
“Mon cher ami et frère d’armes”: Letters from Costantino Ressman to William Riggs, Collectors of Arms and Armor in Nineteenth-Century Paris

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“Can you arrange to help Mr. Riggs transfer his armor to the Museum *at once*?” said the elder Mr. Pierpont Morgan one day. “Not necessary to consider the problem,” I replied, “because so long as he lives, Mr. Riggs will never part with his collection.” “Not answering my question,” retorted Mr. Morgan, whose genius divined things which were happening in people’s minds, “he *is* going to send over his collection and very soon.” And he did!¹

With these words Bashford Dean recalled a conversation with J. P. Morgan, then president of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, concerning a momentous acquisition. As the Museum’s curator of arms and armor, Dean (1867–1928) was arranging the donation of the collection of William Henry Riggs (1837–1924), lauded in the press as “the most valuable collection of armor in the world.”² It was, in fact, through the influence of his lifelong acquaintance Morgan that Riggs, an American who spent most of his life in Europe, was persuaded to bring his armory back to New York, his native city. Dean, who had courted Riggs for years, was sent to Paris to supervise the shipping. In 1912 he returned to New York accompanied by Riggs. It was the collector’s first visit to the United States since 1868.

The gift was accepted on May 19, 1913, by the trustees, who then invited Riggs “to act as a Trustee of the Collection during his lifetime, and to supervise its proper installation.”³ On February 2, 1914, Edward Robinson, then the Museum’s director, announced the donation as “one of the largest and most important the Museum has ever received.”⁴ Comprising nearly two thousand objects and a library of almost three thousand books, it was the second grand collection of arms

and armor to come to the Museum, following that of Charles Maurice Camille de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino in 1904.⁵ The sheer number of pieces was astonishing but so too was their range, from coveted medieval and Renaissance types to specimens from the sixteenth and seventeenth



1. William H. Riggs. Undated photograph. MMA Department of Arms and Armor



2. Hector-Martin Lefuel (French, 1810–1880). Architectural Drawing of the Interior of the Comte de Nieuwerkerke's House, ca. 1870. Pen and watercolor on paper, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (59.3 x 46.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913 (25.135.175)

centuries. The new acquisitions were on view when the new Arms and Armor Galleries opened on January 25, 1915.⁶

Considerable insight into the formation of the collection is provided by 130 letters written by Costantino Rissman (1832–1899), an Italian diplomat and leading collector of arms and armor, to his friend and “brother in arms” Riggs.⁷ The letters, written in French and dated between 1878 and 1899, are in the correspondence files of the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum. This article relies upon them to re-create Riggs’s activities as a collector and to retrace the genesis of his holdings.

WILLIAM RIGGS: COLLECTING ARMS AND ARMOR IN PARIS

During the nineteenth century, first with the Gothic Revival, and later with the Romantic movement, collectors showed

an unprecedented curiosity for antique arms and armor. In the 1830s a vogue for such objects, awakening dreams of the age of chivalry, developed in Paris and was imitated in the provinces. Arms and armor suddenly became accessible owing to recently made fortunes and the opportunity to find pieces at good prices.⁸ Napoleon III (r. 1852–70) himself took a great interest in such objects, requiring a special gallery, the Salle des neuf Preuses at the Château de Pierrefonds, to exhibit his *cabinet d’armes*.⁹ About mid-century, the main collectors of arms and armor, apart from the emperor, were the superintendent of fine arts, Alfred-Émilien, comte de Nieuwerkerke (1811–1892),¹⁰ the dealer Frédéric Spitzer (1815–1890), and the painter Édouard de Beaumont (1821–1888). The ascent of the bourgeoisie, whose ranks sought to emulate the noble and military classes, especially the emperor—fueled the quest for these newly fashionable curiosities, which they acquired as a way of advancing status. As new private collections were rapidly assembled and sold, there was soon a dearth of pieces on the market.¹¹ This reduced supply did not prevent a number of wealthy foreign amateurs from going to Paris to form their own private armories.¹² William Riggs was one of them (Figure 1).

“Mr. Riggs, a wealthy American who is said to collect only to send his museum back to the country of petrol, and who came to Paris around 1868, if I am not wrong. He is living proof that originality is not the monopoly of the English.”¹³ René, marquis de Belleval (1837–1900) provided this lively sketch of his fellow arms collector in his 1895 memoir. The marquis’s observations amplify the biographical information provided by Dean, who knew Riggs for years and recorded his impressions and memories in two detailed articles published in the Museum’s *Bulletin* (cited at the beginning of this article).

In 1853, after the death of his banker father, young Riggs moved to Europe and studied at Vevey in Switzerland, where he was a classmate of J. P. Morgan’s. He later went to Germany with the intent of pursuing engineering studies.¹⁴ There he began to buy arms and armor while establishing important connections with other amateurs. Riggs devoted his entire life to his passion. He bought the bulk of his holdings, mainly European arms from the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, in the 1860s and in the following decades added to them selectively. He regularly trimmed his collection of duplicates and lesser items—through sales à *nettoyage*, or weeding-out sales, as he would call them.¹⁵ In order to widen his knowledge and assemble his own armory, he traveled across Europe to visit museums, private collections, and dealers. In 1857 he settled in Paris in the rue d’Aumale, becoming one of many Americans “acclimated to Paris as to a new home country.”¹⁶

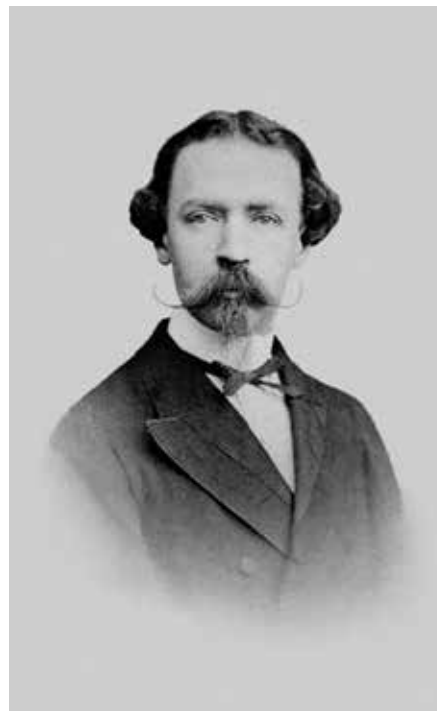
From 1871 his new house at 13, rue Murillo, near the Parc Monceau, became the perfect stage for his collection—

“a small building full of men of iron and instruments of distinction.”¹⁷ This mansion had once belonged to another arms collector, the comte de Nieuwerkerke.¹⁸ Designed by the architect Hector-Martin Lefuel (1810–1880), famous for his additions to the Louvre, it was simple from the outside—“a house which does not attract attention,” according to Edmond de Goncourt¹⁹—but its interior was richly decorated. The armory occupied the top floor (Figure 2). In a rare contemporary description of the display, the marquis de Belleval recalled: “He decorated Nieuwerkerke’s gallery with a great number of mail shirts and shafted weapons, the entire range of the family of halberds . . . and some rare armors. Above a shelf all around the gallery there were helmets of every time and style.” He added: “Eclectic in his taste, M. Riggs did not have any specialty in collecting. He owned some mysterious cases which contained, or at least were thought to contain, some treasures kept secret from the uninitiated.”²⁰

