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## Encyclopedia > Tutankhamun

King Tut redirects here. For the song, see [King Tut \(song\)](#).

**Nebkheperure Tutankhamun** (alternately spelled with *Tutenkh-*, *-amen*, *-amon*), [Egyptian](#) *tw̥t- n -imn*; \**tuwt- ankh-yam n* ([1341 BC](#) – [1323 BC](#)) was a [Pharaoh](#) of the [Eighteenth dynasty](#) (ruled [1333 BC](#) – [1322 BC](#) in the conventional chronology), during the period of Egyptian history known as the [New Kingdom](#). His original name, Tutankhaten, meant "Living Image of [Aten](#)", while Tutankhamun meant "Living Image of [Amun](#)". He is possibly also the *Nibhurrereya* of the [Amarna letters](#). He was likely the eighteenth dynasty king 'Rathotis', who according to [Manetho](#), an ancient historian, had reigned for nine years—a figure which conforms exactly with [Flavius Josephus'](#) generally accurate version of Manetho's Epitome.<sup>[2]</sup> Tutankhamun is, in modern times, one of the most famous of the pharaohs, and the only one to have a nickname in popular culture (King Tut)

Tutankha

Precede  
[Smenkhk](#)  
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## Significance

Tutankhamun was only 9 years old when he became pharaoh. He died 9 years later. Tutankhamun is of only moderate significance, and most of his modern popularity [Valley of the Kings](#) was discovered almost completely intact. However, he also is si managed the beginning of the transition from the heretical [Ateanism](#) of his predece back to the familiar [Egyptian religion](#). As Tutankhamun began his reign at such an [Ay](#) was probably making most of the important political decisions during Tutankha

[Howard Carter](#) of Tutankhamun received worldwide press coverage and sparked a craze for which Tutankhamun's burial mask remains the popular face.

## Parentage

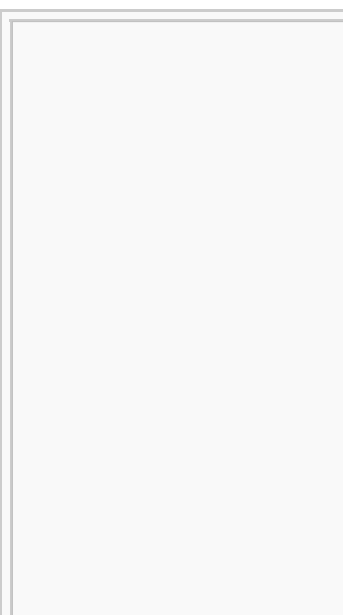
Tutankhamun's parentage is uncertain. An inscription calls him a king's son, but it is generally thought that he was probably a son either of [Amenhotep III](#) (although probably more likely a son of Amenhotep III's son [Akhenaten](#) around 1342 BC. However, it is more likely that Tutankhamun was more likely to be a son of the short-lived king Smenkhkare rather than Akhenaten consciously chose a female co-regent named [Neferneferuaten](#) as his successor. This would have been unlikely if the latter had been his son.<sup>[3]</sup> Tutankhamun was married to [Ankhesenamun](#) and after the re-establishment of the traditional Egyptian religion the couple changed their names to **-amun** ending, becoming Ankhesenamun and Tutankhamun. They are known to have had several (may have been stillborn) girls—whose mummies were discovered in his tomb. The cause of his death is disputed. Some believe that he was murdered by his advisors, but it is also possible that he died of an accident or while at war. A recent CT scan of his mummy shows a very bad injury to his skull, which some think he died of infection. The murder theory is also unlikely now because of the discovery of a tomb for [Kings](#), in a small tomb today known as [KV62](#), that was not intended for a king.

