



Traditional Portuguese Gold Jewellery in Viana do Castelo

Rosa Maria dos Santos Mota

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Foreword

Viana do Castelo is a municipality rich in traditions, and our typical costume is one of Portugal's major symbols, recognised as a brand image both in Portugal and abroad due to the colourful, eye-catching originality of its pieces. Adorning and an integral part of the typical Viana do Castelo costume is traditional Portuguese gold jewellery. This jewellery, displayed by the women when wearing the typical costume, faithfully portrays local traditions.

As a tribute to this legacy of our ancestors, we have now launched the book *Traditional Portuguese Gold Jewellery in Viana do Castelo*, written by Rosa Maria dos Santos Mota and with graphic design by Rui Carvalho. It is a work that greatly honours us and fills us with pride. I would like to thank the author for her pride in and dedication to this work, of such value to all the people of Viana do Castelo and to those who respect and admire our traditions. Similarly, we greatly appreciate the quality and aesthetics of the graphic design.

Traditional Portuguese gold jewellery, which emerged in the 19th century, encompasses a multitude of stories, pieces, meanings and traditions, which must be recognised, studied and preserved. Although Viana do Castelo has never been a jewellery production centre, over the years it has seized the opportunity to become a living showcase of this traditional gold jewellery.

Closely linked to the typical costumes of Viana do Castelo and to the traditional gold jewellery, the feast of *Romaria d'Agonia* – the star of popular festivities in Portugal –, annually attracts around one million visitors. During its main parade, the traditional gold ornaments exhibited by the women in their typical costumes – our *mordomas* – are one of the main attractions, exalting our folk costumes.

I would also like to draw attention to what is known as *Viana Gold*, pieces of traditional gold jewellery that are rooted in our hearts, pieces which immediately identify Viana do Castelo, thus promoting the city and the county throughout the world.

Our motto says “Those who like it come, those who love it stay”. I am sure that this work will be a reference to all those who have Viana in their hearts.

The Mayor of Viana do Castelo
José Maria Costa

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CHAPTER I

Traditional Portuguese Gold Jewellery





A particular type of gold jewellery emerged in Portugal, in the nineteenth century, and became known, in the following century, as *Ouro Popular Português: Traditional Portuguese Gold Jewellery*. This designation embraced a number of items used all over the country, with greater use in the North of Portugal, in particular in the Minho province, and there, mainly in the Viana do Castelo region.

This type of jewellery was predominantly associated with the rural populations of various classes such as land-owning farmers, tenant farmers, day-labourers and part-time farmers¹, but it cut across several social groups² as the middle classes and even the minor landed gentry used it. People of the lower-class urban populations, in particular those who descended from part-time farmers, and lived in the city, also used this gold jewellery, as did the wives of fishermen. In this case, however, there were certain specificities regarding particular types of ornaments in different fishing areas and the most traditional items of these communities were those which appeared in the market in the 1930s and not so the nineteenth century pieces.

The main adornments traditionally included in the denomination “Traditional Portuguese Gold Jewellery”, correspond to those we designate as the “original nucleus”, to distinguish them from other items with similar characteristics but different morphology and decoration that emerged later, in the twentieth century. Included in the original nineteenth century lot are hoop earrings – named *argolas* and *arrecadas* – and multiple types of earrings, including the lavish *à rainha*³ earrings. Beaded necklaces, different gold chains



¹ Part-time farmers are people who work in the city, in all types of jobs, but still live and cultivate their fields in the suburban villages

² In the approximately 2900 jewellery valuations, carried out in the main by the assayer Vicente Manuel de Moura, between 1865 and 1879, and published by Gonçalo de Vasconcelos e Sousa, there are approximately 1000 *cordões*, gold chains, – the key piece of traditional gold jewellery – belonging to people of very different social backgrounds. This proves the social mobility of traditional gold jewellery, as confirmed by this author when he states that “a careful look at the valuation certificates of these gold objects (...) enables us to confirm, in particular by checking the persons involved in the records, that this use could cut across various population groups”. Vd. SOUSA, Gonçalo de Vasconcelos e – *Tesouros privados: a joalharia na região do Porto (1865-1879)*. Porto: CIONP; CITAR; UCE-Porto, 2012, vol. 1, p. 159.

³ *Rainha* means queen, literal translation: “queen like earrings”. More about this earring on Glossary.

Several ornaments which integrate the traditional Portuguese gold jewellery: reliquary, cross, heart pendant, bead necklace, necklace, coin pendants, Our Lady of Conception, *à rainha* earrings, and Maltese cross.



such as *cordões*, *colares de corda*, *grilhões*, *trancelins* and *colares de gramalheira*⁴ also integrate the set. Pendants linked to the catholic religion are also part of the original nucleus, such as several styles of crosses – stamped, cast and in filigree –, as well as reliquaries, *conceições*⁵ and enamel medals invoking Our Lady of Conception. Other pendants, like stamped or filigree heart pendants, Maltese crosses, *borboletas*⁶, *laças*,⁷ Portuguese eighteenth century gold coins, gold sovereigns and imitation coins, all mounted in elaborate gold frames, and brooches made of three sovereigns completed the original set.



4 For further information about these necklaces and chains, see Glossary.

5 Traditional name for a pendant in the shape of a sculpture of Our Lady of Conception. See Glossary for Our Lady of Conception.

6 Small pendant in the shape of a butterfly wing. For further information see Glossary.

7 Bow pendant, for further information, see Glossary.

The traditional Portuguese gold jewellery has been predominantly associated with the rural populations, but it cut across various social groups, as fishermen's wives, the middle classes and even the minor landed gentry also used it.



1.1. Influences

Mediterranean and oriental influences are observed in some of the techniques, like filigree, but also in forms and decorative elements of the traditional gold jewellery. Similarly, the influence of the seventeenth and eighteenth Portuguese jewellery-making is present in items that have passed into popular use, such as the heart pendants, the *laça* (bow pendant) and reliquaries. Equally, the foreign influence of stylistic trends participated in the creation of such items, as well as the yet ill-defined Indo-Portuguese goldsmithery, in addition to unique creations with folk attributes, such as the stamped pieces designated as *barrocos*⁸ (*baroque*) due to their dense phytomorphic decoration punctuated with symbolic elements.

1.2. The raw materials

The collection of adornments making up traditional gold jewellery is produced in 19.2 carat gold. However, there are references to some ornaments of this type made in gold and in silver-plated, as well as models in brass, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries⁹. Nevertheless, as from the last decades of the nineteenth century, traditional gold jewellery was essentially made in high-carat gold, in keeping with the economic importance that is attached to it. The characteristic of store of value, the bequests passing down from generation to generation, as well as being able to express one's social and economic status, by the display of the principal adornments, gradually became associated with the original decorative function, justifying the use of gold over any other raw material.



Traditional gold jewellery uses no precious stones; only enamel, small turquoises and tiny corals – or similar materials – as well as green and red glass, are used for decoration.

⁸ See Glossary for more information.

⁹ Vd. SOUSA, Alberto – *O traje popular em Portugal nos séculos XVIII e XIX*. Lisboa; [s.n.], 1924, p. 238; COSTA, António – *No Minho*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1874, p. 276.

This type of goldsmithery is mostly monochromatic, as it uses no precious stones. Only enamel, small turquoises and tiny corals – or similar materials – as well as coloured glass, are used for decoration. The first materials embellished various items of the late nineteenth century, such as the *fidalga arrecadas*¹⁰, but disappeared as the years passed. The same happened to the coloured glass which decorated the *à rainha* earrings, these re-surfacing in Art Deco-influenced pieces, earrings, brooches and necklaces – traditionally designated as *parolos*¹¹ – which appeared in the 1930s and are clearly different from the original nucleus of traditional gold jewellery.

1.3. The size of the gold ornaments

Given the fact that most types of pieces are used the same over time, the size of some of these ornaments, almost exaggerated at times, served to differentiate the purchasing power of their users and was a prerogative of this type of pieces. In 1879, it was observed that the Minho women used “*wrought gold hearts bigger than the width of a hand, hoop earrings reaching to their shoulders, and enormous crucifixes*”¹². Nevertheless, the iconography shows that the pieces displayed by these women progressively diminished in size. In the 1930s, it was acknowledged that the large pieces were disappearing, making way for lighter ornaments in villages close to towns, owing to the influence of city fashion. However, in the same period of time, inland, gold still twinkled “*heavily, excessively, on women’s chests*”¹³, proof that large-scale adornments were never completely eradicated from use and have reached our days.



The size of some of some ornaments, almost exaggerated at times, served to differentiate the purchasing power of their users.

¹⁰ Type of hoop earring. For more information, see Glossary.

¹¹ For more information about “parolos”, see Glossary.

¹² Vd. COSTA, D. António – *No Minho*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1874, p. 253.

¹³ Vd. BASTOS, Cláudio – *O traje à Vianesa*. [S.l.]: Ed. Apolino Gaia, 1930, p. 34.





Traditional market-going goldsmiths sold gold ornaments all over the country either on fairs and markets or door to door.

1.4. The production centres

In the nineteenth century, the city of Porto – an important centre for jewellery as well as silver and goldsmithery – was still an important manufacturer of traditional gold ornaments. This was also the case with the city of Guimarães, which not only produced this type of gold jewellery but also accommodated an enterprising group of market-going goldsmiths who sold gold products in several regions¹⁴. In the twentieth century, however, traditional gold jewellery production shifted to other places. The town of Gondomar, near Porto, which had been making its mark as a key location for the production of gold objects since the eighteenth century¹⁵, became an important location for the production of smooth-faced hearts garnished with filigree, filigree hearts, different gold chains, crosses, Maltese crosses, medal pendants, stamped earrings, crosses and heart pendants. The town of Póvoa de Lanhoso, close to Guimarães, also began producing traditional gold jewellery and there, too, are signs of goldsmiths since the eighteenth century. In that way, Gondomar and Póvoa de Lanhoso became two important production centres in the twentieth century, producing nearly the same type of pieces, with a predominance of gold beads in Póvoa de Lanhoso, gold chains in Gondomar and filigree pieces in both places. The constant use of traditional techniques and the repetition of the same examples stabilised the typologies, shapes and decoration of traditional gold jewellery, resulting in the same pieces over the centuries, a key characteristic of this goldsmithery.

¹⁴ Vd. SANTOS, Manuela Alcântara – *Mestres ourives de Guimarães: séculos XVIII e XIX*. Porto: Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação, 2007, p.19.

¹⁵ Vd. SOUSA, Gonçalo Vasconcelos e – Aspectos da ourivesaria em Gondomar no séc. XX: subsídios para o estudo de uma arte em renovação. *O Tripeiro*. Porto: Associação Comercial do Porto, 7^a s., 23 (7) (Jul. 2004), p. 199.



CHAPTER II

Ornamentation, symbolism and savings



Traditional gold jewellery has always been an important form of feminine ornamentation among the women of Minho.



Traditional gold jewellery was an important form of feminine ornamentation of the women of the rural areas of the North of Portugal, especially in the Minho province. The use of gold ornaments depended on circumstance and fortune, but gold was always present, either on working days, with a simple bedded necklace and hoop earring, or on festive days, with a more lavish display.

Earrings were worn from childhood and were an essential part of a woman's accessories. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, and following decades, more than a pair could be used at the same time¹, a custom that was lost during the first half of the twentieth century. However, in country areas, it was unthinkable for a woman to go without earrings, and it happened that women would even cover them in black fabric if they were in mourning, instead of removing them. They were also seen as good luck charms or protective amulets, but these meanings have also been lost. However, earrings are still very important in the countryside and are absolutely mandatory when a traditional costume is worn.

¹ Vd. COSTA, D. António – *No Minho*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1874, p. 253; GOODALL, Agnes – *Portugal*. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1901, p. 61.



