

ORBIS PICTUS



Antique Jewellery

HALLWAG

ETIENNE COCHE DE LA FERTÉ

ANTIQUE JEWELLERY

FROM THE
SECOND TO THE EIGHTH CENTURY

TAPLINGER PUBLISHING CO. INC.
NEW YORK

Orbis Pictus

7

© 1962

Copyright Hallwag Ltd. Berne

Printed in Switzerland

INTRODUCTION

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” So says Saint Paul (I. Tim. 2, 9); and Saint John Chrysostomus, when instructing the neophytes of Antioch at the end of the fourth century, goes even further in discouraging women from coming to church loaded with jewels, adding: “The jewels and dresses with which a woman adorns herself may charm the one who wears them for a moment; but they wear off in time; indeed, even before time wears them out they excite the glances of the envious and invite the malefactors to lay hands on them.” (Baptismal Catechisms I, 35.) So the fear of thieves is supposed to be the beginning of all virtue. When looking through this book, we note that the preachers of the young Christian church were no more successful than the Roman moralists in preventing the women of Antioch, of Constantinople or of Rome from wearing sumptuous jewels in their hair, or on their ears, necks, bosoms and wrists. On the contrary, in open contradiction to the teachings of the preachers the jewellery of the early Christian era was decorated with more precious stones and pearls than the ornaments of the Roman matrons had ever had.

For the goldsmiths no longer set so much store by fine artistic workmanship on the precious metal itself, which had been the glory of the Etruscans and the Greeks of the Black Sea coasts, but obviously started along the lines which later were to lead to the attraction of medieval and modern jewellery: to set off the beauty of the precious stones and to abandon the ambitions of figurative art, so difficult to realize on the minute scale of the jewel, although a series of fine examples of this

type is still in existence. The piece of jewellery was to have a purely decorative effect, whether monochrome or coloured, solid or openwork (filigree), used purely as an ornament or as a charm, but—with a few exceptions—without any mythical or human figures whatever. This tendency is already apparent in the jewels of the late Roman period, which tend more and more to become objects of feminine luxury.

In this period of transformation in all the arts, at the end of Antiquity between the third and seventh century A. D., which has been called since Winkelmann, and recently also by Ferdinand Lot, “the total decadence of Antique art”, or—with even more disdain than the term would suggest—“the triumph of Barbarism”, we now try to see a new and different fertile phase of the arts, which—though it was still very vague—made possible the development of Christian art, laid the foundations of mediæval art and, at the same time, safeguarded the preservation of certain essential values of Antiquity. In this development of a new style, or rather of new styles, among which the Byzantine style was to last over a thousand years, the art of jewellery plays a part and even has an historical importance far greater than that usually attributed by historians to those small objects of luxury. The products of the goldsmith’s skill also reflect—as they have done at various periods in the course of the history of this craft—not only contemporary taste, but also the new tendencies in architecture. Perhaps they even precede them in certain aspects. The cuttings in gold in the technique of the “opus interrasile” no doubt reflect the ornaments cut in stone along the cornices of Syrian temples, but they also anticipate the geometrical cuttings in the Byzantine balustrades. The love for polychrome jewellery which dates back very far—it is obvious already at the beginning of the Hellenistic era on the coasts of the Chersonese—reflects the love of the

Romans for coloured statues; moreover, it opens new ways of experimenting in the field of coloured ornaments, which in the Byzantine period are to take the place of modelled sculptures. Among all the disorders of the periods that precede and follow the disappearance of the Western Empire, the art of jewellery was maintained at a very high level and was adopted by the Barbarians who gave it a new impulse, thus giving further proof of the continuity that exists, in spite of all appearances, between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. With regard to jewellery, Rome—the Rome of Hadrian and especially the Rome of Septimius Severus and Diocletian—was not the last epoch of the Antique civilizations (in a very wide sense), but the beginning of the Middle Ages. This remark was made more than thirty years ago by an historian of the goldsmith's art, Marc Rosenberg. Since the works of Riegl it has been known how much the Middle Ages owe to the Roman technique of *champlevé* enamelling which preceded the new technique of *cloisonné* enamelling, the exact date of which is still unknown, only by a very short time. It may have been used in Byzantium towards the sixth century, but proof is still lacking. There are a few ancient specimens at present in Italy. Besides, in the field of jewellery *Saria* is often a more fertile ground for research than Constantinople, where only very few pieces have been located. Syria, in whose museums so many unknown treasures are still hidden, and where most of the marvels of the De Clercq Collection come from, is a rich source of late pieces of jewellery.

