

Arms and Armour at the Burrell Collection

Tobias Capwell: Curator of Arms and Armour (Glasgow Museums) - October 3rd, 2003

Though small, the collection of arms and armour assembled by Sir William Burrell is full of unique and significant pieces. Though he does not seem to have been particularly interested in arms and armour, the pieces Burrell did acquire are generally of a high quality, and reflect his overall discrimination and taste as a collector.

Key Strengths of the Collection:

Medieval longswords, 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries.



This type of large and light fighting sword, also called 'war-sword', 'bastard' sword, and 'hand-and-a-half sword', was one of the most favoured weapons of the medieval knight or man-at-arms in particular. Interestingly, few early examples survive; the Burrell examples are rare and very important.

Medieval and early 16th-century anti-armour weapons (maces, axes, war hammers, poll axes).



Burrell bought quite a few pristine examples of these rather fierce-looking weapons, and though these are not as uncommon as the longswords, our examples are especially fine and representative of their various types.

Key Pieces of Individual Importance:

The 'Coventry' sword, c1461-83.



This is one of the mayorial swords of the medieval city of Coventry. It was probably the personal weapon of Edward IV, who gifted it to the city as a symbol of royal authority.

Amnet from Chester cathedral, c1480.



A rare example of English armour, used as a funerary achievement. .

German sallet (Augsburg), c1480.

An excellent example of the ubiquitous sallet, the most common type of helmet in the second half of the fifteenth century. Stamped with the city mark of Augsburg (an aeom) and a maker's mark.