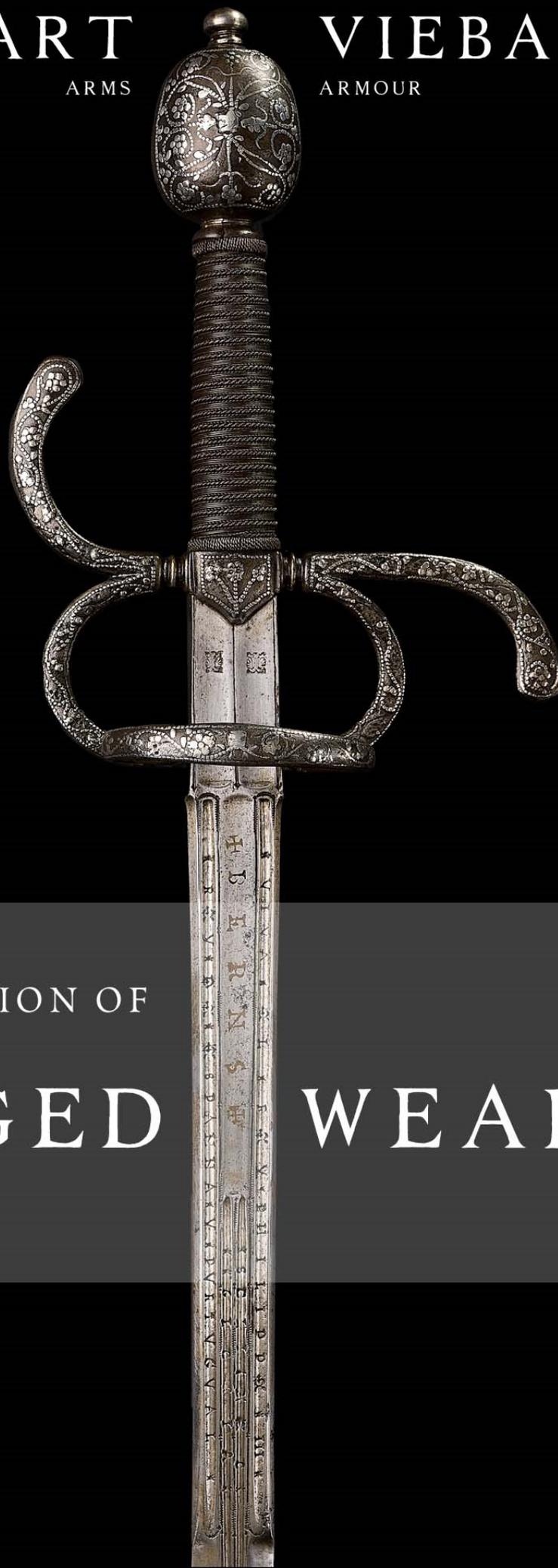


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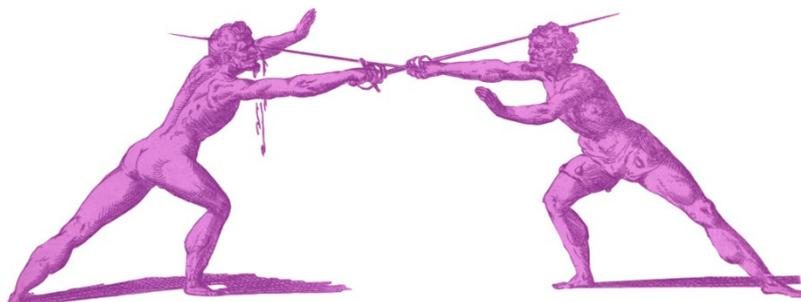
FOREWORD

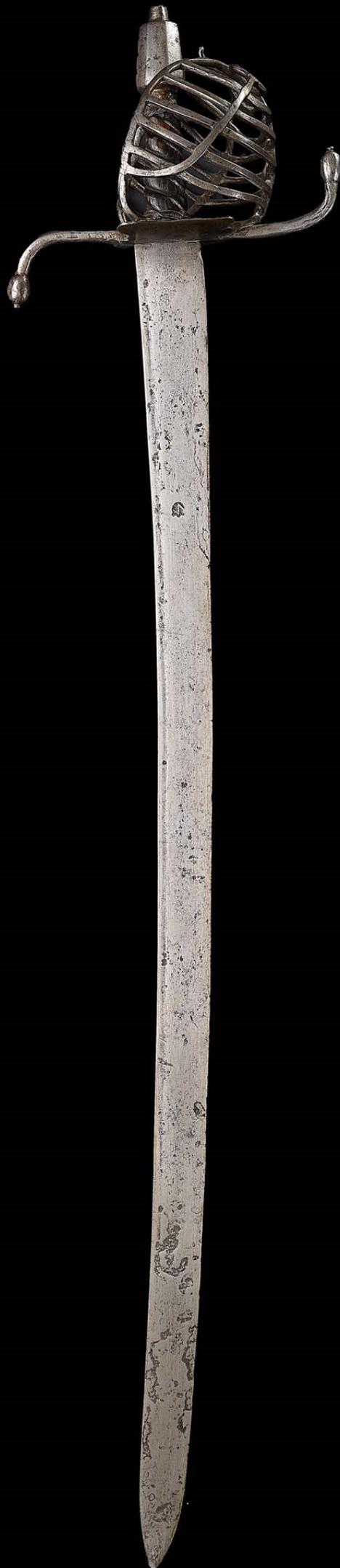
“If it is original and not composite, then you already have a good sword”. After so many years I still do remember these words very well, that an experienced collector addressed to me, when I was a raw beginner in the field of arms and armour. The years have gone by, and I can entirely affirm this thesis. The majority of edged weapons circling around in the market as originals are either complete forgeries, made even today by highly skilled craftsmen, historicising replicas from the 19th and 20th centuries alike, or composite ones, manufactured from both original and new parts. A lamentable fashion from the 19th century contributed to the presence of composite examples, the collecting of sword pommels. Since it led to disassembling and thus destroying intact swords, this seems a highly deplorable custom from our today’s point of view.

