

INO NICOLAOU

**THE JEWELLERY OF CYPRUS FROM NEOLITHIC
TO ROMAN TIMES
(PLATES XXIII-XXXIII)**

The *JEWELLERY* is one of the oldest decorative arts which derived from man's attraction to intrinsically beautiful materials, from his wish to beautify his body and possibly from the superstition that they reinforce human powers and human charm and that they have protective or magic qualities.

The pieces of jewellery in the Museums of Cyprus are archaeological remains acquainting us in a *post mortem* context with the wearers, and with the art and fashions of their time.

In Cyprus already in the *NEOLITHIC PERIOD* (7000 - 3900 BC) we have evidence for the fashion of personal adornment, such as necklaces with dentalium shells and beads of cornelian from Khirokitia (pl. XXIIIa), as well as amulets of picrolite found at Khirokitia and Sotira. The same tradition continues in the *CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD* (3900-2500 BC), a period of artistic inspiration and dynamism. To this period are dated necklaces with dentalium shells and human and animal-figured picrolite pendants from Souskiou in the Paphos District (pl. XXIIIb) and a picrolite amulet from Erimi. In the *EARLY BRONZE AGE* (2500-1900 BC) Cyprus witnessed the arrival of foreign cultural elements from western Anatolia. Ensuing developments together with the subsequent acquaintance of the Cypriots with the techniques of exploiting the copper resources brought Cyprus to the foreground as a trading centre. Already at the outset of the Early Bronze Age gold ornaments appear for the first time in the island, a kind of hair-ring found at Sotira "Kaminoudkia" (pl. XXIIIc). A more evolved type of this ornament in gold, silver and bronze was found in tombs at Lapithos dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the *MIDDLE BRONZE AGE* (1900-1650 BC) (pl. XXIIIId). To this transitional period is dated a necklace with stone beads from Lapithos (pl. XXIVa).

The increase in metallurgical activities during the *LATE BRONZE AGE* (1650-1050 BC) and the flourishing copper trade brought wealth and prosperity to the island. Cyprus became a place of commercial and cultural exchange between East (Syria, Palestine, Egypt) and West (the Greek mainland and the Greek islands). What influenced the civilization of Cyprus even more in all its aspects was the influx in successive waves (1400-1200 BC) of Mycenaean settlers, who introduced their language, culture and their arts and crafts. The artistic development of the island was greatly influenced by the new concepts, methods and techniques of these newcomers. This is demonstrated by objects in gold and silver found in the excavations of towns which were founded in this period: Enkomi, Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke, Palaepaphos and other centres, such as Kalavassos, Maroni, Alassa, Pyla, Maa.

The jewellery of this period shows the skill of the Cypriot craftsman and goldsmith in combining Aegean elements with oriental and local traditions. Frontlets (pl. XXIVb), diadems, mouthpieces, even rings (pl. XXIVc), of oriental form are decorated with embossed or stamped motifs of Aegean origin: figure of eight shaped shields, spirals, rosettes, sphinxes as well as bulls or bull's heads, a Cypro-Aegean inspiration. There is the elongated boat-shaped (pl. XXVa) ear-ring of oriental origin, the crescent-shaped ear-ring with overlapping ends simple (pl. XXVb) or with a pendant of globules below, a mixture of Near Eastern and Cretan elements, the ear-ring in the shape of a bull's head, a Cypriot invention (pl. XXVc-d).

In the jewellery of this period there are excellent examples of granulated decoration: on the gold pendant in the shape of a pomegranate from Enkomi (pl. XXVIa) and on jewellery found in tombs at Kalavassos (pl. XXVIb), Kouklia "Evreti" and in the Hala Sultan Tekke hoard. The

superb sceptre found at Kourion, surmounted by a globe and a pair of hawks decorated with cloisonné enamelling, as well as the rings from the Kouklia "Evreti" tomb (pl. XXVIc), are the finest examples of this new decorative technique. A master silversmith must have worked the silver bowl decorated with a frieze in gold and niello of bucrania, rosettes and lotus flowers found in a tomb at Enkomi.

