

#ARTISTRY

The "love knot"

The Hellenistic Gold Armband with a Herakles Knot



Over 2,200 years old, this exquisite gold armband is one of the finest surviving examples of jewelry from the Hellenistic Greek period.

Characterized by its luxurious materials and meticulous design, the piece features the Herakles knot, a powerful symbol of strength, protection, and unity.

Created by an artisan whose name has been lost to history, the armband embodies the sophistication of Hellenistic metalwork, where Greek artistry met the opulent influences of the wider Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds.

Symbolism of the Herakles Knot

The Herakles (or Hercules) knot, also known as the 'love knot' or a 'cunning knot' in Greek jewelry. In myth, Herakles, the great hero renowned for his strength and courage, used such a knot to tie his own cloak. Over time, the design became a protective symbol, believed to ward off evil and ensure marital fidelity. In jewelry, it was often used to symbolize eternal love and protection, making it a popular motif for wedding ornaments or gifts of devotion.

Artistry and Materials

This armband's design demonstrates the technical mastery of Hellenistic goldsmiths. Crafted pure gold, it is richly inlaid with garnets, emeralds, and enamel, adding vibrant color and contrast to its warm metallic sheen. The intricate filigree and stones settings highlight the artist's precision and the era's fascination with realism and detail.

The Hellenistic period (623-31 BCE) was marked by a surge in luxury art, as Greek aesthetics merged with Eastern



Palmerston's ally on the matter, a noted civil engineer named Robert Stephenson, summarized the sentiments of the majority against the proposed resolution for British support of the canal: "Nothing can be effected, even by the most unlimited expenditure of time, and life, and money, beyond the formation of a stagnant ditch between two almost tideless seas, unapproachable by large ships under any circumstances..."



Kshema Jatuhkarna

By the time a 1,300-foot-long cargo vessel had been dislodged from its horizontal grounding on a bank of the Suez Canal in late spring, the world had been reminded of the crucial role of a major artery of international trade.

Britain was to gain most but resisted most

The Suez Canal transformed transportation among three continents. In a few short years of operation, it became the dominant route between European powers and their colonies in Asia and East Africa. While the Suez Canal opened in 1869, the main seaborne path to Asia required a long, dangerous, and tedious voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. Though all naval powers would benefit from the expedient new route, one country in particular had significant potential for the advancement of its interests through the planned waterway. Britain stood to gain much from the construction of the Suez Canal. Most notably, the canal would enhance the Empire's relationship with its greatest imperial prize: India. By dramatically reducing the travel time and distance between Britain and the subcontinent, the waterway would allow Britain to further pursue its main economic and strategic interests in that region. Despite these potential advantages of the Suez Canal for Britain, the Empire opposed the development of the canal for over a decade after Said Pasha, then Viceroy of Egypt, granted the concession for its construction in 1854.

Several important factors led to Britain's early opposition to the Suez Canal. Longstanding British fears about loss of the India trade contributed to the Empire's predisposition against the construction of the canal. This general motivation compounded with specific strategic concerns and deep political prejudice to sustain an impolitic foreign policy towards the canal well into its construction. Acknowledgement by British officials of the canal's importance and potential strategic change in British policy on the matter. After acquiring control of the Suez Canal Company and enjoying several years as its biggest customer, Britain usurped the canal with its invasion of Egypt in 1882. These changes demonstrate that in a little less than 20 years, the Empire had dramatically shifted its policy towards the waterway.

The Canal's Advantages for Britain

For obvious reasons, the British Empire stood to gain the most of any European power from the new waterway. Britain's favorable circumstances were linked to its imperial holdings in Asia. By the mid-19th century, Britain had significant economic and strategic interests in India, its largest colony. By dramatically decreasing the travel distance and time between Britain and the subcontinent, the Suez Canal was poised to advance British interests significantly. Ministers in foreign ministries across Europe estimated that the canal shaved nearly 4,200 kilometers from the average voyage to India, halving the distance between the Port of Bristol and Bombay. Nautical passage through Egypt's harsh desert also reduced the travel time between Europe and India by up to five weeks for the largest European vessels. These developments augured a sharp decrease in transit costs that served Britain's economic interests in India.

