

	Object:	Janus, the Two-Faced (Gem)
	Museum:	Museum August Kestner Trammplatz 3 30159 Hannover (0511) 168-42730 museen- kulturgeschichte@hannover- stadt.de
	Collection:	Ancient Cultures, Gemmen, Kameen und Glaspasten. Die Sammlung geschnittener Steine
	Inventory number:	K 1404

Description

The depiction of Janus is similar to those on the obverse of republican aces; however, it is very rarely found on gems. The dependence of this gem image on corresponding coin images is also proven by the numeral sign I between the backs of the heads.

In 46 BC, Gaius Iulius Caesar declared January 1st the first day of the year with the introduction of the Julian calendar, also to honour Janus. The name of the first month of the year is also derived from him. The two-faced Janus, the god of the beginning and the end, is one of the oldest Roman gods and has no equivalent in Greek mythology. The Romans began the year with sacrifices. They decorated their houses with laurel, which was considered purifying, visited each other for joint celebrations and exchanged gifts - actually everything, just like today.

Former August Kestner Collection, Rome

Detailed description

Lorbeerbetränker Doppelkopf mit abgerundeten Vollbärten, oben zwischen den Hinterköpfen ein I.

Basic data

Material/Technique:

Glass paste, light brown / carved

Measurements:

Height: 1.16 cm, width: 0.94 cm

Events

Created	When	50 v. Chr. - 50 n. Chr.
	Who	
	Where	Rome
Collected	When	
	Who	August Kestner (1777-1853)
	Where	Rome
[Relation to person or institution]	When	
	Who	Janus
	Where	

Keywords

- Calendar
- Engraved gem
- God
- January
- Mythology
- month

Literature

- Schlüter, Margildis - Platz-Horster, Gertrud (1975): Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen IV. Hannover, Kestner Museum, Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe. Wiesbaden, 206 Nr. 1030 Taf. 138