Long and elaborated earrings were very appreciated and, sometimes, women used even two pairs at a time.
Earrings were used since childhood.



There were also large quantities of good luck charms or amulets that could be produced in gold or other metals; these were mixed with the ornaments, to the extent that the uses were confused. From the 1930s onwards, many amulets were gradually replaced by pieces with religious connotations, although some have reached us today. One such is the *sanselimão*, a Star of David or pentagram, the *figa*, or closed fist, and moon shapes, the latter seen mostly on earrings.

In addition to their use as ornaments, many items of traditional gold jewellery reveal an eminently religious connotation, as witnessed by the crosses, reliquaries and the image of Our Lady of Conception, as well as the heart pendant, connotation that has lost, and their use made clear the rural populations' profound link with the Catholic faith. In addition to this religious aspect, all the typologies were used as *ex-votos*, to pay promises, and many of those are displayed on holy images throughout the country. Nowadays, on feast days dedicated to Our Lady or to some female patron saints, many images, the *Senhoras Ouradas*², process on their stands adorned with gold ornaments, as if they were real women.



The use of amulets: a *figa*, or closed fist, a set of amulets together and earrings with stars and moon shapes.



² *Senhoras Ouradas*, ladies lavishly adorned with gold ornaments.





A bride and a woman wearing the red traditional *lavadeira* costume display a cross hanging from a bead necklace, while a fisherman's wife presents two crosses hanging from a *cordão*, a traditional gold chain.



Mordoma displaying various adornments with religious connotation, such as the representation of Our Lady of Conception, a reliquary and crosses, among other traditional gold jewels.

Saint Marta bejeweled with all the ornaments offered to her to pay promises.





The economic aspect of traditional gold jewellery became extremely significant. Indeed, farmers from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century considered that possessing gold was as essential as owning land and livestock, and even more important than the house where they lived, which justifies the Portuguese saying: *“As much land as you can see, as big a house as you can inhabit and as much gold as you can afford”*. Owning gold reflected the social and economic background of each person, family or region, although public displays of gold ornaments was required for this standing to be confirmed by the community as a whole. These gold ornaments were essential stores of value which were used in times of hardship, when some of these items had to be sold or pawned, constituting also an important nest egg that was bequeathed to future generations. They served also as a reflection of family organisation in a rural setting and of women’s important position within that group, situation upheld by the strong male immigration that affected the region in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, first to Brazil and later to other European countries.

Woman handsomely dressed and wearing lavish gold ornaments which disclosed her social and economic status. Early twentieth century.



CHAPTER III

Alterations
in use:
from private to
public display





Country women wearing traditional gold jewellery on their everyday life and women of all social classes parading in the Feast of Senhora da Agonia, exhibiting traditional costumes and traditional gold jewellery.

From the 1970s onwards, the daily use of traditional gold jewellery gradually became more restricted. Country women stopped using it on a day to day basis, as they rose up the social or economic ladder and their taste evolved as a result of political, social, economic and aesthetic changes in the country. Slowly, traditional gold jewellery became a type of ornament that was mainly used with the regional costume, and both were thus displayed in folk dance groups and ethnographical parades.

If considered the profusion of jewellery shops, the nearly 4000 markets where gold was sold, as well as the many travelling goldsmiths throughout Portugal, from mid nineteenth to mid twentieth century, it is noted that the acquisition of traditional gold jewellery was considerable in regions where its public use is barely visible today. This reality is justified by the non-existence of pilgrimages, feasts and ethnographical parades, in those areas, where such gold might be displayed.

In Minho province, however, pilgrimages become no longer just purely religious, but also comprising entertainment, funfairs, shows and parades where hundreds of women go on parade, arrayed in their regional costumes embellished with plenty of gold. At these events, the costume and gold jewellery association that was thus established made such regional costumes the background setting for the gold to shine, creating a very strong connection between the two. To this day, such display of traditional gold jewellery no longer mirrors social and economic reality or even the way it was used in the nineteenth century. Rather it reflects practices, concepts and fashions that gradually evolved throughout the twentieth century parades without, however, relinquishing their cultural matrix and a model profoundly linked to the past.



Some of these pilgrimages have become extraordinary sources of attraction for tourists, in particular the Senhora da Agonia feast in Viana do Castelo, with two main parades such as the *Cortejo da Mordomia* and *Cortejo Etnografico*, which serve as the model for similar events in the region. The success of this feast and the importance of its parades have greatly contributed to the continued use and dissemination of traditional gold jewellery, confirming the population's traditional love for precious metal adornments, maintaining old collections and creating a liking for constant acquisition; in a word, bringing traditional gold jewellery into the present not as a museological reality but as a way of life that is felt by and characteristic of the local population.







CHAPTER IV

The Feast
of Senhora
da Agonia,
in Viana
do Castelo





Set of posters advertising the Feast of Senhora da Agonia, in Viana do Castelo.



The Feast of Senhora da Agonia takes place in August, in the city of Viana do Castelo, since the eighteenth century, being August 20th the patron saint's day. By the mid-nineteenth century it was already one of the most popular and famous pilgrimages of Minho. By the start of the next century it was considered "*the main pilgrimage in the North of Portugal*"¹, in 1942 it was entitled as the "*national feast of Minho*"², and the following year the poster for the feast claimed it as the "*great pilgrimage of Portugal*". In July 2013 it was classified as being of tourist interest by Turismo de Portugal.

Throughout the centuries, the feast has gradually become more of a lay feast, affirming its position as both emblem and showcase of the city and district of Viana do Castelo. It has attracted outsiders from all regions and, following a number of changes to its format, from the 1960s onwards, all the main features of the festivities have been consolidated. Today, it includes a vast array of cultural and ludic programmes, in which every manifestation of popular culture is present, from the traditional free fair, the livestock market, craftwork fairs, music bands, bass drum parades and *gigantones*³ to folklore acts, with particular emphasis on the Ethnographical Parade and the *Mordomia* Parade⁴, two highlights of the feast, where the display of traditional gold reaches unimaginable heights.

Consisting solely of women wearing rich costumes, for the last fifty years the *Mordomia* Parade in the Feast of Nossa Senhora da Agonia has seen the number of participants increase, and, indeed, it became a landmark in the life of many Viana women, providing the setting for contacts and links between the generations.

1 Vd. *Aurora do Lima*. Viana do Castelo (14.08.1901).

2 Vd. *Aurora do Lima*. Viana do Castelo (18.08.1942).

3 *Gigantones* are giant puppets, with 3 to 4 meters height, composed by a structure in wood and a huge head made of paper-mache paste, dressed as peasants or with formal attire and carried out by men hidden under the clothes. In Viana's festivities there are 4 couples of *gigantones* and several *cabeçudos* (big heads). These have no wooden structure and are dressed with a simple tunic, and are carried out by youngsters. Since 1893, in every feast they parade through the streets, dancing to the sound of drums, and are very appreciated by the crowd.

4 On 15 August 1968, Amadeu Costa organised a parade which he called the *Desfile da Mordomia*. However, by then, it resembled more an ethnographical parade. In 1980, it went under the name of *Desfile de Lavradeiras e de Grupos Regionais* (Country Women and Regional Groups Parade), and in 2013, fishermen's wives from Ribeira with their festive costumes also joined the parade.



View of the Mordomia Parade featuring *lavradeiras* wearing the red traditional costume and traditional gold jewellery.

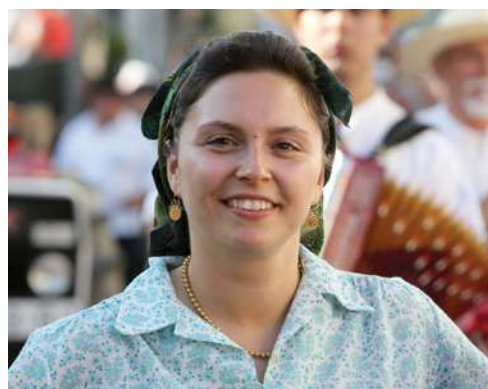
View of the *Mordomia* Parade featuring *mordomas* dressed in the dark traditional costume, embroidered with sequins, and displaying traditional gold jewellery.



4.1. The traditional costumes in the parades of Viana do Castelo and the respective gold ornaments

Very briefly, the main costumes seen in the Viana do Castelo parades are divided into working costumes, Sunday costumes – *trajes de domingo*⁵ – and rich costumes. The latter are the attire of the wealthy *lavradeira*⁶, the *mordoma*⁷, the bride and the *morgada*⁸.

The quantity, type of items and arrangement as well as the layout of the gold ornaments used with each costume are quite arbitrary. However, even without strict rules, certain procedures must be followed.⁹ In a working costume, for instance, no showy pieces are displayed, for at best a plain pair of hoops earrings or simple styled earrings, used daily, with occasionally a beaded necklace, are the designated accessories for this costume.



Women, at the Ethnographical Parade, wearing working costumes and adorned with only a few pieces of gold: a pair of earrings and, sometimes, a necklace.

⁵ Costumes worn on Sundays and holidays, but not as elaborated as the rich costumes.

⁶ *Lavradeira* is the feminine form of *lavrador* and both names stem from the same Latin root as the English words labor and laborer. Still, the most accurate translation for *lavradeira* would be farmwife. Until two or three decades ago, *lavradores* and *lavradeiras* were the men and women who belonged to what we might call the well-off peasantry of northern Portugal. They were landowners of small to medium-sized properties. Vd. VASCONCELOS, João – *Custom and Costume at a late 1950s Marian Shrine in Northwestern Portugal*, p.20, http://ceas.iscte.pt/etnografica/docs/vol_09/N1/Vol_ix_N1_019-048.pdf

⁷ *Mordoma* was a young daughter of a rich farmer, who, in the past, helped in the organization of religious festivities.

⁸ *Morgada* was the heir to entailed interest.

⁹ On the Feast of Senhora da Agonia and its relationship with gold displays on traditional costumes: MOTA, Rosa Maria dos Santos – *O uso do ouro nas Festas da Senhora da Agonia, em Viana do Castelo*. Porto: CIONP; CITAR; UCE-Porto, 2011.



Women wearing *trajes de domingo*, or Sunday costumes, at the Ethnographical Parade. These costumes allow more gold ornaments as the working outfits, but less as the richer costumes.

As regards the Sunday costumes – the *trajes de domingo* –, which came about due to the dichotomy between the everyday and the Sunday costume, it would be possible to use a pair of earrings, hoops or *arrecadas* and a gold chain or beaded gold necklace with a pendant, but also a slightly larger display of adornments. However, large quantities of pieces or the most important items in gold jewellery are not expected to be found on such costumes.

The largest quantity of gold items appears on the colourful costumes of the rich *lavradeira* and the black costumes of the *mordoma*, the *morgada* and the bride¹⁰.



The colourful outfits of the rich *lavradeira* are enhanced with large quantities of gold jewells.

¹⁰ In these two costumes, the only difference lies in the fact that the bride wears a veil and carries a bouquet of white orange blossoms in her hand, while the *mordoma* wears a colourful headscarf and carries a *palmito* in her hand, a decorative, symbolic element made of plaited palm branches or of wire, metallised paper and glitter, in colours ranging from gold and silver, to red and blue and, more recently, bronze and pink. This occurs when the *mordoma's* costume is composed by a coat and skirt. However, when the coat is replaced by a waistcoat, the costume is no longer considered to be a bride's outfit, and merely represents a *mordoma*. The *morgadas* also carry a richly embroidered, costly scarf over their arm, hold a cloth bag, and may be bare-headed, characteristics that denote a more mature age and a good social and economic status.



The luxurious black or blue costumes from the *mordomas* sparkle with the embroidered sequins and function as a support to display a lavish quantity of gold jewellery.

The *morgadas*, with their solemn black outfits embellished with sequins, also display a rich gold ornamentation.







