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JEWELS

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# Asian JEWELS

TEXT WRITTEN BY  
DEREK CONTENT

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*The Fortune attending the Wearing of Gemmed Ornaments*

The wearing of gemmed ornaments brings, respect, fame, longevity, wealth, happiness, strength and fruition.

Over and above this, it wards off evil astral influences, makes the body healthy, removes misery and ill-fortune, and washes away sin.

Tagore, Raja Sourindro Mohun

*Mani-Mala or a Treatise on Gems*. Calcutta, 1881, vol. 2, p601

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# INDIAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN JEWELRY THROUGH THE AGES



**Though it is tempting to consider the development of the different jewelry styles across this vast region in isolation, there are such similarities of style, of adoption of certain technologies, and of preference for certain materials in such distant sites within this vast landmass, that we are able to make the following general observations:**

From the earliest times, trade and trade links have always aided in the dissemination of both the materials used in the jewelry and in the widespread adoption of similar styles across the region. Turquoise from Persia, and Lapis Lazuli, mined in Badakshan, were prized in Egypt and Mesopotamia, but also in the Indus Valley. Carnelian and agate beads, though made in several centers, mostly came from the Kambhat (Cambay) region in Gujarat where a thriving stone bead industry still supplies markets from China to the Levant. In the opposite direction traveled nephrite from Fengtien in northeastern Taiwan, which was used for ornaments in Thailand, Burma and the Philippines. Pearls, from the Persian Gulf, as well as the waters around India and Ceylon, often traveled in both directions and as far as the Roman Empire.

The three earliest centers of civilization in this region were essentially coeval and all three were sited along major rivers: the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, the Indus in Greater India, and the Yangtze in China. Bi-directional trade developed early and though regional differences may be observed, there is sufficient evidence to show that trade, soon followed by population dispersal caused by conflict, and later by the proselytizing efforts by adherents of various religions, was instrumental in stimulating the adoption of new inventions and social interactions between remote communities.

This trade in gem materials was conducted from earliest times both overland along the various Silk Roads, and by maritime commerce from ports along the coasts of southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Though many other commodities were also carried long distances, the advantage of gem materials – low bulk and high value – offset the risks of the often perilous, lengthy journeys across deserts, high mountain ranges, or stormy seas and pirates.

Many of the constituent parts of a piece of jewelry were shipped in semi-processed state, metals were shipped as ingots, not raw ore, gem materials were roughly chipped into usable shape with the debitage either used to make smaller objects like inlays or beads, or discarded to reduce the volume of the commodity.

When we look at these three main centers of culture and their jewelry, it soon becomes obvious that the impact of Greater India on the rest of southeast Asia, – both in terms of technological advances and in terms of iconography – was far more extensive than that of Mesopotamia, or even that of the Chinese world that generally remained more inward looking.

No doubt the spread of Hinduism and Buddhism across the Indonesian archipelago, to Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and into China, was facilitated by the already extensive trade links between India and these neighboring kingdoms. The archaeological record, as early as 500 BCE, confirms that this absorption of Indian religious belief systems was soon followed by incorporation of only slightly modified Hindu-Buddhist iconography into the local jewelry styles of the Indianized Kingdoms of Kutai and later Srivijaya, both on Sumatra, Kalingga on Java, Funan and Champa in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Following the ‘discovery’ of the monsoon winds and of the sea route around Africa, European, explorers, seafarers, traders, missionaries and fortune hunters have all left extensive records of the abundant riches in gems and other treasure that were to be procured in Asia. Beginning in the late 19th century, considerable academic research has been devoted to the history of the inter-continental trade from India and southeast Asia to the European consumer.

Far less effort has been committed to intra-Asian commerce, though recently commendable research has been undertaken by Brigitte Borell, while other scholars too are starting to take a closer look at this subject.

This brief introduction cannot but touch lightly on the many still unanswered questions that should, eventually, show that long-distance trade has been a driver of civilization for as long as man has coveted rare, and thus valuable, ornaments to set himself above his peers or to find favor with his gods.

Today, when time and distance are no longer an impediment to the acquisition of rare jewels, it is only the connoisseur – sensitive to the ever faster flattening of individual cultures – who understands that the preservation of antique jewelry is not merely a means to document those vanishing cultures, but who grasps that when wearing such jewels, one also shares some of the fervor and joy of the original creator and the culture that inspired it.

*Derek Content, London 2018*



## PAIR OF BRONZE EAR PENDANTS

1

GRECO-INDIAN/PARTHIAN  
ca. 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BCE –  
2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY CE

SIZE: 75MM  
WEIGHT: 66g

The long, rigid ear pendants are cast in three, possibly four, parts. The top section is taurine in shape with its large curved 'horns' doubling as earwires. These may have been originally somewhat adjustable after insertion into the ear.

Below this taurine section is a tapered assembly of four standing 'Herakles knots' — considered to have strong medicinal and general apotropaic qualities — resting on a thin platform.

Below this platform is the third section. It consists of four standing, identical figures of Aprodite/Hariti, shown nude but for a long necklace. The goddesses are standing on a smaller circular platform, facing out and with their elbows touching.

Below the base plate are three clusters of granulated balls of varying gauges.

No exact parallel was found, though the individual elements that compose the ear pendant can all be duplicated in jewelry from the east Greek/NW Indian *koine*.



## ROSETTE EARRING

2

BIHAR OR SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 1<sup>ST</sup> – 4<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CE

DIAMETER: 20MM  
LENGTH: 30MM  
WEIGHT: 2g

The body of the twelve-petaled rosette is formed of a section of circular gold sheet, with the edges scalloped and each petal defined with a rounded punch. The round center is made with an applied piece of sheet ringed by granulation.

The raised ear wire, of round cross section, is attached to the back of the rosette and its ends overlap for additional security when the earring is worn.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Aitken, M. E. *When Gold Blossoms: The Susan L Beningson Collection*. New York, 2004, p8, fig. 1

**ALSO**

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p73, fig. 19, fig. 93

**AND**

Brunel, F. *Jewellery of India; Five Thousand Years of Tradition*. Delhi, 1972, pp9, 17 and fig. 9



## ANNULAR ORNAMENT

3

INDIA, GUPTA PERIOD  
ca. 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
HEIGHT: 25MM  
WIDTH: 18MM  
WEIGHT: 9.4g

The ornament is of a type found across the Hindu/Buddhist *koine*, and though this infers widespread use, its exact function has not been determined. Some believe that they are ear ornaments, similar to our number 35, others believe that they were 'bird rings' to identify or adorn a particularly prized bird, while yet others believe they were used as ornamental finials topping a ceremonial staff.

Our example is heavily cast and shows a stylized male mask with a threatening expression, deep-set eyes and exaggerated brows. It is shown wearing a jagged, pointed crown. It may be recognized as *Kirtimukha*, ("glorious face") so named by Lord Shiva because only this scary face was left after the all-devouring monster, Jalandhara, was ordered by Shiva to eat his own body starting with his tail.

It became widely used as a, mostly, decorative element over entrance ways into temples or important civic buildings.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Aitken, M. E. *When Gold Blossoms: Indian Jewelry from the Susan L. Beningson Collection*, p53, no. 10

**ALSO**

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p26, fig. 19 and p74, fig. 97a-b

**AND**

Miksic, J. *Old Javanese Gold; The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery*. New Haven, 2011, p189, pl. 60, with lit. Early Classic Period

**AND**

Content, D. J. and Stark, P. *Gold; Important Ancient and Ethnic Jewellery and Work of Art in precious Metal*. Habsburg Feldman, Geneva, 1990, pp98 – 99, nos 162 – 4



## PAIR OF CIRCULAR EARRINGS

4

GREATER NORTHWEST INDIA  
ca. 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY BCE –  
2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY CE  
SIZE: 65MM X 35MM

The hollow earrings are fabricated from thin sheet with a flat inner tube, two rounded sides and the rounded outside forming the basic frame of the jewel.

The sides of the earrings are undecorated, but the outer surface is enriched with three narrow bands of half domes, hollow and stamped from sheet. There is one central band while the other two mark the border. Between these three narrow bands are two wider ribbons bordered on each side with a thin wire and a line of fine granulation, while the center of each ribbon is enhanced with regularly spaced pyramidal and hourglass-shaped stacks of fine granulation.

For the style we have to study the sculptural survivals of the period as we have no exactly similar published parallels. However, similar bands of hollow half domes, again flanked by wire and lines of granulation, may be seen a pendant in the Chennai Museum, shown in:

Nigam, M. L. *Indian Jewellery*. Delhi, 1999, pp18 – 19-1

**ALSO**

Balakrishnan, U. R. *Alamkara; The Beauty of Ornament*. Delhi, 2014, p53, earring from Taxila, now in the National Museum, Delhi

Furthermore, the celebrated Begram ivories show numerous examples of healthy-looking young women wearing little besides necklaces, jeweled girdles and large round earrings of our type.

Hiebert, F. and Cambon, P. (eds) *Afghanistan; Crossroads of the Ancient world*. London, 2011, pp188 – 196, figs. 82 – 97



## GEM-SET FINGER RING

5

CAMBODIA/THAILAND  
DVARATI OR SUKHOTHAI PERIOD  
ca. 9<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 30MM X 28MM  
WEIGHT: 19g

The ring is cast in one piece with only the oval setting fabricated and added post casting. The ring has a hoop of oval cross-section with shoulders decorated with wavy elements below two larger curved scrolls, possibly stylized sea creatures. These flank a raised central bezel of square cross-section and with a two-stepped rectangular platform on top. This is centered by the oval box-setting that is set with a high domed garnet gem.

FOR THE STYLE, cf.

van Cutsem, A. *A World of Rings; Africa, Asia, America*. Milan, 2000, p213, pl. 170, row 4 – 1



## INSCRIBED FINGER RING

6

MAHARASHTRA,  
(WEST-CENTRAL INDIA)  
MEDIEVAL  
ca. 10<sup>TH</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
HEIGHT: 25MM  
WIDTH: 20MM  
SIZE: US3  
WEIGHT: 21g

The all gold ring is fabricated in two parts, with all details carefully added later with fine chisels. The ring consists of a hoop hammered to a semi-circular cross-section and broadening towards the decorated shoulders. These support a second part consisting of a cast beaded circlet from which rises a substantial and somewhat domed bezel.

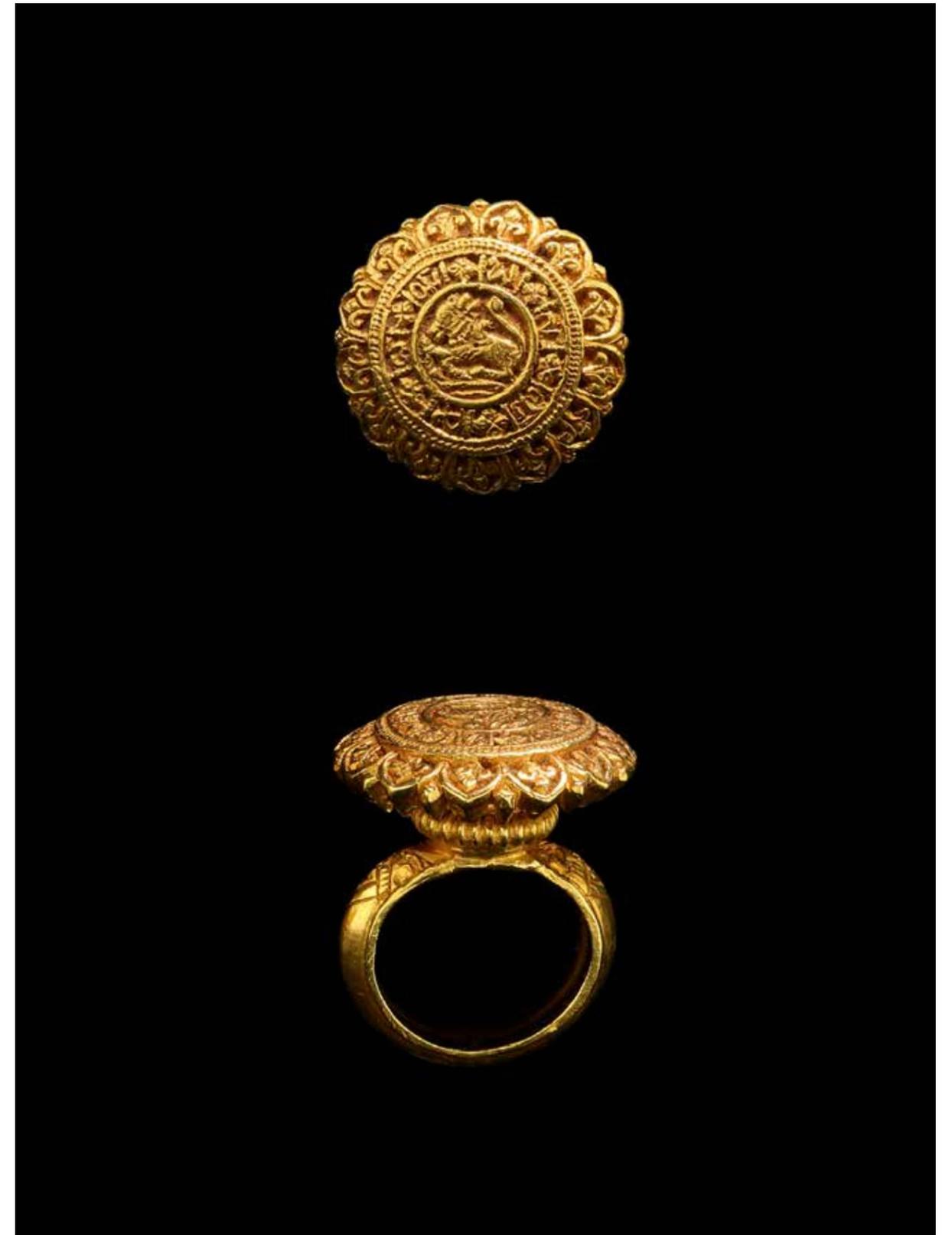
The bezel bears an intricate design executed in delicate *kerbschnitt* technique and shows an inner medallion with the figure of a bull facing left (Nandi) resting over an exergue filled with two ground lines. This central medallion is encircled by a band divided into twelve sections of which six are decorated with a floral design that alternate with six other sections bearing Sanskrit lettering. Four of the sections may be read as BA/NA/VA/SE – the name of the capital of the Kadamba Dynasty (345 – 525 CE) in Karnataka (south India). Two further sections are engraved with MA/YA, the abbreviated name of the founder of this dynasty, King Mayurasharma (345 – 365 CE).

