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Tutankhamun’s Mask Reconsidered

For Dorothea Arnold, with gratitude and respect.

The possibility that the intended owner of the celebrated gold mask from Valley of the Kings tomb KV 62 might have been someone other than Tutankhamun was first raised by the writer in a paper given at University College London in 2001. The present article, based on a second lecture delivered at the Valley of the Kings Since Howard Carter symposium held in Luxor, Egypt on November 11, 2009, revisits and develops that idea. The conclusions reached are that Tutankhamun’s employment of the mask was indeed secondary, and that the original owner had been a woman: Ankhkheperure Nefernefruaten, Akhenaten’s co-ruling queen. The ramifications of this identification are both intriguing and significant.

General Description

The limited interest that Tutankhamun’s gold mask (fig. 1) has over the years generated among Egyptologists is difficult to fathom; perhaps, because of its obvious glamour, there has been a feeling that little “real” information could be expected of it. For whatever reason, commentaries are few, brief, and relatively bland, and for the most part focus on the artistic and iconographical aspects of the piece.

1 This paper was completed with restricted library access in Tokyo in the spring of 2010. An earlier version had been slated for publication in the Valley of the Kings Since Howard Carter symposium volume, the fate of which is now somewhat uncertain. For help in checking a number of supplementary references, both while I was in Japan and subsequently, I am indebted to Nozomu Kawai, Stephen Quirke and John Taylor. For the Luxor lecture on which the article is based, Zahi Hawass, Tarek El Awdy, Emily Teeter, John Taylor and Robert B. Partridge very kindly provided important data and images; Aidan Dodson generously permitted advance access to sections of the typescript of his (and Earl Ertman’s) forthcoming catalogue of Tutankhamun’s mask and coffins (The Coffins, Canopic Equipment and Related Material from the Tomb of Tutankhamun, references below cited from this early manuscript draft); while Nozomu Kawai kindly drew my attention to the important XRDF examination recently undertaken by Sakui Yoshimura and his Japanese co-workers (see here note 10 below). For assistance with Griffith Institute, Oxford images I am grateful to Jaromir Malek and Cat Warsi, and for final manipulation of the montage of Lee Boltin/Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin photographs (courtesy of the Bridgeman Art Library and Friederike Kampp-Seyfried respectively) I am indebted to Scott Murphy. For useful and inspiring discussions I wish to thank John R. Harris, Stephen Quirke, John Taylor and Yumiko Ueno. Responsibility for the conclusions here drawn, and for all errors and omissions, is of course my own.


3 A subsequent version of this paper, entitled “Behind the Mask of Tutankhamun” and delivered in the Recent Research in Egyptian Art lecture series at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, on March 6, 2011, is available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxN1hm1TmJ0.

4 PM 1 (2nd ed.), 573; Helen Murray and Mary Nuttall, comps., A Handlist to Howard Carter’s Catalogue of Objects in Tut’ankhamun’s Tomb, Tut’ankhamun’s Tomb Series 1 (Oxford, 1963), 9, Carter object no. 256a; Carter’s record cards, s.n. 256a (in two distinct hands, those of Alfred Lucas and Howard Carter), Griffith Institute, Oxford, Carter MSS, Tutankhamun archive—http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gr/4sea4not.html. For the independent notes of the expedition chemist, Lucas, see here note 10.

5 For example, Petit Palais, Tutankhamon et son temps (exh. cat., Paris, 1967), 190, no. 43; The British Museum, Treasures
The closest we come to a forensic archaeological assessment is to be found in Howard Carter’s original notes, though these notes are not at all extensive nor are they particularly well served by Harry Burton’s stand-alone photography, which conveys disappointingly little in the way of detail. Few technological examinations of the object seem ever to have been carried out, either by Carter’s team or by subsequent researchers, and of these fewer still seem to have found their way into print. No technical drawings exist.

Reliable detail is thus hard to come by, but the basic facts, such as we have them, may be briefly summarized. The mask carries the Carter excavation number (object number) 256a; its Egyptian Museum, Cairo Journal d’Entrée number is 60672, and its Egyptian Museum Tutankhamun exhibition number is 220. Physically the piece stands around 54 cm in height and measures some 39.3 cm wide and 49 cm deep; the thickness of the sheet from which it is worked has been estimated at around 0.15 cm, expanding at the edges to some 0.30 cm. At the more specific of a range of weights to have been published for it, the headpiece tips the scales at 10.23 kg.

The mask’s primary material is gold, and of a very high carat. Two distinct shades are said to be visible to the naked eye: a bluish-silver for the face and neck, and a richer hue for the remainder. This 


But see the perceptive comments of Emily Teeter, The Treasures of Tutankhamun: A Supplementary Guide (n.p., 1979), 19-20, no. 25 based on observations made when the mask toured the United States in 1979 with a selection of the tomb’s contents. See here note 40.

Griffith Institute, Oxford, Carter MSS, Tutankhamun archive, record cards for object no. 256a, see http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a.html; and diary, http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4sea4not.html. Carter’s published comments add little of substance, see Howard Carter, The Tomb of Tutankhamun (London, 1927), esp. 82-88.

Griffith Institute, Oxford, photos 0749-0750, 0751-0755, 0757-0760, 1545, 1617-1618, 1699-1700; see http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a.html.

More recent photographic coverage of the mask and related objects, though far from exhaustive, has been of exceptional quality; see, for example, A. De Luca in T. G. H. James, Tutankhamun (Vercelli, 2000); and Sandro Vannini in Zahi Hawass, King Tutankhamun: The Treasures of the Tomb (London, 2008).

For example, Jean Thibault, “La masque d’or de Toutankhamon radiographié,” Photo-ciné-revue (May 1968), 216-217 (with two x-ray photographs, one of which is reproduced in Nicholas Reeves, The Complete Tutankhamun: The King, the Tomb, the Royal Treasure [London, 1990], 114; a better-quality version of this image may be found online at http://www.dinosoria.com/egypte/toutankhamon-31.jpg); M. Uda, S. Yoshimura, A. Ishizaki, et al., “Tutankhamun’s Gold Mask Investigated with XRDF,” International Journal of PIXE 17/1-2 (2007), 65-76. For Alfred Lucas’s scant notes and comments at the time of the discovery, now in the Griffith Institute, see http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4luca4n.html, passim. Though I have been unable to trace any written report, a close examination of the mask was evidently made at the time of the 1972 British Museum exhibition; a series of internal and external detail shots (35mm slides) taken at that time (now sadly degraded) is kept in the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan. For Teeter and Yale Kneeland’s examination of the mask during the 1979 US tour see here notes 6 and 40.

