

# Object Summary



## **Gem-Inset Gold Nagaraja (Snake King) Hair Ornament**

19th century

India (Tamil Nadu)

British India/Princely States

Gold, diamonds, emeralds, rubies

Overall: 3 x 2 1/2 in. (7.6 x 6.4cm)

# Object Summary

This jewel-encrusted serpent is part of a jadainagam (or “hair-snake”).

This type of hair ornament decorates a woman’s braid, or plait, and was worn by brides and Bharatnatyam dancers in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The now-missing upper portion of the ornament representing the sun and moon would have affixed to the back of the wearer’s head.

The serpent ornament (nagar) would have been fastened to the nape of her neck, followed by a long, jeweled ornament (jadai) running down the length of her braid and ending in a tassel (kunjalam).