

Coat of Plates, Buckler and Conquistador

Items from the Treasure Chamber of the Bavarian Army Museum

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**Items from the Treasure Chamber of the
Bavarian Army Museum**

Edited by Tobias Schönauer and Ansgar Reiß

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Edited by Ansgar Reiß

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Content

8	Preface
10	Imprint
13	Summaries of Contributions
	Ansgar Reiß
20	Museum History, Object History, History of Europe The Treasure Chamber as a Laboratory of Museum Work
	Kerstin Merkel
32	Sewn and Forged Fashion Transfer and the Social Ideal in the 14th Century Using the Example of Rudolf IV, Archduke of Austria, and Catherine of Bohemia
	Fabian Brenker
46	The Emergence of the Coat of Plates in the 13th Century On the Significance of Written Sources for the Study of the Material Culture of the High Middle Age
	Tobias Schönaauer
68	The “Hirschstein Armour” A Coat of Plates from the Mid-14th Century
	Alfred Geibig
104	Three Swords from the Collection of the Bavarian Army Museum
	Alfred Geibig
122	Of Handgonnes and Wooden Bumpers A very special Arquebus from Markt Schrobenhausen

- 136 Tobias Schönaauer
Wood, Leather and Canvas
A Pavise with the Coat of Arms of Munich
- 150 Tobias Schönaauer
From Innsbruck to Bavaria
A Buckler from Ambras Castle as Spoils of War
- 164 Tobias Schönaauer and Dieter Storz
The Deer-Stalking Rifle of Elector Palatine Ottheinrich
A Wheel-Lock Rifle with a Checkered History
- 178 Tobias Schönaauer
Inside a Jousting Helm
An Arming Cap for a Frog-Mouthed Great Helm
- 190 Christopher Retsch
The Armoured Hose in the Bavarian Army Museum
Hoses as Pieces of Armour in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times
- 212 Johannes Pietsch
Frock and Slops of a Conquistador – An Unusual Find from Peru
- 226 **Picture Credits**
- 229 **Authors**

Preface

“Coat of Plates, Buckler and Conquistador” is the second catalogue to be published in the course of the reorganisation of the older collections of the Bavarian Army Museum, following “Forms of War 1600-1815” from 2019. “Coat of Plates, Buckler and Conquistador” is the catalogue for a separate exhibition room, the so-called Schatzkammer (treasure chamber), and focuses on an even older time period. The material remains that have come down to us from that time are, by their very nature, sparse. From the Middle Ages or the 16th century, only very few objects made of organic materials, i.e. wood, leather or textiles, have survived. For that reason alone, the 15th and 16th century textiles from our museum’s collections are among the most unusual pieces in the museum. Beyond these, however, a deliberately narrow, exquisite selection was made for the treasure chamber. As the catalogue’s subtitle implies, this is not a cohesive group of objects, but rather individual pieces that are particularly noteworthy for a number of reasons.

This new catalogue also follows a different approach. “Forms of War” was intended as a concise but complete documentation of the exhibition in text and images, but this one delves deeper. At the beginning there is an essay on the “museum in progress”, followed by two contributions of a more general, historical nature on the subject of clothing and armour. The main focus, however, is on detailed individual examinations of the objects presented in the treasure chamber. Each contribution is complemented by a double page on which the “hard facts” about the object are presented in a condensed form. This is in no small part a reflection of the only recently developed, new level of digital indexing of

the museum’s documents, which has made it possible to work out particularly the provenances much more clearly.

This volume was written 2020/2021 during the pandemic. We would like to thank the authors of the contributions above all others. We are pleased that during this demanding time they had the flexibility and the willingness to deal intensively with the respective pieces or ensembles and to allow their studies to flow into this catalogue. We hope that further discussions and research will follow, especially as many of the pieces are very unusual and were hitherto practically unknown. We would also like to thank those who have worked in the background and in an assisting capacity, especially Ms Magdalena Verenkotte and Ms Ursula Hofmann, whose restoration of the conquistador’s frock has led to a complete reassessment and subsequently also a new presentation of this extraordinary piece. This restoration was generously supported by the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung.

