



"Katzbalger" (infantry sword)

Date

late 1400s–early 1500s

Primary Maker

German

Medium

steel, brass and briar wood

Description

Infantry sword of the so-called Katzbalger type. Double-edged steel blade of very flat lenticular section, tapering slightly to bluntly pointed spatulate tip (this is doubtless a modern alteration).

Ricasso of flattened rectangular section with 3 shallow, wide

fullers on each face, becoming pointed & continuing as pair of fullers extending 1/3 of length of rest of blade. These are about 8" in overall length, and pointed at their ends. Pressing toward the tip, the blade becomes flat and lenticular, tapering gently and slightly to the point. In addition to the reshaped tip, there have been losses to the edges, whose line is now slightly irregular, and some reshaping of the fullers, which are also irregular in places. S-shaped octagonal section crossguard recurving in plane of blade, with domed, brass capped terminals. Quillon block, terminals of guard, brass caps have deeply incised line decoration. 1-piece briar wood grip of hexagonal section, widening towards pommel. The side faces are accented by cut axial lines at the angles. The grip is insulated at the ends by thin sheets of brass plate. There are no signs of a covering having ever been in place. There are cracks in the wood, with some losses at the distal end. Steel pommel, hexagonal at base & expanding into flattened mushroom-shape at end which is deeply cut into 3 sections. Where the blade tang passes through the pommel body there is a shallow rectangular cavity that might well have once held a finial both decorative and functional, perhaps matching the brass caps on the crossbar. Misshaping and damage around this point makes it clear that the sword has been disassembled.

Dimensions

86.4 × 4.6 × 71.1 cm (34 × 1 13/16 × 28 in.), 2 lb, 2 oz (weight)