A fortiori it is a particular delight for me, to present four interesting and honest examples to you from this endless field of collecting, that is so rich of variety. Going through the catalogue you will recognize, that each piece differs in the purposes it was made for, encompassing both simple and higher-ranking military use, a pure civilian context and courtly life.

I hope that I succeed in the attempt of sharing my passion for edged weapons with you. For their friendly contribution I would like to thank Holger Schuckelt from the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and Andreas Olsson, Livrustkammarens Samlingar, Statens Historiska Museer, Stockholm.

Lennart Viebahn





GERMAN HILTED SABER

Scandinavia or North Germany,
late 16th Century.

Overall Length: 100 cm.

Blade Length: 85 cm.

Weight: 1,39 kg.

Unknown maker's mark.

Single-edged curved blade, a fuller at its back, basket hilt.

Ordinary soldiers of the hussite army in the 15th century were equipped with a side arm called tesak in Czech, which means fighting knife and contains the old Germanic term sax. The word Dusägge is deduced from tesak and describes a saber that became increasingly popular for furnishing large numbers of ordinary infantry units in German speaking lands and Scandinavia. Today a number of these are preserved in the Landeszeughaus Graz. Another term for this would be "Säbel auf teutsch gefaßt", which can be translated as German hilted saber.¹ It seems that the Dusägge forms part as a sub-category of the German hilted saber, since they typically show a triangular shell guard at the hilt.² Our present example with its basket hilt would therefore rather not be named a Dusägge but a German hilted saber.³

Be that as it may, this type of weapon had certain advantages in fighting against slightly armoured enemies, by delivering deep wounds with a

¹ Krenn, P. (1997) Schwert und Spiess, pp. 38-41.

² Laible, T. (2008): Das Schwert, Mythos und Wirklichkeit, p. 118-119.

³ Seitz, H. (1965) Blankwaffen I, pp. 359-364.

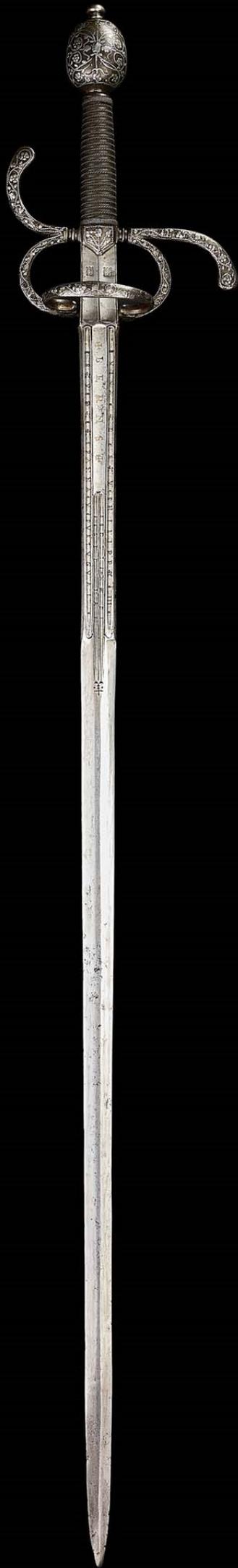
strong cutting effect. On the other hand, these weapons would have had little impact against a heavily armoured cuirassier, which required a stiff blade for thrusting. This is the reason, why the German hilted saber became increasingly popular in the last quarter of the 16th century for ordinary infantry soldiers, when the use of armour declined on the battlefields.⁴

Today especially the dusägge is mainly associated with the Scandinavian lands, foremost Norway, where it is often called Sinclairsaber or by the original Czech term thisack or tesack. It was the Danish King Christian IV of Denmark and Norway (reigned 1588 – 1648), who imported large numbers of this weapon from Germany for arming the peasantry. Among these were also German hilted sabers with a basket hilt like our present example.⁵



⁴ Laible, T. (2008): *Das Schwert, Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, pp. 110 – 119.

⁵ Seitz, H. (1965) *Blankwaffen I*, pl. 271, p. 364.









RAPIER

circa 1600-1620.

Overall Length: 102,5 cm.

Blade Length: 86,4 cm.

Weight: 933 g.

Provenance: Private Collection, Sweden.

Engraved Inscriptions on the blade, outer side: BERNS,

inner side: IOHANNES,

both sides:

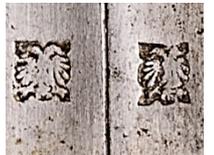
VIVA EL REY PHILIPP III (Long live King Philipp III),

SOLI DEO GLORIA (Glory to God alone),

REY DE ESPANNA Y PURTUGUAL (King of Spain and Portugal).

Very fine blade by Iohannes Berns¹, Solingen (Germany), the signature inlaid with brass, ricasso with two slight fullers, double eagle mark struck two times on each side, first segment with four deep fullers, engraved with the inscriptions as mentioned above and surrounded by decorations, followed by a segment of hexagonal section, the last third of the blade of diamond section, tapering to an acute point.

