

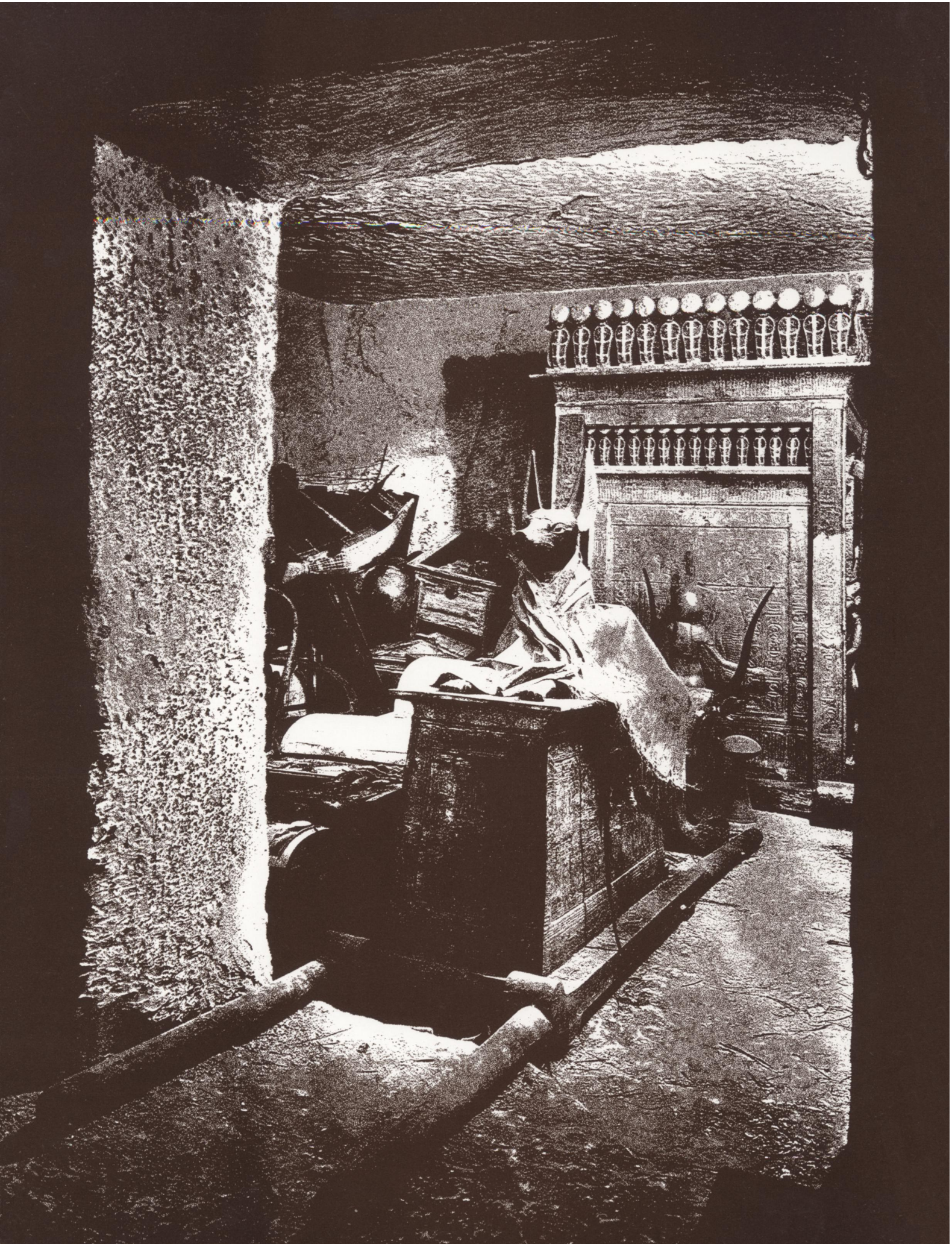
Work at the Tomb of Tutankhamun

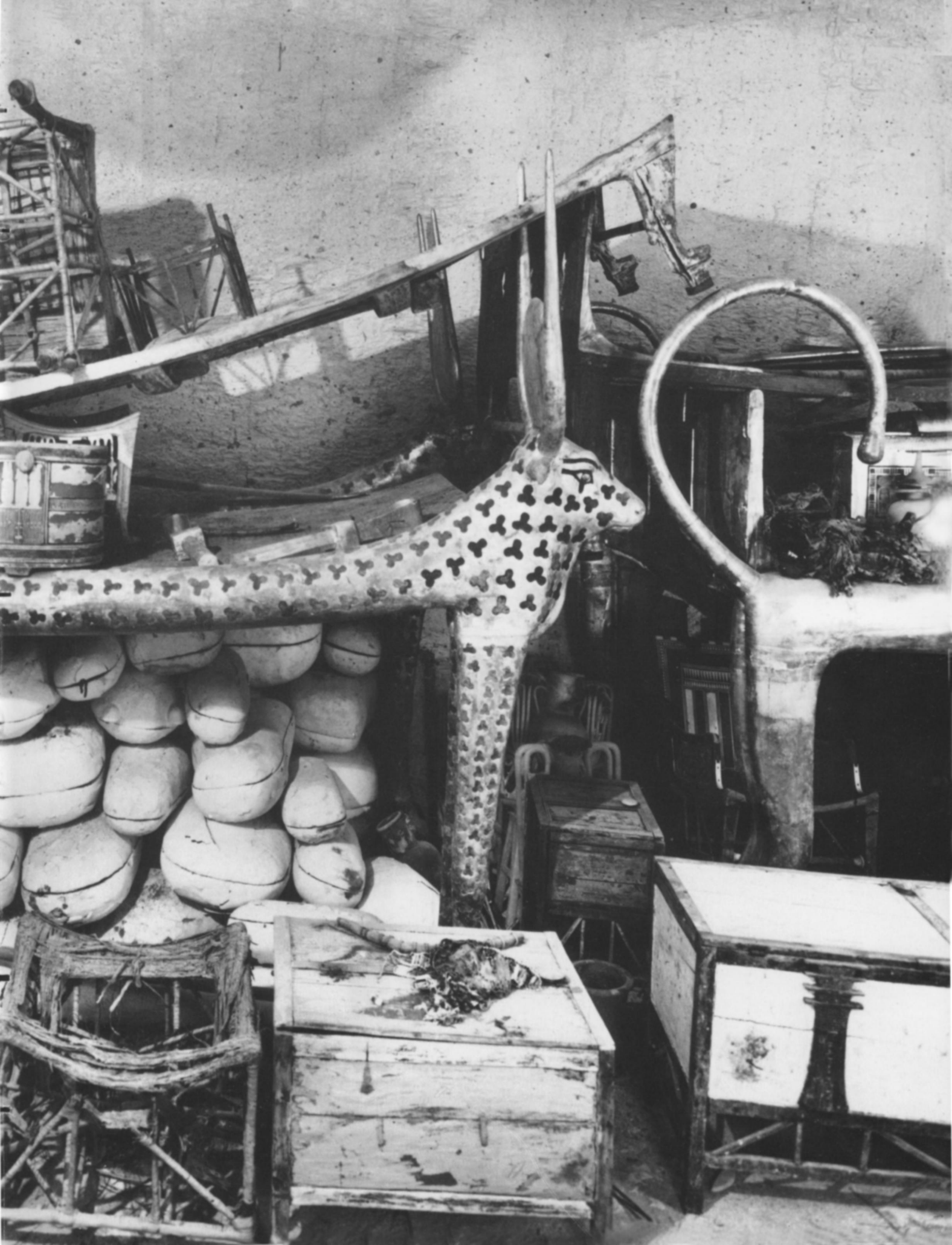
In November 1922 the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamun was discovered, the most spectacular ancient Egyptian royal burial found relatively intact. The find had been made in the Theban necropolis – not far from the spot where the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum was working – by workmen led by the archaeologist Howard Carter, who excavated for the fifth Earl of Carnarvon.

Carter realized the need for expert aid in examining so important a find, and asked his colleague A. M. Lythgoe, the Metropolitan's Curator of the Egyptian Department, for the assistance of the skilled photographer Harry Burton in recording the discovery. Lythgoe immediately cabled back offering not only Burton's help but other Museum expedition help as well: "Only too delighted to assist in every possible way. Please call upon Burton and any other members of our staff." In this way four members of the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian Expedition took part in this historic work: Burton, the archaeologist Arthur C. Mace, and the draughtsmen Lindsley F. Hall and Walter Hauser. The following twelve pages present some of Burton's famous photographs, with captions drawn from Howard Carter's own account of the discovery (the first of the three volumes was written with Arthur Mace).

"I inserted the candle and peered in. At first I could see nothing, the hot air escaping from the chamber causing the candle flame to flicker, but presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold – everywhere the glint of gold. I was struck dumb with amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon inquired anxiously, 'Can you see anything?' it was all I could do to get out the words, 'Yes, wonderful things.'"







