

## THE SPANISH “CHASSEPOT” BAYONETS



The French Model 1866 Yataghan Bayonet, commonly known as the “Chassepot Bayonet”, was copied by many nations, due to its attractive design. The grooved brass hilt bears a chamfered T-mortise with a long guide slot into the muzzle ring. The locking mechanism is a simple press stud with flat spring secured by a rivet. Another rivet pins the grip to the tang. The steel crossguard has a hooked quillon with a rounded finial. The muzzle ring is adjustable, using a spanner screw. The blade is a bright single-edged fullered yataghan.



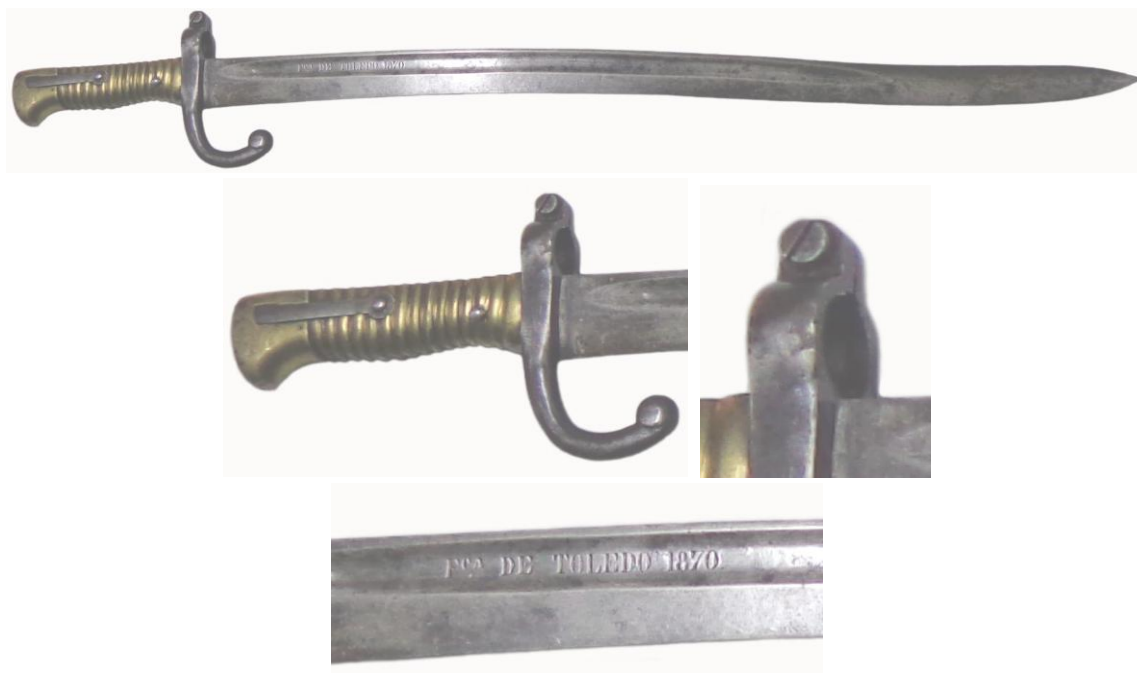
**French Model 1866 yataghan-bayonet; 572 x 30 mm blade, 17.5 mm muzzle ring diameter, overall length 696 mm.**

The Spanish manufactured “replicas” of this bayonet do not reproduce it exactly and my description of them is simplified by establishing two different types, those with Toledo Factory markings and those with no manufacturer’s markings at all: I will call the first ones “Toledanas” and the second ones “Vascongadas” (of Basque manufacture), as they were made by the Basque weapons industry.

