

***Membrae Dispersae* from KV 55:
New Evidence from the Oriental Institute Archives**

"Excavations" that are conducted in museums and archives sometimes uncover information that sheds new light on old problems. Since the discovery of Tomb No. 55 in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings in January 1907, Egyptologists have been wrestling with the vexing questions posed by the analysis of its contents.¹ Recently, a source that reveals additional documentation for the catalogue of objects from KV 55, sometimes now called the "Amarna Cache," has re-surfaced in the Archives of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. This information comes from an illustrated notebook containing a catalogue of the ancient Egyptian antiquities that were once in the private collection of a distant relative of

¹ Most of the objects from KV 55 that are now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, were catalogued for publication by Georges Daressy, apparently on the basis of his examination of the objects themselves, and with the aid of field notes supplied by Edward R. Ayrton, the excavator hired by Theodore M. Davis. See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, The Tomb of Queen Tiye, (1910), 11-40, and PLATES I-XXXIII. A few pieces, including one of the four human-headed canopic jars found in the tomb, were presented by Maspero to Davis; these are now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. See: Geoffrey T. Martin, "Notes on a Canopic Jar from Kings' Valley Tomb 55," Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar, *BdE* 97:2 (1985), 111-124. In 1961, Kate Bosse-Griffiths published a few minor objects from the collection of E. Harold Jones, that were said to have come from KV 55. See: Kate Bosse-Griffiths, "Finds from 'The Tomb of Queen Tiye' in the Swansea Museum," IEA 47 (1961), 66-70; Cyril Aldred, "The Harold Jones Collection," IEA 48 (1962), 160-162; and Kate Bosse-Griffiths, "Gold Leaf from the Shrine of Queen Tiye," Discussions in Egyptology 6 (1986), 7-10. An annotated catalogue of the objects from KV 55 forms the basis for a study entitled "An Armchair Excavation of KV 55," by Martha R. Bell, JARCE XXVII (1990).

Mrs. Theodore M. Davis, a woman named Jeannette R. Buttles.² Under the *nom de plume* “Janet R. Buttles,” she published a monograph entitled The Queens of Egypt in 1908.³ Miss Buttles’ notebook/catalogue contains data pertaining to fifteen gold jewelry elements and two fragments of gold sheets, all said to be from KV 55. This article will show that the origin of these pieces is already partially documented in the published literature. Perhaps more importantly, their relationship to other known finds from KV 55 can now be demonstrated with some degree of certainty.

In February 1958, a man named John W. Allen of Tallahassee, Florida, wrote to P. P. Delougaz, then curator of the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago:

“... with regard to the Egyptian collection of the late Theodore M. Davis. Mr. Davis was a great-uncle of mine by marriage. His library on Egyptology and part of his collection found its home, for many years, in my family’s house in Florence, Italy. Since the death of my aunt the property has passed on to me and last summer I emptied the villa bringing back what there was of the Egyptian collection and the complete library.

... I am interested in selling the collection as well as the books. Your letter states that you would be interested in seeing the catalog. I have a hand-written catalog, prepared by my aunt, the late Jeannette R. Buttles with illustrations by her sister, the late Mary N. Buttles. I do not have all the objects appearing in the catalog, but most of

² The “Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles” is not dated, but year-dated references to objects found by Theodore M. Davis or by Miss Buttles herself range from 1892 to 1913. The highest modern year in this record is 1933, but the entry is written in a different hand from the rest. The entries referring to KV 55 appear on pages 32-33 of the notebook.

