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THREE LATE BRONZE AGE GOLD BRACELETS FROM THE NETHERLANDS

(Pl. XII–XIII; figs. 42–46)

Three gold bracelets found in the Netherlands have hitherto escaped description in the literature. Two of them were found together, and thus constitute the only prehistoric gold hoard known in the Netherlands. One of these can be related to a small local group of bronze bracelets, and thereby dated to the last phase of the Late Bronze Age (Montelius V). The third gold bracelet, a stray find, is related to some examples in the British Isles and there by datable to the same period.

Detailed descriptions of the bracelets are given in the Appendix (page 98). Find circumstances and parallels are discussed in the text immediately following.

I. *The bracelets from Hijkersmilde (Drenthe)*

Early in the year 1921, a small gold hoard consisting of two bracelets was found at Nieuw-Solverd near Hijkersmilde, Gem. Smilde, Drenthe¹. They came to light in the course of peat-cutting, and had been lying in the peat at a depth of 0.80 m under the then surface, not far above the underlying sand². The find was mentioned in a local newspaper, the *Asser Courant* of 25 May 1921, which added that 'wooden remains of ancient constructions were found nearby', and that further investigation was then in progress. But nothing concerning either the wooden structures or any further investigation is to be found in the records of the Provincial Museum at Assen, which acquired the bracelets by purchase.

Both bracelets (made of gold with admixtures of silver and copper, but in somewhat variant proportions; see appendix, p. 98) are of asymmetrically oval penannular form. The heavier one (Pl. XII: 1, left, XIII; fig. 42) is convex on its outer face and slightly concave inside, with flat sides; its nearly rectangular terminals are slightly expanded. The outer ridges are ornamented with a single row of paired punch strokes, each pair being so placed that one impression falls on each side of the ridge. A double punch was evidently used.

The second bracelet (Pl. XII: 1, right, fig. 42) is lighter and simpler. It is of lenticular cross-section; the ends are thin and rounded off.

