

Tutankhamun

1346-1328 bc

Late 18th Dynasty

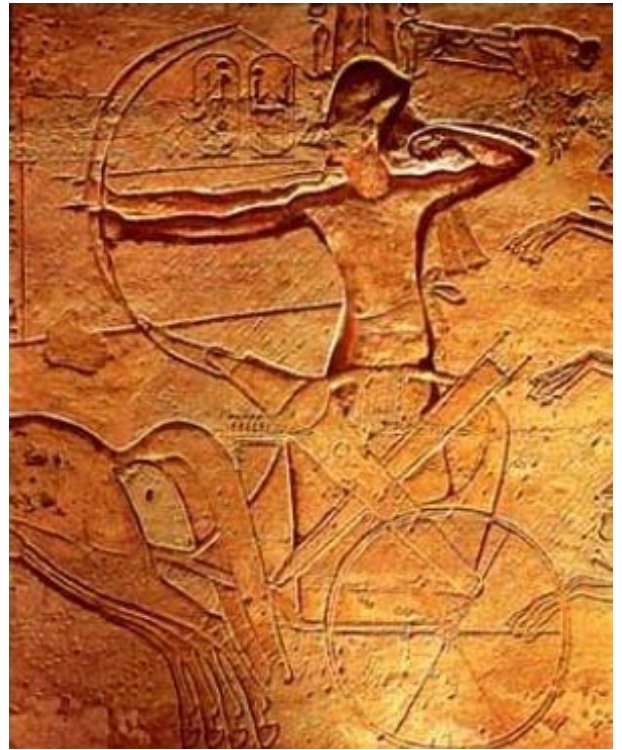


Tutankhamun was probably born at Akhetaten which was the capital city of Egypt. He was born in about the year 1346 BC. He became pharaoh at the young age of nine in 1337 BC, and reigned during the 18th Dynasty when the Egyptian Empire was at its height. He reigned from about 1337 to 1328 BC. His tomb was discovered in the Valley of the Kings, by a team of British archaeologists in 1922, nearly 3000 years after his death. The Valley of the Kings in Upper Egypt contains many of the tombs of pharaohs from the New Kingdom, including Tutankhamun and Ramesses the Great. The small tomb contained hundreds of objects (now housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo), many richly decorated and covered in gold, that would be needed by the king in his afterlife. He initiated building projects, in particular at Karnak in Thebes. Battles with Nubians and Asiatics were recorded in his mortuary temple at Thebes. His tomb contained body armor and folding stools appropriate for military campaigns. Given his youth and physical disabilities, which seemed to require the use of a cane in order to walk, historians speculate that he did not personally take part in these battles. Tutankhamun reigned for around 9 years, making him about 18 when he died.

Ramesses II

1279-1213 BCE

19th Dynasty



He was known to the Egyptians as Userma'atre'setepenre, which means 'Keeper of Harmony and Balance, Strong in Right, Elect of Ra'. He claimed to have won a decisive victory over the Hittites at The Battle of Kadesh and used this event to enhance his reputation as a great warrior. In reality, the battle was more of a draw than a decisive victory for either side but resulted in the world's first known peace treaty in 1258 BCE. Ramesses lived to be ninety-six years old, had over 200 wives and concubines, ninety-six sons and sixty daughters, most of whom he outlived. There is virtually no ancient site in Egypt which does not mention Ramesses the Great. Nefertari was Ramesses' first wife and his favorite queen. The vast tomb complex known as the Ramesseum at Thebes, the temples at Abu Simbel, the hall at Karnak, the complex at Abydos and literally hundreds of other buildings, monuments, temples were all constructed by "Ramesses the Great."

Hatshepsut

1479-1458 BCE

18th Dynasty



She was the first female ruler of ancient Egypt to reign as a male with the full authority of pharaoh. Her name means "Foremost of Noble Women" or "She is First Among Noble Women". She began her reign as regent to her stepson Thutmose III. In around the seventh year of her reign, however, she chose to be depicted as a male pharaoh in statuary and reliefs though still referring to herself as female in her inscriptions. She is celebrated as a powerful female ruler whose reign was extremely successful. Her name was erased from her monuments following her death which strongly suggests that someone, most likely Thutmose III, wanted to remove all evidence of her from history. Her many temples and monuments were often claimed to be the works of later pharaohs. Her existence only came to light fairly recently in history when Jean-Francois Champollion (1790-1832 CE), most famous for deciphering the Rosetta Stone, discovered her existence among hieroglyphs. Since the Egyptians believed that erasing one's name from history hampered one's afterlife, it is believed that whoever removed her from public knowledge, wished her ill after death. Hatshepsut was the daughter of Thutmose I, and wife of Thutmose II.

Cleopatra VII

69 BCE

18th Dynasty



Cleopatra VII Philopator was born in 69 BCE and ruled jointly with her father, Ptolemy XII Auletes. When she was eighteen years old, when her father died, leaving her the throne. Because Egyptian tradition held that a woman needed a male consort to rule, her twelve-year old brother, Ptolemy XIII, was ceremonially married to her. Cleopatra soon dropped his name from all official documents, however, and ruled alone. She was fluent in Egyptian, eloquent in her native Greek, and proficient in other languages as well. Because of this, she was able to communicate easily with diplomats from other countries without the need of a translator. She took the throne, without bothering to hear the counsel of her advisors on matters of state. She knew math, physics and philosophy. She was actually not Egyptian, she was Greek! She married Mark Antony, but before that, she had a relationship with Julius Caesar. She had herself rolled in a rug and carried through enemy lines to the palace and was presented to Caesar. It was said that:

Her own beauty, so we are told, was not of that incomparable type that immediately captivates the beholder. But the charm of her presence was irresistible and there was an attraction in her person and in her conversation that, along with a peculiar force of character in her every word and action, laid all who associated with her under her spell.