³ Q.v. See also: Dawson and Uphill, Who Was Who in Egyptology (2nd Edn., 1972), 49.

them. I am sending this catalog under separate cover so you can get an idea of what the collection consists of."⁴

Jeannette R. Buttles and her sister Mary are often described as Theodore M. Davis's "nieces,"⁵ when they were, in fact, Mrs. Davis's third cousins.⁶

On January 18, 1990, while processing some old curatorial files for transfer to the Oriental Institute Archives, I discovered this notebook and the related correspondence. To my surprise and delight, the notebook contained information about some familiar objects. I readily recognized in the careful ink drawings and the handwritten descriptions important documentation for a small group of artifacts that had been pilfered from KV 55 during the process of clearance in January-February 1907. Subsequently, these objects were recovered from a Luxor antiquities dealer by Theodore M. Davis, through the intervention of Howard Carter. Mrs. Emma B. Andrews, one of Davis's traveling companions, mentioned the episode in the following entries in her personal travel diary, written in Luxor, on board *The Bedawin*:

"Sunday, February 17, 1907.

... Theo was in Luxor this a.m. and Carter told him of various small and precious things which had been shown him by a native which had been stolen from Tyi's tomb. The man had told Carter that Mr. Davis could have them all for £ 400 — provided no attempt at arrest was made! These fellows are difficult to deal with. Theo told Carter if the men would produce everything they had, and would show them, he might consider a

⁴ Excerpted from a letter of 24 February 1958, written by John W. Allen to P. P. Delougaz. Now in the Oriental Institute Archives, "Museum Archives" record group. Reproduced by permission. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

⁵ See: Joseph Lindon Smith, Tombs, Temples, and Ancient Art, (1956), 26, 33-34, and 36.

⁶ Theodore Davis and his in-laws employed a simplified system of kinship terms, and it is not always advisable to take them literally. If John W. Allen was a nephew of Mary and Jeannette R. Buttles, then he must have been the son of an otherwise unidentified sister.

price and promise no arrests to be made. Their practice is to mass together a lot of valuable things on such an occasion, with what has been stolen from a late find, and try to get a big price for all. Later in the day Theo went into Abd el Hamed's and Ali's shops on the river, and the latter handed him several small objects from the tomb — some gold 'nefert's from the necklace, carnelian lotus flowers, and a lovely bit of gold and enamel from a necklace — only one of which we have — and it is marked No. 17 in hieroglyphic characters. Ali would not take anything for these — among them one bearing Aten's cartouche. It is humiliating to find that thieves have been among your trusted workmen — they have such chances in sifting débris, to hide a valuable thing in their loose clothes.

Tuesday, February 19, 1907.

... Ayrton deeply distressed about the robbery. He suspects the trusted Rais, or rather 2 sons of his. It is mysterious. Harold Jones finished his two paintings of Tyl, and went back to Abydos tonight."⁷

Mrs. Andrews' account of the affair is corroborated by Howard Carter's notes, now in the Griffith Institute at Oxford University.⁸

It would seem that these "small objects from the tomb," recovered by Theodore M. Davis from a Luxor antiquities dealer named Ali on February 17, 1907, were not considered to be excavated objects and, therefore, they were not included with the other finds from KV 55

⁷ The entry from Mrs. Andrews' diary for February 17, 1907 was first published by Cyril Aldred in JEA, 48 (1962), 162; for the entries for February 17 and 19, 1907, see Geoffrey T. Martin, *op. cit.*, 122-124, footnote 21.

⁸ As cited by Elizabeth Thomas in her The Royal Necropoleis of Thebes, (1966), Chapter 8, 154, footnote: "100. However, Carter says that 'quite a number of pieces of jewelry bearing' Akhenaten's name--unspecified--'and the Aten cartouche were in the dealers' shops in Luxor, within a few days of the discovery.' (GI I. C. 145)."

when they were delivered to the Museum in Cairo. Instead, the recovered pieces were retained by Davis and, apparently, he determined their disposition. Either these pieces were given to Miss Buttles at the time of the recovery—she was one of Davis's guests on his dahabiya *The Bedawin* for the winter of 1906/1907—or they were bequeathed to her in Davis's will.⁹ In either event, they were neither noted nor published in Daressy's catalogue of the objects from KV 55.¹⁰ We can only speculate about the present whereabouts of the "various small and precious things" that were shown to Howard Carter "by a native." Presumably, if they were marketable, the pieces were eventually sold and may now be in a museum or private collection, their connection with KV 55 severed by the loss of their archaeological context.¹¹

