ENGLAND'S ARMOR: HENRY VIII'S ARMOR AND HIS WARS

by

James Nobukichi Ito

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of

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in

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Master's Thesis to Donald La Rocca, Dr. Todd Larkin, and to Vaughan Judge for their support and guidance in helping me achieve my graduate goals. To Dede Taylor who gave me the Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin *Of Arms and Men*, which got me seriously interested in the topic of arms and armor as a Master's Thesis. To my fellow graduate students; Kate Cottingham, Chelsea Higgins, Jackie Meade, and Jesine Munson. To the School of Art office staff. I dedicate the success of graduate school to my wife Stephanie, who tolerated me being away from home for these last two years researching and writing my thesis and for bringing our son Jefferson into this world while I was in graduate school. You are my greatest supporter, Stephanie.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have grown as a scholar and as a person in these last two years of graduate school and I have the art history faculty to thank for that. Todd Larkin was my committee chair and he has been my most involved mentor who pushed me to conduct active research and question all evidence of my findings to weave out any doubt that what I discovered was reliable information. He has also been an example to me as a scholar who is enthusiastic about his work and teaches in a way that keeps the class attentive and alive. Melissa Ragain and Regina Gee were also on my committee and helped me have an open mind about other avenues I could take while working on my thesis. Vaughan Judge's mentoring truly inspired me to have passion for arms and armor and to own what I write and not be afraid of taking chances. His calm leadership style was very affective for me to go out and find my future in art.

The College of Art and Architecture funded me with the Student Opportunities Grant to go to New York in March 2013 and conduct research at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Arms and Armor department. It was here I saw tangible armor and met with assistant curator Donald La Rocca who counseled me how I should proceed my research for my thesis. For this I am truly grateful. I would also like to recognized Mandi McCarthy-Rogers and Jeanne Wagner who spent hours filing my paperwork so I can graduate on time. I would also like to thank the Graduate School and the Renne Library for their assistance in my research. I arrived here at Montana State as an inexperienced grad student and I have grown to become a scholar. I am forever grateful for all of the help and guidance I have received while I have been here at Montana State University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 1

2. CATALOG 17

Introduction.....18
Conclustion 50

3. ESSAY: ATTACK THE PAINTING.....52

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....77

LIST OF IMAGES

Image Page

CATALOG

Sixteenth Century German and Flemish Armor Diagram 19

1. *Helm for Foot Combat* *20*

2. *Armet* 22

3. Helm for Foot Combat 24

4. Foot Combat Helm of Sir Giles Capel 25

5. Greenwich Workshop under Martin Van Royne decorated by Paul van Vrelant, *Silvered and Engraved Armor* *27*

6. Greenwich Workshop under Martin Van Royne, *Armor for Foot Combat* 32

7. Greenwich Workshop under Martin Van Royne, *Tonlet Armor for Henry* VI 35

8. The Greenwich Workshop, *The Galiot de Genouilhac Armor Garniture,* Originally Belonging to Henry VIII 38

9. Greenwich Workshop under Erasmus Kirkenar, *Armor for Henry* VIII 41

10. Greenwich Workshop under Erasmus Kirkenar, *Armet* 44

11. Greenwich Workshop under Erasmus Kirkenar, *Armour of Henry* VIII 46

ESSAY: ATTACK THE PAINTING

1. Unknown artist, *The Battle of the Spurs*, ca. 1513.....74

2. Unknown artist, The Meeting of Henry VIII and Emperor Maximilian I, ca. 154 75

3. Paolo Uccello, *The Battle of San Romano*, ca. 1440 75

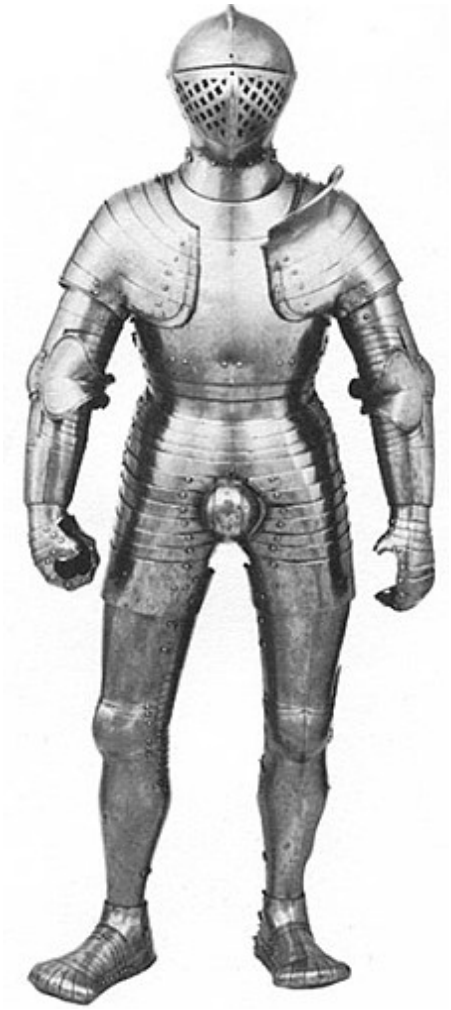
4. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Tournament with Swords*, 1509 76

5. Bernat Martorell, *Saint George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1434/35 76

ABSTRACT

Henry VIII, King of England, was a ruler who did not like having second-rate armor among his collection and decided to create his own royal armory so he did not have to rely on other armories across the English Channel. This thesis has been separated into three parts. The first part is an annotated bibliography of all of the sources that I used in the catalog and the essay. They give a summary of what the source contains whether it be a website, journal or book. The second part is the catalog that discusses eleven works of art and their relation to Henry VIII and the English armory at Greenwich. The armor is listed in chronological order from 1500 to 1540 before the armory was founded to the late reign of Henry VIII. Throughout the twenty-eight year reign of Henry VIII English armor design became its own identity, which had originated across the Channel in Southern Germany and Northern Italy. The third part of the thesis is the argument regarding a history painting of Henry's invasion of Northern France in 1513 titled *the Battle of the Spurs* ca. 1513. Incorporating the catalog and the annotated bibliography, the argument discusses the possible origins of who painted it and what armor the figures are wearing including Henry VIII. It is painting of a historical event, but we need to approach the painting as a mere representation on paint and not fact. That goes the same for the armor. The catalog is meant to help us differentiate German armor from English armor and to give the reader a foundation of what English armor is. The argument also looks to other paintings and prints from Italy, Spain, and Germany to compare the armor and the structure of the landscape, placement of figures and iconography. Armor in England became its own design through Henry VIII's ambition to make England an armor-producing nation.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY



Blair, Claude. ***European Armour: circa 1066 to circa 1700*****. London: Batsford, 1958.**

Claude Blair was one of the founders of modern arms and armor scholarship in the English language. His research and writing has set the foundations of arms and armor

scholarship and what curators and museums need to cover in their exhibitions and galleries in order to have an effective learning experience about the metal art. This book covers the 700-year history of armor on the European continent and explains why the armor changed in that time. He explains why pre-fifteenth century armor has not survived, where the best armories were, who founded the most and best armories, and the science and mechanics of armor production. Another aspect of this book worth mentioning is Blair's method of comparing armor to Renaissance paintings of nobles and aristocrats wearing armor. This book paints a clear picture for me of the chronology of arms and armor. It helps me recognize what Medieval, 15th, 16th, and 17th century armor looks like. It also distinguishes the differences between German, Italian, and English armor under Henry VIII.

Blair, Claude. "The Emperor Maximilian's Gift of Armour to King Henry VIII and the Silvered and Engraved Armour at the Tower of London." ***Archaeologia*****, 1965.**

This article goes into an archival history of the Silvered and Engraved armor that belonged to Henry VIII and follows the debate whether this armor was made in Innsbruck or Greenwich. Blair explains in great detail all of the terms, Classical figures, and techniques of armor. He took German armor made in Maximilian's workshops and compared it to the armor that the Almain (German and Flemish) armorers made in Greenwich and found that they were very similar considering the engraving and the form of the skulls, which is a term used for the outer shell of the helmets. Blair respects both sides of the argument by giving vivid details of the armor's inscriptions for Henry and Katherine, and to the German inscriptions adding to the Innsbruck argument. Some of the sources that Blair worked from were a combination of German and English contracts and

letters exchanged between Henry, Maximilian I, and Archduke Charles (later known as Charles V) discussing the logistics and deadlines that they needed to meet in order for Henry to receive certain armor on time. Blair's argument and catalog constitute a great history of English armor origins. At the end of the text, he provides early blueprints of the armor giving a 360 degree perspective making it easier to write an analysis and pinpoint all of the details he uses for the descriptions.

