



A gold ring set with a carnelian intaglio depicting the bust of Bacchus

Intaglio: 18th century, Grand Tour.

Modern gold mount (18k & 22k).

Weight: 7.92 g · Ring size: EU 55

The oval carnelian, of a warm orange-red tone, is engraved in intaglio with the bust of Bacchus in profile to the right. The god is rendered as the mature, bearded type: his brow and flowing hair are wreathed with ivy and clusters of berries (corymbs), and a length of drapery falls across his shoulder. Before him rises his principal attribute, the thyrsus — the fennel staff surmounted by a pine cone, sacred to his cult.

The gem is a fine example of Grand Tour glyptic art: 18th-century engravers, working in the antiquarian taste, revived the iconographic repertoire of ancient gems for cultivated travellers. The carving is crisp and assured, the modelling of the beard and foliate crown particularly accomplished.