Hilt type Norman No. 39², decorated with silver encrusting against a blackened ground.



¹ Weyersberg, A.: (1926) Solinger Schwertschmiede des 16. und 17.Jh, p. 11.

² Norman, A. (1980): The Rapier and Small Sword, 1460-1820, pp. 102-105.

must have been a great challenge for Iohannes Berns and the other craftsmen, involved in the process. It is remarkable, that he inscribes it on both sides with a reverence to King Phillip III of Spain and Portugal. This rapier was probably never intended for a member of the Spanish court. The inscription simply served to boost the marketability by providing it with the aura of being Spanish. We will discuss this further below.

Along with the wonderful blade the precious silver-encrusted hilt suggests, that this rapier belonged to a high-ranking owner. Silver-encrusting was a technique popular in different places, foremost in German speaking lands and England, but there are also examples from Netherlands, France and Italy.³

In his discussion of the present hilt type, Norman remarks, that the “inner guards are of the very simplest form so as to allow the hilt to rest comfortably against the wearer’s side when sheathed. The conclusion one must draw is that they were designed much more for appearance than for use.”⁴ This seems an interesting thesis against the background of the known comparative pieces.

³ Haedecke, H. (1982): *Blankwaffen*, p. 84; Norman, A. (1980): *The Rapier and Small Sword, 1460-1820*, pp. 360-362.

⁴ Norman, A. (1980): *The Rapier and Small Sword, 1460-1820*, p. 105.

Comparative pieces

A rapier with a similarly shaped hilt was presented to the Elector Christian II of Saxony on Christmas 1610.⁵ With its gilded brass hilt, fine engraving and an integrated watch in the pommel it was designed as a pure luxury accessory, not intended for any practical use.

At the Livrustkammaren Stockholm, the Royal Swedish Armoury,



Rapiers made for the Squires of Gustaf Adolf II.⁶

⁵ Haenel, E. (1923): *Kostbare Waffen aus der Dresdner Rüstammer*, pl. 59; Seitz, H. (1968): *Blankwaffen II*, fig. 22.

⁶ Cederström, R. Malmberg, G. (1930): *Den Äldre Livrustkammaren 1654*, No. 108, pl. 49.

there is group of swords with the same type of hilt, manufactured to be carried by the squires at the wedding of Gustav II Adolf and Eleonora of Brandenburg in 1620. All of these have blades from different workshops in Solingen.

Background

The Rapier

During medieval times it was not common practice to carry a sword in a civilian context. For a knight it would have been considered improper behavior attending a polite courtly event dressed with his sword. This changed in the Renaissance at about the 1520s, when it became more and more commonplace for men of elevated social status to wear a sword together with their civilian dress in everyday life. There were several reasons for this. First, in times of increasing violence there was the necessity of self-defense against robbery and street fights. Albeit wheellock pistols already existed, the sword was the weapon of first choice to make precautions against suchlike situations, since it was quicker at hand in close combat and more convenient to carry.

A nobleman also had to be prepared at any time against intrigues and attempts of murder in courtly life, and last but not least, for the duel. Duels of honor became increasingly fashionable, whereas in medieval times the duel was predominantly fought in order to determine a judicial ordeal. Often hotheads provoked duels on the most trivial of pretexts and it became inevitable for the courtier to carry a sword and know well how to use it.

At the beginning of this development until the middle of the sixteenth century, a sword worn with the civilian dress did not differ very much from the sword used in battle. This began to change and the rapier appeared as a weapon that was exclusively designed for the civilian context. It had a long slender blade which was ideal for thrusts as fast as lightning, the most effective way in order to fight an enemy not wearing armour. So, the main characteristic of a rapier is that it would have been fairly useless on the battle field, but optimized for fencing against a single civilian enemy, or at worst, a small group in a street fight.

The more the evolution of the rapier went forward, the more varieties of blades and hilts were manufactured in the course of time. This process depended closely on the development of fencing techniques.



Scenes from a fencing school, illustrated manual by Joachim Meyer.⁷

⁷ Meyer, J. (1570): *Gründtliche Beschreibung, der freyen Ritterlichen unnd Adelichen Kunst des Fechtens*, dritter Teil, pl. LXIII.

The demand for professional training grew with the custom of wearing swords and rapiers, that was satisfied by fencing schools. People could learn and develop their skills from professional instructors. Masters like Joachim Meyer, Achille Marozzo or Camillo Agrippa, just to mention three, published richly illustrated fencing manuals⁸, that entailed an international reputation – a valuable source for scholars in our present times. Some masters travelled also to courts in foreign countries, providing lessons to their members.

So much for the practical aspects of the rapier. However, limiting the discussion to this would be like considering an expensive watch of our days as a pure instrument for knowing the time. You can use it for this, but there is a lot more about it, a representative function communicating the social status of its owner to his environment. The rapier formed part of the civilian dress as a kind of a luxury accessory, that had to express the rank and financial power of its wearer. Rapiers like pieces of art were manufactured, their hilts being decorated in the most magnificent ways involving all crafts of metalworking, like gilding, silver encrusting, damascening, iron cutting or blueing. Whole sets of matching components with rapier, hanger, belt and dagger, made according to the individual desires of the client completed the look of a dress, often ordered on a particular occasion, like a wedding. The desire for a representative piece let sometimes people risk their bankruptcy.

⁸ Anglo, S.: *Sword and Pen: Fencing Masters and Artists*, pp. 151-175, in: Capwell, T. (2012): *The Noble Art of the Sword*; Grotkamp-Schepers, B. et al (2015): *The Sword – Form and Thought*, pp. 158-161.

