



21 oval antique cameos mounted for wear as a necklace, collected by Arthur Richard Wellesley, 2nd Duke of Wellington, each collet set in gold and joined by detachable circular links,

the carved oval gems in shades of orange, brown, pinkish brown, black and cream or white within fluted border settings, split-ring gold links between each for altering length and order as preferred.

Twenty-one cameos and intaglios is as follows:-

1. Sardonyx cameo in white on pale brown. Head of a bearded man, cloak fastened at the shoulder.
2. Sardonyx cameo in white on pale brown. Cupid burns a butterfly at an altar, watched by Venus)
3. Sardonyx intaglio in cream and orange. A steering oar/rudder, an ear of corn and a poppy head; emblems of fertility.
4. Sardonyx cameo in pinkish-white on pale orange. Composite head of a woman, a ram's head, a Persian monarch with diadem, and the bearded Hercules.
5. Sardonyx cameo on orange on brown. Three quarters facing bust of a boy.
6. Hessonite garnet cameo. Facing mask of Pan.
7. Dark brown onyx intaglio. Head of a young man.
8. Sardonyx cameo in orangey-brown and cream. Head of a child.
9. Sardonyx cameo in white on black. Head of the Virgin Mary, by Robert Wray (fl. 1770).
10. Sardonyx cameo in greyish-white on black. Head of Psyche, butterfly wings in her hair.

11. Sardonyx cameo in orange on brown. Head of a man wearing a head-band.
12. Sardonyx cameo in white on black. Head of a man, bearded, perhaps a philosopher.
13. Convex garnet cameo. Head of a man wearing 17th century costume.
14. Sardonyx cameo in pink on pinkish-brown. Bust of a woman, her hair in the Neo-Classic style.
15. Sardonyx cameo in white on pale brown. A snake is sacrificed at a burning altar.
16. Sardonyx cameo in white on grey. A lion.
17. Sardonyx cameo in white on grey. Head of Roma.
18. Sardonyx cameo in pink on orange-brown. Head of a classical man.
19. Sardonyx cameo in grey and brown on pale orange. Two jugate heads, a bearded man, and a woman with flowers in her hair.
20. Sardonyx cameo in white on black. Head of Michelangelo.
21. Sardonyx intaglio in pale and dark brown. Facing head of a girl with ringlets.

Commentary by Diana Scarisbrick:-

The necklace was part of a collection formed by Arthur Richard Wellesley, 2nd Duke of Wellington (1807-1884), while Marquis of Douro. Underestimated by the biographers of his father, he was witty and cultivated, with a range of interests which included natural history, and the writing of satirical poetry. His enthusiasm for engraved gems is in a tradition which began with Lord Arundel at the beginning of the 17th century and which was continued in the 18th century by members of the Dilettanti Society, in particular the Dukes of Marlborough and Devonshire, Charles Towneley and Richard Payne Knight.

Like them, Lord Douro patronised the contemporary gem engraver as well as purchasing ancient stones. The earliest of these is a group of Babylonian cylinder seals dating from the 2nd millennium B.C., and there are a few Greek and Etruscan scaraboids. The large number of Roman gems provides examples of the subjects which appealed to the military as well as private citizens; portraits, animals, astrological symbols, divinities, mythology and genre. The later gems include examples by notable 18th

century engravers, Luigi Pichler, Antonio Berini, Nicola Morelli, Robert Wray, William and Charles Brown, Edward Burch and Nathaniel Marchant. The group of 70 intaglios from the collection of Prince Poniatowski (1763 - 1833), engraved with heroic episodes from Homer and Ovid, and signed with the names of the legendary engravers of antiquity admirably illustrate the ideal of beauty which was so much to the taste of the aristocracy in the Neo-Classic period.

Length 54.5cm / 21½"

Weight: 48g