There is no record of any further contact between Mr. Allen and the staff of the Oriental Institute. Eventually, Egyptian antiquities from John W. Allen's collection, including at least some of the gold objects that were recovered by Davis from the Luxor antiquities dealer on February 17, 1907, were sold at auction in 1976.¹² In the sale catalogue, the lots are

⁹ Jeannette R. Buttles was listed as one of the beneficiaries in the will of Theodore M. Davis.

¹⁰ Cf. Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, especially 20-23 and PLATE XXI (Fig. 2).

¹¹ In a few cases, pilfered objects from Theodore M. Davis's excavations in the Valley of the Kings did not leave Egypt until years after they were originally found. For example, a gold penannular earring bearing the cartouche of Queen Tausert in Egyptian "cloisonné," Egyptian Museum, Cairo, CGC 52331, was excavated by Edward R. Ayrton for Davis in KV 56, the so-called "Gold Tomb," during the season of 1907/1908. Its mate is British Museum EA 54459, which was purchased in 1919 from the well-known Luxor antiquities dealer, Mohammed Mohassib [regarding whom, see: Dawson and Uphill, *Who Was Who in Egyptology* (2nd Edn., 1972), 204]. This information was kindly provided by W. V. Davies, Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities, The British Museum.

¹² See the Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., New York, sale catalogue *Antiquities*, December 11th, 1976, Sale 3934, lot numbers 39, 161-164, 235-250. I was reminded of this reference by

designated "Property of John W. Allen - Florida," and labelled "*Provenance*: Theodore M. Davis." Regrettably, the present whereabouts of these pieces is unknown.¹³

Figure 1 reproduces Mary N. Buttles' drawings of some of the KV 55 gold jewelry elements that were mounted on a card and displayed in the Florentine villa occupied by the Buttles sisters for more than fifty years. The first item from "The Gold Card," a gold jewelry element "bearing Aten's cartouche" (Figure 1a), is decorated with the second half of the Aten's titulary from the early part of the reign of Akh-en-Aten.¹⁴ Jeannette R. Buttles described this object as a "Gold pendant cartouche of the god Aten, from a lost necklace of Queen Thiy, mother of Akhenaten."¹⁵ This piece seems to be the mate to Daressy's catalogue no. 11,

Martha R. Bell. Some additional pieces from John W. Allen's collection — but none that can be associated with KV 55 — were sold at auction by Sotheby's in New York in 1986.

¹³ Richard M. Keresey, Antiquities expert for Sotheby's in New York, was unable to provide any additional information about John W. Allen of Florida, or about any of the buyers. I am now in the process of trying to ascertain the fates of Mr. John W. Allen of Tallahassee, Florida, the balance of the Davis/Buttles/Allen collection of Egyptian antiquities, and the Egyptological library of Theodore M. Davis.

¹⁴ If this gold pendant was consigned to Sotheby's in 1976 or in 1986, it cannot be identified from the descriptions in the sale catalogues. It is possible that this is one of the pieces that Mr. Allen did not have. Cf. Carter's remark about an Aten cartouche, quoted in footnote 8.

