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**A second Intaglio from The Ditches site, North Cerney,  
Gloucestershire**

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A SECOND INTAGLIO FROM THE DITCHES SITE,  
NORTH CERNEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Fieldwalking by Mrs Frances Saunders of Woodmancote has produced a second intaglio find (PLATE I) from the Ditches site, North Cerney. The gem has kindly been donated to the Corinium Museum, Cirencester, by the landowner, Mr H. Robinson of Moorwood, Woodmancote. The gem has been given the accession number 1982/20/2.



1 Cm

## PLATE I

Iron ring with red jasper intaglio from the Ditches, North Cerney.

The Ditches site comprises a 10-acre hillfort of the late pre-Roman Iron Age with superimposed occupation of the 1st to 4th centuries AD (RCHM 1976, 85–86; Trow 1982a, 26–29). The gem, set in an iron ring, was recovered from ploughsoil in the northern half of the site at SO 99560944. The first intaglio to be found at the Ditches came from the southern half of the site and was of Augustan or earlier date (Trow 1982b).

The gem is of red jasper, oval in shape (measuring 12 × 10 mm) with a flat upper surface. It is in good condition, with the engraving very fresh and the surface retaining much of its final polish. The engraved scene depicts a shaggy-coated goat facing left and rearing up to browse on the leaves of a slender sapling, one of which it has detached and is eating. The well-proportioned figure of the goat and the graceful curve of the tree are simply executed in fairly thick cuts of the lap-wheel. The gemstone is set into the bezel of an iron ring, flush with its surface. The ring is broken into two pieces, perhaps as a result of recent ploughing and is heavily corroded; it has a diameter of 22 mm internally, a band width of 5 mm, and a width of 12 mm at the bezel. The ring is basically of Henig type III/V (Henig 1982, 37 and fig. 1) but visual and X-ray examination suggest that the band has a tendency towards being polygonal and therefore has elements of Henig type IX.

Several parallels for the engraved scene are available from Britain (Henig 1978, 120–121 and 260, nos. 609–612) and on the Continent (Sena Chiesa 1966, nos. 1134–1136; Schmidt 1971, 222–223 and taf. 21, no. 11; Krug 1980, 214 and taf. 98, no. 216). Of the British examples, one (Henig 1978, no. 610) comes from Cirencester, 8 km south-east of the Ditches site. The style of the engraving corresponds to Maaskant-Kleibrink's 'small grooves style' (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978, 252). This style of cutting and the use of red jasper as a gemstone suggest a 2nd-century date for the execution of the intaglio, although, if the gem is in its original ring, the polygonal character of the band would be unusual at this early a date. The theme of the engraving itself, with the goat grazing from a tree or bush, is quite a common motif in Roman idyllic art and appears on wall-paintings, lamps, and other media apart from gemstones (Toynbee 1973, 165).

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