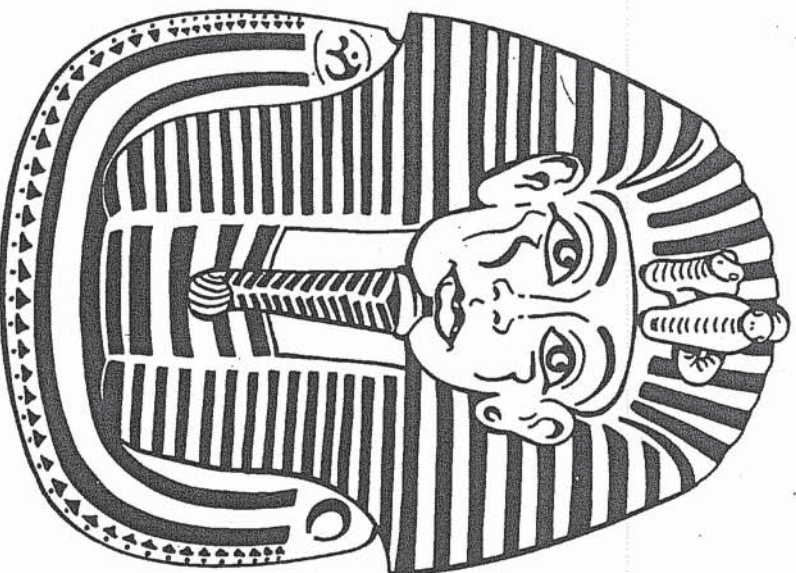


THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMEN

Archaeologist Howard Carter had been digging in the Valley of the Kings for six long years. During that time, he and his Egyptian workers had sifted through mounds of rubble, dug endless trenches, and moved huge quantities of dirt. Other archaeologists believed he was a fool to think that he could find the tomb of Tutankhamen. In time, he too began to doubt that he would ever find the lost tomb. This day looked as if it would be like all the others, he thought, as he trudged down into the dusty valley in the early morning glare. Yet this was not to be a day like all the rest. After several hours of the usual hard work, he was surprised to hear shouts coming from the Egyptian workers. He ran down to see what had happened and stopped dead in his tracks. Before him lay the stone steps of a tomb just unearthed. After several more hours of clearing away soil, the door of the tomb was opened. A rush of dry, cold, ancient air met his face. When he cast his lamp into the darkness ahead, he beheld strange animals, breathtaking statues, and the glint of gold everywhere. At last he had found Tutankhamen's tomb.

Unlike the rest of the New Kingdom pharaohs, Tutankhamen's tomb eluded grave robbers, leaving it almost intact to be discovered by Carter in 1922. It remains as probably the world's most exciting archaeological discovery. It took Carter eight years to remove, catalog, and restore the more than 2,000 objects found in the tomb. The amount of wealth buried with the pharaoh was almost unbelievable. Yet Tutankhamen was a lesser pharaoh and would probably be almost unknown if not for the discovery of his tomb.

Upon Akhenator's death, Egypt was thrown into turmoil for a few years. Finally, order was partially restored when Akhenator's ten-year-old son-in-law was crowned pharaoh. He took the name Tutankhamen. Under the new king, the priests of Amon-Re re-established their authority. The worship of Aton was abolished and Akhenator's city was abandoned. The temples to Aton were dismantled and the materials shipped across the river to build new temples to Amon-Re. The power of the Amon-Re priesthood was never again challenged. Tutankhamen's reign lasted only nine years, and he was buried, like the rest of the New Kingdom pharaohs, in the Valley of the Kings. The mummy of Tutankhamen reveals that he probably died from a blow to his head. In any case, his death was premature because he left no heirs. His widow, Ankhesenamun, desperately tried to maintain order by finding another husband. She appealed to the Hittite king Suppiluliumas to send one of his sons



The innermost coffin that held Tutankhamen's body was made of solid gold and weighed over a ton.

to marry her and become pharaoh. The Hittite prince made it only as far as the Egyptian border where he was mysteriously murdered. Ankhnesenamun apparently lost control and a period of instability followed. Eventually, a new dynasty was established when a military commander named Ramses II seized the throne.

Tutankhamen's tomb reveals how a little-known pharaoh was equipped to enter the next world. How much more wealthy must have been the tombs of the greater pharaohs who followed Tutankhamen on the throne! These men oversaw the final glorious years of Egyptian civilization. Seti I launched military campaigns into Palestine and Syria to win back provinces lost during Akhenaton's reign. Ramses II completed the largest Egyptian temple ever built at Karnak, which covered 6,000 square yards. Ramses III successfully fought off a dangerous invasion of the so-called Sea Peoples, whom historians believe were probably early Greeks.

By the end of Ramses III's reign, however, Egypt was in decline. The costs of maintaining a huge army, building monumental temples, and keeping the priests of Amon-Re content were draining the pharaoh's treasury. Grave robbing had become so bad that a number of mummies from the Valley of the Kings had been removed and placed in a common tomb where they could be better guarded. After the death of Ramses III, eight more pharaohs ruled with the name Ramses as Egypt slid into chaos. Finally, a succession of foreign invaders swept into Egypt and battled amongst themselves for control. The Libyans were overthrown by the Nubians, who themselves were overthrown by the Assyrians. Egypt, the home of an ancient and magnificent civilization, by the eighth century B.C. was merely a province of somebody else's empire.

Discussion

1. What do you think were the characteristics of Tutankhamen's reign?
2. What does Tutankhamen's tomb tell us about New Kingdom pharaohs?
3. Why would foreigners want to invade New Kingdom Egypt?

Map Activities

Using map D, locate and label the modern states of Egypt, Syria, Libya, Jordan, and Israel. Also locate and label the cities of Jerusalem, Beirut, Gaza, Alexandria, and Cairo. Locate and label the Nile River, the Jordan River, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Gulf of Suez. Finally, using a pen or pencil of a different color, locate and label the ancient capital of Amarna, which was just across the Nile from the modern city of Deir Mawas; the Valley of the Kings, which is located across the river and north of the modern city of Luxor; Karnak, which is north of Luxor on the same side of the river; and Palestine, which is made up of modern Israel and the area to the west of the Jordan River owned by Jordan.

Name _____

Date _____

CHALLENGES

1. Where was Tutankhamen's tomb?

2. When was the tomb discovered and by whom?

3. What was so remarkable about Tutankhamen's tomb compared to other pharaohs?

4. How long was Tutankhamen pharaoh?

5. How did the priests of Amon-Re undo the reforms of Akhenaton?

6. What were the accomplishments of Seti I?

7. What did Ramses II accomplish?

8. Why did Egypt decline?

9. When did the New Kingdom begin to decline?

10. Who were the foreign invaders who occupied Egypt?

