



Chinese gold and silver inlaid bronze belt hook, Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.)

POA

Chinese gold and silver inlaid bronze belt hook, Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.), the slender rounded shaft decorated with gold and silver sheet wire inlay forming geometric motifs between horizontal lines, below a tapering dragon's head hook, the reverse with a flat knop for attachment.

Length: 10.2cm. (4in.)

Condition: Chip to knop.

Notes:

A similar example can be found in the collection of the V&A (M.522-1936) Belt hooks have been used in Asia for millennia, with the earliest known examples dating back to the 7th century BC. In China, they were closely associated with foreign horse-riding cultures within which belted trousers were common and so came to represent a foreign, exotic aesthetic. Therefore, although belt hooks served a practical purpose, they were also valued as decorative, aesthetic items and were made in a variety of materials including bronze, iron, gold and jade. Examples of this design (bar-shaped, with an animal head) came into use in China during the Eastern Zhou (770 – 221 BC) and had become standard by the Western Han (202-209 BC). Decorative hooks utilising precious metals such as this reflect both the wider dissemination of wealth during the Han and also the shift within the bronze industry from creating purely religious items to secular, decorative pieces showcasing a high level of skill in inlay technique.

Material and Technique	Inlaid bronze
Origin	Chinese
Period	15th Century and Earlier
Condition	Very good
Dimensions	Length: 10.2cm. (4in.)

Antique ref: U329