Since Palmyra, perhaps inspired by India, encouraged the fashion of large multiple cabochons (high and round polished precious or semi-precious stones), Syrian jewellers seem to have played a decisive part in this sector, and even in that of small metal jewellery. The products of Constantinople were certainly brilliant, but

we must not underestimate the importance of the Orient and of South Russia, inhabited by the Sarmatians and soon to be invaded by the Goths, whose style and ornamental repertory, superimposed on the old Scythian forms, was to stimulate and influence ornamental art throughout Europe. During this transformation of Classical art into Medieval art a whole series of actions and reactions took place at the same time; thus, for instance, Barbarian art, already influenced by the Orient, stimulated the declining art of Western Rome and even of the Orient. It is, therefore, often difficult to describe regional styles or to define the origin of an unknown piece. In any case, in the sphere of jewellery we cannot speak of any decadence or technical decline. Rather it is a fertile search for new styles from which new works of art were to result, which the Romans could never have created by themselves. The polychrome style, for instance, which the Syrians were no doubt taught by the Hellespontians, reaches, thanks to them and to the Barbarians afterwards, that splendour which we admire in the Frankish fibulae and the Medieval reliquaries. In all these exchanges, interferences and evolutions, in which Rome plays a more and more restrained part, we must, all the same, not underestimate the importance of the Empire, through its economic organisation, which, although upset, is still in existence, its material, administrative, even psychological structures, certainly partially in ruins, but still existing and favourable to the widening of artistic influences. The fact that certain of these factors were missing, sometimes even contributed to the process of evolution by the process of compensation. The least that can be said is that the Empire in its final stages furnished a fine basis for new ventures. The techniques of jewellery, in a modest but by no means negligible way—contrary to the other arts—took advantage of the new circumstances. The

early Christian church was not able, nor did it really intend to impose an austerity which would have been deplorable for the decorative arts; and, if it contributed to the decline of mythological iconography, it was only because this had no longer any place in the new fashionable style. Besides, this renunciation was not made without regret. And did not the courageous history of early Christianity offer in exchange various attractive possibilities, where the type of jewellery-marriage-jewellery, sacramental and other rings—once again demanded the use of the subtle means of figurative representation?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- L'Art mérovingien, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire. Exposition, Bruxelles 1954.
- G. Beattti*: Oreficerie antiche dalle minoiche alle barbariche, Rom, 1955.
- B. Brentjes*: Les nécropoles d'Armasi (Mzcheta) in *Arts asiatiques* VI, 2, (1959).
- G. Bruns*: Schatzkammer der Antike, Berlin, 1946.
- E. Coche de la Ferté*: Les Bijoux antiques, Paris, 1956.
- E. Coche de la Ferté*: L'Antiquité chrétienne au Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1958.
- O.M. Dalton*: Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities in the British Museum, London 1901.
- The Dark Ages, exhibition of pagan and christian art... Worcester art Museum, 1937.
- W. Demison*: A gold Treasure of the late Roman period from Egypt, in *Studies in East Christian and roman art*, New York, 1918.
- W. Froebner*: Catalogue de la Collection Bearn, Paris, 1905.
- Early Christian and Byzantine art, an exhibition, Baltimore, 1947.
- T. Heurgon*: Le Trésor de Ténès, Paris, 1958.
- Jenny-Volbach*: Germanischer Schmuck des frühen Mittelalters, Berlin, 1933.
- F.H. Marshall*: Catalogue of the Jewelry in the British Museum, London, 1911.
- F.H. Marshall*: Catalogue of the Finger Rings in the British Museum, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, London, 1907.
- F.H. Marshall*: Catalogue of the Finger Rings in the British Museum, Early Christian, Mediaeval and later, London, 1912.
- W. M. Milliken*: Byzantine Jewelry and associated pieces, in *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, September 1947.
- R. Noll*: Vom Altertum zum Mittelalter, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, 1958.
- A. de Ridder*: Catalogue de la Collection de Clercq, VI, 1, Les Bijoux, Paris, 1911.
- A. de Ridder*: Musée du Louvre, Catalogue sommaire des Bijoux antiques, Paris, 1924.
- A. Riegel*: Die spätromische Kunstindustrie, 2 Bde., Wien, 1901-1923.
- M. Rosenberg*: Geschichte der Goldschmiedekunst auf technischer Grundlage, 4 Bde., Frankfurt a. Main, 1910-1925.
- M. Rostovtzeff*: Iranian and Greeks in South Russia, Oxford, 1922.
- M. Rostovtzeff*: Une trouvaille gréco-sarmate de Kertsch, *Monuments et Mémoires*, Fondation Piot, XXXVI.
- E. Salin*: La Civilisation mérovingienne, II, les Sépultures, Paris 1952.
- H. Schlunk*: Kunst der Spätantike im Mittelmeerraum, spätantike und byzantinische Kleinkunst aus Berliner Besitz, Ausstellung... Berlin, 1930.
- B. Segall*: Museum Benaki, Katalog der Goldschmiedearbeiten, Athen, 1938.
- H. Seyrig*: Antiquités de la Nécropole d'Emèse, in *Syria*, XXIX, 1952 und XXX, 1953. Collection Stathatos, Objets byzantins et post-byzantins, Limoges, 1957.
- R. Zahn*: Zur Sammlung F.L. von Gans, Amtliche Berichte aus d. Kgl. Kunstsammlungen, Berlin, XXXVIII, Oktober 1916.

