

GEOMETRIC BRONZE PLATE FIBULA WITH AN ENGRAVED DECORATION

Greek-Geometric, late 8th century B.C.

Bronze

Dim: 13.8 x 10.2 cm

Reference: 16803



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Both sides of the plaque are decorated with geometric patterns including concentric circles, straight lines, and slanted strokes, which were made by using a punch. These patterns surround a small incised central image of the same subject matter on each side of the fibula. On one side, a horse is grazing (a star and a bird are incised between the legs of the animal), on the other, a standing horse moves toward the left, with animals including a bird and a lizard, and rhombus shapes adorning the background. The designs are characteristic of the late Geometric style, which allows us to date this piece to the late 8th century B.C. A number of linear, slightly incised lines occupy the background and frame the main decoration. Plate fibulas are among some of the first artifacts found that were produced by northern Greek craftsmen, particularly in Boeotia and in Thessaly, during the 8th and the early 7th century B.C.

They are found in shrines and also in necropolises. The pieces discovered in tombs are often in pairs and are generally slightly smaller in size in relation to the impressive examples found in sanctuaries, similar to our example. Many examples feature engraved scenes of horses. The horse was regarded as a noble animal and an archetypal status symbol during the Geometric period, and was one of the most prevalent subject matters of the time. Our piece belongs to type E of the classification established by K. Kilian; the style is close to that of several examples excavated at Pherai, in Thessaly.

CONDITION

This large fibula was cast and hammered from a single piece of bronze and is in a good state of preservation with the exception of the pin, a portion of the decorated plate, and the foot of the object, all of which are lost. The metal is covered with a beautiful green patina. The piece

is elaborate in form, composed of a stem adorned with circles in relief and three large rounded beads, terminating in a large hammered plate, square and thin in shape, the lower part of which is bent into a U

PROVENANCE

Ex-American private collection, acquired in June 2003 in New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

On northern Greek and of related Geometric fibulas, see:
COLDSTREAM, J. N., *Geometric Greece*, London, 1977, pp. 202-209.
KILIAN, K., *Fibeln in Thessalien von der mykenischen bis zur archaischen Zeit* (PBF 14, 2), Munich, 1975, type E V c, pp. 115ff.

Some stylistically related fibulas:

A Passion for Antiquities, Ancient Art from the Collection of B. and L. Fleischman, Malibu, 1994, n. 12.

In Pursuit of the Absolute, Art of the Ancient World, The G. Ortiz Collection, Bern, 1994, n. 82.

VON BOTHMER, D. (ed.), *Glories of the Past, Ancient Art from the S. White and L. Levy Collection*, New York, 1990, n. 77.