Capwell, Tobias. *Masterpieces of the European Arms and Armour in the Wallace Collection*. The Wallace Collection, 2011, 66.

Tobias Capwell is the curator of arms and armor at the Wallace Collection. He has written this catalog to explain the importance the objects have as historical artifacts and works of art by writing essays with each catalog entry ranging from the Habsburgs, . One object that he analyzes is a painting titled *The Meeting of Henry VIII and Emperor Maximilian I,* ca. 1545. He goes into detail about the armor they are wearing in the image and compares it to armor in the collection.

Cruickshank, C.G.. *Army Royal: Henry VIII's Invasion of France 1513*. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1969, 114-119.

The leading image for the argument portion of the thesis called *The Battle of the Spurs* is a painting of a battle between English and French cavalry with Henry VIII in the center with himself and his allies in armor. Cruickshank introduces the historical analysis of the battle by taking a step-by-step approach of Henry's motives to invading northern France, the movement and engagements he had with the French, his ally Maximilian I, and the details of how large or small the battle actually was. He also gives details about the insignias and uniforms the combatants wore during *The Battle of the Spurs* that completes

the formal analysis of the painting. There is not much documentary evidence about the painting; there is no record of who painted it, for example. Cruickshank is not an art historian and does not refer to the painting, leaving it open for fresh discussions and a new formal analysis. There are other sources in this bibliography that reference Henry's three invasions of France in 1513, 1522, and 1544, but Cruickshank only focuses on the invasion of 1513 giving even greater details that help identify the figures and tell the history of the events on the canvas.

Davies, Clifford S.L.. "Henry VIII and Henry V; The Wars in France." ***The End of the Middle Ages?: England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*****. Gloucestershire, England: Thrupp & Stroud, 1998, 235-262.**

Henry VIII fancied himself as the direct progeny of Henry V, who wanted to rekindle the Hundred Years War. Clifford Davies emphasizes this argument by comparing the two English kings who were a century apart, but Henry VIII faced different obstacles than Henry V. Davies writes about Henry VIII's Romanticized perception of war as Davies wrote about the historical content. Davies' take on all three invasions of France and explains why Henry VIII thought it was necessary to do so; mainly because it was his divine right to reign over the French. It was a very large claim. Henry VIII used a lot of political propaganda including art and words to have parliament and his court accept the invasions. This type of propaganda showed Henry VIII winning battles that he did not win, particularly *The Battle of the Spurs*. The painting is an exaggerated depiction of the battle and Davies is a descriptive source that adds to why the painting is the way it is. A cavalry skirmish exaggerated into a battle.

Elton, Geoffrey. "War and the English in the Reign of Henry VIII." ***War, Strategy, and International Politics; Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard.*** **Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1992, 1-17.**

Geoffrey Elton brings into light why Henry VIII believed that he was justified in invading France three times. Elton writes in chronological order a history of Henry and the invasions of France by publicizing the faults of the French Kings Louis XII and Francis I and how these faults affected English and French treaties getting Maximilian I and Charles V involved in the conflicts.

Henry VIII: Arms & the Man, 1509-2009**. Eds. Graeme Rimer, Thom Richardson, J.D.P. Cooper. Leeds, UK: Royal Armouries, 2009.**

This text is a compilation of essays and a catalog that gives a survey of arms and armor manufactured under the reign of Henry VIII in the Almain Royal Armory at Greenwich. This is the most extensive text on the subject and the essays are written by a handful of art historians who specialize in armor garnitures, Henry VIII, and English court life. All of them contributed to this text in giving vivid details on Henry's life as a king and as a knight of the tournament. The catalog is the most informative one, containing detailed analyses of the individual armor produced in Greenwich from foot combat armor, armor on a bard, and armor made specifically for Henry. The entries go through the history of the armor, the imperfections of the craftsmanship, and the theories of which armorer made what armor, making for a 360-degree comprehensive assessment of the armor.

Lacey, Robert. ***The Life & Times of Henry VIII*****. New York: Cross Rivers Press, A Division of Abbeville Press Inc., 1972.**

Robert Lacey introduces us to Henry VIII in this history about his life and his reign as king of England. It is a chronological history about Henry's tactics and methods in

governing England during the Renaissance as it came later than on the Continent. This text gives a broader view of the King and what the conditions were with Maximilian I of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V of the Hapsburgs, and Louis XII and Francis I of France. However, this text focuses heavily on Henry's relations within his court after his coronation in 1509 when his father Henry VII Earl of Richmond died. Henry got rid of most of his father's counselors by way of exile or execution, as he did not trust those who were more loyal to his father rather to him. This distrust made its way to the Scots as most English royalty found entangling. Lacey also paints a picture for us of how Henry played a role in international affairs such as The Battle of the Spurs in France, hosting Charles V in England, hosting French ambassadors, and putting a tournament together in Calais called the Field of Cloth of Gold one of the largest tournaments seen in Europe.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the collections/21989, Accessed 24 and 25 February, 2014.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has the largest collection of arms and armor in the United States and on the Western Hemisphere and have endless amounts of articles and journals on detailed arguments about certain armor in their collection. The website has an inventory of over 20,000 objects regarding arms and armor and has dimensions, brief histories, and names associated with their objects, which makes my catalog more accurate in the descriptions.

The National Gallery. "The Battle of San Romano." http://www.nationalgallery.-org.uk/ paintings/paolo-uccello-the-battle-of-san-romano. Accessed 9 April, 2014.

The National Gallery: London gives a brief summary of Paolo Uccello's painting *The Battle of San Romano* ca. 1440 that has a resemblance to the painting *The Battle of The*

Spurs ca. 1513. This is a very small comparison that gives the foundations for a comparative analysis so we can better understand the origins of large scale battle paintings and armor design on two-dimensional surfaces that may have originated in Italy.

Nickel, Helmut. '"a harness all gilte": A Study of the Armor of Galiot de Genouilhac and the Iconography of Its Decoration'. *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, (1972), 75-124.

Helmut Nickel was the head curator of the Arms & Armor Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who studied the contents of the armor that once belonged to Galiot de Genouilhac that the Met acquired in 1919 (from New York millionaire William H. Riggs) under the department's founder Dr. Bashford Dean. Nickel argues in this text the armor thought to have been French was actually made in the Royal Workshop of Henry VIII of England. Nickel describes how English armor from Greenwich was mistaken for being French and how he was able to reattribute the armor by comparing it to English art. Nickel takes us on a chronological history of the armor's travels from its forgery at Greenwich in 1527, to the tournament on Shrove Tuesday hosted by Henry. The armor was his gift to the French ambassador, François de La Tour d'Auvergne, viscount of Turenne. Galiot de Genouilhac acquired it and kept it in his family for the next 400 years until William H. Riggs bought it and then the Met acquired it where it is now part of the permanent collection on display in the Arms and Armor Hall. Nickel also takes the on the argument on the theory that Hans Holbein the Younger decorated the armor's exterior by comparing the foliage to Holbein's drawings and matching dates, affirming that Holbein was in England as a court artist under Henry VIII. He continues to

analyze the Greek mythological figures from mermaids, Hercules, and exotic elephants, matching them to English architectural and domestic motifs.

Nickel, Helmut. "The Art of Chivalry". *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* No. 4 (1973/1974), 55-60.

Like "Gentleman's Jewelry", Nickel introduces the history and idea of chivalry and how it directly relates to armor. He uses two-dimensional and three-dimensional examples, such as fourteenth-century illuminated manuscripts of St. George Slaying the Dragon, a celebrity of knighthood and chivalric attributes. He explains how St. George paved the way for armorers and patrons having armor decorated with patron saints. At the end of his article Nickel, gives a detailed day-life of a knight and what he contributed to Medieval society through warfare and civic duties expected from him.