PLATES

PLATE I

MEDALLION WITH CABOCHONS

*De Clercq Collection, Paris. Tortosa, Syria.
2nd-4th century A. D. Diameter 3.7 cm.*

A medallion decorated with eight cabochons (2 garnets, 2 cornelians, 4 sapphires); in the centre a cut sardonyx with a head of Apollo. Cable border round the circumference in repoussé and an indented filigree round the cut stone.

This type of medallion, which seems to have appeared towards the end of the Roman Empire in South Russia and in Syria, is of interest for its polychromatic style, applied as almost the only ornament, and for the fact that the Barbarian fibulae in disk-form were largely derived from it.



PLATE II

BRACELET

*De Clercq Collection, Paris. Yakhmour, Syria.
2nd-3rd century A.D. Diameter 7.1 cm*

Bracelet made of mounted gold leaf, pierced by cabochons with no other ornamentation. Fastening by means of hinges. The cuttings of the mount are in the shape of pelts (Amazon's shields) and falcon's heads. Similar motifs have existed since the 6th century B. C., at which period the Scythians introduced the head of the falcon (and of other birds of prey) into the repertory. H. Seyrig (Syria, XXIX, 1952, pg. 227ff.) compares this bracelet with another Syrian piece from the 1st century A. D., which has a certain similarity but no falcon's heads. These are said to be a reminiscence of the ancient culture of the Scythians, which was revived with the arrival of the Goths in South Russia from the 2nd to the 4th century and spread from there throughout the Gothic art of Europe. The recent excavations in Mzcheta in Georgia seem to indicate that from the 2nd century this region played a very important part in the elaboration of the polychromatic style. The bracelet of Yakhmour is evidence for the Gothic infiltration in Syria.



PECTORAL WITH SCARAB

Louvre, Paris. 3rd-4th century A. D.

Height of the medallion 6 cm

Chain consisting of elements of openwork (filigree) lozenges, interspaced by small globules with granulation and by emerald prisms. On the medallion, consisting of gold filigree tracery, a large scarab in black stone surrounded by emerald prisms, pale sapphires and pearls. It is a superb specimen of the "opus interrabile". The jewel was probably made in Italy, perhaps in Rome itself, where the use of the Egyptian scarab is not surprising, since there was a large import of products of that sort for the use of Roman customers.



