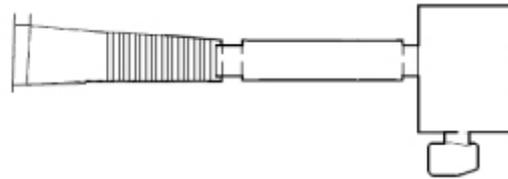


# Difficult to identify the mummy of 55 KV

di **Antonio Crasto**

## Discovery

In 1907, during the excavations in the Kings Valley, looking for new tombs, English archaeologists Edward Ayrton, Howard Carter and Inspector Arthur Weigall discovered a new tomb, not large, which was assigned the serial number 55, based on the history of the discoveries in the Valley.



KV 55

The cartouche of Akhenaten in some of the four magical bricks arranged at the corners of the tomb and the name of Queen Tiye, Chief Wife of Amenhotep III, on the bands of gilt wooden coffin indicated a safe belonging to the Eighteenth Dynasty and especially the Amarna period, so it was immediately obvious that it was facing a second burial of a personage of Akhetaten. The haste imposed by the leader of the research campaign, the American Theodore M. Davis, led to a hasty non-scientific exploration of the tomb and emptying itself without the necessary surveys, drawings and photographs, leading most probably to the loss of many important information.

The grave was in poor condition due to major water leaks from the ceiling and, in particular, the sarcophagus was in the ground water and the wood was almost rotten. The mummy, which was still in the sarcophagus, was without bandages and in poor condition, little more than a skeleton.



Wooden coffin of KV 55

It was therefore evident that the tomb had been violated since ancient times, as shown by the close of the offer with a new brick wall with the seal of the necropolis.

The original inscriptions on the gold leaf that covered the coffin appeared partly substituted with other, a clear sign of a change of use. Unfortunately it was evident a *damnatio memoriae* that had led to the cancellation of the cartouches of the end user and the removal of the gold mask of the coffin.

In this regard I think very likely that the instigator of this *damnatio memoriae*, as well as that of Ay (WV23 tomb) was the pharaoh Horemheb <sup>1</sup>.

What remains of the inscriptions on the gold foils is sufficient to establish that the sarcophagus was donated by Akhenaten to a very close relative, almost certainly Tiye. The writing on the foils replaced also suggest that the person buried in the coffin could be Nefertiti or Smenkhkara. In the foil D is in fact written <sup>2</sup>:

“The king loved greatly, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, living in Maat, Lord of the Two Lands, XXXXX, the wonderful son of the Aton who will be living here, living for eternity, lord of heaven, I am a keen , whose heart is in place providing for ... (loved) by Waenra (true of voice, justified)”

The citation of the second name of Akhenaten, Waenra, can't be taken as evidence that the personage is Akhenaten, as well as heralded by Z. Hawass <sup>3</sup>, as it speaks of the person buried as "love / loved by Waenra." This expression is in other texts referring to the pharaoh Akhenaten and co-regent, Ankhkheperura Neferneferuaten Nefertiti and/or the spouse of his first three daughters, the future pharaoh, Ankhkheperura Smenkhkara Djoserkheperu. Since the person buried in KV 55 is a male, it would be Smenkhkara.



The golden mask torn

### Identification of the mummy

The first examinations of the mummy were carried out by a gynecologist who was sightseeing in Luxor, which was deceived amplitude of the pelvis and posture of the arms, characteristic of the queens of the Eighteenth Dynasty (the left arm folded on his chest and the other along the leg), concluding that it was a woman.

Despite the contrasting opinion of Arthur Weigall, who believed that the mummy was that of Akhenaten, Theodore M. Davis announced, on the basis of medical and archaeological advices, that the tomb of Tiye had been found.

The skeleton, or rather the broken bones, was then sent to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and analyzed by Grafton Elliot Smith, an Australian doctor professor of pathology at the University of Cairo. The professor said that it was badly mummified remains of a man between the ages of twenty and thirty years, and that the skull was hydrocephalus.

Despite this qualified opinion, Theodore M. Davis insisted on his belief and published in 2010 a book about the discovery of the tomb of Queen Tiye <sup>4</sup>.

It was then suggested that, despite the estimated age of the mummy could be that of Akhenaten, which would be used for the coffin of his mother.

In 1916 Georges Daressy said, based on new studies of the inscriptions on the coffin, that it had been prepared for Tiye, but used by a king, who could not be, because of age is too low, Akhenaten, and thought could be Tutankhamen.