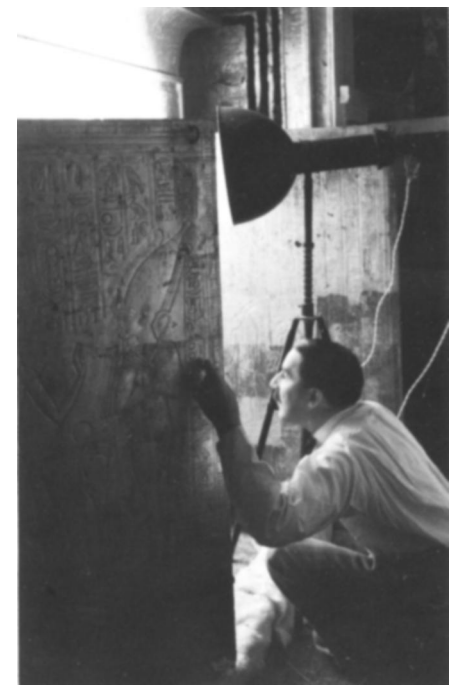




Left, head from a funerary couch: "First were three great gilt couches, their sides carved in the form of monstrous animals with heads of startling realism. Uncanny beasts to look upon at any time: seen as we saw them, their brilliant gilded surfaces picked out of the darkness by our torch, they were almost terrifying."

Far left and below: "Next, two statues caught and held our attention: two life-sized figures of a king in black, facing each other like sentinels, gold kilted, gold sandalled, armed with mace and staff. Strange and imposing figures, these, even as we first saw them, surrounded and half concealed by other objects; as they stand now in the empty chamber, beyond them, through the opened door, the golden shrine half visible, they present an appearance that is almost painfully impressive."

Below, right: Carter opening the second of four shrines enclosing Tutankhamun's sarcophagus: "In the coming winter our first task, a difficult and anxious one, will be the dismantling of the shrines in the sepulchral chamber. It is probable that there will be a succession of these shrines, built one within the other, before we come to the stone sarcophagus in which the king is lying. With the mummy – if, as we hope and believe, it remains untouched by plunderers – there should certainly lie the regalia of a king of Egypt. Imagination falters at the thought of what the tomb may yet disclose."



This article was written by Arthur C. Mace for the Metropolitan Museum's Bulletin of December 1923, at the beginning of the second season of work at Tutankhamun's tomb

Lord Carnarvon's and Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun has aroused an interest not merely in this particular find, but in archaeology generally, that to the excavator is almost embarrassing. Ordinarily he spends his time quietly and unobtrusively enough, half the year burrowing mole-like in the ground, and the other half writing dull papers for scientific journals, and now suddenly he finds himself in the full glare of the limelight. The ordinary details of his daily work suddenly have become of intense and absorbing interest to the world at large. Why is it?

The explanation is, I suppose, simple enough really. It lies in the fact that we are all, even the most prosaic of us, children under our skins, and thrill deliciously at the very idea of buried treasure. Sealed doorways, jeweled robes, inlay of precious stones, kings' regalia – the phrases grip, and we can now, under cover of scientific interest, openly and unashamedly indulge an intellectual appetite that has hitherto been nourished surreptitiously on detective stories and murder cases in the press.

In view of this widespread interest and the general familiarity with Tutankhamun's name, it comes as almost a shock to find how little we really know about this monarch.

He became king (in 1361 B.C.) by virtue of his marriage with Ankhes-enpaaten, third daughter of the so-called heretic king, Akhenaten. It was not, one would have thought, a particularly enviable or safe position to aspire to at this juncture, for the country was in a state of transition.

It must have been obvious to Tutankhamun or to his advisors that a surrender must be made of Akhenaten's ideas and principles, and a return to the old order and the old gods, if the country was to prosper. In pursuance of this policy Tell el

Amarna, Akhenaten's capital, was abandoned, the court was transferred back again to Thebes, the new king changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun, and the favor of the powerful priests was courted by putting in hand restorations and additions to the god Amun's temples.