The gold jewells of the family shine over the sumptuous dark outfits of the brides.



The quantity and quality of the gold displayed on all these rich costumes vary from woman to woman, although one expects to find the key pieces of traditional gold jewellery, some of them inevitable, such as gold chains – the *cordões* –, beaded necklaces and gold framed coins, specially sovereigns. However, there are other adornments on these costumes, such as bow pendants – the *laças* –, crosses, reliquaries, images of Our Lady of Conception, sovereign brooches, *borboletas* pendants, Maltese crosses and heart pendants, all hanging from different gold chains, such as *cordões*, *colares de contas*, *grilhões*, *colares de corda*, and *trancelins*, the latter traditionally less used than the *cordão*, the classic gold chain.

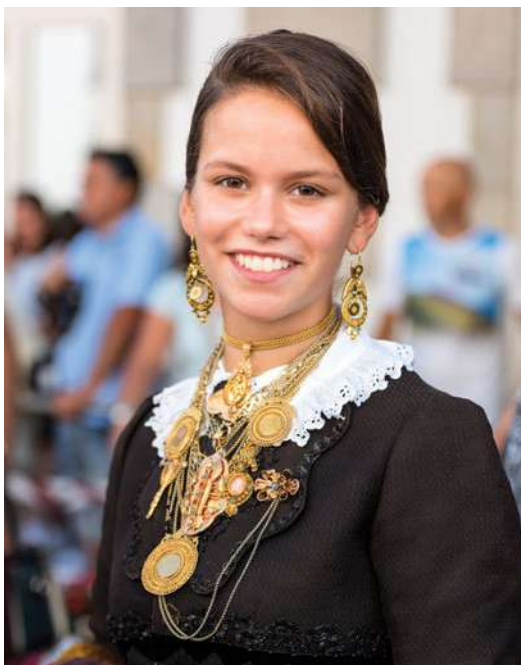
A *lavadeira* and two *mordomas* displaying filigree heart pendants, reliquaries and a *gramalheira* pendant, relevant pieces of the traditional gold jewellery.





Although arbitrary, there are various ways to display the gold adornments on the chest. The oldest dates from the late nineteenth century, but other forms of display emerged during the first half of the twentieth century. Today, we note three different ways of displaying these ornaments. The first layout is used by women wearing the oldest type of costumes, and here the traditional gold items such as hearts, reliquaries and sovereigns, among others, are concentrated in the centre of the chest, over the breastbone, randomly and intuitively placed, forming a triangle with an inverted apex between the breasts, ending with a larger piece, whilst the beaded necklaces reach halfway up the neck.

With the rich *lavradeira* and the *mordoma* costumes the gold ornaments may be concentrated in the centre of the chest, over the breastbone, in a manner used in the past and recovered in today's parades. In this way of displaying gold ornaments, and with the older type of costumes, a black velvet ribbon with a pendant may be used around the neck.





Usually, the gold items displayed with the colorful red costumes extend as far as the shoulders, and women generally use less gold pieces than those dressed with the richer dark outfits, but still as many as they wish.



The second traditional display is mostly used by those wearing the colourful costumes with a shorter skirt, which appeared around 1940/50. Here, the items displayed extend as far as the shoulders and women generally use as many pieces as they like, although less objects than in the previous display system can be used.

The third method of arranging the adornments can be seen on the costumes of the *mordoma* and the bride: a more or less compact display of adornments, covers the chest from the shoulders to the waist, with the items laid out in an organised manner and keeping to a harmonious, symmetrical style, with attention to a central axis and forming a striking assemblage of gold ornaments.



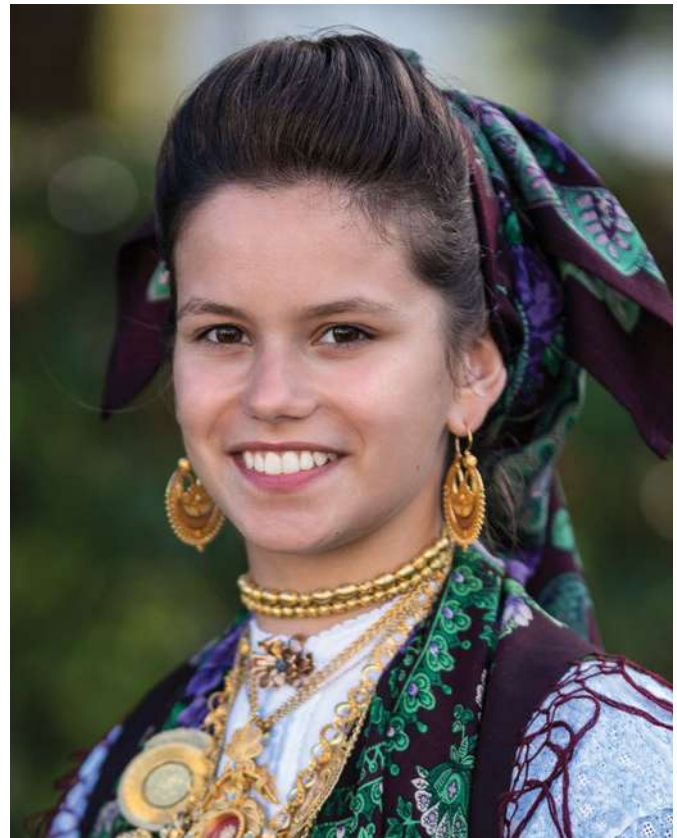
Among the women wearing the *mordoma* and bride costumes, a more or less compact display of gold adornments may cover the chest from the shoulders to the waist, showing a large number of pieces laid out in an organised, harmonious and symmetrical style.





As regards earrings, each type of costume involves different typologies. The Portuguese popular jewellery is very profuse in different types of earrings, but the ones most seen in rich costumes, and even with Sunday costumes, are the exquisite *à rainha* earrings. However, this fact prevents that other styles, equally interesting and old, are not so displayed in the parades as they should.

The traditional Portuguese jewellery is very profuse in different types of earrings and in the parades of Viana do Castelo a wide range of styles can be seen.







From previous page, several variations of the *à rainha* earring, the most iconic earring in the Portuguese traditional gold jewellery.

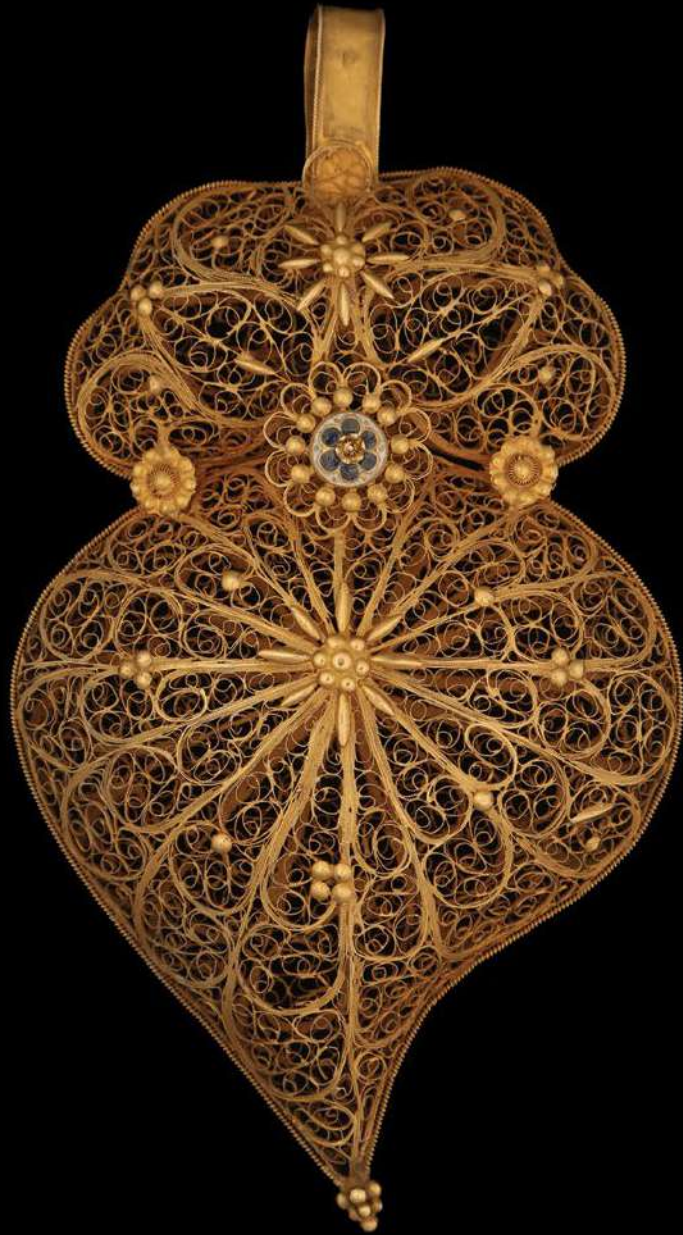




Fancy errings always adorned womens earlobes. Gold, turquoise and coloured glass; end of nineteenth century to mid twentieth century. Sala do Ouro, Viana do Castelo.

Earrings have always been an important part in women's lives, in Minho, thus justifying their presence on the eighteenth century mercy seats of the church of the benedictine nuns convent of Saint Anne, in Viana do Castelo. Known as *cabacinhas* (little gourds), they were common in this region till the end of the nineteenth century, having since disappeared from usage.





CHAPTER V

Ouro de Viana *– Viana Gold*



In addition to the link of traditional costumes and gold ornaments lavishly exhibited in the parades from Viana do Castelo a new designation relating to traditional Portuguese gold jewellery appeared in that region in the last decades of the twentieth century – *Viana Gold* – which has been applied to items of the original nucleus when used in ethnographical parades. This designation took hold in Viana do Castelo but has also been accepted by many people in other regions, as they consider this name reflects the set of traditional pieces due to the link between the use of Portuguese folk jewellery and this city, a fact that may explain the advent of this designation.



Ouro de Viana – Viana Gold.



CHAPTER VI

Museological display of traditional gold jewellery



Despite the significant importance achieved by the traditional gold jewellery throughout the country, not all museums that include jewellery exhibitions showcase a relevant number of popular items, namely of their main paradigms. However, in Viana do Castelo, the collection of traditional gold jewellery of the Eduardo Freitas Foundation, resulting from a donation by Manuel Freitas to the city, and subsequent acquisitions, is on permanent display at the Sala do Ouro, in the Museu do Traje¹, and it constitutes an opportunity to showcase the different types that integrate this jewellery. The collection comprises hundreds of gold ornaments divided into several types. Therefore, from simple items used in everyday life of countryside communities, to the most splendid ones for special occasions, as well as those used by the fishermen's wives can be seen here. Reminiscent of earlobes adornment, the collection includes a large assortment of children earrings, hoops and earrings for daily use, lavish earrings for special occasions, dated from the nineteenth century, as well as mourning earrings, from early twentieth century, and earrings decorated with coloured glass, from the 1930s.

From traditional and basic gold chains to extravagant necklaces from the nineteenth century can be seen along with other chains from the first half of the twentieth century. A high quantity of religious medals, in gold and with enamel, ex-votos, filigree, stamped and casted crosses and elaborate reliquaries confirm the rural population of the nineteenth and mid twentieth century profound link with the catholic faith. Filigree heart pendants demonstrate the excellence of the filigree masters; golden sovereigns enclosed in fancy frames pay tribute to one of most iconic pieces of traditional gold jewellery – the *libra*. Exquisite medallions, decorated with colorful imitation gems and tridimensional flowers and leaves in gold of different shades, as well as rings and bracelets, complete the set of ornaments meant to the embellishment of well-off countryside women.

Chain watches, and a large quantity of watches, cufflinks, tie pins and rings, mainly from the first half of the twentieth century, represent the ornaments for male use.