Since the Suez Canal's inception, its control has been the subject of considerable strategic wrangling, as well as the impetus for intrigue. Yet, the political and economic competition in the 19th century surrounding its construction usually constitutes only a footnote in accounts of the later Suez Crisis of 1956. Examining the imperial clash at the heart of earlier

influences following the conquests of Alexander the Great. Artifacts of this era, including new techniques in goldsmithing, enameling, and gem-setting, resulting in pieces that were both wearable and symbolic works of art.

Provenance and Modern Legacy

Today, this remarkable armband resides in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. It was acquired in 1999 through Ariadne Galleries, funded by the Mr. and Mrs. Christos G. Bastis Gift. The piece stands as a testament to the enduring elegance and ingenuity of ancient Greek craftsmanship.

Photographs of the artifact, including detailed views of its intricate knotwork and gemstones, were shared under Creative Commons (CC BY 2.0) by photographer Mary Harrsch, helping to make this ancient treasure accessible to audiences worldwide.

Cultural Significance

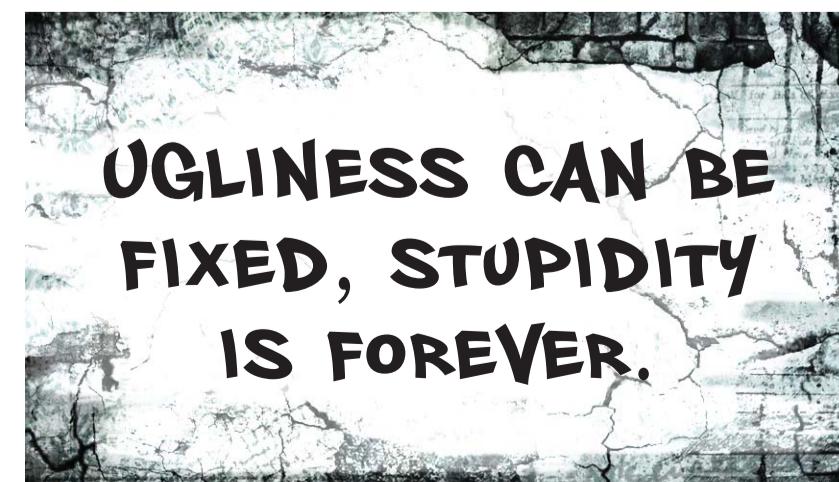
Beyond its aesthetic beauty, the armband offers insight into the values and beliefs of the Hellenistic world. Jewelry like this was more than mere decoration; it was a statement of identity, wealth, and faith in protective symbolism. The Herakles knot's enduring presence in art and fashion demonstrates how mythology continued to shape daily life long after Greece's classical age.

The Hellenistic gold armband with a Herakles knot remains a brilliant example of how ancient artisans blended art, myth, and meaning into lasting objects of beauty. Over two millennia later, it continues to captivate modern audiences with its elegance, craftsmanship, and timeless symbolism, reminding us that even the smallest works of art can tell powerful stories from humanity's shared past.



Indian Army.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



World Hypnotism Day: Celebrating the Power of the Mind

Observed annually on January 4, World Hypnotism Day highlights the fascinating art and science of hypnotism. From therapeutic applications like stress relief, pain management, and habit control to entertainment in stage performances, hypnotism demonstrates the power of focused attention and suggestion. The day also promotes awareness about ethical practices in hypnotherapy, dispelling myths of mind control or magic. Professionals and enthusiasts around the globe use this occasion to showcase demonstrations, conduct workshops, and educate the public about the benefits of hypnosis, reinforcing its role as a legitimate tool for mental and emotional wellbeing.

