

The Royal Egyptian-Roman Metal Work Jewelry in Different Museums around the World

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Abstract

Throughout the Pharaonic era till the Roman era, the ancient Egyptians were used to highlight the value and beauty of their art through several inscriptions and metal pieces, which are being displayed at various museums, including large quantity of jewelry associated with women and queens who used them for ornamentation.

Such jewelry spot light on the nature and culture of the society throughout ages. This appeared in ancient tombs, in which antiques and different mummies were discovered. When Greeks entered Egypt, they cared about highlighting the features of their culture. This was clearly appeared in the antiques dated back to this era and was continued after the Roman entered Egypt. The Roman was cared about portraying their

Gods and emperors, who ruled Egypt from Rome, on many special pieces.

Up to date, the jewelry has been used for ornamentation of women, men, and children and now is constricted to women and children. In addition, it is used as protective amulets whose concept is differed from an era to another.

Therefore, this research aims to emphasize the artistic value and the decoration of the Royal Roman jewelry and illustrate the most important materials used and its different types, which will be studied and analyzed through some special pieces present at world and national museums that were made in Egypt during the Roman era.

Keywords: Roman era, jewelry, metal, gold, emperors, kings.

Introduction

In fact, courtship practices involving the adornment of females and systems of symbolic body ornament are generally regarded as cross-cultural universals practices and customs found in all human societies at all times. In principle, nothing has been changed, whether now or since two or three millennia ago. In the case of ancient jewelry, however, we must remember that to ancient people's mythology and religious symbolism were much more present in their daily life than in ours nowadays; this is not only evident in their frequent use of metaphors in literature. (Pinckernelle, K. (2007), 7)

Jewelry is an adjunct to clothing, a notoriously difficult subject of study for the archaeologist dealing with ancient times. Actual garments rarely survive because of the perishable nature of organic materials, and representations in art of people in contemporary dress may be styled misleading or ambiguous. (John, C. (1996), 1, 2)

The study of personal ornament is therefore an important one in trying to understand the values of past societies.

So the aim of the research is to show the features of the Roman jewelry through showing some pieces of jewelry of kings, queens and emperors that preserved in different museums around the world such as, Walters art museum, Metropolitan museum, Egyptian museum and Antiquities museum of Bibliotheca Alexandrina; because they are very important and they have different pieces related to the aim of my research, which they have a lot of Greek and Roman pieces from Egypt and also, these pieces discovered in Alexandria by these museums so that, they put them inside these museums because they are specified in these, as example the Antiquities museum of Bibliotheca Alexandrina which we have a special place for submerged monuments where discovered

in Alexandria and for these reason we have a different pieces made of gold and different jewelry displayed in these place.

Importance of jewelry:

Jewelry is still heavily loaded with symbolic values and associations, and there is every reason to believe that these factors were at least as important in antiquity as they are today, if not more so. The reasons for buying and wearing jewelry may appear to be self-evident and to have changed little over the centuries. (John, C. (1996), 5)

Two productions of a wide variety of jewelry indicates two things about society:

- The existence of a wealthy clientele.
- Its taste for luxury.

Traditional definitions of "jewel" and "jewelry" refer to ornaments of high monetary value incorporating precious metals and gemstones. However, much of the imagery in the representations of deities, usually on engraved gems which were set into jewels, typically rings. We find hardstones with depictions of most of the major gods and goddesses of Graeco-Roman mythology, and we can assume that the wearers would have exercised some conscious choice when they preferred one over the other. (John, C. (1996), 11)

Jewelry during the Roman Period is an essential part of art as a whole. The striving toward adornment, the taste and preferences for different types of jewelry are particularly pronounced in women, and this is a tradition registered since the remotest antiquity during all historical times. This does not exclude articles of adornment and jewelry being worn by men, but it was done mostly as some sort of status symbol or insignia. (Slokoska, L. N sa Cultivated taste in the late Republic and the early Empire was very simple. After childhood men didnot wear jewelry, at that time the traditional Etruscan-style bullae were used as

protective amulets, the signet-gem, was secured in a simple hoop of iron, gold or silver, the last implying possession of aristocratic (equestrian or senatorial) status.