¹⁵ From the "Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles," page 32. Oriental Institute Archives, reproduced by permission. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

now in the Egyptian Museum.¹⁶ Together, they would have presented the complete didactic name of the Aten, divided between two cartouches. Unfortunately, no measurements are given for any of the pieces in the "Notebook/ Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles," now in the Oriental Institute Archives. The height of the Cairo gold cartouche is only 2 cm. Evidently, more than one set of Aten cartouches must have existed originally. An unpublished example, said to be similar to Journal d'Entrée 39633, is exhibited in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.¹⁷

Jeannette R. Buttles wrote the following description for a second gold jewelry element, also drawn by her sister Mary (Figure 1b):

"A beautiful necklace plaque, gold, inlaid with carnelian and blue paste. It has a number —(16?) - engraved on the back, and comes from a lost necklace in which the pieces were shaped to fit in a certain form, and numbered. A similar piece, also numbered, is in the Cairo Museum. Doubtless they came from the same lost necklace of Queen Thiy, above."¹⁸

¹⁶ Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée 39633. Daressy catalogued the Cairo piece, bearing the first part of the Aten's early didactic name, as one of the "Ornaments of the Mummy." Presumably this attribution was based on information obtained from Ayrtou. The measurements of the Cairo cartouche are given by Daressy as: height 0 m .02, width 0 m .007. See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 22.

¹⁷ Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée 39633 *bis*. Cited by Geoffrey T. Martin, *op. cit.*, 177, cat. no. 10, and Martha R. Bell, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 10.

¹⁸ From the "Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles," page 32. Oriental Institute Archives, reproduced by permission. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Mary N. Buttles' ink drawing of this inlaid jewelry element was drawn with the object shown upside-down. The correct orientation was demonstrated to me by Martha R. Bell. In order to avoid confusion, the drawing has been turned 180° for publication (Fig.1b).

Evidently, Miss Buttles believed that her “beautiful necklace plaque” derived from the same necklace as Daressy’s catalogue no. 10.¹⁹ Daressy’s description of the front side of the “Small gold and inlaid plaque” in Cairo closely matches the drawing of the Buttles plaque, except that one of the original four suspension beads is clearly missing on the latter, as drawn by Mary N. Buttles (Figure 1b). According to Daressy, “The back of the [Cairo] plaque is marked $\begin{array}{c} \wedge \\ ||| \quad |||| \end{array}$, probably to indicate that the piece was the seventeenth of the row.”

A contemporary account by an eyewitness to the discovery and clearance of KV 55 proves that the piece bearing the number “17” was the one that was found in KV 55 by the excavators. Arthur Weigall described the circumstances of the discovery of the excavated piece in the first of his many articles on KV 55:

“The body was dreadfully broken, and the face had entirely fallen in. Only the forehead and the lower jaw, with its full complement of well-shaped teeth, remained. Around the skull still lay the magnificent gold coronet, in the form of a vulture with spread wings, the body of the vulture resting on the front of the head, and the tips of the wings meeting at the back. Around the neck there was a necklace of gold and stone ornaments, but this was somewhat broken. Evidently it had been of secondary importance, for there were fragments of far finer and more elaborate jewels lying near the body. One pendant picked up in the rubbish bore the numeral 17, as though it had formed the seventeenth piece of a great necklace.”²⁰

Weigall’s statement indicates clearly that the excavated piece was numbered “17.”

¹⁹ Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d’Entrée 39632. See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 21 (not illustrated).

²⁰ Arthur E. P. Weigall, “A New Discovery in Egypt: The Recent Uncovering of the Tomb of Queen Tiye,” *The Century Magazine*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 5, September 1907, 727-738, especially 738.

Miss Buttles' inlaid plaque, bearing the number "(16?)," is a separate piece entirely from the Cairo example, as she herself stated. We can now explain Mrs. Andrews' confusing remarks about these two pieces, as quoted above.²¹ Her description, "a lovely bit of gold and enamel from a necklace," obviously refers to one of the pieces that Davis received back from the Luxor antiquities dealer Ali and, subsequently, gave to Jeannette R. Buttles. Mrs. Andrews' additional remark, "— only one of which we have — and it is marked No. 17 in hieroglyphic characters," can now be seen as a parenthetical statement that refers to the single similar piece found in KV 55 by the excavators, still on Davis's dahabiya *The Bedawin* as of February 17, 1907, and destined for the Museum in Cairo.

