

MUSEUMS

Burying Tut

Creating a burial as spectacular as King Tut's required a vast amount of preparation yet today we are only familiar with the end product. The exhibition **Tutankhamun's Funeral** at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art offers a behind-the-scenes look at the most famous tomb of the ancient world. Dozens of artifacts discovered in a shaft in Egypt's Valley of the Kings in 1908 by retired American lawyer-turned-amateur-archaeologist Theodore Davis are the leftover materials from Tut's mummification and provide insights into the days leading up to his interment. These objects may at first glance pale in comparison to the gold masks and jewelry on display downtown in the blockbuster show, "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs." But they reveal spectacular details about the Boy King's burial.

One intriguing piece is a linen strip that had been used for everyday purposes in Tut's household before it became a mummy wrapping. It is inscribed in ink with "Year 6," meaning it was woven during the sixth year (ca. 1331 B.C.) of his nine-year reign. Another is a sausage-shaped linen pouch filled with sawdust, which would have been used to plump up Tut's body after his organs had been removed. Such artifacts evoke the pharaoh's humanity in a way the idealized image on his death mask cannot. "These are very humble things compared with the treasures from the tomb," says exhibition curator Dorothea Arnold. "But on the other hand, people don't just want to look and say 'ooh.' They want to think, and that's what this exhibition is for." **Tutankhamun's Funeral** is on view through September 6. For more, see TutWatch at www.archaeology.org. —ETI BONN-MULLER

Found among King Tut's mummification materials, this unusually well-preserved floral collar is adorned with berries, faience beads, cornflowers, lotus petals, and olive leaves.

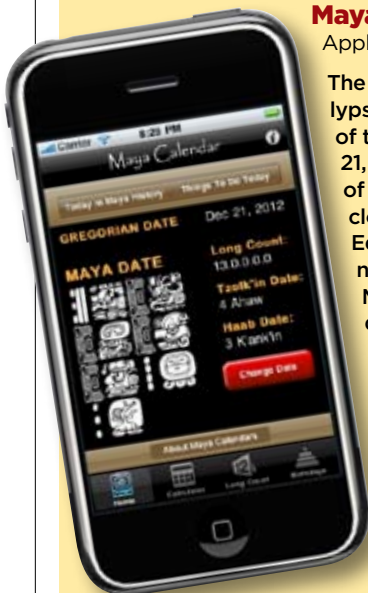


EDITORS' PICKS

Maya Calendar App

Apple Apps Store, \$2.99

The hysteria surrounding the apocalypse supposedly heralded by the end of the Maya long count on December 21, 2012, has led to the proliferation of hokey, Maya-themed countdown clocks for the iPhone. But Mayanist Edwin Barnhart rises above the silliness with a gracefully designed Maya Calendar app that renders dates in Maya glyphs and offers accurate background information on Maya time-keeping methods. The app's "Today in Maya History" feature draws on actual events recorded on Mesoamerican monuments and is a great reminder that the Maya aren't just the exotic doomsayers of popular imagination, but a people with a fascinating culture that has lasted for millennia.



The Incredible Voyage of Ulysses

Getty Publications, \$19.95

Here's a children's book that even adults will treasure. In 58 gloriously illustrated pages, author and artist Bimba Landmann presents her version of Ulysses's perilous, 20-year journey home following Greek victory in the Trojan War. The book's text and imaginative pictures, reminiscent of ancient Greek art, are tightly interwoven, offering dramatic portraits of Sirens, Lotus Eaters, and giant cannibals, among other loathsome or tempting distractions that threaten Ulysses at every turn of the oar. Readers 8 to 12 will be thrilled, delighted, and perhaps a bit overwhelmed by this imaginative re-creation of Homer's classic tale.