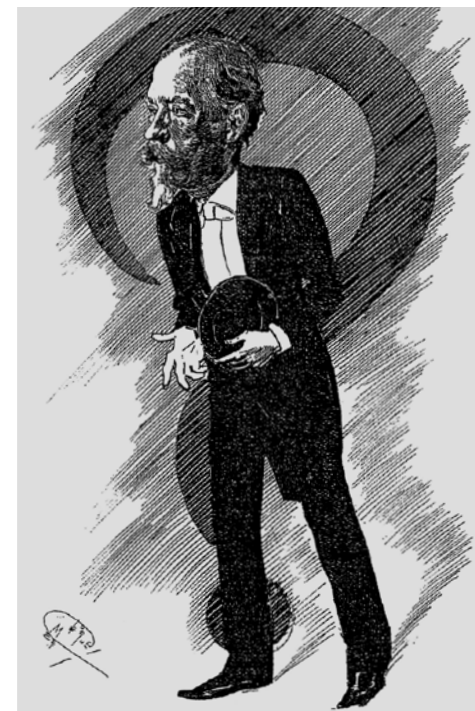
Dean remembered that Riggs “hesitated to show his possessions when they were not mounted properly, or to let a visitor enter his gallery when his harnesses were shrouded in *housses* [covers] or even when they had not been carefully dusted. . . . Most of his time he would be busied in his gallery, . . . intent on removing deep-seated rust, replacing straps, or making necessary restorations.”²¹ His early acquaintance with Jean-Baptiste Carrand (1792–1871), one of the greatest collectors of nineteenth-century France, whose restorations were a matter of debate among his peers, may have influenced Riggs’s tendency to clean objects excessively.²² Ressman sarcastically coined the (French) verb *riggser* after this penchant, and Ressman warned their mutual friend Charles Alexander de Cosson (1846–1929), known as Baron de Cosson, “In my opinion, the first rule is to avoid Riggs’s system and never touch, not little nor much, the interior of antique arms.”²³

Always occupied with the care of his pieces and spending an increasing amount of time in Luchon, a town in the Pyrenees, Riggs found little time for company. Although his own guests only numbered a few experts who regarded the austere mansion in the rue Murillo as a place of the liveliest interest, he had been acquainted since his early years in Paris with a select company of amateurs who opened their doors to disclose “hidden treasures of enchanting grace and perfect taste” to their fellow collectors, or *bibelotiers*, as they were sometimes called.²⁴

Chief among them was Ressman, one of Riggs’s closest friends (Figures 3, 4). The occasion on which they met is not known, but it was certainly the passion for arms and armor that united them. His German family name notwithstanding, Ressman was an Italian diplomat who moved to Paris in 1867 and spent the rest of his life there, in his apartment at 9, rue Richepanse.²⁵ He called himself “an obstinate and absolutely incorrigible old Parisian”²⁶ and was, in fact, a



3. Charles Reutlinger (German, 1816–1881). Costantino Ressman (1832–1899). Photograph, ca. 1870. C. A. de Cosson Papers, Library of the Royal Armouries, Leeds. Photograph: © The Board of Trustees of the Armouries



4. Caricature of Costantino Ressman, ca. 1892. Newspaper clipping (Paris?). Department of Arms and Armor

well-known fixture of Paris society. In his time he was described as a gentleman of distinction who, according to a newspaper account, enjoyed “walking along the boulevards at around five in the evening. Thrifty, he did not receive company. Not much of a gourmand, he would have a *prix-fixe* lunch at the Grand-Hôtel.”²⁷ He once admitted that his one constant pleasure over the years was that of “pursuing or even seeing unknown antique arms.”²⁸ He started collecting in 1867 and never stopped until his death. The evolution of his collection can easily be traced through his receipts for purchases and restorations and three inventories that he compiled assiduously with invaluable annotations about provenance of objects. His reputation as an expert preceded him among collectors who shared his “passion for iron,” with whom he regularly exchanged letters on the subject.²⁹

THE LETTERS THAT MADE THE COLLECTION

To judge from the letters that have survived, Ressman was Riggs’s most dedicated correspondent. These documents offer a long monologue—all Riggs’s replies are missing—that is affectionate and rich in information about the establishment of Riggs’s collection, his character, and

contemporary society and the art market in late nineteenth-century Paris. They ended only when Ressman died in 1899.

The first preserved letter to Riggs is dated July 1878; its friendly tone already suggests a certain familiarity between the two men, who had both lived in Paris for years. At that moment, Paris was agog with excitement over the Exposition Historique that had opened in May 1878 at the Palais du Trocadéro.³⁰ After the mid-nineteenth century, universal exhibitions played a key role in bringing together collectors from two spheres of society—the elite and the masses of amateurs, whose number had increased considerably—and encouraged private collectors to share their treasures openly instead of hoarding them for themselves.³¹ Even Riggs, normally reluctant to admit visitors to his house, took such events as opportunities to exhibit his pieces.³² At the Trocadéro, his collection occupied gallery 13, where Riggs had supervised the careful arrangement of his arms in show-cases.³³ Beaumont, in his detailed review for the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, awarded “all the merits of taste to this display of outstanding pieces of the highest interest,” second in importance only to the selection of four hundred pieces from the Spitzer collection shown in gallery 9.³⁴ Considering the caliber of the Spitzer collection’s arms and armor (not to mention its medieval and Renaissance works of art),³⁵ Riggs had certainly scored a coup. Ressman reported that Spitzer, the Viennese-born Parisian “king of dealers,” “felt uncomfortable with his proximity to Riggs and undertook great efforts to improve his gallery. He had a new vitrine of time-pieces installed and four high vitrines to display his guns and his choice swords. For the rest, there are some armors, daggers, powderhorns.” The Spitzer pieces in the exposition, though only a fraction of his collection, were highly praised in Beaumont’s review. Ressman was far less enthusiastic—though he conceded that “all this does not prevent the amateurs from putting on their glasses when they arrive at the bazaar”—and his report to Riggs concluded: “Everybody agreed that you had the lucky hand of the beginner, of the first inspiration, and today everybody awards you the palm for the arms. I do not flatter. It is a matter of fact.”³⁶

Ressman’s letters disclose exciting peregrinations through auction rooms and dealers’ quarters in the last decades of the nineteenth century that would hardly have been accessible to nonexperts at the time and about which little else is known today. By then, as the marquis de Belleval noted, “There were not as many dealers in Paris who seized upon that branch of curiosity as there used to be, and this made the prices of arms rise beyond any not only reasonable but sensible proportion.”³⁷ Since the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, Germany and Austria had been the principal sources for the arms and armor market.³⁸ Ressman, despite his complaints about a dwindling supply of good antique

arms, regularly haunted the shops of the Bachereau firm and August Henry “le chapelier” in Paris as well as visiting Pratt, Wareham, Wilson, and Harding, the principal dealers in London.³⁹ In Paris the main alternative to dealers was the Hôtel Drouot auction house.

