

THE ART OF CHIVALRY



In this 14th-century Spanish panel, St. Michael the Archangel is protected by armor of the period as he conquers the Devil in the shape of a seven-headed dragon. Only his wings indicate that the Archangel is something other than one of the knightly dragon slayers such as St. George or Siegfried.

He is shown in the earliest type of plate armor, which came into use during the middle of the 14th century, with fully articulated defenses for arms and legs, though not yet a cuirass made of a solid breastplate and backplate. Instead, Michael wears a brigandine, a tight-fitting sleeveless jacket lined with small steel plates and scales, riveted through the fabric with the rivet heads visible on the outside. Since the

shield held in the left hand was still of great importance as a defense and the fighter turned his left side toward his opponent, the brigandine was buckled left side over right to let blades and points glance off harmlessly; that is why, even today, men's jackets are buttoned left over right. A heavily studded sword belt sitting low on the hips helped to keep the skirts of the brigandine from riding up out of position.

His small fist-shield was very popular in Spain for sword fencing, and its metal facing would certainly be more suitable against the dragon's fiery breath than the usual triangular wooden shields used by knights.

Rogers Fund, 12.192

One of the five or six greatest collections of armor in the world, the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Arms and Armor is unrivaled in comprehensiveness. The department owes its scope and quality to several superb private collections acquired early in this century, and to its first curator, Bashford Dean, who was distinguished not only by a connoisseur's eye but also a systematic mind. Dean's thorough and logical approach was perhaps due to his early training as a natural historian: before coming to the Metropolitan Museum, he was curator of the Department of Reptiles and Fishes at the American Museum of Natural History; legend has it that armored fishes piqued his interest in human armor. The nucleus of the Museum's holdings was the magnificent collection gathered by the Duc de Dino, three hundred pieces of European armor of extraordinary quality, which were purchased with the Rogers Fund in 1904. Then, in 1913, William H. Riggs presented his vast collection, including hundreds of swords, scores of helmets. With patience, scholarship, and taste, Dean and his successors have built on this foundation so that the collection now includes examples from almost every European period and school, as well as an important selection of Oriental weapons and armor.

The policy of completeness and refinement continues, so that each new acquisition fills a gap as well as being remarkable in its own right. The most important recent purchase was a fowling piece made for Louis XIII about 1615: it is one of the earliest flintlocks known, and one of three signed examples made in the workshop of the inventors, the brothers LeBourgeois of Normandy. Other important additions are the helmet crest given by Mrs. George Henry Warren, with a flamboyant hydra delicately damascened in gold, and the five swords bequeathed by Col. Wickliffe P. Draper, who gave us the pick of his collection. Each of these help to make the Department of Arms and Armor a haven for specialists as well as for children and their parents on Sunday afternoons.

The works shown in this *Bulletin* illustrate the diversity of the arms and armor collections. They range from a clump of rusted steel that only a scholar can recognize as the rare remnant of a Crusader's mail shirt, to the breathtaking spiraling planes of a fifteenth-century chapel-de-fer, to the masterwork on the back cover, the black steel Negroli helmet, a *tour de force* where sculpture of the utmost delicacy has been hammered from one of the most intractable of metals. Like the collection as a whole, these works demonstrate the magnificent craftsmanship and the functional beauty of the armorer's art.

Thomas Hoving
Director

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Like members of any other medieval profession, knightly fighting men had their own patron saints, such as St. Michael, St. George, St. Mauritius, St. Theodore, and St. Demetrius. The last two were particularly venerated in the Byzantine sphere of influence, and the Byzantine ivory illustrated here shows St. Demetrius. He is wearing armor composed of metal scales laced together, which was worn in late Roman days and in the Dark Ages. In fact, the earliest description of King Arthur's armor suggests the kind shown here.

About 1000. The Cloisters Collection, 1970.324.3

ON THE COVER

The locking gauntlet was a steel mitten with an extended fingerplate that could be secured by hook and eye-peg against the cuff, in order to prevent the sword's being wrenched from the grip of the knight's hand. This type of gauntlet was occasionally vetoed for use in tournaments, and therefore it is sometimes romantically called the "forbidden gauntlet." The one illustrated here belongs to a suit of armor dated 1527 that was made for a French ambassador, the Vicomte de Turenne, by the Royal Court Workshop of Henry VIII in Greenwich. It is the earliest firmly dated one of its kind.

Gauntlet: Rogers Fund, 19.131.1m. Sword: Gift of William H. Riggs, 14.25.1165

ON THE TITLE PAGE

The sword was the knightly weapon *par excellence*. Its cruciform shape gave it special spiritual significance, just as the triangular shield became mystically connected with the Trinity.

In the ceremonies conferring knighthood, the dubbing—the accolade—was performed with a sword: the shoulders of the kneeling squire were touched three times with the blade, and he was thus transformed into that very special being, the knight.

The sword illustrated on the title page must have had special significance: around its pommel is a silver ring engraved with the words, *Sunt hic etiam sui praemia laudi* ("Here too virtue has its reward"), a quotation taken from Vergil's *Aeneid* (I, 461). This phrase is the motto of the Beaufvier family, who were seneschals of Poitou under Jean, duke of Berry. It is tempting to think that this refined and erudite prince might have presented this sword to his faithful seneschal, and that his family adopted its inscription as their motto.

About 1400. The Giovanni P. Morosini Collection, presented by his daughter Giulia, 32.75.225

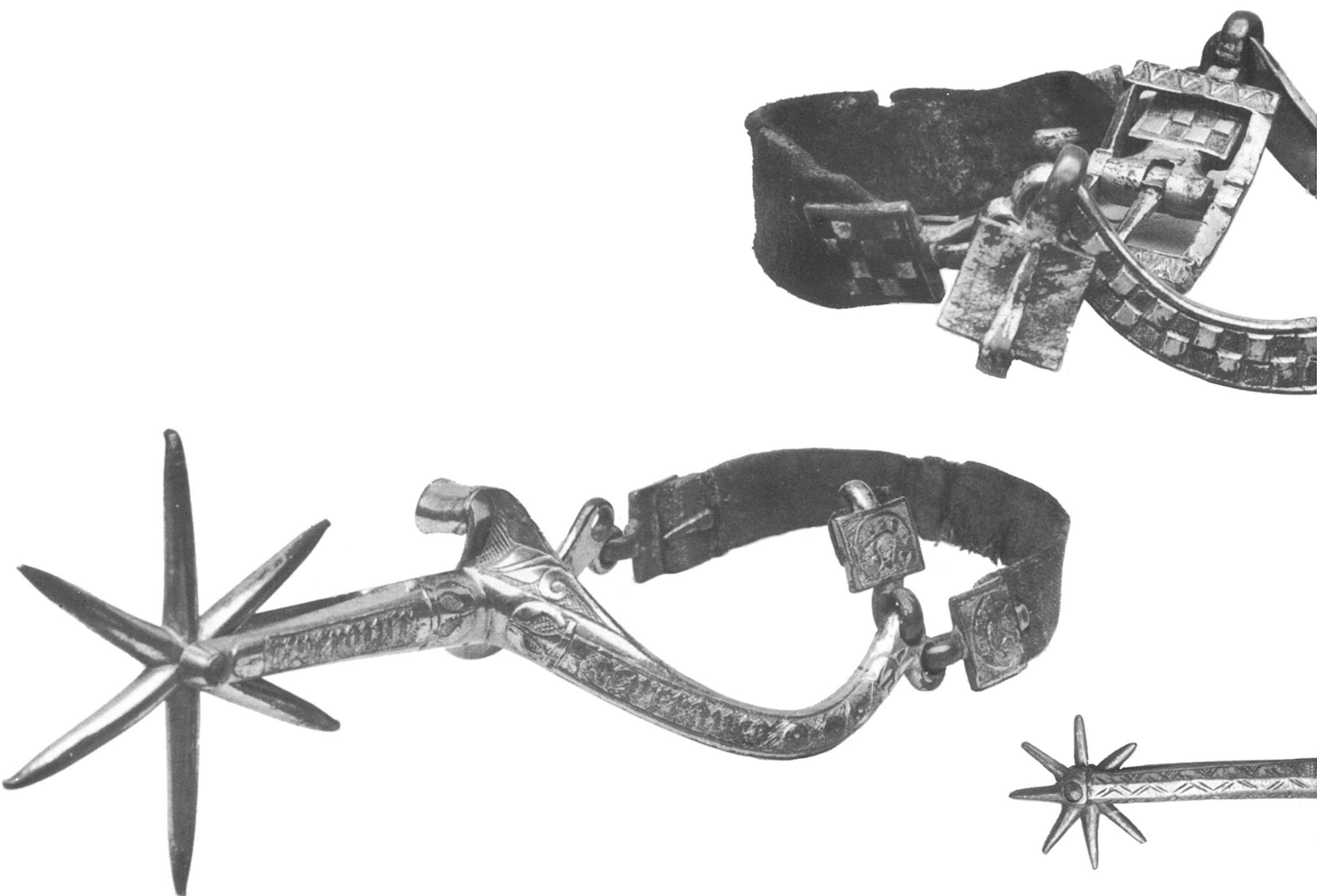
Inseparably linked to the image of the Middle Ages is the figure of the knight. In most European languages the word signifying “knight” refers to horses, as for instance *chevalier*, *caballero*, *cavaliere* (all from the Latin *caballus*, “horse”) or even *Ritter* (“rider”). The knight was a warrior wealthy enough to own a horse, and who therefore had styled his fighting tactics on horsemanship. Far beyond the martial aspect, however, “chivalry” was an entire way of life. It was more than fair play between men in battle and a generous treatment of noncombattants, such as women; it was a distinct class culture, even becoming, at times, dangerously close to a counter-culture—at least from the Establishment point of view of the Church.

Its origins go back to the days of the downfall of the Roman Empire at the end of the 5th century A.D. At that period East Germanic tribes such as the Goths, Burgundians, and Vandals, intermingled with Iranian nomads from the Hungarian and Russian plains, were pouring into western Europe and establishing their own kingdoms. The Germanic warriors had adopted the equipment and culture of the nomads, who were heavy-armored horsemen with a disdain

for toiling peasants and a dislike of manual labor. This blending of the nomads’ horseman culture with the Germanic system of mutual loyalty between leaders and followers eventually resulted—culturally improved by whatever could be salvaged from Roman civilization—in the social phenomenon we call chivalry.

A knight had to own enough property (which in those days meant land) to keep himself and his followers at a standard of living that made their loyalty to him worthwhile, aside from the protection against enemies that he had to offer. First of all, he had to supply food and drink, which were to be judged according to finer points of cuisine. Before he became a knight himself, it was part of a page’s or squire’s education to wait at his master’s table, learning how to carve a joint and select the right wine. Naturally these household duties were supervised by the lady of the castle and perhaps her older daughters, and thus, besides more polished manners, the young knight received an insight into and deep appreciation of the part ladies played in the knightly culture.

Hunting was a necessity for food, but it was subject to strict rules, some plainly ecological: no hunting was allowed



during the breeding season, and the severe restrictions against poaching were basically intended to protect the game against wholesale slaughter. Among the various methods of hunting, falconry was particularly praised, because of its educational value in teaching patience, while other methods, such as riding to hounds and stalking, made good training in horsemanship, animal care, and archery absolutely essential.

