

British archaeologist aims to pinpoint Nefertiti's tomb

September 28 2015, by Tony Gamal-Gabriel



British Egyptologist Nicholas Reeves talks to journalists before visiting the burial chamber of King Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings, close to Luxor, 500 kms south of Cairo on September 28, 2015

Standing before the majestic gold, ochre and white frescos of Tutankhamun's tomb, British archaeologist Nicholas Reeves on Monday passionately defended his daring theory that Nefertiti is buried in a secret chamber.

With the help of a sophisticated radar, Reeves aims to prove Nefertiti is buried there in a hidden chamber of the young pharaoh's underground tomb that long hid the most fabulous treasure ever discovered in Egypt.

Archaeologists have never discovered the mummy of this legendary beauty who played a major political and religious role in the 14th century BC.

Nefertiti actively supported her husband Akhenaten, the pharaoh who temporarily converted ancient Egypt to monotheism imposing the single cult of sun god Aton.

Reeves's theory is that Nefertiti is buried in a room adjacent to Tutankhamun's own tomb.

Although no one is sure of the identity of Tutankhamun's mother, DNA tests have been carried out and one theory is that she was Nefertiti.

DNA testing has revealed his father was Akhenaten.

According to Reeves, the boy king, who died unexpectedly at 19, was buried in a rush in an underground [burial chamber](#) that was probably not intended for him.

His death would have forced priests to reopen Queen Nefertiti's tomb 10 years after her death because the young pharaoh's own had not yet been built, Reeves said at Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor, southern Egypt.

In the burial chamber, just a few steps away from the darkened mummy of the boy king who died in 1324 BC after just nine years on the throne, the archaeologist pointed to a fresco representing Tutankhamun and his successor Ay.



Egyptian archaeologists take pictures next to the sarcophagus of King Tutankhamun in his burial chamber in the Valley of the Kings, close to Luxor, 500 kms south of Cairo on September 28, 2015

Radar to scan the walls

Circled by archaeologists and officials from Egypt's antiquities department, Minister of Antiquities Mamduh al-Damati listened attentively to the expert from the American University of Arizona as Reeves said the frescos in the chamber could conceal two secret doors.

"The theory is a very good theory but it doesn't mean it's true. The best theories don't always work," he added with caution, in the midst of the Valley of the Kings where on November 29, 1922 another British Egyptologist, Howard Carter, discovered Tutankhamun's tomb.

"But I think it's definitely worth checking because we can check easily and without damage," the archaeologist said, explaining that with a radar being brought in from Japan he will be able to scan the chamber's walls.

"I hope we can do some radar and find out whether there is a hollow," Reeves said, aiming to start the tests in late November.

"You have to get security clearance and that always takes time," he said.



A Nefertiti bust is pictured during the exhibition "In The Light Of Amarna" to

mark the 100 years of the Nefertiti bust discovery at the Neues Museum in Berlin, on December 5, 2012

Reeves has been on a visit to Egypt, ending with a press conference in Cairo on Thursday, to discuss his theory with Egyptian colleagues and for preliminary research in the field.

"I am now 70 percent certain that we are going to find something," said Damati, the minister, as he stepped out of the tomb.

Experts from his ministry would have to approve more advanced excavations, which could take between one and three months, to ensure the radar can scan the walls "without damaging them", he said.



A picture taken on September 28, 2015 shows the golden sarcophagus of King

Tutankhamun in his burial chamber in the Valley of the Kings, close to Luxor, 500 kms south of Cairo

But the minister was not so sure that Nefertiti's tomb would be discovered.

He speculated they could find the tomb of Kiya, another of Akhenaton's wives, or even another royal family member whose tomb would have been extended to make room for Tutankhamun.

"If another wing to this tomb or one that predates it is found, that alone would be a major discovery," Egypt's antiquities minister said.

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