



A Grand Tour three-layered agate cameo mounted in a gold pendant. Cupid and Psyche.

Circa: Late 18th century

Cameo 3.8 x 2.5 cm (1 1/2 x 1 inches)

Brooch: Total weight 6,56 gr

Late 18th century

Psyche stands with her arm about the neck of Cupid, who stands at her right side, looking into her face with tenderness. The cameo engraved in a beautiful multi-toned agate is set in a 9ct gold frame converted into a pendant.

A very similar work in onyx was made by Alessandro CADES (Late 18th century) in the British Museum, London, 1867,0507.779.

Cf. an intaglio by L. Pichler in the Antiquarium at Berlin

This model is after an agate cameo, ante 1787, by PICHLER and considered his invention: 'non ad imitazione di antihci marmi...ma di sua propria invenzione e disegno...Amore e Pische a figure intiere, ed è scolpita sopra un 'agata onice" — from de Rossi (Pichler biography), 1792.

Cupid (*Amor* or 'Love' in Latin) and **Psyche** ('Soul' in Greek), which forms the centrepiece of the Latin novel Metamorphoses or The Golden Ass by the second-century A.D. writer, **Apuleius**.

Apuleius' tale narrates how the beautiful princess Psyche gains the enmity of Venus, goddess of love, but the love of Venus' son, Cupid, and how after a series of tribulations and adventures (involving jealous sisters, a husband of mysterious identity, a dramatic revelation scene and an epic-style journey to the Underworld) the two are united in happy marriage and Psyche becomes a goddess.

This story has enjoyed an extraordinarily rich reception through the five centuries from the rediscovery of Apuleius' novel in the Renaissance to the present day; the wonderful frescoes in Raphael's Loggia di Psiche in the Villa Farnesina in Rome (1518); or the famous work by neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss (1783-1793).

Literature

FURTWÄNGLER, Beschreibung, &c., n°. 9396, pl.63.

PAOLETTI, v.II, T.V, n°159