Knighthly culture involved other important amenities such as art, which—and here the old nomad tradition makes itself felt—meant poetry and such portable forms of art as tapestries and heraldry. The Age of Chivalry was the age of the great European epics, romances of chivalry that were based upon historical events that took place around the year 500 (the tales of King Arthur or the Nibelungs, for instance), but were embroidered with much older motifs that can be traced to the long-vanished epic tradition of the steppe riders. Many of these motifs set this poetry apart as the art form of a special class within society, since most of the themes

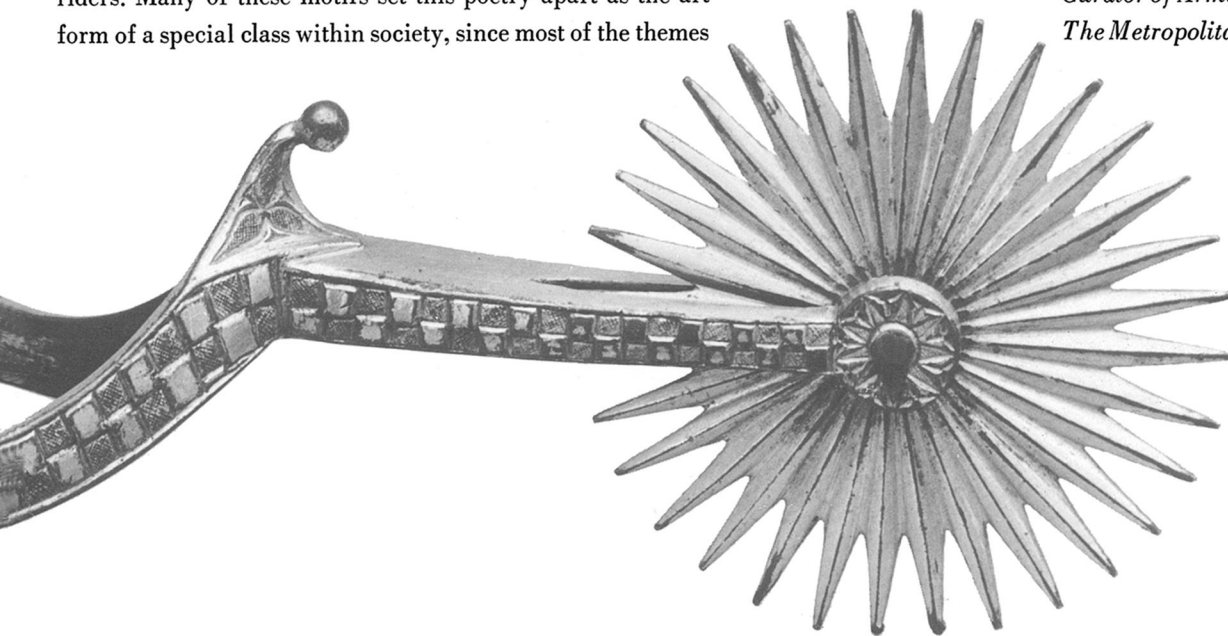
run contrary to Christian ethics: warlike exploits, preoccupation with personal honor, and courtly love have more in common with the Seven Deadly Sins than with the Ten Commandments. Even supposedly Christian themes in these epics, such as the story of the Holy Grail, have a peculiar flavor that at times must have seemed suspiciously like heresy.

The theme of courtly love found its finest expression in the lyric poetry of *trouvères*, *troubadours*, and *minnesingers*, whose songs, composed between the 11th and 14th centuries, celebrated love and ladies' service. Men of noble birth not only were patrons of this art, but composed songs themselves and took pride in a good performance with elegant lute accompaniment.

Of course, in the harsh realities of life many a knight fell woefully short of these lofty standards. But nevertheless the ideal persevered and, in the tradition of King Arthur and his Round Table, many a king could think of no higher praise than to be thought of as the perfect knight.

HELMUT NICKEL

*Curator of Arms and Armor
The Metropolitan Museum of Art*



Golden—or gilded—spurs were a knight's badge of rank, and golden spurs were attached to a novice's heels as part of the more elaborate knighting ceremonies. Although a squire was permitted to wear silver spurs, he still had to "earn his spurs"—the golden, knightly ones.

Besides being gilded, spurs were often decorated with the armorial devices of their owners, such as the upper spur, with the black and gold checkerboard pattern of the Counts of Urgel, in Catalonia, or the one at the far left, incorporating the badge of Louis II, Duke of Bourbon (1337-1410), a strap and buckle inscribed *Espérance* ("Hope").



Above: Spanish (Catalonian), about 1400. Gift of William H. Riggs, 14.25.1737. Far left: French, about 1375. Rogers Fund, 39.159.2. Near left: German (Bohemian), about 1430. Gift of William H. Riggs, 14.25.1705a

THE CRUSADES



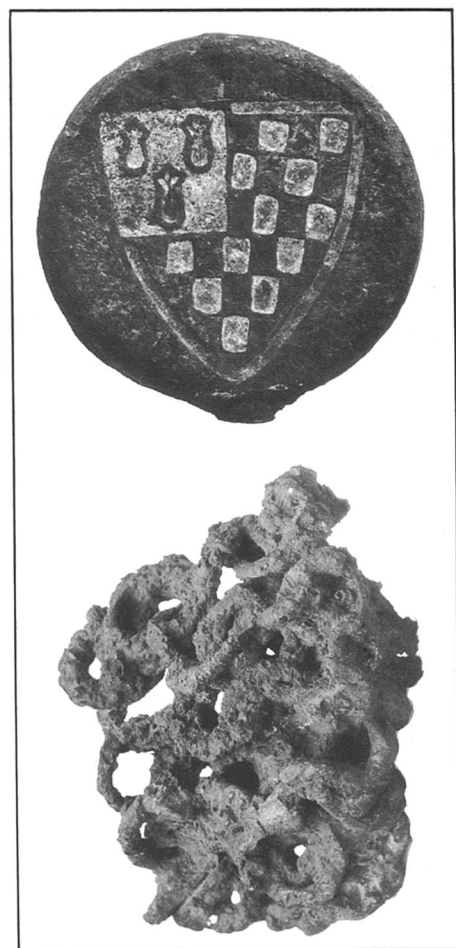
When chivalry or knighthood is mentioned, the Crusades come immediately to mind, and one of the recurrent questions that visitors ask is, "Where is the Crusaders' armor?" The sad truth is that there is none. The proudly crested helmets and glittering shirts of mail, the

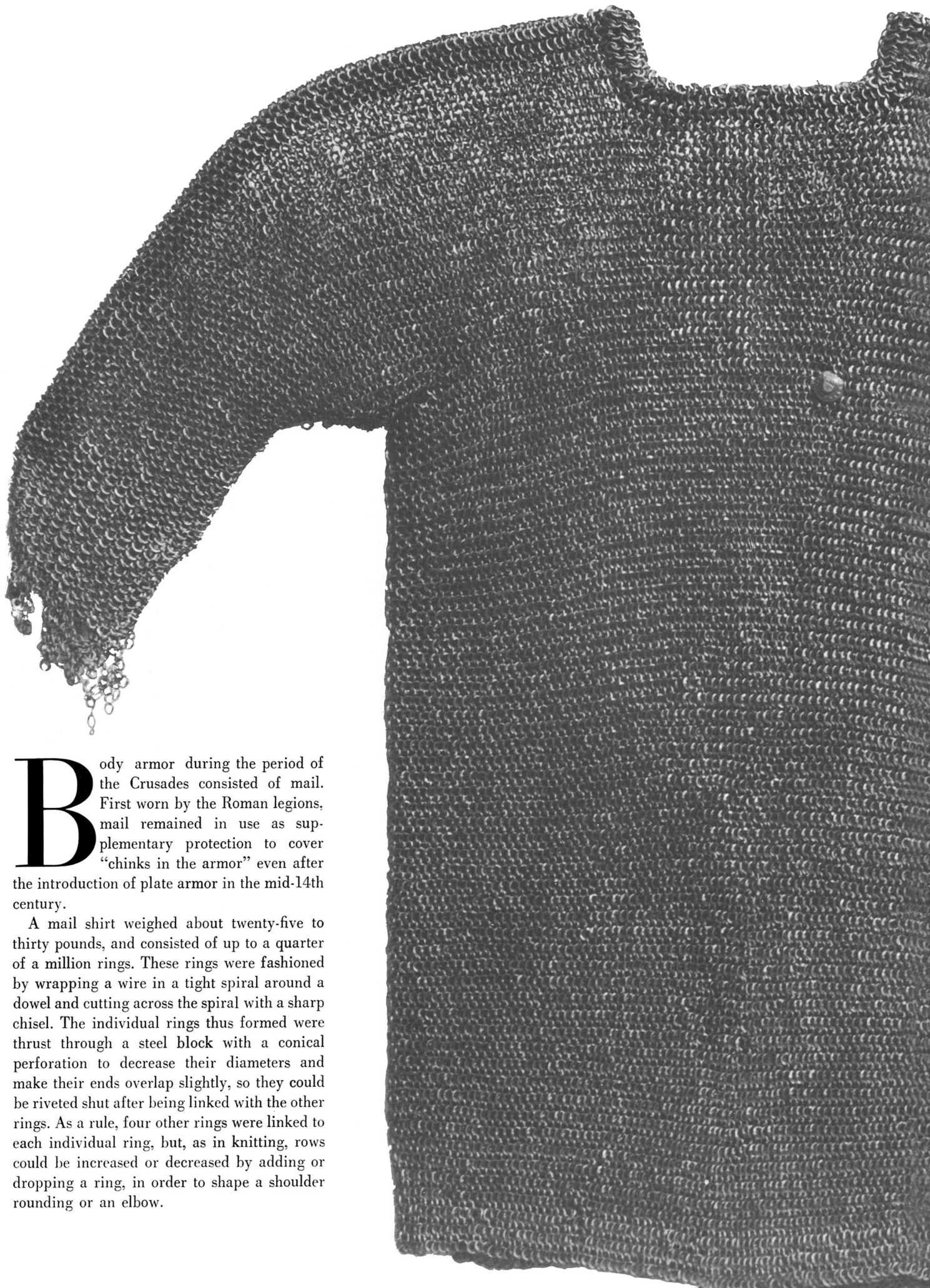
gaily emblazoned shields and colorful horse trappings have long since disappeared, eaten by rust and fallen to dust. They can be seen only in representations such as the galloping knight in full panoply shown here, which was probably once part of the decoration of a tomb effigy.

In the Metropolitan Museum's collections, however, there are two small, inconspicuous objects that can confidently be said to have taken part in the Crusades. One is a bronze sword pommel with the arms of Pierre de Dreux, Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond, who went on Crusade twice, in 1238 and 1249; it was found in the bazaar of Damascus in the 1920s. The other object is a lump of rusted links of mail, the pitiful remnant of a stout mail shirt, which was excavated in 1928 by a Museum expedition from the ruins of Castle Montfort in the Holy Land. Castle Montfort was the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights and was destroyed by Sultan Baibars, "The Panther," in 1270. Therefore it is the only piece of armor of any kind that we can be absolutely sure was worn by a Crusader.

Even after the Crusades had been abandoned—after the fall of Acre, 1291—there were constant raids and naval battles between Christian and Moslem in the Mediterranean. Trophies like the Italian knightly sword above are silent witnesses of these struggles: an Arabic inscription engraved on its blade states that it was bequeathed by Sultan al Mu'ayyad Shaikh to the arsenal of Alexandria in 1419.

