

A Late Renaissance Agate Intaglio: the Allegory of Abundance

15 × 20 × 2 mm

Italian work, 16th–17th century

The oval banded agate, of warm honey and milky-white tones, is engraved in intaglio with a standing draped female figure, tunic falling in fine pleats and one breast bare, facing right with the head in profile. In her right hand she holds a leafy branch (laurel or olive); her raised left hand gestures above a large cornucopia overflowing at the right of the field. The figure personifies Abundance (Abundantia) — the horn of plenty being her defining attribute, emblem of prosperity and fruitfulness.