This second band is enclosed within a beaded border which gives to the outer border decorated with thirteen *fleur de lys* each set within an arched frame so forming the scalloped edge of the bezel. The underside of the bezel is deeply grooved with alternating plain and beaded wedges.

While the inscription seemingly dates the ring to the fourth to sixth centuries, it is more probable that it was made during the reign of the later Kadamba dynasty in Goa, (960 – 1310), likely for one of its rulers who may well have wanted to refer to his earlier forebears to remind his subjects of his deep historical roots and legitimacy. The style of this important, possibly royal, ring also supports a Late Classical date.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, p261, fig. 606



## COIN-SET FINGER RING

7

CENTRAL INDIA  
ca. LATE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY –  
EARLY 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

HEIGHT: 30MM  
WIDTH: 24MM  
SIZE: US7  
WEIGHT: 31g

The massive gold ring is set with four small coins set on a four-lobed bezel plate and held in place with five raised knobs. The coins have been dated, by Riaz Babar, to the late 16th – early 17th century CE.

The bezel rests on a massive hoop with heavily modeled shoulders showing two *kirtimuha* masks with bulging eyes *en tête-bêche* and with the lower part of the hoop chisel-cut with a central bar and geometric designs.



## INSCRIBED FINGER RING

8

KARNATAKA, SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 12<sup>TH</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

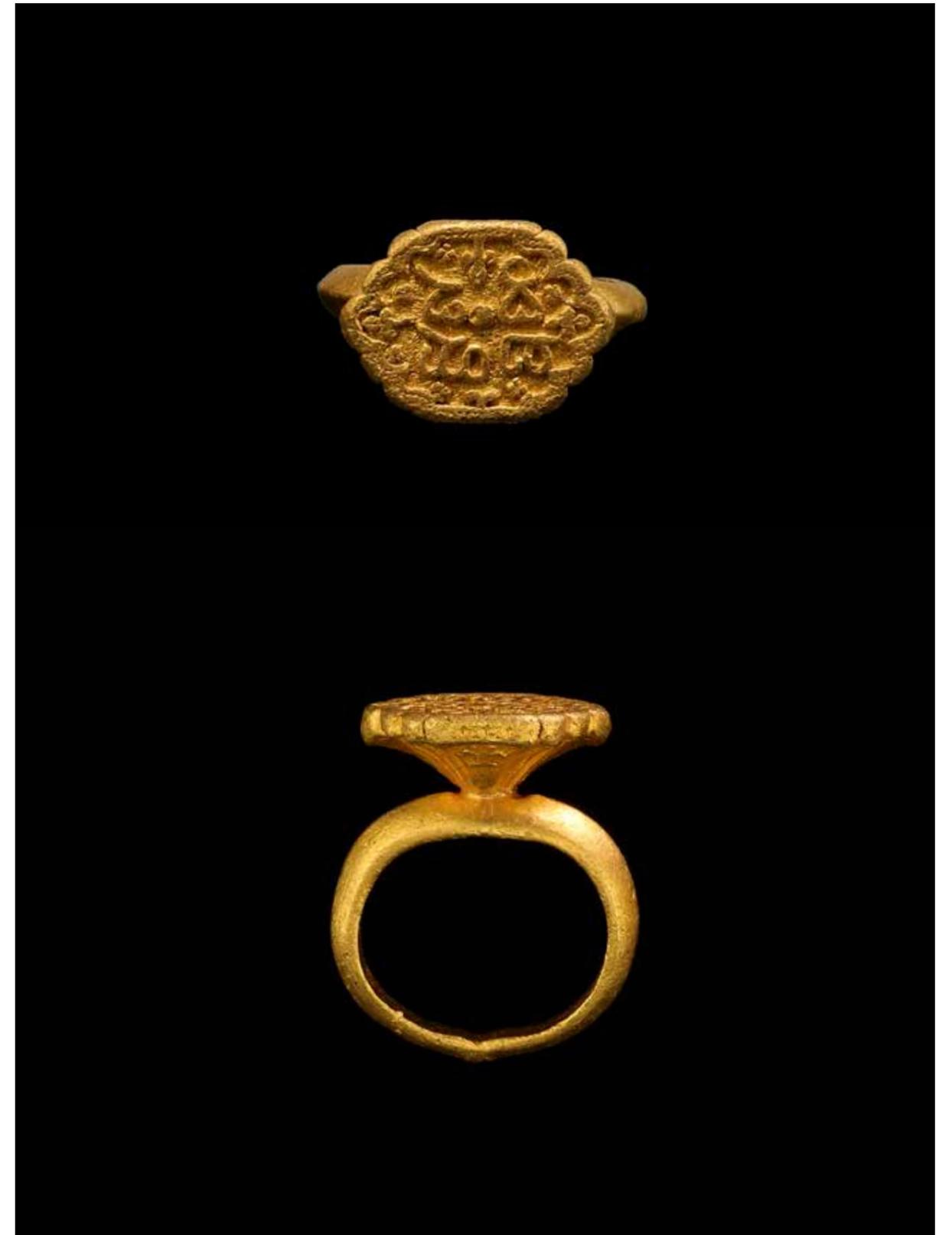
HEIGHT: 15MM  
WIDTH: 1.7MM  
WEIGHT: 16.8g  
SIZE: US5.5

The all gold finger ring is fabricated in two parts, each made separately. One is a hoop of semi-circular cross-section, incorporating a well-defined square casting sprue at its base before broadening towards plain shoulders. The second part rises from the center of the hoop as an inverted, oval cone forming a flat, scalloped bezel.

This bezel is deeply chiseled in such a way that a raised border surrounding an elegant inscription, further enhanced with small floral designs, is left standing proud of the now lowered surface.

The inscription, in the local script, known as Kanda, spells: DE/ VAR/ RAA/YA, which, when read in full gives the rank and name of its former owner: RAJA KRISHNA.

The underside of the conical bezel is decorated on one side, with an inverted triangular frame filled with a flowering plant, while the rest of the underside is deeply grooved.



## ENAMELED AND GEM-SET BAZU BAND

9

NORTH INDIA  
LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY –  
EARLY 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 71MM x 36MM  
WEIGHT: 30g

The almost square rectangular center of the *bazu* has a narrow border enameled in blue on a *guilloche* ground for better adhesion. Beyond this border is a raised field enameled in translucent dark green. This field is centered with a large table-cut diamond surrounded by eight smaller, flat diamond, the whole set in *kundan* technique to form an open flower with pointed and rounded petals. Radiating out from the smaller diamonds are the nine gems that together form the *navaratna*. In order to maintain the desired symmetry a tenth gem, not customarily part of the *navaratna*, (turquoise), was added.

Attached to each of the shorter sides is a three-part hinge highlighted with three diamonds set in a floral design and enhanced with blue and red enamel.

The reverse of the *bazu* is enameled, again within a blue frame, with enamel of outstanding quality, using some rarely chosen colors, such as the pale blue that surrounds the large round medallion that forms the center of the design, itself filled with an unusually delicate yellow enamel. Both the blue field and yellow medallion are further enhanced with three-lobed red flowers interspersed with green leaves. The whole making for a superbly balanced ensemble.

FOR THE SHAPE, cf.

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p239, fig. 396

AND

Stronge, S., Poovaya-Smith, N. and Harle, J. C. *A Golden Treasury: Jewellery from the Indian Subcontinent*. London, 1989, p89, no. 83



## JEWELLED BAZU BAND

10

NORTHEASTERN INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

LENGTH 85MM  
WIDTH: 36MM  
WEIGHT: 41g

A three part, hinged bazu band with a rectangular central section and two triangular wings, each with a floral element at its apex allowing for braided cords to be attached and adjusted for size.

The rectangular section of the bazu is set with thirty flat diamonds, rhythmically filling the spaces between the nine auspicious gems, each of which is set on one of the cardinal points and in the center — together these form the Navaratna.

The wings are likewise set with smaller diamonds and a small ruby. The back is finely enameled with flowers and petals in red and blue against a white ground, and with green champlevé enamel directly applied into the metal.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Hendley, T. H. *Indian Jewellery* in: *The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909, pl. 18, no. 141

**ALSO**

Seligman, T. K. and Balakrishnan, U. R. *Enduring Splendor; Jewelry of India's Thar Desert*. Los Angeles, 2017, p117, no. 4.26a,b



## PAIR OF BRACELETS

11

NORTHWEST GREATER INDIA  
PUNJAB, RAJASTHAN  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

LENGTH: 151MM  
WIDTH: 19MM  
WEIGHT: 102g

The bracelets are made of ten square sections fabricated of thin sheet. Each square has two of its opposing sides pierced twice so that they may be strung together. The two non-perforated sides of each square have been fitted with two standing loops each, allowing for small seed pearls to be strung along the long sides of the bracelet, both for decorative effect and also to further strengthen the armlets. These strands of pearls are joined to a tri-lobed terminal at each end — each set with three small rubies — and then incorporated into the braided cords making the armlets adjustable.

The four corners of each square are tightly set with small triangular turquoise. The main feature of the squares consist of circles formed of eight equal-sized rubies, set *kundan* style, and each encircling a different gemstone from the *navraratna* enabling the wearer to, metaphorically, be one with the universe as each of the nine gems traditionally used in this arrangement symbolizes one celestial body and deity. The use of the one extra gem, (emerald) is unusual but not unprecedented as sometimes a bracelet needed to be longer and required an extra link. Others believe that the moon may be represented in more than a single phase, while yet others think that the use of an additional gem is a local custom in Greater Lucknow.

The reverse is unadorned.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, pp304 – 311, fig. 716 from Jaipur, Rajasthan

ALSO

Hendley, T. H. *Indian Jewellery. in: The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909, pl. 39, no. 272



## PEARL AND GEM DOUBLE NAVARATNA NECKLACE

COMPOSED OF ANTIQUE ELEMENTS

12

NORTH INDIA  
ca. 18<sup>TH</sup>–19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
LENGTH: 555MM

The necklace is composed of two strands of natural 'Basra' pearls with each strand arrayed with the larger pearls in the center. Both strands are passed through two late 18th century terminals of tapered form and after having passed through the terminals, they are joined together and the necklace is further lengthened with a single strand of pearls that complete the jewel with a modern s-hook closure.

The terminals are set with a rosette with a central diamond encircled by six emeralds and with further emeralds and rubies filling the field. The reverse of each terminal is delicately enameled, on a white ground, with five red and three blue flowers, all with green foliage, the whole arching over a standing parrot, with black feet, red body, and red, white and blue wings.

Interspersed between every fourth pearl is a precious gem of ancient *Ta'wiz* shape. This shape has deep historical roots. It is derived from a metal proto-type: a hollow cylinder with pointed caps, of which at least one could be removed so that an amulet could be inserted to protect the wearer from all sorts of baleful events. Later, the shape of the container alone – made of metal or stone – became the powerful amulet. When this amulet was made of a specific gemstone – itself thought to have propitious qualities – it reinforced the 'power' of the amulet.

The particular combination of the *navaratna* (nine gems) is believed to be particularly powerful and it was believed that it should only be worn at the recommendation of an astrologer.

Hindu belief in the efficacy of certain gems to heal parts of the body is expressed in Ayurvedic medicine when certain gems should either be worn or avoided, while in really serious cases certain gems should be ingested.