Nickel, Helmut. "Gentleman's Jewelry". *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* No. 4 (1973/1974), (pages not listed from online copy).

This article explains the reason why royal patrons devoted a lot of wealth to commissioning armor. Nickel's main example is Henry VIII's founding the Greenwich armory to be a place of foreign diplomacy. Decorating the armor in precious metals would definitely signify the wearer's status as only those with the most money could ever wear such treasure. He also dives into mythological figures and canonized saints as popular motifs for armor decoration, relating them to such persons as Hercules, St. George, and St. Sebastian who were very popular during the sixteenth century.

Nickel, Helmut. "The Orders of Chivalry". *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* No. 4 (1973/1974), (pages not listed from online copy).

Nickel briefly describes selected orders of chivalry in this article. They range from the Order of the Golden Fleece in Burgundy to the Order of the Porcupine in France, and the Order of Santiago in Spain. One person that he heavily focuses on is Saint George who is one of the most popular iconographic motifs for Christian knights. For his good deeds and fearsome traits, he is depicted on manuscripts, tapestries, and armor.

Nickel, Helmut. "The Tournament". *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, No. 4 (1973/1974), 67-78.

This is the last of Nickel's articles that literally combines "Gentleman's Jewelry" and "The Art of Chivalry" into one article, explaining how armor ornamentation and chivalry is relevant to the tournament. Everything about chivalry can be seen in the tournament by performing for maidens, showing off fighting skills, and creating diplomatic friendships-similar to the Olympics. Nickel gives another historiography about the tournament, its origins, purpose, and analyzes tournament manuscripts and tournament armor that affiliates with the joust and the tourney (foot combat). This article will assist the thesis in the details of why tournament armor had different functions than battle armor and why some fans of the tournament such as Henry VIII went so far as to establish his own royal armory to make the tournament armor.

Richardson, Thom. "An Early Greenwich Armet." *Arms & Armour*, Vol. 1, N 1 (2009), 5-11.

Thom Richardson is the Keeper of Armour and Oriental Collections at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, UK and specializes in the arms and armor of Henry VIII. He briefly gives a history of the Greenwich armory and explains why Henry only had armor made for himself and very few of his court officials. The main topic of this essay is the armet,

the helmet with a visor for a full suit of armor. He continues describing what the details are for a Greenwich armet plus the development of Northern European armor.

Richardson, Thom. *The Armour & Arms of Henry VIII*. Royal Armories Museum: United Kingdom, 2002, 11.

English armor history is a very specific and complex topic and this text makes for a great general introduction for Henry VIII's armor collection. Richardson uses a very simple language that gets his point across as to why some pieces of Henry's armor collection are worth mentioning. He goes into the history of the patronage of the armor and explains the process of making armor and how many hands took part into making such art out of steel. Richardson also dives into Henry's foreign politics explaining how he acquired artisans and armorers from across the Channel to produce work in England.

Royal Collection Trust. royalcollection.org.uk/collection/406784/the-battle-of-the-spurs. Accessed 18 February and 24 March, 2014.

This website holds the inventory of Queen Elizabeth II's and the royal family's collection of art and artifacts in the United Kingdom. The painting *The Battle of the Spurs* and a number of the armor of Henry VIII are in this collection with the remainder of his armor is in the care of the Royal Armouries in Leeds. The Royal Collection has additional information such as dates, dimensions, and materials used in the art.

Samman, Niel, *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy, Piety*. Ed. Diarmaid MacCulloch. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995, 65.

Niel Samman is one of a few authors who wrote about the social structure of Henry VIII's court. In this book, he goes into individual descriptions of Henry's court including those who would host the King at their country estates and entertain him with sports such

as hunting and hawking. All of this was to impress the King with their loyalty and hospitality in hopes that Henry would give them political favors. This involves armor because if a subject could please the King, then he could be granted permission to have a suit of armor from Greenwich.

Sharp, Arthur D.. "The Story of the Greenwich Armoury," *Transactions of the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society*. London: Blackheath Press, Vol. 3, 1929, 151-154.

Arthur D. Sharp writes a detailed description of the step-by-step process Henry VIII took to create the Greenwich Armory. He provides dates when the armorers arrived in England, their wages, and titles that they held throughout their employment at the English court. Sharp also compares Henry's armory at Greenwich to Maximilian I's armories at Innsbruck, Nuremburg, and Augsburg, and Henry VIII succeeds in competing against them.

Williams, Alan & Anthony de Reuck. *The Royal Armory at Greenwich 1515-1649: A History of its Technology*. London Royal Armories, 1995, 27.

This text takes a chronological approach to the history of the Almain Royal Armory at Greenwich. Williams and de Reuck start the history with older armorers under the English monarchy before Henry VIII. They go into the details of how Henry attributed to importing artists and armorers from Italy, Flanders, and Germany and how their styles in armor production adapted to meet the taste of the English patrons ordering the armor at Greenwich. They take us through the beginnings of the armor in 1514 in Southwark and then to Greenwich in the new building a few years later, the armory would stay in business until the end of English Civil war in 1649. Most of the information this text

provides came from multiple inventories (much like Robinson) from the Greenwich armory.

CATALOG



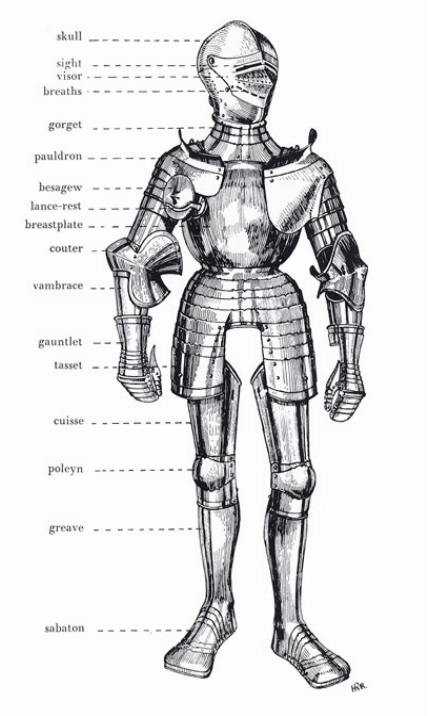
Introduction

Henry VIII was crowned king of England in 1509 after the death of his father, Henry VII, Earl of Richmond, and his older brother, Arthur, leaving Henry to rule the kingdom. In his youth, Henry was never allowed to participate in the tournament, but desired the opportunity nevertheless. When his father died, Henry was like a child who had finally been allowed to enter the contest and put all of his efforts into competing in the tournament. At this time in Henry's life there was no definition of English armor. There was a small armory in England at the time, but it did not compare to the royal armories across the English Channel such as the Milanese one in northern Italy and Emperor Maximilian I's workshop in Germany with connections to the Hapsburgs. There was no such thing as English armor.

Henry needed to bring England up to speed with the rest of the Continent and create English armor, but he could not create a royal armory out of nothing. His opportunity came when he defeated the French at the Battle of the Spurs (ca. 1513) in northern France with the assistance of Maximilian. Henry used this victory and the invasion to make foreign trade agreements with the emperor to acquire armorers and artisans such as engravers, etchers, painters, gilders, millmen, locksmiths, silversmiths, and hammermen from Maximilian's empire. What Henry then had to do was locate and hire German, Flemish (Almain), and Italian armorers to work for him in England making armor. The classification "English armor" took a few decades to complete. The first armors made under this new armory are a guessing game as to if they are Flemish or British. So we are left with three questions in identifying the nature of "English armor":

Is it English armor if a German made it in England under English patronage? Did Henry's armor set the standards for English armor design? What components are found only on Greenwich armor making it English?

This catalog will answer these questions and give a survey of armor from tournament helms, armets, armor for foot combat, full harnesses (word for full suit of armor), and some horse armor. The majority of the objects in this catalog were made for Henry, but there are a few examples that belonged to his courtiers and a few unidentified armets that represents the basics of English armor development. The purpose of this catalog is to define what makes armor "English" armor to show the transformation from German and Italian designs to English ones from 1509 to 1540 under the Almain Royal Armory at Greenwich.