Thanks are also due to all the staff in the house who looked after the items in preparation for the presentation and especially during the sometimes complex and complicated photoshoots in the museum. From the beginning, it was the explicit aim to illustrate the essays abundantly so that the exhibits could be placed in an overall context. However, in addition to illuminations, paintings, graphics, comparative pieces and other depictions, it is primarily the excellent photographs of the exhibits themselves that distinguish this book. We would like to start by thanking the photographer Gert Schmidbauer, who unfortunately did not live to see the completion of this catalogue. In addition to his photos, the publication contains a large number of

photographs by Erich Reisinger. These detailed photos, which were difficult to realise, sometimes give spectacular insights into the “inner life” and the “secrets” of the objects. Additionally, many private persons and fellow researchers provided various photographs of works of art, which have added colour to the catalogue in the best sense of the word – many thanks for this. Our sincere thanks go to our colleague Daniel Hohrath for his meticulous manuscript editing. Without him, the book could not have been realised in this form. We also thank Christopher

Retsch who just recently joined our staff for reading proofs.

And at the same time, this is the place to express our gratitude regarding the museum space realised three years ago and opened simultaneously with “Forms of War” on 3 June 2019. The imprint names the museum staff who were involved in the project in a significant way. Our thanks go to them as well as to the Ausstellungsbüro (curatorial office) Janet Görner and the graphic designer Luise Wagener, who have created a room with a very special atmosphere.

Tobias Schönauer – Ansgar Reiß

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Summaries of Contributions

Ansgar Reiß

Museum History, Object History, History of Europe The Treasure Chamber as a Laboratory of Museum Work

The introductory contribution takes a look at the studies collected in this volume. Using these as a basis, it argues that the treasure chamber has a special function within the framework of the new concept for exhibiting the collections in the New Castle. It exemplifies the museum's *modus operandi*. The individual exhibits are elements within a specific historical narrative, but they also have their own object history across the centuries, and thirdly, they are part of the museum's history. It is only in this threefold reflection that the wealth of meanings that the collected and exhibited objects carry reveals itself.



Kerstin Merkel

Sewn and Forged Fashion Transfer and the Social Ideal in the 14th Century Using the Example of Rudolf IV, Archduke of Austria, and Catherine of Bohemia

Around 1350, the boundaries between armour and clothing became blurred. The close-fitting doublet and the low-slung belt were worn by both knights and burghers, as well as by men and women. The reference to elements of knights' attire shows the desire of contemporaries to approximate a social group with a high level of social acceptance, for the knight was the ideal of his time. Considered protagonists of fashion, Rudolf IV, Duke of Austria, and his wife Catherine of Bohemia were appropriately depicted four times in life-size sculptures in St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. Here, the duchess is depicted vestimentally as a bearer of power, but also as a protector. She may have brought this fashion trend from her Bohemian homeland to Vienna.



Fabian Brenker

The Emergence of the Coat of Plates in the 13th Century On the Significance of Written Sources for the Study of the Material Culture of the High Middle Ages

At the end of the 19th century, pictorial sources and preserved originals took centre stage in German-language weapons studies. Written sources were soon neglected to such an extent that the beginning of body armour by means of plates was vaguely dated to the second half of the 13th century and into the 14th century. Some vernacular poetry and Latin laws, however, prove that coats of plates were already used by horsemen in the early 13th century and were also widespread among foot soldiers from the 1230s onwards. Illustrated depictions from the second half of the 13th century seem to be limited to the German culture area and to differ from the armour in the Romanic regions made of hardened leather.



Tobias Schönauer

The "Hirschstein Armour" A Coat of Plates from the Mid-14th Century

Until the discovery of the "Hirschstein armour" by a detectorist, coats of plates were known almost exclusively from illustrations. At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, this type of armour evolved into the full plate armour still shaping the image of the knights today. The author begins by describing the development of body armour up to the emergence of the coat of plates in the 14th century, thus illustrating the importance of the Ingolstadt specimen for the study of armour. After that, the special features of this piece are explained and the difficulty of reconstructing this armour on a scientific basis is highlighted.