Over the years, as Riggs retreated from society, Ressman updated his friend on his latest discoveries on the market in Paris or elsewhere in Europe as he hunted avidly for any “sensational find.”⁴⁰ He generously advised Riggs on pieces to buy, including ones that he himself could not afford. For his part, Riggs eagerly relied on Ressman, who occasionally acted as his agent in the salesroom, to execute his commissions. In the end, not every object in Riggs’s collection turned out to be a masterpiece, but Ressman’s advice surely must have helped to upgrade Riggs’s holdings. In June 1880, after attending a sale at Drouot,⁴¹ Ressman notified Riggs of purchases he had made with his friend in mind:

I bought for you, only by reason of the minimum prices at which they sold, two among the pieces you had pointed out to me, the little bevor with some mail on the side (no. 15) and the war spear (no. 31). I paid for the first 39 fr. 90 c. and for the second 25 fr. 20 c., fees included, and it makes a total of 65 francs 10 c. If you like, these two pieces will be available to you at that price when we see each other; otherwise I will greedily keep them for myself. . . . I also bought, together with Mr. Gay, to prevent its price from rising, the pavise no. 10, a little smaller than yours which is reproduced in Viollet-Le-Duc’s work.⁴²

A few days later, he wrote further of the pavise (Figures 5, 6):

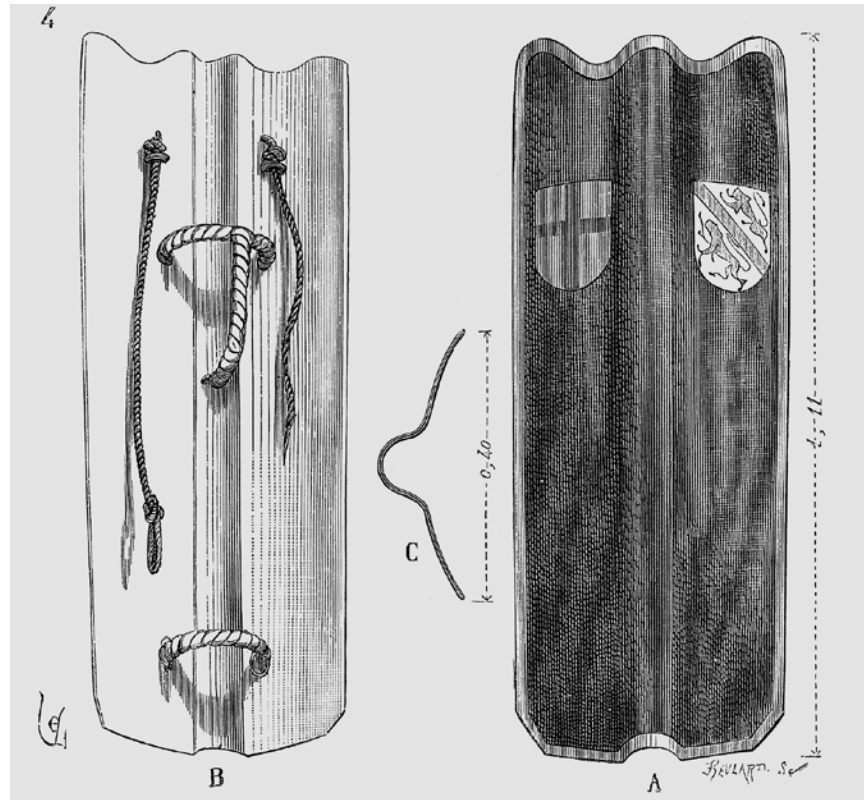
Yesterday I went to the rue Murillo and asked your concierge to let me into the gallery. I could make sure that Mr. Gay’s pavise would not be a bad acquisition for you, because it is not much smaller than yours; and also because it is complete and well preserved. The enarnes [supporting straps for the arms] are still there and they only need some restoration at the attachments and, with a light coat of polish, the pavise will look excellent. . . . And also these pieces have become so rare, or better, impossible to find, and are so precious for a collection that I did not hesitate to conclude the deal.⁴³

Victor Gay (1820–1887), an architect and writer whose collection would be acquired by the Louvre in 1908, was asking 400 francs. Ressman then arranged for the delivery of the pieces to the rue Murillo, ready to take them back in case Riggs was not satisfied. Eventually, Riggs heeded his friend’s advice and bought the second pavise.⁴⁴



5. Pavise. Switzerland, 15th century. Painted wood, 41 1/8 x 15 7/8 in. (104.5 x 40.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913 (14.25.776)

6. Illustration of the pavise in Figure 5. In Viollet-le-Duc 1875, p. 219



In 1882 at the beginning of one of the worst economic depressions of the nineteenth century, Ressman decided to dispose of some of his collection because of financial pressures. The dynamics of such a sale could be difficult, as the critic and collector Philippe Burty (1830–1890) observed: “When we need to sell, our embarrassment is redoubled. Self-esteem becomes terribly susceptible.”⁴⁵ On May 9, 1882, Ressman informed Riggs: “The day of the sale is not far away, but not decided yet. I will send you a catalogue as soon as I have one. . . . At least 35 pieces are mine, and I’m very sorry you will not be here because many pieces are excellent. . . . Every sword I gave Mannheim (around 10), could enter the best collection. . . .” He went on to list every single object and concluded with regret, “Eventually, I would rather be the buyer than the seller, but in this cruel world, we are not always allowed to do as we like.”⁴⁶ A few days later Ressman singled out eleven of the thirty-five pieces as the best in the sale, recommending: “I think you should place your orders by telegraph if you decide to buy any of them. I don’t know what we will have in the sale, but I don’t think there will be any arms other than mine.”⁴⁷ Shortly thereafter, he wrote:

Except for nos. 3 and 17, which is fake for sure, all the other pieces are absolutely good and authentic. I have marked with two red lines the pieces that you should not let go and with a single line those which, while excellent, are of second quality according to my taste. I very much regret your absence because I would love to see in your collection some of my arms from which I part unwillingly and which I will never find again at the same prices. In the meantime you can safely give your orders to anyone you like, because I did not place any reserves on them.⁴⁸

Before the auction, Ressman had sold a German infantry armor to Riggs privately (Figure 7).⁴⁹ At the Hôtel Drouot sale Riggs acquired only four of the eleven lots Ressman had recommended;⁵⁰ the others went for more than he was prepared to pay. He spent, in total, a little over 500 francs.⁵¹

In June 1883 Ressman told Riggs of a collection about to be dispersed that had been “formed by a man in the plumbing business, M. Bécoulet, who bought almost all his pieces from Bachereau. . . . Everything seems to be good, and many pieces are excellent, even if there is none of the first

7. Infantry armor. Germany (Nuremberg), late 16th century. Steel, leather, H. 49¼ in. (125 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913 (14.25.720). Photograph: Juan Trujillo, Photograph Studio, MMA



8. Burgonet and shield. French (probably Paris), ca. 1760. Gilt bronze, silver, and textile. Helmet, H. 17⅞ in. (43.5 cm), Wt. 13 lb. 6 oz. (6.1 kg); Shield, H. 23⅞ in. (58.8 cm), Wt. 13 lb. 11 oz. (6.2 kg). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.259, 260), as reproduced in de Cosson 1901, pl. 23



quality. You could easily spend here and with pleasure at least twenty thousand francs. There are more than 100 court swords, some really beautiful. It can be easily predicted that the majority will be sold at low prices.”⁵² Riggs showed fervent interest in this sale, confirmed by his densely annotated copy of the catalogue, and in the end he bought several lots, many at Ressman’s suggestion.

A few years later, in 1888, the two men turned their attention to the Londesborough sale at Christie, Manson & Woods in London.⁵³ Ressman raised the subject with Riggs: “Did you receive the catalogue of the Londesborough collection? . . . During the three days that I spent [in London], I was able to have a quick glance in Christie’s basement. I was astonished by the large number of pieces and also by the high quality of some, but high bids and a considerable crowd of amateurs and dealers from all over Europe are expected. It will be a battle fought with thousand-franc notes. Will you be there?”⁵⁴ In London, Ressman discovered to his regret that “all the dealers of the universe will be meeting up.”⁵⁵ Alarmed by the news, Riggs fired off a telegram: “Just back and hope to join you tomorrow in London—I would wish to buy today several pieces. Will you bid for me? What do you estimate for numbers

11-32-48-80-81-82-85-124-145-146-147. Will reply immediately fixing my choice after learning your estimation.”⁵⁶ Unfortunately it was too late⁵⁷—the sale had already begun—but Riggs was still able to pick up a few items.