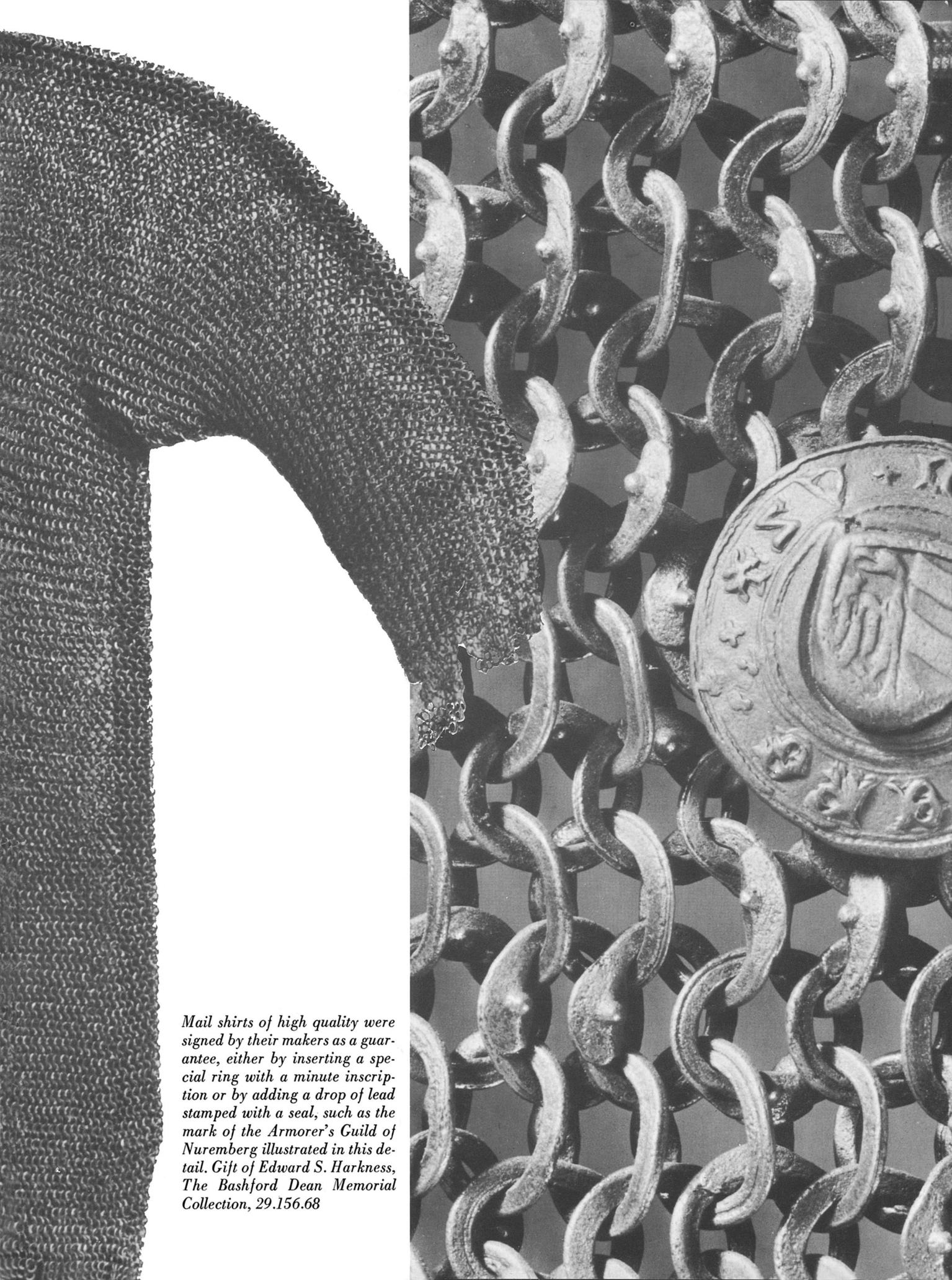
Knight: The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Purchase, 29.158.735. Pommel: Gift of Louis Joseph Cartier, 38.60. Mail: Gift of Clarence Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 28.99.37. Sword: Bequest of Bashford Dean, The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, 29.150.143





Body armor during the period of the Crusades consisted of mail. First worn by the Roman legions, mail remained in use as supplementary protection to cover "chinks in the armor" even after the introduction of plate armor in the mid-14th century.

A mail shirt weighed about twenty-five to thirty pounds, and consisted of up to a quarter of a million rings. These rings were fashioned by wrapping a wire in a tight spiral around a dowel and cutting across the spiral with a sharp chisel. The individual rings thus formed were thrust through a steel block with a conical perforation to decrease their diameters and make their ends overlap slightly, so they could be riveted shut after being linked with the other rings. As a rule, four other rings were linked to each individual ring, but, as in knitting, rows could be increased or decreased by adding or dropping a ring, in order to shape a shoulder rounding or an elbow.



Mail shirts of high quality were signed by their makers as a guarantee, either by inserting a special ring with a minute inscription or by adding a drop of lead stamped with a seal, such as the mark of the Armorer's Guild of Nuremberg illustrated in this detail. Gift of Edward S. Harkness, The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, 29.156.68



espanagne

ingule morte

ymme

noze

de hoz de merloch

noze

zalle

noze

marroch

chastel
de cardage

thunes



In this map of the Mediterranean are incorporated tiny figures illustrating the events of the Seventh Crusade (1270-1271) under St. Louis, king of France as Louis IX. He died on this, his second Crusade. The first time he took the cross was in 1248-1249, when he was accompanied by Pierre de Dreux, whose sword pommel we have seen on an earlier page.

The major fighting in St. Louis's Crusades took place in Egypt, so this country – as the inscription *egypte* indicates – occupies rather more of the Mediterranean coast on this map than on modern ones. In order to accommodate his battle scenes, the artist pushed Jerusalem far northward, and *sirie* (Syria) is inscribed on the promontory that should be Asia Minor. The seven mouths of the Nile, however, are a reasonable representation of the Nile delta, although the word *babilonne* (Babylon) indicates Cairo. The river flowing into the sea just south of Jerusalem is probably the Orontes, which should be far to the north of the Holy City.

French, first half of the 15th century. Illuminated parchment, 9 x 12 7/8 in. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.349

BATTLE ARMOR



Any kind of action produces some kind of reaction, and in the intricate interplay between offensive and defensive weapons there was a constant development. For centuries the body armor of the warrior of high status was mail, tough and resistant to sword cuts and at the same time non-restrictive. Its greatest disadvantage lay in its otherwise advantageous flexibility, because a heavy blow was likely to break a bone. Therefore it was necessary to wear a thickly padded undergarment to absorb the shock, and also to carry a sturdy shield. Both were uncomfortable, the first soon becoming unbearably hot in the exertions of battle, and the second severely hampering the left arm's freedom of movement, which was necessary to keep the reins, and thus the horse, under control.

When the mechanics in the thriving cities of the 14th century came up with an improved type of crossbow—the bolts of which would pierce mail much more easily than arrows from the longbow of even the sturdiest yeoman—the knight had to save his life by improving his armor. The armorers' solution was to foil the missiles' effect by introducing glancing surfaces that would deflect them. Individual armor plates were buckled over the mail; soon these plates were joined together in a sophisticated, articulated system that encased practically the entire body. The shock-breaking quality of the solid plates made the shield superfluous, thus permitting even more freedom of movement than the older mail armor.

The shaping of armor plates for maximum glancing effect quite naturally led to what looks to us like streamlining. In the 15th-century suit shown here, functional beauty merges effortlessly with the contemporary Gothic style, with sharp points and a sweeping tension in the overall design.

The solid plates of such armor were practically invulnerable to the traditional knightly weapon, the sword; for this reason the mace—a steel club with spiked head, such as the one shown at the left—was adopted for hand-to-hand combat. Its value as an armor-breaking weapon gave it so much prestige that it soon became a mark of authority, still surviving in the maces of state of British mayors and other dignitaries.





Gifts of William H. Riggs, 14.25.1334, 718





Toward the end of the 12th century, a helmet was developed that completely covered the wearer's face, except for eyeslits and tiny breathing holes. With his face thus unrecognizable, the knight needed some form of easy identification to make him instantly known to friend and foe. The largest surface available among his pieces of equipment was that of his shield, and shields now were painted in bright colors and with distinctive marks that were at first personal cognizances chosen for the moment, but soon became hereditary family arms. As heraldry, the knowledge of these cognizances developed into an art with intricate rules, and into a science cultivated and perfected by professional heralds and devoted amateurs. The richness and extent of heraldic ornament can be seen in the miniature at the left, which shows the Count of Homberg with a retinue of

knights from Argovie and the Upper Rhine, battling their way through a campaign in north Italy in 1311. Heraldic charges are displayed not only on shields, but on surcoats — “coats of arms” — horse trappings, shoulder shields, banners, and particularly as helmet crests. Every single one of these knights is a “portrait” insofar as he is recognizable by his heraldic blazons, though not one of them has his face visible.

In the miniature above, the Second Horseman of the Apocalypse is armed in full mail, but with a small steel cap that leaves his face free. This older type of helmet was probably chosen by the painter to suggest that these Biblical events took place a long time ago.

The page at the left comes from the *Manesse Codex*, itself a monument to an important feature of the culture of chivalry, since it is a collection of the works of 138 minnesingers. The German equivalent of French troubadours, minnesing-

ers were poets — often of very high rank — celebrating *Minne* (courtly love) and *Minnedienst* (devoted service to a lady), which gave spiritual value to martial prowess to form the perfect knight.

The book was compiled in Zurich by the Swiss knight Rüdiger Manesse during the first half of the 14th century. One of the painters of its miniatures seems to have been influenced by the pictorial style of the Apocalypse manuscript now at The Cloisters, such as the picture shown above. The Cloisters Apocalypse was painted in Coutances in Normandy, but shortly after its completion it apparently traveled to Switzerland, probably with a Swiss knight returning from service in England — an indication of the truly international character of knighthood.

Manesse Codex: University Library, Heidelberg. Apocalypse: The Cloisters Collection, 68.174

Lower left: The increasing use of plate armor made the sword more and more ineffective, because the solid plates could break the shock of a blow easily and might even ruin a good sword edge. The answer to this problem was either to resort to a heavier and less delicate weapon, such as the mace or axe, or to refine the fencing technique in such a way that instead of smashing the edge on unyielding plates, the point would be thrust through the spaces between them. In order to have the long, heavy sword blade under perfect control for the difficult thrust, it afforded a better grip if the forefinger were hooked over the quillons of the crossguard. The obvious disadvantage of this grip was that the forefinger was likely to be sliced off in a parry; the first solution was to add a protective loop to one of the quillons: possibly the earliest representation of this loop is shown

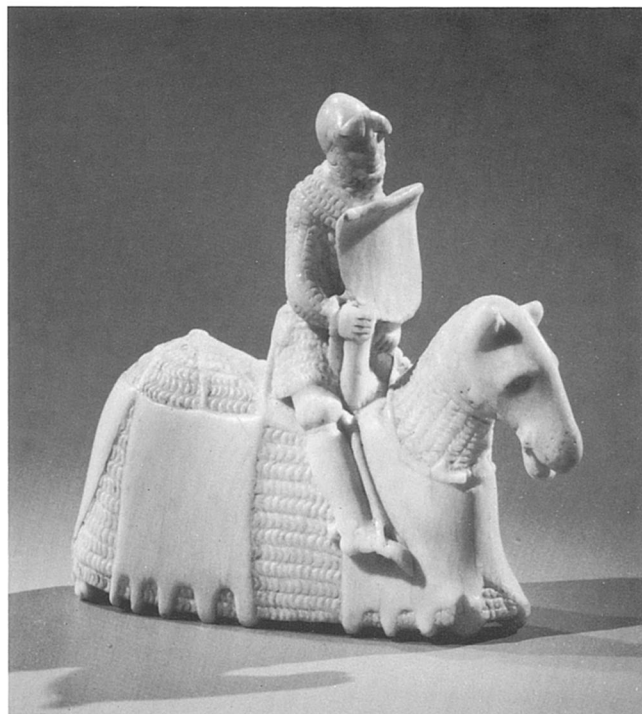
below, in a detail from a 14th-century altar panel at The Cloisters. Through the addition of more loops and rings to the guard, the complicated rapier hilt of the 16th century was finally developed.

Center: This small ivory chess knight seems to be the only surviving 14th-century sculpture in the round that represents a knight on a fully armored horse. The armor for both man and horse is a combination of mail and plate elements. The horse's armor consists of an iron chamfron enclosing the entire head, with additional jointed plates to protect the upper neck; the body is entirely covered by a bard of mail, reinforced by a breast-cover and flank protectors, presumably of thick leather. These reinforcement pieces were probably painted with heraldic designs, in the same way a horse's cloth trappings were decorated.

Right: Part of the fascination of armor is that a piece can often be associated with

a famous historical figure. The helmet shown here—a bascinet of the type worn during the 14th and early 15th centuries—is one of these works fraught with historical associations. It is believed to be the helmet that Joan of Arc wore at the Siege of Orleans (1430), one of the turning points of the Hundred Years' War. It is reported to have hung above the main altar of the church of St. Pierre le Martroi in Orleans (a short length of chain is still attached to its peak); it was considered to have been given as an *ex voto* by the Maid after she had been wounded at the siege by a crossbow bolt. There are marks of crossbow bolts on the helmet.