For example, Arthur Throckmorton, son of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton of Coughton Court in Warwickshire ordered a costume and richly decorated rapier for an appearance before Queen Elizabeth I in 1583. In order to pay for this, he had to sell some of his lands and also borrowed a great deal of money on which he would pay interest for many years.⁹



Peter Paul Rubens, 1650.¹⁰

⁹ Ashelford, J. (1996) *The Art of Dress: Clothing and Society 1500-1914*, pp. 28,37, cited in Capwell, T. (2012): *The Noble Art of the Sword. Fashion and Fencing in Renaissance Europe 1520-1630*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁰ Peter Paul Rubens - *The Artist and His First Wife, Isabella Brant, in the Honeysuckle Bower*. His silver-encrusted rapier in the center expresses civilian confidence, wealth and status.

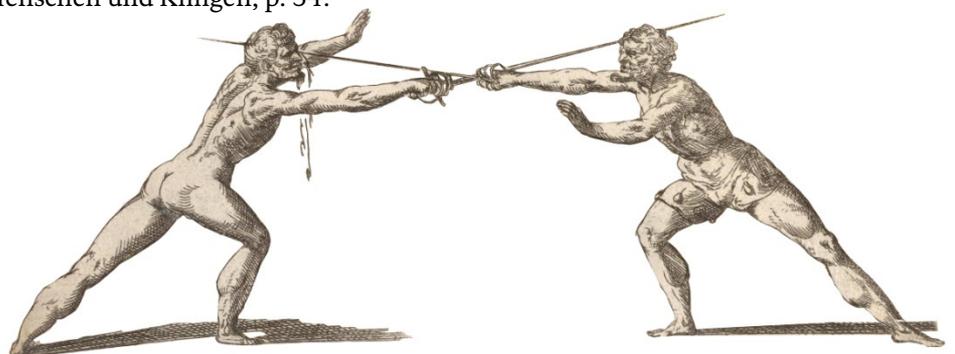
Around 1600, when the fashion of wearing a rapier reached its peak, the desire for a representative piece led to a particular remarkable phenomenon. Members of the high aristocracy like the Elector of Saxony, who was always surrounded by guards and generally did not engage in duels, ordered the finest rapiers ever made. These were decorated in a way, that made them useless for fencing, being pure luxury items for representation. A hilt made of gold or pure silver, enameled or decorated with diamonds and other gems was too soft for parrying an opponents attack. Any decoration for a rapier designed to be used was limited to the techniques, that could be applied to a hilt forged of steel, like gilding, silver encrusting, damascening, engraving or steel cutting.¹¹

Solingen

Since medieval times swords had been manufactured in Solingen, about 35 km north of Cologne, an internationally important metropolis in this age. Long time scholars presumed Cologne was a major center for the production of blades, knives and swords in the 11th and 12th century, since this city was a great market for these products. Dealers exported these over the river Rhine to other regions, not only in German speaking lands. For instance, French medieval heroic epics mention, that the swords of their knights came from Cologne (!): “un autre espie, qui de Coulogne vint”, “l’espeye de Colonyn”, “grans espées de Coloigne”, “une hespee. . . feite outre lo rin. A Cologne en sa cite”.¹²

¹¹ Capwell, T. (2012): *The Noble Art of the Sword. Fashion and Fencing in Renaissance Europe 1520-1630*, pp. 29-33, 46-47, 58, 83, 112-113; Seitz, H. (1968): *Blankwaffen II*, pp. 30-32.

¹² Schultz, A. (1889): *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger*, pp. 6, 13, cited in: Haedeke, H. (1994): *Menschen und Klingen*, p. 54.



However, at a closer look this assumption does not make so much sense. It is known that crafts involving the use of fire were not very welcome within the city walls of Cologne, because of the danger and also the great demand for heating material, which caused its prices to rise. Furthermore, in order to run watermills, necessary to move the grindstones and hammers in the manufacturing process, small streams in a region with a lot of gradient were the first choice. You did not find these in Cologne and the river Rhine was not very well suited for this purpose.

So, it seems a reasonable thesis, that the swords sold in Cologne came from Solingen, long before the first documental evident supports the manufacture of blades in this place in the year 1212. Since products of Solingen were not signed before the 16th century, these were simply considered originating from Cologne, the market place where they were dealt.

The requirements for producing swords and knives were ideal in Solingen. Raw iron could be sourced in the neighborhood and numerous streams in this mountainous region provided the necessary hydropower for hammering, grinding and polishing the blades. Charcoal, made from the rich forests was readily available.

Since the beginnings the whole manufacture process was divided among specialized professions, like sword smiths, hardening agents, grinders and the Schwertfeger, responsible for polishing the blade, completing it with a hilt and dealing with the clients. This early division

