



Halberd for the Guard of Prince Karl I of Liechtenstein (1569-1627)

Date

1620–1622

Primary Maker

Southern German

Medium

etched and blackened steel, wood and textile

Description

Shortened. Broad double-edge thrusting blade of lozenge section tapering to blunted point. Tall axehead with concave cutting edge, cusped above & below & opposed by downcurved fluke similarly cusped. Socket formed by pair of wide long langets secured to section of original walnut (?) staff with restored gold & red tassel at base of head. Obverse of head with princely arms (Prince Liechtenstein (Kernring, Liechtenstein [-Nikolsburg], Trappau and Silesia) beneath the Furstenhut, insignia of a Prince of the Habsburg empire on axe blade (see digital file). Ground of axe & fluke filled with foliation on finely stippled blackened ground. Extending along medial line on both faces are ascendant leaf-like motifs. Reverse of head with Karl's crowned monogram of 2 addorsed & conjoined "C"s with pair of crossed palm fronds, background same as obverse. Near the top of the haft the wood is wrapped in red velvet, at the base of which is a pendant red fringe. Wrapped above, and overlapping the wrap underneath, is a woven trellis-work pattern of red and gold thread, at the base of which is another pendant red fringe. The head is fairly large, with a long, double-edged apical blade of flattened diamond section ending in a spatulate point. The base of the blade at the socket is concave at its sides. The asymmetrical axe blade has a concave cutting edge, is cusped at the inner edges above and below, and is opposed by a downturned, pointed fluke similarly cusped. The base of the socket extends down the obverse and reverse faces in a pair of thick tapering langets, through which the head is nailed to the haft. On both faces the halberd socket and apical blade (at its mid-height) are etched with an ascendant stalk design on a plain blackened ground. This is continued onto the langets as an

ascending stalk with lobated projecting swellings. Both faces of the axe blade and fluke are etched with foliate scrollwork on a blackened, stippled ground. The obverse of the axeblade is centrally etched with the quartered arms of the Princes Liechtenstein (Kuenring, Liechtenstein[-Nikolsburg], Trappau and Silesia) beneath the Fuerstenhut, insignia of a Prince of the Habsburg empire. The reverse face is etched with Karl's monogram, which consists of two crossed palm fronds superimposed with two addorsed, intertwined Cs (for Carolus), the whole surmounted by a coronet. The oaken (?) haft is stained dark brown, and is of flattened, octagonal section, the angled faces slightly rounded. Near the base of the langets the faces aligned with the axe and fluke are strenghted with metal straps nailed to the haft. Near the top of the haft the wood is wrapped in red velvet, at the base of which is a pendant red fringe. Wrapped above, and overlapping the wrap underneath, is a woven trellis-work pattern of red and gold thread, at the base of which is another pendant red fringe.

Dimensions

179.8 × 30.2 × 108.5 cm (70 13/16 × 11 7/8 × 42 11/16 in.), 5 lb, 5 oz (weight)