The flamboyant Greeks of the East might wear decorated bracelets adorned with filigree, and a similar abundance appealed to certain sections of provincial society, outside the strictly Roman social circle (Henig, M. (1992), 155)

In fact, however, much Roman jewelry had its origins in the latter part of this period; sweeping changes of style became apparent before 100 B.C., not only in jewelry, also, for metalwork and ceramics exhibit markedly new tastes. In jewelry, the naturalism in figural and floral work is gradually transformed into more abstract designs and arrangements, with an increasing definition and regimentation of the separate parts and decorative elements. (Davidson, P.F. & Oliver, A. (1984),34)

Some of the Romans spent a lot of money on jewels, and some became ardent collectors of fine gems, which they sometimes put on display in temples and the ancient museums. With the lack of restricting of the nouveaux riches, and encouraged by the luxurious tastes of the Hellenized Orient many Romans followed and exaggerated the tendency toward showy magnificence in jewelry. The wearing of rings, which in the simple days of the early Republic was severely restricted, and was gradually relaxed until in the days of the Empire several might be worn on a single finger and every finger be beringed. (Thomson, M.M. (1952), 19,20)

Late Roman gold work tends to be heavier and is surely more decorate than earlier work. Hence, we find various bracelets, necklaces with large central pendants, and brooches in that the spring-plate has advanced into a heavy cross-bar. (Henig, M. (1992), 160)

Thenceforth, jewelry production flourished, even in Roman workshops, which followed the edicts of fashion dictated by those of Alexandria and Antioch. Jewelry of the Roman period continues Hellenistic tradition, though there is a gradual simplification of morphology and a gradual abandonment of granulation and filigree technique for rendering the ornament, with a complementary steady increase in the use of precious and semiprecious stones, which also includes pearls. The Romans of the early Republic had scorned jewelry as effeminate and demoralizing, but the sophisticated Romans of the Empire adopted Greek jewelry techniques and encouraged the production of fashionable ornaments stemming from the luxurious workshops of Alexandria or Antioch. (Delivonias, Angelos. (1999), 105) (Makes & Dallas, A.R. & Benake, M. & Skiadareses. (1991), 59,60)

Materials used in jewelry:

1- Gold: Egypt was one of the principal sources of gold for the ancient in the Bronze Age, and an important source thereafter. There were two main gold-producing areas: a plateau running along the west bank of the Nile for some 200 miles, its center opposite Luxor; and an area in Nubia (now in north Sudan) by the third cataract of the Nile. (Higgins, R. (1980), 10)

In Roman times, as in most other periods, much of the finest work was made in the most precious metal, gold. (John, C. (1996), 13)

One of the earliest surviving maps from the ancient world shows the whereabouts of the gold mines in the eastern Desert of Egypt. This map, dating from C. 1250 BC., is preserved in Turin. (Odgen,

J.(1992), 30) (Andrews, C. (1990), 54



Figure. 1

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2- Silver: Silver was the symbol of the stuff from that the bones of the gods were made, also it was connected with the moon and was always employed as the material for representation of the lunar disc. (Andrew, C. (1990), 56)

Silver probably well have been used for jewelry to the same extent as gold, but, owing to its perishable nature, little has survived. Unlike gold, it seldom occurs in metallic form. The main source of silver (and of lead) was galena ore. (Higgins, R. (1980), 10)

The rarity of Hellenistic and Roman silver jewelry, compared to gold, cannot be blamed entirely on scarcity of materials or on the greater susceptibility of silver to corrosion over long periods of time. Literary evidence from the Roman period suggests that there

were injunctions against the use of silver coinage for jewelry. Rings and bracelets are the commonest silver ornaments, while earrings are rare. (Odgen, J. (1992), 33)

Silver in Pharaonic Egypt was rare and the costs of bringing it to Egypt were high, and therefore it is not surprising that the value of silver coins is very high compared to the value of the value of the gold coin, but there is no doubt that Alexander's conquest of Egypt gave a great opportunity to increase the silver metal and its availability significantly more than before. This mineral increased in Egypt, especially after the Greeks established trading centers for them in Egypt, and it was of great importance to the Greeks in the country of Greece, as well as in the Aegean islands. (عزت زكى قادوس. (2001) ،186, 187)