For the mask in context, see below.

Those who have had an opportunity to measure the piece provide a range of figures. See, for example, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tutankhamen Exhibition in Japan (exh. cat., Tokyo, 1965), 59, no. 45 (52 cm high); Petit Palais, Toutankhamon, 190, no. 43 (51 cm high, 38 cm wide, 49 cm deep); British Museum, Tutankhamun, no. 50 (54 cm high, 39 cm wide, 49 cm deep); B. B. Piotrovskii, Sokrovishcha grobnitsy Tutankhamona (exh. cat., Moscow, 1973), no. 17 (54 cm high); Metropolitan Museum of Art, Treasures of Tutankhamun, 134, no. 25 (54 cm high, 39.3 cm wide); Mohamed Saleh and Hourig Sourouzian, Official Catalogue: The Egyptian Museum Cairo (Mainz am Rhein, 1987), no. 174 (54 cm high, 39.3 cm wide).

Ertman, in Dodson, Coffins, 319. The estimates are credited to James E. Harris.

Compare, for example, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tutankhamen Exhibition in Japan, 59, no. 45 (9,200 grams); Saleh, Egyptian Museum, no. 174 (11 kg).

colour variance is no mere trick of the light: analysis by XRDF (x-ray diffractometer equipped with x-ray fluorescence spectrometer) has revealed the respective surfaces to be of differing alloys, corresponding to a fineness of 18.4 carat (reading taken at the lip on the face) and of 22.5 carat (reading taken on the queue of the nemes). Compositional differences have been detected in the gold matrix also, the underlying alloy of the face (23.2 carat at the lip) being marginally lower than that of the headpiece proper (23.5 carat at the queue of the nemes).

The face itself is a version of the idealised reality that was circulated as Tutankhamun’s official portrait. As the king’s standard image, these same facial features are encountered elsewhere within and beyond the tomb—perhaps most significantly (for assessing their relative veracity) in the twin guardian statues, believed to be modelled closely and deliberately on an idealised version of the young pharaoh’s physical form.

The rear of the mask carries ten vertical and two horizontal lines of hieroglyphic text taken from Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead, chased directly into the metal. The spell is inscribed specifically to benefit Tutankhamun himself, and the cartouche displays no evidence of alteration.

The gold of the headpiece is richly embellished with abundant inlays of both glassy material (employed principally for the stripes of the nemes-headcloth) and a range of semi-precious stones. These last (according to Carter’s identifications) include obsidian and white quartz (for the eyes), lapis lazuli (for the eye surrounds and eyebrows), and turquoise, amazonite, carnelian and other stones (as inlays of the broad collar).

An integral component of the mask, which is sometimes shown removed (notably in Burton’s well-

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18 On the transmission of the new royal portraiture (and titulary) by the circulation of easily and cheaply produced plaster mouldings taken from an original master (in the case of faces, modelled after life), see briefly Nicholas Reeves, “Left-handed Kings? Observations on a Fragmentary Egyptian Sculpture,” in Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith, Anthony Leahy and John Tait, eds. (London, 1999), 253, n. 36. I have yet to be convinced of the value of recent (and widely differing) facial reconstructions based on CT-scans of the royal skull (see Zahi Hawass, Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs [exh. cat., Washington, DC, 2005], 262-271).
21 See Griffith Institute photograph 0760 (see here note 8) and, for the text, Horst Beinlich and Mohamed Saleh, Corpus der Hieroglyphischen Inschriften aus dem Grab des Tutanchamun (Oxford, 1989), 82-83, no. 256a (Goldmaske).
22 Uda, “Tutankhamun’s Gold Mask Investigated,” 65-76 and esp. 73-74. The Japanese team identify this as “a new artificial pigment composed mainly of an amorphous phase, which is closely related to the crystalline dark blue material, Co(M) Al₂O₄, i.e. a kind of…Amarna blue, together with a crystalline phase, i.e. …Egyptian blue.” The name they propose for it is “Tutankhamun blue” (pp. 75-76).
23 See Carter’s notes for this object (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a.html). Dodson’s list of identifications differs slightly in Coffins, 322.
known series of photographs),\textsuperscript{24} is the gold beard.\textsuperscript{25} Inlaid in a plaited design with a glassy material that has now discoloured to grey,\textsuperscript{26} this beard is located by a curved gold strip soldered beneath the chin\textsuperscript{27} and held in place by means of a simple pressure fit.

When first encountered by the excavators, the mask carried a triple string of large disc beads with lotus flower terminals and uraeus clasps, attached through two holes on either side of the throat. Two of the strings (1 and 3) are composed of groupings of yellow gold, red gold and blue faience, and these flank a central string (2) composed of yellow gold disc beads alone.\textsuperscript{28} As the headpiece is normally displayed and photographed today, this bead necklace is removed.

