dawn, as she rose into the sky. In 170 AD the Emperor Septimius Severus repaired the statue but the sounds were never heard again. It is suggested that the sounds were caused by the expansion of the stones of the broken statue as they warmed up with the rising sun and a reminder to sons to love their mother.

Returning to the Trojan War, Homer the person who wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey, appears to have lived somewhere about the 799 BC to 600 BC, he was reputed to be of

Ionian stock. Now thanks to archaeology we can be reasonably certain that the Iliad is a history of the Trojan wars. Whilst a much later book, circa 650 BC, by Arctinus of Miletus, wrote the Aethiopsis Proclus, a story concerning the burial of Memnon. Here he writes, Aurora (Eos), Memnon's mother, begged Zeus to grant her son some recognition. For Memnon's body was lying by his funeral pyre, waiting to be consumed to ashes, the Greek's method of burial. But Aurora's, (Eos's) pleas were heard by Zeus, who was moved to tears and Zeus once again, bestowed immortality upon a mortal named Memnon. Where upon, so it says, Eos flew off with her son. So, who is recording this? It has to be the Geeks. Oneminute Memnon is there, next minute he's gone. There is no burning of his body on the funeral pyre, could something else have happened to our corpse.

One is tempted to think this legend was created in some fertile mind almost at the time of Memnon's death. Odysseus, a teller of stories and lies, was also a friend of old Nestor and it was Nestor's son Antilochus, who was killed by Memnon.

. Many Pharaohs married Ethiopian Princes and it stands to reason one of the progeny would turn out to be dark skinned or black. Perhaps Memnon was the child of a lesser wife. However, we do have archaeological proof that a certain Maiherpri was buried in the valley of the Kings, in tomb (KV36). He is definitely black, not black due to the resins used in mummification. He had Ethiopian or Nubian features, and appears to have died at the age of 24.

Now it should be remembered that to an Egyptian, a man's worst nightmare would be to die in some foreign land. A land so far away that he couldn't have the expectation of being buried with those special magical rites that would set him on his journey with Ra, into the west. There would be no crossing over that river that divided the living from the dead and his promised afterlife. So, whoever Memnon was, I strongly believe he was Egyptian and working on that assumption, I will build my case, for you to digest.

Let's assume Maiherpri was our Memnon, after all his name reads 'Lion of the battlefield', this in itself points to a warrior, a killer of men. We read Memnon was killed at Troy and if Egyptian, I assume he was mummified at Troy as it would take too long to get back to Egypt. Did the Greeks in admiration, allow Maiherpri's body to be mummified rather than burnt. Did Eos do this, or did an Egyptian priest attached to Maiherpri's Egyptian army, organize this. If Memnon is in charge of an Egyptian army then he must have been in high esteem with the pharaoh that sent him. You can imagine the anger of pharaoh if this man had been burnt and returned to Egypt in a vase full of ashes. We might smile at the thought of immortality but we've got to give the Egyptians ten out of ten for trying, after all they managed to get most of their Pharaohs through to the 21st century.

Can we make a stab as to who would have been this pharaoh? Can we find a reason why this pharaoh would send an Egyptian army to assist the Trojans in destroying the Greeks? If we can say the Trojan War lasted from 1200 – 1190 BC then the pharaoh on the throne could have been either Siptah 1204 – 1198, Queen Tawosret 1198 - 1196, Sethnakhte 1196 – 1194 and then his son Ramesses III. 1194 -1163. So, let's take our choices. Siptah too sickly, Tawosret too old, Sethnakhte too old, leaving his youthful son, Ramesses III, who by his very name, was endeavoring to be as great a warrior as Ramesses II, known as the Great (They are not related).

Did Ramesses III see the dangers of what happens next, if the Greeks win? I think he did, for in the 5th year of his reign in 1189 BC Egypt is invaded by what scholars have named, the Sea people. People armed and in boats, a vast army coming down from western Turkey, just where Troy was, down the coast of Palestine, to Egypt herself. For those good with arithmetic, this is one year after the mythical Trojan war ended. So where could these invaders come from?

May I be so bold as to drop a little bombshell? Wasn't it said that due Helen, wife of Menelaus, running off with Paris, prince of Troy, that caused the Greeks to launch a thousand ships to Troy. Ships, and in history didn't the Sea People launch hundreds of ships to Egypt. I put it to you, the people attacking Troy was not just the Greeks but in fact the Sea People. The Greeks were only part of this and it is only from the Greeks do we get their story of what was taking place. Therefore, I think Ramesses III knew what was going to happen, that's why he sent an army to assist the Trojans. Infact he was so aware of the Sea Peoples intentions that he was waiting for them in the Delta for when they did come in 1189 BC.

