



A Large Roman Chalcedony intaglio set in a later massive 22k ring. Jupiter and Mars.

Chalcedony intaglio; later 22k gold mount.

Intaglio 13 × 17 mm; ring size US 8 (UK P½ / EU 57); weight 12.31 g.

Intaglio: Roman art, 2nd–3rd century A.D. Later mount.

An important Roman chalcedony intaglio depicting Jupiter and Mars, set in a later 22k gold ring with an open oval bezel. The stone, of a fine milky translucency, carries a two-figure composition of remarkable legibility — an allegory of Roman military supremacy.

Mars stands helmeted, spear raised, his hand resting on his shield. Facing him, Jupiter, draped, holds the sceptre and extends the patera; at his feet, the eagle, his bird. The two gods are framed by military standards (signa) composed of stacked lunulae and terminating in hands (manus), the ensigns of the Roman maniples. Groundline.

Iconography

The meeting of Jupiter, guarantor of sovereign order, and Mars, god of war, between the standards of the legions composes an allegory of military supremacy placed under divine protection. Jupiter's extended patera sacralises the scene — libation and pact between the power of the gods and the force of arms — while the eagle, attribute of Jupiter and emblem of the legions, binds the two registers together.

The standards

This type of standard with open hand and lunula refers to the signa militaria of the Roman legions. The

hand, in bronze or silver at the top of the shaft, represented loyalty and divine protection; it also alluded to the military oath (sacramentum) binding the soldier to his legion. It was frequently associated with the lunula and with decorative discs of phalerae type, stacked along the shaft. The lunula, for its part, was a good-luck symbol.

Comparanda

Detail of a Roman marble bas-relief showing the standard formed of lunulae, phalerae and hand, 3rd century, church of San Marcello al Corso, Rome.