Condition of the Mask

One of the more surprising features of Tutankhamun’s gold mask is the amount of damage the piece has sustained. Particularly noticeable are extensive losses of blue glass inlay from both the front and rear of the nemes-headcloth, in particular from the striped pigtail.\textsuperscript{29} The considerable difficulty Carter experienced in extricating the mask from solidified unguents, which had effectively glued the piece to the trough of the innermost coffin, will clearly account for much (though not all) of this loss.\textsuperscript{30}

A second group of very different injuries is visible to both the front and the outer edge of the mask’s right lappet: two crudely punched holes made in antiquity to receive a wire to hold the royal flail firmly in position.\textsuperscript{31} Quite why this fixing had been required, and why it had been realized in this crude manner, are questions that obviously warrant consideration. A likely explanation is that the Opening of the Mouth ceremony\textsuperscript{32} required the king’s mummy to be physically raised from the horizontal to the vertical,\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} See Griffith Institute photos 0749-0750, 0750b-0758, 0769, 1545, 1616-1618, 1620, 1699, 1700 (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a.html).
\item \textsuperscript{25} Griffith Institute photo 0762, bottom (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a-p0762.html).
\item \textsuperscript{26} “A grayish blue material…mostly amorphous” with “similar chemical compositions…to those of the dark blue material used for the nemes, though Fe and Cu contents were slightly higher than those of the dark blue material” (Uda, “Tutankhamun’s Gold Mask Investigated,” 73).
\item \textsuperscript{27} For a general shot showing a glimpse of this “tenon” see Griffith Institute photo 1699 (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a-p1699.html).
\item \textsuperscript{28} Griffith Institute photo 0744 (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a-p0744.html). For the necklace alone see Griffith Institute photo 0762, top (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a-p0762.html).
\item \textsuperscript{29} See Griffith Institute photos (see here note 8) and more recent images, for example, James, Tutankhamun, 9, 96.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Howard Carter, diary, 1925–1926, from October 28 on (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4sea4not.html), describes the problems encountered. Note in particular the entry for November 27–December 14, “The mask was also a difficult undertaking—the inlay had become unstuck from the heat applied to free it from the coffin. It took many days for final cleaning and I am still replacing the numerous pieces of glass and stone inlay that came away”; F. Filec Leek, The Human Remains from the Tomb of Tut’ankhamun, Tut’ankhamun’s Tomb Series V (Oxford, 1972), 8.
\item \textsuperscript{31} See Nicholas Reeves, “The Tombs of Tutankhamun and his Predecessor” (lecture, University College London, May 17, 1997; the full text is available at http://www.nicholasreeves.com/item.aspx?category=Collections&id=261).
\item \textsuperscript{32} As depicted on the painted north wall of the burial chamber; see conveniently Reeves, Complete Tutankhamun, 73; James, Tutankhamun, 38-41. Representations of this subject matter are frequently encountered in private tomb scenes (see PM I’ [2nd ed.], 471, [d]), and of course in funerary papyri (for example Hunefer, British Museum, London EA 9901/5, see E. A. W. Budge, The Book of the Dead: Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerasher and Netchemet with Supplementary Text from the Papyrus of Nu [London, 1899], Hunefer pl. 7 and elsewhere.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Curiously enough, what may be an example of the type of contraption employed to accomplish this feat (though it has not been recognized as such by the excavators) was recently discovered, dismantled, within the large whitened storage jars of KV 63; see Earl L. Ertman, “A Unique ‘Bed’ with Lion-Headed Terminals: A KV63 Report,” KMT 20, no. 2 (summer 2009), 44-47.
\end{itemize}
in which position the unsupported flail will have been found to fall awkwardly forward or sideways. Presumably, from its poor quality, the necessary remedial work took place on site and at a relatively late and urgent stage in the proceedings.\textsuperscript{34} Since it is difficult to imagine the day of burial having been disrupted by the hammering required, we might speculate that the modification had been carried out during or following a practice run-through of the funeral ceremony. Referring back to the losses of inlay noted above: it is apparent from Harry Burton’s in situ photographs\textsuperscript{35} that several sections of blue glass were already missing from the right lappet in particular, close to the punched holes, before Carter embarked upon his removal of the mask from its solidified resin bed. The inference to be drawn is that a proportion of these pre-burial losses had been inflicted during the course of attaching this flail retention wire.

A third area of damage is visible behind and on the protruding right-hand corner of the \textit{nemes}-headress.\textsuperscript{36} This gives every appearance of being the consequence of a violent concussion, and from its position suggests an intriguing possibility: that the masked (and therefore the fully embellished) mummy may have suffered a fall from the vertical within the tomb. Possible supporting evidence for a catastrophic event of this sort may be found in Carter’s notes,\textsuperscript{37} which mention a number of loose gold elements recovered from the floor of the entrance passageway and antechamber. These elements Carter subsequently identified as parts of the mummy’s sectional side-straps (see below)—straps that such a fall would very likely have broken and scattered, along with further portions of the mask’s blue glass inlay.\textsuperscript{38}

It may be noted that nothing has been observed in the condition of the mask to suggest that the piece had in actuality been \textit{employed} for a pre-Tutankhamun burial, despite evidence presented below that it had been prepared for an earlier owner.

\textbf{Construction of the Mask}

Separate inspections of the interior of the mask in Cairo in 2001 and 2009, supplemented by recent photographs kindly provided by Zahi Hawass and Tarek El Awady (see fig. 2), have shed considerable light on the method of construction, revealing clear evidence of cold hammering, riveting and soldered joins. Most remarkable of all the features so far discerned is a series of rivets at the base of the throat, together with visible lines of solder around the edges of the face and neck and (hinted at by a line of thickening in the published x-ray)\textsuperscript{39} just above the brow band.\textsuperscript{40}
These features indicate that the face had been fashioned not as one with the front of the headpiece, but as a wholly separate unit. In fact, close inspection from both inside and out reveals the headpiece to have been a rather complex creation, with the exclusion of its triple necklace composed of at least eight distinct parts: 1) front panel; 2) back panel; 3) uraeus and vulture; 4) face; 5-6) ears; 7) beard; 8) collar panel—each element variously hammered to shape from sheet metal or else separately cast, and jointed, soldered, riveted, or simply pressure-fitted into place (fig. 3). In its fully assembled state, the mask’s metal surfaces had been smoothed, inlaid, chased, treated and provided with the finishing burnish, which, externally at least, conceals so convincingly today details of the construction process.

Separately Modelled Face: Evidence of Reuse?
In my initial lecture in 2001, the proposal that Tutankhamun’s funerary mask had perhaps been intended for an earlier ruler was prompted by my realization that 1) the face was a separately modelled component. But is this on its own sufficient to indicate reuse? With clear evidence now brought to bear from Tanis that the insertion of a separately modelled face might simply be a feature of the construction process, without corroboration the answer would have to be no. In the event, two supplementary pieces of evidence heighten the possibility of the mask’s appropriation and adaptation: 2) the employment on the Tutankhamun portrait of a set of eye and eyebrow inlays cut not from glass (to match the principal blue inlays of the headdress), but from lapis lazuli; and 3) the variant alloy (though not necessarily the somewhat paler finish) of the face insert revealed by recent XRDF analysis. A fourth piece of evidence, outlined below, now confirms that reuse.