This extended collection turns the *Sala do Ouro* in the most comprehensive exhibition of traditional gold jewellery and the only museum space in the country completely dedicated to it. This exhibition has also an added meaning and interest, due to the proximity of the costumes exhibited in the museum, allowing to cross two complementary realities. Further to that, it reveals the importance of the production of traditional gold jewellery in the region between the Douro and Minho rivers, due to showcase a large quantity of instruments used by goldsmiths, and highlights the importance that such type of jewellery still has for the people of Viana do Castelo.

Further to the importance of such exhibition, the Senhora da Agonia feast with the expressive display of gold adornments that occurs in the two parades – the *Mordomas* Parade and the Ethnographical Parade –, turned in to compelling golden ornament display scenarios, where the traditional gold jewellery is revealed in all its splendor, as it is presented as a living reality treasured by the locals.

¹ Gold Hall, in the Costume Museum of Viana do Castelo



A wide variety of typical costumes adorned with traditional Portuguese gold ornaments is displayed in the *Museu do Traje*, allowing the visitor to cross these two complementary realities.

Opposite page:
 The entrance to the *Sala do Ouro* where an extensive collection of traditional Portuguese gold ornaments, from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is showcased.
 Several instruments, dated from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, used by goldsmiths in the North of Portugal, made by the goldsmiths themselves or adapted to their own needs.



Conclusion

Traditional Portuguese gold jewellery was an important form of gold ornamentation, a way to exteriorise the link with all things divine, an external sign of wealth and a symbol of personal achievement, while marking the ascent of the social ladder, determining family hierarchies and amassing nest eggs and legacies. It was also the materialisation of unique moments and rites of passage, the mirror of vanity and an emotional catalyst.

For the people of Viana do Castelo, on the other hand, *Viana Gold* represents the legacy of all these aspects with the addition of an atavistic, perennial link to a form of goldsmithery, to its possession and its display through a type of ornamentation that has very specific features in the region. *Viana Gold* also personifies the vanity and rivalry between the Minho women and the incorporation of ancient and recent traditions. It is the result of the growth in the display of gold in twentieth century ethnographical parades, an aspect that tradition offers to tourism, and the link between an imagined past and a present lived in a very distinctive way in the region of Viana do Castelo.

The display of traditional gold seen in the Viana do Castelo parades has no parallel in Portugal or, indeed we believe, anywhere else. Throughout the twentieth century these events underwent alterations, as younger generations created change and which also came about due to the resources available and evolving fashions; such events, however, have always maintained strong links to nineteenth century regional costumes and to the original nucleus of traditional gold jewellery.

In Viana do Castelo, traditional Portuguese gold jewellery is still an important part of the life of the local population who nurture a mix of pride in being able to acquire it, vanity in liking to exhibit it, as well as esteem for an ancestral tradition. Therefore, year after year, the parades of *Senhora da Agonia* feast erupt in an explosion of colour and glitter, as hundreds of women parade through the town in communion with friends, grandmothers, mothers and daughters, displaying either colourful embroidered costumes or gleaming black costumes decorated with sequins and glass, ornamented with all typologies of traditional Portuguese gold jewellery, or, as local people say, an array of *Viana Gold*.

To honour this tradition, the city features a *Sala do Ouro*, integrated in the *Museu do Traje*, and which is a museum for traditional Portuguese gold jewellery where hundreds of pieces are on display, resulting from a private offer to the town and subsequent acquisitions. Small and simple to big and lavish gold jewells can be appreciated, covering different purposes and periods and illustrating the relevant link in between the people from Viana do Castelo region and the traditional Portuguese gold ornaments.



The splendor of Traditional Portuguese Gold Jewellery.

Glossary



Girl bedecked with gold hollow hoops named “*carniceiras*”.

Argolas carniceiras / Butcher’s wife hoops

Hollow hoops, made of polished gold using the bending hollow tube or stamping technique, with a horse-shoe-shaped hook.

During the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century they were common amongst farmers from Baixo Minho, particularly in Braga and Barcelos regions, although they were not so common in Viana do Castelo, in Alto Minho. Nevertheless, they are used today in that area and can be also seen in the ethnographic parades of Viana do Castelo. Besides Minho province they were also used in Alto Douro, Trás-os-Montes and Douro Litoral and in this last province they were also typical among the fishermen’s wives in Póvoa de Varzim¹.

¹ Vd. CARDOSO, Artur Fonseca – *O poveiro: estudo antropológico dos pescadores da Póvoa de Varzim*. Porto: Impr. Portuguesa, 1908, pp. 12, 17, 21 e 25.



Fancy hoop earrings called “*arrecadas fidalgas*”.
Hallmark n° 139 from assayer from Porto, Moreira Baltar, active 1880/1881, (Vidal, vol.1, p.15).
Hallmarks: illegible goldsmith’s hallmarks.
Weight and measurements: 19,6 g / 4,3 x 6,2 cm.

Arrecadas fidalgas

Fancy nineteenth century stamped or cast metal hoop earrings with filigree applications. They gave rise to a typology of *à rainha* earrings known as *brincos de Barcelos*² (Barcelos earrings). Until the mid-twentieth century, they were decorated with green and red stones or seed / small pearls on the main body, or with pearls around the border or trimming the end of the piece. This decoration has disappeared, and been replaced by small gold flowers on the filigree. The model has fallen out of fashion, although it is one of the most interesting typologies of traditional Portuguese gold jewellery.

Arrecadas de Viana / Viana hoop earrings

These earrings, with a variety of models, were widely used in Minho province from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, particular in the region of Viana do Castelo. Some have a smooth, moveable part in the centre, in the shape of



Viana hoop earring, featuring a “fan” centre.
First half of the twentieth century.
Hallmarks: illegible goldsmith marks.
Weight and measurements: 55 g / 3,5 x 2,5 cm.

² Vd. Ourivesaria do Norte de Portugal.
Porto: ARPPA/AIORN, 1984, p.102

a half-moon – the lunula – whilst others bear a fan-shaped decoration. Both, however, are made in delicate filigree and end in a decorative element shaped like an inverted triangle. In addition to these variations, some examples have a gold bead next to the hook, and others a small detail with gold beads all the way round – known as bells – which are reminiscent of the bells worn by cattle, their ringing keeping away the evil spirits³, and so transforming the earring into an amulet. The idea of an amulet in Viana *arrecadas* is also conveyed by the moveable half-moon and the horseshoe-shaped hooks. This type of hooks also conveys such a connotation to the *carniceira* and *pelicana* hoop earrings.

Barrocos / Baroque pieces

Examples of wrought, bulged, hollow-shaped *arrecadas*, earrings, crosses and heart pendants, handmade in very fine gold, using a punch/stamp. The name *barroco* or *baroque* comes from its dense decoration. The decorative grammar employed calls to mind the Portuguese gilt woodcarvings, given the profusion of ornaments and the *horror vacui*; they display predominantly vegetal decoration highlighted with small applications of blue, black and white enamel. However, in the nineteenth century, *baroque* earrings, crosses and hearts sometimes had enamel in many colours, covering the pieces in their entirety. These *baroque* pieces were found all over Northern Portugal from the late nineteenth century onwards, as seen in the iconography; they were produced in Porto and in Gondomar⁴, as they are to this day, using nineteenth century punches/stamps and techniques.

The decorative exuberance of *baroque arrecadas* and earrings is centred on an imaginary central axis, meaning perfect symmetry of the ornamental motifs finishing at the centre and bottom with an acorn or a bunch of grapes. In addition to fruit and flowers, other decorative motifs include reproductions of tools used in farming life and allegorical elements whose symbolism, difficult to determine at best, has been lost in the mists of time.

³ On the amuletic characteristics of sound vd. ALMEIDA, Carlos Alberto Ferreira de – Carácter mágico do toque das campainhas: a tropicidade do som. *Revista de Etnografia*. Porto, tomo 1, vol. 6 (1966), pp. 339 a 370.

⁴ In the collection of dies belonging to Fernando Martins Pereira Lda., a workshop in Gondomar, although originating in the nineteenth century firm of António Coelho Ribeiro in Porto, there are about one thousand five hundred different stamps used to produce *baroque* pieces.



Baroque hoop earring, cross and earrings characterized by an exuberant decoration of phytomorphic nature, 1821-1855.

Hoop earring

Weight and measurements: 11,12 g / 5,5 x 3 cm.

Hallmarks: illegible goldsmith's hallmarks.

Cross

Weight and measurements: 6,03 g / 6,8 x 4,5 cm.

Hallmarks: Mark n° 104 from the assayer from Porto, Cosme Martins da Cruz Júnior, in use between 1821 to 1855 (Vidal, vol. I, p. 11).

Earrings

Weight and measurements: 1,5 g / 9 cm.

Hallmarks: from Oporto Mint (1887-1937); illegible goldsmith's hallmarks.

The surface of the *baroque* hearts is also decorated all over, sometimes with a heart-shaped cartouche at the centre. The two sides of the piece can have the same or different decorations, and the size varies from three to twelve centimetres in height.

The baroque cross, in turn, consists of a bulged stamped latin cross made in fine gold, with three arms of the same length and a longer one, without the image of Christ crucified. It is decorated with many phytomorphic motifs which can be partially symmetrical or asymmetrical, dotted with symbolic motifs.

From the nineteenth century onwards, they were used in the Douro, Trás-os-Montes and inland Minho regions, as well as in some areas of central and southern Portugal.

Botões (buttons)

Designation given in Minho to the first earrings worn by little girls, as well as to small earrings for daily use. The term was also applied to small mourning earrings worn by widows, and to metal buttons used to close waistcoats or shirts.



Botões: Children earrings decorated with gold beads and fake pearls, and earrings with the sun and the moon, which function as protective motives. First half of the twentieth century.

Borboleta (butterfly)

A small pendant, in various sizes, in the shape of an inverted heart or butterfly wing, used to decorate a gold chain or a beaded necklace. Its main characteristic lies in the decoration with floral, geometric or religious engraved motifs. Sometimes there is a high relief flower at the centre to complete the decoration. On one of the faces of the older models one might find the word “Amor” (love) engraved, later replaced by the word “Amizade” (friendship), no doubt with the same romantic meaning.



Butterfly pendants.

Measurements: 4,5 x 4,9 cm / 3 x 3,5 cm.

End of nineteenth century / first half of the twentieth century.

Brincos à rainha (à rainha earrings)

Nineteenth century earrings that were considered the most elaborate gold earrings within the traditional gold jewellery. They are made of three hinged bodies, a rosette to fix to the earlobe, a central bow and a full, rounded body with a circular moveable piece at the centre. They are similar to the “brincos à rei” earrings, which are slightly narrower. They are also known in Ponte de Lima as *picadinhos* (chopped)⁵, and the locals claim that this is the original designation of the ornament. In Viana do Castelo, on the other hand, as *rainha* meaning queen, it was said that the name *à rainha* was closely linked to the visit made by Queen D. Maria II to the city in 1852. However, there is no documentary reference attesting to that fact, which has survived only in the city’s oral tradition.

À rainha earrings were the result of a development in the typology of bow and pendant earrings of the late eighteenth century; these were also made with hyaline quartz, commonly known as *Minas Novas*⁶, in the early nineteenth century. When adopted into popular use they were made only in gold, mainly in the cast technique, but also in filigree.

⁵ Thus designated because of its slightly rough and pitted surface, caused by the chisel used to finish the piece.

