

## Sword and Dagger in the College of Arms, London

### Sword

The blade is of flattened hexagonal section with a triple fuller. Instead of a ricasso the blade has a curved section ground from the blade edge below the hilt for the index finger. It has the following name engraved on one side of the blade and inscription on the other in rounded Lombardic capitals:

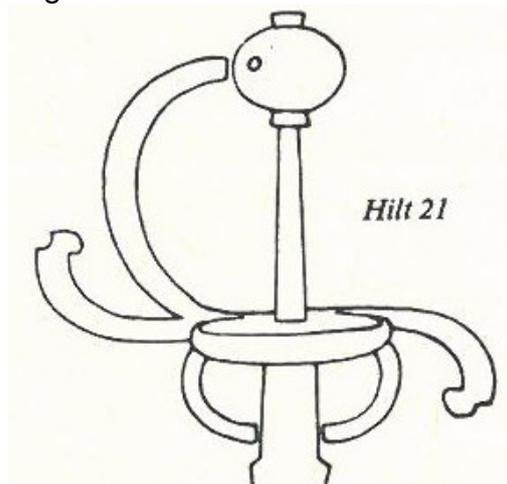
MAESTRE DOMINGO

ESPOIR CONFORTE LE GVEVAL

There are also (possibly) Arabic numerals 6s or 9s near both edges of the blade on both sides towards the hilt.

The blade has been re-fitted to the hilt with small steel wedges on either side. The hilt is rather loose and has a copper-alloy wire-bound wooden grip from which the wire has started to unravel. This grip is almost certainly a later addition.

The downward-curving quillon of the hilt towards the blade has been broken off at the quillon block. The build up of patina and covering of varnish suggests this is not a recent break. There are large side-rings on both sides of the hilt. The remaining quillon curves up towards the grip to form a slight knuckle-guard. It is flat in section thickening slightly at the triangular-ended terminal. Two symmetrical curved arms depend from the quillon block and end parallel to the edges of the blade. There is no semi-circular guard on the ends of the arms. The hilt most closely resembles type 21 in A. V. B. Norman's, *The Rapier and Small-Sword, 1460-1820* (London: Arms & Armour Press, 1980) (p. 84). This type he dates to 'probably about 1585- about 1630'. A noticeable difference on the College of Arms' sword hilt is the second side ring.



There are traces of silver inlay which are heavily tarnished and engraved floral decoration and scrolling foliage throughout. There are also traces of varnish on the hilt.

## Dagger

Of a type known as a left-hand or parrying dagger for use with a swept hilt rapier, the blade is of hollow flattened diamond section thickening to a reinforced tip flattened section on both sides of the blade near the hilt. There are no marks on the blade other than some decorative repeating semicircular patterns on the flat section of blade towards the hilt.

The grip is bound with copper-alloy wire in the same manner as the sword. The quillons of the guard are of flat section and end in triangular-shaped terminals. One quillon is proud of the other as is common in daggers of this type – a feature designed to engage an opponent's blade. The guard also has a side-ring.

Both sword and dagger have matching pommels. These are of an unusual shape not recorded in the standard reference work.

There are traces of silver inlay which are heavily tarnished and engraved floral decoration and scrolling foliage similar to that of the sword hilt.

As Norman points out in his *Rapier and Small-Sword* (pp. 287-88):

By about 1550 the hilts of left-hand daggers were normally made with knobs and pommels similar to those on the sword hilt they accompanied and with decoration to match [...]

The earliest illustration I have noted showing a side-ring on a left-hand dagger made to match a sword, is the portrait of Jeromias Koller by Nicolas de Neufchatel about 1560 (Kassel, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie, 1958 *Cat.*, No. 42). Thereafter they become very common and by 1600 the left-hand dagger nearly always has a side-ring.

Thus the sword and dagger can be dated to the late sixteenth century. The sword blade, however, may well be an older example that has been reused and refitted to the hilt.

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