

Tserkino bracelet from Kastellorizo

ΒΡΑΧΙΟΛΙ ΤΣΕΡΚΙΝΟ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΚΑΣΤΕΛΛΟΡΙΖΟ



Such gold or silver cuff bracelets were given at Kastellorizian betrothal or wedding ceremonies, usually engraved with initials on the escutcheon style clasp.

This jewellery often came in sets of three, with two cuff bracelets, and a 'lemo' for the neck. The latter does not lie flat, but sits up like an upturned collar. The dowering to brides of cuff bracelets is traditional in the middle-east, including parts of India today.

Over time, often to be able to dowry multiple daughters, sets have been split, sometimes with the lemo cut in half to make two cuff bracelets, or a double bracelet separated to make two single ones. The illustrated one (also on display) is a double.

The traditional ones from the island are dated usually in the late 19thC or early 20thC, which reflects the downturn in the island's economy after that period.

They are often thought of as uniquely Kastellorizian, although some Turkish jewellers identify them as Armenian, and it is not certain where they were manufactured in the Ottoman empire.

Their structure is like a woven macrame, where a set of threads is tied to a line of nails, and then 'plaited' together. The plait, with heated metal wires in this case, is such that they may have been machine made. Modern variants on the style can be purchased.

If anybody knows more detail about these bracelets, please contact the Coordinator of this display at the Kastellorizian Association of Victoria.



Illustrations. Top: perfect condition, 1899. Bottom left: Near perfect condition 1898. Many bracelets have become damaged over time, as per the one dated 1911, at right.