Mummies and Movies
The appearance of mummy movies actually happens before the discovery of Tutankhamun’s mummies (and the mummy’s curse) played a central role in movies.

A century of mummy stories – and the occasional play – preceded the arrival of the Mummy on film.

It wasn’t until Howard Carter’s discovery that mummies (and the mummy’s curse) played a central role in movies.
Mummy Movies
Before Tut
Cléopâtre - 1899

Directed by Georges Méliès

an evil old man hacks a mummy to pieces and subsequently uses fire to resuscitate it

The Haunted Curiosity Shop - 1901

Directed by Walter Booth

a living mummy appears before a scholar to have its wrappings fall away and its flesh melt until only the skeleton remains
The Vengeance of Egypt - 1912

An Egyptian tomb is excavated under the supervision of Napoleon Bonaparte,

One soldier steals a cursed scarab ring from the mummy that causes anyone who possesses it to die.

The soldier's sweetheart dreams of a mummy and is then killed by a burglar.

An antique dealer obtains the ring and dies with blotches on his arms and a man who buys the ring is shot.

An Egyptologist returns the ring back to the mummy causing the ancient's eyes to glow.
The Avenging Hand - 1915

Also known as The Wraith of the Tomb

An Egyptian princess travels to London looking for her hand that had been cut off by marauding archaeologist (not an uncommon practice during the late 19th and early 20th centuries).

no surviving copies of the movie exist
Die Augen der Mumie Ma - 1918

Released in English as The Eyes of the Mummy

Emil Jannings (one of the first recipients of an Academy Award) plays the title role of the mummy.
English painter is taken to a so-called haunted tomb and is shown a mummy who blinks his eyes - the eyes are those of a young woman who is forced to play the part by her mad guardian.

Inquisitive visitors are scared away by the subterfuge; and the guardian is about to continue his romantic pursuit of the young woman.

Love conquers temporarily, and the young woman elopes with the English painter.

Her guardian pursues her relentlessly, and she finally drops dead from his harassment. In grief and madness, the guardian stabs himself.
• Trends of pre-Tut ancient Egyptian movies:

1. Based on biblical stories

2. Based on classical works (Cleopatra)

3. Ethnocentric/Colonialist
Mummy Movies

After Tut
Carnarvon sells the print rights to the dig itself to the London Times.

Carnarvon turns his thoughts to other enterprises in order to try to recoup some of the money that he had spend financing the excavations.

After the discovery, Carnarvon entered into discussions with the Hollywood Goldwyn Picture Company to sell the motion picture rights to the discovery.
While no price had been discussed, Carnarvon goes ahead and sketches out a treatment for the movie – which broke down into 7 sections:

1. The approach to the Valley of the Kings, crossing the Nile and passing the colossi of Memnon and Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, over the Theban cliffs, and into the Valley itself.

2. The history of the excavation - and earlier explorations from 1907 onward. Followed by the discovery of the tomb itself and the clearance of the steps and the entrance.

3. The contents of the corridor and the first chamber, with the two life sized statues bathed in electric light.
4. The official opening of the tomb (restaged). All of the notable attendees were expected to reprise their roles.

5. A look at the treasures found to date, including the three golden couches, statues, the 4 dismantled chariots, the golden throne, and any other “delights” which might be found before the file grew arrived.

6. The unveiling of the mummy that, it was assumed, would be found in the sarcophagus.

7. “A strong and uplifting ending…”
A copy of the treatment was set to the various bidders, but Goldwyn was the most interested.

He suggested to add sequences showing:

- “the essence and idea of ancient Egypt, including the pyramids and the Sphinx,” and dramatized versions of “the wonderful ceremonies attendant upon the internment of a dead Pharaoh, with living people chosen from living Egyptians looking like those from Tutankhamun’s time.”
In February of 1923, the New York Times reported that a film company had tried to take unauthorized pictures of the excavation with the aid of a telescope.

Three days later, the London Times reported that “definite arrangements for the official film of the excavation are not yet completed. The matter is receiving Lord Carnarvon’s close attention.”

The motion picture rights were actually kept by Carnarvon, and Goldwyn sent camera equipment that was to be used for scholarly excavation filming.
The Mummy
- 1932 - horror movies were hot in Hollywood.

- After *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, studios were looking for scripts and stars that could match what Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff did for Universal Pictures.
The discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb was still in the public’s consciousness – due to the legendary “curse.”

Carl Laemmle Jr. - producer for many of Universal’s early horror movies

Laemmle thought that the idea of a mummy’s curse could be adapted into a full-length movie.
The Mummy began filming in late September of 1932, and concluded a month later.

Location work was done in the Mojave Desert’s Red Rock Canyon.

Art Director Willy Pogany designed authentic looking sets and artifacts (many of which he lifted from photographs of the artifacts discovered in Tutankhamun’s tomb).
and now KARLOFF
THE UNCANNY
as
THE MUMMY
It comes to Life!
Considering that writer John Balderson had also been associated with Universal’s Dracula, it’s hardly a great surprise that the two pictures are quite similar:

- Both pictures took place in very exotic locales
- Both Dracula and Imhotep were cultured, ageless beings who desired, young, modern women
- Both use supernatural powers instead of brute strength (which is very much unlike future mummy movies)
- Both can only be destroyed using supernatural or pseudo-religious means.
Kharis Series
The Kharis series includes:

- The Mummy’s Hand (1940)
- The Mummy’s Tomb (1942)
- The Mummy’s Ghost (1944)
- The Mummy’s Curse (1944).

The movies themselves are really nothing more that wartime “B” movies that, despite being made by Universal, had little or nothing in common with the original 1932 The Mummy.
The Hammer Films
the next mummy series was not to come from Universal (who had really dominated the genre up until the 50s).

Instead, Hammer Film LTD, a British film company took up the mantle and re-made a series of new mummy movies – the difference was that the Hammer films were in color.