

In 2008, my colleagues and I decided to analyze samples of Tutankhamun's DNA. Early in the study, our team made some new discoveries: Tutankhamun's left foot was clubbed,³ and one toe was missing a bone. A condition known as osteonecrosis (tissue death) had destroyed some bones in the foot. The discovery explained why there were so many staffs in Tutankhamun's tomb. Some scholars had argued that the staffs were symbols of power. Our DNA study showed that the king needed the staffs to walk.