⁶ Minas Novas (New Mines) is a historical designation for a type of jewellery made with chrysoberyl and other colorless gems.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century these earrings were decorated with small red and green stones, a decoration that has since disappeared, owing to the growing importance of gold jewellery as a store of value. This led to the fact that only gold was used, as that was the value it would have in the pawnshop or when selling. The morphology of the *à rainha* earring has remained constant over time, but there are five different variations, with obvious similarities, although produced in different techniques. They come in various sizes and were at all times used in small and large examples, some even reaching down to the shoulders. They have been worn all over the North of Portugal, since the mid-nineteenth century, and also in many regions of central and southern Portugal. However, Minho is the region where they appear most often, and their use grew during the twentieth century, particularly in the parades of Minho feast days, to the extent that the use of other typical earrings of the region has been eclipsed.



À rainha earrings.

Weight and measurements: 62,13 g / 10,5 x 4,5 cm.

Hallmark: nr. 1662 from Delfim Barros Lima, goldsmith from Gondomar, registered in 1934 and cancelled in 1967 (Vidal, vol.II, p. 173).

Brincos de meia libra/ Half sovereign earrings

These have been very typical of the region of Alto Minho since the late nineteenth century. Their weight made them hard to tolerate, often causing the earlobes to tear. The coins most preferred when executing this decoration were those that bear the likeness of Queen Victoria, rather than those showing King George V. Some of the models were surrounded by a strand of twisted gold wire. However, many country women preferred the simpler model, as the wire tended to snag and damage their headscarves.



Earrings made with half sovereigns, known as “brincos de meia-libra”, beginning of the twentieth century.

Colar de contas / Beaded necklace

A necklace made with gold beads which are bought one at a time, depending on one's desire or finances. The beads used for each necklace could be of various shapes and sizes. Very common all over the North of Portugal, since the mid-nineteenth century, they became particularly relevant in Minho, particularly in Viana do Castelo, where the favourite model consists of necklaces made with beads called *olho-de-perdiz* (partridge eye) or Viana beads. In this region, and from the mid-nineteenth century throughout the following century, it was the item most commonly used by women on a day to day basis, both while working or during feast days. In the twentieth century it became the most ubiquitous item in ethnographic parades, decorating both working costumes and rich costumes.

Beaded necklaces appear in different sizes, from half-necklaces, short full necklaces (with beads all the way round) and long necklaces which may come down below the waist, used abundantly until the 1950s. The half necklace has been in constant use since the nineteenth century, and it is worn close round the neck or like a choker, generally with a pendant. However, when more than one necklace was worn, including models of different beads, the pendant was applied only to the first necklace close to the neck, a custom that is still present today in parades.



Bead necklace. First half of the twentieth century.
37 gold beads, one gold coin, cotton thread.
Measurements: 20 cm.
Hallmark: Illegible marks.

It has been considered that the diversity of beaded necklace sizes was due to a question of economy, as they varied as much as permitted by the number of beads acquired⁷. However, from an analysis of nineteenth century wills and a look at the iconography of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, it is possible to conclude that many women in the region of Viana do Castelo owned more than one half-necklace, and no complete necklace, revealing that economy went hand in hand with taste and fashion. It was the first adornment that women acquired (except for earrings), since the large linked chains, solid gold chains or *grilhões*, and braided gold chains succeeded the necklaces with smooth, round or oval beads, as Minho women became richer⁸.

The simple version of this necklaces consisted of gold beads strung on linen thread, known as “fio do Norte” (Northern thread) ending in silk ribbons. A variation of

⁷ Vd. PEIXOTO, Rocha – *As filigranas*. Porto: UCE. Porto, 2011 p. 48.

⁸ Vd. PEIXOTO, Rocha – *IDEM, ibidem*, p. 48.

this came when the beads were strung on manually woven cotton thread in red, yellow or blue, with a tassel at the end made in the same colour, or in threads braided in the three colours. The task of stringing beads onto the thread was left to the “*enfiadeiras de contas*”, bead threaders, positioned opposite the goldsmiths’ stands in local markets. In the 1940s at Ponte de Lima market, the bead threaders were still kept very busy threading the beads that customers entrusted to their hands⁹. A full necklace, on the other hand, with beads all the way round the neck, might be presented in traditional form or even with the beads threaded on a gold thread.



Bead threader, Ponte de Lima, 1940s.

From the early nineteenth to the mid twentieth century, women did not even remove their beaded necklace before going to bed, but merely loosened the fastening for greater comfort, and the continued use of this item of jewellery reflects the protective powers attributed to the beads¹⁰.

⁹ Vd. AURORA, Conde d’ – *Roteiro da Ribeira Lima*. 3.^a ed. Porto: Livraria Simões Lopes, 1959, p. 214.

¹⁰ “(...) *as contas, ramos e figuras de coral ou de azeviche, ao pescoço de crianças e em adereços de adultos, evitam encantos e conflitos*” (... beads, branches and figures in coral or jet, found round children’s necks or as adult accessories, avoid spells and conflicts). Vd. CHAVES, Luís – *Do colar de contas ao colar de pérolas. Ourivesaria Portuguesa*. Porto: Empresa de Publicidade do Norte, nº11 (3.º trimestre 1950), p. 169.

The first known gold beads were solid, but became hollow in the 1st millennium B.C. Greeks, Etruscans and Phoenicians made them, and the people of the *castro* culture¹¹ in Portugal also wore them. Round beads with filigree and grain have been known since the Mycenaean period¹², and the Portuguese knew about these beads since their contacts with the Akan people of S. Jorge da Mina (present day Elmina in Ghana), in the fifteenth century, but also during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries¹³.

Viana beads or partridge eye beads are similar to Etruscan beads. They are made by cutting a thin gold sheet into circles of varying diameters, depending on the size required. These circles are then curved into a half sphere and soldered to the other half with a blowtorch. These form the bead to which are applied decorative filigree granules. The beads are made almost exclusively in the workshops of Travassos, Oliveira and Sobradelo da Goma, in Póvoa de Lanhoso. In 1941, these hollow beads were used by filigree workers to make earrings and necklaces, alternating smooth and filigree beads, and also rosaries, but this typology later ceased. In the 1940s, in a description of the Festa da Agonia, is mentioned the great variety of beads used in necklaces: smooth, round, oval, without filigree applications or with them, such as the referred partridge eye, which were considered to be “the most modern” at the time¹⁴. In 1927, this model had been considered as a simple composition where the filigree is almost non-existent but, filled the eye because of the volume, which pleased the regional sense based on quantity, and its use was attributed to Viana do Castelo, Braga and Barcelos¹⁵. There are also other models with beads made entirely of filigree, stamped and twisted beads which go by different names, such as covered beads, Brazilian beads, rice grain beads, saffron beads, or even barrel beads, to name just a few. Beads have always been made in various sizes. Indeed, in the last years of the twentieth century large beads, particularly the partridge eye model, came back into fashion, mainly forming necklaces worn close to the neck.

11 Castro culture (meaning “culture of the hill-forts”) is the archaeological term for the material culture of the north-western regions of the Iberian Peninsula from the end of the Bronze Age (6th century BC) until it was subsumed by Roman culture (c. 1st century BC).

12 Vd. CHAVES, Luís – *As filigranas*. Lisboa: S.N.I., 1941, p. 62.

13 Vd. GODOY, Solange – *O círculo das contas*. [S.l.]: Editora Museu Carlos Costa Pinto, 2006.

14 Vd. AURORA, Conde d’ – *Festas da Agonia*. Porto: Gráfica do Porto, 1948, p. 8.

15 Vd. FAZENDA, Pedro – *Ourivesaria Portuguesa Contemporânea*. Lisboa: [s.n.], 1927 p. 193.

The bead necklace is the most iconic necklace in the Minho province.





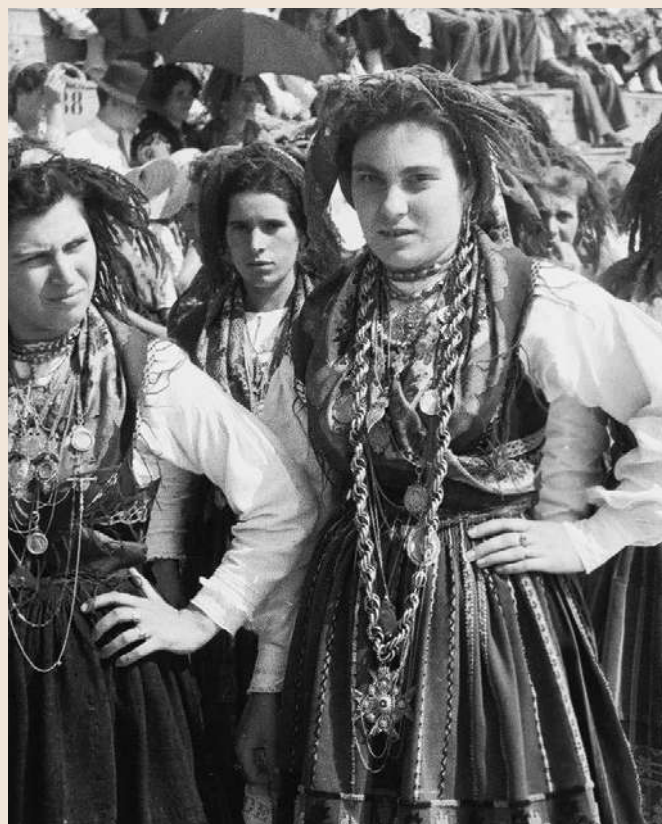
Filigree beads necklace, first half of the twentieth century.

Colar de contas de filigrana / Filigree bead necklace

A necklace made of beads entirely fashioned from filigree, formed by two stylised kind of flowers filled in with filigree and then rounded and soldered to form the bead. This necklace fell out of use at the start of the first half of the twentieth century. The shape of the bead is similar to the bead forming the “bulla earring”, at the National Archaeology Museum in Lisbon (Inventory n° Au 151), dating from the late Middle Ages (476-1000 A.D.), which came from Alcoutim, in Faro.

Colar de corda / Rope necklace

A necklace made of a thick and twisted gold string which resembles a rope and which could have different lengths. They were used in the late nineteenth century and in the first mid-twentieth century, but, from that date on, ceased to appear in public, namely in processions and pilgrimages. In the first half of the century, generally, they were used without any ornament, however, in the iconography, they sometimes appear with a hanging Maltese cross matching the size of the necklace, but it is unknown whether this fact would be a custom or simply a coincidence.



Girl displaying a massive “rope necklace”. Viana do Castelo, 1940.

Colar de gramalheira (sautoir)

Designation given to three types of necklaces that are the most flamboyant in the traditional Portuguese gold jewellery. One type, the simplest one, consists of a necklace formed of large hollow links. The other type presents two variations consisting one of a string of saltire-shaped links connected by a bar and linked by gold rings; and the other being fashioned from a chain of fine gold threads braided by hand, ending at the side with small half hoops in different coloured gold. In these two cases, the morphology of the necklaces resemble a sautoir that crosses at the centre, under a stylised flower or star, decorated with pearls and inexpensive gemstones, from which hangs a matching medallion – the *medalha de gramalheira*, similarly decorated. Initially considered a type of bourgeois jewellery, more appropriated to the wealthy middle and higher classes, this type of sautoirs, in the first decades of the twentieth century, possibly due to economic crisis and taste were alienated and started to be used by country women with some social and economic standing. Since then, they integrated in the traditional gold jewellery. The more typical production being located in Póvoa de Lanhoso.



Flamboyant gold necklaces known as “colar de gramalheira”.

Measurements:

1 Necklace: 40 cm, closed; Medallion: 12 x 6,5 cm.

2 Necklaces: 46 cm, closed; Medallions: 17 x 11 cm.

Hallmark: illegible hallmarks; early twentieth century.



Several long traditional gold chains, known as “cordão”, bedeck this woman; 1940/45.