Gems are also considered personifications of the seven planets and the waxing and waning phases of the moon. The gems on this necklace are two central diamonds, (total weight 9.4 carats) (Venus), flanked by emeralds (Mercury), blue sapphires, (Saturn), rubies, (sun), yellow sapphires, (Jupiter), Hessonite garnet and zircon (ascending moon) and chrysoberyl cat's eye, (waning moon), coral, (Mercury), and pearl (moon).



FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock: Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p265, fig. 428

ALSO

Brijbhusan, J. *Masterpieces of Indian Jewellery*. Bombay, 1979, pl. LXIV

For an interesting western creation by Cartier in 1936, cf.

Judy Rudoe's article *The Taste for 'barbaric splendour': Daisy Fellowes and her 'Hindu' Necklace* in: *Jewellery Studies*, vol. 9, pp78 – 94, figs. 6 – 8

For a diamond *Ta'wiz*, cf.

Vassallo e Silva, N. *Jewels for the Great Mughal: Goa a Centre of the Gem Trade in the Orient* in: *Jewellery Studies*, vol. 10, 2004, p46, fig. 5

For an excellent exposé about the religious underpinning of these beliefs, cf.

*ibid*, pp251 – 255

AND

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewellery of India*. London, 1997, pp304 – 311, figs. 711 – 718

## DIAMOND AND EMERALD NECKLACE

13

CENTRAL INDIA  
ca. LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
WEIGHT OF THE EMERALD:  
6.29 CARATS  
LENGTH: 410MM

The necklace consists of twenty-nine links, each set in a square or pear-shaped setting with a raised gallery attached to its neighbor with a ringlet fitted through a post between the two levels of each gallery, allowing great flexibility to the jewel. Each setting is filled with an irregular flat diamond *pulki* set in *kundan* technique over silver foil and with raised collets.

The central and largest diamond is surmounted by a round pearl nestled in a gold cap. Suspended from this central setting is a pendant of floral design set with nine diamonds while a large, pear-shaped emerald bead marks the lowest point of the necklace.

Flanking this central element are six diamond drops on each side. These match the gems of the main necklace and are attached to it using the same double gallery technique.

**FOR THE STYLE, cf.**

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, p350, fig. 773

**ALSO**

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p214, fig. 352



## DIAMOND AND EMERALD PENDANT

14

NORTH-CENTRAL INDIA  
ca. EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 80MM X 55MM

The openwork pendant is of irregular pear-shape. It is centered by a large heart-shaped cabochon emerald set in a gold setting with closed back and held with six wire claws.

This setting is the focus of an intricate wire frame, formed of triple arches joined side-to-side and of increasing size. There are flat pellets reinforcing and decorating the joints between the various arches. The loops of the outer arches are covered with silver settings each set with large, flat diamonds, each set *kundan* style, and with slightly domed, closed backs.

The lowest point of the pendant has a small loop from which is suspended a large emerald 'pebble', pierced longitudinally.

The setting at the top of the pendant also has a small loop, probably so that it could be attached to a diamond and emerald necklace.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Balakrishnan, U.R. *Alamkara; The Beauty of Ornament*. Delhi, 2014, p84, from Varanasi

**ALSO**

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p165, fig. 241



## INSCRIBED EMERALD

15

GREATER NORTHWEST INDIA  
ca. LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY –  
EARLY 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 20MM X 12MM  
CARAT WEIGHT NOT ESTABLISHED  
BECAUSE OF THE GOLD FRAME

The rectangular gem has a flat table, sloping sides and chamfered corners, the reverse is rounded. The stone is securely set in a heavy gold frame and with substantial claws rising from each of the four corners.

The table is finely wheel-cut in Arabic with parts of the Qur'anic verses 2 and 3 from sura al-Talâq (LXIII):

*(2) And whoever fears God, He will make for him a way out (3) and will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon God, He is sufficient for him. God will accomplish His purpose; God has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.*

It is likely to have been worn against the body as a religious talisman; the absence of the owner's name mitigates against it having been used as a personal seal.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance given me by Professor Ana Labarta, without whose help I would have been unable to read or interpret the inscription.

FOR INSCRIBED EMERALD GEMS, cf.

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997. p327 – 333, fig. 748



## DIAMOND AND ENAMEL BRACELET

16

HYDERABAD  
19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 36MM X 192MM  
WEIGHT: 74g

The bracelet is fabricated of seventeen identical links each consisting of a flat wire frame, roughly rectangular, and filled with one oval setting flanked above and below by two triangular settings, all set with irregularly cut *pulki* style diamonds. The long sides of these frames are fitted on opposing sides with either one or two tubular sections that allow the links to be hinged together once pins are inserted through three parts and so form a flexible bracelet.

The large, oval center of the bracelet consists of an oval *pulki* in a scalloped setting surrounded by twelve small pear-shaped settings that in turn are ringed by twelve larger diamonds, all of rough rose-cut shapes.

Two diamond-set terminals form a three-part hinged clasp that closes with a threaded pin with a domed cap.

The reverse is finely enameled in red and white enamel with its floral design mirroring the design that is executed in diamonds on the obverse.

**FOR THE STYLE, cf.**

Balakrishnan, U. R. and Kumar, M. S. *Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p118, fig. 169



## PAIR OF GEM-SET AND ENAMEL EARRINGS

17

UTTAR PRADESH  
AND UTTARANCHAL,  
NORTH-CENTRAL INDIA  
EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 20MM  
WEIGHT: 12g

Both earrings are shaped in the form of a six-petaled, fully opened flower with round hearts. The pointed petals are each filled with a single flat diamond (*pulki*) set using the *kundan* technique. The center stone is a cabochon ruby, likewise set in a more detailed scalloped *kundan* setting. The rubies are possibly foiled to enhance their color and reflection.

The edges and the back of the petals are enameled in a deep red enamel, (some slight chipping), while the back of the heart is indicated with a six-petaled deep green enamel. A curved earwire rises from the center of the back allowing the earring to be inserted into the ear.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Hendley, T. H. *Indian Jewellery in: The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909, pl. 80, no. 513



## GEM-SET AND ENAMELED PENDANT

18

RAJASTHAN, NORTH INDIA  
ca. 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 70MM x 50MM  
WEIGHT: 34g

The pendant is of inverted egg-shape and is skillfully crafted by a modern jeweler working to the highest standards.

The front of the flat pendant is centered by a pear-shaped flat diamond. It is flanked by two star-shaped flowers rising from a cluster of seven green leaves growing from a red ground. In the field above the diamond there are two long-tailed parrots, three further flowers and more red and green leaves. The five petals of each flower are set with rose-cut diamonds while their hearts are round rubies. The parrots have ruby and diamond bodies while all foliage is set with cut-to-fit slivers of emerald. The field between this rich assemblage is engraved with further floral designs and fine stippling.

The intricately enameled reverse bears, within a blue notched frame, a riotous design of two long-tailed parrots, in red and blue enamel, over a large multi-petalled red flower growing from stem with six green leaves, and with a blue and red dove at its base. The field is further decorated with similar but smaller petalled flowers and foliage, together transmuting the gem-set design of the front into champlevé enamel.

There is a large ruby bead suspended from the base of the pendant.

FOR VERY SIMILAR ENAMEL, cf.

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, p352, fig. 777.

ALSO

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p273, figs. 448 – 9



## GOLD BRIDAL JEWEL

19

RAJASTHAN  
ca. EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 75MM X 67MM  
WEIGHT: 89g

The jewel consists of seven diamond-set beads joined in a row of alternating rosettes and rectangular elements. Attached to the base of this row of beads is a flat bar with twenty-one loops soldered against its lower back. From these loops is suspended a skirt of small gold balls and multiple rows of rosettes, triangles and further balls, many further enhanced with fine shot, all able to sway freely.

Originally, these jewels were a symbol of marriage worn by Hindu women for as long as the husband was alive. Though the general name for this jewel is *Timaniya*, (three jewels), there are subtle tribal differences as well as a different nomenclature: Mahajans call it *muth*, Rajputs refer to it as *aad* or *nimboli*, Bishnois call it *tegad* or *tegni*, Rabaris *gungri* and the Jats *tevata*.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Nigam, M. L. *Indian Jewellery*. Delhi, 1999, pp79 – 80 from Bikaner.

ALSO

Bhandari, V. *Costume, Textiles and Jewellery of India; Traditions in Rajasthan*. Delhi, 2004, pp142 – 3.

AND

Hendley, T. H. *Indian Jewellery. in: The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909, pl. Ad19 – 2A – 4A



## GOLD AND DIAMOND NECKLACE

20

RAJASTHAN, NORTH INDIA  
19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
PENDANT: 76MM  
NECKLACE: 585MM  
WEIGHT: 264g

The gold necklace — known as a *Baleora* — consists of seven flat gold chains ornamented with six diamond-set ornaments spaced evenly along the length of the chains. There are two diamond-set terminals at each end of these flat chains. Attached to these terminals, the necklace is further lengthened by the addition of four loop-in-loop chains that are looped through a large s-hook which securely fastens the necklace. The center of the s-hook is covered with a rosette with ruby petals surrounding an emerald center.

A central floral diamond-set ornament marks the lowest point of the necklace, this supports a second floral drop from which a single gold-capped, pear-shaped emerald is suspended.

Male Brahmins and Jain Merchants wore similar necklaces until the early 20th century.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Hendley, T. H. *Indian Jewellery*, in: *The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909, pl. Ad32 – 2A



## DIAMOND, SPINEL AND ENAMEL BRACELET

21

RAJASTHAN, NORTH INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 165MM X 28MM  
WEIGHT: 47.2g

The bracelet is fabricated and consists of a rectangular central ornament set with a flat diamond with its gold setting engirdled by tiny diamonds. This setting is flanked by two floral 'wings', each set with seven small diamonds and one larger spinel.

This central section of the bracelet is bordered on both long sides by six identical links, each set with two spinels separated by a floral sprig set with three diamonds.

One half of a three-part hinge is attached to each end of the bracelet, allowing the ends to be fitted together and secured with a pin.

The reverse is richly enameled with a design that repeats in white, red, green and blue enamel the design executed in precious gems on the obverse.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Ganguli, W. *Indian Folk Jewellery; Designs and Traditions*, Delhi, 2015, p98 – 1, 2 for a very similar design in a necklace.



## RUBY AND DIAMOND FRINGE NECKLACE

22

SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
LENGTH: 212MM  
WEIGHT: 72.5g

The necklace is made of twenty separate but identical links, with a further two terminals and a central element being added to provide attachments for the cords and center the necklace.

Each link is fabricated of thin sheet with a diamond-set petal attached to a curved stem rising from an oval setting holding a cabochon ruby. There is tiny loop attached to the base of each of the oval settings allowing a barrel-shaped ruby bead to swing freely, so forming the fringe.

The back of the necklace is unadorned.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, p49, fig. 66 from Kerala.



## RUBY AND PEARL NECKLACE

23

TAMIL NADU, SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
LENGTH: 300MM

The necklace is a fine example of a well-known type that has many regional variations without losing its identity.

It consists of a large, finely modeled central element suspended from three parallel strands of pearls. The strands are kept parallel by eight gold spacer bars, each set with three diamonds, strung across the strands at intervals of twelve pearls. The length of the necklace is adjustable with a length of simple chain with s-hook clasp.

The main element consists of two adorsed peacocks with open tails sharing an elaborate crown resting on their heads. There is a central, vertical stem that runs between the birds and through the center of the crown. It is topped with a round pearl set in a beaded cup, while suspended from its base, between the triangular space between the birds, a further large pendant sways freely. This circular pendant shows a central diamond-set eight-petaled rosette with a cabochon emerald at its heart. The rosette is encircled by a row of rubies, closely mounted in *kundan* technique in square settings. These are bordered by an openwork double row of rubies arranged in a floral pattern. The lower half of the pendant is further enriched with fifteen hollow gold balls linked to the main body of the pendant by thin wire loops.

The reverse of the main pendant is finely engraved with a design of peacocks in a bucolic setting.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Filliozat, J. and Pattabiramin, P. Z. *Parures Divines du Sud de L'Inde*. Pondicherry, 1966, pl. LXXXIII, fig. 1 from Maharippatakkam, Temple of Vishnu.

**AND**

Hendley, T.H. *Indian Jewellery. in: The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909, ad pl. 96, no. 3A

**AND**

Seligman, T.K. and Balakrishnan, U.R. *Enduring Splendor; Jewelry of India's Thar Desert*. Los Angeles, 2017, p78, no. 3.1



## GOLD GEM-SET BRACELET

24

RAJASTHAN,  
NORTHWEST INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
LENGTH: 185MM  
WIDTH: 36MM  
WEIGHT: 137.15g

The bracelet is fabricated in three main sections, a central square section made of sheet and with its slightly domed surface decorated with eight diamonds set in *kundan* technique in raised petal-like settings with their stems surrounding a central raised ruby set in a scalloped setting. The slightly domed reverse, though in other examples sometimes enameled — is carefully chased with an intricate floral design.

