

Gold Collar/Gorget

Gleninsheen, Co. Clare.

Late Bronze Age, 800-700 BC.

Ground Floor

Ór - Ireland's Gold Exhibition

Found in 1932 in a rock fissure in the Burren, Co. Clare, this is one of nine surviving examples of objects unique to Ireland. Marks visible on the **rope moulding** on the right hand side of the collar show where it was roughly bent in two, like many of the other collars were before deposition. Their distribution is confined mainly to counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary.



Size-Width 31.4cm; weight 276 grams.

Material

- Gold sheet and wire.

Form

- Crescent shaped, with two large, elaborately decorated discs/terminals on either end.
- Some collars have small gold links attached to the back of the discs; suggesting that a chain may have suspended the collar from the wearer's neck.

Decoration

- The large crescent is decorated in a repeat pattern of **oblique** strokes of **rope moulding**, tiny raised **bosses** and raised plain bands.
- The circular discs are decorated with **concentric** circular **motifs**.
- A **conical** shaped **boss** or piece of gold stands up from the centre of each disc.
- The cone is surrounded by **concentric** circles, and a circle of tiny raised **bosses**; this is then surrounded by nine **concentric** circle **motifs**.
- All of this is surrounded by another circle of tiny raised **bosses** against the ridge of the disc.

Technique

- Hammered sheet gold formed into a crescent shape.
- The raised decoration on the crescent was created by the method of **repoussé** and **chasing**.
- The discs are formed of two circular pieces each. One slightly larger than the other, fitted together by overlapping the larger piece and pressing them together.
- A sharp pointed instrument was skillfully used to **incise** the **concentric** circular **motifs** on the discs.

- The circular discs, were stitched on to the collar using gold thread.

Function

- Possibly worn by a person of wealth, status or rank in the community.
- Could represent an ornamental version of a **bronze** cuirass, a piece of armour that fits the whole torso that was worn by **Bronze** Age warriors in Europe.
- The location of the collar in a rock fissure and its folding into two before deposition indicate that it could have been a **votive offering**.



Another gold collar from Co. Clare which can be seen in the National Museum. Unlike the Gleninsheen gold collar, this collar has no rope patterns between the ribs.