In the *GEOMETRIC PERIOD* (1050-750 BC) which follows the Late Bronze Age most of the old established settlements were abandoned and new ones were established either in the vicinity, like Salamis close to Enkomi, or on their ruins as at Kition, or again new sites were chosen, as at Amathus and Polis. All these centres were later to develop into City-Kingdoms.

In every aspect of Cypriot culture of this period including jewellery production the continuity from the earlier traditions is evident with the fusion of Cypriot, Mycenaean and Near Eastern features. The ear-ring with pendants of globules "mulberry type" (pl. XXVIId) and the crescent-shaped type as well as pins and fibulae (pl. XXVIe) continue and evolve in the Geometric period. The practice of decorating furniture and clothing with gold mountings carries on from the previous period. Gold mountings with perforated edges were sewn onto clothes, unperforated mountings with embossed multi-petalled rosettes were probably stuck on perishable material.

The square gold mounting plaques with embossed heads or the figure of a nude goddess found in a tomb at Lapithos around the skull of a female skeleton suggest that they formed part of a head-dress. They were strengthened with bronze wire through their folded edges and were then sewn onto other material, as suggested the perforations at each corner. The largest examples found so far in Cyprus are the gold rectangular plaques discovered in a tomb at Kouklia "Skales" (pl. XXVIIa). They are decorated with an embossed female figure holding flowers and wearing a long dress and a flat polos divided into rectangles.

In the *ARCHAIC PERIOD* (750-475 BC) Cyprus became subject to Assyria and to Egypt. This new political status, which must have strengthened the activities of the Phoenician traders, brought more oriental influences into Cypriot culture. Noticeable is the transformation of the traditional form of jewellery. Oriental motifs such as volutes, lotus, guilloches and winged figures, are introduced. These may be seen on head bands such as the one from Yialia in Paphos District which consists of small square plaques of electrum with the embossed upper body of a winged nude goddess, lotus and volutes (pl. XXVIIb). Necklaces and long pendants and triangular embossed frontlets (pl. XXVIIc) became very fashionable and are elaborately worked. The necklaces consist of gold beads and pendants as well of stone beads such as chalcedony and cornelian or rock crystal (pl. XXVIId). The traditional biconical bead continues and granulated decoration still appears but incorporates oriental and Egyptian elements. A good example is the magnificent necklace found in 1917 in the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Arsos (Larnaca District). On the cylindrical pendant of agate are seen a bee and two uraei bearing the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. Identical necklaces occur on stone statues of this period (pl. XXVIIa).

In the *CLASSICAL PERIOD* (475-325 BC) Cyprus was under the Persian yoke. The support by the Cypriot Kings for the revolt by the Greek cities of Ionia against Persia and the Persian wars which followed, brought Cyprus more within the Greek horizon. Commercial and cultural relations with the Ionian cities, with Athens and the Greek islands became closer and culminated at the time of king Evagoras of Salamis (411-374 BC). Hellenic influence thus became predominant in the arts and crafts of the island.

New forms and types of ornament and new techniques are now added to the repertoire of the Cypriot goldsmith though earlier Cypriot techniques and forms also revive. The filigree decoration technique almost completely replaces the traditional granulated decoration of ornaments. The traditional technique of gold-plating reappears. In order to economize on the gold, the goldsmith

plated it on a bronze core, as we see on the spiral hair-rings (pl. XXVIIIb) on bracelets and on gold-plated studs, with embossed rosettes (pl. XXVIIIc) and winged figures.