This square is attached by means of a three-part hinge — enhanced with five smaller diamonds — to two flat sections of five double loop-in-loop chains fixed side-by-side. The chains end with narrow vertical terminals decorated with punched dots. They hide a well-made three-part clasp with a heavy pin made to screw down into the clasp.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Nigam, M. L. *Indian Jewellery*. Delhi, 1999, p86

**ALSO**

Aitken, M. E. *When Gold Blossoms: The Susan L. Beningson Collection*. New York, 2004, p116, figs. 118 – 9

**AND**

Balakrishnan, U. R. *Alamkara; The Beauty of Ornament*. Delhi, 2014, p124



## PENDANT SET WITH DIAMONDS AND EMERALDS

25

SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 18<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 50MM X 36MM  
WEIGHT: 36.25g

The almost square hollow pendant is made in three main sections, a frame fitted with two plates. The sides of the frame are rounded and unadorned.

The face of the pendant shows, within a large circular medallion that touches the four sides of the pendant, the following features: a central diamond tablet set in a rectangular *kundan* setting with notching in the sides. This gem is surrounded by eight irregular-shaped diamonds each set in an ogive-shaped setting with engraved foliage between the arches. The central medallion is encircled by a band of rectangular emeralds, set end-to-end. This intense green ring is itself ringed by a ribbon of finely engraved, scrolled foliage.

Each of the four corners of the front of the pendant is *kundan*-set with four irregular-shaped diamonds and further vegetal motifs covering the remaining field.

The back plate shows — engraved in exquisite detail — a remarkably intricate scene of wildlife within foliage. It shows in the center two male lions attacking a boar, in the field below a young lion, one tiger at 11 o'clock and a second tiger at one o'clock, with four gazelles in various running poses filling those spaces in the field that are not already filled with well-delineated foliage.

Attached to the top are two suspension loops, square with chamfered corners and decorated with engraved leaves both front and back.

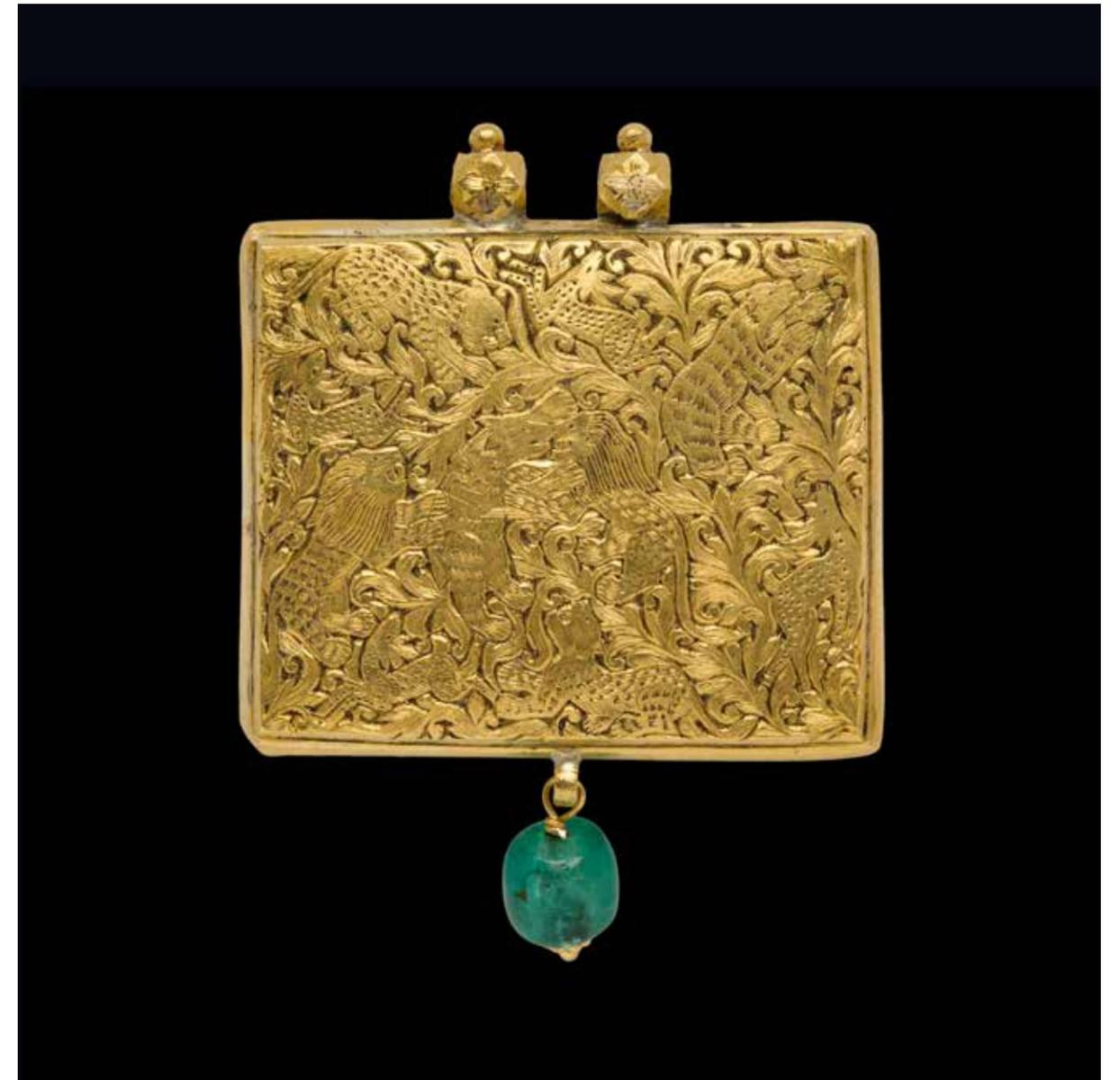
There is a loop attached to the base of the pendant from which a large emerald bead, capped at its base with a gold roundel, sways freely.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Balakrishnan, U. R. *Alamkara; The Beauty of Ornament*. Delhi, 2014, p24, fig. 21, the front of this *same* pendant is shown in: Nigam, M. L. *Indian Jewellery*. Delhi, 1999, p6

**ALSO**

Aitken, M. E. *When Gold Blossoms: The Susan L. Beningson Collection*. New York, 2004, p98, fig. 90



## PAIR OF TEMPLE EAR COVERS

26

SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 62MM  
WEIGHT: 46g

The ear covers are fabricated from sheet and are chased to a life-like and life-size representation of human ears. This similitude ends however with the 'earlobes' which are indicated by a circle of pearls, strung on thin gold wire, encircling an oval cabochon garnet.

Attached to the underside of the earlobes are two wires, terminating in tight spiral coils. These are flanking eleven larger wires, each wrapped with tightly coiled wire, and terminating in a large round pearl.

It is considered meritorious to donate jewelry to the temple of a Hindu deity. The image of the deity requires sixteen ritual acts daily, including bathing, feeding and dressing of the idol as well as adorning it with precious jewels on holidays or the idol's birthday.

Therefore, it is likely that our ear covers were a significant gift to a favored idol, perhaps as a sign of gratitude for favors received or penance for deeds committed.

### FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Filliozat, J. and Pattabiramin, P. Z. *Parures Divines du Sud de L'Inde*. Pondicherry, 1966, pl. XLIV, "Tirukkuvalai" from Tiruppuvanam, Temple of Shiva.

For a modern version of ear covers, as worn by women, cf.

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, p220, fig. 467

### AND

Ganguli, W. *Indian Folk Jewellery; Designs and Traditions*. Delhi, 2015, p55 – 3



## TIGER-CLAW NECKLACE

27

TAMIL NADU, SOUTH INDIA  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
LENGTH: 185MM  
WIDTH: 36MM  
WEIGHT: 137.15g

The necklace consists of ten separate pendants, each set with two adorsed claws indicating that the necklace contains all twenty claws from one (juvenile) tiger.

Each pair of claws is mounted in a flat setting decorated on one side with three gems — one each of the gems that make up the Navaratna flanked by two cabochon rubies — the other side set with a central cabochon emerald flanked by a pair of two smaller rubies. The claws are held in place with a dogtooth setting, and suspended between each pair of claws there is a small gold mount holding a pink bead (spinel, tourmaline?).

Supporting each pendant are two conjoined lugs, their fronts set with two small diamonds, the backs unadorned. These lugs allow the pendants to be strung on a loop-in-loop chain with the spaces between each pendant taken up by three ribbed gold beads.

Jewelry set with tiger claws has a long history in southeast Asia. Sculptural representations are known from the 5th century CE. And representations in different media — jade carnelian, gold, silver and other metals — are made and worn to the present.

A 10th century. pendant set with two actual claws was excavated in the Deccan, (Nigam, M.L. *Indian Jewellery*. Delhi, 1999, p20).

The variations are many, and the following are just a few of the more accessible ones:

Balakrishnan, U. and Kumar, M. S. *The Dance of the Peacock; Jewellery Traditions of India*. Mumbai, 1999, p238, fig. 384

**ALSO**

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, pp91 – 5, figs. 150 – 3 and 155.

**AND**

Brunel, F. *Jewellery of India; Five Thousand Years of Tradition*. Delhi, 1972, pls. 59 – 60 and pl. 67 for an example in jade.



## INSCRIBED ARCHER'S RING

28

DECCAN  
EARLY 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 38MM  
WEIGHT: 16.2g

The iron thumb ring is handsomely decorated with a floral design in *koftgari* technique. This skill originated in Persia and was introduced to Indian craftsmen in the 16th century. Its mastery is closely related to the process known as damascening, and, in modified form, survives today in Hyderabad as *bidri* work.

The iron, steel or bronze base is prepared by engraving the design into the base metal. Usually this is followed with some undercutting of the engraved lines and with crosshatching for larger areas, such as the leaves in the present example. This serves to increase the adhesion of the soft, high karat gold that is then burnished into the design. Upon completion, the object is carefully polished, then sometimes blued or otherwise darkened so that the inlays stand out against and are flush with the non-precious surface.

The inscription, in Arabic, reads: *Oh, the Judge of Needs.*

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Nigam, M. L. *Indian Jewellery*. Delhi, 1999, p95

ALSO

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, pp267–9, figs. 628–33



## PAIR OF GOLD BRACELETS

29

NORTH INDIA, UDAIPUR  
ca. LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
OUTER DIAMETER: 80MM  
INNER DIAMETER: 55MM  
WEIGHT: 124g

Both bracelets are formed of nine domed elements, each attached to a cloth backing. These elements are each hinged to a narrow gold bar set with either two rubies or two small diamonds. One hinge serves as a reverse screw fastener. The main elements are covered with small, hollow gold beads (gajre) threaded tightly together by their, now invisible, integral wire loops.

Similar bracelets set with seed pearls rather than hollow gold balls are also known. (Hendley, pl. Ad30-1A).

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Hendley, T. H. *Indian Jewellery in: The Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, nos 95 – 7. Centenary Edition, Delhi, 1909. pl. Ad74 – 5A

**ALSO**

Untracht, O. *Traditional Jewelry of India*. London, 1997, p254, fig. 580

Bhandari, V. *Costume, Textiles and Jewellery of India; Traditions in Rajasthan*. Delhi, 2004, pp128 – 9, no. 213

**AND**

Balakrishnan, U. R. Alamkara; *The Beauty of Ornament*. Delhi, 2014, p179

**AND**

Bhandari, V. *Costume, Textiles and Jewellery of India; Traditions in Rajasthan*. Delhi, 2004, pp128 – 9, no. 213.