Originally this bascinet would have had a pointed visor, which somewhat resembled a dog's snout and gave this type of helmet the name "hounskull." The small holes around the rim enabled the lining to be sewn in place, while the projecting pegs held the camail, a mail curtain protecting neck, shoulders, and chin.



About 1370. Gustavus A. Pfeiffer Fund, 68.95

Right: Rogers Fund, 04.3.241

Detail from a Crucifixion by the Master of the Codex of St. George, a Sienese artist working at the Papal court at Avignon. About 1340–1350. The Cloisters Collection, 61.200.1





It has been said of the 15th century that it was a period of absolute style, when the same exalted standards of taste and quality could be found not only in the fine arts and architecture but also in the most humble piece of furniture or crockery. Accordingly, 15th-century armor is prized above all others by connoisseurs. Because of the ravages of time, there are relatively few examples that have reached us undamaged, but in their incomplete state their functional beauty becomes even more apparent, as in the case of this

chapel-de-fer with its sweeping brim and spiral bowl. Originally it must have been decorated with an encircling hatband and a crowning knob, like the one at the right – a detail from a contemporary tapestry. The knights in this tapestry show in lavish detail the full splendor of knightly armor – the silver-gilt edgings and finials that brightened the steel, and the gay fabrics that heightened its color effect.

Chapel-de-fer: Burgundian, about 1475. Rogers Fund, 04.3.228. Tapestry: Franco-Flemish, about 1460. Rogers Fund, 09.172



THE TOURNAMENT

The most splendid—and for us the most romantic—of all knightly activities was the tournament. Originally it was a war game and training for battle, performed in antiquity by Teutonic tribesmen. As organized events, tournaments are mentioned in 842 as held by the Carolingian Franks, and in Germany the 10th-century emperor Henry the Fowler established *hastiludia* (“spear games”) on a regular basis, complete with a supervisory committee, since it was self-evident that in order to keep a friendly mock-battle friendly, strict rules and supervision were essential.

The tournament as a formalized event, however, was developed in France, and an Angevin baron, Godefroy de Preuilly (1062) was given credit for having “invented” *torneamenta*. The codified regulations comprised a classification of the courses: the joust, the *melee*, the *baston* course, and the foot combat, as well as explicit rules about how to keep score (special points for the joust who hit so hard that his lance snapped) and about fouls (hitting below the belt, hitting the horse instead of the rider). By the end of the 15th century the rules became so complicated that they distinguished between more than twenty different types of joust alone, each to be run with a meticulously prescribed, specialized armor.

In addition to the sport, there were social events—banquets and pageants such as the Round Table, where everybody dressed up as a member of King Arthur’s court, or the Castle of Love, where a cardboard castle was wheeled onto the tournament field to be defended by beautiful ladies and besieged by amorous knights. Instead of warlike weapons these combatants used *armes d’amour*, such as roses in place of slingstones, rosewater instead of boiling pitch, glowing sonnets instead of flaming arrows.

*Lid of an ivory casket. French, 14th century.
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.173*





Because tournaments were important and prestigious events, some fans of the sport kept records of them, at times illustrated with painstakingly executed miniatures that depicted every participating knight with all the significant details of his armor and heraldic cognizances.

The armor shown here, from a tournament book painted in Nuremberg during the second half of the 16th century and illustrating local tournaments held between 1446 and 1561 – was designed for the *Deutsche Gemeine Gesteck* (the “regular German joust”), which was fought in an open tiltyard with blunted lances tipped by a coronel, a lance head with three or four short prongs that afforded a good grip on contact but would not pierce the armor. The horses were blindfolded, to forestall their shying and spoiling the jouster’s aim. To protect them in case of a collision they had huge cushions stuffed with straw tied around breast and shoulders, large enough to cover the rider’s knees and lower legs as well. The jouster did not have to wear leg armor, and thus his body armor could be of much heavier construction than field armor; a complete field armor would average fifty-five to sixty pounds; a suit for the joust could easily be eighty to eighty-five pounds, with twenty-five pounds for the helmet alone. Helmet and cuirass were firmly bolted together, and the knight’s head was strapped securely inside the helmet by means of a thickly quilted hood, in order to avoid whiplash. Lance thrusts were aimed at a shield – “target” – bound at the left shoulder, its surface covered with a tough layer of bone or staghorn to resist the impact of the coronel.

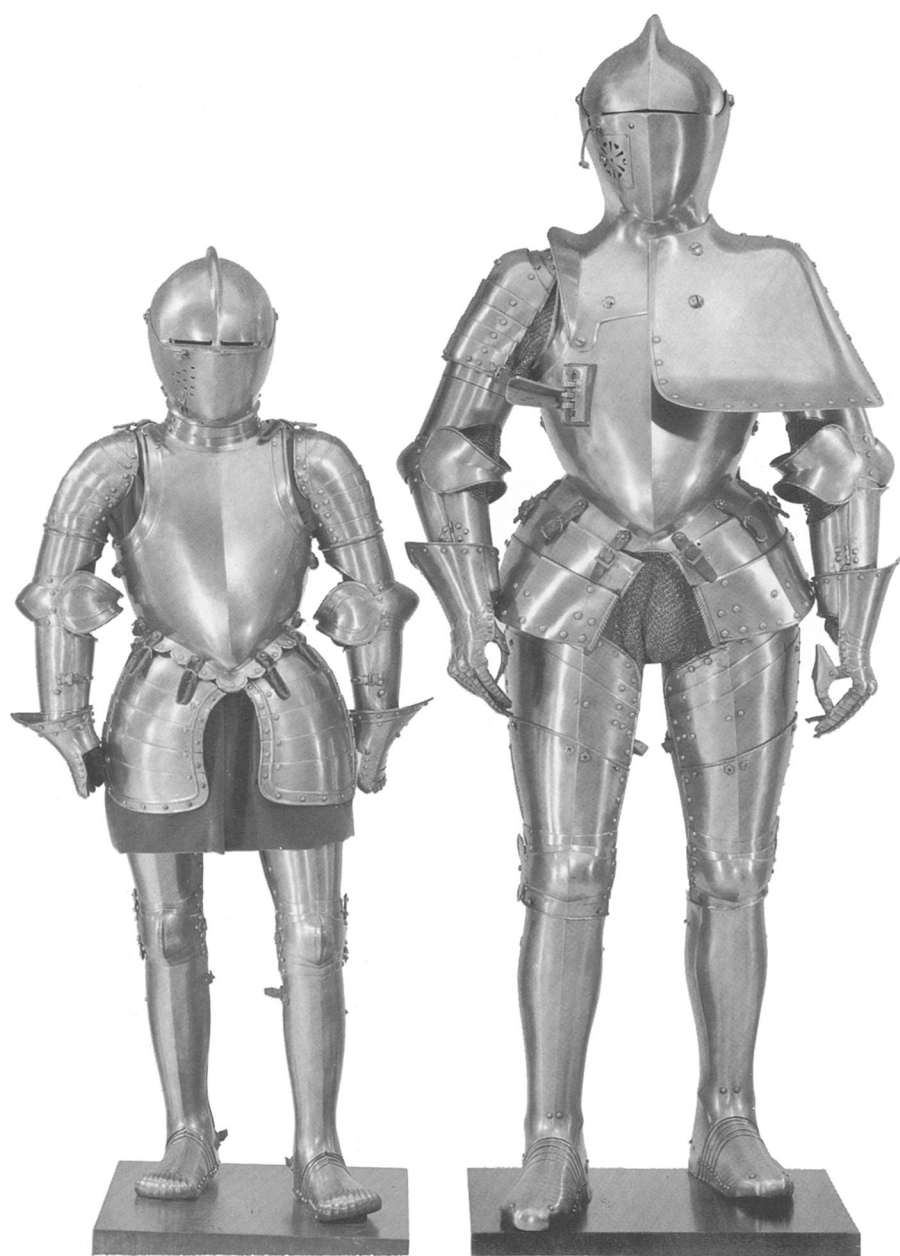
Rogers Fund, 1922



1561.

Kudrr Schmidner.





In the second half of the 16th century, foot combats were often fought as an indoor sport, such as on the occasion of princely weddings, when the groom and ushers – all in matching suits of armor – exhibited their fencing prowess in the banquet hall for the entertainment of the guests. The foot-combat half armor shown at the right is one of a group of twelve made by the last of the great armorers, Anthoni Peffenhauser of Augsburg, and ordered by the Duchess of Saxony as a Christmas present (1591) for her husband, Christian I. Its dark blue ground with gilt-etched decorations displays the ducal family's livery colors, blue and gold. When foot combats were fought outdoors in the castle courtyard, the contestants were often separated by a waist-high barrier, thus discouraging unchivalrous wrestling and blows below the belt.

A barrier – running lengthwise down the middle of the tiltyard – was the essential feature of the joust in western Europe as opposed to the German joust in the open yard. The horses were thus in no danger of colliding, and did not need to be blindfolded or to wear straw-filled bolsters; the rider, however, had to wear leg armor in case the horse came too close to the barrier. The body armor (left) was a version of field armor in the Italian fashion, reinforced by special elements, such as the *bufe* securing the visor of the helmet and the *grand guard* enveloping the left shoulder and part of the chest. As with most tournament armor, mobility was sacrificed in exchange for greater safety.

As part of a knight's training, it was desirable that he become accustomed quite early to the weight of armor and its "feel," although of course nobody expected a small child to take part in any actual fighting. If his family could afford it, a boy might have a suit of armor of his own, such as this boy's field armor, shown alongside the full-size tournament armor.

Right: Gift of Henry Walters, 27.206. Left: Man's armor attributed to Anthoni Peffenhauser. German (Augsburg), about 1575. Gift of Helen Fahnestock Hubbard, in memory of her father, Harris C. Fahnestock, 29.154.1. Boy's armor: Probably Italian, about 1570. Rogers Fund, 04.3.266

