



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Huge Rare Antique French Romantic Dagger "hercules Killing Hydra"



6 999 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Description

The one-piece handle features superb carving in the round, depicting the god Heracles perched on a downed dragon. Heracles wears the leonté, the skin of the Nemean lion, on his head as a helmet. He is also wearing a hoplite's tunic and brandishing a glaive with which to strike the dragon. The dragon raises its head towards Heracles in a pathetic twisting motion. Its outstretched wings form the quillons of the dagger. Double-edged blade, double gutter and median ridge. Scabbard also in silvered bronze, decorated with stylized foliage and three very fine carved and chased trimmings in high relief. The upper trim piece, which bears the two bélière rings, is adorned with a medallion carved on either side. One of the medallions depicts a helmeted woman wearing a leafy crown, probably

Dealer

TheBestAntique

Antiques and collectibles

Mobile : +37256684125

C.R. Jakobsoni 7/1-78

Tallinn 10128

Athena, against a radiating oval background, itself adorned with a small mask at the bottom. The second features a lion's head, mouth open, mane outstretched. The middle panel features military scenes in the Antique style: on one side, a land battle with infantrymen wearing helmets, shields, swords and spears; on the other, a galley with sails and oars, featuring an imposing figurehead and laden with men-at-arms. Each scene is topped by a grotesque mask. The shield is carved on both sides, in particularly high relief, with an owl symbol of Athena, each flanked by two laurel branches tied at the base.

In Greek mythology, the Nemean lion is a fantastic creature killed by Heracles during his twelve labors. The lion is the son of Orthos, the dog of Geryon, and the Chimera or Echidna, like the Sphinx of Thebes. A minority tradition attributes Typhon as his father, without specifying his mother; yet another mentions Selene, goddess of the moon, as his mother. Raised by Hera, he reigned terror in the Nemea region of Argolida. His skin is impenetrable. Killing this monster and bringing it back to Eurystheus is the first of the twelve tasks Heracles must accomplish. On his arrival at Cleones, the hero stops at the hut of a ploughman named Molorchos, who wants to offer him a sacrifice, as if to a god. Refusing such an honor, Heracles asks him to wait a month. At the end of this month, either he will deserve a sacrifice as a dead hero, or he will have killed the beast, in which case Molorchos can offer the sacrifice to Zeus. One evening, Heracles surprised the lion on a hillside after the beast had eaten. Disguised, he shoots at it with arrows. But he soon realizes that the monster is invulnerable. His arrows, given to him by Apollo, bounce off his hide. The lion charges, but Heracles avoids the assault. He fights armed only with his olive wood club. He strikes the lion with it, then chokes it, breaking his club in the melee. (Another version has Heracles locking the lion in his den, and strangling it with both hands). He flays it, using the monster's own

claws to cut into the tough skin. He cleans the skin (which neither fire nor iron can break) and puts it on. Zeus places the lion among the constellations of the firmament. Molorchos is sacrificing to the hero when Heracles suddenly arrives in Cleonae. On his return to Tirynthe, the hero throws the skin at the feet of Eurystheus, who is so terrified that he jumps into a jar to hide. He orders Heracles to keep his trophies outside the city from now on, and to communicate with him only through his herald, Coprea.

Length: 63.5cm.

SKU: 350.2.85.141123