

**PHILIPPINE PREHISTORIC
GOLD BEAD
CATALOGUE**



F. WILLIAM L. VILLAREAL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author wishes to gratefully acknowledge all those who provided him encouragement and inspiration and who, in one way or another, helped in making this work possible. Special thanks are due to F. Landa Jocano, professor of Philippine Studies at the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines, who was so accommodating as to write the foreword to this book, to Consuelo Arnaiz and Maricris Olbes of Auction House, Lourdes Dellota, Vicenta Escobar, Angelita Legarda, Juan Lim, Venancio Magbuhos, Celia Molano, Maria Cristina Roxas, Ramon Villegas and Maria Theresa Virata who, in spite of their tight schedules, were gracious enough to make their collections available.

Thanks are also due to the Philippine National Museum which shared some of its illustrations of early gold beads and particularly to Rey Santiago, the museum's chief illustrator, who selflessly rendered from rough sketches the scientific illustrations of beads which could not be photographed. Finally, to Patrick de Koenigswarter, Jorge Maniquis and Vic Valenciano who, over the span of several years, patiently executed the photography, often under adverse conditions and last but not least to Ani Reyes and her staff who saw the book through the press as well as Eduardo Ledesma Jr. and Albert Yam, both avid enthusiasts, who helped in financing the publication of this small work.

FOREWORD

Jewelry has always been part of Filipino lifeways since prehistoric times. Hundreds and thousands of artifacts have been recovered from all over the country, documenting the sophistication of our ancient culture. Many students of Filipino culture are not aware of this fact and the few who are simply do not appreciate the significance of this development to our cultural history as a people.

The use of jewelry, particularly when such personal adornments include intricately designed gold materials, shows the higher level of economic affluence and finer aesthetic values of the owners. This is true today. It was more so during prehistoric times because jewelry then functioned as more than just personal adornment. It was used as payment for fines and dowry, worn for its magical and healing powers and given as "sacred burial gifts" (*pabaon*) to the soul of the departed as it journeyed from the world of the living to the land of the dead.

Jewelry in the Philippines, as in other parts of the world, began with pieces of crudely shaped stones and shells used as early as 4630 BC by the inhabitants of Duyong Cave in Palawan, although the abundant use of these materials throughout the country has been dated between 1500 and 1000 BC. Glass, carnelian and jade beads were added to the assemblage by about 500 to 300 BC when trade contact with other Asians began.

Gold ornaments began to appear in different archaeological sites all over the country dated as early as 200 to 100 BC. These consisted of beads of various sizes and shapes. Larger objects like gold rings, ear-rings, pendants, necklaces and belts appeared between 500 and 1000 AD particularly in the northeastern part of Mindanao.

Tremendous numbers of gold ornaments were later found in burial sites dating between 1000 and 1500 AD, excavated scientifically or gathered by antique collectors all over the country. These later ornaments show more elaborate craftsmanship than the earlier ones, suggesting the evolution of a more sophisticated cultural life. These later objects include gold necklaces with dangling spherical attachments, ear-rings with dangling foliate shapes, finely decorated "spur" chains, finials, bangles and many others.

In this book, the author has concentrated his study-catalogue on gold beads. His reason for such focus is that gold beads "may very well serve as better indicators and cultural markers" than whole pieces of jewelry in highlighting the sophistication of early craftsmen and gemologists. He further argues that "the value of this kind of work is that it may be the start of a relatively simple method of identification and reference which, to this day, has never been attempted by anyone."

I agree with the author. The skills of the craftsman are expressed in the way he designs and elaborates the individual bead. Stringing beads together into a whole necklace or bracelet can be done by anyone according to his individual taste. Making these beads individually requires not only technical skills but also sensitivity to details as well as the artist's creativity and imagination.

Indeed, this work is a pioneering one. We hope that more works of this kind will be attempted in the future if only to prove that fine arts, expressed in beadwork, was already one of our achievements in ancient civilization.

F. Landa Jocano
Professor of Philippine Studies
Asian Center
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Diliman, Quezon City