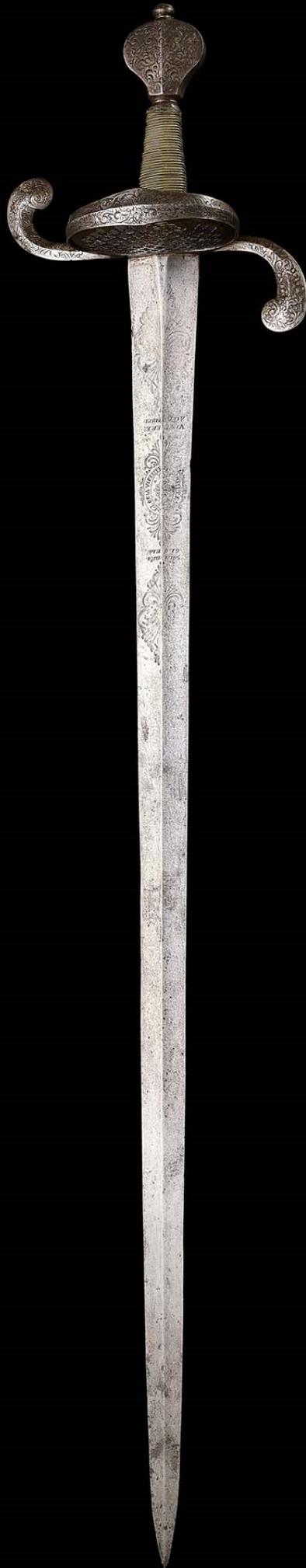
of labor and professionalization led to a very high quality of the products and their international reputation, already in medieval times.

Still, Toledo was the most famous center for blades in Europe and also Milan had a great reputation until Solingen became the primary place of manufacture at about 1600. In order to benefit and foster the marketability of their products, masters from Solingen had never hesitated to copy foreign marks or boost their image by the semblance of a Spanish origin, even after the relevance of Toledo started to vanish and Solingen dominated the European market in the 17th, 18th and even 19th century. Heinrich Kohl, for example, signed his blades with ENRIQUE COL EN ALEMANIA, sometimes with the additional inscription ESPADEIRO DEL REI. As a true malapropism a blade from Solingen is known with the signature SEBSATIAN HERNIE, standing for the famous bladesmith Sebastian Hernandez. In a similar context the inscription VIVA EL REY PHILIPP III REY DE ESPANNA Y PURTUGUAL on our present example was probably meant to provide the blade with a Spanish aura, albeit Iohannes Berns signs with his full name and mark. Berns had never worked in Spain and the presence of the reformist's motto SOLI DEO GLORIA together with a reverence to the strict catholic Spanish King is obviously somewhat contradictory.

Notwithstanding the attempt of profiting from foreign brand images, the actual quality of the present blade was at least the same if not better, compared to a good one from Toledo, in a time, when blades or complete swords and rapiers from Solingen were exported all over Europe.

The new leading role of Solingen can be exemplified by an occurrence back in 1593. Pope CLEMENS VIII from the house of the Aldobrandini presented a sword to the French King on the occasion of his second conversion to the Catholicism. It had a blade by Peter Münch of Solingen. When Henri IV. married for the second time, the pope again gave a sword as a present, this time with a blade by Peter Munsten. It is remarkable that the pope preferred blades from Solingen masters on two occasions, albeit he could have bought these from Milan, Brescia or Padua, where also excellent blades were made.¹³

¹³ Haedeke, H. (1994): *Menschen und Klängen*, pp. 54-55, 61-66, 76, 81; Seitz, H. (1968): *Blankwaffen II*, pp. 259-270.



SWORD

Netherlandish/Swedish type,
circa 1620-1640, designed for an officer.

Overall Length: 104,5 cm.

Blade Length: 87,5 cm.

Weight: 1,16 kg.

Engraved Inscriptions on the blade, outer side:

SOLI DEO GLORIA (Glory to God alone. A typical phrase of the Christian reformists in the early modern age.).

GLORIA VIRTUTEM [SEQUITUR?] (Glory follows Virtue).

VINCERE AUT MORI. (Win or die).

Engraved Inscriptions, inner side, partly faded:

[...]ABIS [...]L]OCIS

[...] SUPERSTES

FIDE SED CUI VIDE (Trust, but be careful whom).

Blade of hollow diamond section, tapering to an acute point. S-curved flattened crossguard, nearly heart-shaped pommel and outer side ring of hollow diamond section with floral engravings. Shell, outer side, thumb ring, inner side.

Its nearly heart-shaped pommel and the s-curved crossguard with flattened ends immediately identify the present sword as the so-called



Netherlandish Swedish type, dating from circa 1620 to 1640.¹ Also the thumb ring is considered as a feature typical for northern Europe.² The presence of detailed engravings on the blade and the hilt suggest that it was designed for an officer. This assumption is also supported by traces of silvering at the grossguard. Presumably, the complete hilt was once silvered, which must have contributed to an impressive appearance of this sword, underlining the rank of its owner.³



In about 1620 there were intense trading relations between Sweden and Netherlands. Large numbers of similar swords had been imported by Sweden from there in order to supply their troops for the campaigns against Denmark, Poland-Lituanian and, from 1630 on, the thirty years war against the Holy Roman Empire. Generally, these were equipped with blades from Solingen in Germany.

Today there are comparative examples preserved in old Swedish armouries, like the Brahe-Bielke at Skokloster castle. Other pieces have survived the centuries in churches or have been recovered from graves, for example Yttergram, Uppland, now in the Livrustkammaren Stockholm.⁴

¹ Seitz, H. (1965): Blankwaffen II, pp. 36-42.

² Norman, A. V. B. (1980): The Rapier and Small-Sword, 1460–1820, pp. 149-150.

³ Comparative Example: Livrustkammaren, Stockholm, Inv. No. 5084_LRK, ex Oxenstierna Armoury, Tidö Castle. <https://samlingar.shm.se/object/D2A89FE2-5ACE-4CAF-B023-24EF28A572D1>.

⁴ Seitz, H. (1965): Blankwaffen II, pp. 36-42.