Alfred Geibig

Three Swords from the Collection of the Bavarian Army Museum

Three swords, each of them representing in its function and shape a specific period, in one case the Carolingian period, in the second the Romanesque / early Gothic period and in the third the later Gothic period. Thus, different methods of use as well as different fashions can be identified through dimensions, construction and morphology. Most interesting from a scientific point of view is the Carolingian sword, which may be considered exemplary for swords of this period. A second sword is composed in its main components of parts from different periods, whereby the blade seems to be clearly older than the hilt. Possible reasons for the time discrepancy between hilt and blade could be the replacement of hilt parts and / or the adaptation to more modern functional / handling requirements.

The third weapon, whose non-ferrous metal inlays in the blade indicate that it originated from Passau, may be dated to the Gothic period and thus represents the early phase of the art of fencing, which blossomed in the course of the following centuries and developed ever more finely.



Alfred Geibig

Of Handgonnes and Wooden Bumpers

A very special Arquebus from Markt Schrobenhausen

In 1904, three extraordinary arquebuses from the town of Markt Schrobenhausen made their way to the Bavarian Army Museum. The focus here will be on a very special hunting rifle that stands out from that trio because of its condition and because it tells an interesting, perhaps even tragic story. In addition to the special butt shape – common to all three rifles and permitting interesting conclusions to be drawn about their former use and areas of activity – the rifle being discussed here shows a disastrous explosion damage around its chamber, which in all likelihood had a considerable, perhaps even fatal effect on its operator(s).



Tobias Schönauer

Wood, Leather and Canvas A Pavise with the Coat of Arms of Munich

In 1463, the city of Munich purchased 99 pavises from a man referred to as “Hanns of Transylvania”. This shield form was widespread in the 15th century and could be found in armouries and private households throughout Europe. Although there were at least 99 such shields, just three have survived. One of these pavises was acquired by the Bavarian Army Museum in 1999. The author describes the construction, design and painting of this object as well as its history, as far as it can be reconstructed.



Tobias Schönauer

From Innsbruck to Bavaria A Buckler from Ambras Castle as Spoils of War

Bucklers are a special form of shields characterised by a central grip and measuring no more than 45 cm in diameter. They have survived in many historical collections around the world, as they were found on all continents and in many civilisations. In 1932, the Bavarian National Museum handed over an unusual buckler to the Bavarian Army Museum. In the inventories, it is referred to as “parrying shield” or “small fist shield” and was purported to come from the cabinet of curiosities of Ambras Castle in Tyrol. The author presents the unusually shaped and decorated shield and is able to trace its history back – via the royal gun room and its robbery from Tyrol by Bavarian troops – well into the 16th century.



Tobias Schönauer and Dieter Storz

The Deer-Stalking Rifle of Elector Palatine Ottheinrich A Wheel-Lock Rifle with a Checkered History

The oldest dateable firearm in the Bavarian Army Museum is a deer-stalking rifle which belonged to Elector Palatine Ottheinrich, and bears an inscription marked with the year 1533. The wheel-lock was a technical innovation that made it possible for the first time to carry a loaded firearm without having to keep a smouldering slow-match ready. Since this technology was not invented until around 1500, this object represents one of the earliest surviving wheel-lock weapons ever.

The article describes the chequered history of the acquisition of the Pirschbüchse, which, among other things, had to be handed over to the newly founded German Hunting Museum in Munich in 1938, but could be exchanged back in 1951. In addition, the complex mechanism of the wheel-lock is explained with numerous detailed photographs of this unique weapon.



