

THE FRIGATES

French Marine

1650-1850

Contents of the Historical Study of Frigates

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This book is devoted to the history of a ship whose very name evokes deep historical resonances, the *frigate*. The reader follows the evolution of *frigates* in the French navy from their origin in the 1660s to the mid-19th century when the sailing wood military navy reached an end.

The evolution of frigates may be divided into two phases. The first phase is characterized by the use of small two-decker vessels and of modest ships called *light frigates*. This period ended around 1750 when small vessels were no longer used, to the “benefit” of the *frigate*. No longer qualified as “light”, *frigates* then gained characteristics and qualities that were to transform them into “modern frigates”, with guns and

dimensions that increased constantly in this second phase.

This historical study begins with a general orientation presenting an overview of subsequent chapters. Each chapter deals with a *specific class of frigates*, characterized by the caliber of their guns. Each chapter opens with a text that historically and technically locates the main characteristics of the class of frigate presented in the chapter. Guided by this over arching presentation, the reader can then proceed easily through the various plans, diagrams, tables, commentaries and notes relating to the study of each class.

The following chapter gathers general and comparative data whose collective elements give an overall evaluation of previous chapters, thanks to numerous sketches, graphs and tables which sometimes analyze frigates in relation to other vessels. The chapter ends with a recapitulation that summarizes the designation and main characteristics of 600 frigates in the French Navy.

The following chapter deals with all aspects of the evolution of frigates: accommodations, guns, decorations, masts and spars, sails, etc. over two centuries.

The final chapter gathers nearly 70 photos of ship models belonging to the collections of the Musée de la Marine.

The original period documents reproduced and gathered in this book constitute a corpus that is without equal. This study is unprecedented in the history of French naval architecture.

Illustrations are abundant, with 106 plans of ships, 92 reproductions of documents of the time, 68 photos and 48 statements, numerical tables, graphs and indexes. In short, this book is a genuine *encyclopedia of frigates*.

CONTENTS OF THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF FRIGATES

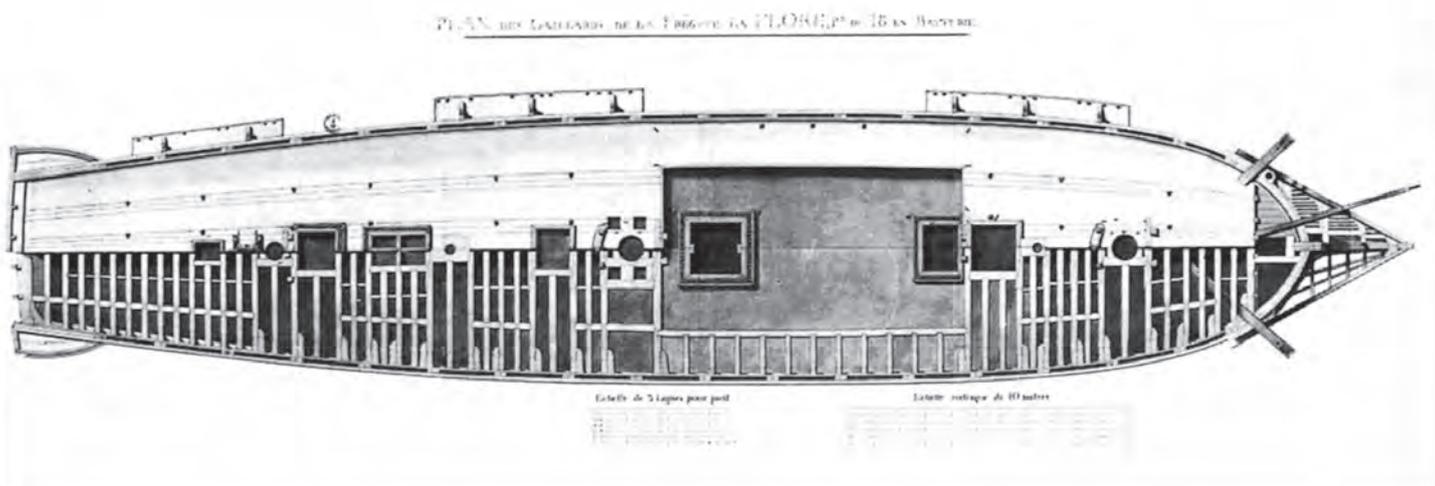
Large volume 24 x 31cm format, full grey-blue cloth binding, sewn with headband. Inside cover with a four-color reproduction of the frigate *La Pomone* by F. Roux. 350 pages, 115 g paper with an inset plate replica of the inside cover.