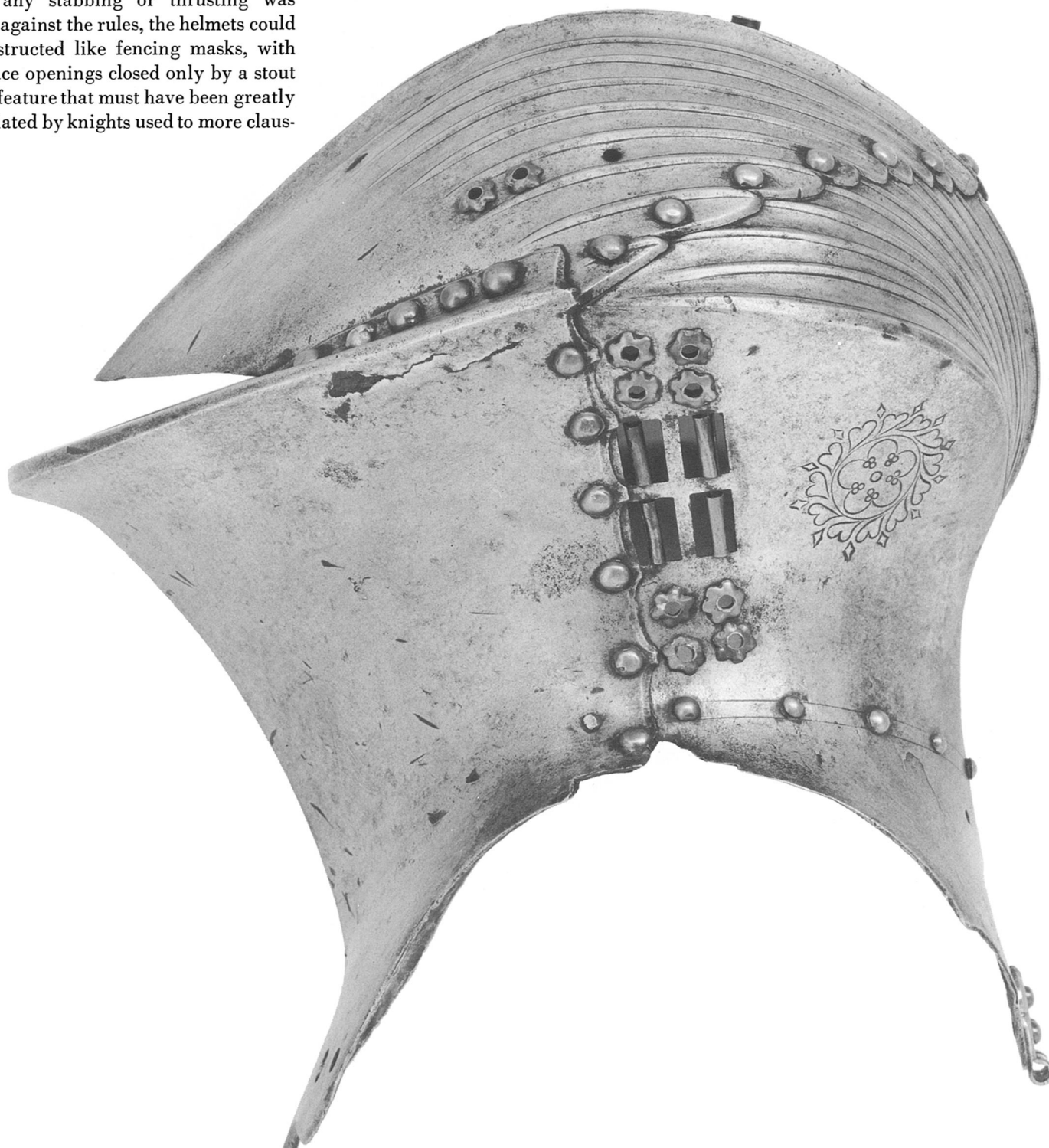


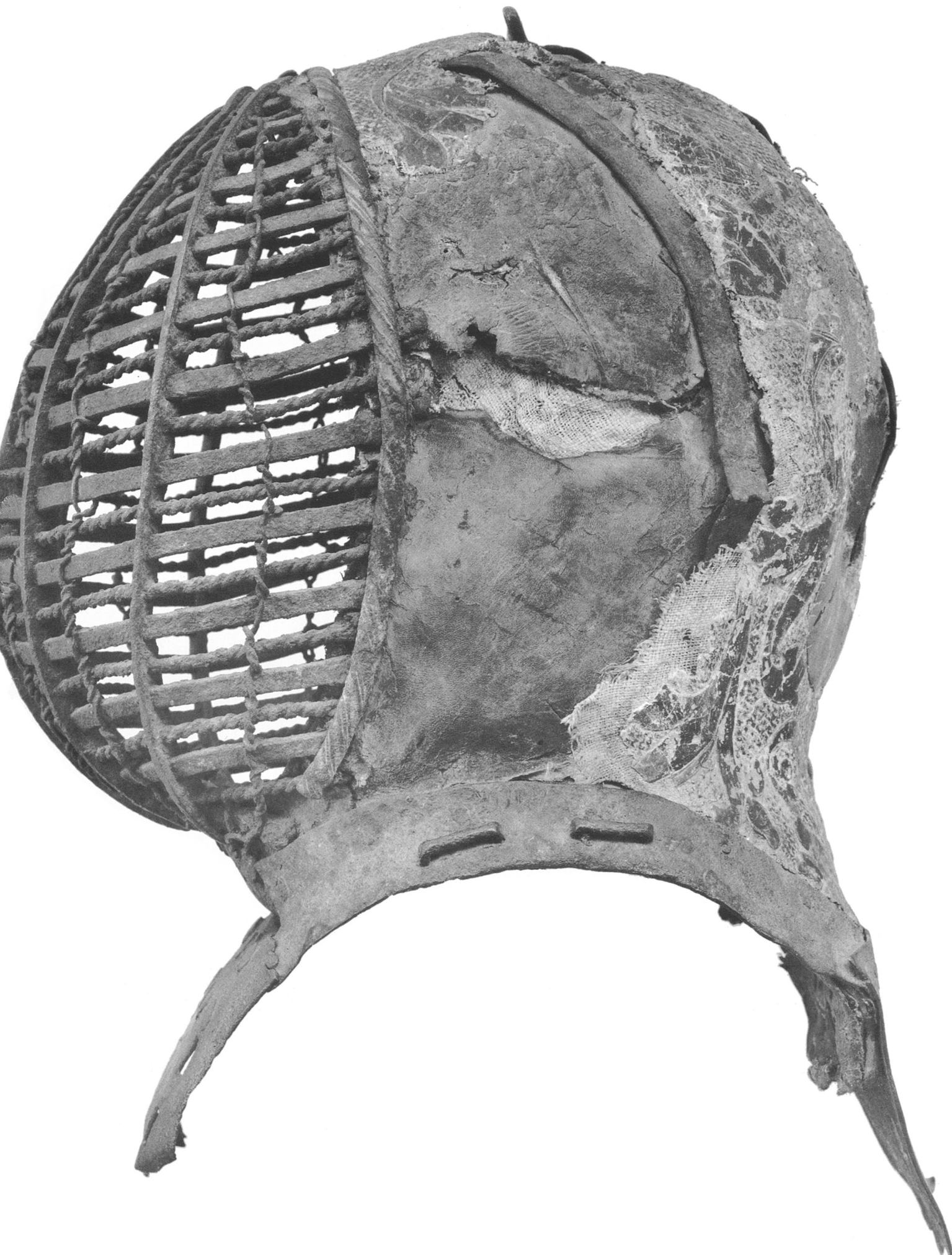
Jousting helms were developed from the earlier battle helmets with fixed visor plates, but now they were firmly bolted to the breastplate: the knight could not turn his head, but had to move his entire upper body whenever he wanted to look in a different direction. The shape was “streamlined” to give as little purchase as possible to the opponent’s corselet; especially impressive in the example below is the bold sweep of the frontplate that resembles the prow of a ship.

For the baston course, which was fought with wooden clubs or blunted swords, and where any stabbing or thrusting was strictly against the rules, the helmets could be constructed like fencing masks, with wide face openings closed only by a stout grill, a feature that must have been greatly appreciated by knights used to more claus-

trophobic helmets. Because of their relatively light construction—an iron framework covered with leather and painted canvas—less than half a dozen of these helmets have survived; the one illustrated at the right bears the arms of the Barons vom Stein painted on its back, and the marks of tournament combat along its left side.

*Jousting helm: German, about 1500. Gift of Edward S. Harkness, The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, 29.156.67. Helmet for the baston course: German, about 1480. Gift of Christian A. Zabris-
kie, 40.135.3*







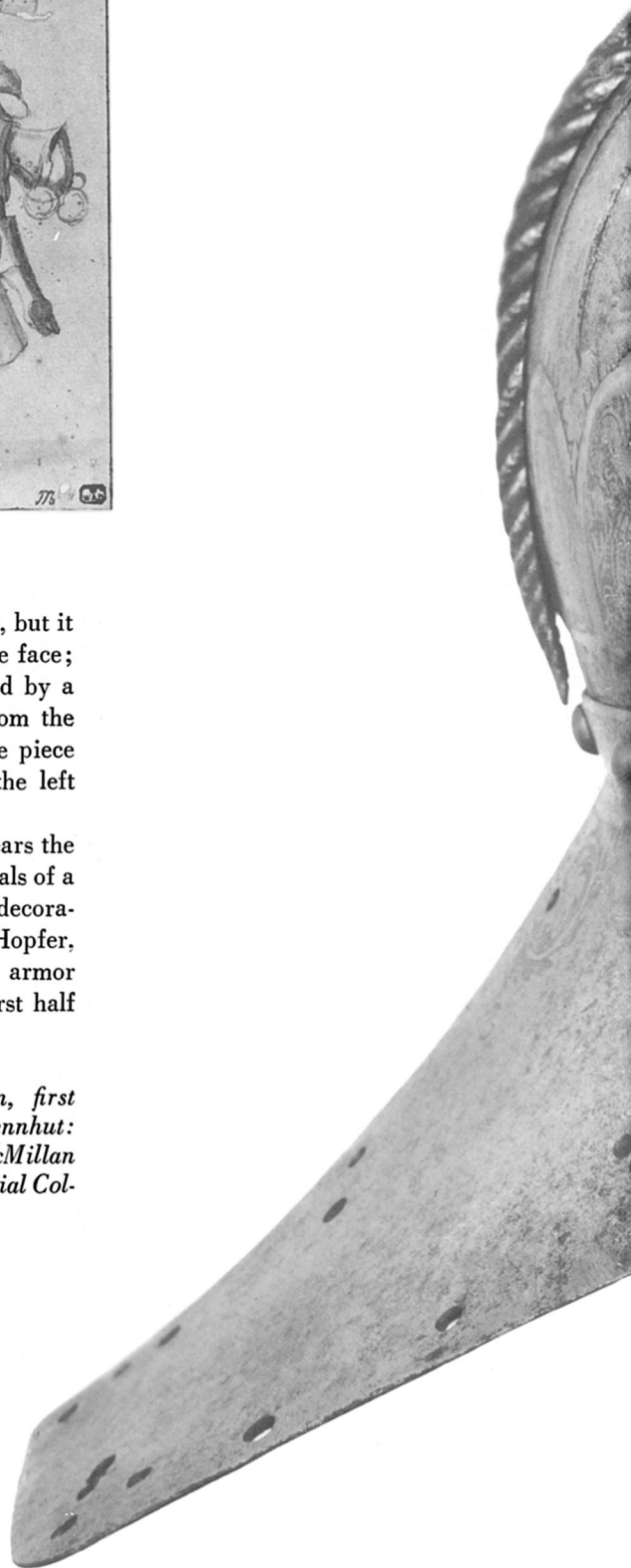
The force of jousters clashing together, with the combined mass of rider and horse at full gallop concentrated into the point of the lance, was enormous, and more often than not both riders were bodily lifted out of their saddles and hurled to the ground, particularly if their saddles were only flat pads deliberately designed for easy falling off. This type of tournament was greatly loved, especially at Shrovetide (Mardi Gras), everybody—including the tumbling contestants—thinking it hilarious to be “sat in the sand.” In order to prevent grave injuries, especially to the back, the armor was constructed like a supporting corset, with the knight firmly strapped in. Furthermore, squires and well-trained tiltyard attendants were at the ready to catch a toppling knight and break his fall, as shown in the drawing above; others jumped in to round up and calm the riderless horses.

A variant of the joust that was particularly favored in German-speaking countries was the *Rennen*, in which pointed lances were used instead of shafts fitted with coronels. Here the helmet was not the heavy affair bolted to the breastplate, but a lighter headpiece, the *Rennhut*, derived from the sallet. It was distinguished

by a long, gracefully sweeping tail, but it covered only the upper part of the face; neck and chin had to be protected by a bevor or buffe that jutted out from the breastplate, or was worked in one piece with the grand guard covering the left shoulder and chest.

The *Rennhut* illustrated here bears the monogram ML (probably the initials of a knight and his lady) and etched decoration close to the style of Daniel Hopper, who was active in the important armor center of Augsburg during the first half of the 16th century.

Drawing at upper left: German, first quarter of the 16th century. Rennhut: Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander McMillan Welch, The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, 29.153.1





The woodcut by Lucas Cranach at the right, dated 1506, vividly depicts the excitement and turmoil of the *melée* with plunging horses, splintering lances, and struggling champions. Cranach was court artist of the Elector of Saxony, whose court had a special reputation for splendid tournaments, and therefore chivalrous subjects like this are an important part of his work.