Riggs often let significant pieces pass, despite Ressman’s recommendations, because he was out of town or reluctant to invest too much money at once. It is difficult to guess the size of his fortune. Riggs had a reputation for drawing out his deals, relishing the art of negotiating, and seeking the best pieces at the lowest prices possible.⁵⁸ In January 1887, for example, Ressman told Riggs, who was again in Luchon, about a “Louis XIV” helmet and shield with a Medusa head in the middle (Figure 8), both of which were described in the catalogue for the sale of an anonymous collection.⁵⁹ Impressed by the catalogue description, Ressman encouraged Riggs not to let them go. Riggs responded with a telegram asking his friend to bid for him and specifying what he would pay: “excellent helmet of great effect: 3,500 at least and 1,500 for the shield.” Unfortunately, they were bought by Bachereau for slightly more: the helmet fetched 3,600 and the shield 1,800. From Ressman’s subsequent letter, long and almost apologetic, it is not difficult to imagine Riggs’s chagrin at losing them. Ressman urged that the

helmet was absolutely exceptional and that the shield appeared to have been complementary to it, but since he was advising Riggs by telegraph, he did not want to push him to spend too much. He considered the two pieces together worth at least 10,000 francs. Ressler thought that it still might be possible to secure them from Bachereau, but he advised Riggs to hurry up this time, since the two pieces were so attractive that they could easily have found a buyer.⁶⁰

From a letter dated February 25, 1887, however, it is clear that Riggs was not only a tardy correspondent but also slow to purchase. Bachereau subsequently sold the two pieces to another client, the duc de Dino, and they eventually entered the Metropolitan Museum's collection.⁶¹ A similar fate awaited the curly-haired burgonet by Filippo Negroli (Figure 9), offered at the Piot sale in May 1890.⁶² Riggs let it go, but it, too, came to the Museum with the Dino collection.⁶³

On a visit to the dealer August Henry's in October 1892, Ressler was impressed by a striking armor—one of a few securely identified as made for Henry II of France (r. 1547–59)—decorated with magnificent ornaments connected to Giovanni Paolo Negroli (ca. 1513–1569).⁶⁴ Ressler wrote immediately to Riggs, urging him to buy the armor, which he said would otherwise go to Dino. Riggs again failed to take prompt action, and the armor was ultimately sold to the banker Sigismund Bardac, for a sum that Ressler did not know but turned out to be too high for Riggs, who apparently offered less.⁶⁵

On March 22, 1892, Ressler wrote to Riggs about eight Borghese fauchards (glaives) he had seen in Rome the previous December, which he described as “splendid, magnificent, as fresh as if they had been finished yesterday, so beautiful that even I, and I do not particularly love polearms, would love to have one.” He encouraged Riggs not to let pass “such an exceptional piece that since its birth had never left the Borghese palace,” adding that in view of the wonderful quality, he would not have been surprised to see such fine objects in the Rothschild collection in Vienna or that of Dino.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, Riggs had nobody in Rome to buy for him, but the chance arose again the following year. In the spring of 1893, Bachereau told Ressler that he had



9. Filippo Negroli (Italian, ca. 1510–1579). Burgonet *all'antica*. Italian (Milan), ca. 1530–35. Steel, copper alloy, and leather, H. 12¾ in. (32.5 cm), Wt. 2 lb. 2 oz. (967 g). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.202)

just bought two Borghese fauchards in Rome and had sold Riggs one of “these marvelous pieces with works of damascening and the Borghese arms repeated all over.” This is one of the two fauchards now in the Museum (Figure 10).⁶⁷

In the early nineties, the sale of the Spitzer collection—“the greatest sale of the century”⁶⁸—became a recurring subject in Ressler's letters to Riggs. These documents offer exceptional insight into the taste of the time and the dynamics of an event that made newspaper headlines for years. Spitzer's armory would not be sold until 1895, separately from the rest of the collection, after nearly three years of negotiations.⁶⁹ In January 1893, before the start of the sale, Ressler reported: “I have not yet seen the catalogue of the Spitzer sale which costs 50 francs. In the meantime they announced that the sale will begin on April 15 and will last until June 17.” A week later he wrote that the sale would begin April 17 and subsequently reported that “15,000



10. Fauchard of the Bodyguard of Cardinal Scipione Borghese-Caffarelli (1576–1633). Italy, ca. 1600–1610. Steel, copper, gold, silver, wood, textile, overall L. 108 in. (274 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913 (14.25.450). Photograph: Juan Trujillo, Photograph Studio, MMA

francs will be spent to fit out the mansion and cover the courtyard where the sale will take place."⁷⁰

The event occurred at 33, rue Villejust (now rue Paul Valéry), where Spitzer had lived since 1878, and drew collectors, dealers, and the curious. After a tour through seven rooms on the first floor, guests entered the armory, where the auction was held under the hammer of Paul Chevallier.⁷¹ In his preface to the sale catalogue, Émile Molinier observed that "not merely another collection of works of art was dispersed, but a museum, a true museum, among the most beautiful one could ever dream of."⁷² Ressman, who followed the auction from day to day, was clearly enchanted by its splendors: "What is going on over the Spitzer sale is fantastic. They are taking in from 300 to 400 thousand francs a day and some of the objects have fetched crazy amounts. It can be foreseen that the total will be up to 8 or 9 million. The sections are very interesting but I have no time to attend."⁷³ To his regret, the public showed little interest in antique arms: "I am surprised that in spite of the immense traffic of amateurs and dealers coming to the Spitzer sale from all over the world, only a few of them seem to be interested in the arms."⁷⁴

The ample proceeds of the auction's earlier sessions lessened the urgency for selling the armory.⁷⁵ In January 1895 Ressman indicated that he assumed that the sale of the arms would be held the following spring.⁷⁶ In April 1895, anticipating the sale on June 10–14, he reported: "I was told that rings of dealers have been forming to try to snatch the arms at low prices and afterwards be divided among them. Nevertheless I predict a very big total."⁷⁷ The expert for both the Spitzer sales (1893 and 1895) was Charles Mannheim.⁷⁸

The sale of Spitzer's armory did not fetch record prices. The most expensive lots, bought by the duc de Dino, now form part of the Metropolitan Museum's collection.⁷⁹ As Edmond Bonnafé pointed out in *La chronique des arts* of 1895, Spitzer had no sense of the "archéologie des armes," and in fact many of his pieces turned out to be, if not fakes, at least clear pastiches, giving rise to amusing anecdotes and concern to ingenuous collectors.⁸⁰ The most famous is probably the Gothic-style armor that Spitzer had bought years earlier from Louis Carrand (1821–1889), a pastiche constructed from disparate and partly modern pieces decorated in late fifteenth-century style that was already suspected by his contemporaries as a work "too good to be true."⁸¹

The last big event mentioned in the collectors' correspondence was the sale of the collection of the German businessman Richard Zschille at Christie's in January 1897, which included 862 pieces and was one of the last great arms sales in England before World War I.⁸² Paris was covered in snow at the time, and Ressman, discouraged by the weather, decided not to travel to London.⁸³ As it turned out,

only dealers, many from Germany, attended the sale.⁸⁴ Riggs's interest was focused on the Bentivoglio halberd, and he was advised by Ressman to rely on Bachereau to execute his bid.⁸⁵ At Riggs's request Ressman contacted Bachereau and confirmed the arrangements: "Bachereau will leave for London tomorrow. I told him about your desiderata. He knows the Bentivoglio halberd and says that it is a very beautiful piece, coming from the Richards collection, where more than 2,000 fr. was paid. He took note of your numbers, but he will not commit himself until you give him a firm commission."⁸⁶ Bachereau himself was in London for one day only, January 23, for the arms exhibition before the auction. He left his bids with a correspondent and departed. The entire Zschille sale fetched only £16,254. In the end Bachereau bought fourteen pieces, including the halberd, which Ressman urged him to acquire. Bachereau paid £62 for it and offered it to Riggs for 2,000 francs, which would have covered the commission and transportation fees.⁸⁷ For whatever reason, Riggs never followed up on it.