Tobias Schönauer

Inside a Jousting Helm An Arming Cap for a Frog-Mouthed Great Helm

Particularly in the 15th and 16th centuries, jousting was a popular, albeit dangerous, sport. Under the helmet, special arming caps or cowls made of linen, wool and leather were worn to prevent serious injuries, of which only a few have survived. The specimen in the Bavarian Army Museum has been meticulously restored and decontaminated. With the help of schematic diagrams and contemporary illustrations, the author presents the object and explains how these cowls were used. Recent measurements have shown the forces that can act on the helmet and thus on the combatant in a joust.



Christopher Retsch

The Armoured Hose in the Bavarian Army Museum

Hoses as Pieces of Armour in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times

The so-called armoured hose consist of two layers of linen fabric with metal plates sewn between them to provide simple protection. The knees, however, are protected by four strips of mail instead of metal plates. These hose are an absolute rarity, as this type of body armour is so far only known from another pair of hose, albeit short ones. Illustrations from the 14th and 15th centuries show that such types of armour existed not only for the legs, but certainly also for the arms. They could be used as sole protective element or in combination with other pieces of armour worn over these. The cut of the fabric on the bottom makes it possible to date the trousers from around 1490/1500 until well into the 16th century.

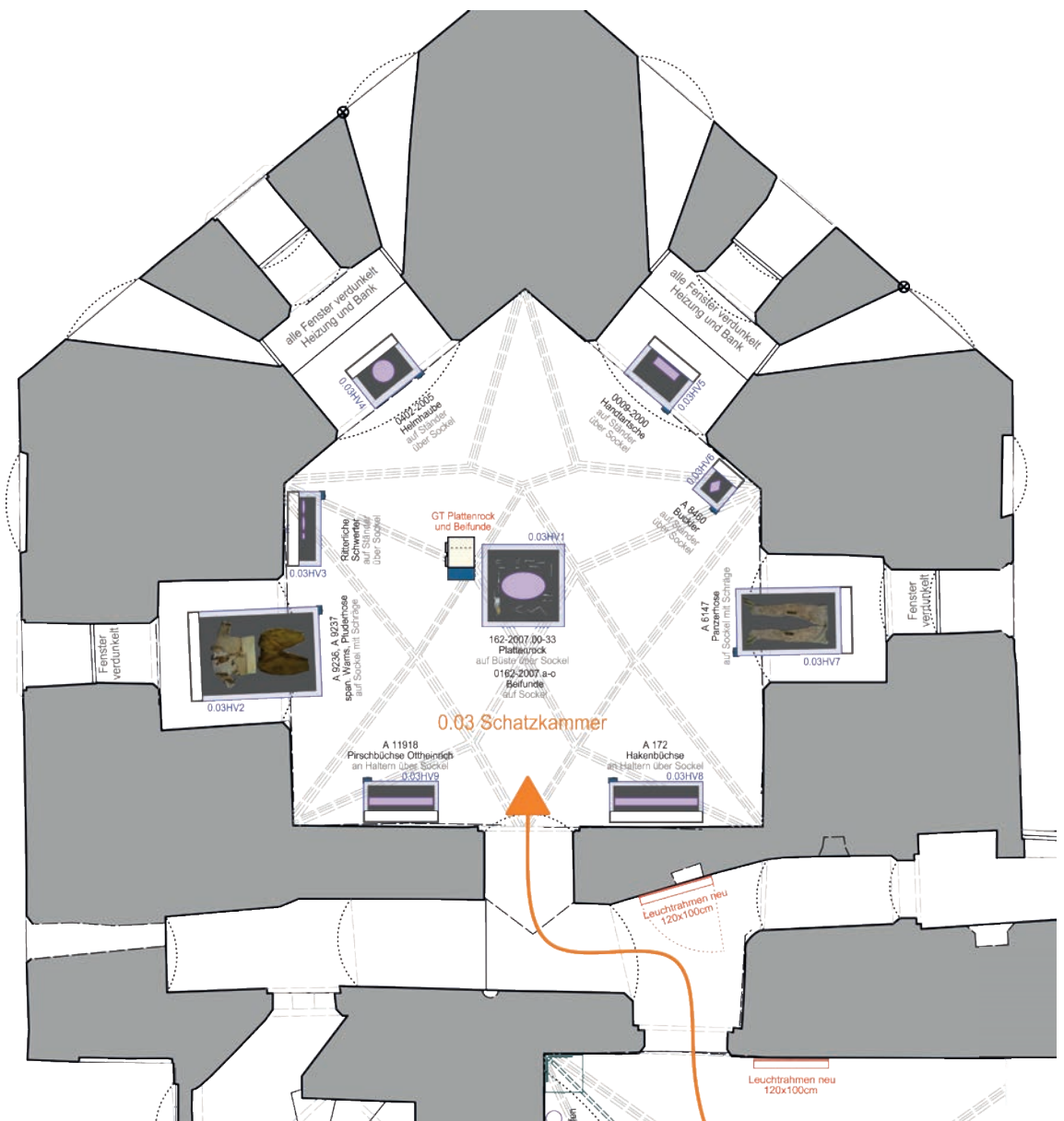


Johannes Pietsch

Frock and Slops of a Conquistador An Unusual Find from Peru

In 1932, the German archaeologist Heinrich Ubbelohde-Doering discovered two pieces of clothing made in the European fashion in an old burial ground in the northern coastal region of Peru and presented them to the Bavarian Army Museum. They comprise a shirt-like frock made of light cotton fabric and a pair of baggy breeches (slops) made of brown woollen cloth. The patterns and tailoring techniques of both garments correspond to those then used in Europe. Even the fabric of the trousers may have come from England. However, the outer fabric and lining used for the frock, as well as the sewing threads, were made in Peru. The frock and breeches can be dated to around 1560/1580 and represent unique evidence of the everyday clothing of Europeans in the New World.