Though shields were abandoned by knights as battle equipment in the last quarter of the 14th century, when plate armor was complete enough to withstand sword blows and crossbow bolts, shields remained in favor for tournaments, partly because of their decorative value. After 1400 the traditional triangular shield went out of fashion and a new type appeared, with a nearly square outline and an asymmetrical cutout to accommodate the couched lance. This new form can be traced to early Lithuanian prototypes, and its name, “targe” or “target,” is probably derived from the Slavic word *tarcica*, meaning “board.” Following late Gothic taste it became enriched by a scalloped outline and decorative ridges, as on the example shown at the far left. The other targe is of a shape called Hungarian. Its cognizance, an owl, was a very popular device of the period and must have appealed to rugged individualists, judging by the motto on this one that, translated, says: “Though I am hated by all birds, I nevertheless rather enjoy that.”

Far left: Targe with the arms of the patrician Behaim von Schwarzbach family, which hung in their family chapel in Nuremberg. Gift of Mrs. Florence Blumenthal, 25.26.1. Center: Targe with the arms of the Tyrolean family Tänzl von Tratzberg quartered with those of the Barons of Rindscheit. Jakob von Tratzberg married Anna von Rindscheit in 1499, and the shield was probably made for the fun and games surrounding the wedding. The Bashford Dean Fund, 69.196



GENTLEMEN'S JEWELRY



Aside from its obvious practical value as protection, armor became a status symbol because of its cost, and in consequence developed into a means of personal adornment. It was truly body jewelry, and as such the most extensive—and probably the most expensive—ever designed; it literally covered the entire body of its wearer, and it could be supplemented with armor for his horse.

An excellent example of this practical jewelry is the armor illustrated here. Known as the armor of Galiot de Genouilhac (he was the Grand Master of the Artillery of France), it consists of a full field armor with exchange elements for the tournament (such as the gauntlet on the cover), an armored saddle, and horse armor, all matching. The entire surface is etched with floral and figural decoration,

including scenes from the Labors of Hercules, and is heavily gilded, producing an effect like glittering cloth of gold. The armor's style indicates that it was a product of the Royal English Armory in Greenwich, which was established in 1514 by Henry VIII, to provide him with diplomatic gifts besides armor "for his own body" so he could indulge in the tournaments he dearly loved. From the date 1527 that appears on this armor in three places, it can be deduced that it was made as a present for a French ambassador, the Vicomte de Turenne; its fine decoration was probably designed by Hans Holbein, who had just arrived in England for his first stay. After the Vicomte de Turenne's death in 1532 the precious armor was apparently passed on to his friend Genouilhac.

Rogers Fund, 19.131.1-2

One of the earliest surviving pieces of parade armor is this helmet in the shape of a lion's head. It is a real steel sallet of about 1460, overlaid with

a boldly embossed sheet of copper that was gilded, silvered (for the lion's teeth), and fitted with eyes of semiprecious stones. The helmet imitates the headcover of Hercules, the skin of the Nemean lion, a motif reflecting the new importance of ideas derived from antiquity in the Renaissance. There is a representation of such a helmet on a relief portrait, probably of the Crown Prince of Aragon, on the triumphal arch in the Castel Nuovo in Naples that resembles our helmet so closely as to suggest it served as a model for the sculptured one.

Of similarly classical origin is the steel crest with gold damascening shown below: it is in the shape of the Hydra, the seven-headed monster that Hercules slew as one of his first labors. The crest was that of the princely family Pallavicini-Sforza; the helmet it belongs to is preserved in the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. For reasons of weight, most helmet crests were just gaily colored plumes, or were constructed of flimsy materials such as painted parchment or fabric-covered basketwork, and only about a dozen of them have come down to our day. Metal crests, on the other hand, are even more scarce, because there were never many of them around.

Hydra: Gift of Mrs. George Henry Warren, 1972.144.4. Helmet: Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 23.141









The interrelations between armor and clothes were manifold: men's jackets, for instance, are still buttoned the way brigandines were buckled, and the decorative fluting on 15th-century backplates corresponded to the pleats of Late Gothic tunics. In the early 16th century, however, a special type of armor came in fashion that could rightly be called costume armor, inasmuch as it directly imitated, in steel, details of contemporary costume such as the full tonlet skirts of court dress tunics or the slashes of the gaudy outfits of the mercenary soldiers, the *Landsknechte*. Though quite a number of suits of armor of this period have

slashes as decoration, in only a few examples did the master armorers rise to the challenge and recreate the billowing puffs of the enormous sleeves of the *Landsknechte* dress by interlocking bulbous bands of steel, at the same time shaping the cuirass to imitate a close-fitting doublet and skin-tight breeches. Such is the case with the armor shown at the left, probably made for a captain of *Landsknechte* who was conscious of his "image" as a member of this military community with strong democratic tendencies.

Another costume armor in our collection—with puffs, slashes, and a tonlet skirt—is distinguished by the fanciful helmet illustrated above, with a visor em-

bossed as a fierce man's face. Grotesque helmets like this were popular in Germany, and were called *Schembart*, after the masks worn at local Shrovetide mummeries.

Right: This helmet and armor, together with several exchange pieces for the joust, came from the Arsenal of the Teutonic Knights in Königsberg. A matching breastplate in the Historische Museum, Dresden, bearing the insignia of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, makes it likely that it was made for Albrecht von Brandenburg, who was Grand Master from 1512 to 1525. Left: Gift of Bashford Dean, 24.179, and Harkness Fund, 26.188.1, 2



Tasset: German, about 1550. Bequest of Bashford Dean, The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, 29.150.1. Clifford armor: Munsey Fund, 32.130.6

The decorative motifs of armor were not only supposed to be worked with skill, but they were also supposed to have deeper significance. The most meaningful motifs a knight could find—aside from religious symbols such as portraits of saints—were his motto and his badges. He did not inherit such devices from his ancestors like his family arms: he himself chose them as a guideline for, and expression of, his expectations for his life. The tasset illustrated above was made for Emperor Charles V (1519-1556) and bears his personal device, a griffin clutching a pillar. The sun did not set on Charles's empire: including his Spanish possessions in the New World and Asia, it stretched around the world. As a young man he had selected the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar, the accepted end of the world in antiquity) as his pictorial device with the ambitious motto *Plus Ultra*—"Still Further." The griffin—a traditional symbol of rapacious greed—was a device of Charles's grandfather, Emperor Maximilian, whose motto

warned, *Halt Mass*—"Nothing in Excess." The addition of this cautionary device to his earlier, youthfully impetuous one was no doubt a result of Charles's experiences during a quarter century of rule, foreshadowing his voluntary abdication in 1556.

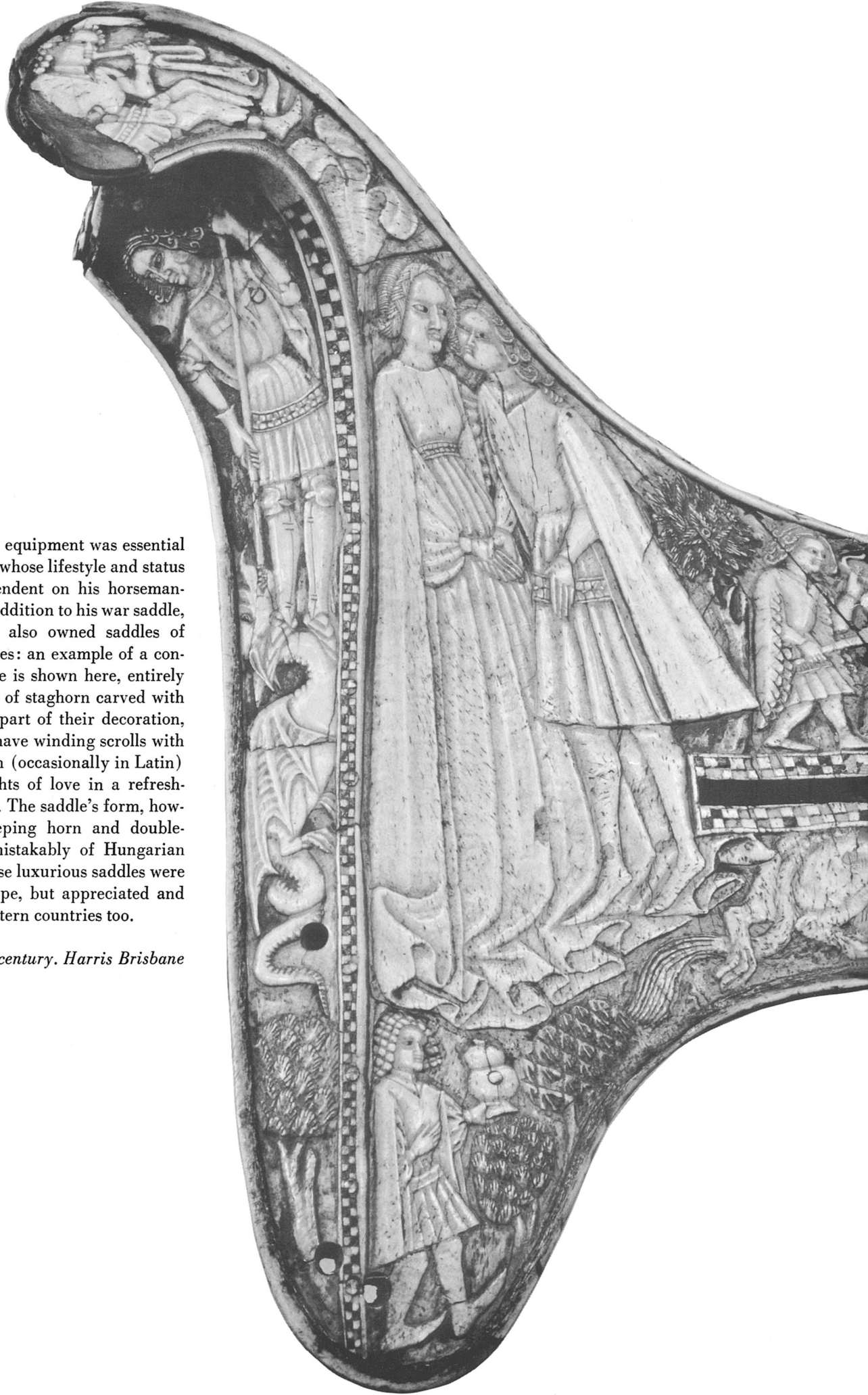
The blue and gold armor shown at the right, made for George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, is one of the finest suits of armor of the Greenwich workshop in existence, and with its exchange pieces for the tournament (including a second helmet and plates for an armored saddle), the most extensive Elizabethan armor preserved. George Clifford was appointed Champion of the Queen in 1590 and the decoration of this armor—probably a royal present for the occasion—combines Tudor roses, fleurs-de-lis, the monogram E (for Elizabeth), and annulets (a Clifford badge). Clifford, incidentally, repeatedly plied the Spanish Main, and was the only one ever to conquer the formidable Castle El Morro in San Juan, Puerto Rico.





Fine horse equipment was essential to a man whose lifestyle and status was dependent on his horsemanship. In addition to his war saddle, a knight also owned saddles of other types: an example of a conspicuously elegant type is shown here, entirely veneered with plaques of staghorn carved with chivalrous scenes. As part of their decoration, most of these saddles have winding scrolls with inscriptions in German (occasionally in Latin) referring to the delights of love in a refreshingly uninhibited way. The saddle's form, however, with its upsweeping horn and double-curved cantle, is unmistakably of Hungarian origin. Apparently these luxurious saddles were made in Central Europe, but appreciated and sought-after in the western countries too.

