

# Hunting near Hartenfels Castle

In 1505, Lucas Cranach the Elder became the court painter to the electors of Saxony. The Saxon rulers were wealthy and powerful and were included among the seven princes who were empowered to elect the Holy Roman Emperor.

Legend has it that Cranach caught the attention of the Saxon princes with the realism with which he painted the hunting trophies they displayed in their country palaces. They soon encouraged him to attend the magnificent staged hunts that were a favorite pastime of the nobility, and Cranach is said to have sketched right on the hunting field. In *Hunting near Hartenfels Castle*, Cranach captured the essence of the hunt's tumultuous excitement.

The painting itself was probably commissioned to celebrate the construction of Hartenfels Castle, seen in the background. The castle itself was not yet complete in 1540 when this painting was finished, and Cranach likely worked from an architect's drawings.

The stag hunt occupies the central portion of the painting. Before the hunt began, horsemen and dogs gathered the animals into pens bound by a bend in the Elbe River. The participants chose favorable positions to shoot at the stags as they were released and crossed the river, pursued by the hounds. It is this moment that Cranach captured in the composition. The wife of Johann Freidrich, the Electress Sibylle (pictured in yellow on the back), is poised to take the ceremonial first shot. **(CONTINUED ON BACK)**

## European Arms & Armor 1400-1700



detail: Lucas Cranach the Elder (German, 1472–1553). *Hunting near Hartenfels Castle*, 1540. Oil on panel; 52 3/8 x 73 1/16 in. John L. Severance Fund 1958.425



# European Arms & Armor 1400-1700



*Parforce hunting depicted in the painting **Hunting near Hartenfels Castle** and related weaponry in the Cleveland Museum of Art*

*(CONTINUED FROM FRONT)* Cranach's patron, the Elector of Saxony Johann Friedrich the Magnanimous, is depicted in green. The crossbow he uses is similar to a crossbow in this gallery that bears the arms of the Elector Augustus I, Johann Friedrich's eventual successor.

Cranach felt strong ties to Johann Friedrich. When the prince was captured in the battle of Muhlberg in 1547, Cranach appealed directly to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, begging for leniency toward his patron.

Not only was the hunt staged, but the three types of hunts shown—stag, boar, and bear—would never have taken place at the same time. Cranach depicted the hunt the way the elector wanted it.

Cranach signed *Hunting near Hartenfels Castle* with a winged serpent motif and the date 1540. The other number in the right-hand corner is the painting's original house of Saxony inventory number.



# A Brief History of Armor in Europe

Ancient Greek pottery and Roman sculpture document warriors and officials wearing helmets and breastplates. Most ancient armor was made of iron. In the AD 400s and 500s, medieval armorers began using the annealing process to produce lighter-weight steel. During the Middle Ages, 11th-century knights protected themselves much the same way as 5th- and 6th-century knights had, wearing *hauberks* (mail tunics) and *barbutes* (helmets) and carrying shields. The longbow and crossbow made plate armor a necessity, and by 1350 a knight covered his entire body in a suit consisting of hundreds of individually made plates.

## Mail Armor of Medieval Times

Northern European Celts probably developed mail around the end of the 400s BC. Made of steel, yet flexible and comfortable, mail could rust when exposed to rain and become extremely hot in the sun. Typically worn over an *aketon*—a quilted undergarment—mail for the head, torso, hands, and legs was constructed separately, each piece requiring the “weaving” of thousands of metal rings and the riveting of four neighboring rings. Thus, a hauberk could consist of 250,000 rings.

## European Arms & Armor 1400-1700



top right: Attributed to Antimenes Painter (Greek). *Hydria*, about 520 BC. Black-figure terracotta; 17 in. (overall). Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1975.1



bottom right: *Helmet (Barbute)* from the Venetian Garrison at Chalcis, about 1350–1420. North Italy. Iron; 11 3/8 x 8 1/4 x 9 13/16 in. Gift of John L. Severance 1923.1065



above: *Mail Shirt (Hauberk)*, 1400s. Europe. Riveted steel; 50 1/2 x 36 in. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Severance 1916.1817



# European Arms & Armor 1400-1700

## Plate Armor of the Renaissance

During the 1200s and 1300s, metal plates gradually covered a knight's entire body. Individual suits of Renaissance armor consisted of hundreds of steel plates joined together with straps, buckles, hooks, and rivets.

Each suit fit its owner perfectly, offering him protection and flexibility. The angled and curved surfaces of breastplates, greaves, vambraces, and gauntlets deflected weapons, making shields superfluous.

Medieval armor-making centers emerged primarily in central Europe. Cities such as Nuremberg, Innsbruck, and Milan developed along trade routes, waterways, or near iron ore sources. Armor guilds formed; apprentices were rigorously trained, and the quality of their products was tightly controlled.