Wallhausen.⁵

The design of the present sword clearly suggests that it was not to be used in a civilian context, but intended for the battle field, as a secondary weapon. Every unit back in the early seventeenth century carried some kind of sword as an additional side arm. However, the blade of the present piece is particularly useful for fighting armoured enemies on horseback. The blade's hollow diamond section ensures a high rigidity, being light at the same time. So, it is the optimal choice for delivering heavy thrusts riding on horseback, the energy being concentrated in its acute point. Like a can-opener the sword could penetrate plate armour at the weaker plates or the gaps between them.

Back in 1616 Johann Jacob von Wallhausen published an elaborate work for the training of cavalry soldiers, encompassing numerous plates. It was fundamental for drilling them in the use of various weapons and techniques. Wallhausen's book became an important source for military leaders all over Europe, especially for the upcoming thirty years war (1618 – 1648).

⁵ Wallhausen, J. (1616): *Kriegskunst zu Pferd*, part 1, chap. I, fig. 8, no. 3.

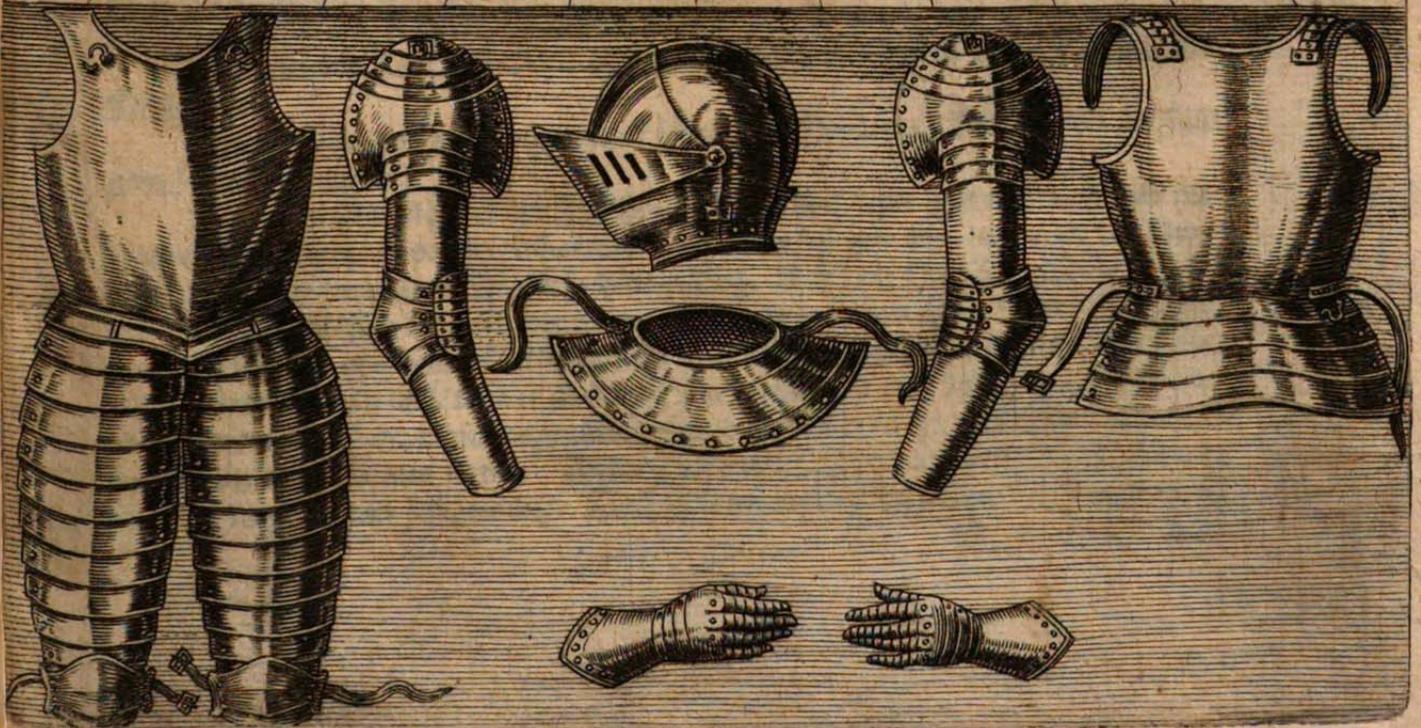
The figure above shows the attack with a sword similar to our present example. The heavily armoured riders typically carried two wheellock pistols in holsters attached to the horse, which they fired first at the enemy.⁶ If possible, they retreated in order to reload. However, this process was time consuming and complicated, so in a combat situation often impossible. When it could not be avoided, cavalry combatants drew their swords instead and continued the fight.



Ibidem, no. 4.

⁶ For the typical equipment see the following two pages, taken from Wallhausen, J. (1616): *Kriegskunst zu Pferd*, part 1, chap. 2, fig. 9 and 10.

Fig: 9.
Par: I.
Cap: 2.





Excursus: The Thirty Years War

was one of the longest and most destructive conflicts in European history, lasting from 1618 to 1648. Fought primarily in Central Europe, an estimated 4.5 to 8 million soldiers and civilians died as a result of battle, famine, and disease, while some areas of modern Germany experienced population declines of over 50%.

The war was traditionally viewed as a continuation of the religious conflict initiated by the 16th-century Reformation within the Holy Roman Empire. The 1555 Peace of Augsburg attempted to resolve this by dividing the Empire into Lutheran and Catholic states, but over the next 50 years the expansion of Protestantism beyond these boundaries destabilised the settlement. However, while modern commentators accept differences over religion and Imperial authority were important factors in causing the war, they argue its scope and extent were driven by the contest for European dominance between Habsburg-ruled Spain and Austria, and the French House of Bourbon.