This hypothetical identification fell miserably in 1922 when Howard Carter discovered in the vicinity of KV 55, the tomb of Tutankhamen (KV 62).

Arthur Weigall revisited, despite the insufficient age of 20 - 30 years, the previous theory that saw the mummy buried in n. 55 that of Akhenaten.



Skull of KV 55



Head of Akhenaten (statue of Karnak)

Four years later, Elliot Smith also complied with this hypothesis, convinced by the comparison of the skull of the mummy and the heads of the colossal statues of Akhenaten, which were found in 1925 at Karnac.

Following the physiologist Douglas E. Derry, Elliot Smith's successor at the medical school of the University of Cairo, after having re-examined the mummy, concluded that it was that of a man, who died at the age of about 23 years and that the skull had characteristics similar to that of Tutankhamun .

These new studies led in 1931 Reginald Engelbach, superintendent of the Cairo Museum, to speculate that the mummy was that of Smenkhkara, the ephemeral pharaoh who reigned between Akhenaten and Tutankhamen.

In 1957, Alan H. Gardiner reexamined all available data and advanced an unlikely hypothesis, according to which the coffin had been prepared for an amarnian princess or for Tiye, after it had been modified to contain the mummy of Akhenaten and, finally, during the translation from Akhetaten, was made confusion among the mummies of Akhenaten and Smenkhkara and in the coffin of Akhenaten, located in KV 55, had been mistakenly buried Smenkhkara.

In 1959 Cyril Aldred (Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh) and Herbert W. Fairman stated that the coffin could be prepared for Merytaten (eldest of Akhenaten) and then used to Smenkhkara.

In 1963, the professor of anatomy at the University of Liverpool, R. G. Harrison, with the collaboration of a group of anatomists and radiologists at the University of Cairo, did new studies and compared the results for the mummy of Smenkhkara with the exams available for the mummy of Tutankhamen, coming to establish that the two had the same group blood (A2-MN) and that they were almost certainly close relatives (brothers or father and son). The researchers confirmed that the age of the personage of the KV 55 had to be under 25 years and that, on the basis of anatomic criteria, it was possible to state that the death occurred at the age of about 20 years <sup>5,6</sup>.

### New identification

In recent years, the former chief of the SCA (Supreme Council of Antiquities), Zahi Hawass, has had, a CT scan (Computerized Axial Tomography) to the mummy of KV 55, hoping for a few suggestions.

The examinations were carried out by the doctor Hani Abdel Rahman and the radiologist Ashraf Selim, who found that the spine had mild scoliosis and significant degenerative changes, which could suggest an age of the mummy around 60 years <sup>7</sup>.

On the basis of this absurd conclusion, which denied all the anatomical data until then considered (state of dentition and suture of the bones of the skull), Hawass has worked by imagination. The doctors who carried out the CT scan should have said that the mummy belonged to a man of about 20 years, whose bones seemed, however, those of an old man of about 60 years. It was not lawful, however, to re-estimate of age, well-established in 20 to 25 years, but it would have to be assumed a serious illness of the personage, a crippling syndrome who had changed the bones, so that they appear as a sexagenarian.

Hawass has instead played with the numbers and, ignoring the many medical opinions, ancient and modern, said that up to that time it was believed that the mummy could have 20 to 35 years (indeed 20 to 25 years) and that the CT scan allowed a new estimate, bringing the personage's age between 35 - 45 years, as reported in the article on the study of the DNA of mummies of period of Amarna period <sup>8</sup>, just the age range that suited him to assert that he had finally found the mummy of Akhenaten <sup>7</sup>.

The difficulties facing the identification of the mummy of 55 KV, which lasted about a century, have been summarized, for a better understanding in the following table:

		estimated age	identification	Note
1907	Theodore M. Davis		Tiye	
1907	Arthur Weigall		Akhenaten	
1910	Grafton Elliot Smith	20 - 30	man	
1910	Theodore M. Davis		Tiye	Book
			Akhenaten	Hypothesis of Egyptologists
1916	Georges Daressy		Tutankhamen	Inscription

1922	Arthur Weigall		Akhenaten	After finding the tomb of Tutankhamen
1925	Elliot Smith		Akhenaten	Find statues of Akhenaten at Karnak
1931	Douglas E. Derry	23	Smenkhkara	New medical tests
1931	Reginald Engelbach		Smenkhkara	Gold leaf
1957	Alan H. Gardiner		Smenkhkara	Hypothesis error in the burial of the mummy
1959	Cyril Aldred Herbert W. Fairman		Smenkhkara	
1963	R. G. Harrison	circa 20	Smenkhkara	Anatomic criteria
2010	Zahi Hawass	20 - 35	Smenkhkara	Incorrect estimation of the past
2010	Hani Abdel Rahman Ashraf Selim	circa 60		The CT scan showed bone deformities
2010	Zahi Hawass	35 - 45	Akhenaten	Article in JAMA

## Conclusion

The archaeological survey of KV 55 and the identification of the mummy found in it leaves bewildered. It is now agreed on an analysis of the findings without any scientific method and it is, almost certain, that some artifacts have been stolen and who have lost useful information to identify the person buried.

