



Pair Of Byzantine Icons: Archangels Michael And Gabriel - Tempera On Panels

3 500 EUR



Signature : Ecole de Novgorod ou Moscou Fin XVII^e ou
Début XVIII^e

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Width : 30 cm

Height : 33 cm

Description

Superb pair of icons depicting the Archangels Michael (left) and Gabriel (right), executed in egg tempera on softwood panel (pine or spruce), with burnished gold highlights on the halos. Dimensions: 33 x 30 cm each. Provenance: European private collection. Michael is depicted wearing a red tunic embroidered with gold, a symbol of justice and heavenly power. His delicately modeled face tilts his head slightly, his gaze imbued with gentleness yet firmness, typical of Russian iconography of the late 17th or early 18th century. Gabriel wears a green chlamys richly decorated with golden floral motifs, associated with the good news and the Annunciation. His graceful features and neat curls make him a refined example of post-Byzantine aesthetics. The halos are carefully gilded,

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providing a luminous contrast with the dark backgrounds. The Old Church Slavonic inscriptions clearly identify each Archangel. The panels are equipped with horizontal linings (crossbars), characteristic of Russian craftsmanship. The Archangels Michael and Gabriel are the two principal heavenly messengers in the Christian tradition: Michael, leader of the heavenly hosts, protector and intercessor, often invoked in the Orthodox liturgy for his role as guardian; and Gabriel, messenger of the Annunciation, figure of the Good News and divine revelation. Presenting these two icons as a pair is highly symbolic: they often flanked a central icon (Deisis, Christ Pantocrator, or Virgin Hodegetria) in a small domestic iconostasis. The style, color palette, and treatment of the faces allow us to situate these two icons within the Russian tradition of the 17th and 18th centuries, probably from the Novgorod or Moscow schools, in the so-called "post-Nikonian" period, characterized by a simplification of the backgrounds and a softening of the features. Condition: Good overall condition considering their age. There is some cracking in the paint layer, wear from use, and some visible older restorations. The panels are sound, slightly curved, with original crossbars. This pair of icons is distinguished by: The quality of the drawing: faces with subtle modeling, a gaze imbued with spirituality. The richness of the ornamentation: finely punctuated gilding, delicate highlights. The rarity of the pair: a coherent ensemble, probably remaining united since its origin. Dimensions: 33 x 30 cm (each) - a sought-after square format for icons used for private devotion. Extremely careful shipping. #AncientIcon #RussianIcon #SacredArt #ArchangelMichael #ArchangelGabriel #OrthodoxIcon #Iconostasis #Tempera #AncientPainting #ByzantineArt #ReligiousAntiquity #RussianArt18th #CollectibleArt #Proantic #Spirituality #HeritageExpertise: 1. Stylistic reading (forms and faces) Softened faces, with subtle modeling

and less contrasting reddish-brown shadows than in the 15th-16th centuries. Melancholic, slanted gaze, typical of post-medieval (18th century) works, more naturalistic than those of the 17th century. Hair detailed in wavy locks, a refinement characteristic of 18th-century Russian art, close to the Russian schools from Moscow and Novgorod.

2. Palette and Gilding: Dark grounds with burnished (not chased) gold halos, common in the 17th-18th centuries. Use of bright greens and reds with gold highlights: colors are quite bold and less muted than in 17th-century production, where the palette is more austere.

3. Support and Technique: Softwood panels with horizontal crossbars (kovcheg is barely marked, or even absent): typical of 18th-century Russian production. Crackle and patina consistent with an age of 250-300 years (uniform oxidation of the gold, no overcleaning).

4. Historical Context: In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, following the reforms of Patriarch Nikon (mid-17th century), we observe: A simplification of composition and an increased production of icons for private devotion. An openness to Western influences, which softened features and made figures more "humanized." These icons demonstrate precisely this blend: respect for the Byzantine canon, but with a softness and decorative refinement typical of the Russian Baroque period. Beautiful Russian work!