It is clear from his friend's letters that over the years Riggs missed important events and seemed gradually to lose enthusiasm, whereas Ressman never abandoned his passion in spite of advancing age and declining health.⁸⁸ The letters became increasingly intimate in tone but always included some lines referring to antique arms. During the twenty years covered by the correspondence, Bachereau remained the most illustrious dealer, few new pieces came on the market, and Ressman continually complained of the "stagnation" in interest.⁸⁹ In 1897 he lamented that "amateurs were becoming rarer and rarer," "nobody spoke about arms anymore, nobody was selling," and proclaimed, "A total eclipse!"⁹⁰ "All the amateurs are gone," he wrote in 1898.⁹¹

Until the end of his life, Ressman kept after his friend, "mon cher Willy," the "beau retardataire" (a reference to Riggs's tardy responses), whom Ressman would recall to his duties as a collector, prodding, "Riggs? Riggs??/ William Riggggs ???"⁹² He frequently admonished Riggs for "Your long infidelity to the *armeria de la rue Murillo*," scolding him for having abandoned a "charming mansion and a splendid collection to the care of [his] old concierge."⁹³

Ressman did not live to see his hopes fulfilled that Riggs would end his "purgative cure in Luchon," sell his house there, and return to Paris.⁹⁴ Only the omnipotent Morgan succeeded where Ressman had failed. In 1912 the Metropolitan Museum bought the house in Luchon for 400,000 francs in order to free Riggs to oversee the transfer of his armory to New York.⁹⁵ In 1920 the Museum sold the Grand Hôtel et Casino de Luchon for a mere 150,000 francs.⁹⁶ Riggs's armory, meanwhile, had become a cornerstone of the Metropolitan's arms and armor collection.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful for the advice and assistance of James David Draper, Henry R. Kravis Curator, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, MMA, and Stuart W. Pyhrr, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Curator in Charge, Department of Arms and Armor, MMA. This article is dedicated to my colleagues and friends in the Department of Arms and Armor.

NOTES

1. Dean 1924, p. 302n1.
2. "Metropolitan Buys Armor," *New York Times*, November 24, 1912, p. C4.
3. Dean 1914a, p. 66.
4. "Museum Gets Deed for Riggs Armor," *New York Times*, February 3, 1914, p. 10.
5. See the article by Stuart W. Pyhrr in the present volume.
6. "Riggs Armor Collection at the Metropolitan," *New York Times*, January 24, 1915, p. SM11; "Arms and Armor: The Opening of the Riggs Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Art and Progress* 6 (March 1915), pp. 146–50.
7. Ressman left his collection of arms and armor and his library to the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence, following the example of his friend Louis Carrand (1821–1889), whose bequest had entered that museum in 1888. The only article on Ressman's collection research devoted to Ressman and his collection at the Bargello and the taste for arms and armor collecting in Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century; see Carrara 2008.
8. See "Un déjeuner d'amateurs," in Bonnaffé 1890, p. 29, and Beaumont 1878.
9. Important collections such as those of the Russian prince Alexei Soltykoff (1806–1859) and René de Belleval (see below) were added to the emperor's collection at the Château de Pierrefonds, the entire armory of which, apart from a helmet bought by Nieuwerkerke and now in the Wallace Collection in London (inv. 480), was transferred to the Musée de l'Armée at the Hôtel des Invalides, Paris; see Penguilly L'Haridon 1865. For the Soltykoff collection, see Soltykoff sale 1854 (517 pieces); Darcel 1861; Piot 1863, especially pp. 157–64; and Beaumont 1878, p. 518.
10. For the Nieuwerkerke collection, see Gautier 1858, pp. 69–70; Gaynor 1985; and Compiègne 2000–2001.
11. "Le commerce de la curiosité," in Bonnaffé 1878, pp. 59–123. See also Pyhrr 2007.

Already in the 1870s, according to Édouard de Beaumont (1878, p. 516), "Il n'y a plus maintenant en France . . . de vrais collectionneurs d'armes, et il ne pourra plus y en avoir, par cette simple raison qu'il n'y a plus et qu'il n'y aura plus dans l'avenir d'armes à acheter" (There are not real arms and armor collectors in France anymore and there will not be any in the future, for the simple reason that there are not, and there will not be in the future, any arms and armor to buy). All translations from the French are by the author.
12. Belleval 1895, p. 275.
13. "M. Riggs, un riche américain qui, dit on, ne collectionne que pour envoyer après lui son musée s'enfouir au pays du pétrole, dont il vint à Paris vers 1868, si je ne me trompe. Il est la preuve vivante que l'originalité n'est pas le monopole des Anglais." Belleval 1895, p. 280.
14. He attended the Technische Hochschule in Dresden.
15. In a letter dated February 5, 1889, Ressman exclaimed to Baron de Cosson that, at the forthcoming Exposition Universelle, Riggs "parle d'exposer environ 2500 pièces, ce qui ne serait, dit-il, que la moitié du nombre qu'il possède" (speaks of exhibiting about 2,500 pieces, which would be, he says, only half of the number in his possession).
16. "Acclimatés à Paris comme dans une nouvelle patrie." Léo 1867, p. 1066.
17. "Un petit hotel de la rue Murillo, tout rempli d'hommes de fer et d'instruments de distinction." Ressman to Riggs, July 4, 1896.
18. Riggs bought the house on April 16, 1871, for 188,500 francs. See Françoise Maison in Compiègne 2000–2001, pp. 124–25.
19. "Une maison qui ne tire pas l'oeil." Quoted by Maison in Compiègne 2000–2001, p. 124.
20. "Il avait garni le hall de l'hôtel Nieuwerkerke d'une grande quantité de cottes de mailles et d'armes d'hast, c'est-à-dire de toutes les variétés de la famille des hallebardes. Quelques rares armures surmontaient ces trophées, le long desquels, sur une console faisant le tour de la galerie, étaient rangés des casques de toutes les époques et de tous les styles." "Éclectique dans ses goûts, M. Riggs ne s'attachait à aucune spécialité; il achetait de tout en fait d'armes, et lui aussi avait des caisses mystérieuses qui recélaient, ou du moins étaient censées recéler des richesses dont les profanes n'étaient pas autorisés à faire la connaissance." Belleval 1895, p. 281.
21. Dean 1914b, p. 71.
22. Jean-Baptiste Carrand came to exert a strong influence on Riggs's taste. An archivist from Lyons with a passion for medieval art objects, Carrand had settled in Paris after a trip to Italy in 1834–35. There he made a living from restorations and became acquainted with the wealthiest collectors. He moved back to Lyons, where he died in 1871. Apparently without compensation, Carrand helped Soltykoff assemble his *cabinet d'armes*, especially advising him on the acquisition of the Debruge-Duménil Collection (sold in 1850). In the meantime he was able to buy several pieces for himself. Little is known about his arms and armor collection, part of which was displayed in 1827 at the Hôtel de Ville in Lyons, while some of his swords appeared at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867. After Jean-Baptiste's death, his son Louis Carrand sold the bulk of the arms and armor collection to Spitzer (see below).