Cordão / Gold chain

A gold chain measuring 2 to 2,40 m, made of round or pear-shaped rings, hooked together. The two ends of the chain are linked by a gold hoop called frequently *bilheira*, or, less frequently, a hook and eye. Traditionally, they were handmade, indeed they still are when weighing more than 200g. Once the gold thread is at the desired thickness, the links are cut and connected to each other, work which was done at home by women called *engatadeiras* (couplers), in Gondomar, the region where they are produced.

In addition to being worn as a piece of jewellery, they have been given amuletic characteristics, and can also be found in Minho *cancioneiros* or songbooks and in Minho prayers¹⁶. It was considered a devotional gold item when used in religious events and in the nineteenth century processions

¹⁶ Vd. PIMENTEL, Alberto – *O Porto há trinta anos*. Porto: CITAR, 2011, pp. 33-34.

the saints on the stands were decorated with these gold chains from head to foot¹⁷, a procedure dating back to the eighteenth century, extending beyond the twentieth century into the present time, in some places of the North. These gold chains were also used to decorate the crosses in the *Compasso da Páscoa*¹⁸: a Portuguese tradition when the priest and a small retinue visit people’s homes where they are given the holy cross to kiss, at Easter day. They were also used as decorative ornaments to glorify farmhouses as well as to enrich the decorations of the festive arches put up at these farms when a daughter was married, both in Minho¹⁹ and in Douro Litoral²⁰, emphasising the type of wealth associated with this chain among country folks. As regards this exaltation of its owner, on occasions of grand displays, gold chains were placed on the yoke of a pair of bullocks in the parade, demonstrating the lavishness of the particular farm in question and the great ornamental importance attached to this chain. Until the mid-twentieth century, this gold chain was the key in ornaments worn by women of the North of Portugal, serving also to confirm their economic status. In the second half of that century, this intensive use altered, also within those parameters. However, they still are an important component in ethnographic parades in Minho.

Coração²¹ / Heart pendant

A pendant in the shape of a stylised heart in varying sizes, and different techniques and morphology, much used in rural areas of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho²² region in the North of Portugal from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

¹⁷ Vd. PIMENTEL, Alberto – *O Porto na berlinda*: memórias d’uma família portuense. Porto: Livraria Internacional de Ernesto Chardron, 1894, p. 60.

¹⁸ Vd. LIMA, A. C. Pires de – *O ouro nas tradições populares. Ourivesaria Portuguesa*. Porto: Empresa de Publicidade do Norte, 10 (1950), p. 96; PAÇO, Tenente Afonso – *Usos, costumes, crenças e medicina popular. Revista Lusitana*, 28 (1-4) (1930), p. 246.

¹⁹ Vd. PEIXOTO, Rocha – *As filigranas... Op. cit.*, p. 80.

²⁰ Vd. NUNES, Franklin – *O casamento: uma tradição em declínio. Douro Litoral – Boletim da Comissão Provincial de Etnografia e História*. Porto: Junta de Província, 3.^a s., 6 (1949), p. 49.

²¹ In her work “*Olhos coração e mãos no cancioneiro popular português*”, Lisboa, [s.n.], 1990, Ana Paula Guimarães considers that the heart is an allusion to all that is most intimate, interior and profound, as the source of life and love, coinciding with the matrix of memory. She illustrates the use of the heart in various artistic aspects, but shows no photographic record of models of hearts in Portuguese traditional gold jewellery. However, she does show two bulging hearts, with a hollowed cross, the arms in the shape of swallows’ tails which she considers to be amulet jewels, with no information as to the metal in question and which we have not encountered in our investigations.

²² Entre-Douro-e-Minho now corresponds to the regions of Minho (Viana do Castelo) and Douro Litoral (Porto).



Heart pendant in gold.
Weight and measurements: 5,7 g / 4,8 x 2 cm.
Hallmark: hallmark from Oporto Mint (1887-1937).
Illegible goldsmith marks.

Its use was revived at the end of the twentieth century, in the parades of the feasts in the Viana do Castelo region. Indeed, it is one of the best-loved pieces of the traditional gold jewellery and also one with the most reproductions in silver gilt, when made in filigree. At such events, over time the heart underwent transformations in size and placement on the countrywoman's chest. Initially very large in size, it occupied a central position on the chest, hanging from a chain. As it diminished in magnitude it moved from this central setting and was either placed to one side or bottom centre, completing the composition and no longer occupying its prominent position. Initially, in Portugal, the heart was associated with the order of divine love and in thanksgiving for the gift of heaven²³. In the eighteenth century, its religious undertones were linked to a strong devotion that D. Maria I, Queen of Portugal from 1777 to 1816, had for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Because of that devotion, the queen promised she would build a basilica as soon as she gave birth to a male child, and in payment of that promise Estrela Basilica was consecrated in Lisbon in 1789. This church is considered to be the first building in the world to be dedicated to the Heart of Jesus, a devotion that spread widely in Portugal during the romantic nineteenth century²⁴. Also, as a result of this veneration, Queen D. Maria I issued a royal decree in 1789 determining that the three most important religious orders of Portugal – Christ, Aviz and Santiago –

23 Vd. TEIXEIRA, Manuela Braz – O Traje regional português e o folclore, p.379. Available on <https://www.om.acm.gov.pt.p.379>.

24 Vd. CORREIA José Eduardo Horta, in *Dicionário da Arte Barroca em Portugal*, Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 1989, p. 81

should be united and the insignia crowned with a representation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus²⁵. Morphologically speaking, the heart crowning this insignia (not yet totally asymmetrical) resembles a reliquary that was popular in France in the nineteenth century, known as the reliquary of the Sacred Heart of Mary. It was made in various materials, and was similar to the heart-reliquary that appears on the engravings of Mater Dolorosa in Monte Calvario venerata, present in Portugal in the eighteenth century. Through these deeds D. Maria I helped to disseminate the use of the heart pendant, although it did not yet have the shape we know today. However, it was also in the reign of D. Maria I that the shape of this heart became standardised, with rocaille decorations²⁶ and simple or two-sided hearts mostly originate from the late nineteenth century²⁷. As it entered the popular mainstream, the lower part of the heart became more asymmetrical in the models made in filigree, whilst the stamped hearts still resembled the older models. In turn, the upper part of the initial hearts – the flames – became more stylised, and the filigree heart has kept that shape to this day.

As the twentieth century advanced, the heart became more identified with profane love. At the start of the century, it was linked to romantic love²⁸ and, in the middle of the twentieth century, it was considered that the heart in Portuguese goldsmithery was a fusion of jewel, love symbol and love-protecting amulet²⁹.

The ambivalence of the meaning of this pendant can be seen in the designation given to the upper part of the piece – the flames – either linking it to the flames of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, for which reason they were called flaming hearts, or associating them to affection, and accordingly known as the flames of love.

The shape and the romantic connotation of the heart were found in other examples of popular art, such as ceramics and embroidery³⁰. The heart was also used to promote the region of Viana do Castelo, losing its religious or romantic connotation as it illustrated advertising campaigns promoting the city, initially with the slogan “Viana is love” and, later, “Viana stays in your heart”.

25 Vd. TEIXEIRA, José Monterroso et al – *O Triunfo do Barroco*. Lisboa: Fundação das Descobertas, 1993, p.390.

26 Vd. TEIXEIRA, Madalena Braz <https://www.om.acm.gov.pt>, p.379.

27 Vd. RIBEIRO, Margarida – *Cerzedelo e a sua Festa das Cruzes: elementos para o seu estudo*. Lisboa: [s.n.], 1972, p. 148.

28 Vd. VASCONCELOS, José Leite de – *O coração na arte e na poesia populares*. Lisboa. Imprensa Nacional, 1914, p.16.

29 Vd. CHAVES, Luís – *As Filigranas*. Lisboa: S.P.N., 1941, p. 25.

30 Vd. VASCONCELOS, J. Leite de – *Etnografia portuguesa*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1985. Vol. 9, p. 214.



Filigree heart pendant.

Weight and measurements: 46,97 g / 15 x 8,5 cm.

Hallmarks: n° 121, "X" crown, from the assayer from Porto, Vicente Manuel de Moura, registered in 1865 and used until 1880; Hallmark < JPS > nr.1278, from the goldsmith from Porto, José Pinto da Silva, registered in 1873 by Vicente Manuel de Moura (Vidal, vol.I, pp. 13, 132).

Coração de filigrana / Filigree heart pendant

A heart pendant made entirely of filigree. Filigree hearts were often used in Minho and Douro from early/mid nineteenth century onwards, as confirmed by iconography. They have been considered the main pieces of Portuguese filigree, veritable works of art by filigree masters³¹. They are made in Póvoa de Lanhoso and in Gondomar, although traditionally the latter is the locality most associated with this production. The pendant consists of two modules: the heart itself, and a crowning element identified with stylised flames of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or Mary, which has lent the piece its name of flaming heart. The structure is filled in with filigree decorated with small overlaid rosettes, also made of filigree, placed at the centre, or else enamelled decorations. In the first half of the twentieth century the central rosette was often replaced with an enamel image of Our Lady of Conception³², but this is no longer the case. They could also be decorated with a few coloured glass stones and turquoises, in addition to enamel, although this decoration was becoming less frequent by the early twentieth century³³ and indeed, has since disappeared,

31 Vd. CHAVES, Luís – *As filigranas*. Lisboa: S.N.I., 1941, p. 62.

32 Vd. PEIXOTO, Rocha – *As filigranas*. Porto: UCE; CIONP; CITAR, 2011, p. 57.

33 Vd. PEIXOTO, Rocha – *IDEM, Ibidem* pp. 54 e 59.

so that only enamel is used now. Until the 1950s, some models displayed an enamelled Cross of Christ in the centre, but this is no longer in use and only gold flowers or small dots are used as decoration.

Traditionally made as a double piece, the production of one-sided filigree hearts flourished in the second half of twentieth century; nowadays these are also made in silver and other less noble alloys, to replace the items in gold. Consequently, it is not only used in ethnographic parades but also by women of many regions in their day to day life, hanging from necklaces made of various materials. It is also one of most purchased filigree pieces by tourists when visiting Portugal.

Cruz / Cross

Traditional Portuguese jewellery adopted the cross in its many shapes: Roman, Greek, with Christ crucified, stylised and ranging in size from miniatures to large-scale examples. An immediate symbol of Christ, His suffering and man's redemption, the cross in traditional jewellery is not merely a solitary, long-suffering version of His martyrdom. In this universe, the cross is marked by the luminosity of the aureoles, the light, sinuous quality of the filigree and the exuberant demonstration of flora entirely covering the models of the bulged, stamped crosses known as *barrocas* (*baroque*). People make a distinction between *Christs* and *Crosses*, depending on whether or not they display a figure of Christ crucified. There are many models: in total or partly in filigree, stamped or cast, and simple hollow tube crosses. It is also called the cross of Malta, although this piece has no religious connotation.

Cruz de canevão e resplendor / Hollow tube cross with aureole

The most important model of a cross within traditional jewellery depicts the body of Christ crucified, His weeping mother at His feet. However, the great aureole of rays of light surrounding His body, removes the inherent degree of suffering from the cross, suggesting an image where pain is overcome and redemption is acclaimed. The hollow tube cross with aureole marked the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, for it was part of the trio of ornaments always worn by wealthy countrywomen – cross, heart and ornate gold medal, the *gramalheira medals*, and/or reliquary. In Minho, this eminently religious ornament was present on the bosom of all country women with some social and economic standing, who preferred it to the cast crosses and the *baroque* crosses, the latter more used in the Douro region.



Cross with aureole, known as “cruz de canevão e resplendor”.
Weight and measurements: 53,50 g / 21 x 13 cm.
Hallmarks: hallmark from Oporto Mint (1887-1937).
Illegible goldsmith hallmarks.