Sixteenth Century German and Flemish Armor Diagram



1. Helm for Foot Combat

Date: ca. 1510–20
Culture: Anglo-Flemish
Medium: Steel
Dimensions: H. 17 1/4 in. (43.8 cm); D. 14 1/8 in. (35.9 cm); Wt. 10 lb. 5 oz. (4675 g)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Credit Line: Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Funds from various donors, 1929
Provenance: Adalbert von Kolasinski, Warsaw; Bashford Dean, New York
Bibliography: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/26456, accessed 25 February, 2014

It is always hard to tell the difference between English armor from that of Flemish in the early years of Henry VIII ca 1510. His Greenwich Royal Workshop under the Almains had not fully developed at this time and could not produce a suit of armor until 1514. It is hard to differentiate Flemish or in English armor since Flemish armorers worked in England under English patronage. This helm is part of tournament armor for foot combat. The oblong helm with a visor in the shape of a galleon known as a bellows visor was commonly seen in German and Flemish armor. After the helm is placed on the

wearer's head, there are two holes on both sides of this helm that are used to fasten down the plates. The dime-sized screw on the lower right below the visor is used to tighten it onto the helm so as to avoid an accidental opening during movement. The last part I want to mention that is standard with foot combat helms is the screw hole on the bottom neck-chest plate. A screw would fasten the helm to the cuirass (or breastplate). The visor of this helm has six simple horizontal slits separated into four parts on each register giving the wearer visibility as well as ventilation.

This helm most likely belonged to one of Henry's courtiers who wanted armor from the king's workshop so he could compete alongside him at tournaments. It could very well be possible that this helm was present at the Field of Cloth of Gold held outside of Calais in France.



1. Armet

Date: ca. 1510–15
Culture: possibly British or Flemish
Medium: Steel
Dimensions: Wt., 9 lb. 9 oz. (4350 g)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Credit Line: Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913
Provenance: Meyrick
Bibliography: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/22224, accessed 24 February, 2014

This armet is British or Flemish. Flemish armorers traveled across the English Channel to work under Henry VIII; however, such armets and armor could have been made before the armorers left Flanders. It is difficult to give this armet one origin since the neighboring kingdoms made their armor similarly. Henry employed German, Italian, and Flemish armorers throughout his reign having them teach his own English armorers the craft. It was not until Queen Elizabeth I finalized English armorer training and

relieved all foreign armorers at the Royal Armory at Greenwich in the late sixteenth century.

This armet has the standard visor covering the lower half of the armet known as the bevor. The visor has a pointed beak with a single register of air slits meeting at the point. Two supporting bolts on the center left fasten the metal plates of the armet together. Behind the armet on the curve of the neck, a curved disk called a rondel protects the leather strap of the wrapper that supports the bevor. The lower rim of the neckline supports the armet's foundation, keeping all metal plates from breaking. The ridge on top of the armet, also known as the comb, has a low silhouette, which is a hallmark of British and Flemish armets of the early sixteenth century. Combs on armets gradually became taller by the seventeenth century.



3. Helm for Foot Combat

Date: ca. 1500–1520
Culture: possibly British
Medium: Steel
Dimensions: Wt., 11 lb. 12 oz. (5330 g); H., 16 3/4 in. (42.55 cm); W., 14 in. (35.56 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Credit Line: Rogers Fund, 1904
Provenance: Lord Stafford; Bachereau; Costantino Ressman; Duc de Dino (cat. no. B-20).

Bibliography: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/21989, Accessed 24 February, 2014

This helm is also for foot combat within a tournament. The helm is all one piece of metal plating except for the visor. It has the same cruise-shaped bow visor with three registered air slits and eye slits on the top. The comb is very small and almost unnoticeable. The bottom corners of the bevor have two pairs of vertical holes where nails or screws are emplaced to attach the helm to the rest of the armor at the breastplate. On the helm's right shoulder, a rotating hook latches the front and back end of the helm together. This helm is for full contact foot combat where the helms are fully covered

plates leaving little mobility for the head, neck and shoulders. This extra plating also gives the combatant full protection from sword, pike, and mace blows to the head. It is however, not practical to wear in battle due to the inflexibility. This helm may also have been used at the Field of Cloth of Gold as most of the games at the tournament were foot combat giving the dates possible.



4. Foot Combat Helm of Sir Giles Capel

Date: ca. 1510
Culture: possibly British
Medium: Steel
Dimensions: Wt., 13 lb. 8 oz. (6123 g); H., 17 1/2 in. (44.45 cm); W., 11 1/4 in. (28.58 cm)
Classification: Helmets
Credit Line: Rogers Fund, 1904
Provenance: Baron C. A. de Cosson; Baron Ressman; Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord; Duc de Dino, Paris.
Bibliography: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/21997, Accessed 25 February, 2014

This is one of the first tournament helms from the Almain Royal Workshop that has a name associated with it. Usually it has been Henry's name closely linked with the armory, but as it gained popularity with the royal family, so did it with Henry's courtiers and subjects. Sir Giles Capel (b. 1485-1556) was one of Henry's subjects in his court who like many of his contemporaries valued armor in its association with the tournament and chivalry. It is very possible that Capel wore this helm at The Field of Cloth of Gold. This helm has stayed in such a well preserved condition because Capel requested to have it hang above his tomb at Rayne Church in Essex making it very easy to trace the history of this helm. Many of Henry's subjects lobbied to have commissions from the Almain Royal Workshop so they could compete at the games hosted by the King, but they had to be careful not to over decorate or make their armor superior than the King's as it would have challenged the throne's authority. In the case of this helm, Capel stayed with simplicity by having one sheet of metal planished (hammering metal while hot) to make the skull and the bevor into one unit. The visor was added later matching the skull's very low comb making its way as a ridge to the bottom center of the bevor. The curved vent-like visor makes visibility and breathing as a double act. Multiple rivets support the neckline of the skull and two large holes on the bevor's front lower half have larger rivets attaching the helm to the breastplate. When the visor lowered over the face, a pin was fastened connecting the visor to the upper bevor. The pin was where the two square holes are on the helms lower right; one on the visor and the other on the bevor. Some decoration could have been added such as a plume of feathers placed on the back of the skull in order for the audience to recognize Capel in a tournament.



5. Greenwich Workshop under Martin Van Royne, decorated by Paul van Vrelant, *Silvered and Engraved Armor*

Date: ca. 1515
Culture: British or Flemish
Medium: Steel
The Royal Armouries
Provenance: From The Royal Palace at Greenwich to the Tower of London in 1644
Bibliography: Blair, Claude. "The Emperor Maximilian's Gift of Armour to King Henry VIII and the Silvered and Engraved Armour at the Tower of London." *Archaeologia*, 1965.

Henry VIII founded his workshop in 1514, and one of the first armors to be crafted specially for the King was the *Silvered and Engraved Armor* pictured here. Most armor before this time in England has not survived, and art historians have been disinclined to include armor in a general survey of art. This armor is a worthwhile topic because it is prodigiously engraved. There is a long standing debate among armor historians over whether the armor was made in the Almain Royal Armory at Greenwich or in one of Maximilian I's armories at Innsbruck. Most historians favor Greenwich.