The first theory was that he was a son of [Amenhotep III](#) and Queen [Tiye](#). This theory is considered more than fifty years old at the time of Tutankhamun's birth. Another theory is that he was the son of [Smenkhkare](#) and [Meritaten](#). This is possible, but not plausible. Smenkhkare came to power in Year 14 of his reign and it is thought that during this time Meritaten married Smenkhkare. If Tutankhamun, he would have needed at least a three year reign, because if it had been barely seven when he came to the throne. However, if there had been length to the reign of Akhenaten, Amenhotep definitely could be Tutankhamun's father.

The current theory is that he was the son of Akhenaten and his minor wife [Kiya](#). Queen Kiya was the "Great Wife of Akhenaten" so it is possible that she could have borne him an heir. Supporting this theory, the tomb of Akhenaten shows that a royal fan bearer standing next to Kiya's death bed, and a likely wet nurse holding a baby, which would indicate that the wet nurse was holding the child.

## Reign

During Tutankhamun's reign, Akhenaten's [Amarna](#) revolution ([Atenism](#)) was being reversed. Akhenaten had attempted to supplant the traditional priesthood and [deities](#) with a god who was until then considered minor, [Aten](#). In Year 3 of Tutankhamun's reign (1331 BC), when he was still a boy at the age eleven and probably under the influence of two older advisors (Akhenaten's [vizier Ay](#) and perhaps [Nefertiti](#)), the ban on the old [pantheon](#) of [deities](#) and their [temples](#) was lifted, the traditional privileges were restored to their priestly families, and the capital was moved back to [Thebes](#). The young pharaoh adopted the name Tutankhamun, changing it from his birth name Tutankhaten. Because of his age at the time these decisions were made, it is generally thought that most if not all the responsibility for them falls on his advisors. Also, King Tutankhamun restored all of the traditional deities and restored order to the chaos that his relative had caused. Many temples devoted to Amun-Ra were built. And even though Tutankhamun's wooden box depicts him going to war against Hittites and Nubians and he is shown wearing the blue war crown, it is doubted that he ever went to war.

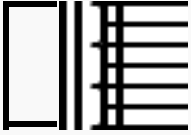




[cartouches](#) of his birth and a rampant [Sekhmet](#) lioness crushing enemies of several [deities](#) protectively above

## Events after his death

A now-famous letter to the Hittite king [Suppiluliuma I](#) from a widowed queen of Egypt, has been attributed to [Ankhesenamun](#) (among others). The royal lineage Marriage to a woman of the royal line was essential for a male pharaoh, even if he of this good fortune, Suppiluliumas I first sent a messenger to make inquiries about After receiving reports that the situation was as related to Suppiluliuma I, he sent However, Zannanza got no further than the border before he was killed, according were the queen in question, and his death a strategic murder, it was probably at th both had the opportunity and the motive to kill him.

## Name

<b>Horus name</b>		<i>Kanakht Tutmesut</i> The strong bull, ple
<b>Nebti name</b>		<i>Neferhepusegerehta</i> One of perfect laws, palace of Amun; Lo
<b>Golden Horus name</b>		<i>Wetjeskhausehetep</i> <i>khau-itef-Re Wetjes</i> Who wears crowns a pleases the gods; W wears crowns, and t
<b>Prenomen</b>		<i>Nebkheperure</i> Lord of the forms of
<b>Son of Re</b>		<i>Tutankhamun Hek</i> Living Image of Am

Under [Atenism](#), Tutankhamun was named Tutankhaten, which in [Egyptian hieroglyphs](#)

Technically, this name is [transliterated](#) as twt- n - tn.

At the reintroduction of the old pantheon, his name was changed. It is transliterated realized as **Tutankhamun Hekaiunushema**, meaning "Living image of [Amun](#), ru to the throne, Tutankhamun took a *praenomen*. This is translated as nb- prw-r , an "Lord of the forms of [Re](#)". The name *Nibhurrereya* in the [Amarna letters](#) may be a

## Cause of death

For a long time the cause of Tutankhamun's death was unknown, and it is still the root of much speculation. How old was the king when he died? The g Did he suffer from any physical abnormalities? Had he been murdered? Some of these questions were finally answered in early [2005](#) when the results of a set of [CT scans](#) on the mummy were released, but many still remain to

The body originally was inspected by [Howard Carter](#)'s team in the early 1920s, alth recovering the jewelry and amulets from the body. To remove these objects from the hardened embalming resins used, Carter's team cut up the mummy into various detached, the torso cut in half and the head was severed. Hot knives were used to it was cemented by resin.

