

TUTANKHAMUN

AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE PHARAOHS

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ANDREAS F. VOEGELIN, ANTIKENMUSEUM BASEL AND SAMMLUNG LUDWIG

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DO NOT CROP THE CANOPIC COFFINETTE IMAGES



CANOPIC COFFINETTE OF TUTANKHAMUN

Tutankhamun possessed four miniature coffins fashioned of gold and inlaid with colored glass and semi-precious stones, and each stood in a separate compartment in an alabaster chest. The band of inscription running down the front names Imseti, one of the sons of Horus, and the goddess Isis, who would protect the deceased and the particular mummified organ within, in this case the liver. The cartouche encircling the king's name on the interior was reworked and originally had the name of one of Tutankhamun's relatives.

GOLDEN DIADEM

The golden diadem, inlaid with colored glass and semi-precious stones, was still around the head of Tutankhamun when Howard Carter opened the royal coffin more than three thousand two hundred years after the young king died. The two protective deities, represented by the vulture and the cobra, originally projecting from the front had been removed and placed near the thighs of the mummy to allow the golden face mask to be put into place.



THE INLAID PECTORAL SPELLING OUT THE NAME OF THE KING

The Inlaid Pectoral Spelling Out the Name of the King is made of gold and semi-precious stones.

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LUXURIOUS FAN

One of several ostrich feather fans, this example of wood overlaid in gold was found in the burial chamber of the tomb. Its long handle terminates in a papyrus umbel upon which is a lunette that has a depiction of the ostrich hunt (ostensibly for the feathers for the fan) on one side and the return with the prize on the other. A similar fan appears in the scene of the hunt. Pharaoh stands in the chariot, poised to shoot the ostriches with an arrow from his bow, while an ankh, the hieroglyph for the word “life,” that has been anthropomorphized with arms and legs, follows behind providing shade for the king. This imagery appears to signify the divinity of the king.

MIRROR CASE

This wooden case for a mirror, formed in the shape of an ankh, the Egyptian word for “life”, is covered in gold and inlaid with semi-precious stones and colored glass. The jeweled inlay displays the hieroglyphs spelling out the King’s throne name, and the lotus blossom below associates it with rebirth. The loop of the top part of the ankh encloses the name as a cartouche normally would, thus serving two purposes. The ankh itself has another function as it also is one of the words the ancient Egyptians used for “mirror.”



MANNEQUIN

Carved of wood and then covered in gesso and painted, this bust of Tutankhamun portrays the young king much more as a youthful figure than a divine being. Although wearing a royal crown with a cobra deity projecting at his brow, he has on a simple linen shirt through which the upper part of his rib cage shows. He has pleasant smile, and his earlobes are pierced, a custom for both males and females during this period. The excavators suggested that the enigmatic statue may have served as a clothes dummy on which garments of the king could be draped or his jewelry displayed. It may also be possible that it had another function, since busts not unlike this are known to have been used during both earlier and later times in certain religious rituals.

GILDED COFFIN OF TJUYA

The Gilded Coffin of Tjuya is almost entirely covered with reddish gold.



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STATUETTE UPPER EGYPT

This statuette of the king wearing the tall crown of Upper Egypt consists of wood covered in gesso and then gilded. It is among 35 ritual figures of the king and deities that were placed in sealed wooden shrines in the tomb. The color combination of the gold of the figure and the black of the base suggests both rebirth and regeneration. The crook he holds in his left hand and the flail he grasps in his right are symbols of his kingship.

STATUETTE LOWER EGYPT

Almost identical to the gilded figure depicting the king of Upper Egypt is this golden statuette portraying Tutankhamun wearing the crown of Lower Egypt. He holds the symbols of his office, the crook and the flail, and both are composed of gilded bronze as are the sandals he wears. The figure stands on a black base, and it was originally covered in linen and placed within a wooden shrine.



ROYAL CANOPIC BUST

This calcite bust of the king depicts Tutankhamun wearing the nemes headdress. Red and black paint are used to highlight features of the face as well as the two protective vulture and cobra deities projecting from his brow. The recessed base below the shoulders indicates that the bust served as a stopper for one of the four cylindrical hollows of the canopic chest in which the mummified organs of the king were stored in separate coffinettes.

PRESTIGIOUS DAGGER

So important was this dagger to Tutankhamun that it was placed upon his mummy among the wrappings. The blade is highly polished gold with simple and elegantly engraved details. The hilt, also of gold, has alternating bands of granulated gold and cloisonné of red and blue glass. The pommel surmounting the handle has a circlet of two falcons with outstretched wings, while its top is decorated with a floral motif, in the center of which are two cartouches with the names of the king.



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PECTORAL WITH SCENE OF GOD

This elaborate necklace was fashioned of gold, with inlays of electrum, silver, semi-precious stones and colored glass. Scenes depicting the king in the company of gods appear in delicate cloisonné openwork on the front pectoral and the counterweight at the back. The detailed links of the straps linking the two consist of double cartouches encircling the names of the king, alternating with royal titles, deities and amuletic messages in hieroglyphs. The front plaque is architectonic, taking the shape of a shrine, and the king appears before Ptah on the right and Sekhmet on the left; the surface on the back is solid gold and has fine engraved details. The scene on the counterweight is simpler, with the king seated before the goddess Maat.

UNGUENT VESSEL

Carved of calcite, this unguent or cosmetic vessel has details of sheet gold, colored pigment and colored ivory. On its lid is a recumbent lion with the cartouche of the king inscribed near its shoulder. Perhaps a symbol of Tutankhamun, he is atop the vessel, while four of the traditional enemies of Egypt are trapped at the base, represented only by their heads. Two columns are applied to the vessel, and each is surmounted by an image of the god Bes. These architectural features also serve as frames for the two scenes depicting fighting animals in a band around the central section of the jar.



FALCON COLLAR

Found on the mummy of Tutankhamun, this golden collar in the shape of falcon with outstretched wings was one of several items of amuletic jewelry placed around the neck of the king. Fashioned of sheet gold, it has been cut into the form of the god Horus, a deity identified with the kingship and the solar religion. Details of the feathering on its body appear in carefully engraved details. A gold wire attached to the two wings encloses the circling, and a counterweight is suspended from a loop at the back.

SMALL STATUE SHRINE

Howard Carter discovered this small golden chest in the shape of an ancient shrine in the Antechamber of the tomb; it is made of wood covered in sheet gold, and the base was plated in silver. A wooden stand with a gold-plated back support stood inside, but the statuette it originally supported no longer exists; carved footprints for it are still visible on the base. Scenes on the insides and outside of its walls, back, and the doors depict the king and queen in a variety of activities, some of which may be associated with festivals, sexuality and coronation.



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A team of experts prepares the gilded coffin of Tjuya for its journey from The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia to The O2 in London where it will be on display as part of "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs" from 15 November 2007 to 30 August 2008. Photos by Miles Kennedy

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