From a distance, the *Silvered and Engraved Armor's* surface looks plain and dull with no exterior decoration. Looking closely, we can see that there is a lot of engraving and etching that went into the harness metal plates. The armet is not a single planished sheet of metal as seen with the tournament helms. The Armet is an Italian style with the skull having a low comb and an outer plate covering the forehead. The visor has a horizontal ridge reaching around the beak with air holes consisting of punch holes, vertical and horizontal slits, and small teeth-like vents on the lower visor. The supporting bevor is attachable, serves as an extra protection for the chin and throat, and has three lames, (or horizontal metal plates) riveted together, making a gorget protecting the front upper torso. On the back of the neck, a leather strap connects and reinforces the armet and the bevor,



but it does not have a rondel. A pattern of foliage with a Tudor rose (the insignia of Henry VIII's family line) on both the right and left where the visor and bevor meet in the hinges with other roses blanketing the armet. On the rear of the armet in the upper right of the skull, the armorer's mark stands out with a bold outline of an armet profile with a

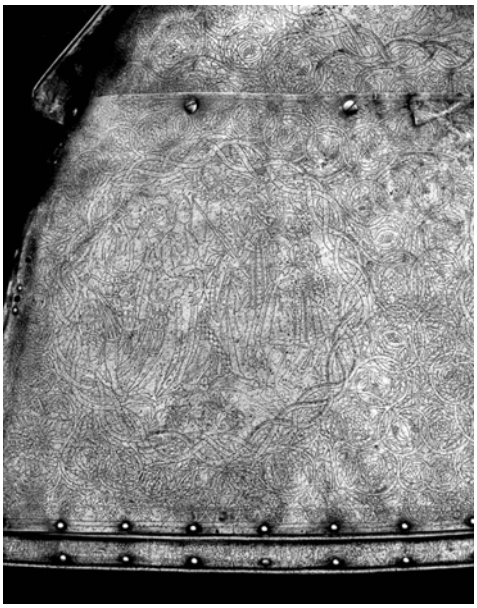
crown on top, which is possibly Martin van Royne's. We cannot definitely be sure if it is his mark since armorers Peter Fevers, Filiplo de Grampis and Giovanni Angelo de Littis were all working in Greenwich at the time this armor was completed. It is also difficult to identify the mark because we do not have other marks to compare it to. Most armor affiliated with a royal or a wealthy nobleman will have an armorer's mark because the most prominent and best armorers marked their armor as a sign of pride in their artisanship and clients.

The breastplate and backplate have extensive engraving representing saintly figures, which are quite appropriate for the armor's firmness. Foliage and Tudor roses



cover the breastplate like the armet, but in the midst of all the vegetation, we can scarcely see the figure of Saint George wearing contemporary armor and slaying the dragon (which led to the conversion and baptism of a populace of over 10,000 people). He is wearing an armet with the visor up, pauldrons known as shoulder defenses, vambraces also known as lower arm defenses, gauntlets, a breastplate with the cross, a mail skirt, greaves for lower leg protection, and sabatons for plated feet protection. The backplate has the same foliage with Saint Barbara in the center. Her head is in profile with a

venerated halo looking at the tower in her right hand where she was imprisoned by her pagan father Dioscorus and converted to Christianity. She is the patron saint of armorers, which explains her appearance here. The gauntlets on this armor are contemporary pieces and the originals are lost. The base or the wavy metal skirt is a German design and similar to a tonlet, which is a metal plated skirt meant for foot combat in a tournament. The base's lower rim has gold gilded lettering "H & K", commemorating Henry's





marriage to Katherine of Aragon six years previously in 1509. The pauldrons on this armor are not symmetrical nor meant for the same purpose. The pauldron on the left shoulder has a larger plate covering the left breast and has a higher guard protecting the upper torso and jugular. This is because the left side of Henry is more vulnerable to a strike since he fought with his right hand and needed the flexibility to strike a blow to his opponent. If the plate is larger on one side, it means his opposite is his dominant hand.

The bard (horse armor) consists of plates for the face above the mussel (horse nostril), the crest over the neck, the shoulders and breasts, the croup, buttock, and the

thigh. The faceplate blinds the frontal view of the horse so as to prevent it from being frightened at what lies ahead. The crest armor has ten lames riveted together arched to the neck looking similar to a lobster back. The main body of the bard's etchings consists of the same Tudor roses and foliage patterns, and Saint's Barbara and George found on Henry's armor. Stills from the life of St. George are on the left side and stills of Saint Barbara are on the right. One of the details form the buttock plate is St Barbara nude from the chest up escorted by two men holding bundles of sticks used for thrashing. A bagpiper leads them while Marcianus (an alleged suitor of St. Barbara) accompanies her as an official witness of the sentencing of the torture. An angel looks onward from above, presenting a cloth to cover her nakedness.



6. Greenwich Workshop under Martin Van Royne, *Armor for Foot Combat*

Date: ca. 1520
Culture: British and Flemish
Medium: Steel
Royal Armouries
Provenance: From The Royal Palace at Greenwich to the Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK.
Bibliography: Karen Watts. *Henry VIII: Arms & the Man, 1509-2009.* Eds. Graeme Rimer, Thom Richardson, J.D.P. Cooper. (Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK, 2009).

One of the many games at the Field of Cloth of Gold and probably the most popular was the tourney, better known as foot combat. This armor was made at Greenwich and has the appearance of early English armor. The helm is similar to previous tournament helms with a low comb, a solid one-piece planished metal plate, a visor with a horizontal eye slit, and the lower half of the visor with cross-hatching ventilation, making a large checkerboard pattern. There are two large hinges on both

sides of the visor for the up and down movement. The neckline of the armet is surrounded by rivets and on the helm's left side we can see a hinged hook fastening the plated helm together. The cuirass and the helm's neck look as though they are forged together, but the neck rotates making room for the wearer to look to his sides. Close inspection reveals that this armor is not symmetrical. The spaulders, which are laminated metal plates for the shoulders and upper arms similar to pauldrons, serve different



functions with the larger spaulder on the left shoulder and the smaller defense on the right. Most armor for the field and tournament has protection for the defending arm with larger and thicker plates while the curved plate on the upper spaulder offers protection from the opponents weapon.

On the top center of the cuirass beneath the gorget line there is screw that bolts down the reinforcing cuirass, adding extra protection to the wearer's vital organs. We can see the same screw on the backplate in case the opponent hit from behind. There are multiple rivets throughout the breastplate, backplate, and the spaulders leading down to the faulds (laminated plates protecting the hips and upper thighs) in a continuous vertical manner leading to the cuisses (armor for the thighs), poleyns (knee armor), greaves (calf

armor) and the sabatons (armor for the feet). The same goes for the couter (elbow armor), the vambraces, and the mitten gauntlets—all with hinged rivets to make mobility possible.

Tournament armor of this type for Henry VIII would have been engraved for a public spectacle at the Field of Cloth of Gold at Calais in 1520. Henry was not able to wear this armor for the tournament due to a change of rules. The French originally announced that each contender had to bring with him a harness (or full suit of armor) for foot combat with no additional armor plating. Three months before the games began, the French changed the rules stating that the armor needed to have an attachable tonlet, a plated skirt that reached to the length of the poleyns. Martin van Royne and his assistants had to abandon this armor and never finished it. We can still see the hammering marks since they were never polished out.



7. Greenwich Workshop under Martin Van Royne, *Tonlet Armor for Henry VIII*

Date: ca. 1520
Culture: British and Flemish and Italian
Medium: Steel
Dimensions: 1850 cm tall
Royal Armouries
Provenance: From The Royal Palace at Greenwich to The Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK.
Bibliography: Karen Watts. *Henry VIII: Arms & the Man, 1509-2009.* Eds. Graeme Rimer, Thom Richardson, J.D.P. Cooper. (Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK, 2009), 124-127

The change in the rules requiring foot combat armor to have a tonlet left van Royne and his workshop to make another harness for Henry VIII in less than three months. Having been rushed for time, the Greenwich workshop was able to make another armor that met the standard for the tournament. There was not enough time to make new armor from scratch so the Greenwich workshop had to go into their storage rooms and

rummage to find adequate pieces of armor that would fit together. The helm is Milanese with the armorer's mark of a crowned "M" over a split cross identifying the Missaglia workshop on the back of the skull. Very little of this harness was made in Greenwich and only the workshop can take sole credit for the etching. The helm is again a single plate with a bellows visor and has laminated pauldrons with the larger and thicker plates on the left shoulder. The cuirass is fluted vertically in the German manner called Maximilian armor along with the poleyns. The most distinct part of this armor is the tonlet with the plates riveted and forged together in the form of scales making it more flexible and maneuverable when fighting in the tourney. It is not to be mistaken for separate square



plates hinged together but as rows of nine plate laminations creating an accordion-like movement. Small traces of gilt gold surround the rivets on the helm and throughout the harness suggesting that this was once gilded gold to match Henry's taste for the rare metal. It is mostly depleted off the armor and we can only imagine the splendor the audience saw when Henry entered the tournament field with the sun beaming down on the gold illuminating Henry.

