Finch & Co



A BANDED AGATE INTAGLIO ENGRAVED WITH THE CHI-RHO SYMBOL

A BANDED AGATE INTAGLIO ENGRAVED WITH THE CHI-RHO SYMBOL SET IN A

GOLD RING GOLD, AGATE

LATE ROMAN OR EARLY BYZANTINE / 4TH - 6TH CENTURY AD (INTAGLIO)

MOUNT 20TH CENTURY

SIZE: 56 (EU) O 1/2 (UK) 7 1/4 (US) WEIGHT: 12.5 GRAMS

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LITERATURE

A LATE ROMAN OR EARLY BYZANTINE BANDED-AGATE INTAGLIO BEARING THE SACRED MONOGRAM ‘CHI-RHO’ THE FIRST

TWO LETTERS OF ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (CHRISTOS) MOUNTED IN A LATER, 20TH CENTURY GOLD RING OF ELEGANT SIMPLICITY. THE ENGRAVING DEPICTS THE OVERLAPPING GREEK LETTERS CHI (X) AND RHO (P) IN REVERSE (AS WAS CUSTOMARY FOR SEALING), SET WITHIN A SUBTLY LAYERED AGATE MARKED BY NATURAL BANDING. THE ADOPTION OF THE 'CHI-RHO' SYMBOL BECAME CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE REIGN OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT, WHO, ACCORDING TO LATE SOURCES, ADOPTED IT FOLLOWING HIS VISION BEFORE THE BATTLE OF THE MILVIAN BRIDGE IN 312 AD. FROM THAT MOMENT, THE CHRISTOGRAM SERVED AS A POTENT SYMBOL OF DIVINE PROTECTION, TRIUMPH, AND CHRISTIAN IDENTITY.

A COMPARABLE RING FEATURING A 'CHI-RHO' MOTIF WAS DISCOVERED IN THE ROMAN CATACOMBS AND IS NOW HOUSED IN THE COLLECTION AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM (1824,0429.5). THE INTAGLIO'S USE OF BANDED AGATE, A STONE WHOSE LAYERED CLARITY CARRIES SYMBOLIC RESONANCE OF WATER AND SPIRITUAL PURITY, REINFORCES THE EMBLEMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHRIST-MONOGRAM AND THE ENDURING POWER OF EARLY CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM.

PROVENANCE

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