



A Neoclassical onyx cameo set in a gold ring. Aeschines.

Cameo: 1.8 x 2.3 cm (0 ³/₄ x 0 ⁷/₈ inches)

Mounting: Mid 19th century; UK size N³/₄ ; total weight 7,58 gr

19th century

This fine and large oval onyx cameo depicts the figure of Aeschines (390-314 B.C.), an Athenian orator who advocated peace with Philip II of Macedonia and who was a bitter political opponent of the statesman Demosthenes. He is represented, standing in slight three-quarters, wearing the classical 'toga'. The figure is masterfully sculpted with great rendering of the anatomical volumes under the drapery.

The face shows the classical physiognomy of the philosopher depicted in the ancient marble portraits.

After, the Roman marble statue of Aeschines from the Villa of Papyri in Herculaneum.

Aeschines came from a modest background and began his career as a tragic actor, later taking on minor roles in public service. In 346 BC, he participated—alongside Demosthenes—in diplomatic missions to Philip II of Macedon, which led to the Peace of Philocrates between Athens and Macedonia. During these negotiations, Aeschines advocated for accepting Macedonia's growing influence in Greece. As a result, after the peace was finalized, Demosthenes and Timarchus sought to charge him with treason. In response, Aeschines successfully accused Timarchus of serious moral misconduct. When Aeschines was eventually tried in 343 BC, he was narrowly acquitted.