

Basic Detail Report



Smallsword

Date

about 1790

Primary Maker

Matthew Boulton

Medium

steel, faceted, burnished, blued and gilded, iron, and stoneware (Jasperware)

Description

Norman's type 112 hilt with long, acutely tapered blade of hollow-ground, triangular section. Blade blued for half its length from the

hilt, identically decorated faces with etched & gilded trophies, figures & candelabra. Blade insulated from the hilt with a restored white leather washer. The hilt of hard, cut steel, brightly burnished, constructed of pommel, grip, crossguard-knucklebow unit, and shell guard. The elements have alternate rows of plain fillets and faceted beads of spheroid and ellipsoid form. The asymmetrically C-shaped knuckle-guard is faceted. The grip tapers to its ends. Ovoid pommel, with tall, faceted neck & button. The sleeve is tall and of rectangular section, with convex sides. The arms of the hilt are feeble and crescentic, linked to the guard and the recurving rear quillon which is finished in a circular terminal of beads. The shell guard is pierced to accommodate applied strings of faceted steel beads on wires; the beads have some play and can be seen from both sides of the plate. The wires are anchored by larger cut steel half-beads that are riveted to the plate. One of these anchor beads, just inside the forward reverse plaque, has been lost. The plate is plain on the underside. The perimeter is undulating and cut with a beaded pattern. Just inside is a circuit of steel beads mounted on wire; a similar circuit is mounted just within the four ceramic plaques. The interior of the shell is inlaid with four blue with white elliptical relief plaquettes. Similar plaquettes are mounted on the grip & knuckle-guard faces at mid-height, and pommel faces obverse and reverse. It is possible to identify a number of the neoclassical themes depicted on the plaquettes. See Notes for detailed description of the imagery.

Dimensions

91.4 × 73 × 12 × 8.5 cm (36 × 28 3/4 × 4 3/4 × 3 3/8 in.), 1 lb, 1 oz (weight)