First half of the 15th century. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 40.66





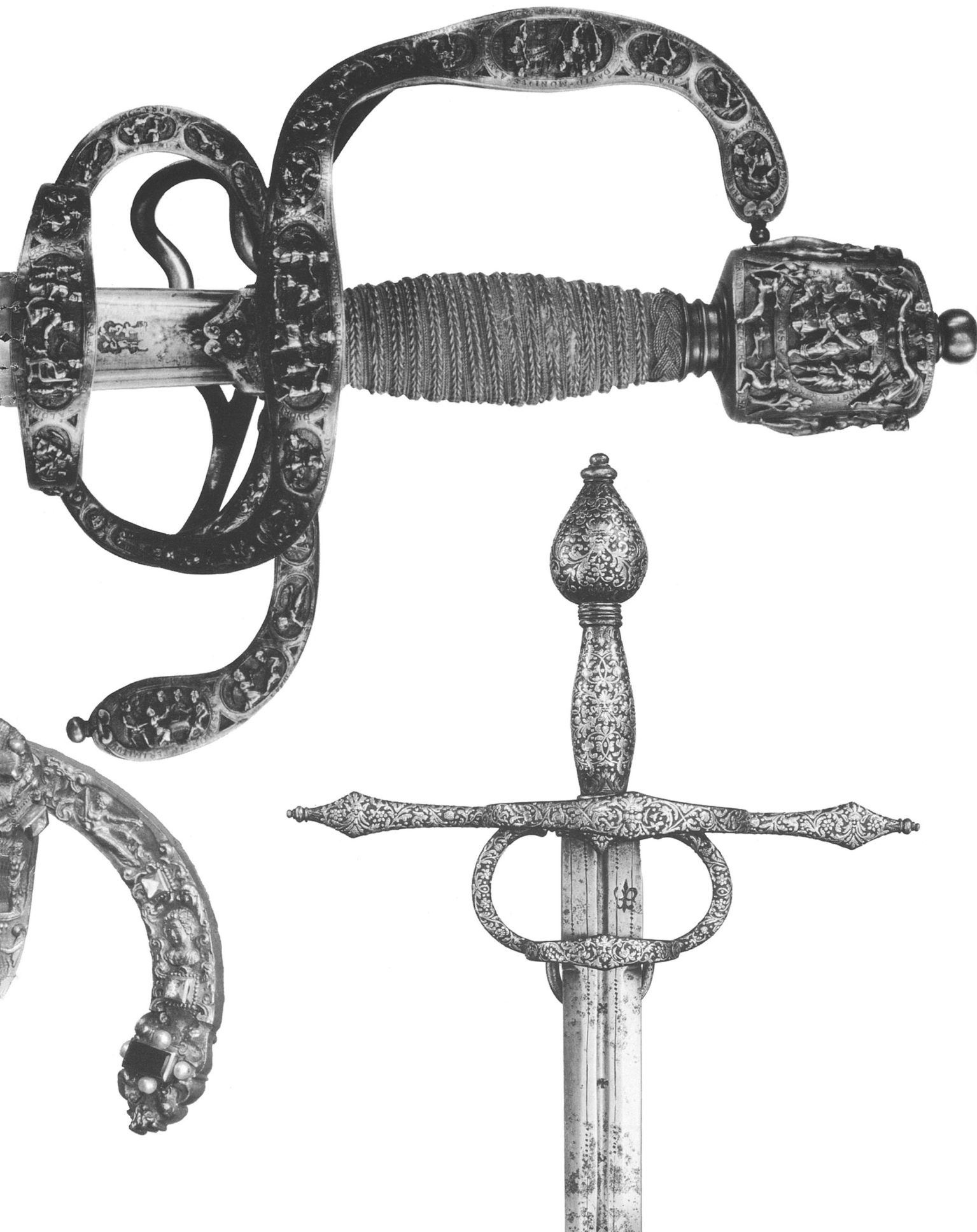
A rmor was worn for a comparatively small fraction of the knight's total lifetime, but his sword was his steady companion. Therefore it is only natural that the sword was a prominent part of "gentlemen's jewelry." From the middle of the 16th century onward, it often had a matching companion piece, a dagger to be held in the left hand for parrying an opponent's rapier thrusts, which became the new fencing style based upon Achille Marozzo's handbook *Opera Nuovo* (1536). All three parade rapiers shown

on this page are, in spite of their rich decoration, deadly weapons, as was only too necessary at a period when duels were fought at the slightest provocation.

The tradition of the sword with cross-shaped hilt as the knightly weapon was so strong that rapiers with cross-guards were occasionally used up to the end of the 16th century, though augmented with anneaus and branches to protect the fencer's fist, which no longer was encased by a steel gauntlet (one reason for this was that the newly invented pistol had been accepted as a cavalier's weapon, and a pistol cannot be used with a gauntlet). The rapier with the cruciform hilt (far right) is Italian, made of black steel richly damascened with gold. The one at upper right, with minute Biblical scenes chiseled on the steel hilt, is of typical French form of around 1600 (it bears a dedicatory inscription to the famed general Ambrogio Spinola, who is shown in the *Surrender of Breda* by Velázquez). The third sword is of gilt bronze baroquely studded with pearls and crystal; it is signed by Israel Schuech, court goldsmith to the Electors of Saxony, and dated 1606. Interestingly enough, the Italian and French swords have German blades, from Solingen, and the German sword has a Spanish blade by Juan Martinez de Toledo.

Center: Fletcher Fund, 1970.77. Above: Rogers Fund, 32.130.4. Far right: About 1560. Gift of Mrs. George Henry Warren, in memory of her husband, 1972.269.9

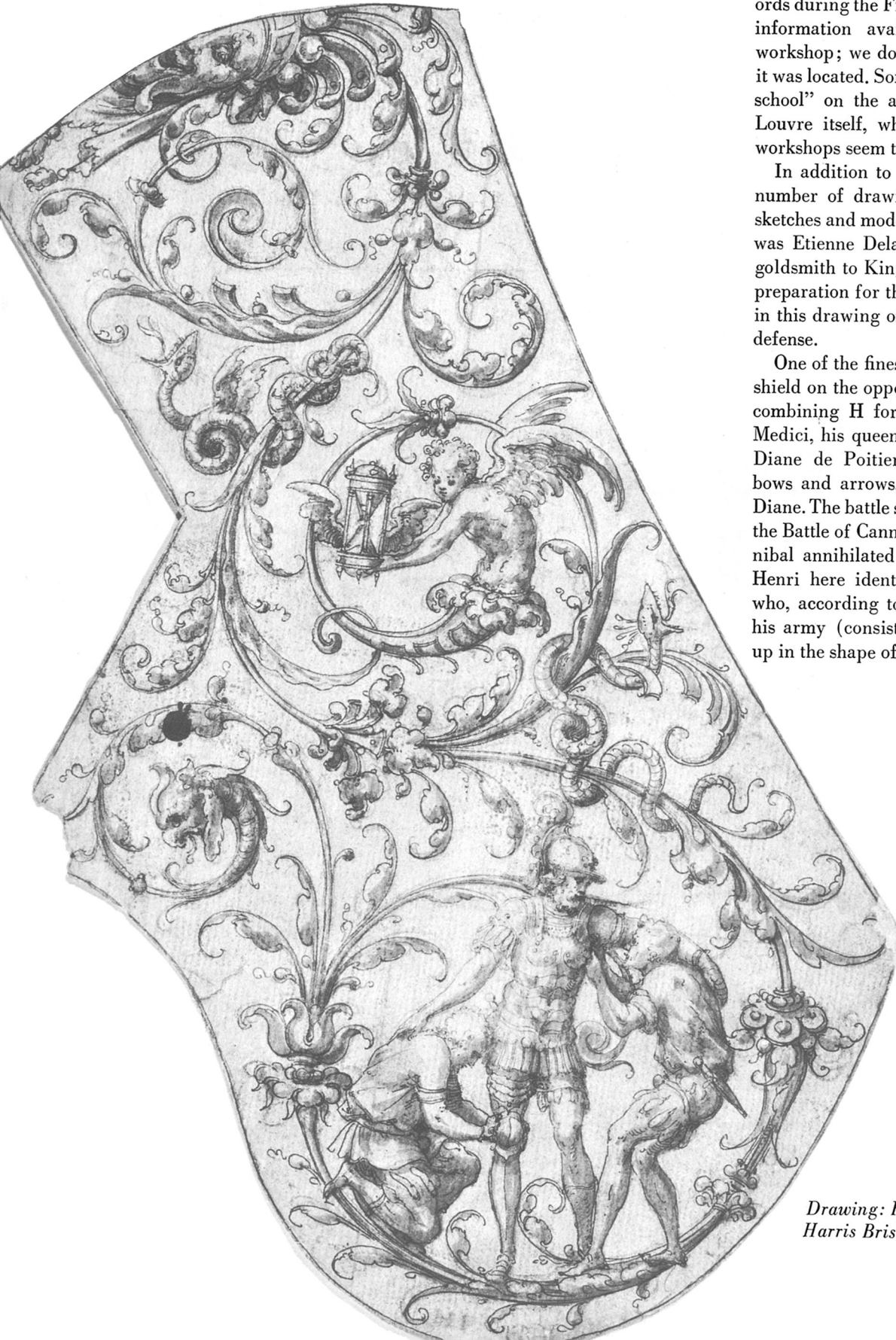




Unquestionably the most elaborately decorated parade armor ever fashioned was made for the court of the kings of France in the mid-16th century. But due to the destruction of records during the French Revolution, there is little information available about this important workshop; we do not even know exactly where it was located. Some scholars call it the "Louvre school" on the assumption that it was in the Louvre itself, where most of the other court workshops seem to have been located.

In addition to the actual armor, there are a number of drawings preserved that were the sketches and models for the armorers. The artist was Etienne Delaune (1518/19–1583), court goldsmith to King Henri II; Delaune's careful preparation for the armorers' work can be seen in this drawing of the main lame of a shoulder defense.

One of the finest examples of this work is the shield on the opposite page. It has a monogram combining H for Henri, C for Catherine de' Medici, his queen, and D for Henri's mistress, Diane de Poitiers, as well as crescents and bows and arrows, Henri's badges in honor of Diane. The battle scene represents an event from the Battle of Cannae (216 B.C.), in which Hannibal annihilated a Roman army. Apparently Henri here identifies himself with Hannibal, who, according to the historian Polybius, had his army (consisting largely of Gauls) drawn up in the shape of a crescent.



Drawing: Rogers Fund, 54.173. Shield: Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 34.85