January 1995



14.0 mm



4.30 g



No. 012

13.0 mm

No. 011

7.0 mm

4.0 g



No. 010

4.00 g



No. 009

0.9 g

MINI



No. 016

MINI

<.01 g



.90 g

No. 018



6.0 mm

.80 g

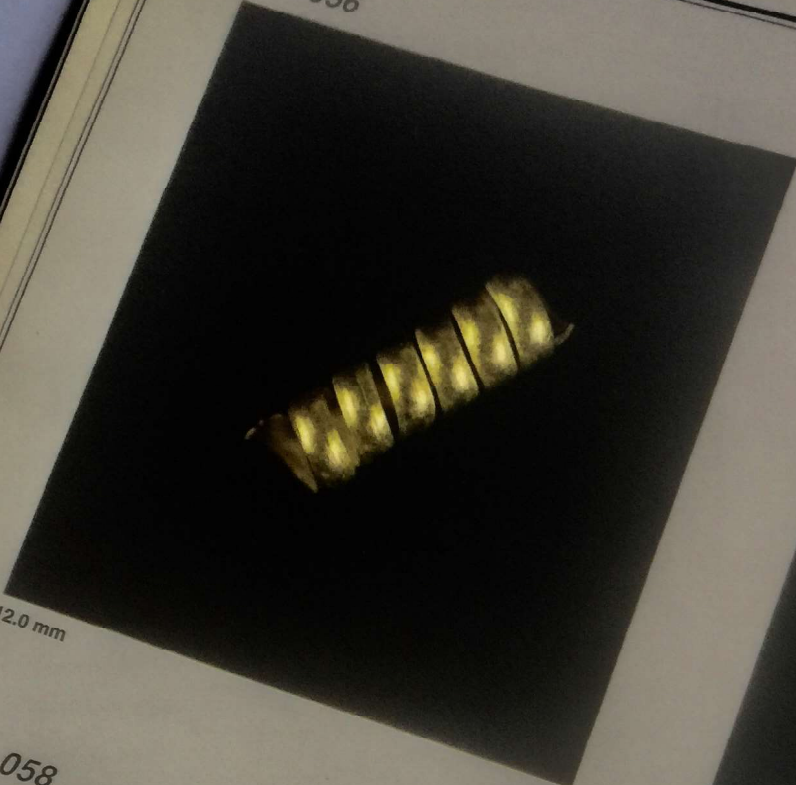


8.0 mm

.80 g



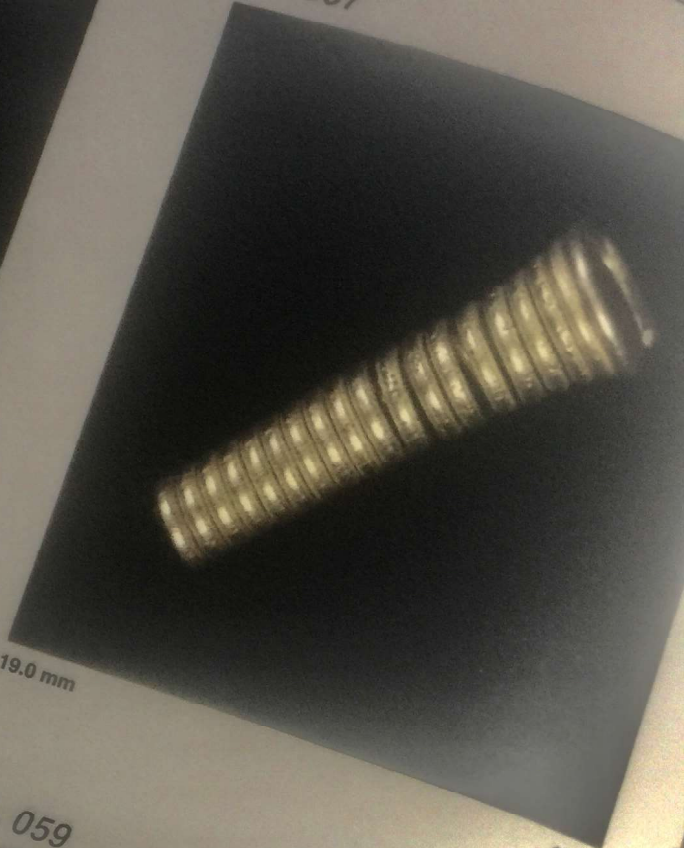
No. 056



12.0 mm

.30 g

No. 057



19.0 mm

1.50 g

No. 058



.30 g

No. 059



21.0 mm

.50 g

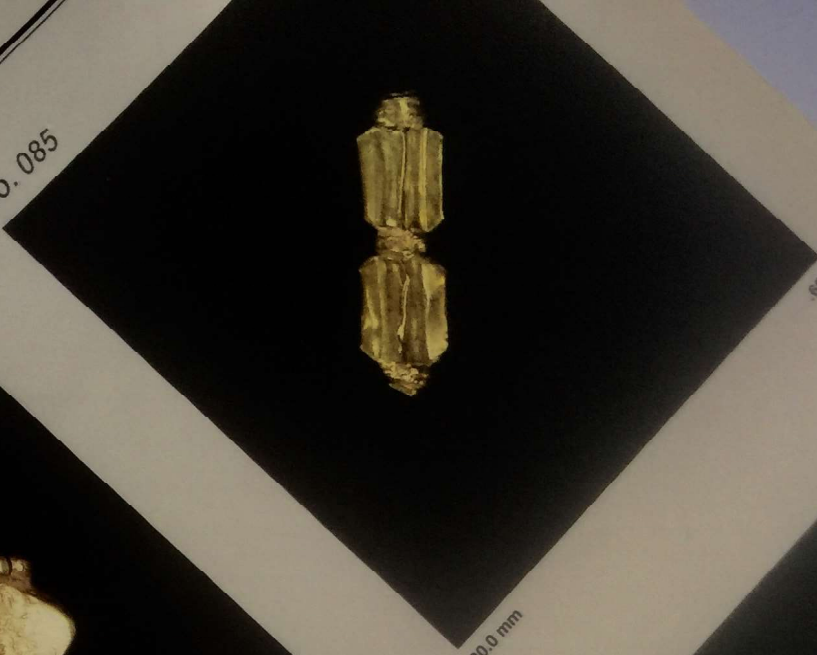
