

**Koller Auktionen - Lot 3930**

**S16 Fabergé & Objets de Vertu - Vente aux enchères forcée - mardi 22 juin 2021, 16h00**

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EMERALD AND GOLD JEWEL, RENAISSANCE, FROM THE FREIGHT OF THE SPANISH GALLEON NUESTRA SEÑORA DE ATOCHA, early 17th century.

Yellow gold.

Rare, ornamental jewel with volutes, strapwork and studded with rosettes, set with a single rectangular step cut emerald of ca. 11.00 ct, not treated, in closed back bezel setting. Despite the firmly sealed setting, seawater seems to have seeped in behind the stone and remained there for centuries. Ca. 4,2 x 4 cm. The gemstone is the largest of the faceted emeralds from the recovered freight.

AGL-Report no. CS 52234 stating that the emerald is of Colombian origin, with no indication of clarity enhancement,

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no longer available. The Atocha was commissioned by the "Casa de Contractación", a Spanish government agency, which attempted to regulate exploration and colonisation efforts. In Cartagena, Colombia, and Portobelo, Panama, the galleon was loaded with the belongings of the noble families and other passengers making the return journey to Spain with the armada. The fleet set sail for Spain with goods and passengers on September 4, 1622, in the midst of hurricane season. Both the Atocha and the Santa Margarita only sailed as far as the Florida Keys before they hit a squall and sank along the reef. Parts of the freight of the Santa Margarita have been rediscovered relatively early, as opposed to the ones from the Atocha. Literature: Priscilla E. Muller, *Jewels in Spain, 1500-1800*, New York, 1972, pp. 27-38. Provenance: - Lost in the shipwreck of Nuestra Señora de Atocha, Florida Keys, 1622. - Rediscovered by Mel Fischer, 1986. - Mel Fisher's Treasures, L.L.C., 1986. - Sotheby's New York, 1 February 2013, lot 11. - Private property Switzerland, acquired at the above auction.

CHF 84 000 / 0

€ 86 600 / 0

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The Prestige Gemstone Report™
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This image is for representational purposes only and is not necessarily actual color or size.

Actual Wt./Weight:



Comments:  
This diagram is an example and does not represent the actual facet arrangement of the item described.

Briefed Report Comments:

Document No.: CG 32234	Validation Date: 16 November 2012
<b>Identification</b>	
Mineral Type: Variety:	Natural Bond Emerald
Color Description:	Green
Gross Weight: Measurements:	Not Determinable Approx. 10.9 x 8.0 x 4.0 mm
Cut Shape:	Rectangular
Cutting Style:	Emerald Cut
Comments: Set in a yellow metal antique mounting. One of the jewelry articles received from the previous Spanish Colonial Heirs Sale at Auction.	
<b>Origin</b>	
Provenance:	Classic™ Colombia
Comments: Based on available gemological information, it is the opinion of the Laboratory that the origin of this material would be classified as Classic™ Colombia.	
<b>Enhancement</b>	
Enhanced?	Clearly enhanced? None
Dyeing?	N/A
Treatment?	N/A
Stability Index:	N/A
Comments: No clearly enhanced materials were noted. Emeralds are commonly clearly enhanced to reduce the visibility of fissures. Such reports had Applications.	
Degree of Clearly Enhanced & Relative Stability*	
Enhancement Stability Index**	

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American Gemological Laboratories

13 November 2012.

Emerald and Gold Mounting.  
Reference: CS 52234

To Whom It May Concern:

Very few gem or jewelry articles transcend to the status of historical significance. However one such item is detailed in American Gemological Laboratories Prestige report No. CS 52234. This remarkable emerald and gold mounting is noteworthy for a variety of individual aspects of consideration and they combine to encompass a jewel of unique historic importance and rarity.

This beautiful emerald and gold mount was part of the treasure recovered from the Spanish galleon Nuestra Señora de Atocha, which sank in 1622. The loss of this vessel, together with another Spanish galleon the Santa Margarita, during a terrible storm as they sailed from the New World back to Spain, had become legendary. Laden with a bounty of gold, silver, emeralds and other treasures, the financial loss to Spain at the time was crippling. Recovery efforts of the period were only able to recoup some of the treasures of the Santa Margarita. Although great lengths were taken to find the Atocha, the vessel could not be located. For over three centuries treasure hunters searched for the wreckage of the Atocha to recover the vast bounty that had been logged into the ship's manifest before it set sail.



In the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new generation of treasure seekers toiled to locate the legendary galleon hidden somewhere along the ocean floor of the Caribbean. Foremost of these was a man by the name of Mel Fisher. Mel Fisher's story of exploration, endurance, hardship and success has become equally famous and forever more linked with the fantastic story of the Nuestra Señora de Atocha, when he and his team finally located the remains of this once majestic Spanish galleon in 1985. In the years that followed, literally thousands of artifacts were

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American Gemological Laboratories

recovered. In addition to relics from the sailing vessel itself, there were gold and silver bars, Spanish gold coins, as well as a trove of jewelry articles and rough emeralds.

It was due to these emeralds that I personally first became associated with the artifacts of the Nuestra Señora de Atocha. In the late 1980's, I was fortunate enough to be part of a team that conducted a study on some of the rough emeralds and emerald jewelry of the Atocha. Our findings were published in the Winter 1989 issue of *Gems & Gemology* (Emerald and Gold Treasures of the Spanish Galleon Nuestra Señora de Atocha. Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 196-206).

In the years that followed, I reminisced about the treasures of the Atocha when asked about what items were most memorable throughout my gemological career. In particular there was an emerald and gold mounting from this study that stood out above all the rest. Imagine my surprise and delight when this same emerald and gold mount came to me again for testing. I was asked to confirm the authenticity of the emerald and determine its country of origin. Relating to these aspects I would like to make a few additional remarks. It was during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries that the emeralds of the land which became known as Colombia earned their status for being superior to all other sources from around the world. This reputation continues even today. Furthermore in today's gemstone market, one may hear of references to "old-mine emeralds" to describe a Colombian stone whose superior quality makes it stand out above the rest. The very fine emerald set in the gold mount from the Atocha is one of these exceptional stones that exemplify a top-quality emerald of Colombian origin. With a known history dating back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, early 17<sup>th</sup> century, this exceptional emerald typifies the caliber of emerald that defines the meaning of the term "old mine".

As a further note regarding this exceptional piece, I would like to make some additional comments relating to the mounting. As an overview, it exemplifies New World craftsmanship at its best. The ornate artistry of the mounting is a tribute to the period of jewelry design and manufacturing of the time. Here I would like to draw attention to the skill applied when mounting the emerald into the piece. Firstly, it should be noted that the gold is conformed snugly against the edge or girdle of the stone. Only in four small places at the corners is there any metal actually sitting on top of the stone (otherwise known as the crown). The detail, time and expertise performed when burnishing the gold against the side of the emerald is so extraordinary that in a

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