A master armorer forged steel into precisely fitted, free-moving parts. He hand-hammered finely tempered billets of steel over metal formers (or dies) that corresponded to each element of the suit. Each piece was hammered to a particular thickness, depending on the vulnerability of the body part it was to protect.

As style became important, armorers etched intricate images and ornamentation onto suits. These etchings originally illustrated a family's or kingdom's coat of arms; later, finer images displayed the owner's prowess and taste.

Over the course of the 1500s, armor was made stronger to protect against firearms. Dents in a breastplate from pistol fire resulted in so-called armor of proof.



above: Pompeo della Cesa (Italian, Milan, active 1572–1593). *Half-armor for the Foot Tournament*, about 1590. Etched and gilded steel; brass; leather and velvet; 12 7/8 x 10 7/8 x 8 1/2 in. John L. Severance Fund 1996.299



above: *Field Armor for Man and Horse with the Arms of the Völs-Colonna Family*, about 1575. North Italy. Etched steel with gilding; leather and velvet. John L. Severance Fund 1964.88



left: *Breastplate with Etched Figure Kneeling before the Crucifixion*, about 1550. Germany, Nuremberg. Etched steel; 12 5/16 x 13 3/4 x 7 7/8 in. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Severance 1916.1647

# A Tragic Love Story

## A Set of Eight Tapestries

### Dido and Aeneas, A Set of Eight Tapestries

The tapestries in this gallery were symbols of power—prestigious works of art that only the wealthiest could afford. They illustrate the tragic love story of Dido and Aeneas, based on Virgil's ancient Roman epic poem, *The Aeneid*.

This beautiful and extremely valuable set is admired for its dynamism: harmonious figures are integrated into architectural and natural settings, and framed by elaborate borders featuring dolphins and twisted columns. It was designed between 1655 and 1662 by the internationally renowned Roman painter Giovanni Francesco Romanelli. This set was woven before 1679 in Antwerp in the prominent tapestry workshop of Michel Wauters. **(CONTINUED ON BACK)**

*Dido and Aeneas, a Tragic Love Story: Set of Eight Tapestries*, designed between 1655 and 1662 by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (Italian, Rome, 1610–1662); woven before 1679 in the workshop of Michel Wauters (Flemish, Antwerp, about 1655–1679). Tapestry weave, wool and silk; various dimensions. Gift of Mrs. Francis F. Prentiss, in memory of Dr. Dudley P. Allen 1915.79.1–8

**right:** [2] *Cupid, disguised as Aeneas's son, presents gifts to Dido*  
Achates, with spear in hand, presents Cupid, who is disguised as Aeneas's son, to Queen Dido. He offers her gifts to encourage her to love Aeneas, seated at her side, while attendants prepare a banquet that Dido is giving for Aeneas and his companions.

**near right:** [1] *Venus tells Aeneas and his friend Achates to go to Carthage*  
Venus, dressed as a huntress, advises her son, Aeneas, to visit Dido, queen of Carthage. Venus wants her son to stop wandering and marry the queen.

**far right:** [3] *Dido sacrifices to Juno, the goddess of marriage*  
Dido loves Aeneas and offers a sacrifice to the gods to keep him in Carthage. Priests prepare to cut open the newly slaughtered heifer and read the future from its entrails.



**above:** [4] *Dido shows Aeneas her building plans for Carthage*  
The enamored Dido, attended by her sister Anna, shows Aeneas the plans, which the kneeling youth holds and the architect discusses.



# A Set of Eight Tapestries

below: [5] *Aeneas and Dido take shelter from a storm*

During a hunting party, Dido and Aeneas are caught in a storm and flee to shelter. Cupid and Hymen, the god of marriage, bless them from above, while servants attend to their frightened horses. On a branch, the owl of evil beats his wings ominously.



left: [6] *Mercury orders Aeneas to leave Carthage*

The supreme god, Jupiter, sends his messenger Mercury to the Trojan hero Aeneas to urge him to continue his voyage and fulfill his destiny: to found Rome.



right: [7] *Aeneas says farewell to Dido*  
Ready to depart on the fleet behind him, Aeneas tells the distraught Dido that he must follow his destiny.



left: [8] *Dido kills herself*

Driven by despair, and to her sister's dismay, Dido throws herself onto a pyre of Aeneas's bed and clothes and pierces herself with Aeneas's sword. Moved by pity, Jupiter's wife, Juno, sends Iris from heaven to cut a lock of Dido's hair and sacrifice it to the underworld so that Dido may die. Aeneas's fleet sails away in the distance.