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Ethiopian Icon: Spiritual Heritage And Sacred Art Of The Coptic Church

4 500 EUR



Signature : NC

Period : 19th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Painted wood

Length : 41

Height : 32

Depth : 3,50

Description

Structure and Materials: This Ethiopian icon is a wooden diptych cross, finely carved and painted. The two parts of the cross are decorated inside and out, with meticulous detail carved into the wood. **Left Pane:** The upper part shows a central figure, probably Christ or a saint, with a serene face and expressive eyes. He holds an open book with scriptures in Ge'ez, the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Around this central figure, several other figures, possibly apostles or disciples, are depicted looking upward with expressions of devotion. The background is colored yellow and green, creating a strong contrast with the brown and green dresses of the characters. **Right Pane:** The central figure is again Christ or a saint, this time in a blessing posture, with raised hands. The lines are similar to those

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in the figure on the left panel. The figures surrounding Christ, perhaps saints or apostles, look towards him with expressions of adoration. The background here too is yellow and green, with green and red robes for the characters.

Exterior of the Cross: The exterior of the cross's flaps is also engraved with intricate geometric designs, adding to the richness of the artifact.

History of Ethiopian Icons Origins and Influence:

Ethiopian icons have their origins in Orthodox Christian traditions, influenced by the first contacts with Christianity in the 4th century during the reign of King Ezana of Aksum.

Ethiopian Christianity has retained unique elements, fusing Byzantine, Coptic and local influences. Characteristics: Ethiopian icons are generally made of wood, sometimes canvas, and are often small, designed to be transportable.

They are richly colored with natural pigments and show a strong Byzantine influence in style, with stylized figures with large expressive eyes and distinctive facial features. Scenes depicted include biblical episodes, lives of saints, and figures of the Virgin Mary and Christ, often in postures of blessing or devotion. Liturgical and Cultural Function: Icons play a central role in the liturgical life of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, used in churches, homes, and during religious processions. They are also an object of personal veneration, seen as windows to the divine, allowing worshipers to connect spiritually with the holy figures depicted. Production and

Techniques: Icon production was traditionally the domain of monks and artisans trained in monasteries. They used egg painting techniques and mineral pigments to create vibrant, long-lasting colors. Motifs and compositions are often dictated by traditional models, ensuring stylistic and theological continuity across the centuries. Conclusion This Ethiopian icon is a remarkable example of traditional religious art, incorporating stylistic and iconographic elements deeply rooted in Ethiopia's Christian history. It illustrates the unique fusion of local and foreign

influences, creating a distinctive style that continues to play a vital role in Ethiopia's religious and cultural practice.