We have reason to believe that Tutankhamun was a young man when he died. His tomb is situated in the center of the Valley of the Kings, not very far from the spot in which Theodore M. Davis had found a famous cache of royal funerary objects from Tell el Amarna, brought to Thebes on the abandonment of that capital, and hidden away in this spot, as the clay sealings would seem to indicate, by Tutankhamun himself. Nor was other evidence lacking to connect Tutankhamun with this particular part of the Valley. Nearby Mr. Davis had found, hidden under a stone, a faience cup with the name of our king upon it, and in a small pit tomb some fragments of gold foil which bore the names both of Tutankhamun and of his queen. Another of his finds was even more significant and, as it happens, nearly concerns our own Museum. This was a cache of large pottery sealed jars, buried in an irregular hole a little way eastward from the Akhenaten cache. There was nothing to show to which tomb, if any, the jars belonged, and, as they seemed to contain nothing but bundles of linen, broken fragments of pottery, and other miscellaneous rubbish, they were passed over and stored away. A year or two later, H. E. Winlock noticed these jars in one of Mr. Davis's storerooms, and realized from a hasty examination of the contents that there might be interesting information to be gleaned from them. Through the kind offices of Harry Burton, who was then working with Mr. Davis, they were handed over to him with the permission of the Egyptian authorities and shipped home to New York, and in the Museum he made a thorough investiga-

tion of their contents. They proved to be even more interesting than he had anticipated. There were the remains of a great number of plain and decorated pottery vases; there were headshaws and other pieces of linen, one of which was inscribed with the date of the sixth year of Tutankhamun; and, most significant of all, there were a number of clay sealings, some bearing the name of Tutankhamun, and others the impression of the royal necropolis seal, the jackal and nine captives. It was a curious jumble of material, but there seemed good reason for supposing that it came from a tomb of Tutankhamun somewhere in the neighborhood, and represented the final gathering up of oddments after the funeral ceremonies.

Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Carter had, then, considerable grounds for believing that the tomb of Tutankhamun was situated in this particular part of the Valley, and for many reasons his was the tomb they most hoped to find. They searched for it for several seasons and removed several thousand tons of debris without success, and not the least dramatic part of the whole discovery is the fact that it was made in a last effort, when hope was almost dead. At the end of the season of 1921/1922 it became a matter of serious debate for them whether, after so many barren years of work, it would not be better to abandon the Valley and try their luck elsewhere, and they finally decided to return for one more season, a short season of two months only. Then, on November 4, just five days after the work had been started, the tomb was found.

The story of the actual discovery and of the general details of the work of clearing is well enough known from other sources, and there is no need to dwell upon it here. I should like, however, to devote some space to the share in the work taken by the members of our own Expedition.

Photography was the first and most pressing need at the outset, for it was absolutely essential that a complete photographic record of the objects in the tomb should be made before anything was touched. This part of the work was undertaken by Burton, and the wonderful results he achieved are known to everyone, his photographs having appeared in most of the illustrated papers throughout the world. They were all taken by electric light, wires having been laid to connect the tomb with the main lighting system of the Valley, and for a dark-room, appropriately enough, he had the unfinished tomb which had been used as a cache for the funerary remains of the Tell el Amarna royalties.

Lindsley F. Hall and Walter Hauser were responsible for the plan of the tomb. Each individual object was drawn to scale in the exact position in which it lay, and a reference to the photographs of the interior, which illustrate the confused and haphazard manner in which these objects were piled one upon another, will give some idea of the difficulties that confronted them.

My own share of the work was largely confined to the laboratory, which was established in the tomb of Seti II, conveniently situated in a secluded spot at the extreme end of the Valley. Here, working in collaboration with Mr. Lucas, Director of the Government Chemical Laboratories, whose chemical knowledge was invaluable, I spent the greater part of the winter, receiving the objects as one by one they were brought up out of the tomb, noting and cataloguing them, and carrying out such repairs and restorations as were necessary.

The most exciting of the laboratory tasks was the unpacking of the boxes and caskets, for, owing to the confused nature of their contents, you could never be certain of anything, and at any moment, tucked away in a corner, or concealed in the fold of a

garment, you might come across a magnificent scarab or piece of jewelry, or a wonderful statuette. The jumble was amazing, the most incongruous things being packed together, and for some time we were completely in the dark as to its meaning. The explanation, which we worked out later, is as follows.