See Piot 1863, p. 158; Barocchi and Gaeta Bertelà 1989; and de Cosson 1901. For Carrand's controversial restorations, see Garmier 1980, especially p. 62n57. For Carrand as an arms and armor restorer, see Eudel 1907, pp. 68–69. For Riggs's overcleaning, see Beaumont 1878, p. 518.
23. "Selon moi, la première règle est celle d'éviter le système de Riggs et de ne jamais toucher, ni peu ni beaucoup, à l'intérieur des pièces d'armure anciennes." Ressman to de Cosson, November 23, 1890. Ressman uses the term "riggser" in his letter to de Cosson, February 5, 1889.

On Riggs, restorations, and forgeries, see also Blair and Campbell 2008, especially pp. 26–30.
24. "Trésors cachés de grâce enchanteresse et de goût parfait." Jacquemart 1867, p. 551. Riggs's circle of friends included the architects Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) and Victor Gay (1820–1887; see below and note 44); the director of the imperial collection of arms and armor Octave Penguilly L'Haridon; the English collector Sir Richard Wallace; the aforementioned superintendent of fine arts the comte de Nieuwerkerke; Prince A. P. Basilevsky; the aforementioned marquis de Belleval; and

- the painters Édouard de Beaumont, Gustave Doré, Henri Pille, Mariano Fortuny, and Jean-Léon Gérôme.
25. Ressman was born in Trieste (Italy) in 1832. After attending the University of Vienna and the University of Paris, he graduated in law studies and pursued a diplomatic career. His work took him to London and Istanbul. Ressman was forced to retire when he came under suspicion of involvement in the Dreyfus affair as a Dreyfusard.
 26. "Un vieux Parisien endurci et tout à fait incorrigible." Ressman to Riggs, August 17, 1878.
 27. "Aime se promener sur les boulevards vers cinq heures de l'après-midi. Sagement économe, ne recevra pas beaucoup. Très peu gourmand, déjeune au Grand-Hôtel, à prix fixe." From an unidentified newspaper clipping in Riggs's correspondence in the Department of Arms and Armor.
 28. "Le plaisir de chasser ou meme de voir des armes anciennes inconnues." Ressman to Riggs, March 1, 1896.
 29. "Dans la passion du fer." Ressman to Riggs, May 18, 1884. In addition to the two extensive blocks of correspondence (approximately one hundred letters each) with Riggs and de Cosson, the documents in the correspondence files, Department of Arms and Armor, include scattered letters to dealers and collectors all over Europe but mostly those based in France.
 30. Beaumont 1878, p. 706; Breban 1878. The exposition was installed in the two wings of the Palais du Trocadéro. The "Exposition historique de l'art ancien," in the left wing, was divided into ten sections with a president for each. Colonel Leclerc, curator of the Musée d'Artillerie, was the president of section 6, Armes et Armures. Detailed information is in *La chronique des arts* for that year.
 31. Blanc 1859; Bonnaffé 1890, p. 5.
 32. Riggs exhibited his collection again at the Exposition Universelle in 1889 and 1900. Ressman to de Cosson, February 5, 1889; Ressman to Riggs, June 15, 1889; Ressman to de Cosson, January 27, 1890.
 33. Ressman to Riggs, July 26, 1878. Ressman reassured him: "Tout était en parfait état dans votre belle salle. Pas un grain de poussière, ni un point de rouille." (Everything was perfect in your beautiful gallery. Neither a grain of dust nor a spot of rust.) Ressman to Riggs, August 17, 1878.
 34. "La collection de M. Riggs . . . offre dans son arrangement tous les mérites du gout. Elle occupe, elle aussi, une salle entière, et là brillent certaines pièces du plus grand intérêt par leurs dates et leur pureté de forme." Beaumont 1878, pp. 518–19.
 35. After traveling Europe and dealing in art objects, Spitzer moved in 1852 to Paris. He had a preference for medieval and Renaissance art. After the Exposition Universelle of 1878, where he exhibited four hundred of his works, he was made a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur. See also Hackenbroch 1984–85, especially pp. 171–72.
 36. "Roi des marchands"; "incommodé par votre redoutable voisinage, a faite des efforts de géant pour donner plus de relief à sa salle. Il y placé une nouvelle vitrine d'horlogerie, et a fait construire quatre vitrines hautes et carrées pour y mettre debout ses carabines et ses épées choisies. Du reste, remaniement des armures, des dagues, des poudrières, etc. mais tout cela n'empêche pas les amateurs de mettre des lunettes quand ils arrivent au bazar." "A fait dire à tout le monde que vous aviez eu la main heureuse de le début, de la première inspiration, et aujourd'hui tous vous accordent la palme pour les armes. Je ne flatte pas: je constate un fait." Ressman to Riggs, July 26, 1878. Ressman revisited the exposition several times (Ressman to Riggs, August 17, 1878; Ressman to Riggs, September 1, 1878).
 37. "Il n'y avait pas non plus à Paris de marchands spéciaux, accapareurs de cette branche de la curiosité, comme on l'a vu depuis, et qui sont arrivés à faire monter le prix des armes au-dessus de toute proportion, je ne dirai pas raisonnable, mais seulement sensée." Belleval 1895, p. 273.
 38. Cripps-Day 1925, p. lxii.
 39. The usual collectors' complaints occur in several of Ressman's letters to Riggs. See December 14, 1878; September 1880; May 22, 1881; August 9, 1881; August 31, 1881. Ressman's visits in London are either mentioned in the correspondence or documented by the receipts for purchases made.
From Riggs's correspondence and receipts we know that from 1821 Bachereau was a dealer in antique arms and armor, furniture, and art objects, at 18, boulevard des Batignolles. He later moved to 35, rue Laffitte. In 1888, after Bachereau died, his widow and his brother inherited the business. The new shop opened in rue de Provence in 1890 and later moved to rue Le Peletier. See Ressman to Riggs, October 30, 1888.
Henry had been the official wig furnisher to the Orléans family, hence the name "le chapelier." Famous for his refined taste, he began by selling court swords. See the "Extrait du Journal des Arts," in Henry sale 1886, preface.
 40. "Trouvaille étourdissante." Ressman to Riggs, December 14, 1878.
 41. Ressman to Riggs, May 24, 1880. *Collection de M. de L***, Objets d'art et de haute curiosité*, commissaire-priseur Ch. Pillet, expert Ch. Mannheim (sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, June 1, 1880). Lots 10, 15, and 31 are checked in blue pencil in Riggs's copy of the catalogue (now in the Department of Arms and Armor) with Ressman's notes: "10: très bon; 15: Bavière intéressante à cause de la maille qui est restée attachée d'un côté; 31: très rare." (10: very good; 15: interesting bevor by reason of some mail still attached on the side; 31: very rare).
 42. "Je n'ai pas acheté, a votre intention, et seulement à cause de prix minime auquel elles ont été adjudgées, que deux pièces dans le numéro que vous m'avez indiqués, c'est-à-dire la petite bavière avec attache de maille sur un coté (n. 15) et l'épieu de guerre (n. 31). J'ai payé la première pièce 39 fr. 90 c. et la seconde 25 fr. 20c., les frais compris, ce qui fait une dépense totale de 65 francs 10c. Si elles vous conviennent, ces deux pièces seront à votre disposition à ce prix, quand nous nous reverront, sinon je le garderai volontiers pour moi. . . . J'ai ensuite acheté en commun avec Mr. Gay, pour l'empêcher de surenchérir, le pavois no. 10, un peu moins haut que le vôtre qui est dessiné dans l'ouvrage de Viollet Le Duc." Ressman to Riggs, June 10, 1880.
The pavise was listed in the sale catalogue (see note 41 above): "Grand pavois d'arbalétrier, du XV^e siècle, à longue cannelure verticale, muni de ses énarms; il est couvert de toile et double en peau de truie. L'extérieur, entièrement peint, est décoré de deux blasons sur les parties latérales. Reproduit par Viollet-le-Duc dans son *Dictionnaire du mobilier*. Haut., 1 m, 05." See Viollet-le-Duc 1875, p. 219. The pavise reproduced by Viollet-le-Duc was already in Riggs's collection. Riggs had bought it at the Spengel sale at Hôtel Drouot, Paris, February 4–6, 1869, lot 101, formerly MMA 14.25.775. It was subsequently found to have been extensively repainted and as a consequence was deaccessioned at Sotheby's, New York, January 12, 1993, lot 409.
 43. "Je me suis empressé d'aller hier Rue Murillo et me suis fait ouvrir la galerie par votre concierge. J'ai pu m'assurer que le pavois de Mr. Gay ne sera pas une mauvaise acquisition pour vous, soit parce qu'il n'est pas beaucoup plus petit que les vôtres, soit parce qu'il est bien complet et entre bon état de conservation. Les énarms y sont et n'ont besoin que d'un peu de restauration aux