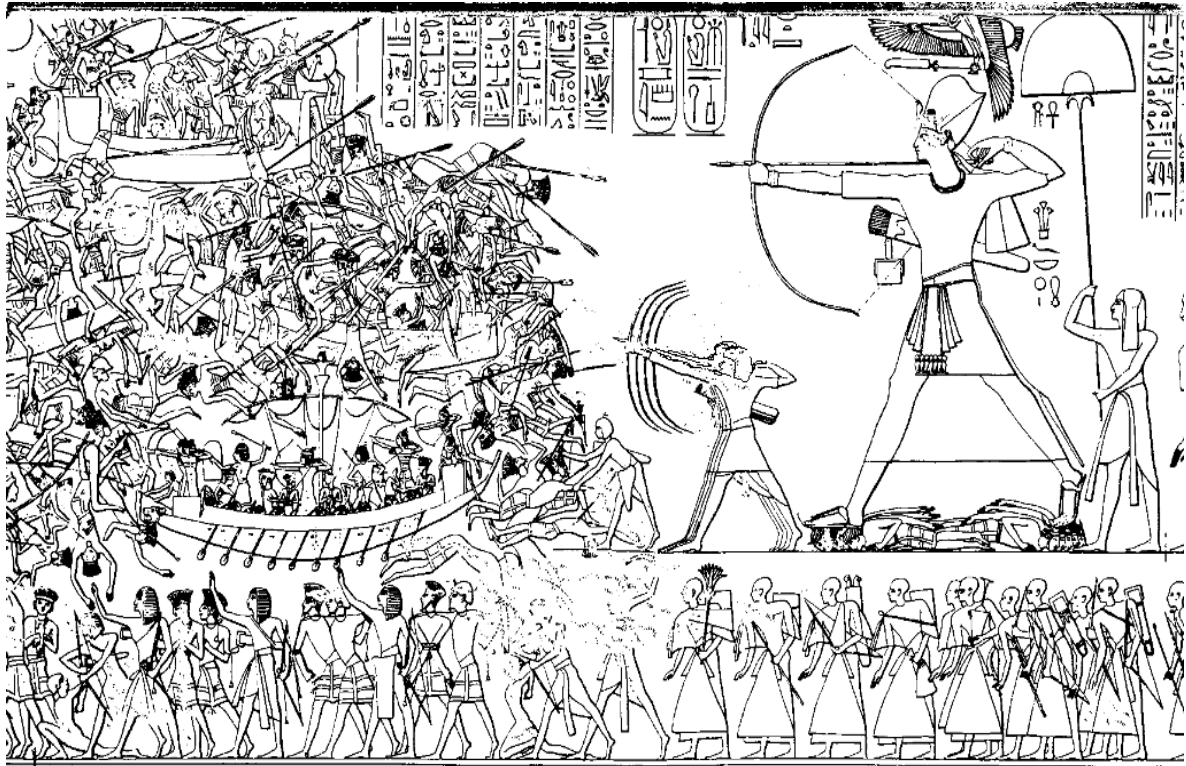
A prince Memnon may have been but could he have been buried in the Valley of the Kings, for to be buried there was a privilege indeed. Pharaohs had many children, call it part of the job, but was Memnon one of them? So, the first thing we can do, is narrow down who was his daddy. If Memnon led an army and fought at Troy he'd be mature, but not that mature if he was to take on these Greeks in single combat.

Pharaoh's were not afraid to send their sons into battle to learn the trade and Ramesses III was a fighting Pharaoh who had just a son. A son, which scholars have been happy to accept as a carving of him on Ramesses victory temple at Thebes, offering up thanks to the god Amun. Yet that son is shown coloured brown, not black. Besides if he's offering up thanks then this is after this battle and so it can't be Memnon.

How many sons did Ramesses III have? We don't know, but you can bet before television was invented, he'd have acquired a few. However, and according to the Berlin museum there is papyrus stating that in the year 29 of Ramesses III reign c1165, 'A work gang went into the royal valley "to found the tomb of a prince of His Majesty "'.