3- Bronze: A certain amount of imagination is needed to envisage the original appearance of bronze ornaments. We cannot say whether the metal was always brightly polished or whether it was sometimes allowed to develop a natural brown patina, but both these effects are quite different from the green surface that is the usual result of burial. The lustrous sage-green or dark green of many well-preserved ancient bronzes is beautiful in itself, and it requires a mental effort to remember that this effect was not desired or aimed for by the original manufacturers and owners. (John, C. (1996), 13,14)

In Cyprus as early as the beginning of the second millennium B.C true

tin bronzes appear to have been made there. (Hemingway, C. & Hemingway, S. (2004), 1)

4- Gemstones: Diamonds, sapphires, aquamarines, peridots, citrines and amethysts also add color and brilliancy to Roman jewelry. The handful of Roman diamond-set rings that have survived are set with diamonds in their natural tetrahedral crystal form. (Odgen, J. (1992), 35)

From the time of the Ptolemaic dynasty coral and pearls were known, but mother-of-pearl and shell were common from predynastic times onwards. (Vilimkova, M. (1969), 50)

Types of jewelry:

- 1- **Hair- or head-ornaments** fall into two major classes: wreaths, diadems or headbands that are decorative and often also symbolic, and hairpins, which in most cases are primarily functional, serving as they do to secure the arrangement of the hairstyle itself. (Johns, C. (1996), 83)
- 2- **Earrings** (Greek enotia or enotidia) might range from simple hoops ending in an animal-head to miniature sculptural master pieces, such as the Boston "Nike"¹ or the engaging pair of harping sirens. Hoop-earrings were worn with the animal-heads hanging upside down. Earrings generally matched the necklaces with which they were worn, and a common "Leitmotif" (a

¹Greek goddess of victory, Nike was represented as a woman in a long chiton, sometimes wigless but more usually winged, holding wreath and palm and crowing the horses of a victorious charioteer or decorating a trophy. (Sear, D.R. (1979), xxvii)

certain type of animal-head or a pendant of a particular shape) might be repeated also in other items of the ensemble.



Figure. 2 Hollow gold ear-ring: in form of bull-head with solar-disc (British Museum EA58518)

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- 3- **The necklaces** themselves were most commonly of the "strap" variety, with a great many small pendants attached along most of the length. (Hoffmann, H. & Davidson, P. (1966),5)
Several concepts and designs current in late Hellenistic necklaces persisted into the Roman Period, notably necklaces with linked stones in bezel settings and others with loop-in-loop chains. The design of gold links, beads threaded on gold links, or beads alternating with elaborate links in which the links are treated with equal importance to the beads, are characteristic of Roman necklaces. Although, beads appear in necklaces of the Hellenistic Period, they always occur with collars and therefore, unlike Roman necklaces, do not stand out as bold elements of the design. (Davidson, P. & Oliver, A. (1984), 137)
- 4- **Bracelets** might include a variety of different forms. At least one pair or spiral bracelets ending in snake-bends (always worn with the heads-oriented wards the wrist). (Hoffmann, H. & Davidson, P. (1966),6)

As with Necklace, so bracelets the designs of the Hellenistic Period remained in fashion in the early Roman Empire. New types, with stones in settings linked together and chains with wheel-like terminals, also with linked pairs of gold balls, are all characteristic of Roman jewelry. (Davidson, P. & Oliver, A. (1984), 147)



Figure. 3 Gold snake bracelet
(Metropolitan Museum 18.2.20)

After: (<https://www.metmuseum.org/>
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- 5- **Rings** were usually worn in considerable numbers and different types are often found in a single burial. They can be divided into plain rings, decorative rings and seal-rings. Among the decorative rings are examples with swivel bezels, fixed elaborate box-bezels, and simple fixed bezels, usually made in one piece with the hoop. Decoration may be chased or shallow groove engraved, in relief, in filigree or in foil on or under glass. In addition, there are rings in the form of snakes, miniature versions of snake-bracelets, and occasionally one in which an animal takes the place of the normal bezel. (Williams, D. & Odgen, J. (1994), 36)

In the Roman period, rings were simpler and plainer and they used colors stones widely.



Figure. 4 Gold finger-ring.
(British Museum 1917,0501.771)

After: (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/>
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Now, we will tackle different examples of royal jewelries displayed currently in various museums outside Egypt like the Walters art museum and Metropolitan Museum, which was a very important museums where we have a big collection for the Egyptian artifacts.