## FINGER RING

30

PYU PERIOD, BURMA  
ca. 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
WIDTH: 24MM  
WEIGHT: 12.5g

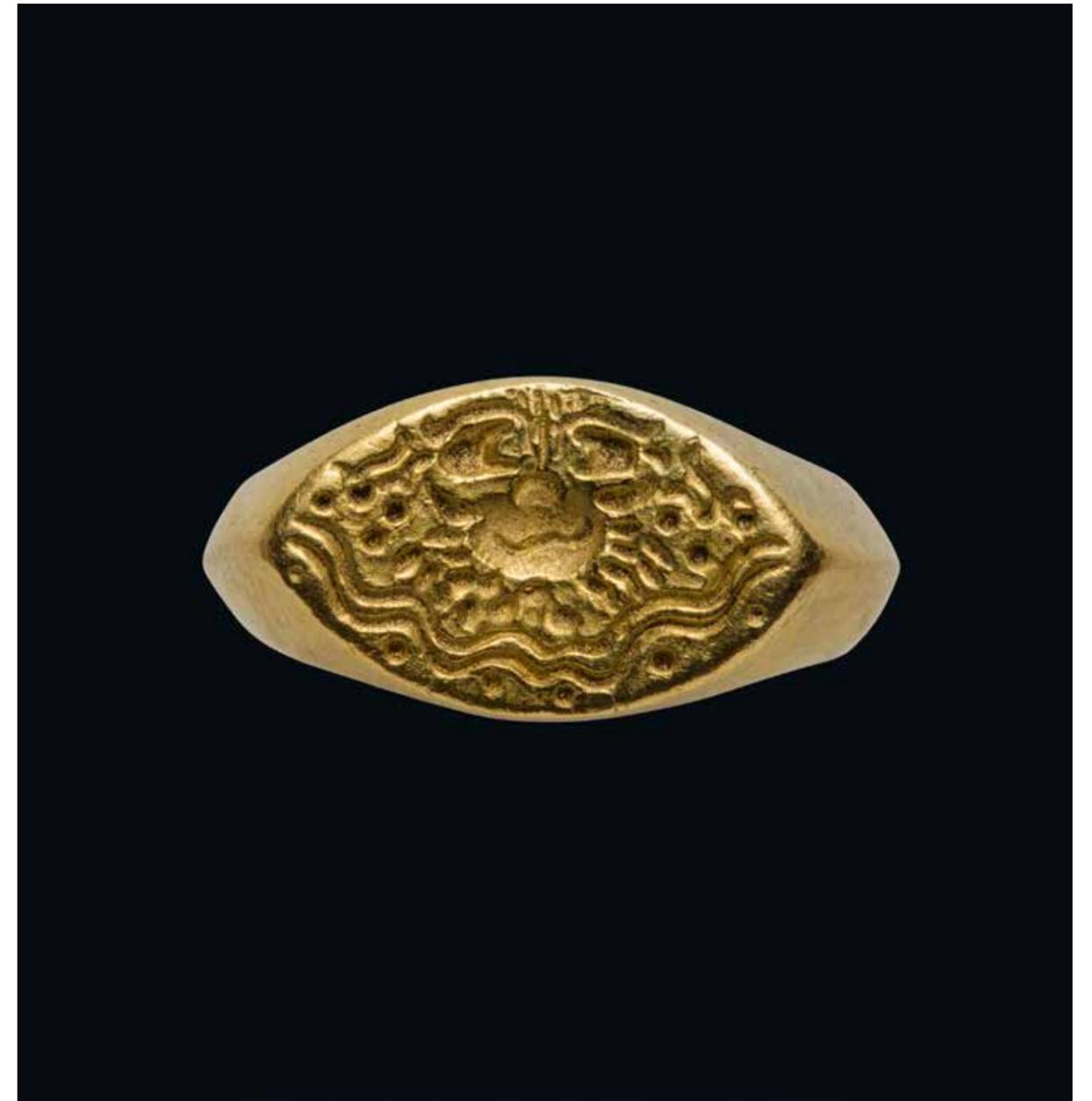
The cast ring has a vesica-shaped, flat bezel swelling from a tapered hoop with well-defined central rib. The flat surface of the bezel is chisel-cut with an overflowing water pot (Purna-Ghata), floating above three undulating lines undoubtedly indicating the ocean. There are several deeply punched dots flanking the water pot, known as a powerful symbol of abundance in both Hinduism and Buddhism across southeast Asia.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

van Cutsem, A. *A World of Rings; Africa, Asia, America*. Milan, 2000, p213, pl. 66

**FOR THE SYMBOL, cf.**

Miksic, J. *Old Javanese Gold; The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery*. New Haven, 2011, pp154 and 156, pl. 34, row 3 – 2 and pl. 36



## FINGER RING

31

PYU PERIOD, BURMA  
ca. 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
WIDTH: 22MM  
WEIGHT: 9.1g

The cast ring has a vessica-shaped, flat bezel swelling from a tapered hoop with well-defined central rib and a shoulder scored with two incised lines.

The bezel is engraved, within a dotted border, with a goddess shown kneeling while holding an offering in her upraised right hand. She is facing the curved double prow of a vessel with a similar stern shown in back. The design is filled with a black substance allowing the incised design to stand out against the gold.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

van Cutsem, A. *A World of Rings; Africa, Asia, America*. Milan, 2000, p213, pl. 66



## STAR-SHAPED EAR ORNAMENT

32

CENTRAL JAVA, INDONESIA  
PROTOCLASSIC PERIOD  
200 – 650 CE

SIZE: 25MM  
WEIGHT: 11g

The star-shaped ornament was cast with eleven elliptical lobes radiating out, but attached to a rounded, open circlet. The opening allows the ornament to be worn. This required pulling down of the earlobe – making it thinner – then sliding the ornament over the now thin earlobe and, once slid on, allowing the earlobe to spring back to its original thickness thus holding it securely.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Miksic, J. *Old Javanese Gold; The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery*. New Haven, 2011, p125, pl. 19 with lit.

**AND**

Miksic, J. *Small Finds: Ancient Javanese Gold*. Singapore, 1988, p.73, fig. 55. Two examples, with 16 and 13 lobes respectively.



## DOUBLE LOTUS FINGER RING

33

CENTRAL JAVA, INDONESIA  
ca. 8<sup>TH</sup> – 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 34MM  
WEIGHT: 59.6g

The massive gold ring is cast. It has a plain hoop of semi-circular cross-section broadening towards heavy shoulders. Upon these shoulders rests a large lotus flower facing down with a similar but smaller lotus flower raised from its center and facing up. The flat surface of the smaller surface is centered with a crawling turtle, facing left.

**FOR THE STYLE, cf.**

Jessup, H. I. *Court Arts of Indonesia*, New York, 1990, p159, fig. 118 and p246, no. 60

**ALSO**

Stutterheim, W. F. *De Oudheden-Collectie van Z.H. Mangkoenagoro VII te Soerakarta*, in: *Djawa, Extra Nummer*, 1937, p87, no. 402, pl. 38



## FINGER RING

34

CENTRAL JAVA, INDONESIA  
EARLY CLASSIC PERIOD  
ca. 7<sup>TH</sup> – 10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 35MM  
WEIGHT: 33.8g

The heavy gold ring is cast in one piece. It shows a hexagonal, three-stepped bezel, slightly cushion-shaped on the base, resting on the massive shoulders of a tapered hoop of oval cross-section.

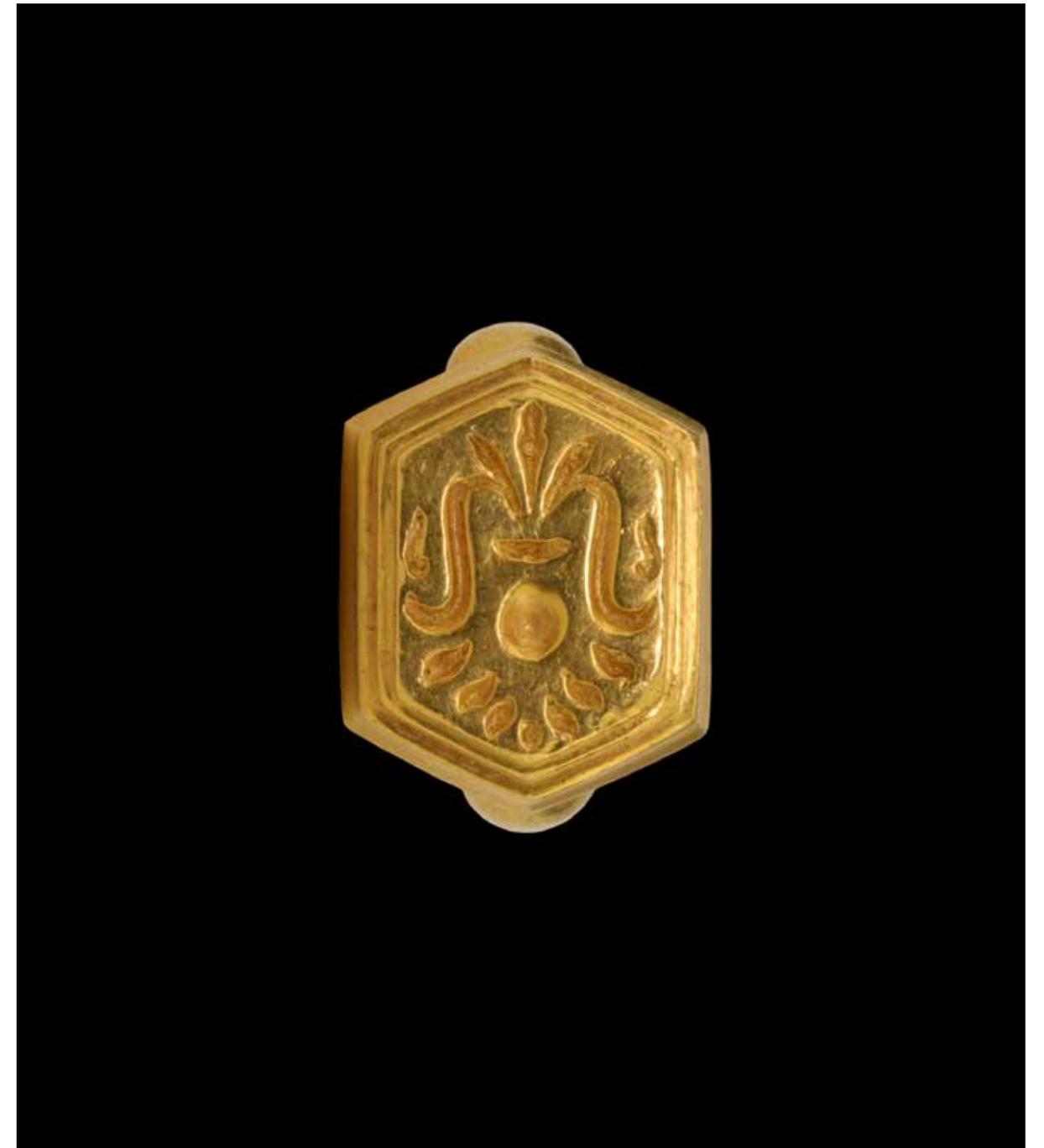
The flat bezel is deeply chisel-cut and shows the overflowing, wide-rimmed water pot (Purna Ghata) – its body indicated with a separate round punch – with three sprays squirting up, then gushing down the sides of the vessel before ending up in the basin below.

**FOR THE STYLE OF THE RING, cf.**

*Miksic, J. Old Javanese Gold; The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery. New Haven, 2011, pp152 – 3, pl. 33 – 6, with lit. Early Classic Period*

**FOR THE SUBJECT ON SIMILAR RINGS, cf.**

*Ibid, p154, pl. 54 – 3 and 54 – 8, with lit.*



## GROUP OF EAR ORNAMENTS

35

CENTRAL JAVA  
MIDDLE TO LATE PERIOD  
SIZE RANGE: 10MM – 15MM  
AVERAGE WEIGHT: 2g

These ear ornaments enjoyed a long popularity and were worn throughout the Middle Hindu/Buddhist *Kulturkreis*. They are found across Java, India and Thailand and have been dated from the seventh to the twelfth centuries. They are found in plain gold, or enhanced with stone beads or pebbles, with filigree or intricately twisted designs. It is believed that they were worn in the upper helix of the ear, not infrequently several pairs at once.

It has been suggested that these ornaments may have been used as 'bird rings', worn wrapped around the legs to decorate and identify prized hunting birds. It is also possible that they were intended to enhance the coiffures of temple statues, while none of these three options preclude the use of the others.

