



Inlaid Bronze Garment Hook with Plaques of Jade and Gold 錯金銀嵌玉金牌銅帶鉤

Length: 21.9 cm. (8 5/8 in.)
Eastern Zhou, Warring States period
5th-4th century B.C.

長21.9厘米
東周•戰國

The gently bowed bronze garment hook is straight at one end, the wide shaft inset with jade and gold plaques, the shaft then morphing into a wide but streamlined dragon head with upturned snout from which issues a narrow neck terminating in the small dragon-head hook. The face of the dragon on the body of the shaft is gilded while the eyes and sharp horns are picked out in silver. Behind the horns on each side are amoeba-like bird forms inlaid with silver. The actual hook at the end is formed by a less mature dragon head or *qilong* with its docile face gilded. Behind its rounded and flattened ears are open-beaked birds inlaid and dotted with silver, while the reverse of the hook is decorated with gold dotting and gilt stripes. The shaft is set with large alternating gold and jade plaques that produce the main decorative impact of the accoutrement. These plaques are surrounded by the intricately gilded and silvered designs of the shaft that consist of geometric angles and diamond and Z-shapes infilled with tight coils or scrolls. The four greyish white jade plaques are carved with comma curls. Three of the five gold plaques are square and similarly cast in relief with small dragons contorted to conform to the square space, their small heads with distinctive bug-like eyes and prominent horns, their bodies a mass of raised curls, their writhing spines emphasized with gold beading, and their tri-clawed feet emerging on one side and at the rear of each plaque. The remaining two gold plaques are slimmer and conform to the narrowing shape of the shaft with gold dragons facing each other in a more confined and tightly organized space. The reverse is finished with gold dotting and gilt stripes above the plain silver back interrupted by a button inlaid with a faint whorl motif.

An iron garment hook in the Freer collection is configured with similar jade and gold plaques arranged in an identical manner to that of the present garment hook (fig. 1); another was in the Singer col-

lection (fig. 2); and similar gold and jade plaques, separated from the original metal garment hook also believed to have been made from iron, were in the former Carl Kempe collection (fig. 3).¹ The gold

Fig. 1: Iron garment hook with jade and gold plaques, Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, 5th-4th century B.C., Freer Gallery of Art, after Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Art of the Warring States Period: Change and Continuity, 480-222 B.C.*, Washington D.C., 1982, no. 51, p. 101.

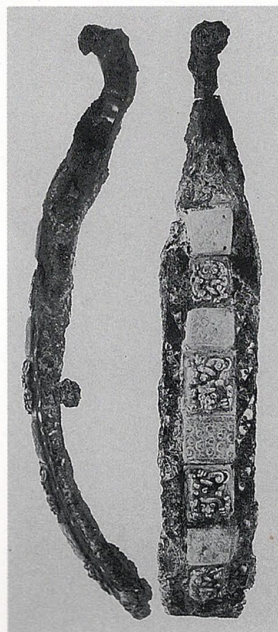


Fig. 2: Iron garment hook with jade and gold plaques, Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, 5th-4th century B.C., after Max Loehr, *Relics of Ancient China from the Collection of Dr. Paul Singer*, New York, 1965, pl. 85:c, p. 107.