The spiral hair-rings, occurring already in the Early Bronze Age, become more elaborate and are decorated with filigree work and human or animal heads (see pl. XXVIIIb above). The traditional triangular frontlets, are now decorated with stamped designs of Greek origin: palmettes, ivy-leaves, spirals and the swivel ring, known already in the late Bronze Age, reappear (pl. XXIXa,b). Completely new forms of jewellery of Greek origin are introduced: the ear-rings with animal-headed finials (pl. XXIXc) and the bracelets ending in head of snakes, rams (pl. XXIXd), bulls and calves. However, the traditional type of band-shaped ribbed bracelet, such as the Late Bronze Age bracelets from Kouklia "Evreti", is still popular but is decorated with new motifs as on the bracelets from the treasure of Vouni.

Silver becomes more abundant in this period. The silver treasure found at Vouni (pl. XXXd) attests the great ability of the silversmiths which matches that of the silversmiths of the Archaic period who produced the patera from Tamassos and the bulls from Kourion. Vouni and Marion (Polis) are the main sources of jewellery of this period.

The *HELLENISTIC PERIOD* (325-50 BC) coincides with the time of Alexander the Great and the struggles of his successors which resulted in the final annexation of Cyprus to the Ptolemies of Egypt.

The predominance of Hellenic influences on Cypriot jewellery continued. The traditional forms, however, are gradually replaced by new types, new decorative motifs and new techniques, this time coming from Alexandria, the Hellenistic centre *par excellence*. The traditional type of ear-ring still persists but is transformed. The hook, threaded with multi-coloured beads or twisted, has one finial decorated with beads of dolphins (pl. XXXb), swans, goats (pl. XXXc) or a figure of the young Bacchus. New types also appear, the simple pendant suspended from the ear by a hook or wire, the simple hoop of wire with the fastening concealed behind a ball, disc, rosette or a figure of cupid (pl. XXXIa), ear-rings with hoop of wire and pendants in the form of clusters of grapes. The ancient techniques of filigree and granulation are now combined with the new methods of inserting coloured beads of precious stones or glass. Precious stones, plain or engraved, are also set in the bezels of finger-rings (pl. XXXIb). The bracelets of plain twisted wire with ends fastened with a pin (pl. XXXIc) are reminiscent of the bracelets of the classical period with decorated beaded twisted wire. The finger-rings in the shape of spiralled snakes (pl. XXXId) must also have their prototypes in the spiralled snake-shaped bracelets of that period. The necklace as such becomes simpler, it has the form of plain or rope-like chain terminating in human or animal's heads (pl. XXXIIa), sometime decorated with precious stones, or the Herakles-knot, a type also occurring on the finger-rings of this period.

In the jewellery of the *ROMAN PERIOD* (50 BC-395 AD), which coincides with the Roman occupation of Cyprus, the Hellenistic tradition continued but faded gradually in favour of new types and forms of inferior styles, which became common in all parts of the Roman Empire.

The type of gold frontlet stamped with palmettes and scrolls (pl. XXXIIb) as well as the wreaths decorated with laurel leaves-funerary gifts deposited in tombs-follow the Hellenistic tradition whereas, the myrtle-leaf wreath (pl. XXXIIc), becomes more common in this period. The elaborate traditional form of ear-ring becomes simpler. More in fashion is the plain hook ear-ring on which is attached a disc with a precious stone or glass-paste setting. Some also have pendants of chain or fine wire terminating in gold balls (pl. XXXIIId), pearls or glass paste beads. The flat crescent-shaped, plain or decorated ear-ring and the ball-shaped type (pl. XXXIIIa) are also popular. The form of finger-ring is simple: a plain hoop, with a plain or engraved bezel of gold or precious stone. On some of them the temple of Aphrodite is engraved (pl. XXXIIIb). The twisted wire

type of bracelet with hook-and-eye fastening as well as the chain necklace still persist but now the decorated type with glass or precious stone beads alternating with gold links, is introduced (pl. XXXIIIc). These sometimes bear pendants with "gnostic stones" (pl. XXXIIIId) which were inscribed with magical inscriptions and engraved with figures of snakes or demons, meant to have apotropaic effect on the wearer. This shows how superstitious the people of that time were.

