
How King Tutankhamun died

According to our text, The Humanities, “King Tutankhamun was just a teenager when he died. For an ancient Egyptian pharaoh, presumably well-fed and fiercely protected, this was a premature demise. It was also momentous, for his death meant the beginning of the end of ancient Egypt’s 18th dynasty”. (Sayre, 2015) What and how did this happen to the young King? The first speculation about a possible cause of death is catastrophic injuries.

According to National Geographic, 2013 “in 2005, under the direction of Zahi Hawass, then head of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities an accurate CT scan was performed on the mummified body of King Tutankhamen. It revealed the extreme damage to the rib cage, a missing breastbone, as well as a broken leg”. Undoubtedly, King Tut had suffered some massive trauma. The researchers speculated that King Tutankhamen could have been run into by a speeding chariot while he was on his knees. They also, suggest the damage to King Tutankhamen chest caused by a swift kick from a horse since horses pulled the pharaoh’s chariot. (Williams, 2013)

Another speculation by writer Bob Brier is that a more sinister motive for Tutankhamun’s death suggested. Brier uses his medical knowledge, as previous researchers did, to look closer at the young King’s skull. He found evidence that leads him to declare that these bumps and marks are the reason for Tutankhamun’s early death. Brier suggests that these same marks could most likely only be caused maliciously. He argues, the area of the head which was damaged could only have been reached by someone who had ready access to the King, a servant for example. (Williams, 2013)

The third speculation is that King Tutankhamun was poisoned. This theory comes later from the Egyptian state information service. Some even say the Egyptian King Tutankhamen died from illness because he suffered from a genetic deficiency from his parents being brother and sister. The information according to some is very sketchy; it stated, “Forensic examination carried out”. “This reveals that he (Tutankhamun) was poisoned, and it is now suggested that the blow to the back of the head might have happened after his death, during mummification. It went on to say “There is even a suspect named Tutu (or Dudu) who first appears as an official in the court of Amenhotep III, later in the court of Akhenaten and finally in that of Tutankhamun, Tutu described as non-Egyptian, an unsavory character who caused friction”. (Williams, 2013)

The Egyptian state information service believed that the young king was poisoned. The final speculation is that King Tutankhamen died of illness. The reason for this speculation is several pieces of art images found in his tomb picture a young king with his young queen, but they also

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show him in several instances to be resting on a walking stick or sitting. Also, found in his tomb were images of Tutankhamun, which showed an active king, mowing down the enemies of Egypt in his chariot. However, there could be a case for a sickly young Tutankhamun, who was never destined to rule far beyond a few short years. A king who would not die from a blow to the back of the head, from a chariot fall or a foreign zealot but illness. (Amarna, N.D.) There have been many theories about the cause of King Tutankhamen death. After reading these opinions, I believe the most logical argument for King Tutankhamen death is due to illness.

A virtual autopsy of King Tutankhamun body later revealed that the king unlikely died in a chariot crash because he suffered from serious genetic, physical impairments. His ability to ride on a chariot would be impossible for him due to his partially clubbed foot, which made him unable to stand without aid. Evidence of his physical impairment was the 130 used walking canes found in his tomb. He had a genetic illness that was because his parents were brother and sister, and he also suffered from malaria. The injuries to his skull and fractures to other parts of his body caused after the young king was already dead. The only fracture that is said to have happened before his death was to his knee. This fracture was not caused by a chariot race, but by a fall. With complications from a broken leg (knee), which was aggravated by malaria King Tutankhamen died.

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