



SHAFFRON

in the style of Anton Pfeffenhauser (1525 – 1603).

Attributed to Lorenz Kilian (atelier Ernst Schmidt), Munich, Germany.

Length: ca. 59 cm (chanfron without neck plate).

Width: ca. 28 cm.

Ear, eye and cheek pieces riveted to the main plate, in the center a decorative spike, the neck plate attached by a piece of leather; the surface etched with scrollwork and bands against a stippled blackened ground.

Provenance

Galerie Fischer, Luzern, auction on May, 30th, 1979.

The present chamfron impresses immediately by its elaborate appearance. It was forged by a highly skilled armourer and decorated with very well executed etchings, resembling closely the style of Anton Pfeffenhauser of Augsburg (1525 – 1603).

As a leading craftsman in his field, Pfeffenhauser manufactured armour for representative and tournament use. Among his clients were members of the high European aristocracy, like King Phillip II. of Spain, emperor Karl V. or Christian I. of Dresden. One of his magnificent

examples that can be studied in the *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden* is the garniture made for Christian I. back in 1586.¹

Only a couple of skilled armourers were able to manufacture a shaffron as the present one in such a high quality back in the 19th century. Stylistic comparisons let us attribute this work to the armourer Lorenz Kilian, who worked for Ernst Schmidt.

Ernst Schmidt

One of the few workshops for neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance arms and armour that can be identified today is the one of Ernst Schmidt, who was active in Munich from the late 1870's to about 1930. Schmidt dealt also with original pieces and soon recognized that the high demand could not be satisfied due to the scarcity of supply. So he founded this workshop for replicas and employed Lorenz Kilian, one of the few individuals who still knew the armourer's craft, which had not completely died out. Any collection of original arms and armour requires a lot of attention in the course of time, compared to other antiques. For example, the leathering of an armour that holds together the numerous plates deteriorates and has to be restored occasionally. Without the necessary discipline, components get lost over time and have to be replaced later. That is the reason why there is almost no preserved homogeneous suit of armour without any replacements today. Consequently, a couple of individuals like Lorenz Kilian had worked as restorers for the mayor collections and passed down their abilities to the succeeding generations.

¹ Schuckelt, H. (2019): Harnische, Helme & Schilde in der Dauerausstellung der Dresdner Rüstkammer, pp. 144 – 147, Inv. No. II.19, II.23 and II.25 – 27.

Lorenz Kilian and his co-workers manufactured armour in various levels of quality. While the assistants produced the simpler objects in large amounts and for reasonable prices, Kilian himself took care for the fine pieces, like our present one. These high quality products were ordered by wealthy individuals like William Randolph Hearst or John Woodman Higgins from the United States and even by members of the German aristocracy, among them His Royal Highness Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, the Grand Duke Friedrich of Baden and Duke Friedrich of Anhalt. Prices ranged from 100 \$ for a simple armour to 3000 \$ for the finest.

While the works of Lorenz Kilian were offered by Ernst Schmidt as what they are, in the course of time especially the high quality ones have occasionally been sold as original pieces – sometimes with criminal intent, on other occasions by misjudgement. The fact that this even happens in our days can be seen as a compliment for the highly skilled craftsmanship of Kilian.

Literature

Mowbray, E. A. (1967): Arms and Armor from the Atelier of Ernst Schmidt Munich.



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