



**3008. Annunciation**

**Russia, 19<sup>th</sup> century**

**Egg tempera on gesso and wood**

**Panel: 31 x 26.3cm**

**Condition: good condition, commensurate with age.**

**Inscription in Church Slavonic: Благовещеніе Пресвятая Богородица, Annunciation to Our Most Holy Theotokos.**

**Gabriel, Archangel, Гавриил Архангел; Mother of God - МР ΘΥ**

**Provenance: Private Collection, London, late 1990s.**

**Feast Day: 25<sup>th</sup> March**

The work exemplifies the best of the great Old Believer revival of the 19th century that coincided with the Slavophile Movement. The Slavophiles aimed to protect the uniqueness of Russian traditions and culture, rejecting the westernizing influences of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. The role of the Russian Orthodox Church was seen by them as more significant than the role of the state and Russian mysticism was preferred over "Western rationalism". Rural life was praised by the movement, which opposed industrialization and urban development.

The movement originated in Moscow in the 1830s. Drawing on the works of Greek Church Fathers, the philosopher Aleksey Khomyakov (1804–60) and his devoutly Orthodox colleagues elaborated a traditionalistic doctrine that claimed Russia had its own distinct way, which should avoid imitating "Western" institutions. An important corollary of the Slavophile movement was the translation into Russian of the *Philokalia* and the revival of Hesychast mystical prayer in the monasteries. It influenced many of Russia's greatest intellectuals such as Dostoevsky and, in our own times, Solzhenitsyn.

Thus the painter of our Annunciation has produced a work in the tradition of Russia's greatest medieval art. The icon bears comparison with the Ustyug Annunciation of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 1.) and that of Andrei Rublyov in 1405 (fig. 2.)



Fig. 1. Ustyug Annunciation, 12<sup>th</sup> c.



Fig. 2. Rublyov Annunciation, 1405.