41 Reeves, Complete Tutankhamun, 111; Petit Palais, Toutankhamon, 190, no. 43, had suggested the mask was beaten from a single sheet.
42 The rarity in royal imagery of the combined uraeus and vulture has been noted by Edna R. Russmann, “Vulture and Cobra at the King’s Brow,” in Chief of Seers: Egyptian Studies in Memory of Cyril Aldred, Elizabeth Goring, Nicholas Reeves, and John Ruffle, eds. (London, 1997), 266-284; Dodson, Coffins, n. 1. The fact that the parallels cited by Russmann occur on objects intended for male use seems to deny the possibility that vulture + cobra might have represented a deliberate combination of female (vulture) and male (uraeus).
43 See here note 2.
44 Ertman, in Dodson’s as yet unpublished catalogue of the Tutankhamun coffins and mask (Coffins, n. 18), proposes that the silver coffin and gold mask of Psusennes I display similar inserted faces, while of course both Shoshenq II and Wendjebauendjedet were equipped with gold face masks identical in construction and form to the Tutankhamun face element—the portrait hammered from a single sheet of gold, to which separate ears cast in gold were then attached by means of solder. For the relevant Tanis materials, see Pierre Montet, Les constructions et le tombeau de Psousennès à Tanis, La nécropole royale de Tanis 2 (Paris, 1951), pls. XXII, XLVII-XLVIII, CII, CIV-CV; and, conveniently assembled, Grand Palais, Tanis: l’or de pharaons (exh. cat., Paris, 1987), 270-271, no. 104.
45 One possibility I had previously considered on the basis of this inconsistency in materials was that Tutankhamun’s headpiece might originally have been prepared for Akhenaten himself, with the gold mask’s original portrait subsequently removed and reemployed to furnish a suitable new face for the adapted KV 55 coffin (which had originally been intended for Kiya). The eye and eyebrow inlays of this (now damaged) KV 55 face are of course in a shade of blue glass that matches the glass stripes of the Tutankhamun nemes. For a convenient image of the KV 55 coffin, see Nicholas Reeves, Akhenaten: Egypt’s False Prophet (London, 2001), 81.
46 In funerary objects, the face of the deceased is frequently shown highlighted relative to its surrounding headdress, perhaps in allusion to Book of the Dead Chapter 151 [on which see Barbara Lüscher, Untersuchungen zu Totenbuch Spruch 151 [Wiesbaden, 1998]], and the 11th Division of the Book of Gates (Erik Hornung, Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches, Aegyptiaca Helvetica 7-8 [Geneva, 1979–1980], I, 361-362; II, 251-252).
47 See Uda “Tutankhamun’s Gold Mask Investigated,” 65-76. Note that in the context of jewellery it is common to find separate elements of a single item utilizing alloys of differing compositions—for the reason that the refining of precious metals in ancient Egypt was normally undertaken piecemeal and on a limited scale, see Nicholas Reeves, “The Ashburnham Ring and the Burial of General Djehuty,” JEA 79 (1993), 259-261.
Pierced Ears and Pharaonic Representation

Figure 4 reproduces Harry Burton’s famous photograph of the mask as it was first revealed on October 28, 1925, in situ on the head of the royal mummy. A careful examination of this image reveals two small and at first glance indeterminate pieces of gold foil, one on each of the nemes-lappets. These small discs prove to be the coverings mentioned by Carter as having been applied in antiquity to conceal large piercings in the lobes of the mask’s ears—holes that are attested not only on the headpiece itself, but on the ears of the innermost gold coffin also.

Before examining in detail this Burton photograph, my original understanding from a reading of Carter’s description had been as follows: 1) that, for whatever reason, those burying Tutankhamun had had as their principal aim a total camouflaging of the king’s ear-piercings; and 2) that this camouflaging had been achieved by the application of flat gold patches. Since, however, the foil elements visible in the Burton image prove to be dished inserts (see below), it is now obvious that total concealment had never been the issue. Indeed, nowhere within Tutankhamun’s tomb or beyond can there be discerned the slightest desire, in either two or three dimensions, to deny that the king had pierced ears.

This had not always been the case in Egyptian art: although we know from his mummy that Thutmose IV had pierced lobes (his is the earliest royal attestation), this fact is not reflected in any extant representation of the king nor does it seem to be attested in artworks of the reign of his son and successor Amenhotep III. By the reign of Akhenaten, however, the situation changes dramatically, and this pharaoh, as all subsequent rulers, is shown routinely in all media with pierced ears.

What is significant for us is the manner in which the presence of piercings in life was regularly expressed in art: not by a hole drilled completely through a three-dimensional sculpture’s lobe, but by a discreet, oval depression—which is plainly the effect those modifying the fully drilled lobes of Tutankhamun’s mask and innermost gold coffin were seeking to achieve by the insertion of dished foil plugs.

Besides Tutankhamun’s mask and innermost coffin, there is one other large-scale image from the tomb that displays, and most instructively, the anomaly of fully perforated earlobes: this is the well-known, gessoed-wood representation of the child Tutankhamun’s head rising from a lotus.

48 Griffith Institute photo 0750a (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a-p0750a.html). A good quality reproduction may be found in Susan J. Allen, with an Introduction by James P. Allen and photographs by Harry Burton, Tutankhamun’s Tomb: The Thrill of Discovery (exh. cat., New York, 2006), 57, fig. 45.

49 Griffith Institute, Oxford, Carter MSS, Tutankhamun archive, record card no. 256a(1); see http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/256a-c256a-1.html.

50 Good images can be found in James, Tutankhamun, 17, 82-83, 96, 98-99.

51 See Griffith Institute, Carter record cards for object no. 255; http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/255-c255-02.html. The left plug looks as if it had fallen out, but the camouflaging of the right ear remains and is scarcely noticeable, even in the best-published images, for example James, Tutankhamun, 88-91. Although not a specific focus of the present study, the conclusions reached regarding the mask will also surely be applicable to the innermost gold coffin, which itself shows evidence of significant and as yet not fully explained alterations in its design; see Robert B. Partridge, “Tutankhamun’s Gold Coffin: An Ancient Change in Design?,” GM 150 (1996), 93-98, and here note 79.