**FOR THE STYLE, cf.**

Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. *Gold from Java/Goud uit Java*. The Hague, 2012, pp64 – 5, nos 6 – 8. Central Javanese Period. Central Javanese

**ALSO**

Miksic, J. *Old Javanese Gold; The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery*. New Haven, 2011, pp162 – 7, pl. 42 – 5. With lit. Early Classic Period



## SINGLE AND PAIR OF GOLD EAR ORNAMENTS

36 37

CENTRAL JAVA  
MIDDLE TO LATE PERIOD,  
ca. 1000 – 1400 CE  
25MM x 25MM (PAIR) and  
30MM x 30MM (SINGLE)

WEIGHT  
PAIR: 13.3g and 12.2g  
SINGLE: 8.8g

The body of each of the v-shaped ear ornaments is cast to shape with further detailing added with fine chisels. The pair of ornaments is enhanced with a single cabochon ruby to each.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

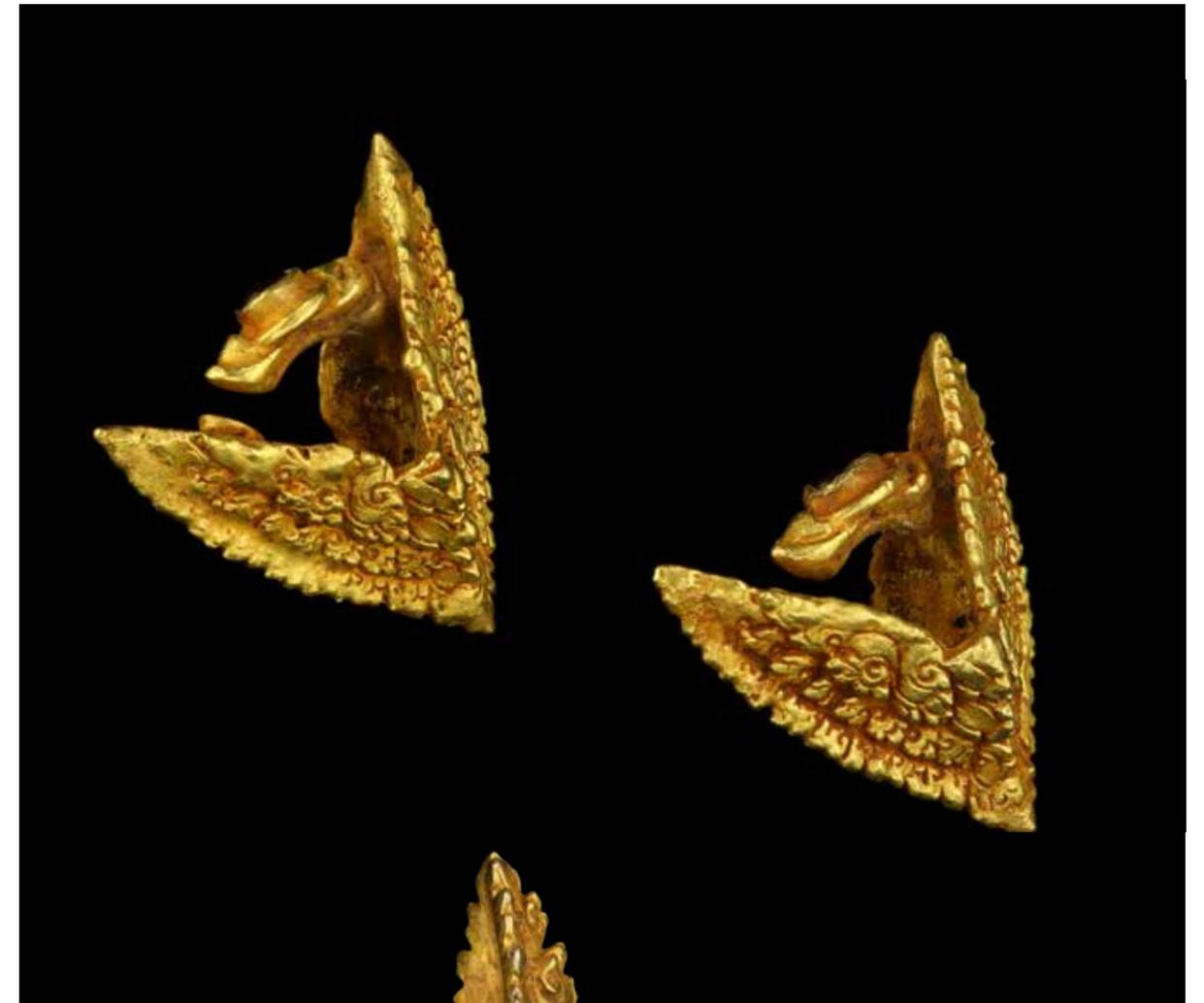
Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. *Gold from Java/Goud uit Java*. The Hague, 2012, pp53 – 5, no. 2. Central Javanese Period.

**ALSO**

Miksic, J. *Old Javanese Gold; The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery*. New Haven, 2011, p242, pl. 99 with lit. Middle and Late Classic Periods

**AND**

Stutterheim, W.F. *De Oudheden-Collectie van Z.H. Mangkoenagoro VII te Soerakarta*, in: *Djawa, Extra Nummer*, 1937, pp92 – 3, pl. 42, nos 602 – 605



## EAR ORNAMENT

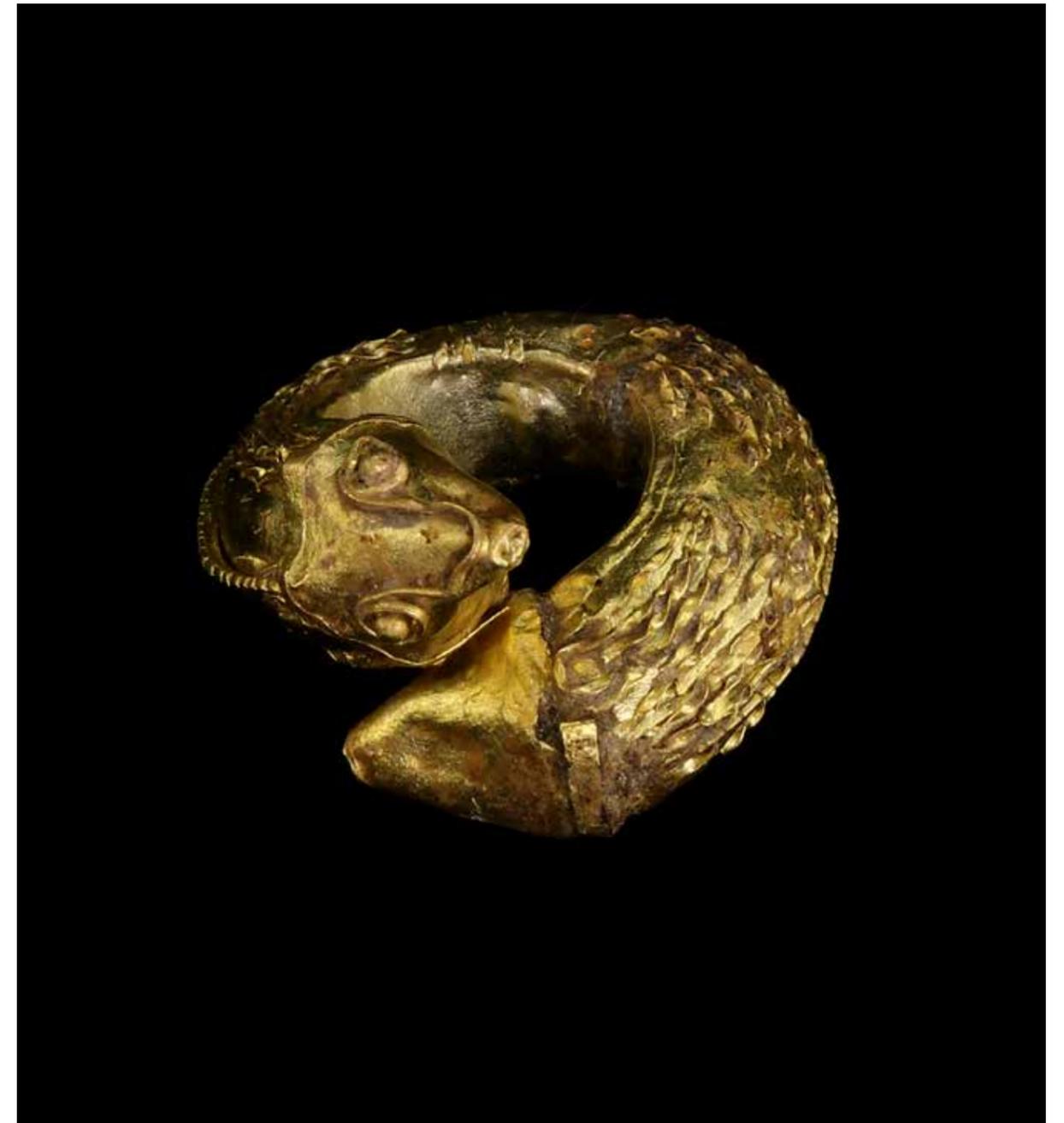
38

CENTRAL JAVA, (INDONESIA)  
ca. 17<sup>TH</sup> – 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 30MM  
WEIGHT: 8.3g

The hollow ornament is fabricated with overlapping terminals with one showing the pointed head — with applied bulging eyes and outlines of eyebrows and a nose — of a conger (large marine eel) along the equally pointed tip of its tail.

The body is fabricated from flat sheet on the inside, while the outside of the tubular body is covered with twisted strips of flattened wire soldered alongside each other, so giving the outside of the rounded body a scaly look, (some now missing). There is a raised spine, likewise made of twisted flat wire, from the head to the tail of the animal.

No exact parallel was found, but as the workmanship is relatively primitive and the style cannot easily be matched with known datable examples, it is perhaps one of few known examples of tribal workmanship.



## PAIR OF DIAMOND-SET ROYAL EARRINGS

39

CENTRAL JAVA, INDONESIA  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> – EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 26MM x 30MM  
WEIGHT: 24.75g

The earrings were formerly owned by Princess Gusti Putri Pangeran Mangkunegara of Surakarta, central Java.

They consist of a central rose-cut diamond set in silver with a braided gold surround. Encircling this surround are seven further, irregularly cut diamonds, each set within a wavy band of silver. The entire central ornament rests within a raised gold border on a flat gold disc.

Attached to the flat back of the earring is a long gold pin finely threaded to screw down an elaborate safety plug to secure the earrings while being worn. This plug is cylindrical, its upper part decorated with a band of applied circles, and it supports a pierced conical cap with guilloché designs. The use of such a large safety pushes the earlobe forward so that the diamonds will show more 'sparkle' when seen from the front and facing the observer.

**FOR THE STYLE, cf.**

Wassing-Visser, R. *Sieraden en Lichaamsversiering uit Indonesie*. Delft, 1984, pp62 and 106 – 7, figs, 102 – 3; and 183.

**ALSO**

Jasper, J. E. and Pirngadie, M. *De Inlandsche Kunstnijverheid in Nederlandsch Indie*, vol. IV: *De Goud-en Zilversmeedkunst*. The Hague, 1927, p122, fig. 129



## PAIR OF CRICKETS

40

SHANG OR HAN DYNASTY, CHINA  
ca. 2<sup>ND</sup> MILLENNIUM BCE;  
OR 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY BCE –  
2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY CE  
SIZES: 35MM X 18MM  
AND 18MM X 5MM

The turquoise crickets are carefully cut in a very life-like pose. They are pieced for suspension along the long axis.

Crickets have a long symbolic history in China. In a largely agricultural society the arrival of the first crickets of spring announced the start of the planting season; when they disappeared in the fall, it was time for harvest. By extension, as crickets lay hundreds of eggs, they also represented fruitfulness and fertility.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Salmony, A. *Carved Jade of Ancient China*. Berkeley, 1938, pl. XIX-1



## PAIR OF HOLOLITHIC EARRINGS

41

LIAO DYNASTY, (CHINA)  
ca. 10<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

HEIGHT: 40MM  
WIDTH: 32MM  
WEIGHT: 11g

These earrings are a *tour de force* of the stone carver's craft! Each earring is carved from a single slab of slightly translucent gray agate. Their polish and overall finish is of the highest quality and may well indicate a royal patron. Though they may not have been worn on a daily basis, there is no reason to assume that they were made as burial pieces.

The plasticity and elegance of their simple shape, known as "the hanging leaf design", is surely modeled after metal prototypes, but translated in a much more difficult to work medium.

When worn, the long, curved 'ear wire' is hidden behind the ear lobe. The curved front swells into the protruding frontal knob, then recedes and reforms into a broadening oval disc 'wrapped around' the lower section of the earring.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Content, D. J. and Stark, P. *Gold; Important Ancient and Ethnic Jewellery and Work of Art in precious Metal*. Habsburg Feldman, Geneva, 1990, pp40 – 1, no. 50 (in gold)

**AND**

Bunker, E. C., White, J. M. and So, J. F. *Adornment for the Body and Soul; Ancient Chinese Ornaments from the Mengdiexuan Collection*. Hong Kong, 1999, p228, no. 96 (in jade)

**AND**

Shen, H.-M. *Gilded Splendor; Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907 – 1125)*. New York, 2006, p368, no 218

**AND**

Kwan, S. and Ji, S. *Chinese Gold Ornaments*. Hong Kong, 2003, pp203 – 4, no. 218, (in gold)



## PAIR OF EARRINGS

42

LIAO DYNASTY, (CHINA)  
ca. 10<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 45MM X 45MM  
WEIGHT: 38g THE PAIR

The design of the earrings is based on the Chinese interpretation of the star sign Capricorn, (*Mó jié*), itself probably derived from the Hindu *makara*, (sea dragon), and absorbed into the Chinese repertory through the influence of the invading Hunnish tribes of Xiongnu, one of the ancestral tribes of the later Liao Dynasty.