Now says N. Reeves and R.H. Wilkinson's in their book, *The Complete Valley of the Kings* (page 161). *The tomb is probably KV3 though the name of the princely owner is unknown ... nor do we know whether he was ever buried here.*

If it was KV3 then as these authors have said they don't know who the owners name was or if he was ever buried there. I therefore suggest that KV3 was original for a son of Ramesses III but that son outlived his father to become Ramesses IV. This being so he decided he didn't need a princely tomb but would built for himself a tomb fit for a pharaoh namely KV 2. So, I conclude this was not the tomb Ramesses III's work men were looking for, for it states 'the royal valley' and I think it meant the valley of the Kings, not the valley of the Queens. So, I think we can discount the four sons buried in the Queen's valley in QV 42 -45. However, we can ask did they die before their father, for they could die later and still be princes but not the prince that inherited Ramesses III throne, that would be Ramesses IV. Ramesses III was old by his 29th year and had only two years to live.



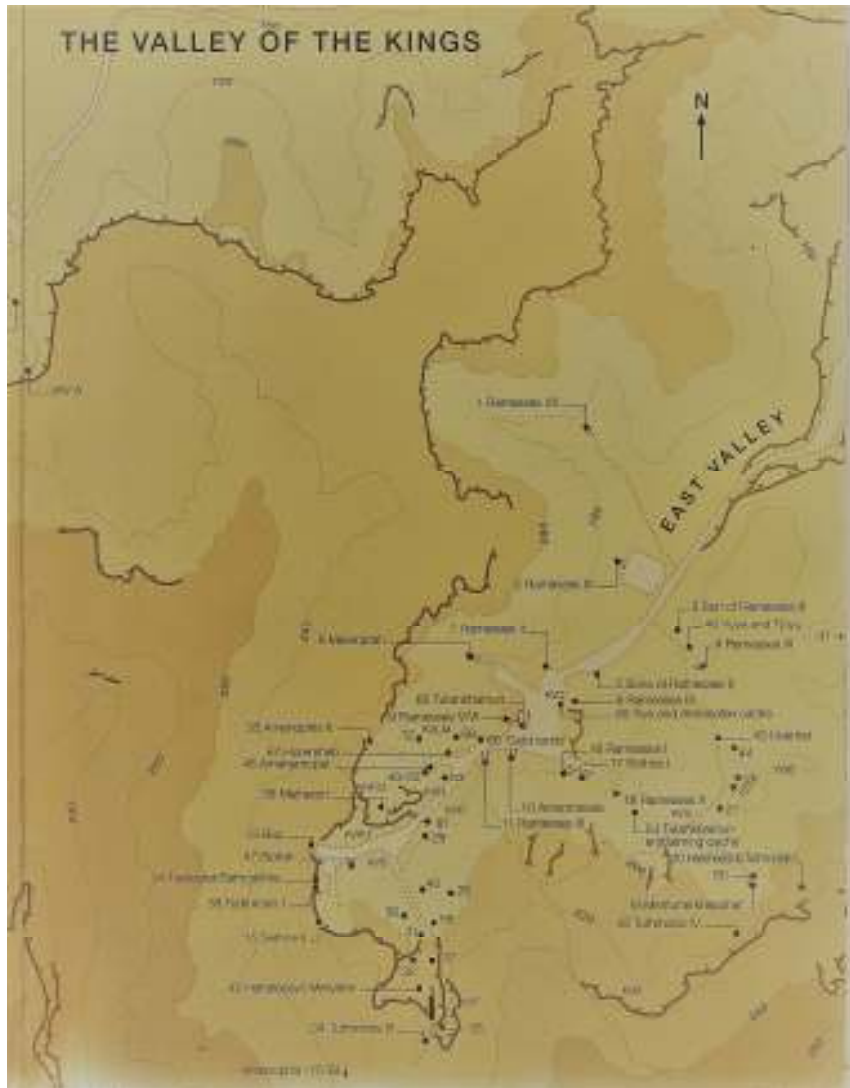
Ramesses III only vanquishing the Sea People
Artist reconstruction of what's shown on Ramesses mortuary and victory temple

Was he reminiscing about a favorite son, a special son, a son that was possibly as valorous in battle as he had been. That we'll never know, but old age does make you remember the past.

Now there are three valleys over the Nile, the Valley of the Kings (KV), West Valley (WV) and the Queens Valley (QV). If I'm to find my Memnon I have to find a tomb with a young man in it who had died in battle. The only answer was to inspect the records and do some eliminating. Now whether I am right or wrong I have come to a short list of four of which they will all have a part to play.