52 A fact established, of course, from the royal mummy itself, which displayed a single perforation in each lobe consisting of “a circular hole measuring 7.5 mm. in diameter,” see Derry, in Carter, Tut.ankh.Amen II, 153.

53 Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 61073, see G. Elliot Smith, The Royal Mummies, CG 61051-61100 (Cairo, 1912), 42-46, pls. XXIX-XXX.

54 It is possible that Amenhotep III never had pierced ears—the condition of the mummy is too poor to decide; see Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 61074, Smith, Royal Mummies, 46-51, pls. XXXVI-XXXVII.

55 Carter object no. 8 (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/008.html).
crucially, the piercings actually functioned; that is to say, holes had been made not simply to reflect the fact that the king had pierced ears, but to receive the posts of separately modelled ear-ornaments—as confirmed by a broken part of one earring still in place in the sculpture’s left lobe.56

From this evidence we may reasonably draw a key conclusion: that if, contrary to representational custom, true holes are present in the ears of an image, then they are there for a purpose. In the case of Tutankhamun’s mask and innermost coffin, the original intention, clearly, had been for the ears to carry earrings or ear-studs; just as apparent, from the subsequent disguising of these holes, is that this need for functionality had passed before the king was buried.

**Boy-king—or Queen?**

The complicating factor in all of this is that depictions of kings wearing earrings are so rare as to be virtually non-existent. Apart from the Tutankhamun lotus head described above, an extensive search within the literature has produced no more than two such images: 1) a limestone relief fragment of Amenhotep I from the Theban temple Meniset, in which the king is shown wearing a large hoop earring;57 and 2) a limestone relief of Ramesses II in the Louvre, in which pharaoh sports a similar large hoop earring elaborated with pendant drops—a type familiar from examples found in Tutankhamun’s tomb.58

Why so few instances? Self-evidently in the case of the Tutankhamun lotus head, and from the presence of a sidelock in the two cited reliefs, all three of these representations depict pharaoh as a child. They are, therefore, the exceptions that establish the ancient rule: that, while ear adornment was acceptable in images of a pre-pubescent king, it was deemed inappropriate for a king who had advanced beyond puberty into manhood.61

Although this explains why the holes in the ears of Tutankhamun’s gold mask and innermost coffin were subsequently covered over, it sheds but little light on why actual perforations had been present in the first place. Are we to assume that when these items of burial equipment were initially prepared Tutankhamun had yet to reach adolescence? That on both mask and inner coffin the child-king had

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Conveniently, see Howard Carter, *Tutankh.Amen III* (London, 1933), pl. XVIII, left lower (Carter no. 269a[3]), right upper (Carter no. 269a[2]) and right lower (Carter no. 269a[1]). See further http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/250-299.html.

Teeter, *The Treasures of Tutankhamun: A Supplementary Guide*, 20, makes a similar deduction. A likely general echo of ancient custom is recorded by Winifred S. Blackman, in *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt* (London, 1927), 50; “Among the fellahin,” she writes, “it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring. When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible.” Interestingly, the earring illustrated by Brunton is a degraded version of the pharaonic hoop-and-pendants type seen on the Ramesses II relief and found buried with Tutankhamun (see here notes 59-60). As Blackman continues, “No reason was given for this custom but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex”—this last remark particularly ironic in the present context.
originally been equipped with earrings? And that these earrings had been removed and the piercings plugged for the simple reason that Tutankhamun survived beyond adolescence, and was buried as an adult.\footnote{62}

It is a view, clearly. But, given the fully adult scale of the mask and innermost coffin, and the fact that preparations for Tutankhamun’s burial scarcely seem to have begun by the time of his unexpected death, it is almost certainly not the true answer.

My suggestion is that we consider a rather different possibility: that, in company with other items closely associated with the royal mummy, the mask (and related inner coffin) had been prepared originally not for a male at all, but for a female—the opposite sex being regularly shown in Egyptian artworks at all (upper) social levels and stages of life wearing ear-ornamentation in a range of types.\footnote{63}

The Mask in Context

The photographs taken by Harry Burton at the time of the discovery (fig. 4) remind us that Tutankhamun’s gold mask did not stand alone: it was but a single element in the outer adornment of the king’s mummmified body. The mask’s companion pieces in this external decoration were several and comprised the following: 1) a gold-mounted resin scarab inscribed with Chapter 29B of the Book of the Dead, suspended on ornamental straps made up from odd sections of reused gold trappings;\footnote{65} 2) a pair of separately modelled sheet-gold hands\footnote{66} sewn onto the mummy wrappings and clasping the crook and flail;\footnote{67} 3) a winged ba-bird pectoral;\footnote{68} 4) inlaid inscriptional bands positioned over and along the lines of the shroud’s linen retaining strips;\footnote{69} and 5) ornamental side straps made up from the same series of components employed as suspension for the scarab (no. 1).\footnote{70}

The outwardly visible names on these mummy trappings (and the name on the base of the scarab) are throughout those of Tutankhamun. Both the suspension bands of the resin scarab (no. 1) and the ornamental side straps (no. 5),\footnote{71} however, reveal by the intact cartouches on their concealed under-surfaces that these particular pieces had originally been prepared for a quite different regal personage: Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten.\footnote{72}
Who was Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten? Fortunately, it is now possible convincingly to demonstrate what until recently could only be surmised. With the discovery by Marc Gabolde of the phrase akhet-en-hi-es (ḥ.t-n-h(i)=s)—“one who is beneficial for her husband”—employed as an epithet associated with this individual’s nomen (and balancing a prenomen epithet “beloved of Neferkheprure”), we have confirmation that Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten was both a woman and a wife of Akhenaten who, on the basis of iconography and paired cartouches, was acting in the capacity of co-regent. But which wife? Since the cartouched nomen shares a key element with the developed name of the principal consort, Nefernefruaten Nefertiti, the clear inference is that Akhenaten’s female co-regent and great royal wife were one and the same person.

