

— ANCIENT JEWELLERY IN EUROPE

As some of our clients may know, Llyn just returned from a trip to Europe. While he went primarily for rest and recreation (and of course to enjoy the food and wine!) he did find time to see collections of antique and ancient jewellery and objects. Following is an account of some of the highlights:

The archaeological museum in Frankfurt, Germany had a huge exhibit of gold objects found in Hungary in recent excavations. Most of these were made by the Scythians, a nomadic Persian tribe who wandered central Europe almost 2600 years ago. The jewellery consisted of two distinct styles: Bracelets, earrings and neckpiece (torques) made from heavy forged gold bars, terminated with more delicate spiraled finials. The other technique used beaten gold foil, perhaps as thick as a piece of paper with fabulous designs repoussé and chased (impressed in relief into the gold with



Lion head finial on Scythian gold bracelet

small hammers and chisels) into the metal. They also used stone and clay dies to form gold foil into repeated motifs for

use in neckpiece and belts. The delicacy and vitality in the designs by these ancient goldsmiths is amazing. There are strong similarities between the Scythian jewels and the later Mycenaean and other Mediterranean work that clearly shows that there was cross pollination of jewellery design even in millennia long past.

The museums in Athens and Iraklion, on the island of Crete house, among their many treasures, stunning collections of gold jewellery and tableware dating back as far as 4000

years. The ancient Minoans pioneered the delicate art of granulation as illustrated in the

Minoan granulated bee pendant



famous pendant depicting two honeybees holding a seed cake (c. 17th cent. BC). Granulation is a method of applying minute ($\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of a millimeter

diameter) spheres to an object without using solder. The Romans were still using the process but by modern times this method was lost, and not re-discovered until the 20th century. Ancient Mycenaean (c. 16th cent. BC) gold-workers crafted the well-known repoussé gold death masks as well as belts, necklaces, earrings and goblets of gold. The designs range from detailed scenes of the daily life of the court to beautiful floral motifs and abstract coils and geometric patterns. Ancient gem-cutters were also well represented by the hundreds of carved seal stones. In size, they are approximately 1-2 cm across and in this minute palette the quality of the engraving and the amount of detail achieved is astounding. With no access to magnification, they carved graceful animals, both real and mythical, portraits of people and also abstract designs.

In Switzerland we visited the ancient Abbey of St. Maurice at Agaunum, a few kilometers south of Montreux near



gold death mask from Mycenae

Lake Geneva, at a narrow entrance to the Upper Rhone Valley. The site of earlier settlements, the Romans established an imperial outpost here

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Thursday December 2 & Friday December 3, 1999

6:00-9:00 p.m.

JEWELLERY IN EUROPE con't...

sometime in the 1st century AD. In the 2nd or 3rd century, the pagan Emperor Maximian killed the Christian members of a Roman legion stationed here. The Abbey was founded in the memory of the soldiers' leader: St. Maurice. An important sacred and strategic site, the abbey was the recipient of numerous precious objects, the gifts of kings and princes. As well as ecclesiastical jewellery there are a number of objects in gold,



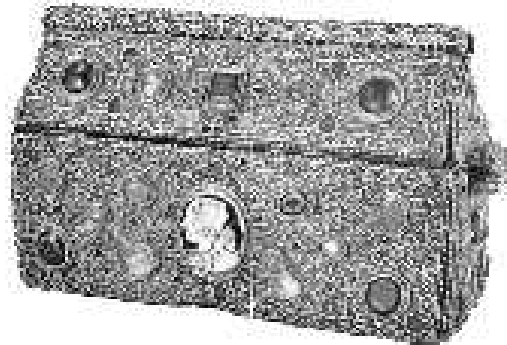
silver and gemstones dating back as far as the 1st century AD. The golden jug (at left) decorated with enamels and cabochon sapphires was given by the Emperor Charlemagne. In the Abbey, unlike a museum, these objects are still venerated and used in the services of the monks of the abbey. The picture above shows an early Roman carved vase (c. 1-200



AD) in sardonyx (a form of agate with bands of colour) with a later, 7th century, gold, cloisonné and gemstone mounting.

The small gold box below (approximately 8 inches long) was originally the reliquary for some of the remains of St. Maurice. The fine gold netting and rich encrustation with pearls and ancient gems is a stunning example of medieval metalwork.

Seeing these ancient pieces was a very humbling experience for a modern jeweller. On the eve of a new millennium, with all our modern technology, computer-aided design and laser engraving and welding machines we can not surpass the sheer beauty and opulence of metalwork created in the last 4000 years.



What's new at Jewels By Design!

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere THANK-YOU to all of our clients for helping Jewels By Design to reach this anniversary. It would have been impossible to do it without you, our loyal clients. It is hard to believe, but 1999 marks the **15th year** since the founding of Jewels By Design. After working for Meiko Jewellery Ltd. (A wholesale manufacturer also providing repair services to the trade) for 5 years, my employers were ready to move on so, as the cliché goes, I liked it so much I bought the company! While I maintained the wholesale component of the business for a few years, my true love is custom design so it didn't take long until that part of our business took over from the manufacturing. For the first 3 years we remained in the original location in the industrial south-east of the city. When that lease expired we were able to make the move to 616 17 Avenue and 3 years later to our present location. The future



Vertigo front



Vertigo back

looks bright as Calgary moves into the next millennium and we look forward to continuing to provide an ever-increasing level of fine jewellery design and our usual high level of service.

We will be launching a new line of watches to our stock for Christmas. After much searching we have chosen the St. Moritz line. These fine timepieces are made in Switzerland, and include a wide range of styles and models from sporty titanium to elegant 18K gold. Some are mechanical movements with automatic winding actions and others are modern quartz movements with batteries that can last 10 years! There is even the fluid-filled *Hyperbar* diving watch tested down to 39,000 feet. Shown at left is the *Vertigo* model, a stainless steel case, with the precision movement visible through a sapphire crystal exhibition back. We are sure you will find a model that will suit your lifestyle and enjoy this new addition to our stock.