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An Exceptional Orthodox Icon Of The Synaxis Of The Three Holy Hierarchs -- Saint Basil The Great



6 000 EUR

Signature : Grünbaum

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Silver metal

Width : 27 cm

Height : 31 cm

Description

The folded edges bear the maker's mark HG, attributed to Heinrich Gottfried Ferdinand Grünbaum, the date 1884 and the 84 zolotnik silver standard, equivalent to 875 fineness. The saints are shown standing frontally in episcopal vestments and holding closed Gospels. Their names are engraved beneath them in ornate Church Slavonic script. Above the central figure is a small image of Christ Pantocrator. The riza is remarkable for the quality and density of its workmanship. Almost the entire surface is enriched with engraving, chasing, punched decoration and intricate geometric ornament. Particularly impressive are the large radiating haloes and the numerous miniature sacred medallions decorating the episcopal vestments. The scale, richness and labour involved

Dealer

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place this riza well above ordinary commercial production of the period. It was almost certainly individually commissioned for an icon regarded as especially important and venerated. Only the faces, hands, parts of the beards and the small image of Christ remain visible beneath the silver. These exposed areas show traditional tempera painting over gesso, a dark preparatory sankir layer, carefully built highlights and fine natural craquelure. The riza was made in 1884, but in our considered opinion the icon itself is likely to be considerably earlier. The combined visible technical and stylistic evidence suggests that significantly earlier painting with substantial independent historical, artistic and market value survives beneath the silver. The riza has not been removed during our ownership. The precise date, school and condition of the concealed painting can be established only after professional removal by a qualified icon conservator. The future owner therefore acquires not only a rare, fully hallmarked silver work by a named Reval silversmith, but also an unexplored icon whose complete attribution remains to be discovered. If the earlier date and good preservation of the concealed painting are confirmed, the importance and value of the complete object could substantially exceed that of the silver riza alone. Condition: natural tarnishing, oxidation, wear, scratches and local deformation to the silver. The upper left corner is bent. There are several small punctures, tears and local losses to the thin silver sheet. The visible painting has age-related craquelure and local losses, including a noticeable loss to the face of Saint Basil the Great. The textile backing is heavily worn. The riza has not been removed, and the condition of the concealed painting, gesso and wooden panel is unknown. Dimensions: 27 × 31 cm Please study the accompanying photographs carefully as they form an integral part of this description. If you have any questions, we will be happy to answer them. The item will be shipped with full tracking and insurance.

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