The Evidence of the Canopic Coffinettes
The reused pieces among Tutankhamun’s mummy trappings in fact represent but two items from a substantial body of “second hand” materials that had been drawn upon, seemingly from more than one source, for the provisioning of Tutankhamun’s burial. These recycled elements within the tomb may be recognized today by any one, or a combination, of the following: 1) the presence of an original owner’s name; 2) the superimposition of Tutankhamun’s name over an original owner’s name; 3) facial features that differ from the official facial image of Tutankhamun; 4) physical characteristics inappropriate for Tutankhamun; 5) iconographic features inappropriate for Tutankhamun; 7) the over-provision of certain classes of funerary item. Though there is obviously not space here to list every known piece, this recycled component of Tutankhamun’s burial equipment so far includes, or may be detected among, the large gilded shrines, the sarcophagus, the royal coffins, the mummy trappings (as we have seen), the canopic equipment, the gilded ritual figures, the shabti-figures, the boxes and chests, the bows, and the royal jewellery.

Of this material, a significant proportion may be recognized as definitively female, and, where inscriptions survive, to have been prepared originally for Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten.

Four of the more illuminating objects of this ruling queen within Tutankhamun’s tomb are the richly decorated gold canopic coffinettes, found within the enshrined alabaster canopic chest and ultimately employed to store and safeguard Tutankhamun’s embalmed viscera. The iconography of these coffinettes is revealing. While from the waist up the imagery is that of a pharaoh, from the waist down the containers

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73 Reeves, Akhenaten, 162-173.
75 This carry-over of name-elements is one of the bases for the view that Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten and Ankhkheprure Smenkhkare-djeserkhepru might be one and the same individual, see Reeves, Akhenaten, 172.
76 As first recognized by R. Engelbach, “Material for a Revision of the History of the Heresy Period of the XVIIIth Dynasty,” ASAE 40 (1940), 133-183.
77 On the inscribed material (though the article predates the correct reading of the ḫ.t-n-h(i)=s epithet), see J. R. Harris, “Akhenaten and Nefernefruaten in the Tomb of Tut’ankhamun,” in After Tut’ankhamün: Research and Excavation in the Royal Necropolis at Thebes, C. N. Reeves, ed. (London, 1992), 55-72. For provisional discussions of the range of these appropriations (obviously now subject to revision), see Nicholas Reeves, “The Tombs of Tutankhamun and his Predecessor,” lecture, University College London, May 17, 1997 (http://www.nicholasreeves.com/item.aspx?category=Events&Id=261); Nicholas Reeves, “The Amarna Dead in the Valley of the Kings (2),” lecture, Imola, Italy, April 12, 2003 (http://www.nicholasreeves.com/item.aspx?category=Events&Id=248). The writer is currently preparing a detailed study of Tutankhamun’s appropriated burial equipment.
78 Carter object nos. 266g(1-4) (http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/266g.html). Beinlich, Corpus, 106-117.
lack the embracing wings appropriate for a full king.\textsuperscript{79} In fact, the unelaborated \textit{rishi}-decoration of their lower halves is not pharaonic at all: it is that of a queen,\textsuperscript{80} as confirmed by the identical lower-body scheme of the coffin prepared for Akhenaten’s secondary wife, Kiya.\textsuperscript{81} No attempt had been made to update this overall “semi-pharaonic” style to reflect the full pharaonic status of the coffinettes’ new and final owner: the technical difficulty of modifying elaborately inlaid surfaces, particularly when time was short, will have been too great for Tutankhamun’s undertakers to contemplate.\textsuperscript{82}

Although this design anomaly had been allowed to stand, as completed the overall adaptation of the coffinettes for their new owner was externally convincing enough. As viewed today, the containers are clearly and competently inscribed for the benefit of Tutankhamun and, other than slight variations in the colour of the gold backgrounds of these inlaid texts, no obvious changes may be discerned. As ever within this tomb, though, it is the less-visible that tells the full story: close inspection of the inscriptions chased on the interior gold linings of the coffinette shells reveals the king’s cartouches here to be palimpsest—that is, to have had the names of Tutankhamun inscribed over incompletely erased and still legible cartouches of \textit{Nefernenfrouuten—\textit{nh.t-n-h(i)}=s}.\textsuperscript{83}

On both representational and inscriptive grounds, therefore, Tutankhamun’s coffinettes—like the scarab suspension, the decorative side-strings of the mummy, and a veritable host of other mortuary items—had demonstrably been intended for first use in the burial of Akhenaten’s female co-regent; that is, by Nefertiti herself.

These feminine containers display one further and significant distinguishing feature, and one that serves to associate them directly with, and clarify the original ownership of, the gold mask: fully pierced ears. What was discerned above concerning the presence of such sculptural piercings allows us to conclude now, for Nefertiti’s coffinettes, that these particular artworks had, in their original manifestation, carried

\textsuperscript{79} See here note 80, and cf. Carter object nos. 253 and 255—the outermost and innermost coffins (http://www.griffith. ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/253.html and http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/255.html). The wings as now present on Tutankhamun’s innermost coffin I would tentatively recognize as secondary additions made during the coffin’s refurbishment for Tutankhamun (for which see briefly here note 51). As I conclude below, this is an object made originally for Ankhkheprure Nefernenfrouuten.

\textsuperscript{80} A similar “queenly” lower half may be observed on Tutankhamun’s second coffin, with which the canopic coffinettes were evidently prepared en suite. The second coffin must also be a reused piece (a possibility already hinted at by the fact that its cartouches sit somewhat lower than the surrounding texts), and again originally the property of Ankhkhep re Nefernenfrouuten whose portrait it (and the coffinettes) would appear still to bear. While perhaps not independently diagnostic, the faces bring to mind the less elegant version of Nefertiti’s portrait seen, for example, in the grandiorite head Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin 21358—for an image of which see Dorothea Arnold, \textit{The Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty from Ancient Egypt} (exh. cat., New York, 1996), 80, fig. 72; 82, fig. 74.

\textsuperscript{81} For a photograph, see conveniently Reeves, \textit{Akhenaten}, 81.