I- Royal Greco Roman Jewelry at Museums outside Egypt

Pendant with portrait of Alexander the Great

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Egypt
Place of conservation	The walters Art Museum
Museum number	57.526
Dimensions	8.3 x 9.5 x 1 cm
Material	Gold

This pendant is decorated with a beaded molding border and with repoussé. In the middle we've the portrait of Alexander the

Great² as a young man, the head is raised a little higher, as if he looking to the sky, the neck turns slightly to the right or sometimes to the left, the shining bright look in the eyes and the average tuft of hair on top of the grain was styled vertically, unlike the rest of the hair,

which was not styled deeply and carefully. (<https://www.art.thewalters.org> accessed 25/11/2020 12:45) (منى حجاج 116 د.ت)



Figure 5

After: (<https://www.art.thewalters.org> accessed 25/11/2020 12:45)

Medallion with Alexander the Great

Dating	Roman period ca. 215-243A.D. (Imperial Roman)
Provenance	Egypt (Aboukir)
Place of conservation	The Walters Art Museum
Museum number	59.1
Dimensions	Diam: 2 1/8 x D: 5/17 in. (5.34 x 0.76 cm)
Material	Gold

This medallion was discovered in Egypt as part of a group that continued about twenty similar medallions (now dispersed among

² Alexander was born in the year of the 106th Olympic games during the Elphines' reign at Athens.

Alexander's father was Philip, the king of Macedonia. Alexander's mother was Olympias. (Abbott, J. (1853), 3) (Freeman, P. (2011), 3,5)

many museums), six hundred gold coins and eighteen gold ingots, issued by Roman emperors from Severus Alexander (r. 222-235 CE) to Constantias I (r. 293-306 CE).

This particular medallion presents Alexander the Great gazing heavenward and bearing a shield which was decorated with zodiac signs. This portrait presents him with his hair pulled back. He wears a decorated cuirass with a Athena's figure on the shoulder strap and, on his chest, a scene from the Gigantomachy (the Giants' war). The reverse shows Alexander with small mouth, straight mouth and curly hair and Nike, goddess of victory, riding in a chariot, flanked by the gods Roma. (<https://art.thewalters.org/>) Accessed 25/11/2020 13:00



Figure. 6

After: (<https://art.thewalters.org/> accessed 25/11/2020 13:00)

Medallion with Olympias³

Dating	Roman period 215-243 A.D. (Imperial Roman)
Provenance	Egypt (Aboukir)
Place of conservation	The Walters Art Museum
Museum number	59.2
Dimensions	1/4 x 2 1/9 in. (0.6 x 5.3 cm) (d. x diam.)
Material	Gold

³ Olympias (c.373-316 B.C.), was the daughter of Molossian king, wife of Philip II the king of Macedon, and mother of Alexander the Great. Olympias lived a remarkable life. She was a woman of very strong character. (Carney, E. (2006), 1)

BC, and spread to Greece in the fifth century BC, then, came to Egypt mainly by Ptolemaic Dynasty. In Greek culture there were certainly healing associations with snakes, but there may have been other associations, too. (<https://www.metmuseum.org/>) Accessed 2/12/2020 11:30



Figure. 9

After: (<https://www.metmuseum.org/> accessed 2/12/2020 11:30)

Gilded glass earring

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Egypt
Place of conservation	Metropolitan Museum
Museum number	10.130.1521
Dimensions	L. 4.1 cm (1 5/8 in) Diam. of bead, 1.3 cm (1/2 in)
Material	Gold, Glass

Gilded or silvered glass was especially popular from the mid-1st century BC to the mid-1st century A.D. Here a gilded bead hangs as a pendant from a hoop with ring beads of granules above and below the bead. (<https://www.metmuseum.org/>) accessed 2/12/2020 11:40



Figure. 10

After: (<https://www.metmuseum.org/> accessed 2/12/2020 11:40)

Collar with medallions containing coins of emperors

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Egypt Memphis (Mit Rahina)
Place of conservation	Metropolitan Museum
Museum number	36.9.1
Dimensions	L. of chain: 91 cm (35 13/16 in.)
Material	Gold