Described by Richard M. Keresey as "a gold plaque probably from a collar inlaid with part of a foliate frieze in carnelian and remains of glass paste," Miss Buttles' inlaid plaque was one of the "Thirteen Gold and Electrum Amulets" that were sold as lot number 238 on December 11, 1976, by Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., New York. The measurements for objects in this lot are given as "1.2 to 4 cm." According to Daressy, the Cairo plaque measures "18 millimetres in length and 15 in height."²²

We can now postulate the survival of at least three elements from this "great necklace" with its numbered plaques: Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée 39632, marked with the number "17" on the back; the Davis/Buttles/Allen piece that was sold at auction in 1976, present whereabouts unknown, marked with the number "(16?)" on the back; and Leiden

²¹ Throughout her personal travel diary, Mrs. Andrews' punctuation tended to be idiosyncratic, for it was simply a record that she kept for her own amusement, not intended for publication. See the note by Albert M. Lythgoe from 1919, as quoted by John A. Wilson in his article "Mrs. Andrews and 'The Tomb of Queen Tiye'," *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, SAOC 39 (1976), 274.

²² Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée 39632. See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 21, cat. no. 10.

F 1940/8.4, acquired from the art market in 1940, marked with the number "16" on the back.²³ Either there were originally two gold inlaid plaques bearing the number "16," or the number on the back of the Davis/Buttles/Allen plaque was mis-read. The first row of the gold broad-collar necklace found on the mummy in KV 55, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée 39631/ CGC 52674 (Figure 2), preserves a total of eighteen plaques, which suggests that the plaques numbered "16" and "17" probably represent some of the higher numbered elements from the "lost necklace."²⁴ In future efforts to reconstruct the original appearance of this necklace, we should also be mindful of Miss Buttles' comment: "Doubtless they came from the same lost necklace of Queen Thiy, as the Aten cartouche, above."

The last group of gold jewelry elements from KV 55 in the Davis/Buttles/Allen collection was described by Jeannette R. Buttles as follows:

"13 gold pendants in the form of petals and *nefer* signs. These are pieces left over from the reconstructed necklace of Queen Thiy - (or of Akhenaten) found on the mummy in the 'Tomb of Thiy', discovered by Mr. T. M. Davis, in 1906-7."²⁵

One example of each shape was drawn by Mary N. Buttles (Figure 1c). On paper at least, we can add these thirteen gold jewelry elements, worked in the form of dates, *nefers*, and drop-beads, to a hypothetical reconstruction of the gold broad-collar necklace that was found on the mummy. At least eight of these pendants, divided between two lots, were sold at

²³ See the comment by Martha R. Bell, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 8. See also my remarks in note 11.

²⁴ Daressy also noted this similarity between Journal d'Entrée 39632 (his cat. no.10) and the plaques in the first row of Journal d'Entrée 39631/CGC 52674 (his cat. no. 9). See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 20-21 and PLATE XXI (Fig. 2, below).

²⁵ From the "Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles," page 33. Oriental Institute Archives, reproduced by permission. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Sotheby's in 1976.²⁶ Amongst the thirteen pieces from the gold broad-collar necklace in Miss Buttles' collection, there were three dates, three *nefers*, two drop-beads, and five elements of undetermined shape.

Similar broad-collar necklaces are depicted on the funerary equipment of Yuia and Tuiu, found in KV 46.²⁷ These complete representations, dated one generation earlier than the KV 55 jewelry elements, contain multiple rows of inlaid floral plaques. Since we now know that at least thirteen pieces are certainly missing from the reconstructed broad-collar necklace from KV 55 in Cairo (Figure 2),²⁸ might we not then suppose that some or, perhaps, all of the gold jewelry elements discussed above—the cartouches of the Aten, the inlaid plaques, the dates, *nefers* and drop-beads—are part of one great royal broad-collar necklace from the mummy found in KV 55?