\textsuperscript{82} A similar pragmatism was exercised in the adaptation of the second coffin also (for which see here note 80). The situation stands in marked contrast to that of Tutankhamun’s innermost gold coffin, on which the chased decoration could be readily changed. Similarly, with immense effort, on the king’s usurped quartzite sarcophagus wings had been added to originally wingless arms—an evident attempt to adapt it for full pharaonic use. On this latter monument see M. Eaton-Krauss, \textit{The Sarcophagus in the Tomb of Tutankhamun} (Oxford, 1993); M. Eaton-Krauss, “The Sarcophagus in the Tomb of Tutankhamun: A Clarification,” \textit{JEA} 84 (1998), 210-212; Marianne Eaton-Krauss, “The Burial of Tutankhamen, Part One,” \textit{KMT} 20, no. 4 (Winter 2009–2010), 34-47, esp. 41-42.

\textsuperscript{83} Beinlich, \textit{Corpus}, 106-117 (with caution); Marc Gabolde, “Under a Deep Blue Starry Sky,” in \textit{Causing His Name to Live: Studies in Egyptian Epigraphy and History in Memory of William J. Murnane}, Peter J. Brand and Louise Cooper, eds., Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 37 (Leiden, 2009), 109-120. Gabolde notes that traces of the epithet \textit{nh.t-n-h(i)}=s, “one who is beneficial for her husband,” are visible on the interior of the coffinette of Selket (Carter 266g, Selket = Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE 60691, line 7).
ear-ornaments\textsuperscript{84}—and these, we may assume, were a variation on the large, domed studs seen worn by Nefertiti in her later representations.\textsuperscript{85}

As with Tutankhamun’s appropriated coffinettes, I would suggest, so with the gold mask (and innermost coffin): the shared, essentially feminine feature of functionally pierced ears definitively identifies the original owner of this entire group of core mortuary objects as a woman and co-regent queen: Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten—the late, powerful manifestation of Akhenaten’s former great royal wife, Nefertiti (fig. 5).

Conclusions and Implications

Tutankhamun’s gold mask ranks today as one of the most famous artworks in the world. For more than eighty-five years it has been subjected to the unremitting gaze of countless millions—viewed at first hand on exhibition in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo and elsewhere, and featured in endless books, magazines and television documentaries. It is not only the quintessential image from Tutankhamun’s tomb, it is perhaps the best-known object from ancient Egypt itself.

Blinded by the piece’s sheer beauty and enormous bullion worth, however, the world has looked and yet has completely failed to see—that the gold mask had never been intended for Tutankhamun at all. Though now bearing that king’s name and facial features, from the evidence of its fully pierced ears—which the royal undertakers had gone to some pains to conceal—it is clear that the headpiece had originally been prepared for a woman. This woman, as Tutankhamun’s adapted canopic coffinettes allow us to establish, had been the young pharaoh’s immediate predecessor, Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten—the beautiful Nefertiti, Akhenaten’s famous consort, in her guise as co-regent queen (table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. The transformation of the KV 62 gold mask.</th>
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<td>• <strong>Primary ownership</strong>: initial preparation of the mask for Nefertiti in her role as Akhenaten’s co-regent, Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten; produced with her facial features and probably wearing her characteristic domed ear-ornaments (see fig. 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Secondary ownership</strong>: the face of Nefertiti cut out, the ears detached from the face; a new portrait of Tutankhamun, worked and finished in a slightly different alloy, soldered and riveted in place; the original (Nefertiti) ears reattached to this face, now minus their domed studs and with the piercings plugged by circles of dished gold foil; inscriptions added to confirm the new owner as Nebkheprure Tutankhamun (see fig. 1).</td>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{84} In the case of the ears of the en suite gilded and inlaid wood second coffin, the precise state of affairs is unclear. If originally perforated and subsequently plugged and foiled (as I would expect) then the work has been carried out very thoroughly and the adaptation never noted.

\textsuperscript{85} See Arnold, *Royal Women*, 78, fig. 71 (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin 21263); Rita E. Freed, Yvonne J. Markowitz, and Sue H. D’Auria, eds., *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen* (exh. cat., Boston, 1999), 92, fig. 63 (mislabelled by the editors as an image of Kiya). It may or may not be significant that at least one pair of ear-studs of the type worn by Nefertiti on her Berlin statue is attested in Tutankhamun’s tomb, see Carter no. 269a(6), Carter, *Tut.ankh.Amen*, III, pl. XVIII, left middle (with pl. XVIII, left upper—Carter no. 269a(5)—being of this same circular type with the addition of pendent uraei). See http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/250-299.html.
That an already extensive list of this ruling queen’s reused funerary equipment within KV 62 may now be supplemented by the gold mask (and the innermost gold coffin) completely transforms our understanding of the tomb. Not merely a proportion of Tutankhamun’s core burial items—shrines, sarcophagus, coffins, mask, mummy trappings—had originally been prepared for Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten: it now seems probable that most of it had.

The conclusion comes as a surprise, and carries much in its wake. First, it obliges us to reconsider the circumstances under which Tutankhamun was able to draw upon so much (all?) of Nefertiti’s co-regent status equipment. Are we to imagine that, following Tutankhamun’s untimely death, his officials deliberately reopened, and then solely to plunder, the tomb of a predecessor the young king had himself buried, presumably at Thebes, less than a decade before? Or did the co-regent’s equipment simply lie abandoned in store, available to be pressed into service as and when required? If the latter, then the ramifications of Nefertiti’s non-employment of that equipment are significant: for in whatever manner she was eventually laid to rest, clearly it will not have been as Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten. Had this extraordinary woman in the end been “demoted” and buried as an ordinary queen—perhaps in consequence of her damning parley with the Hittites? Or are we to discern quite the opposite, a conclusion Nefertiti’s role in the Zannanza affair might actually argue: that, since in the immediate aftermath of Akhenaten’s death Nefertiti was in a position to conduct such negotiations, she had established herself as pharaoh de facto and as such merited, and in the actual received, a superior burial of full pharaonic status?