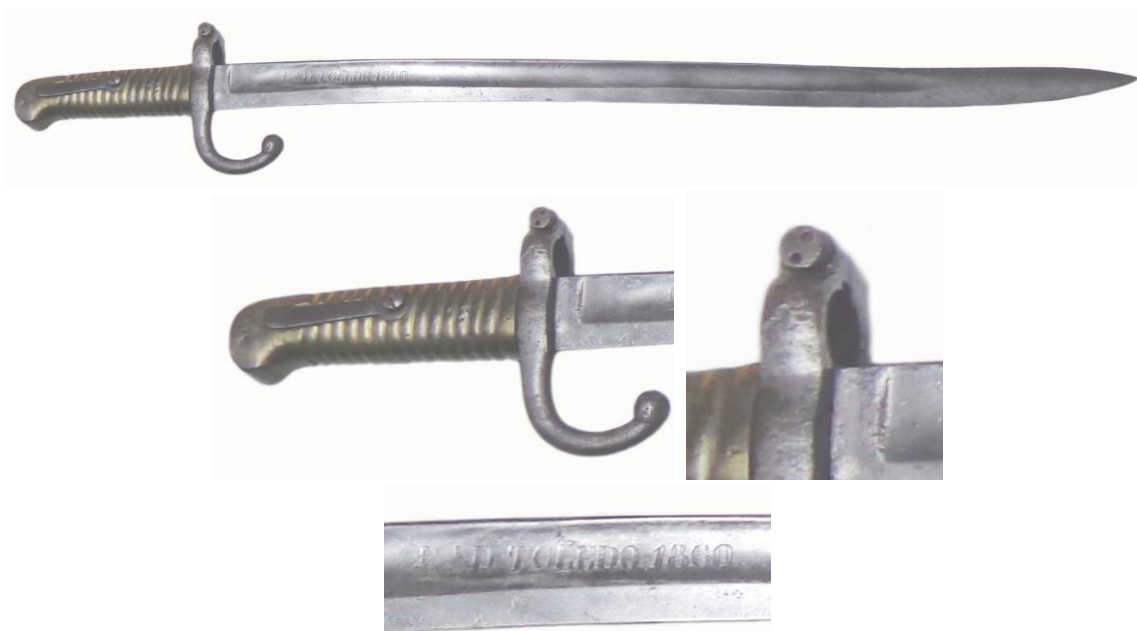
### THE “TOLEDANAS”

These are the closest to the French model and ,similar to this model , their muzzle ring which is open at the top , is tightened by a screw which can be either , longitudinally slotted for a standard flat screwdriver , or with double orifices as in the French original . The following sword-bayonets, with blades respectively inscribed “Fca DE TOLEDO 1870” and “Fca D TOLEDO 1860” illustrate both types, and in the second one we can also notice that the hilt is identical to that of the Spanish Model 1858 sword-bayonet for Marine Infantry, evidence that the

manufacture of “Chassepot” bayonets at the Toledo Factory was both, of “new manufacture” and of “conversion” type, same as with many other models or projects.



**Sword-bayonet similar to the French Model 1866 with 565 x 31 mm blade, markings: Fca DE TOLEDO 1870. The 18 mm diameter muzzle ring is closed by a screw with a longitudinal slot on its head.**

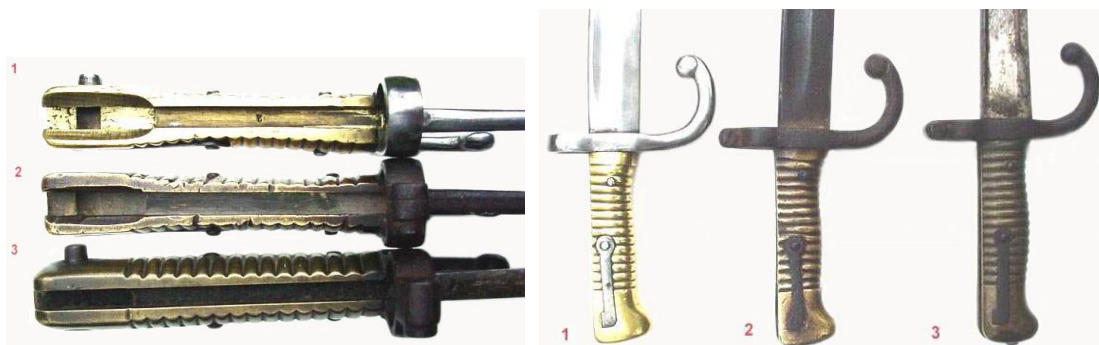


**Sword-bayonet similar to the French Model 1866 with 560 x 29.5 mm blade, markings: Fa. D TOLEDO 1860. The 17.5 mm muzzle ring is closed by a spanner screw.**