Its outbreak is generally traced to 1618,[when Emperor Ferdinand II was deposed as king of Bohemia and replaced by the Protestant Frederick V of the Palatinate. Although Imperial forces quickly suppressed the Bohemian Revolt, his participation expanded the fighting into the Palatinate, whose strategic importance drew in the Dutch Republic and Spain, then engaged in the Eighty Years' War. Rulers like Christian IV of Denmark and Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden also held territories within the Empire, giving them and other foreign powers an excuse to intervene. The result was to turn an internal dynastic dispute into a broader European conflict.

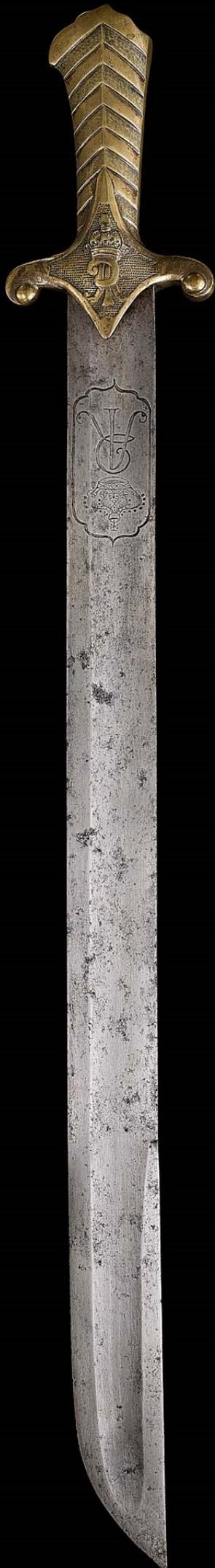
The first phase from 1618 until 1635 was primarily a civil war between German members of the Holy Roman Empire, with support from external powers. After 1635, the Empire became one theatre in a wider struggle between France, supported by Sweden, and Emperor Ferdinand III, allied with Spain. This concluded with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, whose provisions included greater autonomy within the Empire for states like Bavaria and Saxony, as well as acceptance of Dutch independence by Spain. The conflict shifted the balance of power in favour of France, and set the stage for the expansionist wars of Louis XIV which dominated Europe for the next sixty years.¹



Soldiers plundering a farm.²

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_Years%27_War#cite_note-FOOTNOTEParker1997189-31 [January 2024.]

² Sebastiaen Vrancx, Soldiers plundering a farm, circa 1620.



BROADSWORD

of the Saxon Janissary Corps, 1729.

Overall Length: 82 cm.

Blade Length: 67 cm.

Weight: 1,025 kg.

Provenance: Turkish Chamber of the Saxon Electoral Court. Swords of this group had been sold in the 19th century and at the sale of Lepke, Oct. 7th, 1919, lots 598-602, pl. 44.

Single edged blade with broad fullers on both sides, double-edged for its last third, the cipher "AR" under a crown (King August II. 1697-1755), etched on both sides. Cast brass hilt with more raised ciphers on the languets on each side, closely resembling a Turkish Karabela sword.

The present sword should not be seen as a pure representative one forming part of the Janissary dress, but indeed as a functional weapon that was designed to deliver cuts.

According to Hilbert, Johann Caspar Clauberg ordered 770 blades for the manufacture of the whole group in Solingen. These were mounted in Dresden by the cutler Gottfried Schmidt with cast brass hilts, made by Lindenwenz, also Dresden.¹ Holger Schuckelt indicates that at least a number of blades probably were manufactured in Suhl. An inventory entry from 1731 clearly mentions a sample being sent to Suhl for the

¹ Hilbert, K. (1994): *Trag diese Wehr zu Sachsens Ehr!*, pp. 16-17.



purpose of producing further blades there.² Currently, it is not possible to trace back the information of Hilbert and clarify this contradiction. Normally, it would have been reasonable assuming Solingen as the origin, since it was the most important center for the production of blades in these days with numerous examples existing in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, today. Suhl on the other hand is famous for the manufacture of firearms. Was it a mistake, made in the inventory of 1731? This might be possible. Another explanation could be, that some pieces were made in Suhl, the remaining ones in Solingen.

Background

Two times in history the Ottoman Empire almost managed to conquer Vienna and defeat the Holy Roman Empire and their allies. Both in 1529 and 1683 the city was sieged. European history would have taken a completely different road if the Ottomans had been successful. However, the Holy Roman Empire survived, while the rigors of war and plundering troops initially let to an in-depth fear of the Turks.

Notwithstanding, the wars also initiated a civilian exchange process that encompassed trading relations and originated a fascination in Europe for the exotic Ottoman culture. After the battles of Vienna an interesting war booty was taken from the tent camp of the besieger. People became acquainted with the previously unknown coffee, for example, and exotic clothing, tents, weapons and other equipment, that was shared among the military leaders. For celebrating their victories in the Turkish wars, it became common practice at the European courts to

² Schuckelt, H. (2010): Die Türckische Cammer, p. 312.

arrange feasts, parades and tournaments, whose participants dressed in Ottoman cloths. Collections with Ottoman artefacts were gathered and the Turkish fashion spread into the arts world. As long as a substantial military threat prevailed, the main motif for celebrating feasts in the Turkish fashion remained real or hypothetical victories, fear dominating the emotions. The more the Ottomans were pushed back east, the more the fear faded and was substituted by an ever growing fascination.

