Heavy Postilion Boots Or Seven-league Boots.



1 600 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Leather

Length : 32cm

Diameter : 18cm

Height : 63cm

Description

A rare pair of heavy postilion boots, also known as seven-league boots, probably dating from the late 17th or early 18th century. With the rise of regular mail delivery, these overboots were essential for postilions to prevent direct friction between two horses and to allow them to free their legs from under a recumbent horse, as accidents were not uncommon. An integral part of a blue, white, and red livery under the Ancien Régime and then green under the Empire, these impressive boots were also adorned with badges worn on the chest or arm. Royal employees made a strong impression on the population and had a reputation as jovial fellows. Every seven postal leagues, approximately twenty-eight kilometers, postal relays were established--a kind of farm-inn from which the postmaster, often a large

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landowner, had postilions ready to depart at short notice. The convoy was then unloaded of its previous team, drawn by two or three fresh horses, led by a postilion, the postman of the time, to reach its next destination as quickly as possible. Upon arrival, the team was removed from the stagecoach, and the postilion returned to his starting point at a moderate pace. These colossal boots, made of boiled leather and wrought iron, show signs of wear at the calves, a seam in the leather, and two small dents, evidence of their great use. They are composed of several pieces of boiled leather, sewn together and waterproofed with a shiny black substance, traces of which remain in many places. This may have been a mixture of fats such as tallow. Their removable lining bears the marks of embossing around the edge and a downward-pointing triangle on each side. They serve as attachments for various horseshoes, probably for securing the currycomb and as supports for spurs, one of which is complete. The sole is made of several layers of leather joined with forged nails. It is itself reinforced underneath by a substantial nailed-on shoe. Their specific shape was designed to fit into the currycomb to ensure maximum stability for the rider. Only the internal padding at the knees is missing, and remnants of the stitching that held it in place can be seen. Inside the upper part, a symbol delimited by a square, marked with hot iron or ink, can be seen. Their excellent state of preservation and the fact that they are almost complete make them a rare testament to the best European postal service of the time and to the lives of these adventurers who gave rise to a rich imaginary world, particularly in literature. Similar examples can be seen in many museums such as the Palais de la Bénédictine in Fécamps, the Château de Compiègne, the Musée de la Poste in Paris. Provenance: post house in the Valenciennes region. Weight: 4 to 5 kilos each.