**LEFT: The grip of a standard Model 1858 sword-bayonet for Marine Infantry ; RIGHT : Similar grip on the sword-bayonet similar to the French Model 1866 with 1860 dated blade and with spanner screw .**

The French literature on this subject fails to make any mention of the Toledo Factory marked “Chassepot” bayonets and they refer only to those showing no manufacturer’s markings, designed for the use on the Chassepot rifle, which I am referring here as “Vascongadas”; The Toledo made specimens show a Not Chamfered T-mortise with long guide slot, quite different from those made for the Chassepot rifles whose mounting slots are of T-mortise, Chamfered with long guide slot.



**Numbers 1 and 2 for the Model 1866 Chassepot rifle ; Number 3 for Remington system rifles**

The manufacture of “Chassepot” bayonets in Toledo may have been a project to produce a sword-bayonet for the Remington system rifles that were being tried in Spain in the late 1880s.

### **THE “VASCONGADAS”**

The “Chassepot” bayonets that I am calling “Vascongadas” (of Basque manufacture), showing no maker’s markings, were made for the French Model 1866 Chassepot rifle; The military expert and writer Almirante mentions a 1867 contract for 30,000 of these rifles to the

Zuazubizcar , Isla y Comp<sup>a</sup>, owners of the Euscalduna Factory in Placencia but he does not tell us if this rifle contract included also the bayonets; If this was the case, it does not appear likely that these “basque Chassepot” bayonets were made only at the Euscalduna Factory.



**Model 1866 Chassepot rifle with the markings of its manufacturer: “Zuazubizcar Isla y Cia. Placencia”, and of its contractor, the: “CAHEN-LYON et Cie.” company.**

In contrast to the rifles made at the Euscalduna Factory, of excellent quality and finishing, the “basque Chassepot” bayonets differ amongst themselves in small details and dimensions, appearing to have been made in different shops. Their manufacture may have been after that of the 1867 contract, perhaps due to an order from the French Government of “Defense Nationale” (1870-71) which, after the defeat of the French Army at Sedan, suffered an extreme shortage of portable weapons to fight the Prussians.

Although with some exceptions, most “basque” saber-bayonets have a solid muzzle ring and their scabbards are not of steel, but made of leather with brass throat and finial; The thinness of the leather made them prone to cracking and crinkling, which reduced their lifespan; Once the Franco-Prussian War ended, those specimens that were sent to the Chatellerault arsenal were described there as “useless junk”, somewhat exaggeratedly in my opinion, although, admittedly they would only mount correctly on the Placencia built Chassepots.



**“Basque made” French type sword-bayonet mounted on a Model.1866 Chassepot rifle made in Placencia de las Armas.**



**"Basque" made Chassepot sword-bayonet; 560 mm blade, 18 mm muzzle ring diameter, overall length 680 mm.**



**"Basque" made Chassepot sword-bayonet; 550 mm blade, 20 mm muzzle ring diameter, overall length 665 mm.**

I can not ignore the possibility that the use of these "Basque made" sword-bayonets may not have been limited to Chassepot rifles; At the "La Azpeitiana" factory, established in Azpeitia around 1870, Remington and Snider system rifles were made bearing a bayonet lug for an sword-bayonet; The sword-bayonet accompanying the rifle in the next illustration can not be described as a Chassepot "replica" but , as a product of its "evolution", manufactured during the 1872-75 Carlist War.



**Remington rifle marked "La Azpeitiana" bearing a sword-bayonet with no manufacturer's markings.**

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