

Membership Badge of the Russian Orthodox Society of Minsk, 1909-1917.

In brass with silver finish (often referred to as "white metal"); measures 53.2 mm x 38.9 mm; weighs 14.2 g. The cross in the center is a separate superimposed part. The characters МПБ in the center ("MPB", for "Minsk Orthodox Brotherhood") in the center are in characteristic Church Slavonic font. The wreath and imperial crown are very nicely detailed.

The badge is in very fine condition. Sadly, the little cross on the top of the crown broke off, a common flaw of the imperial-era badges. The defect however is not glaring or even immediately noticeable. There is practically no overall wear; the raised details of the wreath, cross and crown are exceptionally well-preserved and crisp. Traces of the original silver finish are visible in the recessed areas of the obverse, while the silver plating on most of the reverse is nearly pristine. In the center of the reverse, there was once an inscription "Minsk Orthodox Brotherhood" in a vertical line which got carefully erased for unknown reasons. The pin attachment is original and fully functional.

The badge was established in 1909 in three grades. The gold version with enameled white cross was reserved for honorary members of the organization, individuals who advanced the cause of Russian Orthodox faith in a major way, or those who made a particularly large contribution to the society's coffers. The second level badge in silver with white enamel was issued to distinguished members or contributors of at least a 50-ruble donation (at large sum at the time.) Rank and file members were issued the 3rd (bronze) level badges such as the one offered here

/Patrikeev and Bojnovich, Badges of Russia Vol.1 , p. 263, fig. 15.16/.

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