

A 19th century gold brooch set with a large carnelian intaglio. Portrait of an Hellenistic ruler.

Brooch: 40 × 45 mm

Intaglio: 32 × 37 × 5 mm

Weight: 15 g

A large and impressive gold brooch set with a carved carnelian intaglio depicting the portrait of a Hellenistic prince in left-facing profile. The subject is rendered with authority: a young idealized face, full lips, and an abundant head of curling hair bound with a band — attributes evoking the Alexandrian tradition of royal portraiture.

The iconographic type recalls representations of Alexander the Great or one of his successors, as perpetuated throughout the Hellenistic world and widely revived during the 19th-century neoclassical taste for antique subjects.

The carnelian, a warm orange-red stone of exceptional translucency and size, is carved in high relief with remarkable plasticity, the flowing locks treated with particular virtuosity.

The gold mount displays refined archaeological revival workmanship: a double border composed of twisted rope motifs, a beaded inner register, and a scalloped inner edge of pointed prongs framing the stone — a vocabulary directly inspired by Etruscan and Hellenistic goldsmithing, characteristic of the finest Italian workshops of the period, such as those of Castellani or their circle.