

Tutankhamun

Factfile

Tutankhamun, who is referred to by many different names including King Tut and the Boy King, is probably the most well-known Egyptian pharaoh. Historians are able to understand a lot about this pharaoh's life due to the abundance of objects found within his undisturbed burial chamber.

Early Life

Tutankhamun lived from around 1341 to 1323 BC. He was only ten years old when he gained power, which is why he is often referred to as the 'Boy King'. His original name – Tutankhaten – means 'the living image of Aten' but he changed this after his father's death to the name we now know him by which means 'the living image of Amun'.

His father was the pharaoh Akhenaten, who was extremely unpopular due to his decision to change the religion of Egypt by removing the many gods that they used to worship and replacing it with one god, Aten – the sun god. After his death, many people removed his image and name in an attempt to forget about him.

Once in power, King Tut moved the centre of government back to Thebes, after his father had moved it elsewhere. He also rebuilt some of the temples for the gods in an attempt to regain popularity and trust from the Egyptian people.

Tutankhamun died at the age of 19 but historians are unsure why despite there being many different theories.



Discovering Tutankhamun's Tomb

Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered in 1922 by a group of researchers funded by Lord Carnarvon and led by famous Egyptologist, Howard Carter.

The tomb, which was located in the Valley of the Kings, was located due to a cup, which was discovered by a man named Theodore Davis. This cup had a picture of Tutankhamun and his wife on it and gave Carter and his team a clue to finding the Boy King's final resting place.

Having laid undiscovered for so long, the treasures and the sarcophagus were all still in very good condition. This meant that when Carter and his team finally found his burial chamber, many of the objects were still exactly how they were left all those thousands of years ago.

Inside the tomb, they found over 5000 items which had been left for King Tut to take with him to the afterlife. These items included statues, gold jewellery, chariots, canopic jars, chairs and paintings. There were many rooms filled with these objects but the burial chamber held only the king's sarcophagus, which was the only room in the tomb to be decorated. This is unusual as usually every room would be carved or painted. This has led historians to declare that Tutankhamun must have died very suddenly and that this tomb may not have been meant for him in the first place. Other historians believe that the burial chamber and decorations were added after his death.

The Curse of the Mummy!

It was believed that mummies and their tombs had magical powers over any person who disturbed them. Many people might think this is nonsense but after Tutankhamun's tomb was opened, many strange things started to occur which made people believe in the curse! Firstly, Lord Carnarvon, who paid for the dig that discovered King Tut, died shortly after the tomb was opened. When he died, all the lights in Cairo mysteriously went out! As well as this, Carnarvon's dog died and Carter's pet canary was killed by a cobra. Spooky!

