



Saint Nicholas - 19th-century Russian Icon



890 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 31 cm.

Height : 35 cm.

Description

Russian iconographer Central Russia (Palech or Mstera region), mid-19th century Saint Nicholas Egg tempera on wood, 35×31 cm The icon depicts a half-length portrait of Saint Nicholas of Myra, following the established type of Nikolaj Cudotvorec ("Nicholas the Wonderworker"), the most popular saint in all of Russian Orthodox devotion. The bishop is depicted in pontifical vestments--a red phelonion studded with golden crosses, a green omophorion with golden crosses--with his right hand raised in a gesture of blessing and his left hand holding an open Gospel. The text in Slavonic script quotes a passage from the Gospel of John (Jn 8:12 ff.), legible in the customary liturgical version. In the upper corners, within small arches, appear the figures of Christ blessing on the left and the

Dealer

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Mother of God on the right: a reference to the hagiographic episode of the Council of Nicaea (325), in which tradition recounts that Nicholas received the Gospel and the omophorion from heaven directly from the hands of Christ and the Virgin, after having been stripped of his episcopal insignia for slapping the heretic Arius. The gold background is entirely engraved with geometric and floral motifs--rhombuses, chevrons, rosettes--which cover the entire free surface of the panel using the cekan (cold-engraving) technique, a distinctive feature of the production of the Palekh and Mstera workshops in the second half of the 19th century. The halo is radiated with very fine engraved lines. The quality of the execution, the refinement of the chasing, and the vividness of the skin tones--modeled with a certain academic sensibility--point to an attribution to these two schools of Central Russia, among the most prolific and technically advanced of the 19th century.