

Pair of Gold Ear Spools

Near Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Late Bronze Age, 800-700 BC.

Ground Floor

Ór - Ireland's Gold Exhibition

Artefacts of this type have previously been described as boxes although this is unlikely as the lids were sealed on.

Size-Weight 18.7 grams and 15.95 grams.
Diameter-60 mm.

Material

- Hammered sheets of gold.

Form

- Each spool consists of a cylindrical side piece and two discs or lids, originally sealed on top by bending over the edges to form a circular spool or box.
- These objects sometimes contain small balls of gold.

Decoration

- The decoration of the gold boxes is closely related to the gold discs attached to the **Glennisheen Gorget**.
- The centre of each disc has a raised circular **boss** surrounded by **concentric** circle **motifs** followed by a sunburst of **radiating** lines framing the inner circle of each disc/lid.

Technique

- The spools and cylindrical side pieces were made from a hammered sheet of gold.
- Raised decoration was created by **repoussé**.
- **Concentric** circles were created by **incision** on the surface of the gold.

Function

- **Ethnographical** comparisons of similar objects found in a number of cultures in Africa, Asia and South America suggests that these were created as pair of dramatic ear ornaments to be worn in the stretched ear lobe.
- These objects were possibly worn for ceremonial or ritual purpose.





The Ballinesker Hoard, contained two pairs of gold boxes.