



19TH CENTURY FRENCH HAND COLORED PARROT ENGRAVINGS BY J. BARRABAND, SET OF TWO

\$3,400

SKU: 242-444

Stock: N/A

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Decorate a study or office this colorful set of antique parrot etchings by Jacques Barraband. Created in France circa 1801-1804, each engraving depicts a parrot resting on a branch. Titled "Le Perroquet Dufrene Plaque 91" and "Le Perroquet Jaune Ecaille de Rouge Plaque 137", each bird drawing has been professionally framed, and set in the original black and gilt frame with glass protection. The two wall decors are in excellent condition commensurate with age and use; exquisite details and wonderful colors. One frame slightly smaller. Jacques Barraband (1767-1809) was a French zoological and botanical illustrator, renowned for his lifelike renderings of tropical birds. His pictures were based on mounted specimens and his illustration was considered the most accurate ones made during the early 1800s. Barraband's contribution to ornithological art, can hardly be understated, and he was and is justly celebrated as the finest ornithological artist of his time. Of his life relatively little is known; he was born in 1767 or 1768, the son of a weaver at the Aubusson Factory. He is first mentioned as a pupil of Joseph Malaine (1745-1809, the eminent flowers painter under King Louis XVI), and is known to have worked for the Gobelins Factory and later for the famous porcelain Factory at Sèvres. He executed decorative cycles after designs by Percier and Fontaine, most notably for the dining room commissioned by Emperor Napoleon for the Château de Saint-Cloud. We know that Empress Joséphine bought two of his gouaches of exotic birds at the Salon in 1808, and that she commissioned paintings of specimens in the hot-house and aviary that she had built at Malmaison. Drawings of flowers, insects and birds make up the greater part of Barraband's graphic work. His most important achievement was undoubtedly the series of more than 300 drawings in watercolor and gouache that he executed to illustrate François Levaillant's monumental works of Natural History, the *Histoire naturelle des Perroquets*, the *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux de Paradis* and the *Histoire Naturelle des Promérops*. This vast undertaking is representative of the ambitions, optimism and academic vigor typical of publishing in France during the Napoleonic period. His drawings are so realistic that it is almost certain that he studied living specimens, some of which are now extinct, and achieved a level of scientific accuracy that has rarely been surpassed. In 1820, Henrich Kuhl commemorated Barraband's scientific and ornithological contribution by naming a newly discovered South American parrot 'Barraband's Parrot' (*Psittacus barrabandi*). Measures: 15.25"W x 19"H. 14.75"W x 18"H