

Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues - By A.R.Williams

Introduction of the Lesson

Written by A.R. Williams, this chapter is about the last heir of the powerful Pharaoh Dynasty, Tutankhamun, who died when he was a teenager after ruling for nine years. He died in a mysterious way, this chapter throws light over all the possible mysteries – the curse, where his tomb lies, his life and ultimately death. Egyptians believe that there is life after death and that is the reason why the Pharaohs were buried with wealth and everyday use items.

Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues - Summary in detail:

Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues is a chapter which gives us an in-depth insight of Tutankhamun, the last ruler of the powerful Pharaoh Dynasty in Egypt. He was a teenager when he died and his death was a mystery. Some speculated that he was murdered. He ruled in Egypt and its empire for centuries. In 1922, his tomb was discovered by Howard Carter, a British Archaeologist. After 80 years, he was taken from his resting place for CT scan which offers to solve the mystery of his life and death by creating a forensic reconstruction.

Tut's father or grandfather, Amenhotep III, was a very powerful Pharaoh who ruled over a period of forty years. His son, Amenhotep IV, thrived him and began the strangest period in the history of Egypt. He promoted the worship of Aten (the sun disk). He changed his name to Akhenaten meaning servant of the Atens. He also moved the religious capital from Thebes to the new city of Akhenaten, called Amarna. Further, he attacked Amun, a god, smashed his images and closed his temples. Another mysterious ruler succeeded him who died soon. Next, Tutankhamun, also known as Tut, sat on the throne and ruled for nine years. He worshipped god Amun in the old ways. However, he died mysteriously.

When Tut's mummified body was discovered, he was laid with lots of gold, wealth and everyday items like a bronze razor, games, clothes, cases of food and wine. Carter discovered him after searching for many years. After researching on the treasures, he decided to investigate his three nested coffins. Some parts of the Tut's treasures in the tomb were already looted.

His tomb was rock-cut, 26 feet underground, which had wall paintings. On the outer coffin, Tut's face was gilded. In the first coffin, he found the garlands of olives, lotus petals, and cornflowers. It showed that he was buried in the months of March or April. The third and final coffin put Carter into trouble. The resins used to cement Tut to the bottom of the solid gold coffin was hardened enough making it impossible to move. He put the coffin in the sun for several hours in hope for the resins to loosen up but it didn't work. Finally, he removed the resins with the help of chisel and hammer. Carter felt he didn't have any other choice as to if he hadn't cut the mummy from limb to limb, thieves would have looted the gold. His men first removed his head, then they cut off every joint. After removing the body parts, they placed it on the layer of sand in a wooden box and put it at the original place.

In 1968, the mummy was X-rayed by an anatomy professor, revealed few facts – his breast bone and front ribs were missing.

Later, on January 05 2009, Tut was taken for CT (Computed Tomography) scan which takes hundreds of X-Rays and creates a three-dimensional image. The night of the scan, the workmen carried his body from the tomb in a box. They climbed ramp and stairs and lifted it on a

hydraulic trailer that held the scanner. The scanner stopped working which paused the procedure. After using a pair of spare fans, the scan was finally done. After three-hours, his body was taken back to his tomb where his body is resting in peace.

Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues - Lesson and Explanation

Heir – Inheritor, successor

Laden – loaded

Speculated- form a theory without evidence

Tomb- an enclosure to bury the dead

Forensic Reconstruction – the process of recreating the face of an individual

Pharaoh- a ruler in ancient Egypt

Tutankhamun, also known as Tut, was a teenager when he died. He was the last successor of his powerful Pharaoh Dynasty which ruled Egypt and its empire for centuries. He was laid on rest, heavily loaded with gold. His tomb was discovered in 1922 which made the world raise a question about what had happened to him and whether he had been murdered? After almost 80 years, his body was about to undergo a CT scan which would give new information and clues about his life and death. His face would be recreated with the help of a procedure called forensic reconstruction.

Stirred – move or cause to move slightly

Ghostly – eerie and unnatural; unreal

Resting place- here, the grave

Cemetery- a large burial ground

Dark-bellied – dark in colour

Scudded across – moving quickly; it refers to the movement of the dark-bellied clouds

Veiling – to cover something

Casket- a small ornamental box or chest for holding jewels, letters, or other valued objects.

Casket grey – It means that the grey clouds were like a grey coloured casket which contained the stars. The stars are like jewels which are kept in a casket.

Glided – quite, continuous motion

Probe – to investigate, find out

Lingering – long-lasting

A fast, strange and unnatural wind was blowing as King Tut's body was taken from his grave called 'Valleys of the Kings', an ancient Egyptian cemetery (The location of the Valley of the Kings is given in the image). Dark clouds moved quickly across the desert all day long and later, they covered the stars. On January 5, 2005, at 6 pm, King Tut's mummy which is the world's most famous mummy was placed in the CT scanner to investigate the mystery behind his death which had occurred more than 3300 years ago.

Descended – moved or gathered

Cramped – very small to fit into

Rock-cut - made in a rock by cutting it

Gazed – to look in surprise or in admiration

Murals – a painting or other artwork executed directly on the wall

Gilded – covered with a thin sheet or coating of gold

Striking- prominent

Whisper- to speak in a low voice

Pondering – think about something carefully

All afternoon, tourists visited the 26 feet deep, underground rock-cut tomb to pay respect to the king. Many people stuffed into the small tomb and looked in admiration at the murals on the walls of the chamber and took a look at the face of Tut that had been painted with gold. While visitors read the guidebooks in a hushed tone, some stood silently, wondering about his untimely death in his teen years. They might also be wondering if the curse of the pharaoh which leads to the descent of misfortune upon the person who disturbs him is true.

Futile – pointless; incapable of producing the result of something

Hastily – fast; swiftly

Ransacked – raid; go through a place to steal or damage something

Antiquity – age, oldness

Resurrection – restoration to life

Afterlife- life after death, based on the belief that the essential part of an individual's identity continues to the next life after the death of the physical body

As Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of Egypt, leaned over the body to have a look, he said that the mummy was in a very bad condition because of what the British archaeologist Howard Carter did to it in the 1920s. He discovered King Tut's tomb in 1922 after a long search. The valuable treasures of Tut had been explored earlier too but surprisingly, they were complete. The treasure found at Tut's grave is the richest till date and has come to be known as the Pharaoh's legend. It has artefacts in gold which are eternally beautiful and as good as new. Such artefacts still get attention. Tut was buried with things of daily use like a razor made of bronze, games, linen undergarments and boxes of food and wine which he could use in the next life.

Funerary Treasures – the valuable things with which the king was buried

three nested coffin- three coffins placed one in another in order of decreasing size. The innermost coffin houses the body of the deceased.

Shroud – a length of cloth in which a dead person is wrapped

Adorned – decorated

Garlands of willow – a wreath of flowers and leaves

Mummy- a body of a human being or animal that has been ceremonially preserved by removal of the internal organs, treatment with natron and resin, and wrapping in bandages.

Ritual - here, the resins used in the ceremony of mummification

Resins – a sticky flammable substance that is insoluble in water

Legitimate - reasonable

Carter took a few months to record the treasures found in Tut's grave. Then he began investigating his three coffins which were nested one in another. In the first coffin, he found a piece of cloth with garlands of willow, olive leaves, wild celery, lotus petals and cornflower, which suggested that he had been buried in the months of March or April. When he reached the third coffin, he was in trouble. The body had hardened due to the resins which had cemented the body and it had stuck to the bottom of the coffin which was made of gold. Carter wondered what to do next because no amount of force could separate the two.

Blazing – very hot

Budged – moved or shifted; a slight movement

Chiselled away – to cut something with a chisel

Carter tried to loosen the resins by keeping the body in the hot sun. He kept the mummy in 149 degrees Fahrenheit heat for several hours but still, it remained stuck. He reported that a chisel could be used to cut down the mummy from the limbs and the trunk so that Tut's body could be taken out of the coffin.

Circumvented – find a way around; thieves would have found a way to tackle the guards and remove the gold from the tomb

Inlaid - a decorative pattern on a surface

Amulet - an ornament or small piece of jewellery thought to give protection against evil, danger, or disease.

Apron - a protective garment worn over the front of one's clothes and tied at the back.

Sheaths – a close-fitting cover

Iconic - something or someone who is a symbol or it represents some other thing

Adornments – ornaments

Concealed- hid

According to Carter, he had no choice other than to cut the mummy. He believed that if he hadn't done that, thieves would have removed the gold from the tomb and would have looted it. During Tut's time, the royal people were very wealthy and they had a belief that after death, they could take the wealth along with them. For his life after death, he was given precious collars, necklaces with decorative patterns, bracelets, rings, amulets, ceremonial aprons, sandals, sheaths for fingers and toes and now, an iconic inner coffin and a mask. His men removed his head and every joint of his body. After they finished, they reassembled the remains in a wooden box with padding filled with a layer of sand to conceal the damage. It was his new resting place.

Intervening – occur in the time between events

Intriguing – to arouse one's curiosity

Startling – unexpected or surprising

In the past few decades, archaeology has changed as it now focuses on the details of life and the mysteries of death. Earlier, it was about focusing on the treasure. Now, it uses more advanced medical technologies and tools for research. In 1968, an anatomy professor X-rayed King Tut's mummy and revealed that the front limbs and breast bone were missing.

Computed Tomography – Also called a CT scan, it is a three-dimensional scan of a body with the help of hundreds of X-Rays in cross-section together

Demise - death

death rattle - the gurgling sound produced in the throat of a person who is about to die

Aftermath – after-effects of an unpleasant event

Now with the advancement of technology, CT scan or Computed Tomography can give a virtual image of the whole body. With the help of this technology, King Tut's body would be scanned to find answers to two questions – How he died and how old was he at the time of his death.

His death was a shock to the royals also as he was the last person of his family and his funeral indicated the diminishment of his dynasty. However, what happened after his death is still not clear.

Wacky –amusing in a slightly odd way

Tut's father or grandfather, Amenhotep III, was a very powerful Pharaoh who ruled over a period of forty years. His son, Amenhotep IV, succeeded him and began the strangest period in the history of Egypt. He promoted the worship of Aten (the sun disk). He changed his name to Akhenaten meaning servant of the Atens. He also shifted the religious capital from Thebes to the new city of Akhenaten, called Amarna. Further, he attacked Amun, a god, smashed his images and closed his temples. Ray Johnson, director of the University of Chicago said it must

have been a bad time for the empire as the family who ruled for centuries came to an end and Akhenaten moved in an odd direction.

Another mysterious ruler, Smenkhkare, succeeded him and died soon. Next, Tutankhamun, also known as Tut, sat on the throne and ruled for nine years. He worshipped god Amun in the old ways. However, he died mysteriously. Tut is one of the mummies in Egypt. Whereas, until now with the help of the Egyptian Mummy Project which started in 2003, almost 600 mummies have been recorded so far. King Tut's mummy was the first one to be scanned by CT under the next phase of scanning the mummies with the machine donated by the National Geographic Society and Siemens.

Eerie detail – strange image of Tut's head as visible with the help of CT scan

Forensics – the application of the scientific method to investigate a crime

Anatomy – the branch of science which deals with the bodily structure of humans, animals or other living beings

Burial – burying the dead

Shrine – holy place

The CT scan machine scanned the body by creating 1700 digital X-rays in cross-sections. Tut's head was scanned in 0.62 mm slices to record the tiny details. The resulting image was very strange. A team of Radiology, Forensics and Anatomy experts started examining the secrets of the grave that had been protected by flying goddesses for a long time.

Pallbearers – a person who helps to escort a coffin at a funeral

Swirling – to spin or twist

Hydraulic lift – a lift that uses a machine to lift or move heavy objects with a pressure

Sprinted – ran at a high speed

During the night, workmen climbed up on the ramp and the flight of stairs to carry the body from the tomb into the spinning sand outside. They rose the body onto a hydraulic lift, then into a trailer where the scanner was kept. After twenty minutes, two men ran towards the office nearby to bring two fans. The scanner was not working as the sand had entered a cooler fan. The guard joked that it was because of the curse of the pharaoh because they had removed his body.

Once the fans worked, the procedure was finished. The data was checked in case of any losses and then technicians returned the body to the pallbearers who carried him back to his tomb. In less than three hours, he was resting at the same place where the priests had laid him many years ago.

stood Orion — the constellation that the ancient Egyptians knew as the soul of Osiris, the god of the afterlife — watching over the boy king.

Astonishing – amazing

Pixels - a pixel is a single point in a graphic image

Spun – to turn around

Vertebrae – series of small bones which form a backbone

In the trailer, the technician showed a beautiful image of Tut on a computer screen. He showed the grey head which was scattered in pixels and he spun it around. Next, the vertebrae, hand, rib cage, and transection of his skull were shown. As the work was done, the pressure was finally off from the shoulders of Zahi Hawass. While sitting in his chair, he smiled and said

that he was relieved that nothing went wrong. He had not slept the previous night and now, as the work was done, he would go and sleep. By the time they left the trailer, the wind had stopped and the winter air was like death itself. Just above the tomb the Orion constellation shone in the night sky, watching over the boy king.