



GERMAN HILTED SABER

Scandinavia or North Germany,
late 16th Century.

Overall Length: 100 cm.

Blade Length: 85 cm.

Weight: 1,39 kg.

Unknown maker's mark.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



Richard-Wagner-Str. 17 · 28209 Bremen · Germany
T+49 (0)421 4093 6994 · info@lennartviebahn.com
www.lennartviebahn.com