Some years after the burial of the king, plunderers had contrived to tunnel their way into the tomb and had made a hurried and ruthless search for treasure that was portable, ransacking the boxes and throwing their contents all over the floor. Then, probably while the plunderers were still at work, the officials responsible for the safekeeping of the royal necropolis got wind of the affair, and came posthaste to investigate. Some of the thieves made good their escape – the faience cup beneath the rock which we referred to above was probably hidden by one of them – but others were evidently either caught on the spot, or apprehended later with the loot still in their possession. Then came the question of making good the damage, and a hurried and perfunctory job the officials seem to have made of it. No attempt was made to re-sort the material or pack the objects back into the boxes that were originally intended for them. Instead, they were gathered up in handfuls and bundles and hastily crammed into the nearest box. As a result we get the most incongruous mixtures, walking sticks and underlinen, jewelry and faience vases, headrests and robes of state.

Slow and exacting the work was, but intensely interesting, and worth every minute of the time that was spent upon it. No trouble could be too great, for we have been given an opportunity such as archaeology has never known before, and in all probability will never see again. Now for the first time we have what every excavator has dreamt of, but never hoped to see, a royal tomb with all its

furniture intact. The increase to our sum of archaeological knowledge should be enormous, and we, as a Museum, should count it as a privilege to have been able to take such a prominent part in the work.

Some idea of the extent of the discovery may be gleaned from the fact that the objects so far removed represent but a quarter of the contents of the tomb, and that, probably the least valuable quarter. We have cleared the Antechamber. There remain the Sepulchral Chamber, the inner Store Chamber, and the Annex, and, to all appearance, each contains far finer objects than any we have handled yet. It is the first of these chambers that will occupy us in the opening months of the coming season. There, beneath the sepulchral shrines, more than three thousand years ago the king was laid to rest, and there we hope to find him lying.

Below, the first of three coffins within the stone sarcophagus: "The light shone into the sarcophagus. A sight met our eyes that at first puzzled us. It was a little disappointing. The contents were completely covered by fine linen shrouds. We rolled back those covering shrouds, one by one, and as the last was removed a gasp of wonderment escaped our lips, so gorgeous was the sight that met our eyes: a golden effigy of the young boy king, of most magnificent workmanship, filled the whole interior of the sarcophagus."





Left: "The lid was slowly raised. This revealed a third coffin, but the main details of the workmanship were hidden by a close-fitting reddish-colored linen shroud. Mr. Burton at once made his photographing records. I then removed the linen coverings. An astounding fact was disclosed. This third coffin, over six feet in length, was of solid gold! The face was again that of the king, but the features, though conventional, by symbolizing Osiris, were even more youthful than those on the other coffins."



Right: "A pair of statuettes represent the king upon papyrus-reed floats, and appear to symbolize a mythical pursuit: Tut-ankh-Amen as the youthful warrior Horus killing the hippopotamus in the marshes. These figures are remarkable for the vigour and animation they display. The feeling here exhibited is beyond the formalized conventions learned by rote; they show both energy and grace, in fact, the divine and the human have been brought in touch with one another."