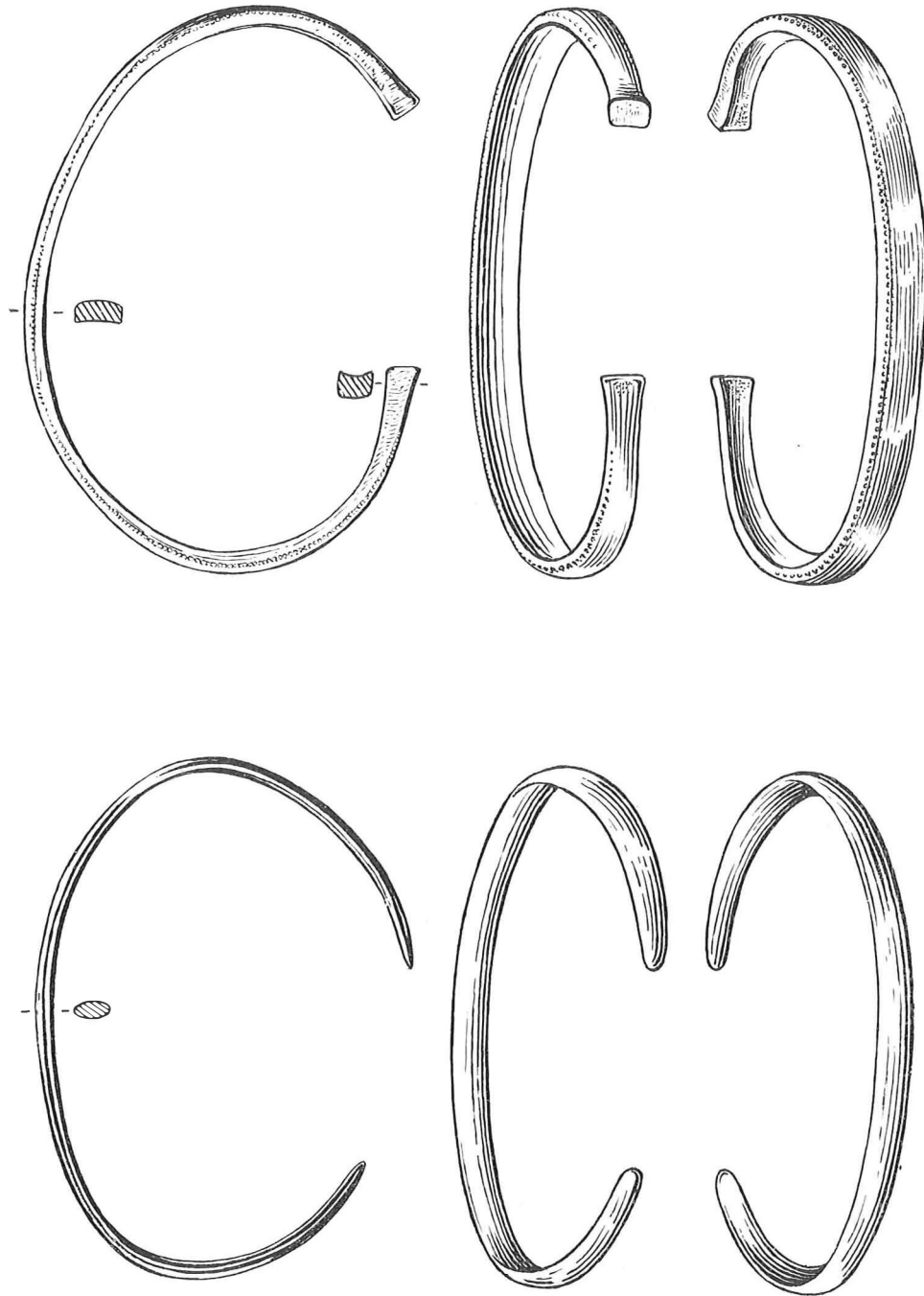


Fig. 42. Two gold bracelets from Hijkersmilde. Scale 1 : 1.

The larger of these bracelets seems not to belong to any well known group of gold bracelets. As far as its form is concerned, it might, however, be thought of as a copy in gold of a type of bronze bracelet known from some few examples in hoards of Montelius V widely scattered in North Germany (Sprockhoff, 1956, I, 208 no. 11, Taf. 41 : 5). These bracelets have in common a more or less D-shaped cross-section, slightly thickened terminals, and, as ornament, groups of transverse lines near the terminals. One bracelet of this very type was found at Odoorn (fig. 43; Mus. Assen, Inventory no. 1863/I. 13), 30 km to the southeast of Hijkersmilde. When compared with the illustrated examples of this type of bracelet, the Odoorn one actually stands closest to that from Hijkersmilde in form as well as in geographical proximity. It is therefore specially interesting to see that the Odoorn bracelet has a feature not seen on the German ones, but present on the gold Hijkersmilde bracelet; namely a double row of pointillé along the outer edges.

In itself, pointillé is of course much too widespread a feature to be of dating value; but here we are referring to a special manner of its employment, that is as an edging along the angles. Single rows of punch-marks along the edges appear to be fairly common on a variety of bracelets over a wide area of North Germany, especially in Montelius V (cf. Sprockhoff, *Ibid.*, II, Taf. 40 : 5, 41 : 4, 43 : 4).

But the double row of longitudinal punch-marks is evidently much less common; among Sprockhoff's illustrations one sees it only on the golden *Eidring* belonging to the gold hoard of Grünewald, Kr. Neustettin (*Ibid.*, II, Taf. 39 : 7) and on a bronze bracelet (one of a pair) from Ostrhauderfehn, Kr. Leer. (*Ibid.*, I, 209 No. 18, Abb. 53 : 1).

Now the Ostrhauderfehn bracelets are, according to Sprockhoff, unique in North Germany; they have, however, extremely close parallels in two pairs of bronze bracelets in a Dutch hoard from Onstwedder Holte in the province of Groningen (Butler, 1960, and present paper, fig. 44-45), which are unique in the Netherlands. It follows that the three pairs of bracelets in these two hoards (the find-places of which are in fact only 45 km away, though on different sides of the border) represent (unless they be imports from some place unknown) a small local group, allied by the double pointillé row with the Odoorn and Hijkersmilde specimens.