TWO NECKLACES

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Syria (?). 4th century A. D.

1. Total length of the necklace 28 cm. Thirteen filigree gold plaques (one of which in the shape of a trapeze), each decorated with a cabochon: pearl, sapphire, emerald prism or chalcedony. It is not certain whether all the links belonged to the same chain; in that case it would appear to be incomplete.

2. Length of the individual plaques 2.5 cm. This necklace is similar but of more elaborate workmanship than the first; the plaques are of double thickness, connected by gold links. In the centre an empty cup-setting surrounded by sapphires and emerald prisms. The two end plaques in the shape of a trapeze.

The two jewels are no doubt of Syrian origin. However, it has to be considered that this type of jewel was widely known and has even been found in England. P. Schramm considers a similar specimen in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, as a head-band and compares it with the jewels worn by Theodora on the mosaic of San Vitale in Ravenna. Prototypes of this shape are found in Antiquity as necklaces or pectorals. The type was even known in England.



GOLD FIBULA WITH FILIGREE WORK

Louvre, Paris. Italy (?). About 400 A.D.

Length 6.5 cm

This fibula, belonging to the so-called arbalest type, is of special interest because of its long rectangular case, decorated by a cut gold plaque (*opus interrasile*). The jewel was used to fix the mantle on the shoulder. There are few examples known of decorated fibulae of such fine workmanship. The one that comes nearest to it has a cross left out in the network of filigree tracery and was found on the Palatine in Rome. It is possible that the specimen in the Louvre is of similar origin. Its ornamentation, consisting of nine fields with a pair of birds in each, is of charming originality and still shows traces of Roman naturalism in a technique that tends to become stereotyped.



WEDDING RING IN GOLD AND NIELLO

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Gebel, Syria. About 7th century

Engraved on the hoop the words from the Scriptures: "My peace I give unto you" (St. John 14, 27), which are frequent on wedding rings. The bezel is oval and shows three standing figures engraved and filled with niello of bluish black. The centre figure with the halo and cross represents Christ extending his arms towards the married couple in the benedictory gesture. In the field the word OMONIA, i. e. Concord. The ring probably originates from Constantinople.

RING WITH FIVE BEZELS

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Tortosa, Syria. About 4th-5th century

Flat ring shaped from a series of lozenges, ending in five, cups linked by granules and supporting the five rectangular bezels in which the garnets are set. This type illustrates how the polychromatic style of Antiquity has developed towards a new style which is to last, in a certain way, throughout the Middle Ages.

INTAGLIO WITH THE GOOD SHEPHERD

De Clercq Collection, Paris. 3rd-4th century

The hoop is hollow. The cornelian on the bezel is engraved with the picture of the Good Shepherd with the Lamb on his shoulders. He is dressed in a short tunic and boots. This is the paleochristian representation of Christ, so frequent in catacombs and on sarcophagi and also found on cameos. Thus the jewel must have been made between the end of the third and the fourth century. Several rings of this type are in the British Museum and the Museum of Ravenna.

RING WITH ENGRAVED ANCHOR

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Kalaat el Markab, Syria. 3rd century

Hoop of solid gold, cut and ornamented with shields of a type common since the 3rd century. Bezel of polished gold, on which is engraved with less skill an anchor, the paleochristian symbol of the Cross particularly frequent in the 3rd century. This motif is found on several rings of the same collection and in the British Museum and the Museum of Ravenna. The same shape of ring also exists with Pagan themes on cameos and intaglios; it is typical of the late Roman period.



EAR-RING WITH PENDANTS

Louvre, Paris. About 6th century. Length with pendants 5 cm

Plaque decorated with nine cabochons of green glass-paste and one red cabochon; pendants of baroque pearls. Characteristic example of the preference for cabochons towards the High Middle Ages, even to the exclusion of artistic workmanship on the metal itself. Theodora, in the mosaic in San Vitale in Ravenna, wears similar ear-rings, though of different shape. The museum of Istambul has a pair which is almost identical. It is difficult to say whether the rings of the Louvre originate from Italy or the Byzantine Orient. Both origins are likely, the Orient more so, because a very similar form is attested there.