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Οι πολιτικές συγκυρίες και οι εμπορικές συναλλαγές που γνώρισε η Κύπρος στη μακραίωνη ιστορία της επηρέασαν την εξέλιξη της μορφής του κοσμήματος, όπως και της τέχνης της γενικότερα.

Έτσι από τη Πρώτη Εποχή του Χαλκού (2500-1900 π.Χ.) ως την Αρχαϊκή Περίοδο (750-475 π.Χ.) ανατολικά, μυκηναϊκά και αιγαιακά στοιχεία επηρέασαν κάθε τύπο του κυπριακού κοσμήματος. Ο Κύπριος χρυσοχόος όμως έχει την ικανότητα να παντρεύει αρμονικά τα διάφορα αυτά στοιχεία με τα τοπικά παραδοσιακά και αυτό προσδίδει ιδιαίτερο χαρακτήρα στο κυπριακό κόσμημα.

Στους Κλασικούς Χρόνους (475-325 π.Χ.), που συμπίπτουν με την Περσική κυριαρχία στο νησί και την ενδυνάμωση των δεσμών με την Ελλάδα, στο Κυπριακό κόσμημα κυριαρχεί η Ελληνική επίδραση. Ο Κύπριος χρυσοχόος υιοθετεί νέα σχήματα, νέους τύπους κοσμημάτων και μεθόδους που προέρχονται από τα Ελληνικά κέντρα συνδυάζοντάς τα με τα παραδοσιακά ντόπια στοιχεία.

Στην Ελληνιστική Περίοδο (325-50 π.Χ.) συνεχίζεται η Ελληνική παράδοση των Κλασικών Χρόνων αλλά παρουσιάζονται και νέοι τύποι, νέα διακοσμητικά μοτίβα και μέθοδοι που προέρχονται από την Αλεξάνδρεια, το κατ'εξοχήν καλλιτεχνικό κέντρο της εποχής αυτής.

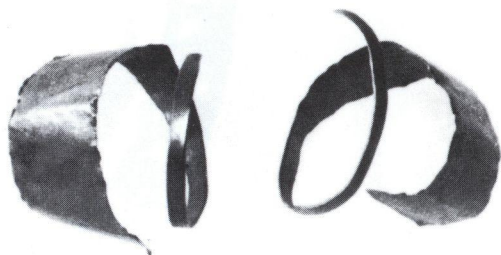
Στους Ρωμαϊκούς Χρόνους (50 π.Χ. - 395 μ.Χ.), που συμπίπτουν με τη Ρωμαϊκή κυριαρχία στη Κύπρο, συνεχίζεται αρχικά στο κόσμημα η Ελληνιστική παράδοση αλλά αυτή εξασθενεί σταδιακά, γιατί κυριαρχούν απλούστεροι τύποι, κοινοί σ'όλο τον Ρωμαϊκό κόσμο.