The double pointillé row is not entirely confined to bracelets in our district; one finds it also on the back of a socketed single-edged knife, otherwise undecorated, of the characteristic Hallstatt B-Montelius V form found near Aalten, Gelderland (RMO Leiden, Inventory No. e. 1925/II. 1). Knives of this type were imported to Northwest Germany and the Netherlands from the South German-Swiss Urnfield area, but were also presumably locally copied (cf. Sprockhoff, *Ibid.*, I, 104-6; II, Taf. 13 : 1, Karte 14). The double punch row has thus a certain local currency here in Montelius V, which tends to confirm the dating of the Hijkersmilde bracelet to that period.

The second bracelet from Hijkersmilde (fig. 42) is of an extremely simple form, and is lacking in features which facilitate specific comparison. Here we must be

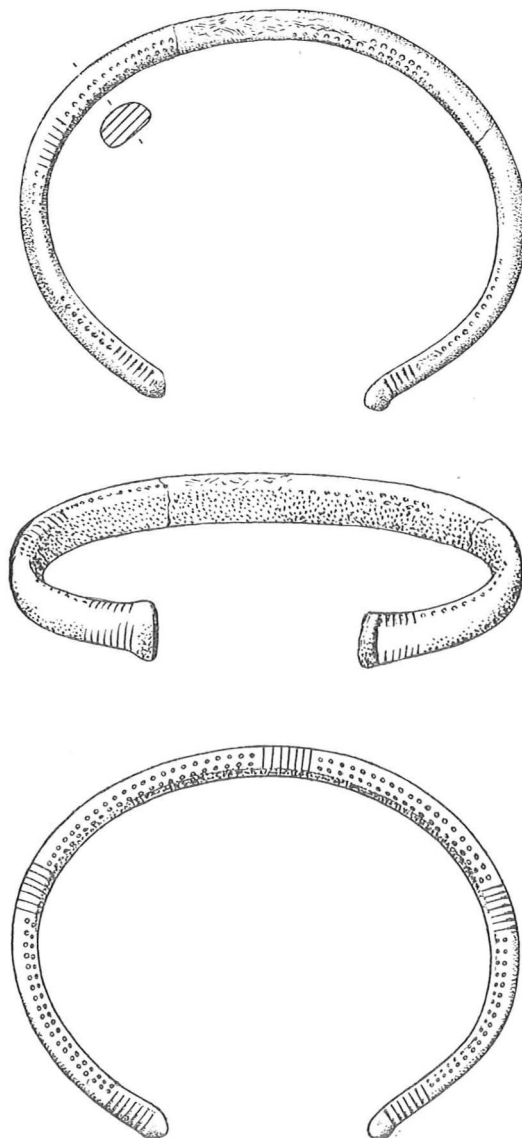


Fig. 43. Bronze bracelet from Odoorn, actual state (top and centre) and reconstruction (bottom). Scale 1 : 1.

content to note that there are similar rings present in Montelius V contexts, as with the simplest of the gold rings in the Barum hoard (Sprockhoff, 1926, 74, Taf. 1c) or the bronze examples in the hoards from Darsekau, Kr. Salzwedel

(Sprockhoff, 1956, II, Taf. 48: 9) and Maribor (Marburg), Slovenia (Müller-Karpe, 1959, Taf. 118: 38-9).

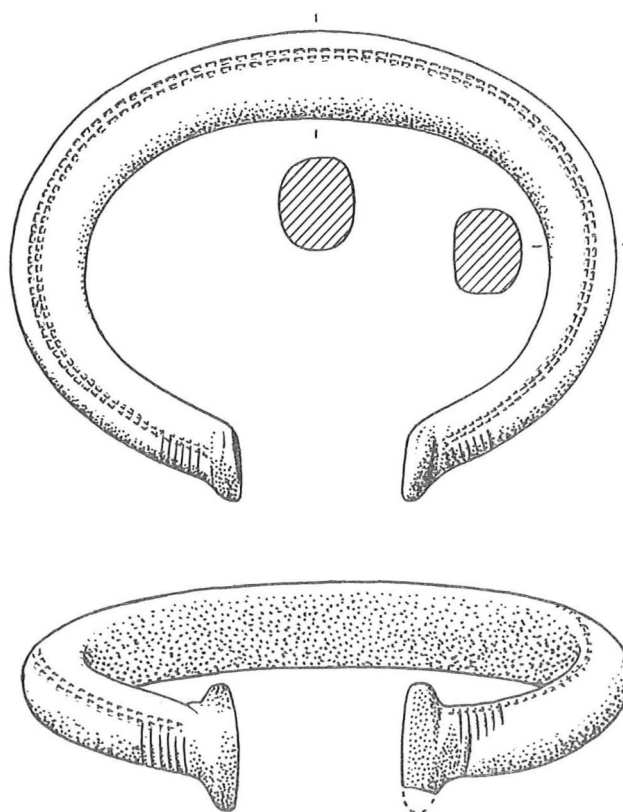


Fig. 44. Bronze bracelet from Onstwedder Holte hoard. Scale 1 : 1.

