



Russian Orthodox Relics Box Moshchevik (мошчевик) with the icon of Theotokos of Tikhvin, circa XVII-XVIII C.

The icon is in silver, the box is in silver-plated bronze, 4" long to the eyelet, 3" wide, and 3/4" thick to the highest points of the icon.

The icon of the Theotokos of Tikhvin is one of the most revered Orthodox Christian icons. The original was considered to be written by St. Luke the Evangelist. According to tradition, it was moved in the 5th century from Jerusalem to Constantinople where a church was built specially for it. Indignant of the multitude of sins of the Byzantians, the icon miraculously moved itself to the quiet Russian town of Tikhvin near Novgorod.

The back side shows an engraved image of the Golgotha cross with a skull and bones underneath. Tradition holds that Golgotha was the resting place of the first man, Adam, and Golgotha crosses feature Adam's skull under the cross.

A relics box could contain partial relics of one or more saints, covered in an aromatic paste made of wax, ground marble, myrrh, aloe, and other aromatic substances. The mix is melted in a special vessel and poured over the relics to prevent them from moving around in the box but also to symbolize the aromatics with which Christ's body was buried.

In very good condition. The icon has two small triangular holes on the high points, most likely caused by repeated friction. The hinge of the box is straight and strong, the box is structurally sound and shows no significant deformities.

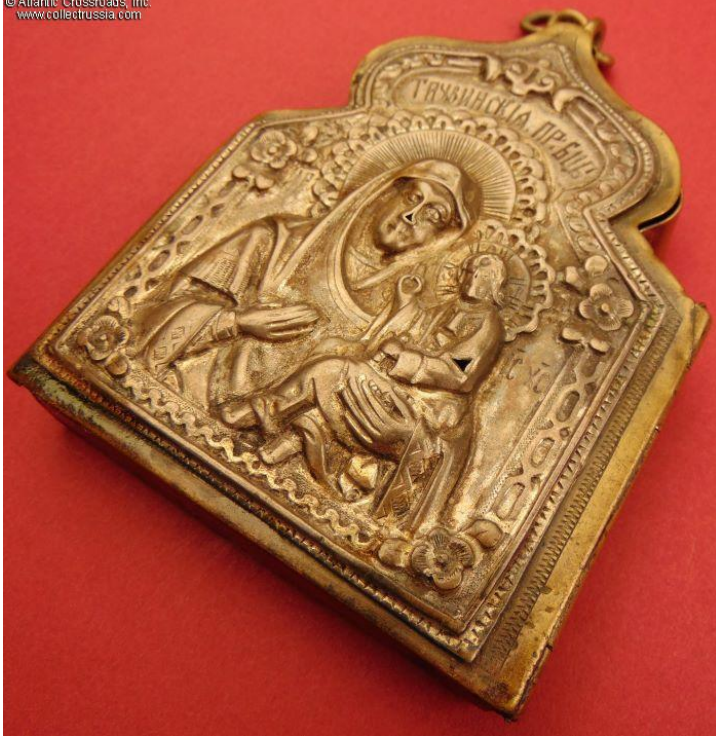
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