Ship-launching Axe From Nantes, Late 19th Century



1 350 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Length : 31cm

Width : 15 cm

Description

Bronze ship-launching axe, an object used in the ceremony to launch a new ship. The purpose of this axe was to symbolically sever the last mooring line holding the vessel on its launching ramp, allowing it to slide into the sea.This axe was created for the christening and launch of the three-masted ship named Maréchal Davout, which took place in Nantes on August 30, 1898, at the Loire shipyards for the Guillon and Fleury shipping company. As indicated on the reverse side of the axe, the official godfather chosen for this launch was Prince Louis d'Auerstaedt (Louis Davout, 1877-1928), who was none other than the direct descendant (great-grandson) of the famous Marshal Davout (elevated to the rank of Duke of Auerstaedt by Napoleon I), which explains the perfect historical consistency between the ship's

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name and its prestigious godfather. Elisabeth Guillon, the ship's godmother, was the wife of shipowner René Guillon (1863-1901) of the Nantes-based shipping company René Guillon & René Fleury, which commissioned the ship.In 1899, this ship was the fastest to complete the crossing between New Caledonia and Greenock in 84 days (this crossing typically took more than 110 days). This ship was purchased in 1903 by the Société Générale d'Armement.The end of the handle unscrews and originally contained the ship's "christening" certificate; unfortunately, it is missing from the item we are presenting here.Good overall conditionWeight: 1.2 kilogramsDimensions: 31 cm x 15 cm