²⁶ See the Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., New York, sale catalogue (1976), *op. cit.*, lot numbers 238 and 239. Lot number 238 included “two lotus-seed vessel pendants [called ‘drop-beads’ by Aldred and ‘flower petals’ by Daressy], a date and three *nefer* pendants similar to those remaining on the collar of King Smenkhare (cf. Aldred, *Jewels*, pl. 71).” Measurements for objects in this lot are given as “1.2 to 4 cm.” Lot number 239 included “two fragmentary gold or electrum dates, similar to those remaining on the broad collar of King Smenkhare (cf. Aldred, *Jewels*, pl. 71).” No measurements whatsoever are given for objects in this lot. As noted by Daressy, the lengths of individual hollow gold beads in the reconstructed Cairo necklace range from 17 to 21 cm. See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 21, cat. no. 9.

²⁷ See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, The Tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou, (1907), PLATES IX, XIII-XV.

²⁸ Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Journal d'Entrée 39361/CGC 52674. See: Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 20-21, cat. no. 9, and PLATE XXI. Cf. the color illustration in Cyril Aldred, Jewels of the Pharaohs, (1971), Figure 71 on [84] and Aldred's notes on 211.

The two fragments of gold sheets (Figure 1d), also said to be from KV 55, were not illustrated by Mary N. Buttles, and are presumed to be undecorated.²⁹ The “carnelian lotus flowers” mentioned by Mrs. Andrews cannot be identified with certainty, either in the “Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles” or in Richard M. Keresey’s descriptions written for the various lots attributed to Theodore M. Davis in Sotheby’s auction catalogues.

The present whereabouts of these dispersed pieces from KV 55 is unknown, but it is to be hoped that they will re-surface one day, and that this information will aid in their identification. Their chief interest lies in their association with the other finds from KV 55 that are now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. They represent a modest addition to the corpus of known royal jewelry from the Amarna Period.

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May 16, 1990

²⁹ They are probably to be identified with the “two plain gold sheets” from lot number 238 of Sotheby’s 1976 auction. Measurements for the objects in this lot are given as “1.2 to 4 cm.” Therefore, these two bits of gold are no larger than 4 cm. in their greatest dimension.

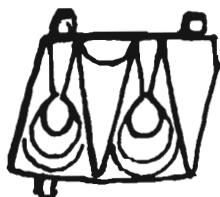
Extracts from the "Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles"
Oriental Institute Archives, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

Card no. 3. The Gold Card.

- [a] Gold pendant cartouche of the god Aten,
from a lost necklace of Queen Thiy,
mother of Akhenaten. XVIIIth Dynasty, about 1380 B.C.
Very rare.



- [b] A beautiful necklace plaque, gold, inlaid
with carnelian and blue paste. It has
a number —(16?)— engraved on the back,
and comes from a lost necklace in which
the pieces were shaped to fit in a certain
form, and numbered. A similar piece,
also numbered, is in the Cairo Museum. Doubtless
they came from the same lost necklace of
Queen Thiy, as the Aten cartouche, above.



[c]



13 gold pendants in the form of
1-petals, and nefer signs.² These are pieces
left over from the reconstructed necklace of
Queen Thiy - (or of Akhenaten) found on the
mummy in the "Tomb of Thiy", discovered by Mr.
T. M. Davis, in 1906-7. The mummy was at first
supposed to be Queen Thiy's, but it afterwards
proved to be that of a man, either Akhenaten
himself, or, more likely, a younger prince of
the family.

[d]

[NOT ILLUSTRATED]

The mummy had been entirely wrapped
in large sheets of gold, of which the two
fragments below, are specimens.

Figure 1: "Card no. 3. The Gold Card." From the "Notebook/Catalogue of Jeannette R. Buttles," pages 32-33. Oriental Institute Archives, reproduced by permission. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Bracketed letters for individual entries are inserted here for ease of reference.

