



D. Gavarrone (1821-1874), the Paddle Steamer Solide From Abo Flying Under Russian Imperial Flag

4 500 EUR



Signature : Domenico Gavarrone (Italien 1821-1874)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Gouache

Width : 82

Height : 62

Description

Portrait of the Finnish paddle steamer "Solide from Åbo" (Abo is old Swedish name of now Finnish sea port and city Turku) under the flag of the Russian imperial marine, this captain's painting was executed in 1854 by famous Italian marine painter Domenico Gavarrone (1821 -Genua - 1874). Unger image in the middle is original title in Finnish: "Solide Fran Abo commenderad af Capten C.F. Hedenberg, An 1842" (in English: Solide from Abo (now City Turku) under command of the captain C.F. Hedenberg, in year 1842) and under the image lower right signed by the author in Italian: " Domenico Gavarrone, Genua, 4.6. Gennajo 1854". This ship sailed the Turku -Stockholm route under the Russian naval flag, since Finland was then a province of the Russian Empire. This

Dealer

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painting was ordered by the renowned Genoese maritime artist Domenico Gavarrone in Genua, who was famous and popular with his portraits of famous ships on commission. Gavarrone was one of the most celebrated Genoese marine painters of the 19th century. His fame has transcended the Ligurian and Italian borders, reaching overseas. His works have been consigned to the most significant moments of this artistic genre and, due to their undoubted qualities, have entered the collective imagination of those who study and are passionate about "naval portraiture" in the most artistic, and at the same time technical, sense of the term. In reality, the biographical information on Domenico Gavarrone (1821-1874, born and raised in Genoa) is limited, although fortunately, it has been explored and well-described by Pierangelo Campodonico, the current director of the Genoa Museum of the Sea and Navigation, in a beautiful 2000 volume published by Tormena (*I velieri di Domenico Gavarrone*), which, to date, is the most complete and exhaustive study on the work and production of this Ligurian and all-round maritime artist. Domenico Gavarrone's art rightfully falls into the category of ship portraits: a pictorial genre that was very popular in the eighteenth century and, especially, until the 1880s, when photography had not yet established itself as a primary documentary source for maritime and naval subjects. Indeed, numerous artists were active abroad in this field: one need only mention the Roux dynasty of Marseille (among other things, the protagonist of this column in last February's issue of "Il Mare"), whose creations undoubtedly influenced those of Gavarrone in style, subject matter, and pictorial technique. It is also worth mentioning, from the Napoleonic era to the early decades of the 19th century, the presence in Genoa of the Maltese Nicolas Cammilleri (1777-1860), who, even more than the Rouxes, played a fundamental role in guiding and inspiring Gavarrone. In practice, as was the case at the time in the major ports of Europe and the United States, shipowners,

captains, and officers would commission specialized painters to create a ship portrait (i.e., a true "portrait" of their ship, usually a view from the starboard or port beam) to be displayed at the company headquarters, on board, or in the ship's residence, as is still the case today with photographic prints. Over the years, ship portraits have acquired not only artistic but also documentary value, as one of their characteristics is the absolutely faithful reproduction of hulls, masts, rigging, and fittings. In many cases, these paintings constitute the only certain and precise iconographic document of a given ship, and as such, their value is further increased on the art market, sometimes reaching considerable prices in the tens of thousands of dollars or euros. During the mid-19th century, Domenico Gavarrone and his studio were active, producing hundreds of paintings (primarily oils on canvas, watercolors and gouaches) for clients of diverse origins, but most of them related to the shipping area of Genoa and eastern Liguria, which at the time and until the post-World War II period were among the most important Italian areas for shipbuilding and merchant shipping. In order to speed up the creation of a ship portrait as much as possible, artists of the time (and Gavarrone certainly exploited this trick) would prepare the backgrounds of a painting in advance, with the sea, the sky, and--often--a stretch of distant coastline, thus always having a good quantity of them available. This way, it was possible to reproduce only the ship once the painting was commissioned, also because, then as now, a ship's stay in port could be short due to commercial schedules and weather conditions. Many foreign shipowners also made use of Domenico Gavarrone's art: one of the largest foreign collections of his ship portraits is exhibited at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, USA, but his works are also present in French, British, and Canadian museums. Especially in the Mediterranean (and, more specifically, in Italy, Greece, Malta, and Spain), the ex-voto pictorial

typology experienced its most brilliant moment in the 19th century: Domenico Gavarrone was an active interpreter in this field, with his works which - together with those of his contemporary Angelo Arpe - add important documentary and artistic value to devotional paintings that constitute one of the most significant expressions of Ligurian religious sentiment. Source: [https://www.marenostrumrapallo.it/bres/Pegli\(Genua\), Museo Navale](https://www.marenostrumrapallo.it/bres/Pegli(Genua), Museo Navale). Inscription: signed and dated 1854 in Italian under image lower right, titled in Finnish under image in the middle with the name of ship and commander; to the painting enclosed original invoice with expertise from the art gallery in Aaberna, Denmark, dated 1973. Technique: gouache on paper, original period frame. Measurements: unframed 27 1/2" x 19 3/4" (70 x 50 cm), framed 32 1/4" x 24 1/3" (82 x 62 cm). Condition: void he in very good condition, original frame partially damaged.