Since the body was placed back in its sarcophagus in 1926, the mummy has subsequently been examined in 1968 by a group from the [University of Liverpool](#), then in 1978 by a group from the [University of Manchester](#), and in 2005 a team of Egyptian scientists led by Secretary General of the [Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities](#) who conducted a [CT scan](#) on the mummy.

[X-rays](#) of his [mummy](#), which were taken previously, in 1968, had revealed a dense area that had been interpreted as a [subdural hematoma](#), which would have been caused by the result of an accident, but it also had been suggested that the young pharaoh was the result of a number of theories as to who was responsible. One popular candidate was his wife, Ankhesenpaaten, but other candidates included his wife and chariot-driver. Interestingly, there seem to be signs of a leg injury, which if true, meant Tutankhamun lived for a fairly extensive period of time after the injury was inflicted.<sup>[5]</sup>

Much confusion had been caused by a small loose sliver of bone within the upper part of the same X-ray analysis. Some people have suggested this visible bone fragment found in Tutankhamun's [brain](#) was removed *post mortem* in the mummification process, and that a hardened [resin](#) introduced into the [skull](#) on at least two separate occasions after the injury while he was alive, some scholars, including the 2005 [CT scan](#) team, say it all came from the cranial cavity.

## 2005 findings



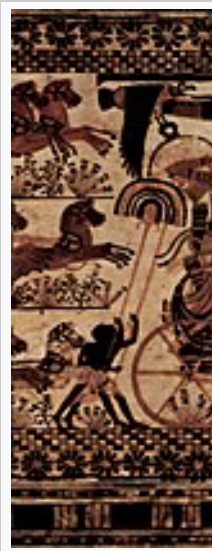
Tutankhamun coffinette

On [March 8, 2005](#), [Egyptian](#) scientists announced the results of a [CT scan](#) performed on the mummy. It uncovered no evidence of a leg fracture, but evidence suggesting [foul play](#) appeared to have been drilled into Tutankhamun's left thigh bone. The pharaoh badly broke his leg but it was not infected; however, members of the team recognized, as a less likely possibility, that the embalmers. Altogether 1,000 years after Tutankhamun's mummy was discovered,

Much was learned about the young pharaoh, estimated at nineteen years, his upper and lower limits to his health and there were no signs of malnutrition during his childhood. He was roughly 170 cm (5 ft 7 in) tall. [Overbite](#) characteristic of the pharaoh belonged. He also had a pronounced [overbite](#) although it was within normal limits, not pathological. Given the fact that [Akhenaten](#) (possibly his father) had an elongated head, it is likely that this was more than a distinct abnormality, and some have speculated. The results also revealed a [cleft palate](#).<sup>[6]</sup> A slight bend to the spine, scientists agreed that there was no scoliosis, was pathological in nature, and had not been caused during the embalming process. Based on the previous X-rays, Tutankhamun had [scoliosis](#). (However, it was suggested that the mummy found in [KV55](#), possibly his father, exhibited several similar features, including a [cleft palate](#), a [dolichocephalic](#) skull,

The 2005 conclusion by a team of Egyptian scientists, based on the CT scan finding [gangrene](#) after breaking his leg. After consultations with [Italian](#) and [Swiss](#) experts, the team concluded that the fracture in Tutankhamun's left leg most likely occurred only days before his death,

led directly to his death. The fracture was not sustained during the mummification process or as a result of some damage to the mummy as claimed by [Howard Carter](#). The Egyptian scientists also have found no evidence that he had been struck on the head and no other indication that he was murdered, as had been speculated previously. Further investigation of the fracture led to the conclusion that it was severe, most likely caused by a fall from some height—possibly a chariot riding accident due to the absence of [pelvis](#) injuries—and may have been fatal within hours[1].