Medical examinations have however allowed to overcome the doubt between Akhenaten and Smenkhkara. The age of the personage suggested by medical examinations led to talk of a man under the age of 25 years, so the only solution was to Smenkhkara. The hypothesis advanced by Hawass is at least ridiculous. He did not consider the possible disease deforming the personage.

La quasi certa sindrome deformante di Marfan, che sembra aver segnato i corpi di molti personaggi del periodo: Nefertiti, Akhenaton (donna), alcune figlie di Akhenaton, Smenkhkara e Tutankhamon è testimoniata dalle strane rappresentazioni dei due sovrani e delle figlie <sup>9,10,11</sup>.

The almost certain deforming Marfan syndrome, which seems to have marked the bodies of many personages of the period: Nefertiti, Akhenaten (female), some daughters of Akhenaten, Smenkhkara and Tutankhamen is evidenced by the strange representations of the two sovereigns and of the daughters <sup>9,10,11</sup>.

Regarding Smenkhkara, disease is also suggested by various representations of him with an axillary stick.



Smenkhkara and Merytaten



Tutankhamen and Ankhnesenamun

Whether it is a hereditary disease is gathered, finally, by a similar representation in which this time is Tutankhamen to be represented with an axillary stick. Declarations of Hawass, heralded on articles and media from around the world, have led to a total lack of, the consequences of which can be, for example, take:

- on the Italian Wikipedia page about the KV 55, where it wrongly states "By comparing DNA samples of Amenhotep III and a mysterious mummy, it has come to the conclusion that with certainty the mysterious mummy of KV55 tomb is actually Akhenaton" <sup>12</sup>;
- on the more important page of the Theban Mapping Project, where it says "It is now generally believed that the mummy found inside the tomb was Amenhetep IV / Akhenaten." <sup>13</sup>;
- in the video in which Hawass describes his great discovery for the identification of the personage of the KV 55 with Akhenaton <sup>14</sup>.

DNA investigations have suggested simply that the personage of the KV 55 was the son of Amenhotep III and the personage whose mummy, EL of KV 35 (61,070), is considered by Egyptologists to Tiye, but it could be, in my opinion, that of Princess of Mitanni Gilu Heba / Nefertiti. The conclusions of Hawass are only justified from an incorrect and imaginative estimate of the age 35 - 45 years, which of course wipes out the hypothesis Smenkhkara and give value to that Akhenaten.

About the other issue, still unresolved, on the posture of the arms of the mummy of KV 55, were not so far advanced hypothesis valid and safe.

According to the custom of the Eighteenth Dynasty, posture suggests a queen, but no one has so far considered that the religious revolution of Akhenaten may have also imposed a revolution in mummification.

The mummy of Akhenaten woman is the 61072 found together with the 61070 (for me Gilu Heba / Nefertiti) in the tomb of Amenhotep II (KV 35).



Mummies 61070, 61071 e 61072 of KV 35

The mummy of Akhenaten woman (61072 right) has his left arm extended down the leg and the other broken, but probably originally folded across his chest. The mummy of Nefertiti (61070 left) has instead left arm on the chest and right down the leg. Given that also the mummy of KV 55 had one arm folded on his chest (most likely the right notwithstanding what is stated by E. Ayrton <sup>15</sup>), we can assume that Akhenaten and Smenkhkara have been embalmed according to innovative posture, not the one like Osiris with two arms crossed over his chest, which is considered not in keeping with the cult of the god Aten, nor that of queens, according to the custom of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The mummification of the two sovereigns wanted to emphasize the religion based on most importance of Horakhty Ra, primary theophany of the Creator, according to the evolution of the solar disk Aten-Ra, the giver of life, earthly and heavenly (in place of the divine judgment of Osiris).

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HASSALEH – L'OCCHIO DI HORUS. Manetone aveva ragione!

DENDERA – La sacra terra della dea

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