Maltese cross: gold filigree and enamel.
Weight and measurements: 74,6 g / 18,5 x 13,7 cm.
Hallmarks: n° 20, from Oporto mint, department of Gondomar,
in use between 1900 to 1910; goldsmith mark n° 2637 from
Manuel Gaudêncio Correia, Gondomar (Vidal, vol. II, pp 9, 271).

Cruz de Malta / Maltese cross

A four-armed pendant with the arms ending in a swallow tail shape, decorated with blue and white enamel, having no religious connotation.

Initially an insignia, in nineteenth century, in Portugal, the Maltese cross was often used as a pendant adorned with gems, accompanying the aesthetic evolution that was characteristic of jewellery. When it became part of traditional popular jewellery in Portugal, the Maltese

cross was made of filigree, the gems replaced by enamel. It was made in different sizes, from tiny crosses to ones over fifteen centimetres long, some of them quite heavy. The use of the large filigree Maltese cross was extensively widespread along the Portuguese littoral, having reached the all North and Centre of the country in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century appeared with great prominence in the ethnographical parades in Viana do Castelo. Depending on its volume, it would occupy a central position in the gold composition displayed by the parading women, generally hanging from a *grilhão* or a *colar de corda*, or else mirroring another ornament – a *laça*, a framed gold coin or a reliquary.

In Minho, this ornament was also known as “Star”, given the resemblance of the eight-pointed piece to stylised representations of these luminous bodies; this also distances the cross from its relation with the Order of Malta, making it an item more closely connected with nature, and highlighting country people’s unawareness of its origin.

Esmaltes / Enamels

Portraits on enamel in sepia, green, black, blue and sanguine, placed in settings made in white and yellow gold, or in gold and silver, decorated with phytomorphic scrolls and seed pearls. Commonly worn as brooches, they could also hang from a chain, and indeed the frames presented both possibilities. These items of sentimental goldsmithery were used by the wives of farmers, fishermen and city folk, as a sign of commitment to a fiancé, evoking a dead husband, father and grandfather or displaying a photograph of children or grandchildren.

Often before embarking for the Colonial War in Africa in the 1960s, it was customary for young conscripts to give their girlfriend an “enamel” with their photograph, for them to



Adornments, from the first half of the 20th century,
known as “Esmaltes” (*enamels*) representing family members.

wear in their absence. The considerable sales of this ornament fully justified the existence of goldsmiths devoted exclusively to producing the settings for such enamels until the 1970s, when sales dropped. In a lesser extent, women could offer men a flat-top ring with an enamel, containing their photograph. However, the enamel photo rings for men were not as widely used as the *enamels* worn by the women. During the twentieth century *enamels* were not part of the gold panoply worn by the women taking part in the ethnographic parades of the Viana do Castelo region or, indeed, of any display when the typical costume was worn. However, in the last decades of that century and up to this day, it was customary to find an *enamel* on the bosom of young women dressed in traditional costumes, particularly with a portrait of their grandfather, and it is also common in the women parading with the costume of the Ribeira, the fishing quarter of Viana do Castelo.

Grilhão / Gold chain

A spectacular chain made of interlinked loops of different sizes, typically worn by wealthy country women. The length of the chain varied from short to very long, the first being worn close round the neck. Longer ones fell to the waist and were placed in such a way as to frame all other ornaments displayed. They were very popular from the mid-nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century. From then on, their use declined and from the second half of the twentieth century onwards they were no longer seen in public, not even in the parades during the feast of Viana do Castelo.

Traditional chain known as *grilhão de aros*.

Weight and measurements: 70,60 g / 52 cm long; rings 2,5 cm diameter.

Hallmarks: Vicente da Silva Aguiar, registered in 1865.

Traditional chain known as *grilhão fino*.

Weight and measurements: 28,3 g / 37 cm.

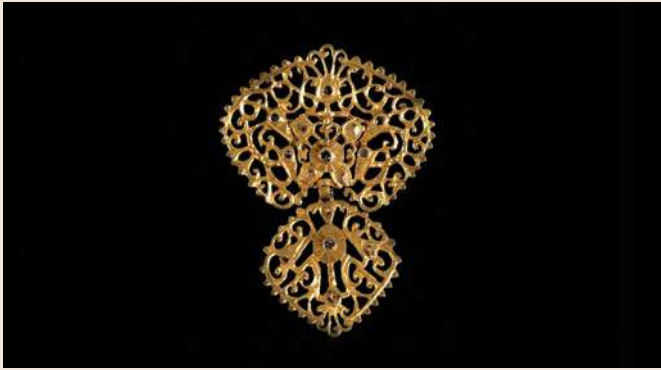
Hallmarks: hallmark from Oporto Mint (1887-1937).



E

G





Bow pendant, known as *laça* in the casted and filigree versions.
First half of twentieth century.
Weight and measurements: 3,6 g / 4,1 x 3 cm; 8 x 5 cm.
Hallmarks: illegible marks.

Laça / Bow pendant

Laça and *laço* have the same meaning. The *laça* is a pendant that evolved from the bow and cross pendants of traditional Portuguese eighteenth century jewellery which, on coming into popular use, in the nineteenth century, were no longer decorated with gemstones, and were made through melting and in filigree. This item is frequently seen in the parades of the Feast of Senhora da Agonia in Viana do Castelo, mainly worn on the richer costumes.

In 1942, José Rosas Júnior considered that bows / *laças* were genuinely Portuguese production since this typology appears not to have existed in any other country. This author considered that most bows / *laças*, in a general way, present a contour and decorations within the spirit of the shields of the time of King D. João V, although they recall stylised heart shapes³⁴.

34 Vd. ROSAS Júnior, José – A ourivesaria portuense. *Panorama*, 2.^a s., n.º 4 (1952, pp. 11 and 12).

Writing at the end of the twentieth century, Manuel Freitas considered that the design of the Portuguese bows is very similar to jewellery engravings showing ribbons and bows with a double loop, published by Gilles Legaré, a goldsmith at the French court, in 1663³⁵.

Maria José Carvalho³⁶, on the other hand, considers that the bow – the first jewel truly originating in the North of Portugal – appeared in the seventeenth century. She defined it as generally being a small pendant consisting of a double bow with scrolled ribbon decoration, which might have a diamond at the centre. As for its name, she advocates that it comes from the elongated hoop at the back, to enable it to be used with a silk ribbon.

Margarida Ribeiro³⁷ believes that the *laça* derived from the bow already present in Portuguese jewellery. According to Leonor d'Orey, chiselled gold pendants with diamonds, which gave rise to the *laça*, are viewed as being typically Portuguese, although the bow motif is a recurring decorative motif in seventeenth century goldsmithery³⁸. This writer considers that the initial bow-shaped pendants also bore a stylised cross suspended from the bow, and that it was the combination of the two adornments, the bow and the cross, that gave rise to the Portuguese *laça* which is still made to this day with little variety in the designs³⁹. Leonor d'Orey also believes that the erudite forms of this type of jewel gave rise to lovely popular variations, becoming part of the repertoire of traditional jewellery, particular in the North of Portugal. Its use and manufacture kept up with evolving styles throughout the eighteenth century, was taken up again in the second half of the nineteenth century, and has continued to this day⁴⁰.

35 Vd. COSTA, Amadeu, FREITAS, Manuel – *Ourar e Trajar*. Viana do Castelo: Uniarte Gráfica, p. 135.

36 Vd. SOUSA, Maria José Carvalho – *A arte do ouro*. Póvoa de Lanhoso: Pelouro da Cultura da Câmara Municipal de Póvoa de Lanhoso, 1994, p. 10.

37 Vd. RIBEIRO, Margarida – *Laças de ouro e jóias afins: elementos para o estudo de jóias portuguesas*. In *Memoriam António Jorge Dias*. Lisboa: Instituto da Alta Cultura, 1974, p. 327.

38 Vd. OREY, Leonor d' – *Cinco séculos de Joalharía*. Lisboa: Instituto Português de Museus, 1995, p. 67.

39 Vd. OREY, Leonor d' – *IDEM Ibidem* p. 46.

40 Vd. OREY, Leonor d' – *Cinco séculos... Ob.cit* p. 50.

Libra / Sovereign

An adornment consisting of a gold sovereign in a quite elaborate gold setting, called *libra ourada*, *libra guarnecida* and *libra rendada* (gold sovereign, decorated sovereign, lacy sovereign). In Minho, the preferred sovereigns for this type of pendant are those bearing the effigy of Queen Victoria, usually called “*libras cara de mulher*” (sovereign with woman’s face) or “*libras da rainha com véu*” (sovereign of queen with veil), related to the queen’s portrait. They are also known as “*libras cavalinho*” (horse sovereigns), in this case, a reference to St. George’s horse on the reverse of the coin. It has been considered that the presence of gold sovereigns in Minho, and the display by village women of gold pieces, became more widespread in the 1860-1870s. This happened as many families received remittances from emigrants in Brazil, but also because, at the same time, there were exports to England of large quantities of live cattle⁴¹, usually raised by small-scale farmers⁴². Added to such events was the superiority of the British pound sterling as the dominant currency worldwide, throughout the entire nineteenth century, justifying its presence in Portugal, making it perfect for purposes of creating a nest egg, and its later use as an adornment.

By the late nineteenth century, the sovereign initially appeared as a fob on the watch chains worn by farmers and later became ornaments for their wives and daughters. It took a few decades for their display to acquire its well-defined contours. Sovereigns and half sovereigns, with their more or less elaborate settings, date from the late nineteenth century, and their use as pendants and earrings was intense until about 1930, when it declined. The use of coins in jewellery and in male luxury items corresponds to the idea of some sort of savings, synchronic with a time when such coins were widely accepted in



Gold sovereign / “*libra ourada*”, first half of the twentieth century.
Weight and measurements: 9,5 g / 6,5 x 5,7 cm.
Hallmarks: illegible marks.



41 Trade in cattle between these two countries began in 1847, through the bar of the Douro River, at which time 548 head were exported. The market grew steadily, reaching between 15 and 20.000 head between 1847 and 1878, about half believed to have been of the Barrosã breed. The meat of the exported cattle because known as “*Portuguese beef*”, and its reputation was mostly due to the excellent characteristics of these animals. Freight between the city of Porto and any English port cost 2 pounds a head. The voyage took between four and four and a half days to London, Southampton and Liverpool, and five days to Glasgow and Dublin, the five British ports to which cattle from Porto was sent, in commodious steamships, with a displacement of 500 to 600 tonnes. Vd. LIMA, Silvestre B. – Exposição pecuária de Penafiel. *O Occidente, revista ilustrada de Portugal e do estrangeiro* ano 1, 16 (15.8.1878), pp. 125-126.

42 Vd. MEDEIROS, António; PEREIRA, Benjamim; BOTELHO, João Alpuim – *Traje à vianesa: uma imagem da nação*. Viana do Castelo: Câmara Municipal de Viana do Castelo, 2009, p. 16.