Tutankhamun :  
caused by the c

Despite the relatively poor condition of the mummy, the Egyptian team found evidence that great care had been given to the body of Tutankhamun during the embalming process. They found five distinct embalming materials, which were applied to the body at various stages of the mummification process. This counters previous assertions that the king's body had been prepared carelessly and in a hurry. In November 2006, at the annual meeting of the [Radiological Society of North America](#), Egyptian radiologists stated that that CT images and scans of the king's mummy revealed Tutankhamun's height to be 180 cm, a revision upward from the earlier estimates.[2]

Michael R. King continues to dispute these findings, claiming that the king was murdered. He argues that the bone was loosened by the embalmers during [mummification](#), but that it had been broken at the back of the head (from a fall or an actual blow) may have caused the brain to rupture. He also claims that breaking small pieces of the bone right above the eyes.[8]

## Discovery of KV62

*Main article:* [KV62](#)

Tutankhamun seems to have faded from public consciousness in Ancient Egypt within a short time after his death, and he remained virtually unknown until the early twentieth century. His tomb was robbed at least twice in antiquity, but based on the items taken (including perishable oils and perfumes) and the evidence of restoration of the tomb after the intrusions, it seems clear that these robberies took place within several months at most of the initial burial. Eventually the location of the tomb was lost because it had come to be buried by stone chips from subsequent tombs, either dumped there or washed there by floods. In the years that followed, some huts for workers were built over the tomb entrance, clearly not knowing what lay beneath. When at the end of the twentieth dynasty the Valley of the Kings burials were systematically dismantled, the burial of Tutankhamun was overlooked, presumably because knowledge of it had been lost and even his name may have been forgotten.



Tomb of Tutankhamun in

For many years, rumors of a "[Curse of the Pharaohs](#)" (probably fueled by newspapers seeking sales at the time of the discovery) persisted, emphasizing the early death of some of those who entered the tomb. A recent study of journals and death records indicates no [statistical](#) difference between those who entered the tomb and those on the expedition who did not. Indeed, most lived past seventy. [Ancient Egyptian senet](#) games similar to the one displayed at the right, were found

Some of the treasures in Tutankhamun's tomb are noted for their apparent depart

king. Certain cartouches where a king's name should appear have been altered, as to reuse the property of a previous pharaoh—as often occurred. However, this instance may simply be the product of "updating" the artifacts to reflect the shift from *Tutankhaten* to *Tutankhamun*. Other differences are less easy to explain, such as the older, more angular facial features of the middle coffin and canopic coffinet. The most widely accepted theory for these latter variations is that the items were originally intended for *Smenkhkare*, who may or may not be the mysterious KV55 mummy. Said mummy, according to craniological examinations, bears a striking first order (father-to-son, brother-to-brother) relationship to Tutankhamun.<sup>[10]</sup>

## 2007 discoveries in Tutankhamun's tomb

On September 24, 2007, it was announced that a team of Egyptian [archaeologists](#) led by Zahi Hawass discovered [baskets](#) of 3,000 year old [dough](#) fruit in the treasury of Tutankhamun's tomb.<sup>[11]</sup> Dough is native to the [Nile Valley](#). The dough fruit are traditionally offered at [funerals](#).

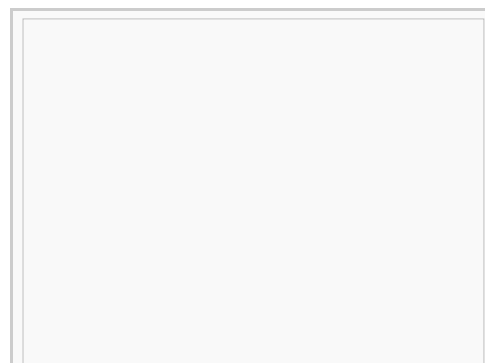
Fifty clay pots bearing Tutankhamun's official seal were also discovered. According to the team, the pots contained money that were destined to travel with the pharaoh to the afterlife. He is believed to have used the objects were originally discovered, but not opened or removed from the tomb.

