



Tutankhamun Bust

The most famous Egyptian pharaoh today is, without doubt, Tutankhamun. However, before the spectacular discovery of his almost intact tomb in the Valley of the Kings in November 1922, Tutankhamun was only a little known figure of the late 18th Dynasty.

Tutankhamun was probably born at Akhetaten which was the capital city of Egypt. He was born in about the year 1346 BC. He became pharaoh at the tender age of nine in 1337 BC and reigned during the 18th Dynasty when the Egyptian Empire was at its height. He reigned from about 1337 to 1328 BC.

The reason that Tutankhamun is so well known today is that his tomb, containing fabulous treasures, was discovered on November 4, 1922, nearly 3000 years after his death, by British archaeologists Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon. He was buried in a hastily prepared tomb in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes, the traditional burial place of his predecessors.

The person responsible for his burial, and shown on one of the walls in Tutankhamun's tomb, was Ay who succeeded him on the Egyptian throne. The small tomb contained hundreds of objects (now housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo), many richly decorated and covered in gold, that would be needed by the king in his afterlife.

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Over 3,000 treasures were placed in the tomb to help Tutankhamen in his afterlife and the walls of the burial chamber were painted with scenes of his voyage to the afterworld.

Tutankhamun reigned for around 9 years, making him about 18 when he died. Forensic analysis of his mummy has confirmed this, putting his age at about 18. Clay seals on the wine jars found in his tomb record not only the type of wine and the vineyard, but also the King's regal year when each wine was laid down. The highest recordable date is Year 9, suggesting that Tutankhamun died in that year.

There is no positive evidence on the mummy of how Tutankhamun met his death though there has been much speculation about it: had he been murdered to allow his courtiers access to the throne? Or did he die young of natural causes? What do you think?