- attaches, et avec une très légère conche de vernis le pavois fera excellent figure, ce sont actuellement la poussière et la saleté l'empêchent. . . . En outre, ces pièces sont devenues tellement rares ou plutôt introuvables, elles sont si précieuses dans une grande collection, que je n'ai plus hésité à conclure le marché pour vous." Ressman to Riggs, June 19, 1880.
44. MMA 14.25.776. After studying in one of the latest courses given by Alexandre Lenoir, Gay steeped himself in the antiquarian culture of the midcentury, became an architect, and worked with Viollet-le-Duc. He soon abandoned that career to pursue his aim of writing a glossary of the arts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The *Glossaire archéologique* was originally conceived as an alphabetic repertoire of brief texts and images. For this purpose, he started collecting all sorts of art objects for reproduction in the book. Gay was only able to finish the first volume of the *Glossaire*, the first two issues of which were published in 1883. As revealed in the correspondence between Ressman and Riggs, Gay (himself a collector) turned out to be a very close friend of both. The letters show high expectations for the publication of the *Glossaire*, unfortunately delayed by Gay's poor health. Both Ressman and Riggs were much involved in the book's genesis: they not only allowed Gay to reproduce objects in their own collections but also were asked for their advice on the text. The second volume of the *Glossaire* was published in 1928.
45. "Si l'on a besoin de vendre, notre embarras redouble. Les amours-propres sont terriblement chatouilleux." Burty 1867, p. 956.
46. "Le jour de la vente ou paraîtront mes objets n'est pas éloigné, mais n'est pas encore fixé. Des que j'aurai le catalogue, je vous l'enverrai. Environ 35 numéros sont a moi, et je regrette vivement que vous ne soyez pas ici, car plusieurs de mes pièces sont excellentes. . . . Toutes les dagues que j'ai confiées à Mannheim (une dizaine) seraient absolument dignes de figurer dans la meilleure collection. . . . Enfin, je voudrais être plutôt acquéreur que vendeur. Mais en ce bas monde on ne fait pas toujours ce que l'on veut." Ressman to Riggs, May 9, 1882.
47. "Je pense que vous devez donner vos ordres par le télégraphe si vous voulez acquérir l'une ou l'autre. Je ne sais pas de tout ce qu'il y aura, en dehors de mes pièces, à la vente, mais je pense qu'il n'y aura d'autres armes que les miennes." Ressman to Riggs, May 11, 1882.
48. "A l'exception du pistolet no. 3, dont le canon et la batterie sont superbes, mais dont le bois, sauf le pommeau, est neuf, et à l'exception du pulvérin no. 17, qui est décidément faux, toutes les autres pièces sont absolument bonnes et authentiques. J'ai marqué avec deux traits rouges les pièces que vous ne laisseriez sûrement pas échapper, si vous étiez ici, et avec un trait celles également excellents, mais qui viennent en seconde ligne, à mon goût. Je regrette vivement votre absence, je le répète, pour vous autant que pour moi-même, car j'aimerais voir entrer dans votre splendide collection quelques-unes des pièces dont je me sépare le plus à contrecœur que je ne retrouverai certes plus au prix ou elles se vendront. Cependant, vous pouvez donner vos ordres à qui vous voudrez en toute sécurité, car je n'ai pas mis des prix de réserve." Ressman to Riggs, May 14, 1882.
49. MMA 14.25.720. The transaction is confirmed by a note among his papers in the correspondence files, Department of Arms and Armor: "Acheté de mon ami Monsieur Charles [sic] Ressman, le 16 avril 82, une demie armure à bandes blanches sur fond noir, composé de: 1) Bourguignotte avec sa coiffe du temps; 2) Collier en velours noir; 3) Hausse col à épaulières; 4) Plastron et Dossière; 5) Tassettes jambières; 6) Gantelets avec gants du temps. Le tout poinçonné de l'estampille de Nuremberg. Cette demi armure de la fin du XVI siècle est d'une remarquable conservation et provient du château de la famille patricienne Pfinzing. Payé par chèque No. D. 18310 on 31 mai, 1882, à l'ordre de M. Ressman. Riggs. Frs. 1000." The Library of the Royal Armouries in Leeds owns the original bill proving that Ressman had bought it from the dealer in Nuremberg on July 1, 1880.
50. "L'arbalète, le brise-lame, la brayette, le centurion gothique." Ressman to Riggs, May 20, 1882. The sale was *Objets d'art et de curiosité* (sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, May 17, 1882).
51. Unfortunately, on the day of the sale Ressman, hindered by his health, was unable to go to Drouot but related that things had gone better for the buyers than for the seller. On June 18, from Vichy, Ressman wrote again to Riggs, recalling that he had asked Mannheim to buy the objects in which Riggs was interested as if they were for Ressman himself, in order to help him save money.
52. "La collection . . . a été formée par un entrepreneur de plomberie, M. Bécoulet, a qui toutes les pièces presque ont été vendue par Bacherau. On pourrait donc l'appeler la collection Bacherau. . . . A peu près tout y est bon, et plusieurs pièces sont excellentes bien qu'il n'y ait aucun grand premier numéro. Vous pourriez y dépenser facilement et avec plaisir au moins une vingtaine de mille francs. Il y a plus de 100 épées de cour, quelques-unes fort belles. Il est à prévoir que la majorité de celles-ci se donneront à vil prix." Ressman to Riggs, June 2, 1883. See *Collection Bécoulet: Armes européennes*, sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, June 6–9, 1883. Riggs's annotated copy of the catalogue is in the Department of Arms and Armor.
53. *Collection of Armour and Arms, Carvings in Ivory*, sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, July 4–6, 9–11, 1888.
54. "Avez-vous eu le catalogue de la collection Londesborough? . . . Le jour même de grand prix de Paris, c'est-à-dire le 10 juin, je suis parti pour Londres et pendant les trois jours que j'y ai passés j'ai pu jeter sur cette collection un coup d'œil dans les caves de Christie. J'ai été étonné du grand nombre des pièces et aussi la qualité de quelques-unes; mais on prévoyait des enchères fort élevées et un concours considérable d'amateurs et de marchands de tous les coins de l'Europe. Ce sera une lutte non pas à coups de lires sterling, mais à coups de billets de mille. Comptez-vous vous y rendre?" Ressman to Riggs, June 24, 1888.
55. "Car tous les marchands de l'Univers se sont donné rendez-vous." Ressman to Riggs, July 2, 1888.
56. Riggs to Ressman, July 4, 1888 (in English). The following day Riggs responded to Ressman, telling him to go ahead and buy some pieces for him.
57. A basinet that Ressman had recommended as "unique" later came to the Museum with the Dino collection. Number 441 of the catalogue, described as "a pig-faced basinet, very rare. From the castle of Herr von Hulshoff, Bavaria," for which Riggs paid 405 francs, is MMA 04.3.238. Ressman marked with a blue pencil some objects in Riggs's copy of the catalogue and in his own copy (today in the library of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence, inv. 325).
58. Belleval 1895, p. 278.
59. Ressman to Riggs, January 24, 1887.
60. Ressman to Riggs, January 28, 1887.
61. De Cosson 1901, p. 109, nos. 7, 8 (MMA 04.3.259, 260). See also the article by Stuart W. Pyhrr in the present volume.
62. Ressman to Riggs, May 22, 1890. Piot sale 1890, lot 282. This burgonet has often been confused with the helmet bought by Basilewsky at *Collection Mariano Fortuny Marsal* (sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, April 30, 1875), lot 20, and now in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

