

## EGYPTIAN JEWELRY

By CHARLOTTE R. CLARK  
*Assistant Curator of Egyptian Art*

In the course of rearranging our galleries, the collection of Egyptian jewelry has been assembled in one gallery as it used to be. The new arrangement in the Sixth Egyptian Room includes all the gold jewelry and a few of the fine small objects of various periods, and from the standpoint of both quantity and quality it is extremely impressive and quite breath-taking. The workmanship of most of the jewelry is the very finest; in no other museum except the one in Cairo can one get so complete a picture of the Egyptian goldsmith's art from the time of the Middle Kingdom, when it was at its height, down through the Graeco-Roman period.

In this comprehensive display there are several newly acquired pieces. Among them is a miniature broad collar of gold inlaid with semiprecious stones, one of two such collars found in 1905 in the ruins at Tukh el Karamus in the Delta. They were part of a hoard evidently stolen from the treasure room of a temple and secreted by the thieves in a place which was then lost to sight and memory for 2000 years. Our recently purchased collar has been on loan in the Museum for a number of years; the other is in the Cairo Museum.

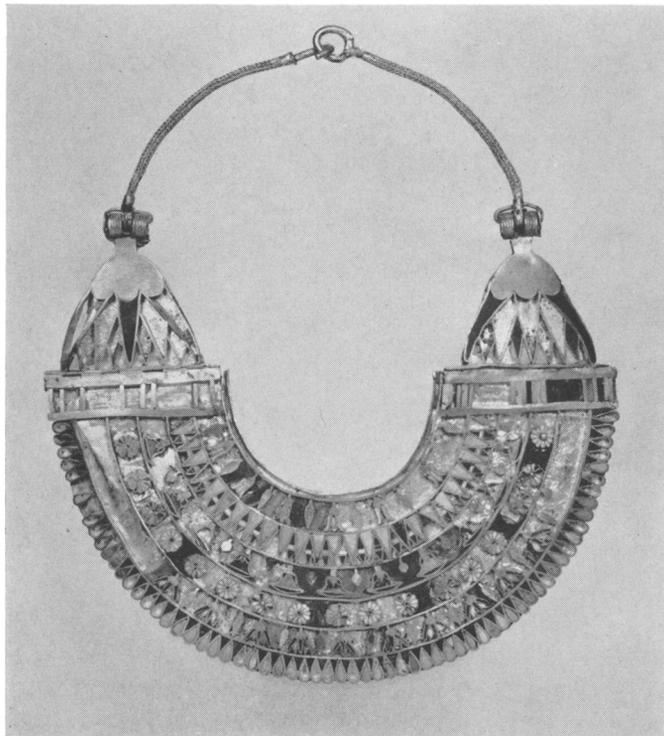
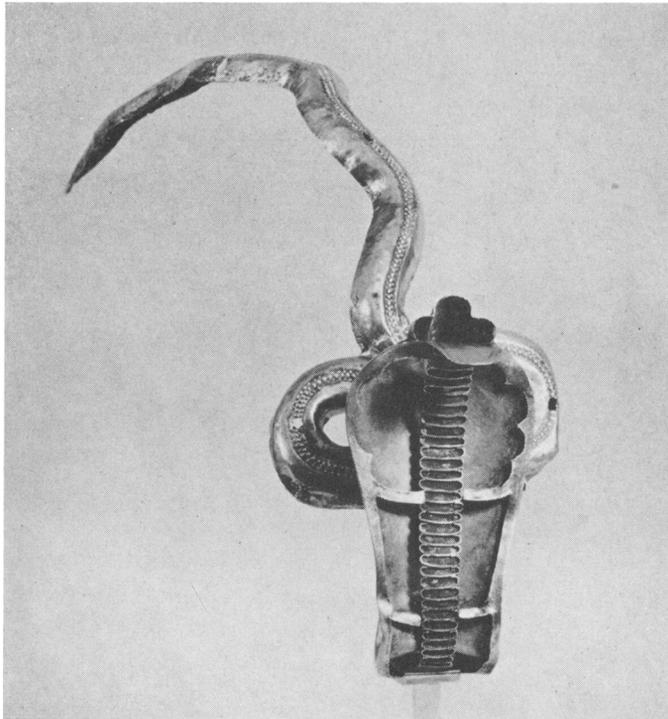
These two small collars must have been used to adorn the cult statue of a god when it was borne in procession on appointed feast days.

ABOVE: *Detail of a gold diadem with inlaid lotus flower ornament. Rogers Fund, 1945*

Deep down under the temple of Hat-Hor at Denderah there is a crypt where, to judge from the decoration on the walls, such valuable temple paraphernalia were stored, and one of the objects depicted is a collar very similar to these, with the casket in which it was kept.

The Tukh el Karamus find belongs to the Ptolemaic period, but the design of the miniature collar is, as might be expected, of a traditional pattern familiar in earlier periods. Collars of this kind were at one time made of real flowers (three are preserved in the Egyptian collection), and at a later date similar designs were carried out in gold inlaid with colored stones to represent flowers. In composition and in delicacy of execution the tiny collar, with its lotus-flower shoulder pieces and its rows of various flowers, all with inlays of carnelian, turquoise, and lapis lazuli set in gold cloisons, is as fine as the best work of the Middle Kingdom. The braided wire chain with hook and loop for fastening is, however, characteristic of the Ptolemaic period.

A gold diadem with a central forehead ornament in the shape of a lotus flower inlaid with semiprecious stones is of the same period. Most of the inlays are now missing, but two pieces of turquoise and one of carnelian which are still in place show that it was originally a charming decoration for a lady's hair. The rather large and heavy flower is surrounded by a circle of leaves, and in between is a row of seed pods



*A gold uraeus and a miniature broad collar of gold with stone inlays. Pulitzer Bequest, 1950, and Dick Fund, 1949*

supported on slender curving stems. The circlet to which it is attached is made up of two narrow strips of sheet gold interlaced to make a flexible headband. This type of workmanship is unusual in Egyptian jewelry, and the piece can hardly be dated earlier than the Ptolemaic period.

The large gold uraeus, the sacred cobra indicating royal rank, may have adorned a coffin or a funerary mask, but it might equally well have been part of a diadem from a royal mummy. It presumably came from Tanis, where the kings of the Twenty-first Dynasty were buried, and in many respects it is similar to a gold crown of the Twenty-second Dynasty in the Cairo Museum, also found in Lower Egypt. The head of the cobra and the inlays that filled the cloisons on the front of the broad hood of its

neck are now missing; they were probably of colored glass or stone. The coiled body is in *re-poussé* and is decorated along its medial line with a row of tiny dots. The attachment at the base of the neck and several holes in the body show that it was part of another object, and it may originally have had a narrow gold headband, with a strip extending over the top of the head to support the coiled body, as on the Cairo crown.

*For the collar in the Cairo Museum, see G. Maspero, Guide to the Cairo Museum (1906 edition), pp. 369-370, and E. Vernier, Bijoux et Orfèveries (Catalogue général du Musée du Caire) 1, p. 480, II, pl. xcix, no. 53669. For the diadem, page 110, compare Sammlungen der Galerie Bachstitz, II, no. 33, pl. 8, no. 70, pl. 21.*