II. *The bracelet from Lunteren* (Pl. XII : bottom, Fig. 46)

This bracelet was found some years before 1910 (when it was acquired by the RMO Leiden) while ploughing a field belonging to the farm 'Vorst-Engelaar' in the Gem. Ede, which lies to the south of the Barneveldse Beek, the stream which forms the boundary between Gem. Barneveld (to its north) and Ede, on the western Veluwe³. Lunteren is 5½ km away, and the designation of Lunteren as the find-spot is not strictly correct, though the bracelet has become entrenched in the literature under that name (*e.g.* van Heemskerck Düker and Felix, 105; de Laet and Glasbergen, 1959, 125).

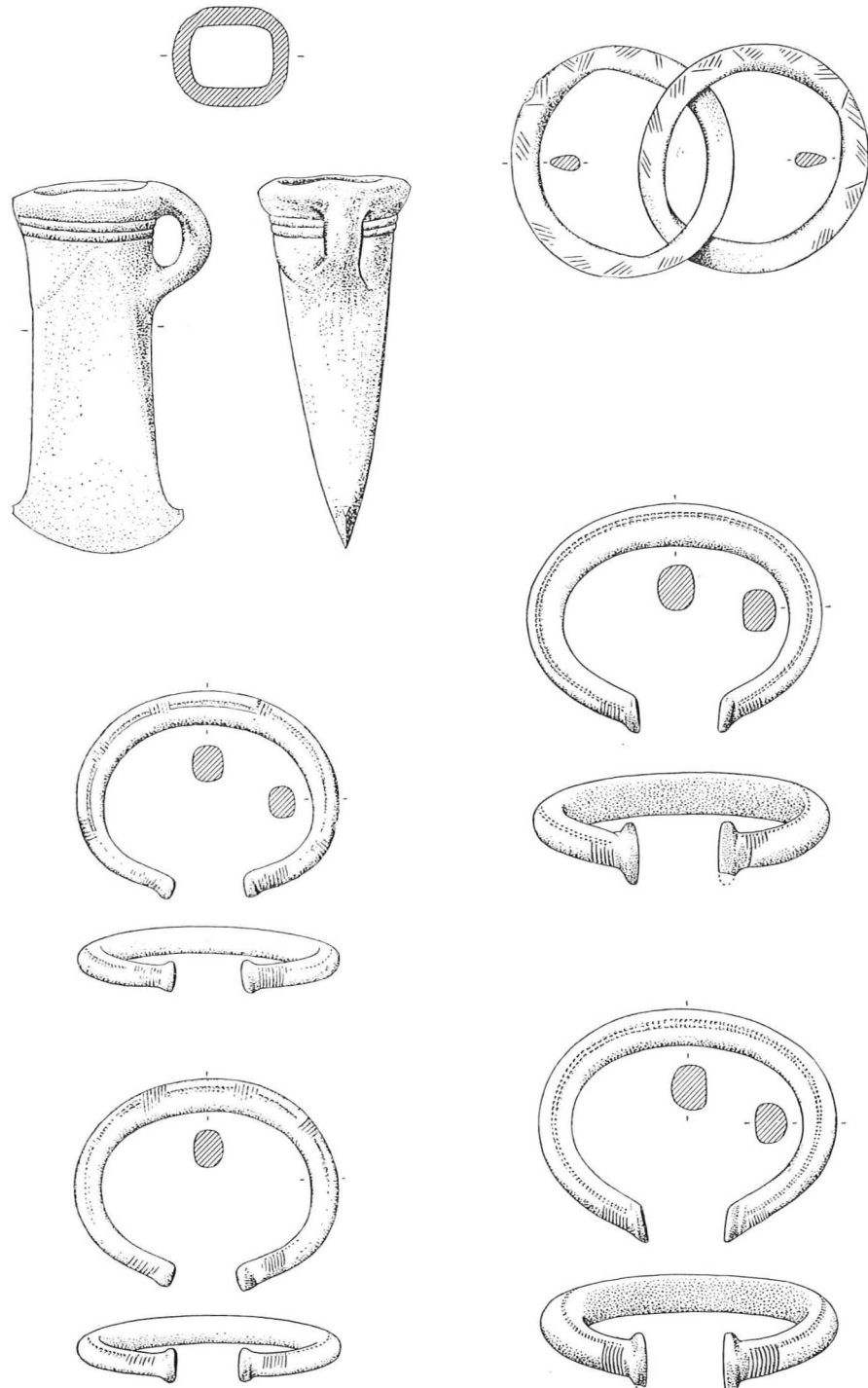


Fig. 45. Bronze hoard from Onstwedder Holte. Scale 1 : 2.

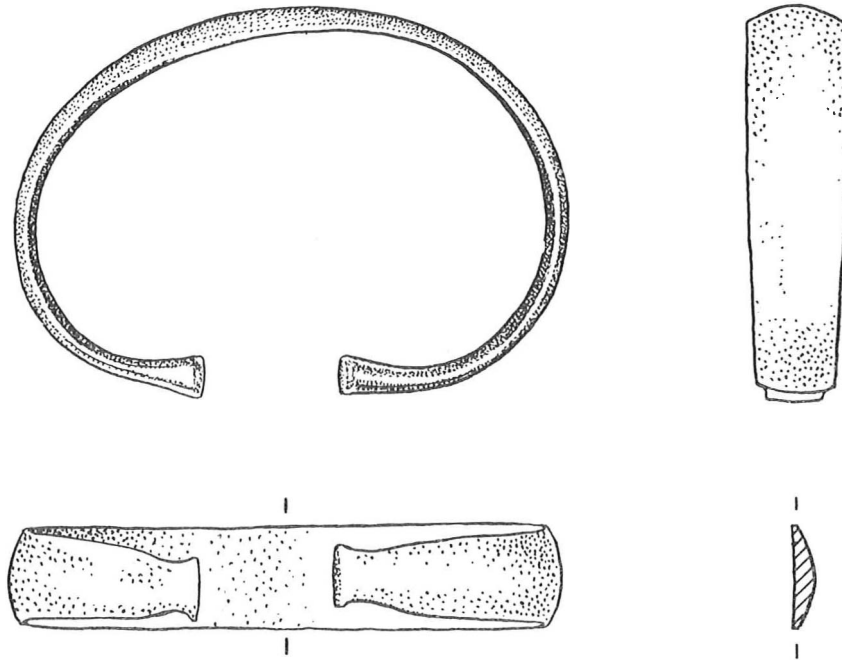


Fig.46. Gold bracelet from Lunteren. Scale 1 : 1.

Although no precise parallel can be cited, reference to the catalogue of Armstrong (1933) and personal examination of the Irish and British prehistoric gold finds in the British Museum⁴ showed that there are no features of the Lunteren bracelet which cannot readily be paralleled among the Irish Late Bronze Age penannular gold bracelets. The flat plano-convex cross-section and the disc-ended terminals were repeatedly found, though they were not actually united on the same bracelet. To cite only published examples, we may mention two bracelets which, though of different cross-section, have terminals quite like those of the Lunteren bracelet (Fore Abbey, Co. Westmeath: Armstrong, 1933, p. 94 no. 420, Pl. XVII: 393, and Heathery Burn, Co. Durham: Greenwell, 1892, p. 96, fig. 1; British Museum *Bronze Age Guide*, 1920, fig. 33). A bracelet with its cross-section like Lunteren, but with different terminals, is from Cottingham, E. R. Yorkshire (British Museum, *Ibid.*, fig. 36). The Heathery Burn example comes from the well-known Late Bronze Age II find, and is datable to the seventh century B.C. according to Hawkes and Smith (1957, pp. 149 ff, with further references; the bracelet is mentioned p. 156). Seventeen gold bracelets of related forms were found in the two hoards from Wansunt near Bexley, Kent (British Museum, *Ibid.* p. 51).