The decoration was very much rushed and we can see on the bevor's collar where the engraved ribbon shows the Tudor roses and the English crosses with a knight on

horseback underneath the center rose; possibly Henry or St. George. The lines and borders on the bevor are all jagged and uneven with hasty markings. This work was not used with any straighteners and resembles chicken scratches as what most of the etchings look like. The motifs of St. George, the Virgin and Child, are etched on the crown of the helm and the Order of the Garter is on the left greave all referring back to Christianity being the leading theme in most early English armor. These motifs were also rushed with mistakes showing jagged etchings crossing off borders and figure outlines. The most obvious etching mistake on this armor is the checkerboard foliage on the back center of the tonlet where one square was supposed to be left blank, but the etcher's rushed work made him mark it anyway. Realizing his mistake, he stopped immediately and continued the pattern without finishing the square. There was no time to fix anything. Luckily, the workshop managed to complete the tonlet armor on time for the games and Henry wore this armor and competed in the tourney in the last four days of the tournament.



8. The Greenwich Workshop, *The Galiot de Genouilhac Armor Garniture,* Originally Belonging to Henry VIII

Date: ca. 1527

Culture: British/Greenwich

Medium: Steel, gold gilt

Dimensions: 1850 cm tall

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Credit Line: Purchase, William H. Riggs Gift and Rogers Fund, 1919

Bibliography: Thom Richardson. *Henry VIII: Arms & the Man, 1509-2009*. Eds. Graeme Rimer, Thom Richardson, J.D.P. Cooper. (Leeds, UK: Royal Armouries, 2009), 124-127. Nickel, Helmut. '"a harness all gilte": A Study of the Armor of Galiot de Genouilhac and the Iconography of Its Decoration'. *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, (1972), 75-124.

For nearly 500 years, this armor was thought to have been a product of the French Royal Armory, yet it is now thought to be from Greenwich. This armor came about as a result of Henry VIII hosting the French ambassador François de la Tour d'Auvergne, viscomte de Turenne in 1527. Turenne sailed across the Channel in the hope of

convincing Henry VIII to have his daughter the princess Mary wed the duc d'Orleans who would then become the king Henri II after the passing of François I in 1547. The marriage never happened, but this visit to England ended on good terms, making France and England loyal allies for the time being. To show his good intentions, Henry had his royal armory make a harness identical to one of his own for Turenne. Henry presented it to him at a tournament on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. There have been arguments that the armor was made for Henry, but





Turenne and Henry we both hefty men making it quite common to mistake the two. Turenne took the armor back to France and died in 1532, having had only five years to enjoy the royal present. His family gave the armor to Galiot de Genouilhac, Grand Maître de l'Artillerie, a fancy title for an artillery officer, who had done political favors for Turenne. This was payment for what he had done for the family. The armor stayed with Genouilhac's family for the next few hundred years until New York millionaire, William H. Riggs, bought it and then Bashford Dean, the founder of the Arms & Armor department at the Metropolitan Museum of art, acquired it for the museum's collection in 1919.

Dozens of etched motifs decorate the armor plating, from the armet to the sabatons of the harness. On the reinforcing breastplate, in particular, dozens of putti crowd the plate amongst foliage with heads of putti at each corner of the breastplate (contained within the outer border). A lance rest (a device that takes some of the lance's weight away from the wearer, making it easier to balance while on horseback) covers some of the etching on the armor's right side. Beneath the lance rest, we can scarcely see an elephant with a tower mounted on top of its back with two putti sounding trumpets and a third holding a banner depicting what scholars say alludes to the "Dragon of Wales", Henry's title when he was the Prince of Wales. We see an identical motif of another elephant and putti on the other end of the breastplate. In the center-left, there is a merknight armed with a saber at the center-right, a mermaid holding what looks like a seashell. Both are facing each other as if in the production of a stage play. The armet has other grotesque forms ranging from lions, serpents, centaurs, wild men, and more putti wrestling throughout the skull and all of the figures are intertwined in classical foliage. The leg defenses contain the most popular of Greek figures, Hercules, conducting four of his twelve deeds, Hercules carrying the pillars, Hercules wrestling with Antacus, Hercules killing the Nemean lion, and Hercules slaying the Hydra. This style of etching matches with a few German artists such as Lucas Cranach the Elder and Albrecht Dürer, but the most logical artist that most historians believe that could have executed such designs was Hans Holbein the Younger who worked in Henry's court from 1527-1528. The entire armor was gilded, the gilder mixing gold with mercury and applying the mixture to the steel surface after the etching. The metal was fired and the mercury bound the gold liquid to the surface, the mercury evaporated and leaving only gold behind. The

gilding of the garniture could be in better condition as half of the gilding has worn off with age, but the etching has stayed preserved, leaving a fine and elegant example of Greenwich armor.



9. Greenwich Workshop under Erasmus Kirkenar, *Armor for Henry VIII*

Date: ca. 1539
Culture: British/Greenwich
Medium: Steel, etching
Victoria and Albert Museum
Provenance: Henry VIII Royal Armory, Royal Collection Trust - Queen Elizabeth II
Bibliography: Royal Collection Trust. http:// www. royalcollection.org.uk /collection/72834/ armour-of-henry-viii-for-the-field-and-tilt, accessed 18 February 2014.

This armor made under Martin van Royne's successor, Erasmus Kirkenar, has a heavy appearance with flat armor plating and limited on its decoration. The armet has the

low comb and an upgraded bellows visor with ventilation only reaching the top of the eye slits. We can see remnants of etching and gilding around the ventilation and on top of the visor. The collar of the armet wraps around the top half of the gorget, which is riveted to the breast and backplates. This harness has two deflector pauldrons. The one on the





armor's right shoulder has been riveted to the lames and hinged to the rest of the plating consisting of the couter, the lower vambrace, and fitted with a fingered gauntlet. The left arm defenses do not mirror the right. The left pauldron has a longer and wider deflector as to protect the non-fighting arm, and has a larger and thicker gauntlet that reaches over the left vambrace and couter. The gauntlet is a mitten-type as to give further protection to the hand. No need for a shield. On the breastplate next to the right armpit there are three pairs of holes where the lance rest would be for the tilt and joust. Under the tassets there is a contemporary textile of red velvet covering the green and gold upper pumpkin-like trousers that reach to the top of the knee protected by the cuisses and poleyns. One-third of the cuisses and poleyns look as though they have been cut out from the inner thighs and knees to allow Henry to ride on horseback without clanking metal on the horse's bard and to prevent chaffing if the horse was wearing a silkscreen bard. The greaves have a

pinched front creating a sharp middle lining and the sabatons are exactly the type as what the period needed. They have seventeen lames creating flexibility for the feet as if Henry were wearing a shoe. There is constant etching throughout the harness, but it is unclear what the etchings depict besides the classical foliage as on most of Henry and Greenwich's armor. The loss of the gilding and the rubbing of the armor make it difficult to identify. Some armors of Henry like this one were equipped with wooden face masks to give the viewer a visual of what his face did for the livelihood for the armor.

After a near death experience from a jousting accident in 1536, Henry became hesitant to participate in the games. It did not stop him from commissioning armor. Usually a patron needed an excuse to make armor and to have a tournament. Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleaves ca. 1539 was a very appropriate event to have new commissioned armor and a tournament. It is unclear if Henry jousted, but either way this is most likely the armor commemorating the marriage. This armor has the English/Greenwich tall pauldrons deflectors, the half bellows visor, and flat textured designs that reflect Henry's taste.



10. Greenwich Workshop under Erasmus Kirkenar, *Armet*

Date: ca. 1540
Culture: British/Greenwich
Medium: Steel, originally with etchings
Victoria and Albert Museum
Provenance: Bequeathed by Major Victor Alexander Farquharson, Victoria and Albert Museum
Bibliography: Claude Blair, *European Armour: circa 1066 to circa 1700*. London: Batsford, 1958, 136. Royal Collection Trust. http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection /72834/armour-of-henry-viii-for- the-field-and-tilt, accessed 18 February 2014.