King Tutankhamun still rests in his tomb in the [Valley of the Kings](#), in a temperature of 17°C. In 2007, 85 years to the day since Howard Carter's discovery, the actual face of the 19-year-old pharaoh was revealed in an underground tomb at [Luxor](#), when the linen-wrapped mummy was removed from a climate-controlled glass box. This was done to prevent the heightened rate of decomposition from tourists visiting the tomb.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Tutankhamun in popular culture

*Main article: [Egypt in the European imagination](#)*

If Tutankhamun is the world's best known pharaoh, it is partly because his tomb and associated artifacts are the most exhibited. He also has entered popular culture—commemorated in the whimsical song "[King Tut](#)" by the American comedian [Steve Martin](#) in his album "The Toot Uncommons". He was also the namesake of one of Batman's arch enemies in the American television series "[Batman](#)" with [Adam West](#).



In 1939, The Three Stooges spoofed the discovery of King Tutankhamun with their short film *We Want Our Mummy*.

In 1939, slapstick comedy trio the [Three Stooges](#) (which they explored the [tomb](#) of the [midnight tootin'](#)) and his Queen, Hotsy Totsy. A devious salesman in *Mummy's Dummies*, in which he is played by [Vernon Dent](#) with a toothache.

As a side effect, the interest in this tomb also led to the creation of a feature film featuring a vengeful mummy. As Jon Manickoff wrote in the 1977 edition of Carter's *The Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun*, "who in life was one of the least esteemed of pharaohs, is now the most renowned."

## Tutankhamun's appearance and legacy

*See also: [Racial characteristics of ancient Egypt](#)*

In 2005, three teams of scientists (Egyptian with the [National Geographic Society](#), French with the [Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique](#), and American with the [Smithsonian Institution](#)) developed a new facial likeness of Tutankhamun based on 1,700 [three-dimensional CT scans](#) of the pharaoh's skull. The French and American teams were given the task of reconstructing the face from these—but the Americans were never told *who* the subject of the reconstruction was. The French team used [silicone](#) busts of their interpretation of what the young monarch looked like.

## SKIN TONE

Although modern technology can reconstruct Tutankhamun's facial structure with

data from his mummy,<sup>[14][15]</sup> correctly determining his skin tone is impossible. The problem is not a lack of skill on the part of Ancient Egyptians. Egyptian artisans distinguished quite accurately among different ethnicities, as can be seen clearly in the image, above at "Reign", where the enemies being vanquished are displayed under the rampant lioness with Tutankhamun's head. Sometimes they depicted the subjects in totally unreal colors, the purposes for which aren't completely understood. The colours may have had ritual significance. There is no consensus on King Tut's skin tone.

Terry Garcia, *National Geographic's* executive vice president for mission program said, in response to some protesters of the King Tut reconstruction—

The big variable is skin tone. North Africans, we know today, had a range of skin tones, from light to dark. In this case, we selected a medium skin tone, and we say, quite up front, 'This is midrange.' We will never know for sure what his exact skin tone was or the colour of his eyes with 100% certainty. ... Maybe in the future, people will come to a different conclusion.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Exhibitions

The splendors of Tutankhamun's tomb are among the most traveled artifacts in the world. They have been to many countries, but probably the best-known exhibition tour was the *Treasures of Tutankhamun* tour, which ran from 1972-1979. This exhibition was first shown in London at the [British Museum](#) from 30 March until 3 September 1972. More than 1.6 million visitors came to see the exhibition, some queueing for up to eight hours and it was the most popular exhibition ever in the Museum. The exhibition moved on to many other countries, including the USA, USSR, Japan, France, Canada, and West Germany. The exhibition in the United States [Museum of Art](#) and ran from from 17 November, 1976 through 15 April, 1979. It was seen by millions of people in the United States.