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The Frigate
La Belle Poule
Modèle:
B. Frölich
Paris

Extracts from the plans



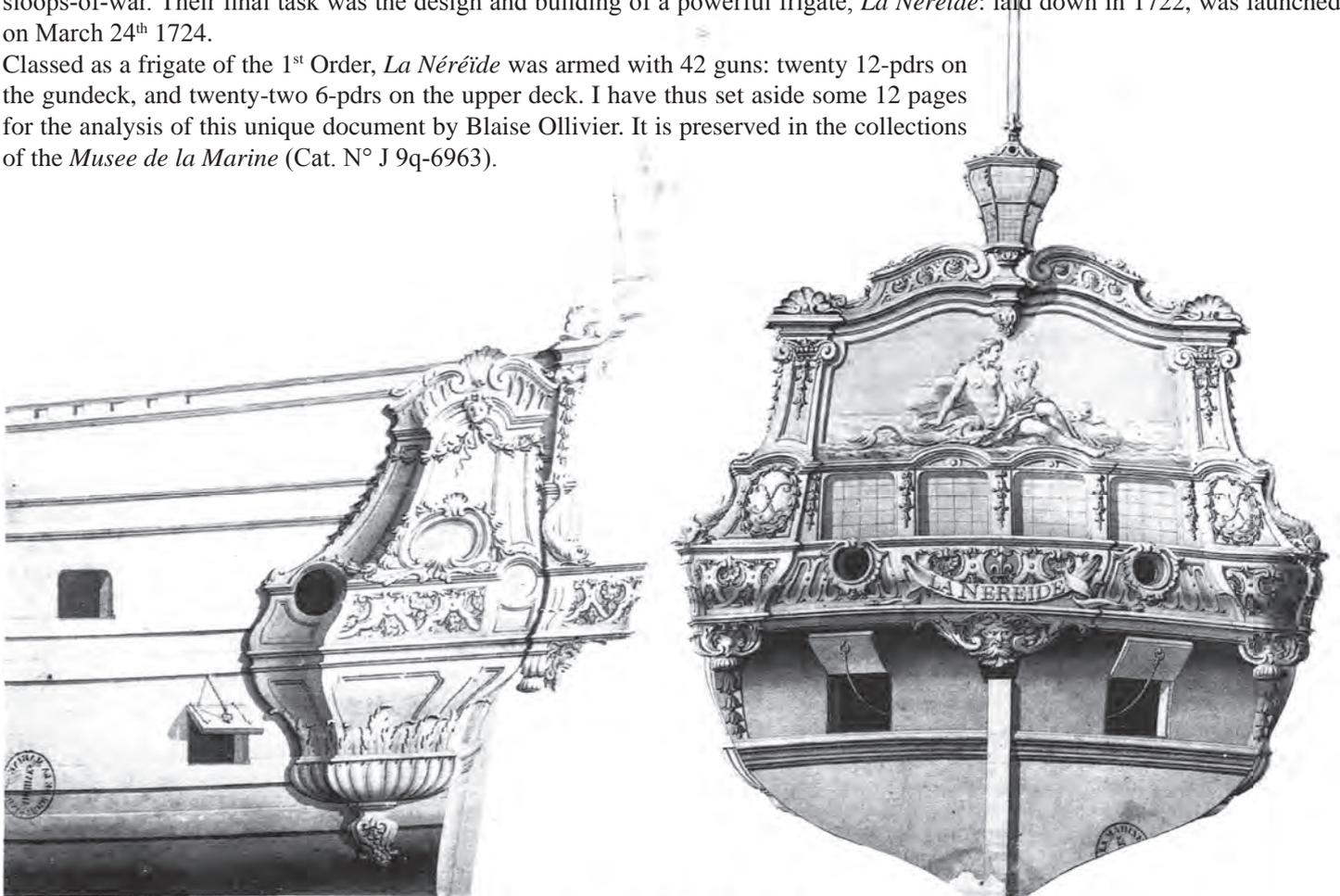
Extracts from some illustrations

La Néréïde, frigate of the 1st Order

These sectional drawings of the frigate *La Néréïde* were executed in pen and wash by the young Blaise Ollivier. It is perhaps worth explaining how this came about. In the course of the year 1720 the Assistant Shipwright Joseph Ollivier, accompanied by his son Blaise, were dispatched to Rochefort. They had come from Toulon, where the family originated. Father and son had been charged with the task of supervising the building of the *St-Philippe* (74) and the *Ardent* (64), which had been designed by the Master Shipwright at Rochefort, P. Masson. However, Masson had died that year. It was this that brought the Olliviers to Rochefort, and their new responsibilities resulted in their promotion, to the rank of Shipwright for Joseph in December 1720, and to the rank of Assistant for Blaise, in January 1721. Father and son were to remain in Rochefort until September 1724, when they were transferred to Brest.

Between 1720 and 1724 the principal activities at Rochefort were concerned with the building of three ships designed by Masson (the *St-Philippe* and *Ardent* already mentioned, and the *St-Louis*), followed by le *Juste*, to the designs of Geslain senior, and two sloops-of-war. Their final task was the design and building of a powerful frigate, *La Néréïde*: laid down in 1722, was launched on March 24th 1724.

Classed as a frigate of the 1st Order, *La Néréïde* was armed with 42 guns: twenty 12-pdrs on the gundeck, and twenty-two 6-pdrs on the upper deck. I have thus set aside some 12 pages for the analysis of this unique document by Blaise Ollivier. It is preserved in the collections of the *Musee de la Marine* (Cat. N° J 9q-6963).



LA NEREÏDE

Stern decoration of *la Nereïde*, to the designs of F. C. Caffier (1667-1729); the proposal received the ministerial approval of Maurepas on April 4th 1723. Note that the Master-Carver was resident in Brest, from which it may be concluded that the talents of his colleague in Rochefort went no further than the ability to execute the work entrusted to him.