63. De Cosson 1901, no. B26 (MMA 04.3.202). See the catalogue entry in Pyhrr and Godoy 1998, pp. 132–34.
64. See the article by Stuart W. Pyhrr in the present volume. See also Pyhrr and Godoy 1998, pp. 240–47.
65. The armor had belonged to the collector Charles Stein (1840–1899). Ressman to Riggs, August 10, 1894; Ressman to Riggs, March 6, 1895.
66. “Splendides, magnifiques, frais comme s’ils venaient d’être terminées d’hier, si beaux que moi-même qui n’aime pas les armes d’hast voudrais bien en avoir un.” “Laisser échapper cette occasion d’enrichir votre collection d’une arme exceptionnelle, superbe et qui depuis sa naissance n’a jamais quitté le palais Borghese. Tout le travail de damasquiner est admirables et les armes répétées des Borghese charmantes.” Ressman to Riggs, March 22, 1892.
67. Ressman to Riggs, April 11, 1893. The second work, MMA 54.46.16, is from the Stuyvesant collection.
68. “La plus grande vente du siècle” (Molinier 1893).
69. In the meantime Ressman tried to obtain a catalogue for his friends. Ressman to de Cosson, May 29, 1892; Ressman to Riggs, August 4, 1892. Thanks to Madame Spitzer’s intervention, he obtained a copy for Riggs. Ressman to Riggs, September 19, 1892.
70. “Je n’ai pas encore vu le catalogue de la vente Spitzer qui coûte 50 francs. Cependant, on annonce que la vente va commencer le 15 avril et durera jusqu’au 17 juin.” Ressman to Riggs, January 30, 1893. “La vente Spitzer va commencer le 17 avril. On dépense 15000 francs pour aménager l’hôtel et couvrir la cour ou la vente se fera. Le catalogue n’a pas encore paru.” Ressman to Riggs, February 8, 1893.
71. The walls were covered with tapestries and paintings while the objects were displayed in vitrines. The visitor would then reach the arms and armor gallery—“le sancta sanctorum” or “le bouquet du feu d’artifice, le dernier triomphe de la collection,” as Edmond Bonnaffé defined it. On the walls the tapestries surmounted a boiserie with panoplies framed by helmets on the top. More than six hundred pieces (acquired from the Fontaine, Londesborough, and Hamilton sales) were at the center of this “masculine and severe decoration.” The catalogue was a major concern for Spitzer, who had personally chosen the best experts, photographers, designers, and editors to work on it. Spitzer lived to see published only the first of the six magnificent volumes that illustrated his collection. Bonnaffé 1890, pp. 25–26.
72. “Ce n’est point une réunion plus ou moins heureusement composée qui va se disperser. C’est un musée, un vrai musée, l’un des plus beaux que l’on puisse rêver.” Molinier 1893, p. XXIV.
73. “Ce qui se passe à la vente Spitzer est fantastique. On y fait de 300 à 400 mille francs par jour et quelques objets se paient des prix fous. On prévoit que le total montera à 8 ou 9 millions. Les séances sont fort intéressantes, mais le temps de le suivre me manque.” Ressman to Riggs, April 27, 1893.
Gerard Reitlinger (1965, p. 191) observed that the Spitzer auction, comparable in terms of richness only to the Bernal sale of 1855, produced the highest proceeds with the exception of the *Collection Jacques Doucet* (sale, Galerie George Petit, Paris, June 5–8, 1912). Its 3,369 lots earned more than nine million francs in thirty-eight days.
74. “Je suis étonné de voir que malgré l’immense affluence d’amateurs et de marchands de toutes les parties du monde à la vente Spitzer, si peu d’entre eux paraissent d’intéresser aux armes.” Ressman to de Cosson (Leeds), April 24, 1893.
75. At some point the Spitzer armory was to be sold en bloc. De Cosson, who intended to sell his own collection, considered waiting until the Spitzer sale was over, but Christie’s representatives recommended he take advantage of the weeklong break in the Spitzer sale. The de Cosson sale was at Christie, Manson & Woods, London, on May 3–5, 1893. Ressman to de Cosson, July 26, 1893. At the time Ressman asked the baron’s advice about the advisability of selling some of his own collection while the Spitzer sale was in progress. Ressman to de Cosson, October 25, 1893.
76. Ressman to Riggs, January 20, 1895.
77. “On me dit qu’il s’est déjà formé des groupes des marchands qui tacheront d’avoir les objets à vil prix et feront la révision entre eux. Néanmoins je prévois un très gros total.” Ressman to Riggs, April 17, 1895.
78. See Eudel 1885, chap. 11, pp. 123–25. See also Spitzer sale 1895.
79. De Cosson 1901.
80. Bonnaffé 1890, p. 29. See Appendix 1 in the article by Stuart W. Pyhrr in the present volume.
81. Eudel 1907, pp. 68–69; Beard 1932. See Figure 53 in Appendix 1 in the article by Stuart W. Pyhrr in the present volume.
82. Cripps-Day 1925, p. lxx. Richard Zschille’s huge collection, well illustrated in a folio publication in 1892, was exhibited at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago and at the Imperial Institute in London in 1896. See Grossenhain 2006.
83. Ressman to Riggs, January 12, 1897. Ressman would have preferred Riggs to be present and do his own bidding.
84. Ressman to Riggs, February 9, 1897.
85. Ressman to Riggs, January 20, 1897.
86. “Bachereau partira demain pour Londres. Je lui ai fait part de vos desiderata. Il connaît la hallebarde Bentivoglio et dit que c’est une fort belle pièce provenant de la vente Richards ou elle a été payée plus de 2000 fr. Il a pris note de vos numéros; mais naturellement il ne reste engagé à rien puisque vous ne lui avez point donné de commissions fermes.” Ressman to Riggs, January 20, 1897.
87. Ressman to Riggs, February 3, 1897.
88. During the last years of his life Ressman remained close to de Cosson and Dino and would write about them to Riggs. Even in his last letter, when he was very ill, he reported that de Cosson was still searching for arms to acquire.
89. Ressman to Riggs, September 6, 1898.
90. “Les amateurs deviennent de plus en plus rares.” Ressman to Riggs, November 4, 1897; “On n’en parle plus, personne n’en a, personne n’en vente. C’est l’éclipse totale.” Ressman to Riggs, December 20, 1897.
91. Ressman to Riggs, February 11, 1898.
92. Ressman to Riggs, July 4, 1896.
93. “Votre longue infidélité à l’armeria de la rue Murillo.” Ressman to Riggs, January 23, 1897; “charmant hôtel et une splendide collection.” Ressman to Riggs, December 12, 1895; Ressman to Riggs, February 9, 1897.
94. Ressman to Riggs, August 25, 1897.
95. Two weeks after signing the deed of gift, Riggs sailed back to France. He died August 31, 1924, at Parc de la Pique, Bagnères-de-Luchon.
96. Strouse 1999, p. 496.

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