

## The Tutankhamun Exhibit Jewelry and Ornamentation



### Decorated Scarab

It is evident from the tubular projections at both ends that the beetle, or [scarab](#) , was attached to a larger ornament, and the damaged condition of the projection at the back end suggests that the missing part was torn from the scarab by the ancient robbers. What is surprising is that they should have discarded an object that contained so much gold. The blue inlay on the back was first identified by

[Carter](#)

as lapis lazuli, and it seems to show all the characteristic markings of that stone, but in the brief description of the scarab in his card catalogue the material is said to be glass. The inlay is, however, composed of several small pieces fitted together; such a method of construction would not be suitable for glass, which could be molded to the shape of each cloison, but it would be the most convenient way of using lapis lazuli.

Beneath the openwork legs are two gold plates soldered together, the lower embossed with a scene, the chief features of which are figures of Tutankhamun and the gods Atum and Ra-Harakhty. The king, whose throne name Nebkheperura is engraved in a cartouche near his head, wears the so-called atef crown with ram's horns and four uraei with sun's disks above the striped royal [headdress](#) (nemes) with uraeus. A corselet covers his shoulders and the upper part of his body. A pointed kilt with apron and an animal's tail, suspended from the back of the girdle of the apron, complete his attire. The gods stand one on each side of him holding his hands, and they also are shown with pendent tails, like the king's, and wearing kilts. Ra-Harakhty, with falcon's head surmounted by the sun's disk and uraeus, extends, with his left hand, the sign of life (ankh) to the nostrils of the king. He is described in the accompanying inscription as "Ra-Harakhty, the great god of [Heliopolis](#), lord of heaven and lord of earth." In a corresponding inscription Atum is called "Atum, lord of the Two Lands of Heliopolis, great god, lord of heaven and lord of earth." Above the king's crown is the sun's disk, flanked by uraei; at its base are seven pendent ankh symbols, relics of the Amarna custom of terminating the rays of the sun with hands holding these symbols.

In a separate compartment, beneath the feet of the three figures, is a design composed of two identical antithetical groups facing the sema sign for unification supported by intertwined lily and papyrus stems and flowers, emblems of Upper and Lower Egypt. Each of the groups has as its principal element a lapwing (*Vanellus cristatus*) with human arms and hands projecting from its chest and reaching towards the symbol for unification. Beneath the arms are a five pointed star and a basket, the latter serving as a perch for the bird. They are all hieroglyphic signs and in combination with the sema sign they may be translated: "Adoration by all the people of the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt". The whole composition is a heraldic device recalling the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under one crown by Menes, the first dynastic king.

The scarab was found in the antechamber inside a gilded chest, where it had presumably been placed by the necropolis staff when they were collecting together the objects removed by the

robbers from their original containers and left in disorder scattered about the tomb. To judge from the character of the scene on the plate, its purpose was to commemorate an important event in the life of the king, which seems to have occurred early in his reign if the ankh signs at the base of sun's disk are a legacy from Amarna. What that event might be is not revealed by the inscriptions, but it is possible that it was one of the ceremonies in Tutankhamun's coronation, when "the crowns of Atum were assembled" and he was crowned either with each in turn by priests impersonating the particular god with whom a crown was associated or with one-perhaps the khepresh-that symbolized all the crowns. This scene may therefore represent [Atum](#) placing the atef crown on the king's head with his upraised right hand while Ra-Harakhty gives him life. If this is the correct interpretation, the scarab would be part of Tutankhamun's coronation regalia.