Exhibition floor plan of the treasure chamber,
5 October 2018
(Ausstellungsbüro Janet Görner, Berlin)

Buckler

Der so genannte Buckler ist eine besondere Form des Schildes. Es handelt sich dabei um einen kleinen Pariereschild, der mit der linken Hand am Oberarm am Körper getragen geführt wurde oder als zusätzliche Schlagwaffe zum Einsatz kam.

Form und Größe dieser Schilde variierte je nach Kampfstil. Durch die außergewöhnlich schmal und aufwendig gearbeitete Gestaltung des Bucklers entstanden seine Größe und sein Gewicht. Der Hieb auf der Rückseite ist sehr dick ausgefallen, so dass er schwer zu handhaben gewesen sein dürfte. Beim schnellen Übergehen waren nicht mehr möglich, sondern damit er nur als Schlagwaffe.

Der hier gezeigte Buckler stammt ursprünglich aus Schweden in Tord. Er kam vermutlich während der Besetzung Tord durch Bayern in den europäischen Krieg (1618 bis 1648) in Deutschland.

Buckler aus Schweden aus Tord, Schweden (1618 bis 1648) in Deutschland. Foto: Hans-Ludwig Böttcher, Antiquarische, 1998, Nr. 1, 1. Aufl.

Buckler

The so-called buckler was a small shield, mostly used for parrying. It was carried in the left hand on the forearm of an opponent. It was used for both as a defensive and as an offensive weapon.

Shape and size of these shields varied depending on the fighting technique. One was exceptionally broad and strong, despite of the particular buckler with and which this form made use. The buckler made use of the way it was used that the shield was heavy and difficult to handle. Compared to modern ones, it was not only a shield, but also a weapon.

The buckler shown here originally came from Sweden in Tord. It probably arrived in war in Germany during the Thirty Years' War (1618 to 1648) when Spain was occupied by Sweden.

Buckler in Schweden aus Tord, Schweden (1618 bis 1648) in Deutschland. Foto: Hans-Ludwig Böttcher, Antiquarische, 1998, Nr. 1, 1. Aufl.



Illustration des Hieb-Übungs, 1618
Spanische Illustration, Tord, Schweden (1618 bis 1648) in Deutschland. Foto: Hans-Ludwig Böttcher, Antiquarische, 1998, Nr. 1, 1. Aufl.