No. 084



11.0 mm

.90 g

No. 085

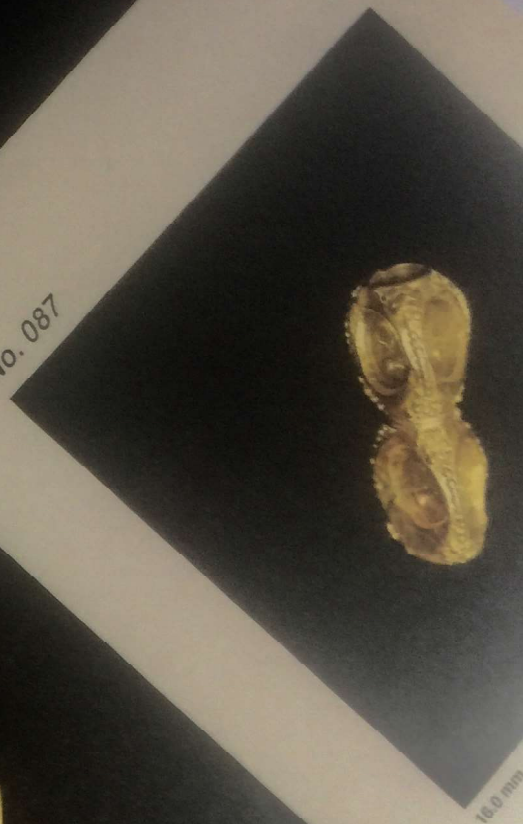


20.0 mm

3.00 g

80 g

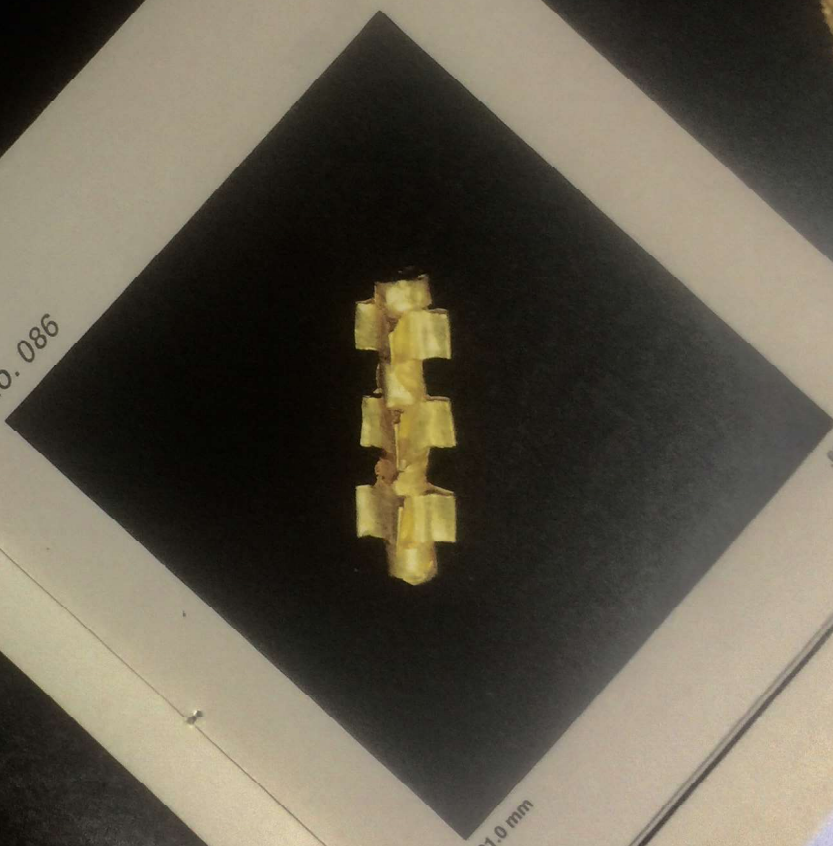
No. 087



16.0 mm

.60 g

No. 086



21.0 mm

.60 g

No. 083



1.20 g



No. 099

10.00 mm

9.0 mm



No. 096

24.0 mm

2.00 g



No. 094

20.0 mm

1.30 g



No. 095

1.60 g



29.5 mm

2.80 g

30.0 mm



60 g



No. 122

6.0 mm

40 g



15 g

MINI

No. 121

5.5 mm



No. 120

50 g