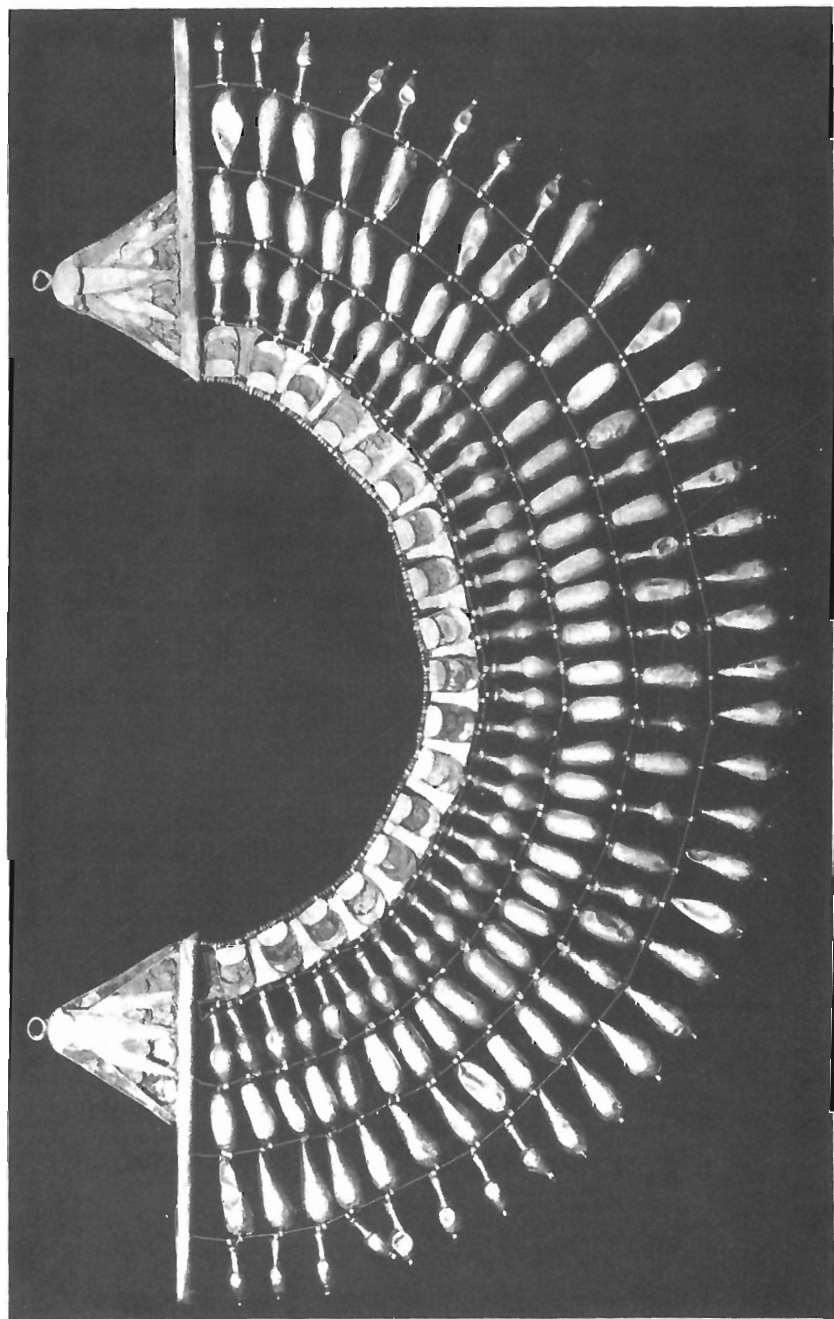


Figure 2: The reconstructed gold broad-collar necklace from the mummy.
After Theodore M. Davis, *et al.*, *The Tomb of Queen Tiyi*, (1910), PLATE XXI.

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