

Conclusion

The data obtained by LA-ICP-MS shows that the scarab is consistent with the known composition of standard Late Bronze Age plant ash glass. The scarab is coloured with a pure source of copper which is indicative of glasses from the Near East. The trace element analysis also indicates that the scarab is consistent with glasses of Mesopotamian origin. The date of the tomb, between Amenhotep I (1525–1504 BC) and Tuthmosis III (1479–1425 BC), indicates that the scarab represents some of the earliest Mesopotamian glass to be identified in Egypt, and associated with foreign women of high status living at Gurob. The scarab also represents an early example of Mesopotamian glass being used to make amulets in the shape of a quintessentially Egyptian symbol. The ESEM analysis indicates that the scarab was coated or had been mounted in silver, which is unusual in Egyptian grave goods, suggesting a foreign influence.

About the authors

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Professor Andrew Shortland (MA, MSt, DPhil Oxon, FSA, FGS) is Professor of Archaeological Science and Director of Cranfield Forensic Institute, part of Cranfield University. He leads a multidisciplinary team that is interested in niche forensic areas such as explosives, ballistics, body recovery/identification and digital forensics. His own research concentrates on applying scientific techniques to the investigation of historical and archaeological objects, especially those with dating, provenance or authenticity questions hovering over them. He advises the British Army, Metropolitan Police and major auction houses and museums about cultural property protection and the problems of illicit antiquities.

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