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NOTES

¹ According to the Inventory, in the cadastral plot 'Gemeente Smilde, Section C, No. 1963'.

² According to the Inventory: 'Onder het moerasveen, iets boven het zand . . . onder broekveen en darg, waarover nog sphagnetum'.

³ This information is contained in a letter from E. van Dronkelaar, Barneveld, to the then Director of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, of 10 November 1910, at present in the RMO Leiden.

⁴ We are grateful to Mr. J. M. Brailsford for kindly showing us all the gold finds in December 1960.

APPENDIX

I. The bracelets from Hijkersmilde, Gem. Smilde, Drenthe (*Provinciaal Museum van Drenthe*, Assen, Inventory number 1921/V 2 and 2a).

A. Solid gold bracelet of irregular pennanular form; outer face convex, inner concave, with flat sides; slightly expanded rectangular-ended terminals. The outer edges are ornamented with a double row of punch impressions, evidently made with a double punch (Pl. XI, bottom). On the inside, adjacent to the terminals, are surfaces rough from casting (Pl. XI, top). Hammer marks are visible on the sides close to the terminals (Pl. XI, centre).

Diameter 7.75 cm; width 0.69 cm; terminal plates 0.6 × 0.45 cm.

Weight 40.144 grammes.

Composition of gold: c. 19.5 carats, *i.e.* (accuracy within 2 %) Au c. 81 %, Ag c. 16 %, Cu c. 3 %; S.G. 16.3.

B. Solid gold bracelet of irregular pennanular form; lenticular cross-section; slightly tapering toward thin rounded ends.

Diameter 7.15 cm; width 0.55 cm; thickness 0.2 cm.

Weight 21.367 grammes.

Composition of gold: c. 18.7 carats, *i.e.* (accuracy within 1 %) Au c. 78 %, Ag. c. 12.5 %, Cu. c. 9.5 %; S.G. 16.0.

Literature: *Verslag Museum Assen* 1921, p. 12, No. 15.

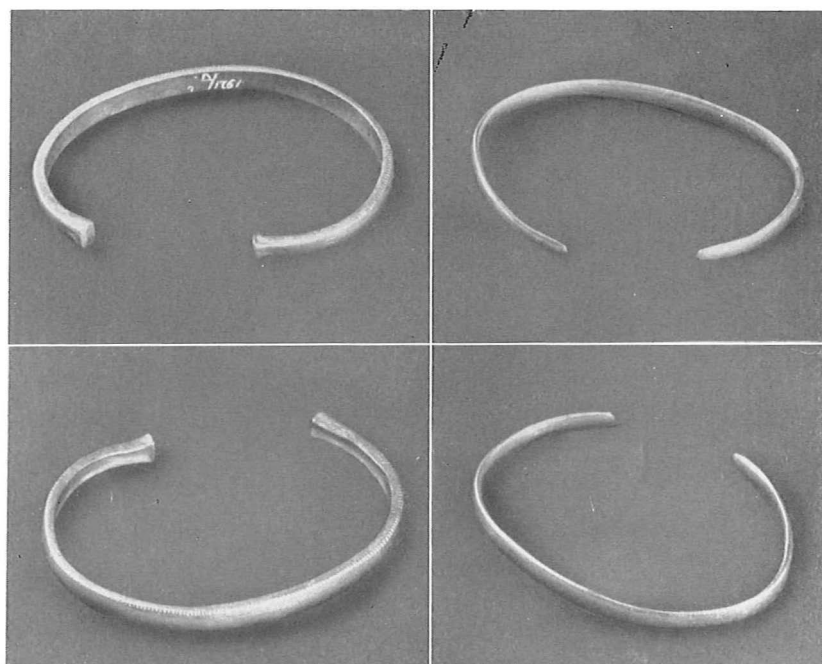
Determination of the metal by Mr. M. R. Mulder, Hoofdessaieur, and Mr. H. van der Zwaag, then Essaieur of the „*Kantoor van Waarborgen*” (Assay office) at Leeuwarden, to whom we are deeply indebted for their friendly coöperation. We are also grateful to Mr. G. Elzinga, Leeuwarden, for his good offices.

II. The bracelet from Lunteren, Gem. Ede, Gelderland (*Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*, Leiden, Inventory number e 1910/12.1).