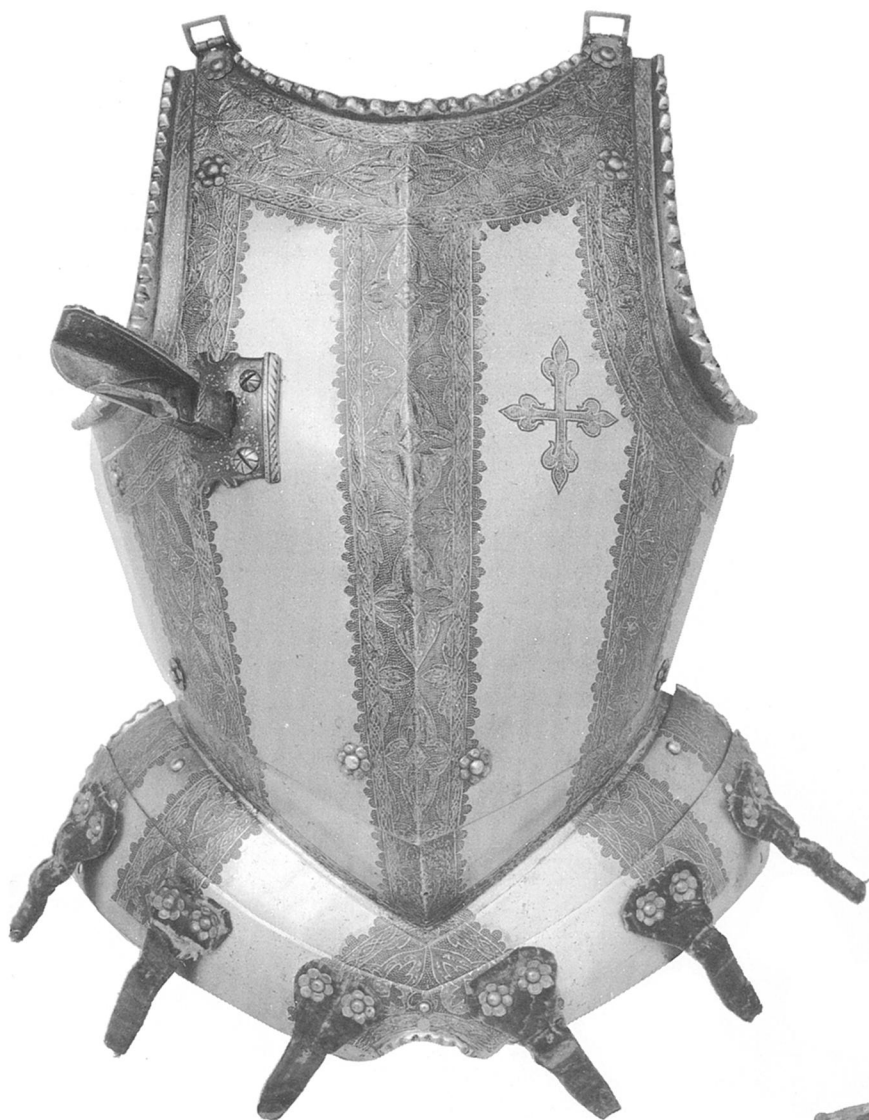
ORDERS OF CHIVALRY



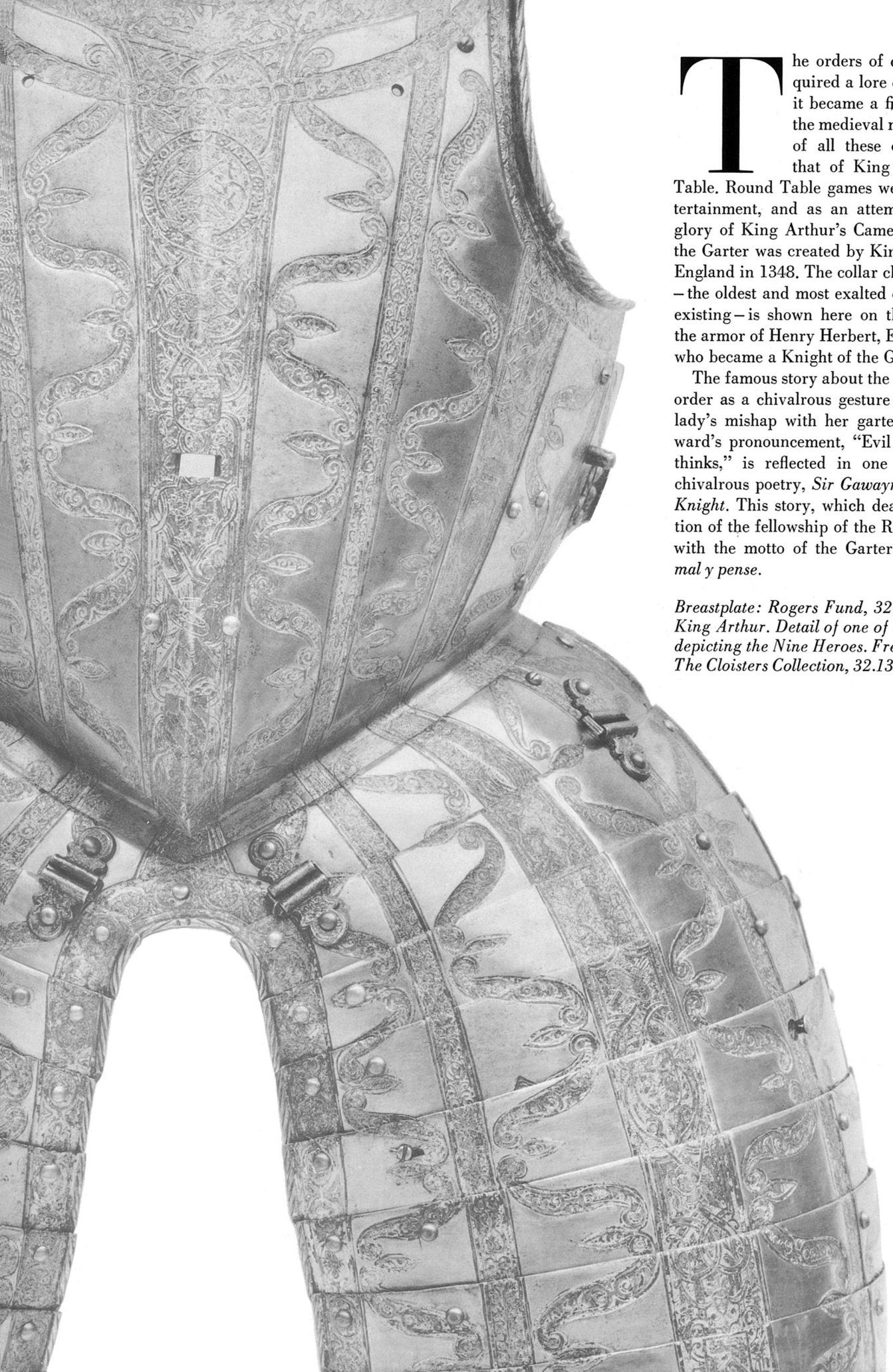
During the precarious early days of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, several groups of knights assumed the duties of guiding and protecting pilgrims, as well as providing help for the wounded and sick. They organized themselves after the model of the monastic orders, with the additional vow to fight the “infidels.” Like monks, they dressed uniformly and had crosses of various colors for their cognizances—red crosses on white surcoats for the Templars, white crosses on black surcoats for the Hospitallers, black crosses on white for the Teutonic Knights. It soon became a great honor to be admitted to these elite warrior societies; a holdover from this high esteem is that even today military decorations are, more often than not, cross-shaped.

National orders were founded in Spain and Portugal, where Christian countries bordered on Moslem territory: the Knights of Alcantara, of Calatrava, and of Santiago in Spain, and the Knights of the Order of Christ in Portugal.

Great feudal lords were eager to give their followers a similar mark of distinction, and from the 14th century onward there was a proliferation of secular orders of chivalry. These were mostly named after their badges, which were often highly original and sometimes quite bizarre, as for instance the Order of the Porcupine (France), of the Golden Fleece (Burgundy), of the White Elephant (Denmark)—even an Order of the Boot (Venice). It should be pointed out, though, that none of these secular orders used the cross as their badge, in spite of their sometimes strong religious undertones, as in the French Order of St. Michael. In the stained-glass window at the left, St. Michael himself, in a suit of Gothic armor, stands beside the donor. The collar of the order is arranged around the armorial shield he is carrying.



Window: French, second half of the 15th century. Fletcher Fund, 28.84. Upper right: Cuirass with the cross of the Order of Alcantara or Calatrava. German, mid-16th century. Rogers Fund, 04.3.278. Lower right: Cuirass with the cross of the Portuguese Order of Christ. About 1690. Rogers Fund, 15.113.1-5



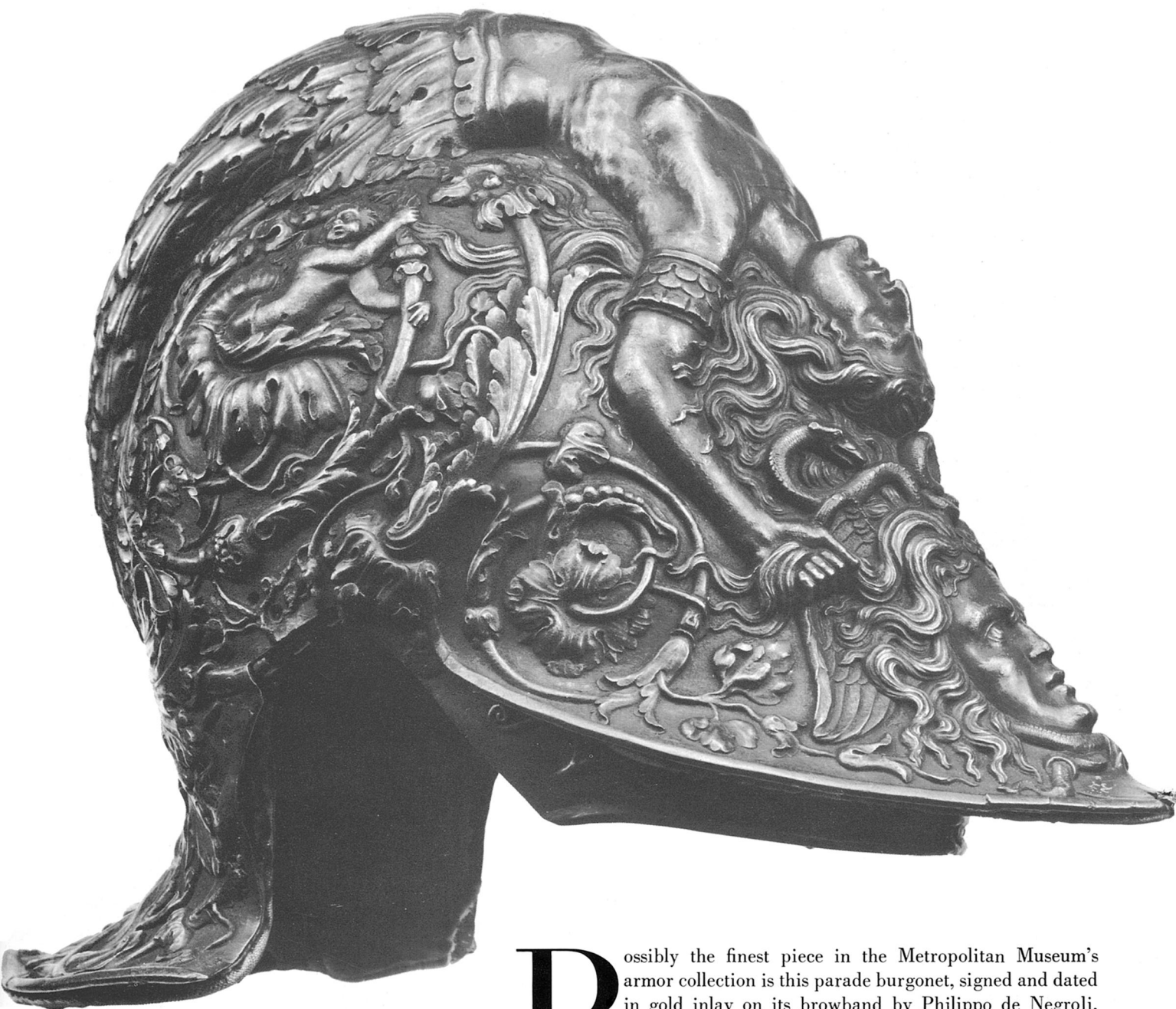
The orders of chivalry soon acquired a lore of their own, and it became a firm conviction of the medieval mind that the first of all these orders had been that of King Arthur's Round

Table. Round Table games were a popular entertainment, and as an attempt to revive the glory of King Arthur's Camelot, the Order of the Garter was created by King Edward III of England in 1348. The collar chain of this order—the oldest and most exalted of the orders still existing—is shown here on the breastplate of the armor of Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who became a Knight of the Garter in 1574.

The famous story about the foundation of the order as a chivalrous gesture after a beautiful lady's mishap with her garter, and King Edward's pronouncement, "Evil to him who evil thinks," is reflected in one of the gems of chivalrous poetry, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*. This story, which deals with the creation of the fellowship of the Round Table, ends with the motto of the Garter: *Honni soit qui mal y pense*.

Breastplate: Rogers Fund, 32.130.5. Opposite: King Arthur. Detail of one of a set of tapestries depicting the Nine Heroes. French, about 1385. The Cloisters Collection, 32.130.3, 47.101.4





Possibly the finest piece in the Metropolitan Museum's armor collection is this parade burgonet, signed and dated in gold inlay on its browband by Filippo de Negroli, 1543. The Negroli were a famous clan of master armorers in Milan, and Filippo was one of their greatest. The helmet bowl is hammered from a single piece of steel, from the pointed umbril bearing the terrifying face of Medusa, over the breathtakingly beautiful sweep of the mermaid crest, down to the neck guard. With its richly textured surface treatment, however, it looks as if it had been cast of dark bronze, so pleasing to the classical taste of the Renaissance. It is thought to have been made for François I, king of France (1515-1547).

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.1720