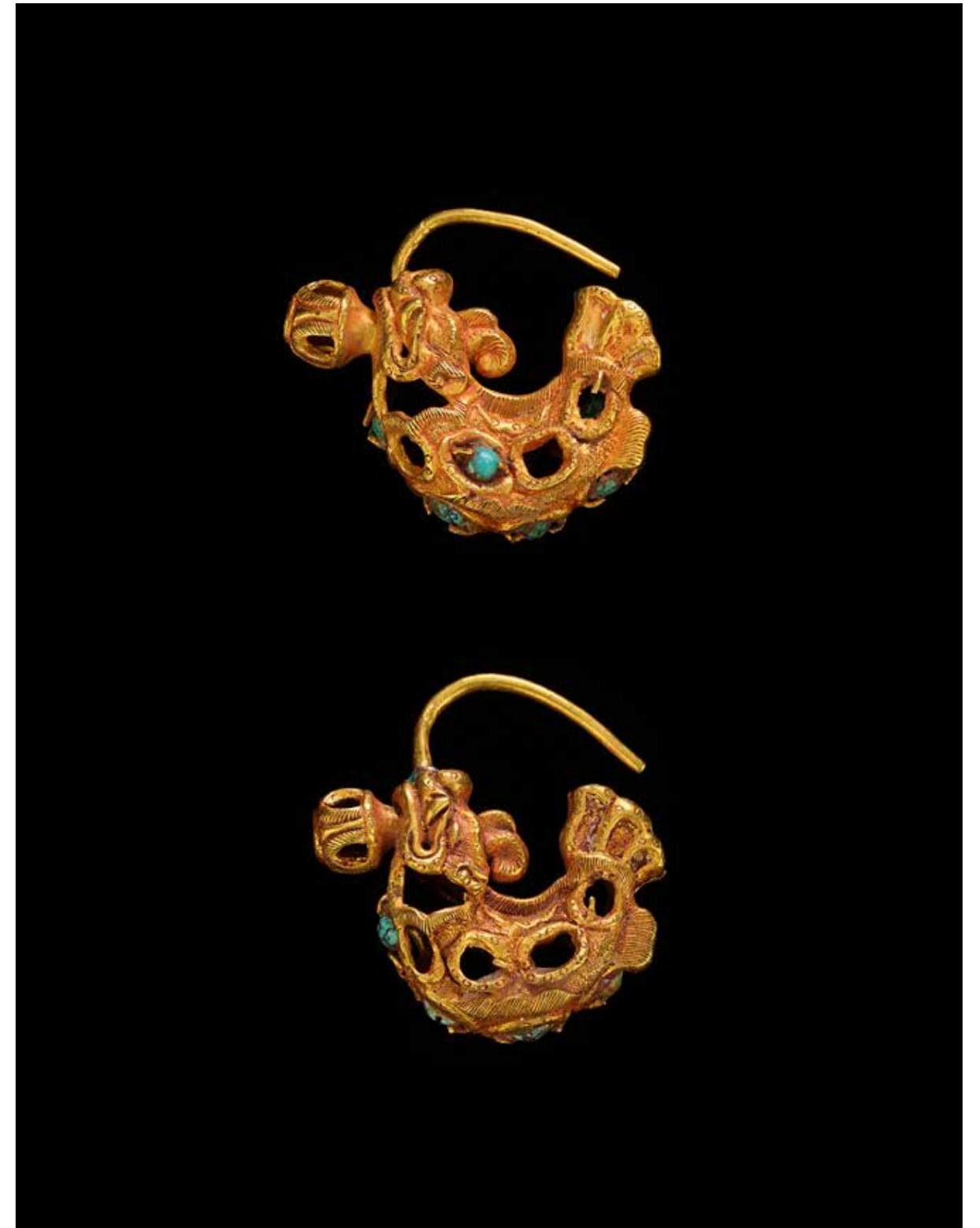
Each earring is made in two hollow and openwork halves and shows the mythical 'dragon-fish' facing front, with raised fan-shaped tail and open mouth. Its body bears a hatched design and several openings that originally held cabochon turquoise gems (several remaining). The creature appears to chase a large openwork sphere issuing from its lower jaw. A large curved ear wire of round cross-section rises from its open mouth.

**FOR THE STYLE, cf.**

Shen, H.-M. *Gilded Splendor: Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907–1125)*. New York, 2006, pp150–1, pls. 25–26a-b

**ALSO**

Bunker, E. C., White, J. M. and So, J. F. *Adornment for the Body and Soul Ancient Chinese Ornaments from the Mengdiexuan Collection*. p227, no. 94



## FINGER RING WITH LEONINE BEAST

43

LIAO DYNASTY, CHINA  
ca. 10<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 32MM X 30MM  
WEIGHT: 12g

The ring is fabricated from sheet and detailed with finely chased shells on the shoulders and scrolls on the hoop. The openwork top of the hoop has a central flat section which supports a three-dimensional, standing leonine beast, fabricated in two halves, and facing the long axis of the shield-shaped top.

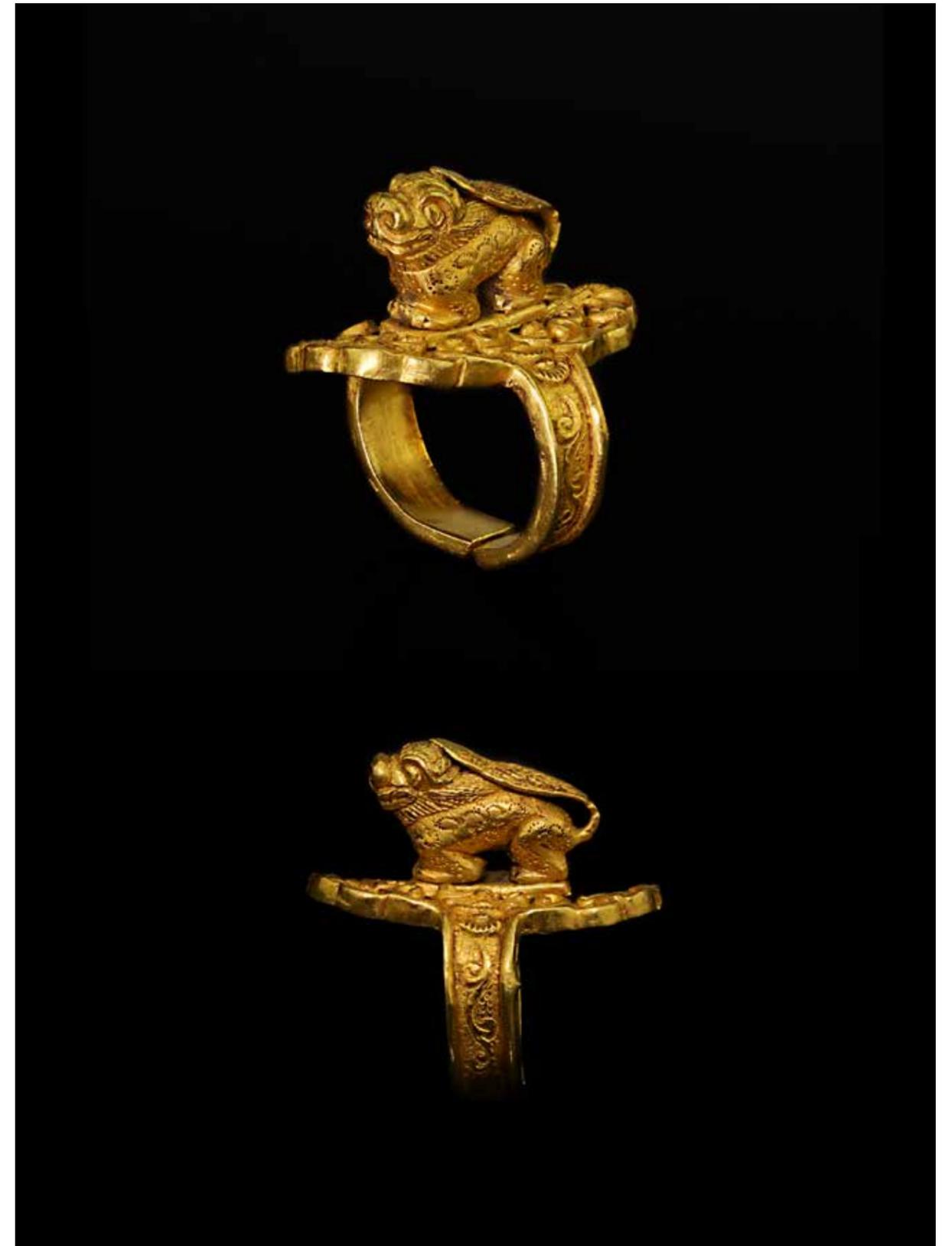
Rings of this type and period – though rare – always have penannular hoops to make it easier to fit the ring over metal-mesh gloves, both in life and when preparing the body for burial.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Shen, H.-M. *Gilded Splendor; Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907–1125)*. New York, 2006, pp158–9, pl. 30a-c

**ALSO**

Kwan, S. and Ji, S. *Chinese Gold Ornaments*. Hong Kong, 2003, also pp376–8, nos 225–7



## SILVER-GILT FILIGREE BRACELET

44

QING DYNASTY CHINESE  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
OUTER DIAMETER: 95MM  
INNER DIAMETER: 55MM  
WEIGHT: 122g

The hinged bangle is a superb example of 19th century Chinese filigree. With only the inner frame made of a continuous strip of flat sheet, and with both the inside and outside of the bracelet crafted entirely out of wire of varying gauges, which is further enhanced with applied granulation in the rosettes, the complicated design is executed by a highly skilled artisan.

The bracelet shows a pair of playful dragons confronting each other over the spherical box clasp. The dragons rise from a richly scalloped base enriched with raised, multi-petaled double rosettes alternating with smaller rosettes so suggesting the undulating bodies of the creatures.

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

*Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ch'ing Dynasty Costume Accessories. National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1986, p253 no. 236. "Gold filigree bracelets decorated with sea creatures"*

**ALSO**

*The Palace Museum. Jewelry and Accessories of The Royal Consorts of Ch'ing Dynasty. Peking, 1992, pp113 – 4, nos 262, 264*



## FINGER RING

45

NORTHWEST PROVINCES, INDIA  
EARLY INDO-CHRISTIAN  
ca. 5<sup>TH</sup> – 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
DIAMETER: 23MM  
WEIGHT: 4.1g

The simple gold finger ring is fabricated in two pieces, the plain hoop – broadening towards the shoulders, continuing underneath the round bezel, and with a distinct central spine – and a separate roundel soldered across the top of the hoop.

This roundel is carefully chisel-cut with Early Christian details that include a central fenced in area filled with the addorsed foreparts of sheep. On the right of the fence is a large palm branch growing from a square container, while on the left a large bird is sitting on the fencing. In the field above the long side of the fence is a large structure, possibly a bell tower attached to the nave of a religious building. There are three crosses, one on the tower, two on the roof of the nave. The upper left quadrant of the bezel shows a facing couple, female to the right with upraised hands and pleated garment, facing a taller male wearing a long headdress, and likewise wearing a pleated garment.

This possibly unique ring may be evidence of early Christianity – both St Thomas Christians and Nestorian Christians – in Greater India. Following Nestorius' removal from office of the episcopal throne in Constantinople in 431 CE and the condemnation of his views by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE, many of his followers fled the east Roman world for the Sasanian and Kushan world to the east. The local Zoroastrian population did not obstruct these growing Christian communities which prospered and migrated to towns and cities as far as the Chinese and Indian worlds.

Their intellectual output was considerable with centers of learning established in Nisibis and Gundeshapur, the latter with the support and encouragement of the Persian emperors who liked the idea of helping Christians who opposed Byzantium.

FOR AN INTERESTING, BRIEF SYNOPSIS ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN THE EAST, CF. Starr, S. F. *Lost Enlightenment; Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane*. Princeton, NJ 2013, pp88 – 92

AND

van Cutsem, A. *A World of Rings; Africa, Asia, America*. Milan, 2000, p209, pl. 126–1



## CHAIN NECKLACE

46

CAMBODIA  
ca. 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 429MM  
WEIGHT: 220.6g

The massive chain is cast in numerous separate units, each consisting of one closed oval link with a second oval link, set at 90°, cast on to its top. The center of the upper oval was either cast with an opening, or, more likely, was chisel-cut after casting, so creating a split upper link. Both ends of this cut link were then pried apart to create an opening through which the closed oval of the following double link unit could be inserted. Following the insertion of this next link, both cut ends were then hammered down again, so securing the two (and all subsequent) double link units together. Under magnification, marks of this hammering process can clearly be seen on every other link.

The terminals of the chain are fabricated from stout sheet. They are curved inwards and taper towards the ends. The ends are capped and terminate in standing double loops on both sides. Each terminal is decorated with applied triangles made of sheet and is ringed with two applied beaded wires.

A heavy, hammered hook is fitted through the end of one terminal while its opposing end is fitted with a receiving eyelet.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Bunker, E. C. and Latchford, A. J. *Khmer Gold Gifts for the Gods*. Chicago, 2008, p96, fig 5.18a



## EMERALD-SET FINGER RING

47

PRE-KHMER  
ca. 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SIZE: 33MM  
WEIGHT: 16.1g

The base of the solid gold ring was first cast, subsequently all details were chased in with great care by a highly skilled artisan using fine punches and chisels. It is possible that the oval setting, ringed by granulation, and set with an oval cabochon emerald in a rub-over setting, was made separately and brazed on to the platform between the shoulders.

The ring shows a hoop of u-shaped cross-section broadening to very elaborate shoulders richly enhanced with scrolls and chiseled pellets, and two outward facing, naturalistically modeled ducks.

