

Rare Renaissance gold and enamel pendant set with an agate intaglio. Allegorical scene.

Circa: 16th-17th century

H. 8,3 cm

Total weight 22,15 gr

On the left, a dressed woman seems to chase away an other woman naked, fleeing, and clutching only a drapery that billows in the wind. The scene is set on a sea shore— the waves symbolizing the sea. Next to the draped figure, on the left, there is a mirror on the ground on which a snake is intertwined. These are the typical attributes of Prudence, a virtue that indicates the ability to choose the good and act wisely. The serpent is an allusion of the Gospel of Matthew "be prudent as serpents" (Matthew 10.16) while the mirror is the instrument of oneself knowledge.

The subject appears in numerous Renaissance pictural works, while the depiction of this scene appears more unusual in which a naked female figure is added, with her face turned three-quarters backwards, with a more dramatic expression. The scene seems to have the meaning of a punishment referable to the allegory of the supremacy of Good over Evil, therefore of Virtue. The type of agate chosen for this carving is typical of this late Renaissance era.

The frame, in excellent condition except for small signs of aging, and characterized by an alternation of black and white enamels; at the bottom emerald and a pierced pearl.