General Bibliography

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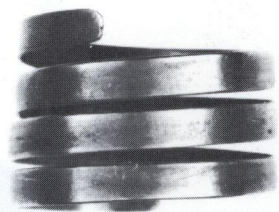
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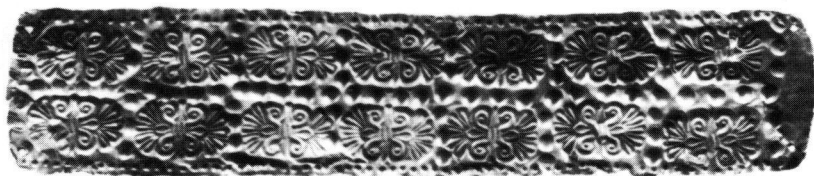
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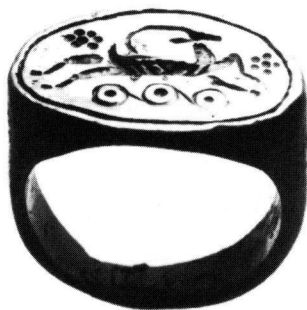
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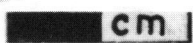
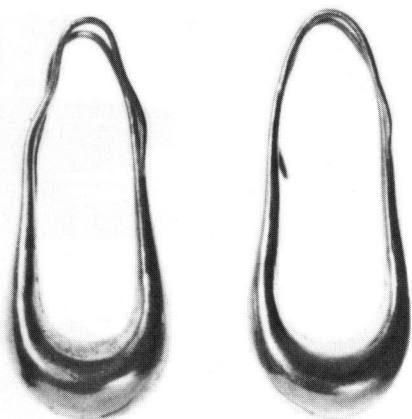
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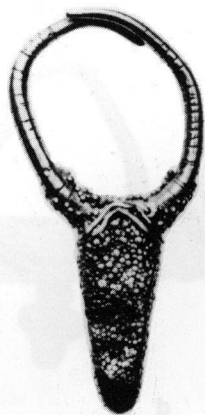
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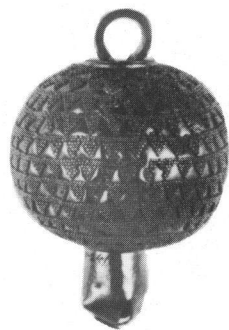
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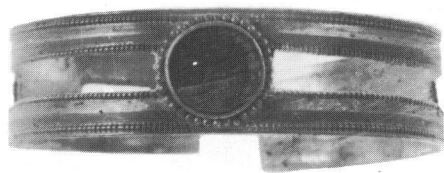
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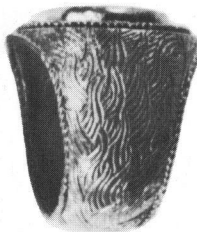
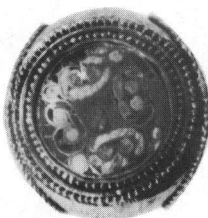