PECTORAL OF JUSTINIAN, WITH CHAIN

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Beirut. 4th century
Diameter of the medallion 7.6 cm

Very fine medallion with filigree edge on opaque ground reminiscent of the "opus interrasile" but of quite a different technique. It uses the same elements as the architecture of the period, particularly for balustrades. The side not reproduced here shows the bust of Justinian with name and insignia of the emperor. The side reproduced represents the emperor standing, with the inscription: "Securitas Reipublicae", an inscription found on various coins of the period. Hinge to hang the medallion from a chain. Several medallions of Justinian and various other emperors of the late Empire are known; they were distributed by the sovereigns as gifts and for propaganda purposes. Others were coined on the occasion of a Consul's taking office.



EAR-RING WITH ENAMEL ORNAMENTATION

Lowre, Paris. About 4th century. Length 5.5 cm

The jewel tapers slightly towards the end, which takes the form of a hook and is decorated in front with five cup-settings. From it is suspended the cut disk, surrounded by thick twisted filigree work. The fields of the front and the back side represent motifs of plants and triple leaves and are filled with a fine red and green glass-enamel, an example of the Hellenistic technique of wire enamelling by means of a brush. But here the coloured fields are bordered by narrow bands of gold (cloisons), a forerunner of the technique of cloisonné enamelling. The technique is still very imperfect, the enamel being too thin and of poor consistence.

EAR-RINGS WITH INLAID GARNETS

*Lowre, Paris. Kertsch, South Russia. 3rd-4th century
Length 3.4 cm*

Garnets surrounded by thick twisted filigree and two empty cup-settings. The garnets are very wide-spread in the Orient, the mines of Asia Minor being rich in them. They are the stones used most in polychromatic jewelry. The form reproduced belongs to the transitional style between Roman and Ostrogothic.

OSTROGOTHIC EAR-RINGS

*Lowre, Paris. Kertsch, South Russia. About 4th century
Length 7 cm*

Triangular plaque connected by hinges to a smaller plaque ending in a hook. Four cup-settings with red and blue glass-paste surrounded by a border of pseudo-granulation. The form is of Gothic origin and was no doubt introduced into Graeco-Roman Russia by the Goths, who followed the Sarmatians towards the end of the third century A. D. South Russia, colonised by the Greeks, was a centre of a refined, though very mixed culture (Hellenistic, Scythian, Roman, Sarmatian and Gothic), where the jeweller's art was developed to an incomparably high degree. The preference for coloured stones, which was very pronounced, spread from there to the whole Classical Orient. These ear-rings are already no longer in the Classical technique.

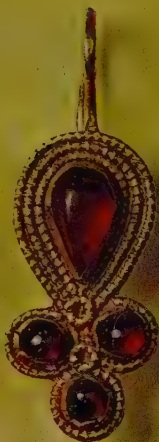


PLATE X

PECTORAL WITH CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL

De Clercq Collection, Paris. About 6th century

Diameter 5,9 cm

The gold border is in the Roman style of the third century A. D. It is soldered around a double-faced gold plaque of cloisonné work, on which are represented on one side an eye—a charm against the evil eye—and a bird (not reproduced). On the side of the eye are concentric squares, spirals and pyramids. The ornamentation is of completely vitrified enamel and therefore of special interest: it is certainly one of the oldest examples in existence of the technique of cloisonné enamelling at the height of its perfection. Its origin, unfortunately, is unknown; the date is equally uncertain, since the whole question of the beginnings of cloisonné enamel is still unsettled.



WEDDING BELT

*De Clercq Collection, Paris. Syria. 6th-7th century. Total length
74 cm. Diameter of the centre medallion 4.5 cm*

Twenty disks (several are probably missing) are linked by joints and form a belt, fastened by two large medallions. On the disks are represented alternatively a bust of Tyche or Fortuna with turreted crown and Bacchantes, borrowed from the mythological repertory still in use in the Christian era. On the large medallions, Christ blessing the married couple and an inscription in Greek: "The grace of God, pledge of good health to him (or her) who wears (this belt)." The whole relief was undoubtedly beaten over moulds. The Museum of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington has a similar wedding belt. It is supposed that the bride received it on her wedding day. Similar belts, but without nuptial character, are worn e.g. by the Virgins in the procession of the Martyrs in the mosaic of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.