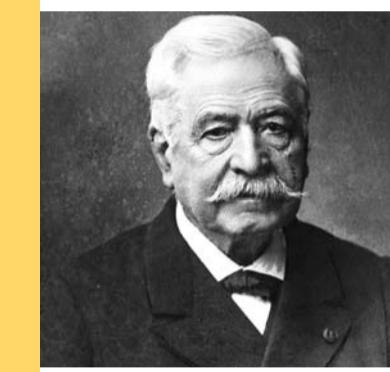
Lessons To Learn From The Blockage Of Suez Canal

PART:1

While Waghorn died in 1850, Palmerston's hostility towards the project (Suez Canal) grew stronger in subsequent years. In 1851, he responded to the idea of a canal through Egypt by stating: "it shall not be made, it cannot be made, it will not be made; but if it were made, there would be a war between France and England for the possession of Egypt." Up to the end of his last term as Prime Minister, Palmerston's Foreign Secretary, Earl Russell, continued to refuse British support for the canal project, asserting that its completion was not in Britain's interests: "the British Government can in no case guarantee, promote, or favour the Suez Canal, which they would wish to see abandoned." Palmerston's influence over British public opinion, bloated by his vindication in the Don Pacifico affair and the death of his political rival, the Duke of Wellington, provided for this stance to persist until his death in 1861.



How one of the World's Biggest Ships jammed the Suez Canal.



Ferdinand de Lesseps, French Engineer.



Mohammad Said.



Thomas Waghorn.

on obstruction of the project. Britain's foreign policy perspective on the canal was first evident in the response of prominent statesmen to proposals for a waterway across Egypt's isthmus. In 1847, both Thomas Waghorn, known for his pioneering of Britain's postal service, and future Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, expressed reservations about a canal between the ports of Said and Suez. Waghorn believed that a canal should only be constructed if it expressly served British interests. He argued that it was not possible given the Empire's lack of influence in Egypt. Palmerston asserted that such a canal would be too costly and impractical. He favored an overland route instead.

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Until 1865, Britain actively impeded the construction of the Suez Canal. Although a private agreement between the French and British Governments precluded their ambassadors in Constantinople from publicly pressuring the Sultan with their opposing positions on the matter, Britain attempted to undermine the project from the first days of construction in 1859. In the months after digging began, Sir Henry Bulwer, Britain's Ambassador to the Porte, had letters sent from the Sultan's Viziers to Egypt's local authorities, ordering them to stop construction immediately and to wait for the Sultan's official approval, as stipulated in the original concession. These attempts had minimal suc-

cess, halting construction only briefly in November 1859, when a Turkish emissary convinced the European Consuls in Egypt to cease the incursion on Ottoman sovereignty by Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French entrepreneur who developed the Suez Canal. While this disruption was short-lived, Britain influenced the canal's development greatly by joining with the Porte later in the year to oppose construction of the 'French canal.' This precipitated a crisis between Egypt and France. Construction of the canal was suspended a month later by ordering the immediate cessation of construction. These efforts, along with Britain's repeated public jockeying to stop forced labor on the canal, helped to destabilize the relationship between de Lesseps, the Canal Company's stockholders, the Ottoman Sultan, and the Egyptian Viceroy who oversaw the project.

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To be continued...

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#BUSINESS



Mutiny of 1857.

Empire's industries while manipulating tariffs to help exports. The Raj even went so far as to guarantee high rates of interest on railway construction to ensure penetration into India's interior.

Furthermore, the British Empire maintained significant strategic interests in India. Most tactical calculations made by the Foreign Office regarding India related to the Empire's military strength and its ability to challenge Russia's advance in Central Asia. By dramatically decreasing the travel distance and time between Britain and the subcontinent, the Suez Canal was poised to advance British interests significantly. Ministers in foreign ministries across Europe estimated that the canal shaved nearly 4,200 kilometers from the average voyage to India, halving the distance between the Port of Bristol and Bombay. Nautical passage through Egypt's harsh desert also reduced the travel time between Europe and India by up to five weeks for the largest European vessels. These developments augured a sharp decrease in transit costs that served Britain's economic interests in India.