- (A) Amenherkhepshef believed to be the son of Ramesses III (KV13)
- (B) Prince of Ramesses III but not used (KV3)
- (C) Virgin Tomb (KV61)
- (D) Maihepri (KV36)

Amenherkhepshef could well be the son of Ramesses III, for he's buried in a tomb that was originally built for the Chancellor Bay, the power behind the throne of the Pharaoh Siptah 1204 -1198 BC. Then on Siptah's death, his step-mother Queen Tawosret, took over the throne, his job and his tomb, for chancellor Bay, seems to have out stayed his welcome.



However, she didn't use the tomb, so either she left it vacant or gave it to Amenherkhepshef. But Tawosret was no relation to Ramesses III, and there doesn't seem to be any love lost between these two families, as Sethnakhte, the father of Ramesses III, had commandeered Queen Tawosret's tomb, then thrown her body out. Either way it seems Amenherkhepshef didn't use this tomb, so I think the work men weren't looking here.

However, and in mitigation, if Amenherkhepshef was Ramesses III's son then this son's early death could have been why Ramesses III was sending work men into the valley to find this tomb, except to date, nobody has found his tomb. Yet it must be said, many pharaohs had many sons and they were not always looked upon with delight, more as a continuation of the dynasty. As he was looking for one son, I can only think he was looking for a special son.

Yet there is just one more case, a case that holds merit, as well as many thorns. This was the tomb of Maihepri, once resided in tomb KV36, but now lies in the Cairo museum to be gazed upon by many even I. When I saw him years before, I saw he was as

good as being immortal as any one could get. His hair and feature were interesting insofar he was a Nubian and he was buried in the Valley of the Kings. It was he, who had got my little grey cells working, although to be fair, I was beginning to think I was flogging a dead horse, for just as I thought I had found my man, I found archaeologists had placed Maiherpri's death at the time of Tuthmosis IV 1391 BC. This may conveniently fit in with our legend of Tithonus and Aurora, but it doesn't come up with the right date of the Trojan wars in 1193 BC some 200 years later. There had been an autopsy on his body, on the 22nd of March 1901, which prompting Maspero to suggest that he was the royal son of a black Queen.

Yet all is not lost, for there is a mystery concerning this burial. Insofar the inner coffin in which was his body, was brought into the tomb, only to find it didn't fit into the next two coffins, the middle and the outer, which were, I suggest, already made and in this tomb, awaiting his arrival. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the two that fitted were made by the same person, whilst the one with the body in, was made by someone else.

So, if Maihepri died in Egypt, they would have made all the coffins together and all to fit. This suggests, the first coffin was made a long way away. Now it so happens that my hero Memnon, died at Troy, a considerable distance away from his beloved Egypt and if Memnon was Egyptian, they would have done their utmost to bring him home. So, this coffin his inner coffin could have been made in Troy, sending the dimensions on ahead, dimensions that the tomb builders got wrong. A mistake they couldn't rectify because they had to await the arrival of the coffin and body. This looks to me as though this youth was in some distant land, because the other coffins which didn't fit, were discarded, although left in the tomb.

Let's say Maihepri was 24, a good age to go to war, he dies suddenly, as one does in war and he's brought back in a hurry to a tomb that has only just been started and so unread. So, with his few possessions, they bury him in a tomb, whose occupant has already been robbed, or removed. For the only evidence archaeologists have, in dating this tomb, is its design, being somewhere between Amenophis II to Tuthmosis IV's reign, but putting bodies into other people's tombs and coffins was never a problem for the priesthood then or in the future. Buried with him, amongst other things, were 2 quivers and 75 arrows, true they could have been for hunting but they could also have been for war. However, there was no bow, which would indicate a robbery but then why not take the arrows.

Now Maiherpri's tomb was discovered by Victor Loret, in 1899 and although Loret was good at finding tombs (he found 16) but he was bad on his recordings. Whilst tomb building by the Egyptians', began when you were young, the older you got the more work you did in preparing your own special paradise for the afterlife. So how nice it would be to find a tomb started but never finished, simply because they weren't expecting one's body to turn so quickly. Oh, how nice for my theory, if I could find such a tomb and of course I can, it's Tomb KV61, the so called the Virgin tomb. The tomb had been hewn out of the rock but the walls were never plastered or painted. Then it seems to have been sealed up and forgotten. Is this tomb far from where Maihepri was entombed? Well it was just 50 yards away, not near but then not far.

Now there's one thing about a tomb, if you want it to be a tomb and not a room, this being you put a body in it and if it's your tomb you don't lose it or forget it, as it must have some value, especially if empty. So, whoever this tomb belonged to, his body never went in it, could this have been Maiherpri's tomb?

As I have said they could only date Maiherpri by the design of the tomb they found him in. What if, when Maiherpri died, his tomb wasn't finished and here they were, in a hurry to get him down below, then the only recourse would be to find an old tomb long forgotten, force out the occupier, which should be easy and pop in our man. So, it could be this tomb was in fact far older than our Maiherpri. Now the whole point of doing work on your tomb was, you could paint on the walls with tables groaning under the weight of delicious food. Paint in a harpist for eternal entertainment and anything else you fancied to occupy yourself with. Yet in Maiherpri's tomb there was not a lot, most of the gold etc had been robbed and for entertainment, he's got a gaming board. Now he might have been named, 'The lion of the battlefield' but it does look as though much thought went into his tomb. In fact if you think about his name, it doesn't seem he'd have been born with that name. Could it be, he acquired this name after some great feat, like killing Nestor's son in single combat.

However, let's assume KV36 was an older tomb and that if Maiherpri had to be buried quickly this old tomb should show evidence that it had been reopened. To fit my theory, it has to have been opened in Ramesses III's time. Now it came about that Howard Carter reexamined this tomb about 1922 and discovered in the debris that had been used to back fill the entrance, a wooden box inscribed Maiherpri, containing an exquisite loincloth, cut from one piece of leather. Also in the debris were pieces of ostraca, or inscribed pieces of stone or pottery of the Ramesses period but which Ramesses period? It could be Ramesses I or II this being 1307 – 1224 or Ramesses III (by hopeful one) to Ramesses XI. 1194 - 1070.

Sadly, Carter could not date it better than that, but from that I am taking the assumption he is referring to the 20th dynasty which is within the right period and is definitely long after the date the archaeologists say Maiherpri was buried. Now I can understand the priests wanting to get into a tomb to put other bodies in, like they did with Amenophis II's tomb. Yet as archaeologists say, Maiherpri had been in there for some 200 years before my hopeful date of 1192 BC. If so, why open it in the Ramesses period to take nothing out, unless of course you were putting something in, namely Maiherpri's body. One must question why amongst the debris that filled up the entrance or in reality the grave shaft, was Maiherpri's leather loin cloth, mixed in with pottery of the Ramesses period. But it's that exquisite loincloth, cut from one piece of leather, in its box that holds a clue. Why rob it, then leave this valuable article behind. They couldn't have been disturbed because they had time to back fill in the entrance.

I'm pretty sure when I say, tombs were not opened by the priesthood to do a tidy up. Later in Ramesses IV's reign and after that, they did, but that was to officially rob them and then move with reverence, the bodies to a safer tomb. But this didn't happen here because the mummy of Maiherpri was still there, so it could only have been opened to put someone in. So, for my scenario to work, in went Maiherpri, and in the process one of the tomb builders, also the tomb openers, decided he's steal this loincloth and even the bow. The tomb openers then seal up the tomb, fill in the entrance and depart. But could it

be that the one who had purposely kept this loin cloth out of the tomb for himself, suddenly realized that this was more than dangerous, for the evidence available, is a police man's dream, for the box has a Maiherpri's name on it. Now when he thinks of the punishment for theft, is a spear thrust up your rear, I can see him leaving this there for the next 3000 years.

Then there is another case. Let's say Maiherpri was buried c 1350 BC and his tomb was opened in the earlier Ramasses period of Ramasses II the great 1290 BC then these leather underpants are going to be 60 years old. Would they be worth stealing or removing? It's more likely they were never put in, in the first place, in which case the tomb was reopened to accept a new occupant, Maiherpri.

I consider Maihepri is a good candidate for my Prince Memnon, simply because he's been honored for some great service with a burial in the valley, he's Ethiopian in origin, he died young, his name suggests he was warlike but above all he was mummified along way from home. Suggesting to me, someone argued long and hard, to get his body back, from the everlasting damnation of a Greek funeral pyre. It also fits nicely to the fact that as the Greeks were the owners of his body, they would surely have seen this embalming process which to the Greeks would have been seen as one being made immortal.

Now I do not say that my answers are the right answers but they are at least answers, where no answers have been presented before. I therefore hope what I have presented has given you satisfaction and a stimulation to those little grey cells. As for my reward, I know that you, who read this, are like minded, inquisitive and forever seeking knowledge and so will prosper.

Finally, if Maihepri is our Memnon, our Mery-Amun, then as Shakespeare would say, 'Upon your imaginary forces play' for as you gaze upon this face in the Cairo museum, look down to those closed eyes, eyes whose last glimpse of life, was the terrible face of Achilles.

Don Cox
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