

Finch & C^o



A FINELY CARVED ITALIAN AGATE CAMEO DEPICTING THE BUST OF JULIUS CESAR
A FINELY CARVED ITALIAN AGATE CAMEO DEPICTING THE BUST OF JULIUS CESAR
IN ENAMELLED SILVER MOUNT
EARLY 17TH CENTURY
SIZE: 3 CM HIGH, 2 CM WIDE – 1¼ INS HIGH, ¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

IN HIS 'AUTOBIOGRAPHY' CELINI CREATES A WONDERFUL PICTURE OF THE ENTHUSIASM WHICH EARLY ROMAN ANTIQUE GEMS AROUSED IN RENAISSANCE COLLECTORS. THE AMAZEMENT THEY FELT AT THE PERFECTION OF EXECUTION OF THESE MASTERPIECES WAS OBVIOUSLY A SPUR TO THE CRAFTSMEN OF THE DAY.

'Â€Â€. THIS WAS ALSO THE CAUSE OF MY MAKING ACQUAINTANCE WITH CERTAIN HUNTERS AFTER CURIOSITIES Â€Â€
WHILE DIGGING THE GROUND THEY FREQUENTLY TURNED UP ANTIQUE MEDALS, AGATES, CHRYSOPHRASES, CORNELIAN'S AND CAMEOS; ALSO SOMETIMES JEWELS Â€Â€ THE PEASANTS USED TO SELL THINGS OF THIS SORT TO THE TRADERS FOR A MERE TRIFLE; AND VERY OFTEN WHEN I MET THEM PAID THE LATTER SEVERAL TIMES AS MANY GOLDEN CROWNS AS THEY HAD GIVEN GIULIOS FOR THE SAME OBJECT. INDEPENDENTLY OF THE PROFIT I MADE BY THIS TRAFFIC WHICH WAS AT LEAST TENFOLD IT BROUGHT ME ALSO INTO AGREEABLE RELATIONS WITH NEARLY ALL THE CARDINALS OF ROME. I WILL ONLY TOUCH UPON A FEW OF THE MOST NOTABLE AND RAREST OF THESE CURIOSITIES Â€Â€ I REMEMBER YET ANOTHER PRECIOUS STONE DIFFERENT FROM THESE; IT WAS A CAMEO, ENGRAVED WITH HERCULES BINDING CEREBUS OF THE TRIPLE THROAT; SUCH WAS ITS BEAUTY AND THE SKILL OF ITS WORKMANSHIP, THAT OUR GREAT MICHEL AGNOLO PROTESTED THAT HE HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO WONDERFUL'.