EAR-RINGS WITH FILIGREE TRACERY

Louvre, Paris. Syria or Egypt. 6th-8th century (?)

Diameter 5.5 cm

These large ear-rings, reminiscent by their circular shape of the ear-rings of Egypt and the Ancient Orient, consist of hollow tubes, linked by a band of filigree tracery and pseudo-granulation, with a silver thread holding a fine pearl. A small number of ear-rings of this type is to be found exclusively in the museums of Egypt and Syria. Similar ear-rings were also made in silver. Others are of more elaborate construction, but they have never been found in archaeological contexts before the sixth century. Their age is difficult to define; they seem to be of rather late origin.



PECTORAL REPRESENTING AN EMPEROR
IN A TRIUMPHAL CHARIOT

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Kalaat el Markab, Syria
About 6th century. Diameter 5.5 cm

Thin gold plaque in repoussé, bordered by large granulation, with eyes for hanging (perhaps from a necklace). An emperor triumphant (on his left hand a standing Victory) is represented, in a chariot pulled by six horses, seen from the front and enlarged at the sides according to the conventions of the rather unrealistic perspective of the Byzantine era. In the fields the sign of Christ and a Victory. It is no doubt one of those medallions given by the emperors as signs of favour (hence their name "liberalitas"); such medals are known with the picture of Justinian, Tiberius II and others. The one reproduced has been ascribed without much proof to Justinian II. The style is certainly rather naive, as it is also on the coins of that time. This specimen is of interest as much for its rarity as for the figure it represents.



EAR PENDANT WITH FILIGREE TRACERY

De Clercq Collection, Paris. 6th-7th century.

Length 6 cm

The shape of these pendants derives from the Antique type of water-hose, which was also the origin of the crescent in Moslem jewelry. On the piece of the De Clercq Collection the evolution is so advanced that it approaches the Islamic type. The decorative leaf-tracery is strictly geometrical. Fine metal openwork, little known in Antiquity, became widely used towards the High Middle Ages in the Orient, where it succeeded the *opus interrasile*. Islam adopted it and the specimen reproduced here might be either of Moslem or of Byzantine origin.



GOLD BRACELET IN REPOUSSÉ

De Clercq Collection, Paris. About 8th century

Diameter 7.3 cm

Hollow bracelet beaten in gold leaf with repoussé decoration and triangular clasps with arabesque decoration in filigree work. The style of the ornamentation shows Moslem influence. In the divided fields of the hoop are busts of women-musicians in Barbarian style, holding alternatively a tympanon, rattles and a cithern. This is undoubtedly a reminiscence of the Pagan motif of the Bacchantes. The form of the clasp is late and remains, with modifications, similar until the High Middle Ages. It is probable that the bracelet originated from a Moslem workshop in Syria. The art of the Omai-jades, for instance, was still under the strong influence of Antiquity, and, like Islamic art, it kept certain subjects and figured scenes of a classical nature. They are found, e.g. also on the ceiling of the chapel in the palace of Palermo, a work of Moslem art, where there are musicians similar to those represented on the bracelet.



CROSS-PENDANT

*De Clercq Collection, Paris. Gebel, Syria. 5th-6th century
Height 3.2 cm*

Hollow cross in gold leaf, the arms of which are in the shape of paws and decorated with plaited filigree and granulation. In the centre a garnet. On the reverse side two vertical inscriptions in filigree: Θως (light) and Ζωη (life). Eye, for hanging the jewel from a chain.

It is an amulet-cross, as worn by Christian women since the 4th century; its use became more and more widespread and in time it replaced the Pagan charms. On a small reliquary in Pola there is a cross surrounded by a plaited chain of filigree (not filled-in as in the cross above), which is of similar workmanship and also of Oriental origin like the one reproduced, which comes from Syria.

