A Corpus Of Roman Engraved Gemstones From British Sites

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Of the increasing number of Roman gemstones from Turkey published from museum and private collections, nearly all lack a secure archaeological context. Consequently, it has been difficult to discuss the origin, production or dissemination of gemstones in Anatolia during the imperial period. Excavations in the cemeteries at Gordion have yielded over a dozen carved intaglios typical of the first to the fourth century AD. Three of the gems are cut in a relatively rare octagonal form, an eight-sided shape which achieved limited popularity during the late imperial period but has yet to receive The study of engraved gemstones, however, has benefitted little from this. It remains largely concerned with questions of style, chronology, typology, and attribution, and persists, for the most part, in viewing gems either as functional seals or as static items of elite display, useful primarily for what their images can reveal about the appearance and dissemination of classical sculpture. The wearer; and chapter four explores how gems engraved with images of gods enacted epiphany. In so doing, this study aims to show that Roman gemstones were complex objects, carriers of multiple potential meanings, and useful to us as lenses onto different aspects of Roman material culture, from luxuria, to the expression of gender identity, to the depiction of divinity. Related Papers. 'The primary purpose of an engraved gem or ring-bezel, cut in intaglio, was to make an impression upon some fictile material..., which would be understood by the owner of the device, and by his associates, as a personal signature.' So began Martin Henig's original BAR Number 8 from 1978, in the British Series of British Archaeological Reports, a catalogue and study of over 1000 Roman engraved gemstones from the British Isles. Nearly 30 years later comes the third edition of this study, the new Preface to which concludes: 'Over the years I have thought more about gems in relation to other arts and have integrated glyptics into my book on The Art of Roman Britain (1995).