



A High-carat gold ring set with a Roman carnelian intaglio of a butterfly on a palm branch

Intaglio: 0.9 × 1 cm

22-karat gold ring (916‰)

Ring size: EU ~56.5 · UK ~P½ · US ~7¾ - Weight: 9.7 g

Intaglio: Roman, 2nd–1st century BC.

A high-carat gold ring, the rounded hoop closing in a Herakles knot, with interlaced gold wires at the shoulders. The gold bezel is set with a carnelian intaglio engraved with a butterfly alighting on a palm branch; globular elements in relief model the wing and body.

The butterfly — psyche, the soul — set upon the palm of victory forms one of the quiet emblems of Roman glyptic: the soul triumphant, the palm sealing its victory, a motif at times read as a consoling image of the spirit prevailing over death. The Herakles knot that closes the hoop was itself a token of protection and indissoluble union, carrying the ring beyond ornament into the language of amulet.