Greenwich by this time in 1540 has developed its own design for visors on their armets. This armet has an exaggerated visor where the beak has a curved tip and the ascending horizontal ridge separating the circle air vents from the double registered eye slits. This appearance makes the wearer appear as though he was looking up all the time when placed on the head, but would level out when riding. This style of armet matches the armet from the Genouilhac harness making this style popular among Henry VIII and his subjects. This type of visor was in use during the Elizabethan Age and into the beginning of the seventeenth century. The skull and top visor have a low comb, which has become an English feature. There is a metal knob on the bottom right of the armet

that fastens the visor to the bevor, which is solely a Greenwich mechanism. Because of widespread cleaning and wearing, there is no longer any gilding or etching on the plates to signify that any noble wore this armet to a tournament or battle. It has some minor damage with heavily blackened spots on the curved depression around the collar. On the right side of the armet in the back of the visor hinge there is an armorer's mark, which looks like the infinity symbol "∞", but it is difficult to identify to whom the marking belongs to because of the damage. The rest of the armor is lost, but this armet stands as a wondrous example of Greenwich armor production.



11. Greenwich Workshop under Erasmus Kirkenar, *Armour of Henry VIII*

Date: ca. 1540
Culture: British/Greenwich
Medium: Steel, gold gilt
Dimensions: 1880 cm tall
Royal Armouries
Provenance: From The Royal Palace at Greenwich to The Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK.
Bibliography: Thom Richardson. *Henry VIII: Arms & the Man, 1509-2009*. Eds. Graeme Rimer, Thom Richardson, J.D.P. Cooper. (Royal Armouries, Leeds, UK, 2009), 212-217.

This is by far one of the best-preserved armors belonging to Henry VIII and stands as a pivotal example of English/Greenwich armor. This armor almost mirrors the 1539 armor entirely. It has a very heavy appearance—not a reflection from Henry's

heavy physique late in life—but as a broad and cladded armor with bold and simple decoration. To make armor look more light, an embosser (an artist hammering out metal to make designs) or engraver would make decorative patterns to try to make the armor have a more artistic feel to it making it seem lighter. This armor does not do this due to



the bulky metal with no decoration. The armet has a simpler bellows visor with vertical slits for the eyes and circulation with gilding on the rims and borders of the visor. The simple molding of the skull with barely a comb on top makes for a bald appearance. The bevor gives the armet a double-chin look adding to the heaviness. The collar around the armet has etched into it “1540”. The one piece of armor that stands out the most, as with most Greenwich armor beginning around this time, is the left pauldron that creates an exaggerated bowed effect protecting the left side while fighting with the right hand. Every plate of armor from the armet, the tassets (skirt armor for the front), to the sabatons—which were lost and replaced with wooden copies—has a smooth transition

without breaking any planes as if it was sculpted without any grooves or crevices making it look like one plate of metal. On the pauldrons, breastplate, gorget, and tassets we can see rivets gilded gold. On the bevor neck strap, and on the lower pauldrons, we can see rivets surrounded by six smaller rivets creating a rose image. It could possibly be the Tudor rose by making the rivets look like part of the decoration. The gilding surrounding the borders on the tassets, vambraces, mitten gauntlets, the armet, pauldrons, and the couters are the only forms of exterior decoration and make a contrast to the polished



steel, but would have been more noticeable after the original heating of the steel making the armor look black. Most of the gilding has rubbed off the armet particularly the visor and other random places throughout the armor. The gilt etching comprises of Classical foliage scrolls throughout the armor and on the arm defenses we can see sphinxes, Triton as a merman (sea messenger and son of Poseidon), the arms of England possessed by other mermen and mermaids and cherubs, all attributed to Hans Holbein the Younger who returned to England as Henry's painter in 1532. If he did not directly lay hands on the armor, then his drawings laid the groundwork for the decoration.

Henry needed a new armor tailored to fit his now larger size now that he was pushing 50—far too old to participate in the games and we do not know why exactly he commissioned such a harness and if he ever wore it. We do know that he wanted it for his last hosted tournament held on the first of May also known as May Day in 1540. If he had worn it, then Henry would have been a fearsome sight with the contrast of the blackened armor with the gilding glowing in the sunlight.

Conclusion

Much of the English armor that Henry VIII commissioned from the Almain Royal Armory has smooth two-dimensional surfaces as opposed to the embossment of the Italians and the fluting of the Germans. Henry's 1540 armor serves as the standard of his armor design, with flat plated armor, thin gilded borders, and elongated pauldrons. Henry did not focus too much on sculptural decoration; he merely retained the engraving, the etching and gilding.

Many of the Greenwich products were blackened so as to highlight the brass rivets and the gildings as we have seen from Henry's 1540 armor. This was a common design in Northern Europe, but the king's love of gold surmounted in the de Genouilhac armor with the whole armor gilded in gold that had never before been seen across the Channel. The simplicity of the blackened armor and the simple parallel lining of the gold and brass bordering remain a Greenwich design. This plainness is British. English/Greenwich armets were very distinct about having interchangeable parts for the visors. As we learned from the 1540 armet, the Greenwich armorers included a latching mechanism, a cylinder type piece of metal on the bottom right of the bevor that kept the visor locked. The visor for this armet had the upper hooked beak that was solely an English design that stayed in use until after the reign of Elizabeth.

Henry VIII's subjects did not want to anger the by commissioning armor that matched or was superior to the king's for that could be considered as a challenge to the English throne. It was all too risky to make elaborate armor from an armory founded by the king. It would only be until after Henry's death in 1547 that the English court could

commission armor that was more elaborate than that of the late king. Even then, the English patrons kept to the English tradition of simplicity by having flat surfaced armor with only two-dimensional decoration. Gilding, engraving, and etching stayed the standard all the way to the English Civil War of 1644.

ATTACK THE PAINTING

HENRY VIII DRESSED IN ARMOR
FOR THE BATTLE OF THE SPURS



There is an oil painting in the Royal Collection that was intended for Whitehall Castle and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum owned by Queen Elizabeth II, which depicts a brief moment during one of the many-armed conflicts between England and France.[1] The painting is titled *The Battle of the Spurs* (figure 1), and is dated 1513. We do not know who painted it or what workshop the artist could have come from, although it is possible that the artist came from Flanders or Germany. Nothing much can be said about this painting other than that Henry VIII commissioned the work and that it is a painting of an English victory in a French campaign. Despite the lack of documentation for this painting, it does show the visual aid needed to suggest what was happening during Henry's invasion of France in 1513. This painting also clarifies what sort of armor the English army wore, particularly the king. This essay will analyze the events leading to this engagement, identify the contents of the painting *The Battle of the Spurs*, including the armor worn by the monarch and his comrades through armor previously mentioned in my catalog. *The Battle of the Spurs* can teach us about English armor production in the sixteenth century under the Almain Royal Armory at Greenwich. I also intend to address the possible origins of this painting by comparing it to two other battle images; a German engraving and an Italian Renaissance painting.

Before describing the armor in the painting, I want to first give some historical background as to why the Battle of the Spurs occurred. As Henry V had done in 1415 during the climax of the Hundred Years War, Henry VIII wanted to challenge and excel in another invasion of France. Henry V lost all the land he conquered at the end of the

[1] Royal Collection Trust. royalcollection.org.uk/collection/406784/the-battle-of-the-spurs, Accessed 34 March, 2014

war, but Henry VIII saw himself as a descendant of Henry V (but had no blood relation) who had been divinely appointed to rule France, and saw the French as the enemy as they have always been in English Medieval history. This was a very ambitious claim, a claim that was once executed and failed, but Henry VIII was eager to have a campaign in France as past English kings had done before him.[2] Henry knew that his army stood no match against Louis XII (the king of France in 1513) and fighting a war in France was not going to succeed unless he had foreign help. What Henry VIII needed was to find another enemy of the French who would be willing to supply troops. The Holy Roman Empire under the rule of Maximilian I had past aggression against the French involving land disputes as the English did. Henry knew that if he could convince Maximilian to invade France, then Henry and Maximilian would split the conquered provinces as the outcome of the invasion.[3] But before Henry could convince Maximilian to join his cause in Europe, he had to convince parliament and other English nobles to raise an army. Thirty-four nobles accepted Henry's invitation to sail across the Channel not to fight for glory or adventure, but mostly to gain recognition from the King so they could receive titles, political favors, and make small alliances with other nobles going on the campaign.[4] This type of relationship would last for the rest of Henry's when he visited his subjects' estates and determined if their hosting capabilities matched their loyalties.[5] Bitter rivals between English provinces and Henry's poor tax revenue policies prevented