Secondly, and linking with this: if Tutankhamun’s undertakers had, for the preparation of the young king’s burial, indeed drawn but sparingly on the funerary equipment of Akhenaten, then what became of Akhenaten’s pharaonic tomb furnishings? Tutankhamun’s nominal responsibility for the interment of the heretic king within KV 55 in an adapted coffin of Kiya is demonstrated by the presence of sealings in that tomb bearing the young pharaoh’s name. Contrary to previous understanding, are we now to see KV 55 as Akhenaten’s first and only burial? Had he never actually been laid to rest at El-Amarna, as originally intended, accompanied by the rich funerary equipment he had prepared for himself? Might we now discern a plausible explanation for the curiously sparse and ramshackle nature of that KV 55 interment:

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86 This differs from my earlier impression that Tutankhamun’s tomb had been stocked perhaps equally with reused Akhenaten and Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten core burial items, see here notes 2, 31 and 77.

87 On the identification of the Dakhamunzu of the Zannanza episode as Nefertiti, see J. R. Harris in Reeves, Akhenaten, 176-177, and now, on complementary grounds, Jared L. Miller, “Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibihururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34, no. 2 (2007), 252–293.


89 Irrespective of whether Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten and Ankhkheprure Smenkhkare-djeserkerahu are recognized as one and the same (as Reeves, *Akhenaten*, 172-173) or as totally independent (most recently J. R. Harris, “Apropos Nefertiti (2): Smenkhkara Resartus,” *Papyrus: Egyptologisk Tidskrift* 28/2 [2008], 14-23; Aidan Dodson, “Amarna Sunset: The Late-Amarna Succession Revisited,” in *Beyond the Horizon: Studies in Egyptian Art, Archaeology and History in Honour of Barry J. Kemp I*, Salima Ikram and Aidan Dodson, eds. [Cairo, 2009], 29-43; Aidan Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation* [Cairo, 2009]).

90 For the KV 55 burial (and the first publication of these sealings), see C. N. Reeves, *Valley of the Kings: The Decline of a Royal Necropolis* (London, 1990), 42-49, 55-60; Nicholas Reeves, “The Archaeological Analysis of KV55, 1907–1990;” in Theodore M. Davis, *The Tomb of Queen Tiye*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, 1990), iv-xiv—both perhaps now subject to revision in the matter of KV 55 being a secondary burial of Akhenaten; while on the KV 55 body, see now Hawass, “Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun’s Family,” 638-647.
that Akhenaten’s own burial equipment had been redirected for future employment by Nefertiti herself in her new capacity as full ruling king?

Many questions still remain, but the recognition of Nefertiti’s original ownership of the KV 62 gold mask moves forward significantly, I would suggest, our understanding of Tutankhamun’s burial and a number of related complexities of the immediate post-Amarna era. Indeed, it does more: it stimulates afresh the suspicion that there is indeed much yet to play for in the Valley of the Kings, where it seems increasingly likely that Nefertiti was buried and rests still—in a tomb that may not only have been preserved intact, but perhaps with a full, pharaonic mortuary equipment to put Tutankhamun’s substantially queenly assemblage to shame.

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Abstract
The possibility that the intended owner of the celebrated gold mask from Valley of the Kings tomb KV 62 might have been someone other than Tutankhamun was first raised by the writer in a paper given at University College London in 2001. The present article, based on a second lecture delivered at the Valley of the Kings Since Howard Carter symposium held in Luxor on November 11, 2009, revisits and develops that idea. The conclusions reached are that Tutankhamun’s employment of the mask was indeed secondary, and that the original owner had been a woman: Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten, Akhenaten’s ruling queen. The ramifications of this identification are both intriguing and significant.

91 The high rate of survival of the burials of the Amarna era—KV 55 (Akhenaten [and Tiye!?]); KV 63 (a cache of late Amarna burial materials); KV 62 (the tomb of Tutankhamun); and KV 54 (Tutankhamun embalming materials and items associated with the funerary meal)—probably owes very little to chance. Instead, I would see it as a testament to the thoroughness with which the names of the hated kings of this period were subsequently excised from official records. Those charged with the formal dismantling of the Valley of the Kings following the end of the 20th Dynasty (Reeves, Valley of the Kings, 276-278) were clearly unable to locate these deposits—presumably because records of their siting had been culled. If Nefertiti’s tomb survived the petty thieves who seem to have been dangerously active in the immediate days and weeks following any interment, then the chances are that her burial (of which not a single employed item has so far come to light), as yet another Amarna-Period sepulchre struck from the records, was similarly missed by the early Third Intermediate Period salvage teams—as it appears to have been missed by all excavators since.
Fig. 1. The gold mask from the tomb of Tutankhamun. (Photograph Lee Boltin, copyright Bridgeman Photo Library, New York.)

Fig. 2. Interior view of the mask, showing the rivets and soldered seams of the separately modelled face. (Photograph Egyptian Museum, Cairo, courtesy of Zahi Hawass and Tarek El Awady.)

Fig. 3. Schematic, exploded view showing the component parts of the Tutankhamun mask.
Fig. 4. The gold mask as first revealed in position over the head of Tutankhamun’s mummy within the innermost gold coffin. The two dished gold foil plugs for the pierced ears may be seen detached on the lappets of the headdress. (Burton photograph 0744, courtesy Griffith Institute, Oxford.)

Fig. 5. A reconstruction of the gold mask of Ankhkheprure Nefernefruaten as it might originally have appeared, with the face of Nefertiti and wearing the queen’s large domed ear studs. (A composite of the Lee Boltin photograph of Tutankhamun’s mask [Bridgeman Photo Library] and the face of Berlin 21263 [courtesy Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Berlin].)
Postscript
In late September 2015 I was able to re-examine the gold mask under different lighting in its reoriented case in the Cairo Museum. Contrary to previous understanding, it is now evident that the cartouche containing Tutankhamun’s prenomen had been altered in antiquity. Beneath the present signs may be discerned clear traces of an earlier name, “[Ankh]kheperure-beloved of Nefer[kheperure],” originally contained within a significantly longer cartouche. My conclusions concerning the mask’s initial ownership thus find definitive confirmation. A photograph of the reworked cartouche, together with a brief commentary, will appear in the *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 7.4 (2015).