A Neoclassical chalcedony intaglio set in a 22k gold ring. The Conquest of Love.

Intaglio 16 × 19 mm

Gold 22 k – Ring size US 8¼ (UK Q / EU 57½) – 7.92 g

Intaglio : Late 18th - early 19th century

The oval chalcedony, milky and translucent, engraved with a winged, nude Cupid standing in a biga at full gallop — the goad in one hand, the reins in the other, the flying gallop above clouds; open gold bezel.

The subject is the Love-chase / the Love conquest: Cupid as charioteer of the heart, racing headlong across the heavens in pursuit — Love that gives chase, seizes and carries off, the metaphor of desire that drives the human heart.

The motif of Cupid driving a chariot is a favourite of ancient glyptic and, through the Grand Tour taste for engraved gems, among the most reproduced subjects of the Neoclassical revival.

Literature

Comparanda

Graeco-Roman layered-agate cameo, Cupid driving a biga to right, set in a later gold ring — Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 1794-1869.

– Roman intaglio, Cupid driving a two-horse chariot, 2nd century A.D.— Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta, no. 2008.031.321 (the museum reads the type as Love the charioteer

directing the human heart, a love token).

– Roman carnelian intaglio, Eros driving a quadriga, inscribed CN·PO — Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des médailles, inv. Froehner.2323.

– For the celestial variant: Jens Petersen Lund (Danish, 1731–1794), Cupid (Eros) driving a chariot on the rainbow, drawing — Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, KKSgb8707.