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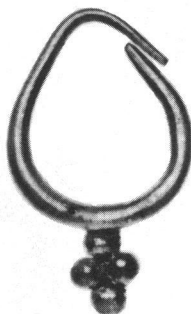
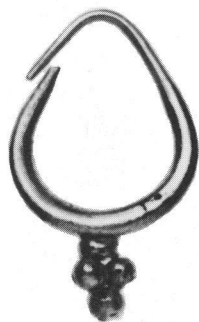
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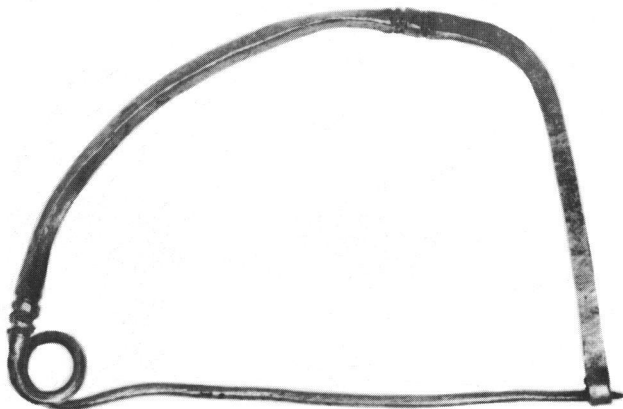
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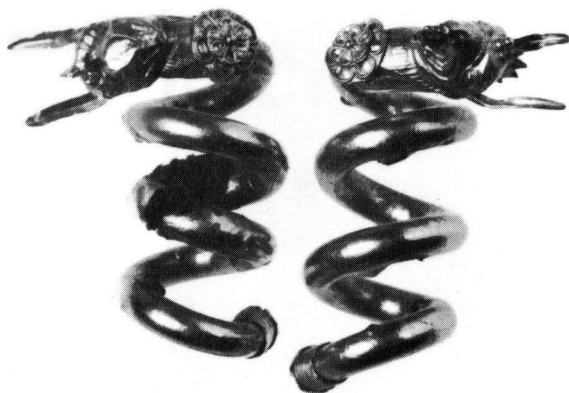
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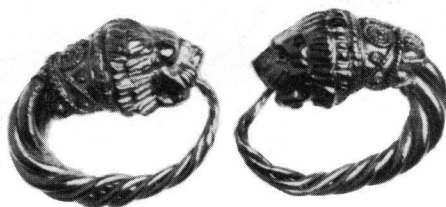
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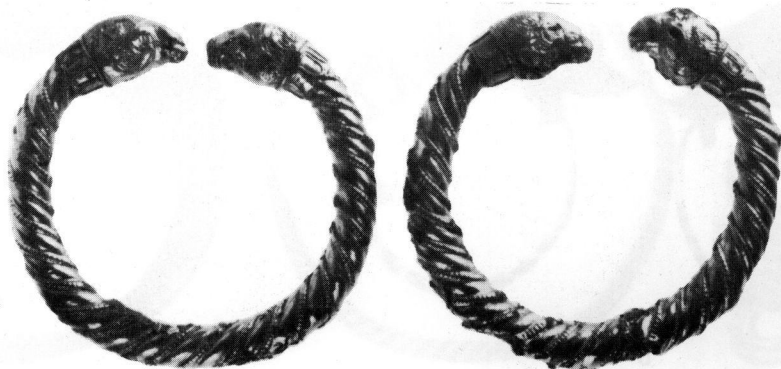
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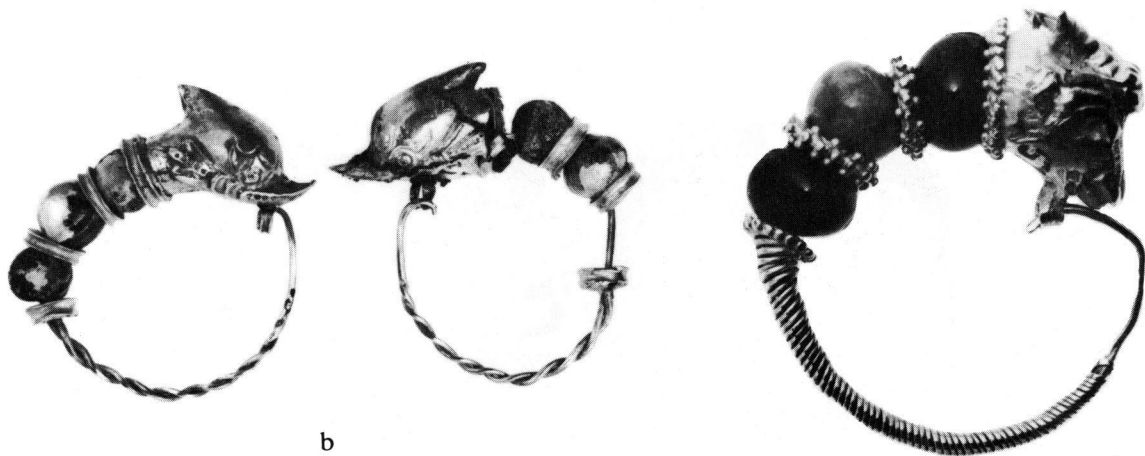
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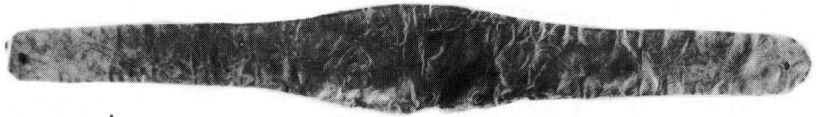
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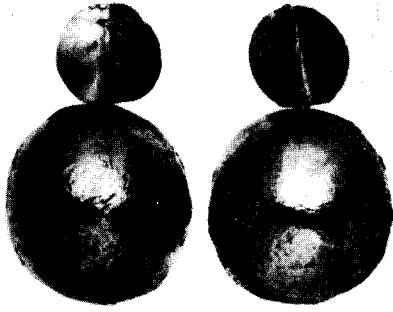
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