In India, the British Raj maintained a small standing army. One of its main reserves of troops lay in India. What began as a contingent of just over 45,000 soldiers serving the British East India Company grew into three standing armies, totaling 131,000 troops, by 1862. By 1880, the Raj's forces had grown to 137,000 troops. Half of the Empire's expenditures in India were specifically dedicated to military forces, totaling 12,207,681 pounds from 1884 to 1885. In addition to sustaining the general security over its global empire that access to British-Indian troops provided, Britain was desperate to maintain its troops in India as a

check against Russia's advance towards the colony. By the 1870s, Russian troops had moved within 650 kilometers of India's Punjab province. Had Russian forces crossed India's border, British-Indian troops would have been the colony's main defense. Consistent

and efficient transit over the seaborne passages to the subcontinent remained vital to maintaining the readiness of troops. The Suez Canal stood to strengthen the colony and the Empire's defense by expediting the process of replenishing the supplies of British-Indian

troops. The Indian Mutiny of 1857 highlighted the strategic advantages of a shorter route to the subcontinent. During the insurrection, the British Empire learned a hard lesson about the cumbersome distances between its capital and the centers of power within the colony. Officials in London heard about the mutinies in Meerut, Delhi, and Cawnpore 30, 40 and 50 days respectively after each event's date. Troops dispatched from Britain faced a three-month delay before arrival in India. Consequently, Delhi was relieved by troops from the Punjab, without aid from a single British soldier. Had the delays been cut in half, Britain might have suffered significantly less damage to its prestige and imperial holdings.

King George VI is driven past cheering Indian troops on his way to a ceremony to invest Sepoy Kamal Ram with the Victoria Cross, Italy, 26 July 1944.

British Opposition to the Suez Canal

One might guess that the clear economic and strategic advantages of the canal for Britain would have led its government to craft foreign policy aimed at hastening the waterway's construction. Yet, the historical record reveals that Britain's policy dating back to the original canal concession centered



Prime Minister Lord Palmerston.

on obstruction of the project. Britain's foreign policy perspective on the canal was first evident in the response of prominent statesmen to proposals for a waterway across Egypt's isthmus. In 1847, both Thomas Waghorn, known for his pioneering of Britain's postal service, and future Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, expressed reservations about a canal between the ports of Said and Suez. Waghorn believed that a canal should only be constructed if it expressly served

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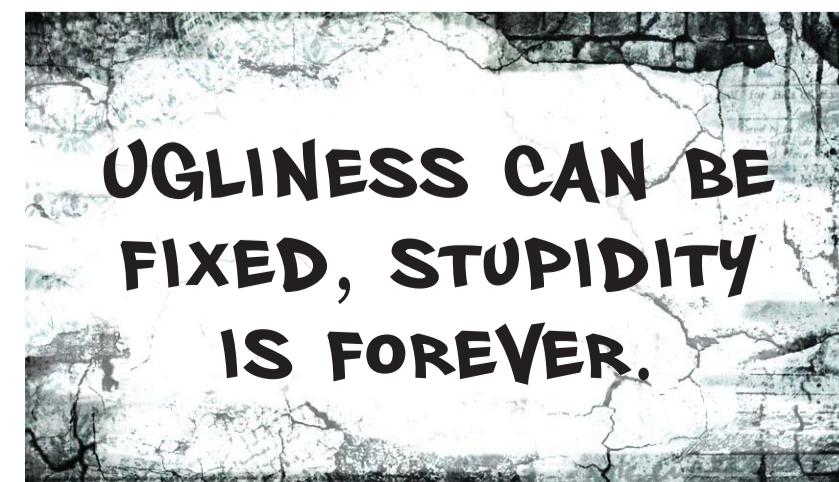
Bathymetric chart, northern Gulf of Suez, route to Cairo, 1856

Before 1859, Britain denied the canal's feasibility whenever possible. The Palmerston Governments of the 1850s continued their general arguments that a canal was too costly and impractical to ever see the light of day. Nothing changed under the brief Derby government from 1858 to 1859. Benjamin Disraeli, then Chancellor of the Exchequer under the Earl of Derby, referred to the Suez Canal as "a most futile idea-totally impossible



Mountbatten inspects Indian troops at Singapore, 1945.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman