













## LINSTOCK

Second half 17<sup>th</sup> century, Saxon Electoral Court and Armory.

Length of head: 37,5 cm (14.76 in.).

Width of head: 18,6 cm (7.32 in.).

Overall length: 203 cm (79,92 in.)

*Blade of flattened diamond section, etched scrollwork at its base, below the electoral coat of arms. At the sides two arms that firmly attach a slow match in their jaws, richly decorated as sea monsters by etching. Octagonal socket with three annular beads, the lowermost with two rings, where the match feeded through. Two straps attached with brass capped rivets. Round wooden haft with iron shoe.*

*Due to its rich etchings and the small number of comparative pieces it seems reasonable assuming that the present linstock was used by officers.*

### **Condition**

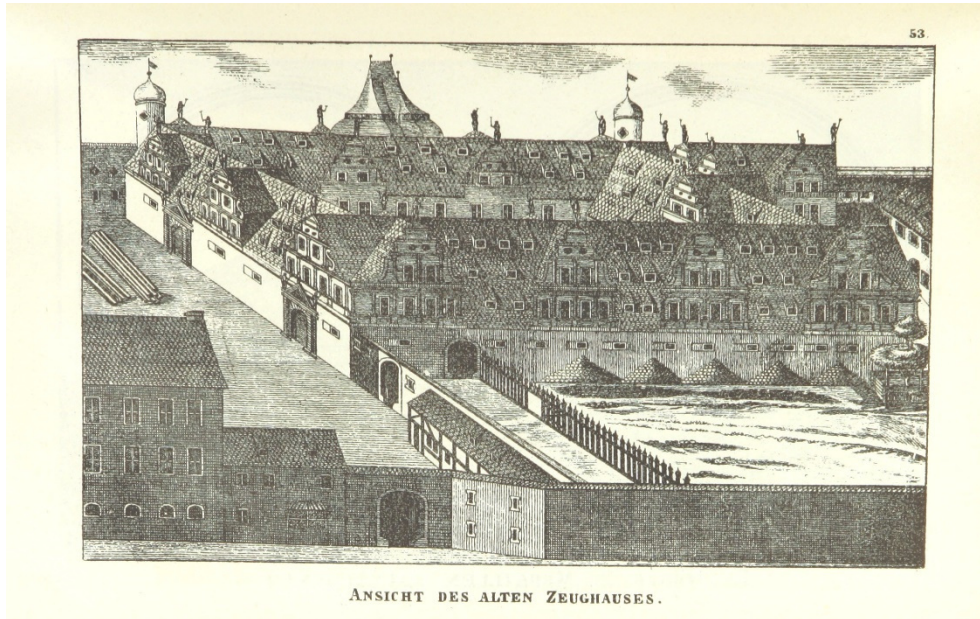
Insignificant traces of corrosion on the surface and etching. Original wooden haft in full length with iron shoe.

### **Comparative Pieces and Provenance**

The present linstock is extremely rare. There is no comparative piece at the *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden*. When the German Democratic Republic still existed the previous owner contacted the eastern German authorities in order to figure out more regarding this group of pole arms. They

mentioned two examples at the *Armeemuseum der DDR* (Army Museum of the GDR), which was founded as the Royal Saxon Army Museum in 1873 and is now the *Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr* (Museum for Military History of the German Army) in Dresden. Today both pieces are unknown at the museum and there do not exist any records about them. It seems reasonable assuming that the GDR administration sold these to the western art market in order to raise funds, which was common practise also at the SKD or other museums.

Originally this group of linstocks was presumably stored at the armory in Dresden, which was converted to the *Albertinum* in 1884, becoming a museum for sculpture, casts of antiques and later painting as well. The newly founded Royal Saxon Army Museum received its inventory, encompassing the cannonry of the Saxon Army among other things. Albeit the *Büchsenmeister* who carried these linstocks also formed an integral part of the Electoral courtly life, their belongings were obviously stored at the armory since their primary function was a military one. Besides their duties in defense and fire watch these persons also fired saluting guns at festivities. *Büchsenmeister* were recruited among the citizenry of Dresden, many of them also working as craftsmen at the court.



*Fig. 1.*

Besides the two pieces mentioned above our present example seems the only one that has survived the centuries.

### **Background**

Linstocks allowed firing a cannon from a distance by holding a lighted slow match on the touch hole at the breech. This prevented the gunner from being injured by flash backs of the charge or the recoil that could move the carriage towards him. Their period of use lasted between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when flintlock firing devices replaced them. In order to defend the cannon in the case of an attack the linstock was designed as a pole arm, equipped with a blade on top and two arms serving for parrying the opponent's attacks.



## References

Müller, H., Kölling, H.: Europäische Hieb- und Stichwaffen, Berlin 1990, p. 306, No. 374-376, fig. p. 307, p. 404 (other linstocks).

Seitz, Heribert. *Blankwaffen: Geschichte Und Typenentwicklung Im Europäischen Kulturbereich: Ein Waffenhistorisches Handbuch*. Vol. II. Brunswick: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1967. p. 249, fig. 251 (other linstocks).

## Figures

1. Ansicht des Alten Zeughauses (view of the old armory), copper engraving originally published in the cronicle by Anton Weck, 1679, in: Krause, B. (1893): *Residenzstadt Dresden ... Mit ... Illustrationen*, etc., p. 111.



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