

# Gem Gossip

Endless talk of all things sparkly

---

## BOOK REVIEW:

### TOWARD AN ART HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL RINGS BY SANDRA HINDMAN



My latest summer reading is off to a great start! This week has been nothing but dreary, overcast days--perfect for an afternoon spent reading books. It only has taken me a few sittings to be nearly finished with this one, it is called: **Towards an Art History of Medieval Rings: A Private Collection** by Sandra Hindman. The book takes you through a **collection of rare medieval rings--35 to be precise**. Each ring has a description and several short paragraphs about it, how it relates to the time period, the symbolism/materials used/etc, and also sometimes gives a references to another ring(s) from other private collections that are similar and compares them. Also referenced are paintings from the time period that reveal clues to how a circa date was put onto the pieces or any other significant connections between the two. What one must understand is this time period has **such a scarce amount of examples that are present today** that each one is not only a rare piece of history but a primary clue into the time period.



The first examples of rings date back to the **Byzantine Empire**, with some examples of **early Christian rings**. An early Cristian marriage ring is a part of the collection, with an engraved portrait of a facing couple on the front of the ring. The example is roughly from the year 500. The next chapter depicts **Early Medieval rings**, with my favorite being the Viking braided ring, which dates back to the 9th century. The **Gothic time period** is illustrated next, with cusped rings first showing up during this time period--a derivative of the claw settings. The 13th-14th centuries producing some great fede rings, intaglios and my favorite from this particular collection--a gothic heart ring. There is also an example of a pendant from the 15th century that is inscribed "sadness is pleasure" on a heart shape, with tears engraved on the other side. That's amazing! The last chapter focuses on **Renaissance rings**, again with an example of a cusped ring, a merchant signet ring and some enameled examples.



The book is **organized really well** for quick reference and easy reading. I think that is what I like most about it besides the wonderful photos. One ring alone can account for 4-6 pages, so you can cover several ring and several pages within an afternoon of reading. This one's going into my bookshelf and I hope it will be in yours too! See below for an easy click away from owning your own copy!