

Nation & World

Three views of King Tut in reconstructions



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The first CT-scan facial reconstructions of King Tutankhamun's mummy have produced images strikingly similar to the boy pharaoh's ancient...

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Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — The first CT-scan facial reconstructions of King Tutankhamun's mummy have produced images strikingly similar to the boy pharaoh's ancient portraits, with one model showing a baby-faced young man with chubby cheeks and a round chin.

That model, one of three released yesterday, bears a strong resemblance to the gold mask of King Tut found in his tomb in 1922 by the British excavation led by Howard Carter. The beardless man depicted in the mask has soft features and a weak chin, and his eyes are highlighted by thick eyeliner.

The beardless youth depicted in the model, created by a French team, has soft features, a sloping nose and a weak chin — and the overbite, which archaeologists long have believed was a trait shared by other kings in Tut's 18th dynasty. His eyes are highlighted by thick eyeliner.

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The French team's model of the boy king has thick eyeliner.

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Three teams of forensic artists and scientists — the others from the United States and Egypt — each built a model of the boy pharaoh's face based on some 1,700 high-resolution photos from CT scans of his mummy to reveal what he looked like the day he died nearly 3,300 years ago.

“The shape of the face and skull are remarkably similar to a famous image of Tutankhamun as a child where he was shown as the sun god at dawn rising from a lotus blossom,” said Zahi Hawass, secretary-general of the Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities.

The CT scans have suggested King Tut was a healthy, slightly built 19-year-old, standing 5 feet 6 inches tall at the time of his death.

The three teams created their reconstructions separately — the Americans and French working from a plastic skull, the Egyptians working directly from the CT scans, which could distinguish different densities of soft tissue and bone.

AP

American model has receding chin and prominent upper lip.

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The French and Egyptians knew they were re-creating King Tut, but the Americans were not even told where the skull was from and correctly identified it as a Caucasoid North African, the council said in a statement.

“The results of the three teams were identical or very similar in the basic shape of the face, the size, shape and setting of the eyes, and the proportion of the skull,” Hawass said.

The French and American models are similar — with the Americans’ plaster model sharing the more realistic, French silicone version’s receding chin and prominent upper lip. The Egyptian reconstruction has a more prominent nose and a stronger jaw and chin.

The tests provided an unprecedented look at Egypt’s most famous mummy — but they did not resolve the mystery of the death of Tut, who took power at age 9.

They were able to dismiss a long-held theory that Tut, who died around 1323 B.C., was murdered by a blow to his skull or killed in an accident that crushed his chest. It raised a new possibility: Some experts on the scanning team said it appeared Tut broke his left thigh severely days before his death, and the break could have caused an infection.

The life of Tutankhamun has fascinated people since his tomb was discovered in 1922.

A U.S. museum tour a quarter-century ago of Tut’s treasures drew more than 8 million people. A smaller number of treasures — minus Tut’s famous gold mask — will go on display again in the United States starting June 16 in Los Angeles.

MAAMOUN YOUSSEF

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