

Continued from page 24



Philanthropy is Alive and Well in Philadelphia!

Philadelphia Museum of Art Acquires Spectacular Early Renaissance Horse and Man Armor

Kretzschmar von Kienbusch Galleries of Arms and Armor
For information visit www.philamuseum.org

This past October, Peter Finer Arms and Armour offered one of the last complete early Renaissance European horse armors and an accompanying man armor at the Haughton International Fine Art and Antiques Dealers Fair in Manhattan. During the show the Philadelphia Museum of Art acquired these spectacular armors through the generous donation of Athena and Nicholas Karabots and the Karabots Foundation. Notes Peter Finer, "We are thrilled that thanks to the generosity of Nick and Athena Karabots, the museum has made the most important acquisi-

tion in recent history of the finest and rarest armor we have had the privilege of handing in our over forty-five years of dealing."

The horse armor was created in 1507 by Wilhelm von Worms the Elder (master in 1499, died 1538), the most famous Nuremberg armorer of his day. One of only a handful in existence from such an early date, it is one of the last complete examples to have remained in private hands. The man armor, created around 1505, is one of under a dozen surviving complete, or near complete, field armors of that

period.

Composed of steel plates enriched with etched and gilded figures of a dragon and noblewomen, the horse armor was made for Ulrich of Württemberg (1487–1550), a German duke famous for his military achievements and controversial public and personal affairs. Ulrich conceivably used the horse armor to march into France at the head of an imperial army in 1513; he would later align himself with Martin Luther to expand the reach of the Protestant Reformation. Its maker, Wilhelm von Worms the Elder, was a

LEFT: Horse armor of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, for the field, German (Nuremberg), 1507. Wilhelm von Worms the Elder, active Nuremberg, master in 1499, died 1538; and anonymous Nuremberg graphic artist. Embossed, etched, and partially blued and gilded steel; brass; leather; birch bark; steel; with saddle 89 lb. 11 oz.

Man armor for the field, German (Landshut), ca. 1505. Matthes Deutsch, active Landshut, first recorded 1485, last documented ca. 1505. Etched, and partially blued and gilded steel; leather; textiles; 58 lb. 14 oz. Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art (2009-117-1,2). Gift of Athena and Nicholas Karabots and The Karabots Foundation, 2009.

RIGHT: Philanthropists Athena and Nicholas Karabots donated the funds to acquire the early Renaissance horse and man armors, newly installed in the Kretzschmar von Kienbusch Galleries of Arms and Armor at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2009. The armors were purchased from Peter Finer Fine Antique Arms and Armour, St. James's, London.

highlights

Continued from page 28



ABOVE: Detail from the peytral (chest defense) of the horse armor of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg. The image is of a richly-dressed noblewoman holding banners with the Duke of Ulrich's motto. "The decoration," notes Pierre Terjanian, the J. J. Medveckis Associate Curator for Arms and Armor, "demonstrates the gradual and complex shift from the late Gothic to the early Renaissance styles in the Germanic speaking lands." Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art (2009-117-1,2). Gift of Athena and Nicholas Karabots and The Karabots Foundation, 2009.



highly regarded armorer working in Nuremberg, a leading center of armor manufacture in the sixteenth century. His other key works are preserved in Vienna and Nuremberg.

The man armor was created by master armorer Matthes Deutsch (recorded from 1485, last documented ca. 1505). It is Deutsch's latest known work and his most richly decorated. Active in Landshut, where Bavaria's dukes commissioned much of their personal armor, his other key surviving works are preserved in

Vienna, Dresden, Paris, and in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

On its acquisition, Timothy Rub, the museum's CEO and George D. Widener Director, said, "The museum has always wanted to have an extraordinary horse armor to augment our holdings of European arms and armor, but finding one has been an especially elusive quest, given the exceptional rarity of this type of object." Rub adds, "We are deeply indebted to our donors, Athena and Nicholas Karabots and

the Karabots Foundation, who made this acquisition possible." Says Nicholas Karabots, "The Karabots Foundation was moved by the interest shown in the Arms and Armor Collection by children and young adults and it is the Foundation's hope that the addition of the horse and man armor to the existing collection will result in the development of programs at the museum that will further interest and encourage these young people to pursue higher levels of self-improvement via advanced education." 