This collar shows five medallions containing Emperors Lucius Verus’s (r. AD 161-169) Alexander Severus (r. AD 222-235) of Julia Domna⁵, Wife of Emperor Septimius Severus⁶ (r. AD 193-211), mother of Geta (r. AD 211-212) and Caracalla (r. AD 211-217) Coins. The use of imperial portrait coins - almost exclusively the aureus - as jewels became widespread with the third century A.D. In this example, the globular pulls for adjusting the necklace are decorated with schematic theater masks. (<https://www.metmuseum.org/> accessed 2/12/2020 11:50)



Figure. 11

After: (<https://www.metmuseum.org/> accessed 2/12/2020 11:50)

⁵She was married in 187 CE. She soon gave birth to two sons, Caracalla in 188 and Geta in 189. Severus accompanied his wife Julia on nearly all of his travels. (Lusina, S.S. (2013), 1)

⁶He founded a personal dynasty and converted the government into a military monarchy. His reign marks a critical stage in the development of the absolute despotism that characterized the later Roman Empire. (Gadalla, S.I. (2017), 13)

Hence, we will tackle different jewelry displaying in Alexandria and Egyptian museums, especially in Antiquities Museum of Bibliotheca Alexandrina where we have a part for submerged monuments where we have discovered a different coins, statues, obelisks and jewelry related to Roman emperors.

II- Royal Greco Roman jewelry at museums inside Egypt

Bracelet with snake head

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	East Delta
Place of conservation	Egyptian Museum
Museum number	Cat. Gen. 52123
Dimensions	Distance from one head to the other 14.5 cm. Length of the spiral 60 mm. Width of the band 7 mm
Material	Sold Gold

This is a symmetrical bracelet with snake head.

A bracelet shaped like a two-headed snake. The spirally twisted band is of beaten gold with engraved details on the molded heads. The heads are made of two pieces of gold leaf, the larger forming the upper side, and the gaps filled with plaster. (Vilimkova, M. (1969))



Figure. 12

After: (Vilimkova, M. (1969))

Bracelet

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Sa el-Hagar
Place of conservation	Egyptian Museum
Museum number	Cat. Gen. 52114
Dimensions	Length of the spiral 76 mm. width of the band 7 mm.
Material	Gold and beryls

A massive gold snake bracelet with the details on the head and tail chased; the eyes and the top of the head are inlaid with beryl. (Vilimkova, M. (1969))



Figure. 13

After: Vilimkova, M. (1969)

Bracelet

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Kom Abu Billo
Place of conservation	Egyptian Museum
Museum number	Cat. Gen. 52101
Dimensions	Longer diameter 65 0mm. Thickness 8 mm. Bezel 25 x 22 mm
Material	Gold, and agate

Three thick gold wires arc twisted in a spiral and fixed in hollow cylinders fitted with rings. The crown has a convex segmented edge and an oval agate in the Centre; it is also fitted with rings and held in place with pins, one fixed and one sliding. The crown is of gold leaf filled with plaster. (Vilimkova, M. (1969))



Figure. 14

After: (Vilimkova, M. (1969))

Bracelet

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Zagazig (Bubastis)
Place of conservation	Egyptian Museum
Museum number	Cat. G£n. 52099
Dimensions	Longer diameter 80 mm. Thickness 10 mm. Bezel 36 x 35 mm.
Material	Gold and agate.

The bracelet is formed by three hollow gold tubes twisted into a spiral ending in hollow cylinders with rings and pins holding the large oval crown in place. The crown is slightly conical in shape and an agate is set in the center. The crown and the tubes arc filled with plaster. (Vilimkova, M. (1969))



Figure. 15

After: (Vilimkova, M. (1969))

Earrings

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Mit Rahina (Memphis)
Place of conservation	Egyptian Museum
Museum number	Cat. Gen. 52441-2
Dimensions	Length 30 mm. Width 20 mm
Material	Gold

The wires by which the ear-rings are fixed pass through the sickle-shaped bodies. From the center hang cylindrical ornaments with rows of beaten beads in relief, ending in a lentil-shape. The ear-rings are made of thin gold leaf with a solid filling. (Vilimkova, M. (1969))



Figure. 16

After: (Vilimkova, M. (1969))

