

LES ENLUMINURES LTD.

2970 North Lake Shore Drive

Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel: (773) 929 5986 • fax: (773) 528 3976

chicago@lesenluminures.com

www.lesenluminures.com

www.medieval-rings.com

Sandra Hindman





LES ENLUMINURES

Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2 place du Palais-Royal
75001 Paris
tél : (0033).1 42 60 15 58
fax : (0033).1 40 15 00 25
info@lesenluminures.com

www.lesenluminures.com
www.medieval-rings.com

It is in this kingdom [Mutfili perhaps Teligana in southern India] that diamonds are got in the great and deep valleys among these mountains. Wherefore the men who go in search of the diamonds take with them pieces of flesh, and these they cast into the bottom of a valley. Now there are numbers of white eagles that haunt those mountains and feed upon serpents. When the eagles see the meat thrown down they pounce upon it and carry it up.... The men raise a loud shouting to drive them away, and when the men recover the pieces of meet they find them full of diamonds which have stuck to the meat.



There is also in the same country another mountain, in which azure [lapis lazuli] is found; 'tis the finest in the world and is got in a vein like silver. Bk. I, Ch. 29 (f. 18v)



Gothic Ring,
gold and
dark-blue corundum,
chased shoulders,
England,
14th century,
diameter 18.5 mm.

1

2



Renaissance Hardstone Cameo Ring with Gryllus,
a sard set in a gold mount, Italy,
16th century (mount 19th century),
diameter 16.75 mm.



Hunnish Ring
gold,
hessonite,
almandite gemets,
and meerschaum,
Central Europe,
5th century,
diameter 19.75 mm.



3

4



Renaissance Signet Ring, gold,
blood jasper, gamet and ruby,
Switzerland, late 17th century,
diameter 17.5 mm.



It is in this province [Badakshan in Afghanistan] that those fine and valuable gems the Balas Rubies are found. They are got in certain rocks among the mountains, and in the search for them the people dig great caves underground.



Medieval Iconographic Ring,
gold with engraved Saints George & Christopher,
a squared bezel set with a ruby,
band inscribed "sans departir", England, 15th century,
diameter 17.25 mm.

Renaissance Ring,
openwork gold band set with diamonds, Spain, c. 1650,
recovered from the 1656 shipwreck of the Nuestra
Señora de las Maravillas,
diameter 15.75 mm.





No man of that country [Tibet] would take as a wife a girl who was a maid, for they say a wife is worthless unless she has been used to consort with men. And their custom is this, that when travelers come that way the old women get ready, and take their unmarried daughters and go to the strangers who are passing, and the travelers take them accordingly and do their pleasure. You must know too that the traveler is expected to give the girl who has





been with him a ring or some other trifle, something she can show as a lover's token when she marries. And it is for this alone that they follow that custom, for every girl is expected to obtain at least 20 such tokens. And those who have the most tokens, and so can show they have been most run after, are in the highest esteem and most sought in marriage because they say the charms of such a girl are the greatest.

Bk. II, Ch. 45 (f. 52v).

There is also a **mountain** in this country wherein they find a kind of stone called turquoise, in great **abundance**; and it is a very beautiful stone. These also the Emperor does not allow to be extracted without his special order. *Bk. II. Ch. 47*



Medieval Signet Ring,
octagonal bezel inscribed "Robert Jacob" and engraved
with a flower, England, 16th century,
diameter 25 mm.

Renaissance Posy Ring,
gold inscribed
"Providence divine
hath made thee mine"
England, early 17th century,
diameter 19.75 mm.





Merovingian Ring,
gold and sapphire, Gaul, 8th century,
diameter 18.25 mm.



Renaissance Ring,
gold,
pyrope garnet
and enamel,
Italy,
late 16th
early 17th century,
diameter 16 mm.





Stirrup Ring,
inscribed "pour iole avoir" Italy, 14th century,
diameter 17.75 mm.

11



Byzantine Inscribed Ring

Ο ΚΑΤΥΚΦΝ ΕΝ ΒΟΗΘΙΑ (Ps. 90 (91).

"He that dwelleth in the aid of the [most Highest]".

Byzantium, 5th century,

diameter 19 mm.

12



Renaissance Gemstone Ring,
gold, table-cut diamond and traces of enamel,
Western Europe, 16th century,
diameter 18 mm.



Late Roman Two-Finger Ring,
gold and pointed hessonite garnet,
polygonal hoop, 4th, 5th century,
diameter 15.75 & 17 mm.

There is a lake here [in the province of Caidu in eastern Tibet] in which are found pearls which are white but not round. Only when it is his pleasure [the Great Khan] they take from the lake so many as he may desire. *Bk II, Ch. 47 (f. 54)*



Byzantine Nominative Ring,
gold inscribed ΘΕΟΔΩΤΙΚΗ (Theodotis),
Byzantium, 10th-11th century,
diameter 14.75 mm.
ex-collection Max Crépy, Paris

Medieval Signet Ring

★ + S[IGILLUM] FRANCISC[US] . DE . UGONIBUS,
gold engraved with an eagle,
Italy, 14th century,
diameter 22.5 mm., weight: 28.5 gr.





photos: Alexandre Kobbeh
design: Virginie Enl'art
printing: Nory (Paris)

Credits:

Paris, BnF, MS fr. 2810,
ff. 18v, 52v, 54, 82

Marco Polo,

Le livre des merveilles du monde

France, Paris, c. 1410

(Cliché Bibliothèque nationale de France,
Paris)

A selection of our rings
Complete descriptions available on request



Marco Polo's vivid eye-witness account of his adventures in Asia offered new information on the sources of precious gems and reported some curious foreign customs involving the gift of rings. Our title, text, and pictures come from Marco Polo's celebrated fourteenth-century travelogue of the marvels of the world called *Le Livre des merveilles du monde* (Travels of Marco Polo) lavishly illustrated in Paris, BnF, MS fr. 2810 by the Workshop of the Boucicaut Master.