



A Large Neoclassical carnelian intaglio set in a later massive gold ring. Mars and Venus.

Gold (18k-750) ; gross weight 14,6 gr

TDD 60 (resizable) ; UK size S ; US size 9

Dim. Intaglio 2.5 x 2.2 cm (1 x 0 ⁷/₈ inches)

The scene presents the divine lovers Mars and Venus. The goddess of love restrains the arm of the god of war. The couple gaze at each other with intensity. Mars, naked, wears a helmet and holds a shield in his right hand. His upper body twists towards Venus, who is partially clad in drapery covering the lower part of her body. The groundline is finely engraved with naturalistic elements; Mars's right foot crushes a small globe (an allegorical symbol of earthly power and military victory).

The scene derives from ancient statuary models such as the Mars and Venus group in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, MR 316; the Uffizi, Florence; and the Galleria Borghese, Rome.

The Forbidden Love of Mars and Venus

The illicit affair between Mars and Venus stands as one of mythology's most celebrated romances. Venus, goddess of love and beauty, was wed to Vulcan, the divine blacksmith, yet her heart belonged to Mars, the virile god of war. Their clandestine liaison represented the eternal union of opposing forces—love and conflict, beauty and brutality, harmony and discord. When Vulcan discovered their betrayal, he forged an invisible net of bronze and ensnared the lovers in flagrante delicto, exposing them to the mockery of the assembled gods. Yet despite this humiliation, their passion endured, symbolizing the irresistible power of desire over duty, and the triumph of love even in the face of shame and consequences.

