A GREEK GOLD ORNAMENT FROM
EARLY ARCHAIC TIME

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By means of a grant from the Ny Carlsberg Foundation, the Department of Classical Antiquities in the Danish National Museum has recently been able to purchase the rare gold ornament to be published here 1. Only those who have the opportunity of holding it in their hands and viewing it from different angles, in order to make every detail in its decoration stand out clearly and to catch the glistenings of light in the many rises and falls of the surface, can fully appreciate the beauty and exquisite workmanship of this ornament. Here too, as in most cases where jewellery is concerned, the photograph does not quite do justice to the original. Presumably, however, the representations on figures 1–3 will give a fairly good conception of its character and appearance. As a supplement, a detailed description will be added.

It appears from the figures that we are dealing with a rectangular pendant. Its ground consists in a thin gold plaque (5 cm by 4.3) which, in the middle of the top side, runs out into a projecting strip serving to fasten a tube for a suspending wire; this strip is 1.8 cm broad and only 0.5 cm high. The reverse of the plaque is smooth (fig. 1b). Each part of the front decoration was made separately and soldered on the ground. Running along the top and the two vertical edges there is a raised border which is formed like a roof and made of a thin bent gold sheet; its sloping sides are milled, while a longitudinal furrow runs along its top. A similar roof-shaped cross-wall divides the plaque into two panels, a larger upper panel which is framed all round its four sides, and a smaller lower panel which is open at the bottom.

The upper panel, very nearly a square, is covered by close-sitting conical bosses separately made from smooth sheets and arranged στοιχεῖαν with

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Fig. 1  Gold ornament 1:1 (Obv. and Rev.)

Copenhagen, Nat. Museum

the utmost accuracy so as to form nine rows each containing ten bosses. All the top openings of the bosses are closed by small globules; similarly, each interval on the ground between the bosses is occupied by a single globule. At the purchase a few of these bosses were loose and have now been refastened; three are missing, two in the top and one in the bottom row; their position is marked by circular traces of soldering. At the four corners of the panel the point where the framing borders meet was covered by a rosette of seven petals; out of these three are preserved in their position, while the fourth, at the inferior right corner, is now missing. Moreover, at the middle of the right, left, and bottom border a smaller rosette of six petals is placed. Finally, the middle part of the top edge is occupied by a very large rosette of many petals fastened on the tube for suspension, which it covers completely. The upper half of this rosette had been broken off (fig. 1a) but was replaced in the Museum (fig. 2). Unfortunately the central part of it is severely damaged; the remainders of an erect originally circular rim, which is soldered on the support, are preserved. No doubt this was part of the setting for a precious stone, a vitreous paste, or the like. The centres of the smaller rosettes were marked by globules, some of which are now missing. Each of the slightly curved rosette petals is made separately and is kept in its place on an even support by a striated border-wire. The manufacturing technique is open to observation wherever