

Was King Tut Murdered?

1 King Tutankhamun was just a **teenager** when he died. He was the last king of a powerful family that had ruled Egypt for centuries. When he died in 1322 B.C.,
5 Tut (as Tutankhamun is often known today) was placed in a **luxurious**, gold-filled tomb. There he lay forgotten until the tomb's eventual discovery in 1922. Although we now know a lot about his life, the reason for Tutankhamun's death at such a young age has remained a mystery, with **murder** the most extreme possibility. Now, improved x-ray technology¹ is offering new clues into
15 King Tut's death.

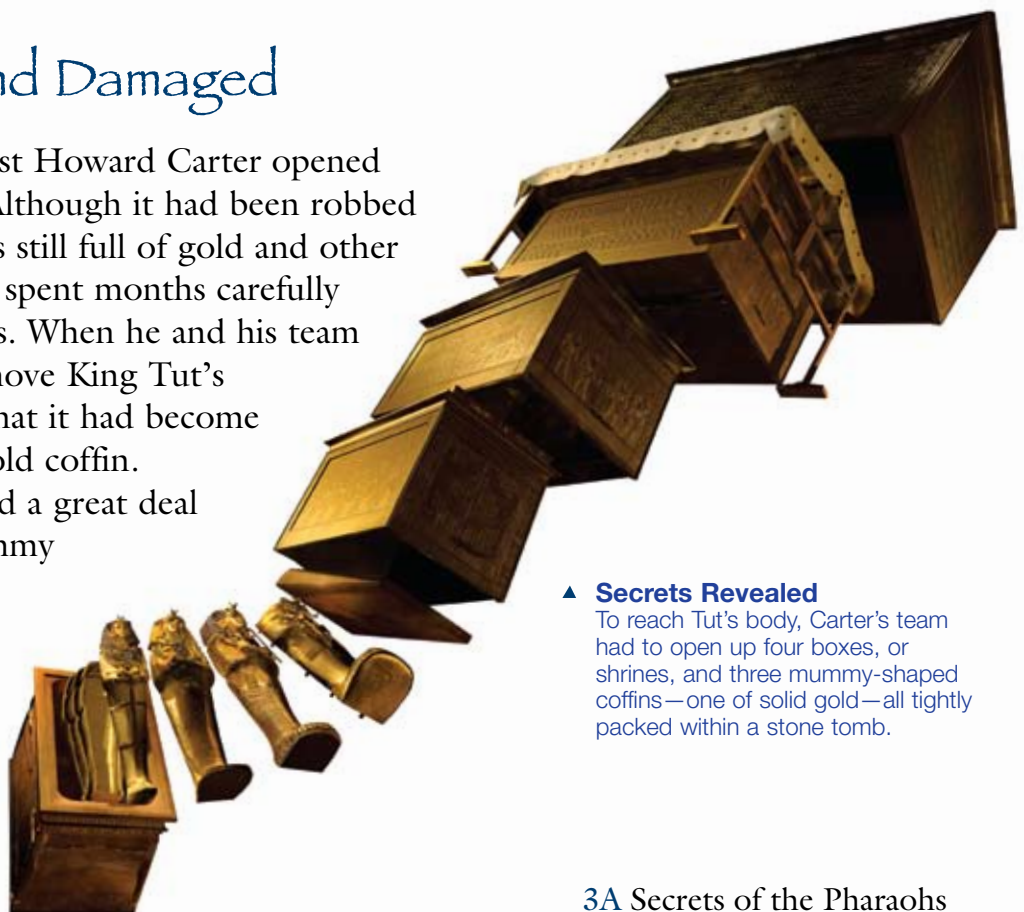
Discovered and Damaged

The British archeologist Howard Carter opened Tut's tomb in 1922. Although it had been robbed in ancient times, it was still full of gold and other
20 amazing items. Carter spent months carefully recording the treasures. When he and his team then attempted to remove King Tut's mummy, they found that it had become **attached** to its solid gold coffin. Unfortunately, they did a great deal
25 of damage to the mummy while removing it.

¹ **X-ray technology** is a special way of taking pictures of the inside of something.



▲ Is this the face of Tutankhamun? Recent analysis allows us to recreate, for the first time, what the boy king looked like.



▲ Secrets Revealed

To reach Tut's body, Carter's team had to open up four boxes, or shrines, and three mummy-shaped coffins—one of solid gold—all tightly packed within a stone tomb.

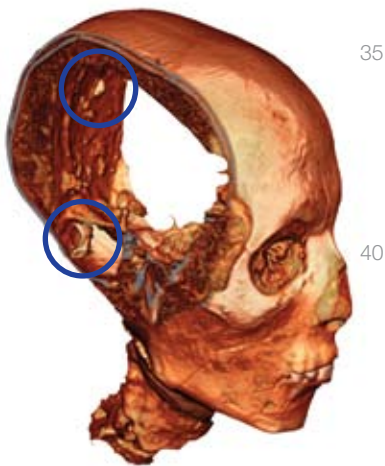


◀ “When I saw his face, I was shocked,” says Zahi Hawass. “My heart was pounding, and I could not speak.”

Theories About Tut's Death

30 In 1968 archeologists **conducted** an examination of the mummy using simple x-ray technology. Three important discoveries led to various **theories** about his death.

- The x-rays showed that bones in King Tut's chest² were missing. Carter hadn't done that damage. Tut was a trained fighter and hunter, so some people have guessed that it was caused by a war **injury** or a hunting accident.
- There appeared to be pieces of bone inside the skull, causing many to believe that King Tut was killed by a blow from behind to the head. Was he murdered by people wanting to take control of Egypt?
- A serious fracture discovered above Tut's left knee could have been the result of an accident or attack. **Infection** might have started there and killed the boy king.



A Closer Look at the Mummy

▲ Two loose pieces of bone (circled) may have broken off when Tut's body was being made ready for burial, or during its removal by Carter's team. It's unlikely the damage was caused by a blow to a head.

45 In recent years, scientists, under the direction of Zahi Hawass, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities,³ have applied a new and more effective x-ray technology to mummies throughout Egypt. In the images, each bone appears in perfect detail.

So, was King Tut's death murder or accident, infection or war injury?

50 Doctors who **analyzed** the x-ray images say that the skull was mainly undamaged, **excluding** the possibility of a blow to the head. However, while modern technology has been able to rule out one theory, the actual cause of death remains unknown. It seems there are secrets that even the latest technology cannot yet find the answers to.

² Your **chest** is the top part of the front of your body.

³ Egypt's **Supreme Council of Antiquities** is responsible for the care and protection of Egypt's historic treasures.