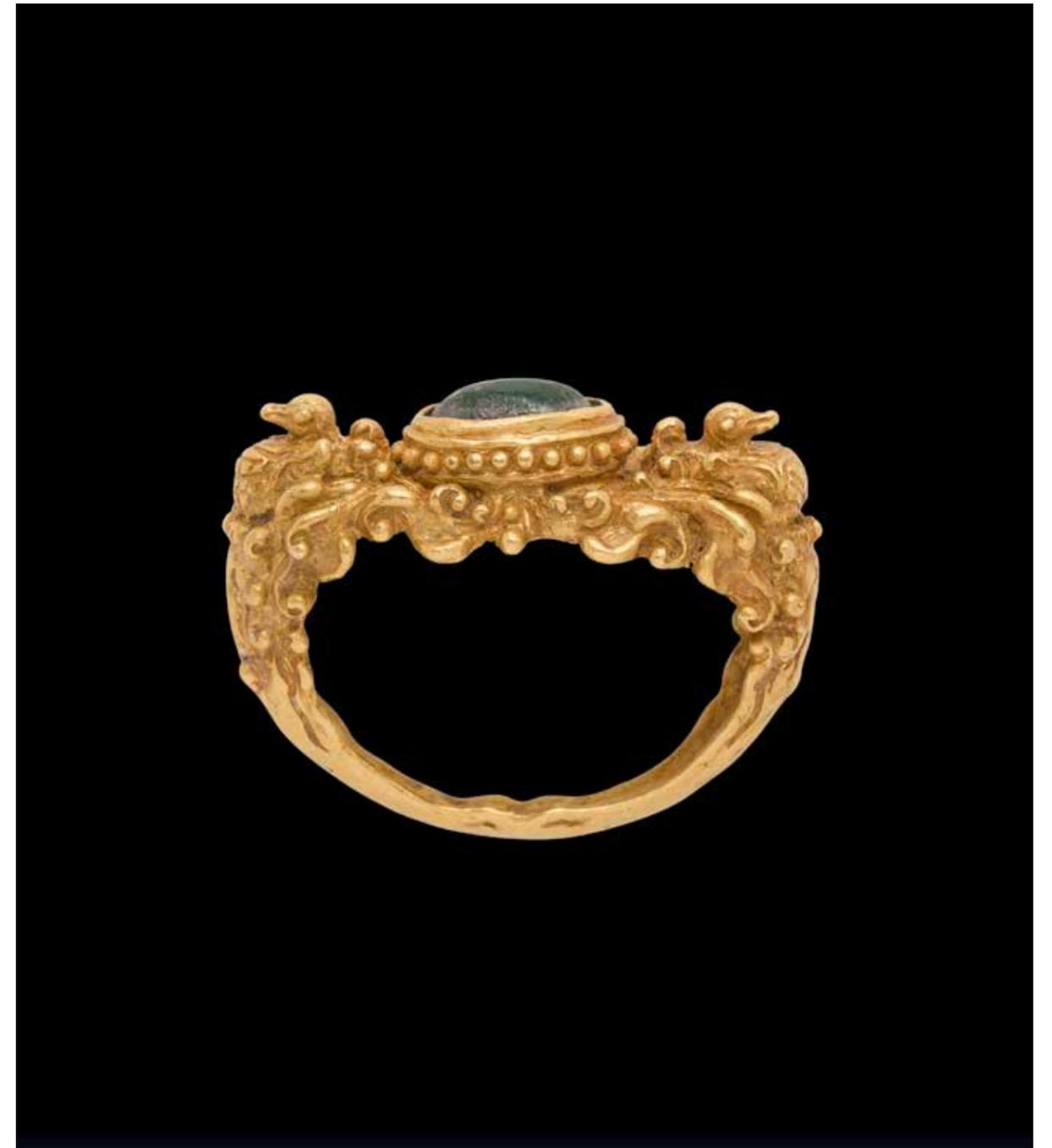
Ex private Thai Collection, since 1960s  
Acquired by a Hong Kong collector in the 1990s

**FOR THE TYPE, cf.**

Picron, C. B. "Jewels for a King." Part I, *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift*, vol. 14, 2014, pp42 – 56;  
Part II, vol. 15, pp41 – 57

**ALSO**

Content, D. J. *Ruby, Sapphire & Spinel: An Archaeological, Textual and Cultural Study*.  
Turnhout, 2016. vol. II: The Babar-Content Collection, pp86 – 7, no. 28



## GEM-SET PENDANT

48

NEWARI, NEPAL  
ca. 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
OR POSSIBLY EARLIER  
SIZE: BODY 34MM X 33MM,  
WITH PEARL DROPS, 60MM  
WEIGHT: 26g

The pear-shaped pendant is fabricated from sheet. It shows, within a raised, scalloped frame an intricate design showing the god Vishnu seated astride his mount, the mythical bird Garuda. The design is formed of many individual cloisons, each inlaid with a precisely cut-to-fit gemstone. The main features of the design — Vishnu and Garuda — are outlined in cells either topped or ringed by beaded standing wires while the field is filled with mostly flame-like cells in alternating green and red inlays. Though some of these inlays have disappeared, the overall design still retains most of its original color scheme.

Vishnu is shown, conventionally, with four arms, each holding one of the following attributes: the war discus in his upper right hand, the battle mace in his lower right, the sword in his upper left, all detailed in gold, and with the conch trumpet in white, to warn the wicked, in his lower left hand.

His body and limbs, though usually blue, are here detailed in turquoise. He is shown wearing a crown set with five pear-shaped turquoise jewels, as well as the dolphin or crocodile-shaped earrings that rest on the two garlands round his neck: the jeweled *Vaijayanti*, symbol of his triumph over demons, and the *Vanamala*, made of wild flowers, that symbolizes love which binds him to his devotees.

Garuda, here in his anthropomorphic form, is shown with outstretched open wings, curved above his outstretched arms — inlaid with red gems — finished with open hands detailed in gold, and with four large feathers below the arms.

In the *Rigveda*, the sun is compared to the Garuda bird in flight, thus its body is detailed in yellow, while its three-toed feet are formed of gold wire. They rest on seven irregularly-shaped cabochon gems along the base of the pendant, again in alternating red and green.

The base of the pendant is further enriched with sixteen pendent drops formed of three loop-in-loop links, ending in thin wires, each strung with three round pearls.



## COPPER-GILT EAR COVER

49

NEPAL OR, POSSIBLY, TIBET  
ca. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SIZE: 180MM  
WEIGHT: 167g

The single ear cover is chased, (employing repoussé technique) in copper sheet that — after the design had been completed — was fire-gilt using the mercury gilding process.

The design shows — centered in a circular medallion symbolizing the solar disc — the Creator of the Universe and Source of all Life, the Sun God, Surya.

The deity is shown standing in his chariot, two hands raised in front of his chest with open palms and facing front. He is shown from the knees up and is dressed in a belted tunic, he wears a long pearl necklace and a ribbed choker around his neck. His head sports a crown of five sections, while his long, extended earlobes, accented with long circular earrings, rest on his shoulders. There is a long loose shawl draped round his shoulders.

He is flanked by two male attendants — *Dandi* and *Pingala* — each holding flywhisks, dressed in belted tunics and long strands of pearls similar to those worn by Surya. Two large sprays of budding lotus flowers are shown between the attendants and the deity. Two smaller, bow-wielding female figures — *Usha* and *Pratyusha*, symbolizing the first ray of dawn and the last ray of dusk — are shown standing from the waist up, on each side of the chariot, and facing out. The chariot is steered by the seated figure of *Aruna*. He is holding reins of serpents to steer the team of seven horses — representing the seven *chakras* or, according to other traditions, the seven colors of the rainbow. The center horse is shown half kneeling and facing front and is flanked by six horses, three facing left and three facing right. All are shown with bent forelegs almost touching their chests.

The whole scene is bordered with raised, punched beads, and is set within a raised border resembling an open lotus flower, itself a symbol of enlightenment. The disc is stood on the upraised, open hands of a graceful nymph (*apsara*) floating among heavenly cloud bands that display a distinct Chinese influence.

For the type, as worn by a Nepalese lady in east Nepal, cf. Gabriel, H. *Jewelry of Nepal*. London, 1999, p150, fig. 233



## PAIR OF GOLD EARRINGS SET WITH CABOCHON RUBIES

50

NEPAL  
ca. EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
DIAMETER: 77MM  
WEIGHT: 55.4g

The large discoid earrings are made of a thin flat sheet bordered by a raised rim of v-shaped cross-section of which one side defines the front, the other the back of the earring.

There is a raised band of applied hollow decoration along the vertical axis, flanked and centered by three small cabochon rubies, possibly synthetic. The screw attachment for the earrings is attached to the back and is further reinforced through the front by a raised knob at 12 o'clock.

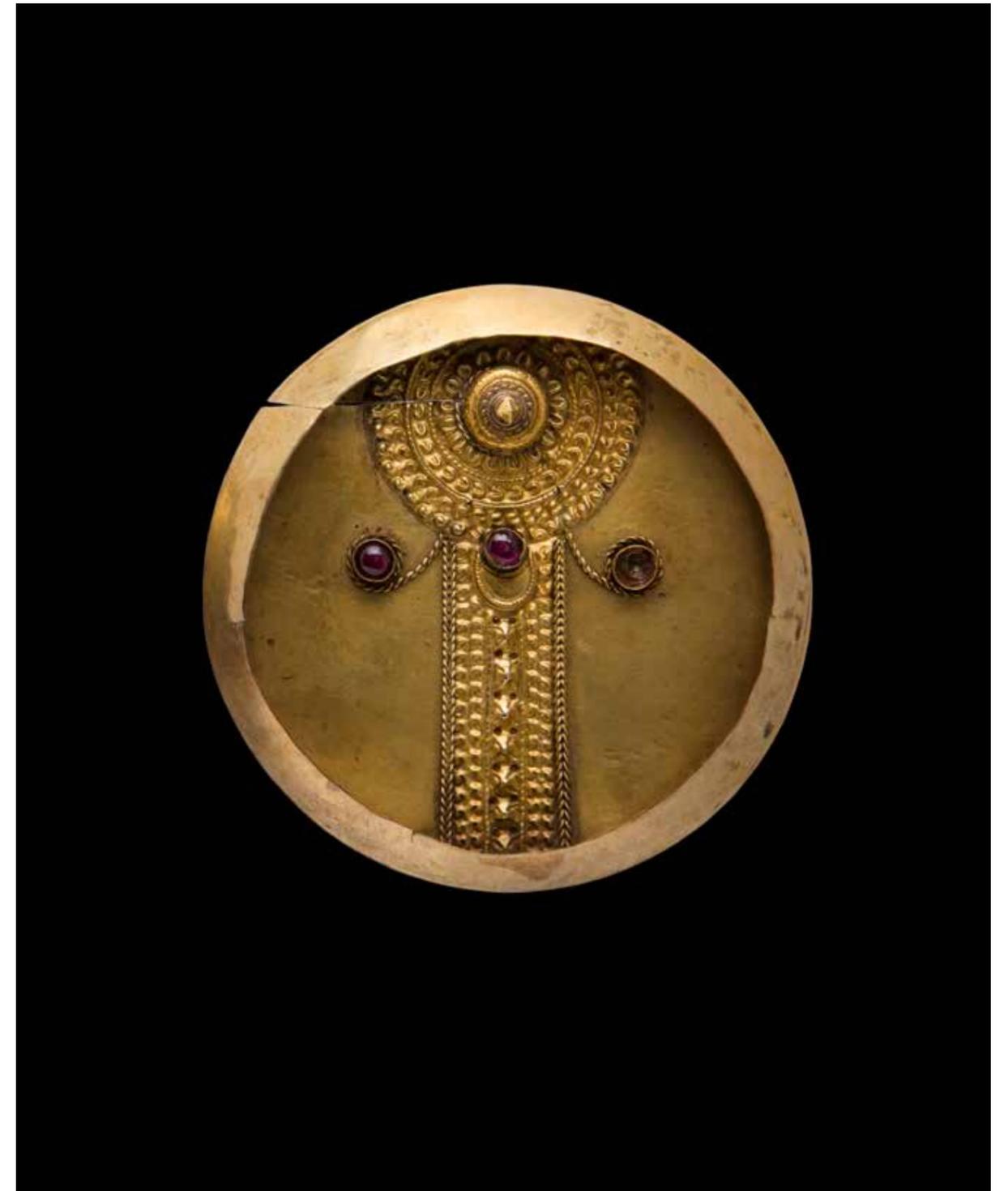
Earrings of this type are known to the hill tribes of Nepal as *Cheptisoon*.

FOR THE TYPE, cf.

Brijbhusan, J. *Masterpieces of Indian Jewellery*. Bombay, 1979, p. vii, pl.XXXII-2

ALSO

Ganguly, W. *Earring; Ornamental Identity and Beauty in India*. Delhi, 2007, p120 with illus.



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