



A Roman amethyst intaglio set in a late Roman gold ring. Eagle with a cornucopia.

Intaglio 7 × 9 mm

Late Roman gold ring with filigree scrolls and granulation

Ring size US 8¼ (UK Q½ / EU 58); gross weight 4.07 g.

Intaglio: Roman Imperial, 1st–2nd century A.D.

Ring: late Roman, 4th–5th century A.D.

Good condition; small losses to the edge of the bezel; wear consistent with age.

A late Roman gold ring, the hoop formed of three wires, the central one beaded, divided on each side of the bezel by granules and flanked by four spiral scrolls of wire; the oval bezel is set with a violet amethyst intaglio.

An eagle stands in profile, its head turned to the left, its wings folded. Before it rises a cornucopia, which curves beneath the bird and opens at the top into fruit. The engraving is fine and careful, the plumage rendered in short parallel strokes.

Historical context – Roman glyptic

Amethyst, the stone that "keeps from drunkenness" in its Greek name, was highly prized by imperial engravers for its deep colour. Engraved gems outlived their first owners: here a 1st–2nd century intaglio was reset three centuries later in a ring of the late Empire, whose wire scrolls and granules announce the goldsmiths' work of the Migration Period.

Iconography and symbolism

The eagle is the bird of Jupiter and the standard of the legions; the cornucopia is the horn of Abundantia and Fortuna. Together they state the imperial promise: victory in war brings wealth in peace. Augustus counted among his achievements the recovery of the standards taken by the Parthians (Res Gestae, 29) — for the Romans, the eagle was the Empire itself. On this small violet stone, conquest and abundance are held in a single image.