EAGLE-PENDANT

De Clercq Collection, Paris. 5th-7th century. Height 4 cm

An eagle worked completely in filigree of double thickness. A sapphire fastened to it by means of hook and eye, and other eyes round the jewel, which must have hung from a chain. The very fine workmanship in filigree tracery is remarkable in contrast with the style, which is derived from the animal-style of the Sarmatians. The specimen was no doubt made in a workshop of the Byzantine Orient. Similar jewels with ornamentation in filigree-work are to be found in Visigothic art. There the bird-motif often appears in jewelry, but more often with filled-in, coloured enamelling than with open-work tracery as here.



EAR-RINGS WITH
ENAMEL ORNAMENTATION

*De Clercq Collection, Paris. Lombardian style. 6th-7th century.
Total length 7 cm*

The hoops are ornamented with beaded wire and globules. The pendant, fastened to the hoop by means of a hinge, is a half-sphere, decorated on the outside with meanders and circles in filigree and on the flat inside with concentric circles in granulation and twisted and plaited filigree chains. In the centre there is a plaque of polished gold of a lighter colour than the rest, in which are cut falcons, which must originally have been filled with enamel or incrustation; a little of the white paste remains. At the bottom a ring fastened by a hinge. The general shape is of Lombard style; it is the same as of numerous ear-rings found in Italy. The falcons derive from the art of the steppe, that is, they are of Oriental origin. But from there they spread to the Barbarian art of Europe and are frequently found in Frankish, but also in Ostrogothic and Visigothic art.

To judge from their shape, the rings would seem to be of Italian origin. The enamel mosaic may have been made separately. The type of this jewel shows, at the same time, Roman and Byzantine traditions and Barbarian and Oriental influence.



LARGE FIBULA IN THE SHAPE
OF AN EAGLE

De Clercq Collection, Paris. Italo-Gothic art. 5th century
Height 12.3 cm

A superb fibula, consisting of a gold plaque and thick cloisonné work with inlaid garnets. The eye is made of white glass-paste with a small garnet in the centre. On the body of the bird, a circle in relief containing a cross. The pin is at the back and is still in perfect working order. This form of eagle with spread wings disappears in the fifth century and its place is taken by the more sturdy birds of the Frankish and Lombard fibulae. The origin of this jewel is in South Russia, in Gothico-Sarmatian art. An exact double was found in Cesena (Italy) and is in the Germanisches Museum in Nuremberg. Similar pieces are in the Musée de Cluny, the Walters Art Gallery, etc.



PLATE XIX

BUCKLE

*De Clercq Collection, Paris. Hungary (?). 5th century.
Length 7.3 cm*

The whole is made of solid gold. The plaque is of cloisonné work with incrustations of red stones. The buckle is engraved and encrusted; it ends in two heads of wild beasts; a third head, with open jaws and carefully chiselled teeth, forms the outer end of the hook. The mixture of incrustations and plastic composition gives this buckle an Oriental character and it may be classified among the products of Gothico-Sarmatian art. Hungary may be considered as the place of origin, since such heads of wild beasts with encrusted garnets are typical of Hungary and Central Europe.

DISK-SHAPE FIBULA

*Ganay Collection, Paris. Found in Witernesse near Saint-Omer
5th-6th century. Merovingian art. Diameter 3.8 cm*

Two round fibulae with cloisonné work enclosing red glass enamelling. Characteristic style of the Merovingian goldsmith's art as, represented by the treasure of the tomb of Childeric I. († 482). The cells form a quadrilobe in the centre and at the edge four motifs reminiscent of the cross. This type of ornamentation was taken over by the Lombards.



Orbis Pictus

- 1 THE RAVENNA MOSAICS
- 2 THE STAINED GLASS AT CHARTRES
- 3 THE ISENHEIM ALTAR
- 4 POMPEIAN WALL PAINTINGS
- 5 HOLY ICONS
- 6 THE NATIVITY
- 7 ANTIQUE JEWELLERY
- 8 CATALONIAN PAINTINGS

2004

Book # 0 AT

- 11 - 2 AT (under 160000)

10

P7-BOU-352