Saxony had played a special role in this regard. Due to its geographical position it had not been threatened directly by the Turks, while it still supported the Holy Roman Empire with troops. So, fascination for the exotic was the main force for the Turkish fashion right from the beginnings. At the courtly festivities in Dresden, the Turks had not necessarily represented the evil and the enemy in parades and tournaments. Instead even Elector Friedrich August of Saxony, King II. of Poland, called the Strong (1670 – 1733), dressed himself in elaborate turkish clothing and played the role of the Sultan! He was accompanied by members of the high aristocracy on horseback, also in Ottoman dress. This is a clear indication for the fascination and adoration August the Strong felt for the Ottoman culture.³

³ Schuckelt, H. (2010): *Die Türckische Cammer*, p. 228.



August the Strong.⁴

The Janissary Corps and the Zeithainer Camp

Within the Ottoman military the Janissaries formed an elite troop and provided the members of the Sultan's personal guard. August the Strong's admiration for the Turkish fashion not only let him celebrate courtly feasts with members dressed like Janissaries, he also went a step further by establishing a personal Janissary Corp, dressed like he imagined a Janissary to look like and equipped with the present sword.

The inducement for this was a huge military reform. August had recognized during the Nordic wars, how inefficient the Saxon army had been. So, for over a decade he implemented improvements resulting in a well-trained, organized and equipped troop of about 30000 men. August intended to present his new army to the international public in

⁴ Louis de Silvestre (1670-1733): August II the Strong, Elector of Saxony, King of Poland. Circa 1700-1760.

a huge maneuver, encompassing an elaborate feast, that was supposed to take place near Zeihain, circa 40 km northwest of Dresden back in 1730. As early as 1728 preparations for this event started under the responsibility of Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann, in order to construct a camp that was large and attractive enough to accommodate all the international guests. The total need for tents numbered 825, so these were brought there from all over the country, overhauled or newly constructed.



Zeithainer Camp.⁵

August the Strong did not spare any effort and founded a Janissary corps, who were responsible to guard the Zeithainer camp. In June 1729 he ordered his officers to recruit soldiers for this unit in Saxony, Poland and Lithuania. Prospective Janissaries had to be in the optimal

⁵ Thiele, Johann Alexander (1685-1752), circa 1730/31.

age and were not allowed to be married. Of special importance to him was their size, so August paid a bonus for the recruitment of large soldiers. Not enough, he personally drew a Janissary as he imagined these to look like⁶, and ordered the prospective members being dressed this way. As a weapon they carried the present sword.



Broadswords of the Janissary Corps.⁷

There existed four companies under the command of colonel von Unruh with a total of 603 men, including officers and 42 musicians. A costly undertaking, summing up to 1415 Taler per month. This was the

⁶ SHStA Dresden, Loc. 2097, No. 33, p. 7.

⁷ On View in the Turkish Chamber at the *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden*.

reason, why August the Strong soon scaled down the unit. For some time after the Zeithainer camp the Janissaries served as a personal guard, until the unit was dissolved, their members transferred to a grenadier battalion on August 31st of 1731.⁸

Since August the Strong was also King of Poland, some Janissaries served at his residence in Poland. Today there exist comparative examples of the sword in the National Museum Krakow.⁹

Literature, Comparative Pieces and further Reading

Chodynski, A. R. (1978): Zbrojownie Malborskie, Muzeum Zamkowe, p. 64, no. 30, fig. 18.

Diener-Schönberg, A. (1912): Die Waffen der Wartburg, no. 416, pl. 57.

Dziewulsi, M. (2015): 100 Rarities from the Military Collection at the National Museum in Krakow, p. 188, fig. 72a

Kessler, H. J., Schulze, D. (1979): Historische Blankwaffen, p. 12.

Müller, K., Kölling, H. (1990): Europäische Hieb- und Stichwaffen, item no. 351, image p. 298.

⁸ Schuckelt, H. (2010): Die Türckische Cammer, pp. 248-251.

⁹ Dziewulsi, M. (2015): 100 Rarities from the Military Collection at the National Museum in Krakow, p. 188, fig. 72a.

Muzeum Wojska Polskiego W Warszawie, catalogue Zbiorów Wiek XVIII., p. 40, no. 74, pl. IV.

Nadolski, A. (1974): Polish Arms, Side-Arms, fig. 160.

Schuckelt, H. (2010): Die Türckische Cammer, no. 313.

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Wagner, E.(1975): Hieb- und Stichwaffen, p. 234, no. 219.

INSTITUTIONAL CLIENTS

In the last years, we have welcomed several museums of international significance among the circle of our valued clients. We are grateful for the confidence these institutions have placed in our services.

2019

The *European Hansemuseum* in Lübeck loaned our 15th century breech-loading swivel gun for their special exhibition *Störtebeker and Company*.

2017

Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna from Malta purchases a group of rare antiquarian books on artillery and fortification, dating from the 17th to 19th centuries.

2016

The *Bayerisches Nationalmuseum* in Munich enhances its collection with an important hunting hanger.

2015

Schloss Moritzburg near Dresden acquires from us a partizan of the lifeguard of Elector Friedrich August I., Saxony 1694 – 1697.

2015

We sold the drawing of an unknown bronze barrel by Albert Benningk to the *Deutsches Historisches Museum* in Berlin.

2013

The *Cleveland Museum of Art* secures a savoyard helmet, dating from the early 17th century. We were able to trace back its provenance to the collection of Rutherford Stuyvesant.