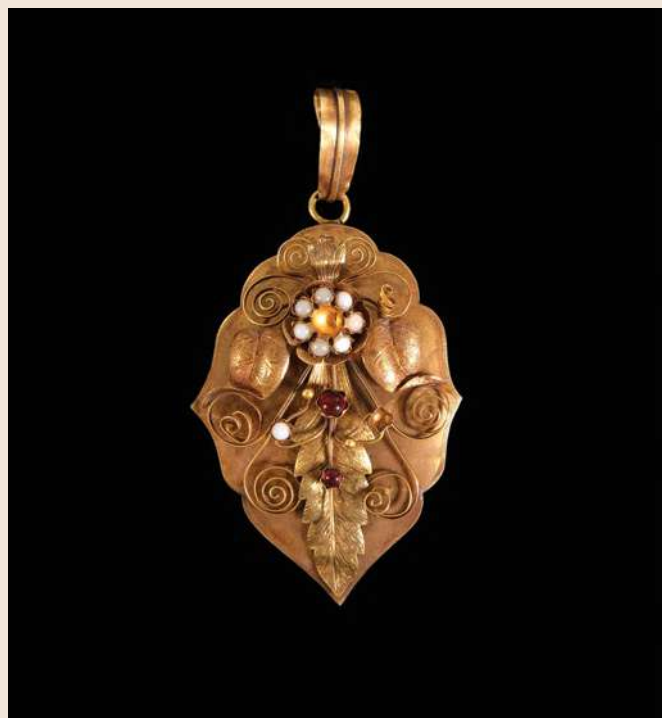
Portugal because of their exchange value⁴³. Nevertheless, in the late 1930s, many such coins could still be found displayed on women's bosoms. Its major presence in ethnographical parades comes after the 1940s, and corresponds to the increase in the number of adornments displayed by each woman. Note, also, that to make up for the lack of any such English coins in a family, or the means to buy one, we see the emergence of the "medal", an adornment similar to the decorated sovereign, but where the coin is an imitation made by goldsmiths, with no numismatic value, although surrounded by a gold setting, similar in every way to those surrounding real sovereigns.

Garnished with fantastical gold settings, the sovereign became one of the most prized possessions of the women of the North of Portugal, in the twentieth century. It was an ornamental motif and, at the same time, a nest egg given its numismatic value. When seen hanging from the traditional gold chain – the *cordão* – it forms the most popular set throughout the twentieth century, both in daily contexts and in ethnographic parades, and, indeed, is still used by older women on feast days in country areas.



The "libra ourada", a gold sovereign set in a lavish gold frame, was a constant adornment throughout nineteenth and twentieth centuries in different contexts.

⁴³ Vd. RIBEIRO, Margarida – *Cerzedelo e a sua Festa das Cruzes: elementos para o seu estudo*. Lisboa: [s.n.], 1927, pp. 148 e 149.



Decorated medallion known as *gramalheira*.
Measurements: 8,5 x 4,5 cm.
Hallmarks: hallmark from Oporto Mint (1887-1937);
Illegible goldsmith hallmarks.

Medalha de gramalheira / Decorated medallion

Designation given to highly decorated medallions made of a fine sheet of gold bearing floral applications or festoons, also in gold, in different shades, as well as small turquoises and imitation pearls and rubies. The size of such pieces varies, but they are usually fairly large. Initially, these medallions would have been used in conjunction with a sautoir necklace, or *colar de gramalheira*, hence the name. In this case, the gemstones should be the same colour as the ones decorating the centre of the sautoir necklace. Today, however, they may hang from any chain strong enough to take their weight. *Medalhas de gramalheira* are a showy and flamboyant typology of goldsmithery, which explains their popularity, particularly during the ethnographic parades in Viana do Castelo. They have been called "medallions with applied pieces and imitation stones"⁴⁴ and considered initially bourgeois jewels whose use spread to the local populations during a period of economic crisis⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Vd. ROSAS JÚNIOR, José – A ourivesaria portuguesa. *Panorama*, 2.^a s., n.º 4 (1952), p. [39].

⁴⁵ Vd. RIBEIRO, Margarida – *Cerzedelo e a sua Festa das Cruzes*. Lisboa: [s.n.], 1972, p. 146.



Watch chain, from the end of the nineteenth century, adorned with eighteenth century Portuguese gold coin pendant and an "International Watch".

Men's jewellery – the watch chain

In 1789-1790, during his visit to Portugal, the British architect Jacques Murray observed that both men and women in rural areas were very fond of gold ornaments⁴⁶. This trend continued for some time in Portuguese society; at the end of the nineteenth century, Maria Rattazzi noted that from the highest-ranking members of middle-class families to the lowliest clerk, every man wore watch chains with many fobs, rings on every finger, and shirt studs made of precious stones⁴⁷. Despite these observations, the use of gold ornaments by men in rural areas, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was not as exuberant as the use by women, and only watch chains were particularly relevant. In addition to its utilitarian function, this adornment was an element of display, highlighting wealth and social standing, so that they corresponded to the use of gold ornaments by their female counterparts. The types of gold chains were similar to the gold chains used by women and known as *trancelins*, but with longer,

heavier links. One end of the chain held the watch, kept in the waistcoat pocket, while the chain was decorated with small medals of saints, favoured by the owner, in addition to family portraits and fobs of many shapes and sizes. Near the end of the other extremity was a ring, attaching the chain to a buttonhole in the waistcoat, and from the end hung a gold coin. This ornament was used on its own, although some photographs of the early twentieth century show men wearing more than one watch chain, underlining their wealth, although it is not known if this was common practice or merely fortuitous. Despite the importance of gold chains in men's ornamental wear, and the purposes inherent to their use, this taste for display steadily declined throughout the twentieth century. Even in Minho, from the second half of the century onwards, at times when a lot of gold is displayed, as in the main ethnographic parades in the region, few men wear them. This situation is obviously justified by the greater presence of men's costumes that do not include a coat and waistcoat, situation in which their use was almost mandatory.

46 Vd. *Douro Litoral – Boletim da Comissão Provincial de Etnografia e História*. 2.^a s., Porto: Junta de Província, 1 (1949), p. 29.

47 Vd. RATAZZI, Maria – *Portugal de relance*. Lisboa: Antígona, 2004, p. 298.



Fisherman's wife bedecked with "parolos" adornments: earrings, brooches and chokers in gold and coloured glass, influenced by Art Déco.

Parolos

Earrings, brooches and chokers, influenced by Art Déco, appeared on the market in the 1930s, and made in yellow gold decorated with blue, yellow, red and black glass. They were widely used by both town and country women, but are not part of the items worn with the regional costume. However, from the last decades of the twentieth century onwards, the discreet presence of some *parolo* earrings have been noted in conjunction with working costumes, whereas *parolo* necklaces and brooches are seen on the richer costumes.

Relicário, Custódia, Medalhão do Calvário / Reliquary, monstrance medal, Calvary medallion

A flamboyant piece in filigree, with religious connotations. The designation "reliquary" came about as an analogy of the piece where relics were kept. However, this particular item does not contain relics, merely evoking the original reliquaries, and probably descended from Roman reliquaries. It registers the symbology of Christ's martyrdom, for the centre immortalises the Crucifixion. It is also called a monstrance medallion as the central part has an opening similar to the opening in a monstrance where the consecrated host is placed. Some models display the symbols of Christ's crucifixion: crown of thorns, ladder, nails, whip, sponge, rod and spear, representing the martyrdom,

and are thus known as Calvary medallions⁴⁸. Other than the typology relating to Christ's passion, some reliquaries have a totally different iconographic programme, reproducing biblical scenes, with elements of Catholic symbology such as the Holy Family, or the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, pieces already common in the end of the eighteenth century and quite rare now.

Worn on special occasions in the nineteenth century, reliquaries became very common in Minho parades during the twentieth century. The size varies, some can be 30cm long, in which case they are placed at the centre of the bosom, as in the Vila Franca parades. When very small they are combined with other adornments and one might see more than ten examples on the chest of the same woman, particularly in the parades of Santa Marta de Portuzelo. However, despite their frequent use in ethnographic parades, in present days the reliquary is not used on a daily basis.



Reliquary, monstrance medal or Calvary medallion. Weight and measurements: 20,8 g / 9,5 x 4,5 cm. Hallmarks: hallmark from Oporto Mint (1887-1937). Illegible goldsmith marks.

⁴⁸ Vd. CRUZ, António – Ourivesaria. In *A arte popular em Portugal*. Lisboa: Verbo, 1963, p. 226.

Senhora da Conceição / Our Lady of Conception pendant

An image of Our Lady of Conception, chiselled or hollow, depicted frontally with joined hands and crowned head, standing on a cloud filled with a varying number of angels. It is made using various different techniques and can be cast, and small in size, or stamped and thus larger, reaching as much as 12 cm in length. Together with chains and monstrances, this religious adornment was included in the jewels that revealed their users were comfortably off. The origin of this pendant dates back to the eighteenth century but in popular contexts they have been in constant use since the nineteenth century both in Minho and in Douro Litoral. In Minho, this piece is also known as *Senhora do Caneco*.

Medals with the same invocation, in blue and yellow enamel with gold fittings that are elaborate, to a greater or lesser degree also exist, being used both in parades or in everyday life, testifying to the great appreciation in Portugal for our Lady of Conception.

According to Manuela Bras Teixeira, this depiction is a popular response to a royal gesture. In 1804, by royal favour, Queen D. Carlota Joaquina created the Order of the Noble Ladies of Saint Isabel (Ordem das Damas Nobres de Santa Isabel), as a decoration in honour of Queen Saint Isabel⁴⁹, awarded solely to ladies, as a way of honouring the ladies in waiting and maidservants who accompanied and/or visited her. According to this researcher, this gesture was repeated in popular terms, with the generalised practice of having the patron saint of Portugal – Our Lady of Conception – worn on the chest. This became the fashion, and, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards it was used outside the capital and throughout the country, but mainly in the North⁵⁰.



Our Lady of Conception, pendant.

Weight and measurements: 18,6 g / 9,5 x 4,5 cm.

Hallmarks: Oporto Mint (1887-1937); illegible goldsmith marks.

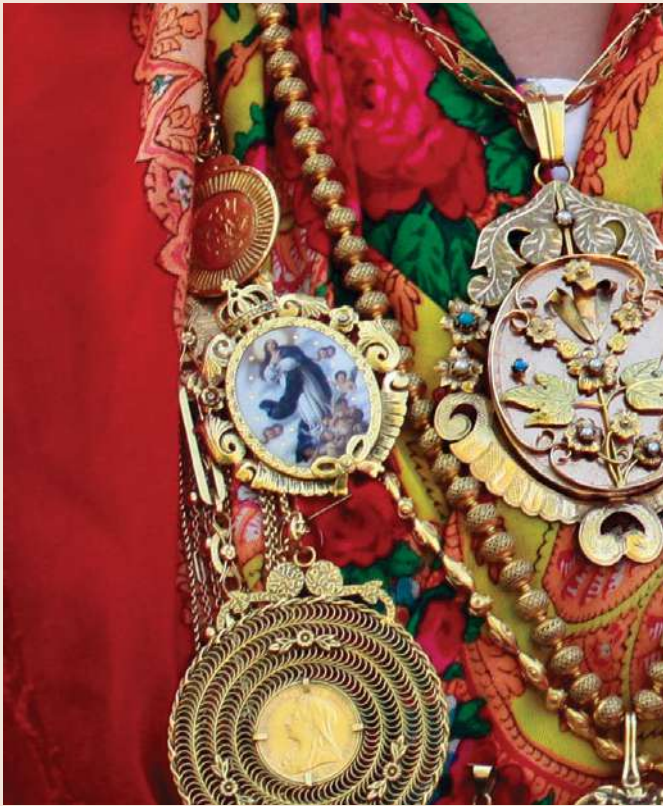
Enamel medal, second half of the twentieth century.

Weight and measurements: 52,2 g / 6,5 x 5 cm.

⁴⁹ Queen Saint Isabel was born in 1271 into the royal house of Aragon, and was married to the Portuguese King D. Dinis. Isabel quietly pursued the regular religious practices of her youth and was devoted to the poor and sick. She died in 1336, was beatified in 1526 and canonized By Pope Urban VII on 25 May 1625.

⁵⁰ Vd. TEIXEIRA, Manuela Braz – *O traje regional português e o folclore*, p.380, in http://www.oi.acidi.gov.pt/docs/Col_Percursos_Intercultura/1_PI_Cap7.pdf (30.5.2012).





Trancelim / Gold chain

About two meters long gold chain with interconnected structural elements, either stamped or in filigree, allowing unlimited combinations. Linked to the bourgeoisie, this chain was less popular among farmers than the traditional “cordão”, the simplest and basic gold chain.



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