Ring

Dating	Roman period
Provenance	Alexandria (East Harbor)
Place of conservation	Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum.
Museum number	1036
Dimensions	Diameter 2.29 cm
Material	Gold and agate

This ring consists of an oval hoop. An oval glass or stone cabochon of a dark red. Similar rings were popular in the Hellenistic period. (Goddio, F. & Clauss, M. (2006), 384)



Figure. 17

After: (Goddio, F. & Clauss, M. (2006), 384)
Intaglio of an eagle holding a crown

Dating	End of 1st century B.C Beginning of 1st century AD
Provenance	Alexandria (East Harbor)
Place of conservation	Bibliotheca Alexandrina- Antiquities Museum.
Museum number	SCA 84
Dimensions	Diameter 2.7 cm
Material	Gold and chalcedony



Figure. 18

After: (Goddio, F. & Clauss, M. (2006), 221)

This ring was found during excavations of a ship in Alexandria's port, close to Antirrhodos's island, where stood the royal palaces and stone are perfectly preserved. The ring is consisted of three thick solid gold twisted threads, the third resting on the other two. Their tips are soldered to either side of the ring bezel, linked by two big granules. An oval closed setting holds the intaglio. The gemmologist admirably used the tints of the chalcedony; inside a dark blue circle, the engraving over a white-bluish background brings out the eagle silhouette in midnight blue on a base line, its profile turned to the left, and the wings half unfurled. The raised head, facing right, holds a leafy crown attachment towards the right in its powerful beak, the two final leaves pointing symmetrically either side of the beak.. Zeus eagle on lightning, a symbol of the celestial forces and of universal domination shown on the reverse side of the Ptolemy coins, had become the mark of the Lagid dynasty, and also the eagle is associated with Jupiter during Roman times, for this reason probably we 've here this representation. The crown adds a note of glory and victory to that of the absolute divine power carried by the image of prey bird, and eagle's motif holding a crown is much appreciated in the corpus of Greco-Roman gems. (Goddio, F. & Fabre, D. (2017), 221)

Conclusion:

At the end of this research and after implementation on some royal pieces at many museums we discern:

- The combination of Greek and Roman taste and techniques gave early Roman portraiture the same fundamental characteristics as that of the Hellenistic world. The Greco-Roman portrait is a careful record of a man's features, plastically modelled, and attempting to show his personality and character; one emperor may prefer the cold, remote expression of the face, another the intensity of a momentary glance, but none of the portraits give away the subject's feelings, aspirations, and sufferings. **Like figure. 5, 6, 8**
- Jewelry during the Roman Period is an important part of art. Some of the Romans spent alot of money on jewels and the decorations on Roman jewelry show the same development from time to time.
- Jewelry during the Roman Period is an essential part of art as a whole. The striving toward adornment, the taste and preferences for different types of jewelry are particularly pronounced in women, and this is a tradition

registered since the remotest antiquity during all historical times. **Like figure. 9,10,12,13,14**

- Roman jewelry had its origins in the latter part of this period; sweeping changes of style became apparent before 100 B.C.
- Late Roman gold work tends to be heavier and is surely more decorate than earlier work. So we find various bracelets, necklaces with large central pendants, and brooches in that the spring-plate has advanced into a heavy cross-bar. **Like figure. 11,14,15**
- Roman jewelry had sweeping changes of style became apparent 100 years before B.C. The naturalism in figural and floral work is gradually transformed into more abstract designs and arrangements, with an increasing definition and regimentation of the separate parts and decorative elements. **Like figure. 10,16**
- There is also greater use of colored stones. **Like figure. 17**
- Animal or inanimate attributes of deities were usually depicted on their own, and were understood to stand for a particular gods or goddesses. **Like figure. 9,12,18**
There were difference between the portraits of Alexander the Great before his death and after his death, after his death we find the hair was long, the head drawn up and represented more younger than before. **Like figure. 5,6**
- In addition, we have the existence of Roman emperors on various jewelry

and there was difference in their representations but the most common representation that shows them as knights. **Like figure. 11**

- There were many snake bracelets found that dated back to Roman period as a symbol of healing and protection. **Like figure. 9,12**
- The choice of the museums at this research depends on the importance of the pieces that they display which is related to the research.

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