

## KUNSTHANDEL INEZ STODEL



A Russian Jasper box of Achilles

An octagonal box crafted from Yamsk Jasper, with each side featuring two layers of green and brown agate, set in a silver gilt mount. The front is adorned with a cameo of Achilles, his helmet embellished with a dragon motif.

weight: 50.49 grams

dimensions: 2 x 6 x 3.8 cm

The Yamsk Jasper cameo snuff box, depicting Achilles in profile on the lid, is attributed to the Yekaterinburg Russian Imperial Lapidary, established in 1751, known for producing exquisite hardstone objects, many now part of the State Hermitage Museum's collection. The Russian Imperial Cabinet, responsible for overseeing Imperial family properties, managed lapidary production using precious stones from the Ural Mountains. The craftsmanship, material, and

dimensions of the snuff box, along with its similarity to other Hermitage pieces, suggest it likely originated from the Yekaterinburg workshop. It was later fitted with 19th-century Russian snuff box components. The cameo likely draws inspiration from a model created by the renowned gem engravers Charles and William Brown, who also worked for Catherine the Great. A good visual comparison is offered by a modern cameo brooch with Achilles by Luigi Rosi in the British Museum (1978, 1002.1049), based on a design by Brown (Tassi and Raspe 1791, no. 9198). The box's octagonal shape is atypical for cameos produced outside Russia. Such precious objets de vertu were dispatched as diplomatic presentation gifts abroad. Similar Yamsk Jasper snuff boxes featuring carved cameos of Russian czars have also been identified in private collections. Additionally, in terms of material and carving, our Achilles intaglio bears comparison with a Yamsk Jasper cameo of Czar Nicolas I in the Hermitage Museum.