

Resource 9

The stages of the excavation

The excavation began on 1 November and the steps to the tomb found on the 4 November. Lord Carnarvon was messaged and the tomb's entrance was blocked while they waited for his arrival from England. He arrived on site on 24 November and the entrance was opened. On the 26 November they reached the sealed doorway to the inner chamber.

The stages of the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb in November 1922:

- Egyptian workers clearing rubble from the site
- Archaeologists looking for signs of the tomb in the hard, dry earth of the valley - maybe there are false alarms?
- A young Egyptian boy who carries water to the people working on site discovers a step that could lead down to the tomb (Carter refers to this incident in his diaries)
- Descending the stairs and discovering the sealed door to the tomb
- Resealing the entrance, piling boulders up against it, while waiting for Lord Carnarvon to arrive from England
- Lord and Lady Carnarvon arrive and the door to the tomb is broken through
- Entering the outer chamber and seeing all the things that were buried with the Pharaoh Tutankhamun for his after life
- Reaching the sealed doorway and the two statues guarding the Pharaoh

The words of Howard Carter as he recollects the final stage:

The sealed doorway between the two guardian statues of the King, the mystery gradually dawned upon us. We were but in the anterior portion of a tomb.

I think at the moment we did not even want to break the seal [on the inner chamber of the tomb of Tutankhamun] for a feeling of intrusion had descended heavily upon us... We felt that we were in the presence of the dead King and must do him reverence.