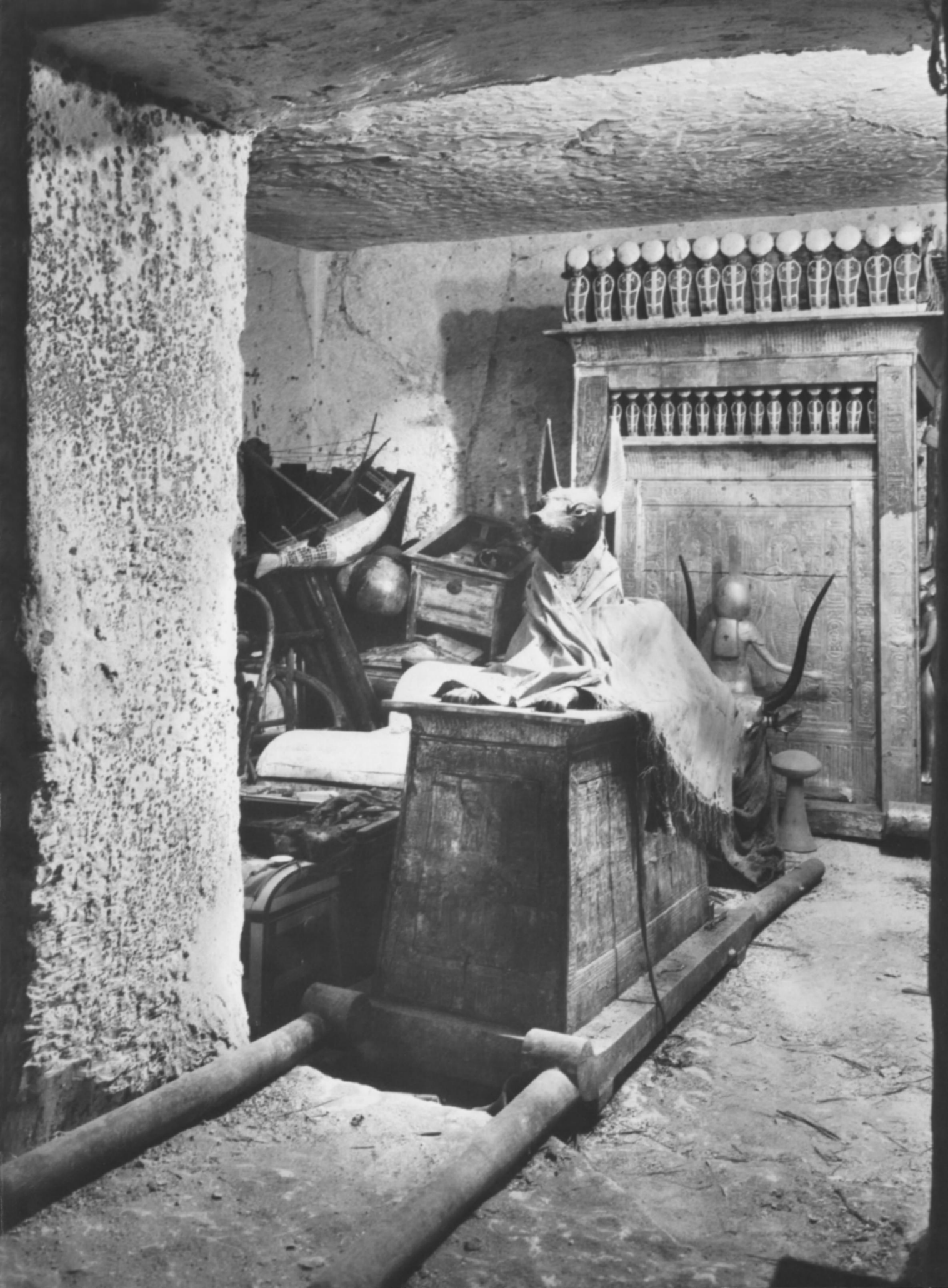
Left: "This lamp, flanked with fret-work ornament symbolizing 'Unity' and 'Eternity,' ranks among the most interesting objects we had so far discovered. Its chalice-like cup, which held the oil and a floating wick, was neither decorated on its exterior nor interior surfaces, yet when the lamp was lit the king and queen were seen in brilliant colors within the thickness of its translucent stone. We, at first, were puzzled to know how this ingenious effect was accomplished. The explanation would seem to be that there were two cups fitted one within the other, and that on the outer wall of the inner cup a picture had been painted in semi-transparent colors, visible only through the translucent calcite when the lamp was lit."



Left, the mask of Tutankhamun: "Before us was an impressive mummy, over which had been poured anointing unguents, blackened by age. In contradistinction to the general dark and sombre effect was a brilliant, one might say magnificent, burnished gold mask. The beaten gold mask is a beautiful and unique specimen of ancient portraiture."

Right: "We passed on to the farther end of the burial chamber. Here a surprise awaited us, for a low door gave entrance to yet another chamber, smaller than the outer ones and not so lofty. This doorway, unlike the others, had not been closed and sealed. A single glance sufficed to tell us that here, within this little chamber, lay the greatest treasures of the tomb."

"Immediately in front of the entrance lay the figure of the jackal god Anubis, upon his shrine, swathed in linen cloth, and resting upon a portable sled. Anubis, who takes upon himself the form of a kind of black jackal-like dog, who not only presided over the burial rites but also acted as the vigilant watcher over the dead, was appropriately placed facing outwards, to guard against the intruder."



“On the farther side of the Treasury stood the most beautiful monument that I have ever seen – so lovely that it made one gasp with wonder and admiration. The central portion of it consisted of a large shrine-shaped chest, completely overlaid with gold, and surmounted by a cornice of sacred cobras. Surrounding this, free-standing, were statues of the four tutelary goddesses of the dead – gracious figures with outstretched protective arms, so natural and life-like in their pose, so pitiful and compassionate the expression upon their faces, that one felt it almost sacrilege to look at them. There is a simple grandeur about this monument that made an irresistible appeal to the imagination, and I am not ashamed to confess that it brought a lump to my throat. It is undoubtedly the Canopic chest and contains the jars which play such an important part in the ritual of mummification.”