Gold pennanular bracelet, of plano-convex cross-section; ends constricted and then expanding to oval discs facing one another. A few deep incisions at the edges appear to be modern.

Diameter 7.36 cm; width 1.41 cm; terminal plates 0.9 × 0.6 and 0.84 × 0.6 cm.

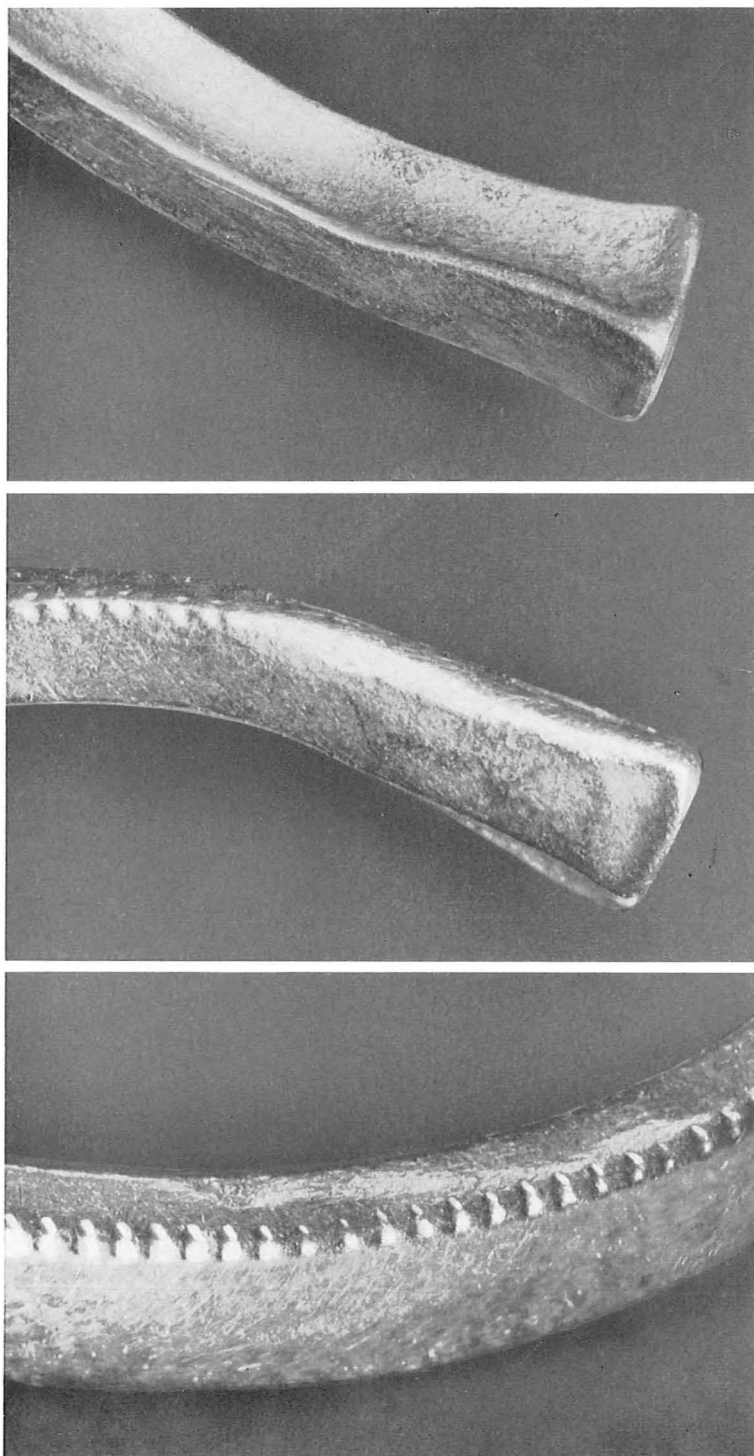
Literature: W. F. van Heemskerck Düker and P. Felix, *Wat aarde bewaarde*. Amsterdam, 3rd ed. (undated), p. 105.



1. Two gold bracelets from Hijkersmilde.



2. Gold bracelet from Lunteren. Courtesy *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*, Leiden.



Gold bracelet from Hijkersmilde; details showing punched decoration (bottom) and terminals (centre and top).