

Tutankhamun's tomb, egypt

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



Ancient History Preliminary Assessment Task 2013 TRANSCRIPT:

TUTANKHAMUN'S TOMB, EGYPT When archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922, he remarked that it was " the day of days, the most wonderful that I have ever lived through, and certainly one whose like I can never hope to see again. " On that November day, not only had this man uncovered an unknown ancient Egyptian tomb, but one that had lain nearly undisturbed for over 3000 years whose remains laying within astounded the world.

Previous excavations in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt by Theodore Davis had found and cleared the tombs of Tutankhamun's family and their possessions. By 1913, Davis had not yet found an intact royal tomb and became disillusioned, finally declaring the area exhausted of By 1920, the tomb of nearly every New Kingdom king from between 1550 and 1070 BCE had been found in the Valley of the Kings, but Tutankhamun's remained missing. Lord Carnarvon, an English aristocrat who was enthusiastic about Egyptology, applied for and purchased the license Davis gave up and chose Howard Carter, a British Egyptologist, to continue the search.

Minor finds by Davis bearing Tutankhamun's name led Carter to believe the king was still somewhere in the valley and felt the finds justified a further exploration. Between 1917 and 1921 the two worked in the eastern valley without success. Carter convinced Carnarvon to persist for another season, determined to find Tutankhamun. Carter's team cleared bedrock using the grid system of archaeological excavation. This technique was developed in WWI for the purpose of maintaining a system that ensured stratigraphic control of excavations in trench digging and artillery barrages.

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Using these methods, on November 1st 1922 a staircase was uncovered in the limestone cliffs of the Valley of the Kings. The entrance door, which had a dry limestone blocking plastered with gypsum, was later uncovered to reveal Tutankhamun's name. The entrance they excavated then led to an eight-metre-long corridor that revealed evidence of past robberies. Four small rooms flowed from the entrance and corridor, including an Antechamber, Annexe, Burial Chamber and Treasury. On November 6, Lord Carnarvon was summoned by telegraph and arrived with his daughter, Lady Evelyn Herbert, to watch the excavation process unfold.

Compared to tombs of other pharaohs of the time, Tutankhamun's tomb was small and lacked some of the more elaborate features - for example, tomb paintings and decoration were only found in the Burial Chamber room rather than all rooms. Due to Tutankhamun's early death, a lack of time was left to prepare his tomb. One of the most remarkable divisions of Tutankhamun's tomb was that he was the only pharaoh to have been discovered intact in his tomb with the complete burial furniture and possessions surrounding. These objects included gilded statues of Tutankhamun, gods, and family members,.

Objects from the king's daily life were also present such as clothes, furniture and sceptres. Funerary goods such as canopic jars containing the king's entrails and hundreds of shabtis (which were small statues of people, intended to serve as slaves in the afterlife) were found, along with more personal items. Two miniature coffins containing mummies of stillborn babies were placed beside Tutankhamun's sarcophagus. These were likely to have been his children by his half-sister and wife, Ankhsenamun, whom he

married around the age of ten. It took Carter the most part of ten years to empty all the chambers.

This was due to difficulties from a sudden change in protocol and access privileges from both British and Egyptian governments, affecting the excavation on the site and delaying the whole process. It was also due to the meticulous process Carter took in his excavation - each object was recorded, catalogued, described, and photographed in situ, before being preserved and conserved, then finally packed and transported to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The main archaeological find of the tomb however, was King Tutankhamun himself. Inside the burial chamber were four gilded shrines, one inside the other.

The innermost shrine held a quartzite sarcophagus which in turn held three coffins. The innermost coffin made of solid gold contained the mummy of Tutankhamun, wrapped in linen and wearing his famous gold plated mask, inlaid with blue glaze and inscribed with religious spells. Although the body was found to be poorly preserved, Tutankhamun was notable for being the only Egyptian pharaoh found in situ, intact and unsealed since ancient times in his tomb. In 1925 the body was removed from the coffins with difficulty, due to the abundance of resin that had been poured over the mummy at the funeral.

Carter and his team were forced to cut the body in order to remove it from the coffin. Four sessions of scientific analysis were conducted on Tutankhamun's body over the years. These proved to ablaze many controversial issues and interpretations over Tutankhamun's cause of death. The first inquiry was an autopsy which began after Carter's excavation in <https://assignbuster.com/tutankhamuns-tomb-egypt/>

1925, carried out by Douglas E. Derry, a Professor of Anatomy at the Egyptian University in Cairo. Derry found Tutankhamun to have a fracture in his lower left thighbone, a large, ragged embalming wound, and estimated his age of death to be between 18 and 22 years.

He also reconfirmed the body's poor preservation, noting that the inner layers of linen were reduced to the 'consistency of soot', that an overload of resin destroyed the corpse, and that the nose was heavily flattened by the bandages. The second scientific analysis of the body was conducted by R. G. Harrison in 1968. With an x-ray the team concluded that two bone fragments in the skull and haemorrhaging may have been caused by a blow to the head, and that the body was missing a sternum and some frontal rib bones. This caused speculations about Tutankhamun's death, some suggesting murder and others suggesting a fatal chariot accident.

Examiners also noted that the spine showed signs of scoliosis. A further x-ray and blood analysis in 1978 was led by James E. Harris. It wrongly concluded that the king was perhaps 23 to 27 years old at death. A blood analysis supported the idea that Tutankhamun was related to the body of Akhenaten found in another tomb in the Valley of the Kings - suggesting it was Tutankhamun's father. A final CT scan in 2005 was conducted to test the conclusions of previous inquiries and to look for additional details still undiscovered.

Led by Dr Zahi Hawass, the scan confirmed the previous findings of the king's height, health, general features and age of death at around 18-19 years. It also disproved the theory of scoliosis, relating the curvature of his spine instead the way his body was arranged by the embalmers. 8MINSThe

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theory of murder by head trauma and death relating to the missing ribs was also ruled out and blamed on embalmers and/or Carter's team, The leg trauma found in Tutankhamun's lower left femur may have introduced infection which may have been fatal.

This theory however remains unproven. Facial reconstruction of King Tutankhamun was also commenced using the new CT scan data in 2005. A forensic anthropologist calculated sizes of tissue on his face. A cast was then made of the skull from this data which was used to build a latex model. When the CT scan data and skull cast was given to another forensic team for checking, the skin colour proved to be somewhat controversial in interpretation. Controversies occurred as it is impossible to determine skin colour accurately.

This is because there is a large variation on skin tones in the area, and not enough accurate information available as Ancient Egyptian art depicted bodies in unrealistic colours. Thus, no consensus on the King's skin tone was reached, however the overall results between the different reconstructions was similar. At the time of discovery, very little was known about this ancient pharaoh. Thanks to the efforts put into many investigations over the years and, in particular, the 1923 'Curse of King Tut' phenomena that was spread through media following the untimely death of Lord Carnarvon, knowledge and interest of Tutankhamun has skyrocketed.

Tutankhamun's legacy remains to this day and he continues to stand across the globe as one of the most well-known Egyptian pharaohs in history.

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