



France. Antique Senior Naval Officer Sword. Mod. 1837. Circa 1880



570 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Length : 91,5 cm, (36 in)

Description

Antique French sword for a high ranking naval officer, corresponding to Model 1837 and datable to circa 1880, within the period of the Third Republic. It is an example of classical typology within the French naval officer corps, with a refined appearance, highly representative of the edged weapons used by high ranking officers in France during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The hilt is made of gilt brass and shows careful decorative work on several of its parts. The knuckle guard displays chiselled vegetal decoration, with an elegant and well balanced design. The pommel, with its broadened profile and flat upper end, retains ornamentation of clearly French taste, in harmony with the rest of the hilt. The folding counterguard, visible on this example, is also a characteristic and functional

Dealer

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detail, typical of this type of officer's sword. The grip is made of light coloured horn, arranged in pronounced flutes and accompanied by metal wire binding, a visually very attractive configuration fully consistent with the quality of the piece. The shell guard bears a decorative motif of strong naval character, with a naval anchor against a background of flags, flanked by oak and laurel foliage, a composition that clearly defines the identity of the piece and gives it a very marked visual personality. It is military and maritime iconography of great aesthetic strength, intended for high ranking naval officers. The blade is straight, of triangular section, long, slender and conceived for thrusting. It bears the signature Carri at the ricasso, a detail of interest in the study of the piece. Its state of preservation is very good, with a good overall profile, a tip in good condition and a clean and attractive visual presence. The scabbard is of black leather with gilt brass mounts. It shows normal wear from use and age, as well as a visible defect or bend in the area near the chape, although it remains complete and accompanies the weapon correctly. It also retains its belt hanger, with buckle decorated with Naval symbols, a particularly attractive detail because it completes the sword as a uniform set and adds both historical and visual interest. The overall condition is very good within its age. The hilt retains its structure and decoration well, the grip maintains an excellent presence, the blade shows very good preservation and the scabbard, despite logical wear and the bend noted near the chape, still performs its function. The belt hanger is also an important added value, as it survives together with the sword and reinforces its identity as a naval uniform piece. In short, this is a French sword for a high ranking naval officer, Model 1837, of great elegance, with very clear naval iconography, a signed blade, good overall preservation and a particularly attractive ensemble because it also retains its scabbard and belt hanger. It is a very interesting piece for collectors of French militaria, naval edged

weapons and historical uniform objects with strong aesthetic personality. Pieces such as this are of special interest today because they bring together several values in a single object. They are authentic edged weapons, uniform objects of great formal beauty and very clear historical testimonies of a specific military hierarchy. This French sword for a high ranking naval officer, Model 1837, circa 1880, represents with great clarity the refinement, symbolic authority and visual tradition of French naval officers in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Measurements: Total length of the sword: 91.5 cm, 36 in. Blade length: 76 cm, 30 in.

History of Model 1837

The sword for a high ranking naval officer, Model 1837, forms part of the great tradition of uniform weapons used by the French naval officer corps during much of the nineteenth century and even at later dates. It is a model that perfectly reflects the military mentality of its time, when the sword continued to be at once a weapon, a sign of rank and an essential element of the officer's public image. Within the French Navy, the sword had particular importance. It was not merely a piece of equipment, but a visible attribute of authority, discipline and belonging to one of the most prestigious corps of the State. In the case of high ranking officers, this symbolic dimension was even more evident. The sword accompanied the uniform in acts of service, ceremonies, representations and official contexts, projecting an image of professional dignity and clearly recognisable hierarchy. Model 1837 belongs to a moment when France was consolidating a refined military aesthetic. Gilt mounts, grips made of showy materials and the presence of naval emblems such as the anchor answered a clear desire to distinguish naval officers visually. That elegance did not, however, cancel the functional character of the weapon. The straight blade of triangular section was conceived for thrusting and responded to a logic of effectiveness, lightness and precision very characteristic of nineteenth

century officer swords. Although the model originated at an early date, examples such as this continued to be used or produced within a prolonged regulation tradition. For that reason, it is entirely coherent to place this piece around circa 1880, already in the period of the Third Republic. In those years, France remained a major maritime power, with a navy active both in national defence and in the country's external projection. Colonial expansion, naval policy and the prestige of the uniform all contributed to keeping alive a whole material culture linked to naval officership.