An excerpt from the site of the American [National Gallery of Art](#):

"...55 objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun included the boy-king's solid gold mask, the goddess Selket, lamps, jars, jewelry, furniture, and other objects for the afterlife. The exhibition was a 'blockbuster.' A combination of the age-old fascination with ancient Egypt, the discovery of the tomb, the golden masks, and the funeral trappings of the boy-king created an immense popular interest before the building opened to view the exhibition. At times the line completely

In 2005, hoping to inspire a whole new generation of museum visitors, Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, with Arts and Exhibitions International and the National Geographic Society, launched a new exhibition of the tomb's treasures, this time called "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs." It was seen by millions of people.<sup>[18]</sup>

The exhibition started in [Los Angeles, California](#), then moved to [Fort Lauderdale, Florida](#), [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#), and the fifth will be [London](#)<sup>[19]</sup> before finally returning to Egypt. Recent events have propelled an encore of the exhibition in the United States, beginning with the opening in New York City of 2008.<sup>[20]</sup> The tour will continue on to two other U.S. cities which have yet to be revealed.

The exhibition includes 80 exhibits from the reigns of Tutankhamun's immediate predecessors, such as [Hatshepsut](#), whose trade policies greatly increased the wealth of that dynasty. It also includes Tutankhamun's burial artifacts, as well as 50 from Tutankhamun's tomb. The exhibition was a feature of the 1972-1979 tour.<sup>[22]</sup>

## In fiction

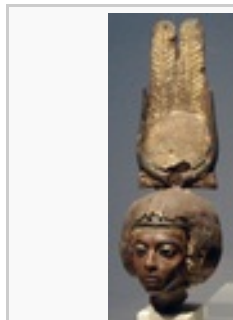
Tutankhamun/Tutankhaten appears in [P. C. Doherty's](#) trilogy of Ancient Egyptian novels: (2003), *The Season of the Hyaena* (2005) and *The Year of the Cobra* (2005).

Tutankhamun is also the major character in a series of historical novels by the American author [Michael Chabon](#).

The historical novel *Tutankhamun-Speak my Name* (2005) ISBN 1-4120-6325-6 by (678 page) story of the life of the young king from his birth to Kiye, the concubine (later and beyond into the afterlife of his KA in the tomb eventually discovered by H

Tutankhamun appears as a 10-year-old mummy in the [Discovery Kids](#) show [Tutankhamun](#) [King Tut](#), as played by [Victor Buono](#), was a villain on the [Batman TV series](#) aired in William Omaha McElroy, after suffering a concussion, came to believe he was the response to this knowledge was to embark upon a crime spree that required him to [Batman](#) and [Robin](#).

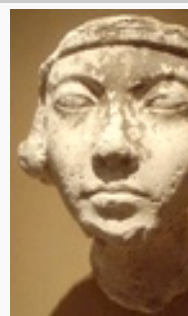
## Gallery depicting kin of Tutankhamun



A wooden statue head of Queen Tiye, thought to be Tutankhamun's Grandmother, part of the Ägyptisches Museum Berlin collection



Fragmentary statue of Akhenaten, perhaps Tutankhamun's father, on display at the [Cairo Museum](#)



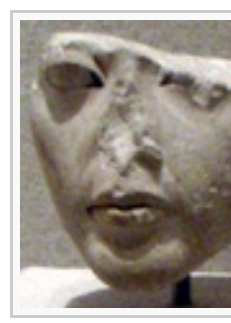
Plaster face of a young Amarna-era woman, likely Queen Tiye, likely mother of Tutankhamun, on display at the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), New York City



The iconic image of Queen Nefertiti, perhaps the step-mother of Tutankhamun, part of the Ägyptisches Museum Berlin collection



Another statue head depicting [Nefertiti](#), now part of the Ägyptisches Museum Berlin collection



Fragmentary statue to represent Ankhnesneferibre, sister and wife to Tutankhamun, on display at the [Brooklyn Museum](#)

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