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[2] Clifford S.L. Davies, "Henry VIII and Henry V; The Wars in France." *The End of the Middle Ages?: England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (Gloucestershire, England: Thrupp & Stroud, 1998), 236
[3] Ibid. 238
[4] Steven Gunn, *Henry VIII: Arms & the Man, 1509-2009*. Eds. Graeme Rimer, Thom Richardson, J.D.P. Cooper. (Leeds, UK: Royal Armouries, 2009), 43
[5] Niel Samman, *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy, Piety*. Ed. Diarmaid MacCulloch. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 65

him from having a standing army, but he was able to raise the army he needed by having his subjects see the French as a common enemy[6]. All of this was possible with the help of Thomas Wosley who became Henry's primary counselor in 1511 in domestic matters and who was very effective in convincing English noblemen to side with the King.[7]

Henry landed near Calais with 30,000 men-at-arms in the early summer of 1513[8] and met with Maximilian shortly afterwards to coordinate their plans to take the selected provinces of Tournai, Thérouanne, Normandy, and Gascony. They first laid siege to Thérouanne in August and then Tournai in September. Southeast of Thérouanne in the outskirts of a village called Bony, Henry's scouts Sir John Peachy, Henry Bourchier Earl of Essex, and Sir John Neville spotted French cavalry approaching from the south riding towards Thérouanne. Henry and Maximilian mounted a small force to meet the French cavalry. We need to remember that painting *The Battle of the Spurs* is an interpretation of a historical event and we therefore should affiliate it with fact as we will see with armor design.

Before we enter into the fighting, we must first analyze the terrain and buildings as most strategists would before engaging the enemy as to know the avenues of approach. In the top center of the painting, we see the city of Thérouanne spelled "Terwaen" on the canvas. The city contains a Gothic cathedral in the center with a rose window and flying buttresses, a Romanesque tower to the right, and circular turreted stone ramparts surrounding all sides. There are three siege encampments. The first and largest is directly

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[6] Gunn, *Arms & the Man*, 43
[7] Arthur D. Sharp, "The Story of the Greenwich Armoury," Transactions of the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society, (London: Blackheath Press, Vol. 3, 1929), 151
[8] Gunn, *Arms & the Man*, 44

in front of the city adjacent to what appears to be a monastery, a decent structure to house Henry and Maximilian during their siege and conduct their strategies. The second camp is right of the city behind a river, and the third is hidden in the thick of trees in the right center of the canvas adjacent to a rocky ridge and a castle or keep. In the left center of the canvas, there are no camps, only rocky terrain with a lonely keep on a small hilltop. The main terrain features rolling hills, a winding river, and scattered groves of trees; there is no flat area to engage the enemy in a conventional battle.

In the center of the fighting, we see Henry clad in a black harness with gold decoration on horseback acknowledging, the surrender of the French Chevalier Bayard, who kneels before him.[9] We do not see Maximilian anywhere in the painting, possibly because it would have been a great distraction for Henry to share the canvas with an emperor. Henry has his head downward facing Bayard, visor up so as to see his face, and his right arm raised looking as though he is stopping his horse abruptly for the French knight. Bayard dismounted from his horse but his horse is nowhere to be seen. It may have gotten scared and galloped off amidst the fighting. Dressed in a golden harness, Bayard almost disappears in front of Henry's barded horse. Bayard has sheathed his sword and has taken off his armet and his right gauntlet to have a hasty parley, but a humble moment with the King. The armet that Bayard took off lays at the foreground in the center-right and the right gauntlet has disappeared. Henry was careful how to represent himself with the French prisoner. They are not at eye level, as it would make both figures equal, therefore challenging Henry in his own painting. The only approach was to make the relationship obvious with Henry as the victor of the two, even though

[9] Royal Collection Trust

Henry's victory was apparent with the English and Imperials fighting under the red cross of St. George (an English banner) as seen in the far left.[10] The French banner of a white cross on red could be dedicated to St George too (it would have been confusing and dangerous to have the exact same banner on opposing sides), as he was a very popular image in all of Western Europe. Since the English had already adopted the banner as their own the French just used opposite colors because they also valued St George.

Another painting titled *The Meeting of Henry VIII and Emperor Maximilian I* (ca. 1545; Figure 2) has led many art historians in the past to believe that it is Maximilian on horseback greeting Henry on the field of *The Battle of the Spurs*. Henry and Maximilian are greeting each other for the first time at the beginning stage of the invasion of France. The armor both monarchs are wearing match identically to the armor in *the Battle of the Spurs* with Maximilian wearing his gold and black armor and Henry wearing his gold armor. In *the Meeting of Henry VIII and Emperor Maximilian I*, we see three registers of events leading up to The Battle of the Spurs. The first register in the front of the canvas shows Henry on the right and Maximilian on the left clasping hands surrounded by their bodyguards armed with lances with the Imperials wearing sallets and the English wearing the German and Italian style armets[11], as seen in *the Battle of the Spurs*. The second register shows Henry and Maximilian side-by-side again with their pikemen and billmen flanking them on both sides while organizing their plans for the campaign. Both monarchs' field tents are visible behind the infantry with their coat-of-arms embroidered

[10] C.G. Cruickshank, *Army Royal: Henry VIII's Invasion of France 1513*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 114

[11] Topias Capwell, *Masterpieces of the European Arms and Armour in the Wallace Collection*, (London: The Wallace Collection, 2011), 66

on the cloth. Maximilian's is the two-headed black eagle on the left and on the right is Henry's coat-of-arms with the lion and *fluer de lis* insignia flanked by the Dragon of Wales and a white greyhound. Directly in front of both tents we see wheeled artillery cannons used to bombard enemy lines or walled defenses. The third register illustrates a clash between the allied English and Imperial cavalry with the French cavalry at the Battle of the Spurs. This depiction of the battle does not focus on any strategic elements, just two opposing forces riding into each other. The fourth register shows the two cities Tournai and Thérouanne, the two cities that Henry was successful in capturing. The city in the upper left is labeled "Tournai" and Thérouanne is in the upper center, surrounded by a wall of wooden stakes (to stop cavalry charges), artillery, and siege camps as needed to besiege a large city. Another unknown artist did this painting, but it does succeed in identifying forces in both French campaign paintings and gives a brief history of Henry's first military operation as king of England.

I too was convinced throughout my research that *The Meeting of Henry VIII and Emperor Maximilian I* supported Maximilian as the mounted knight and Henry kneeling in *The Battle of the Spurs*. I then questioned the legitimacy of the figure placements: Why would Henry dismount and meet Maximilian without an armet and the right gauntlet—his fighting hand during a battle? The only reason a soldier would do that is if he were desperate to show that he did not wish to fight anymore and be spared, which makes Bayard surrendering to Henry a more logical take on the painting.

In *the Battle of the Spurs*, the armor worn by the Imperials, the English, and the French is identical. Each knight making contact with the enemy has the same bluish black tone of armor (as it looked when newly forged), and has the same robin-beak-like armet

similar to what Henry commissioned in 1515 with his silvered and engraved armor from catalog entry number five. In fact, it is a mirror image of Henry's armor in *the Battle of the Spurs* to include the rippled-like tonlet, the pauldron's deflectors, and the bevor and visor of the armet. We know that Henry's 1515 armor design came from Germany and his armor was most likely German in the Battle of the Spurs since no royal workshop existed in 1513. It would have been the same for most of Henry's comrades.

It is rather difficult to identify which side the armored troops are fighting for, and the only way to tell is if they are carrying a banner, or entering or fleeing the field. It also depends what insignia is on the horse's bard such as the white cross on black left (maybe a St. Piran insignia for the French) of Henry, red plaid on black top right of Henry, and golden Hellenistic figures on blue to the right of Bayard. One fight that I feel is worth emphasizing is that between two knights to the left of Henry and Bayard. The knight on top and riding a black horse has his sword in-hand with his arm to the square ready to strike a blow to the knight opposite him. This knight on the black horse, even though he is fully covered in steel, looks as though he has mobile agility. The opposite knight on the red-brown steed carries two blades which is very rare in combat for a fully suited knight. This may be because the knight's horse has been cut down by either a spear or sword and is half-limp with the head and neck flopping on the ground and the knight looks as though he is jumping off the horse with his toes barely touching the ground. His back faces us, revealing the details of the backplate and the pauldrons overlapping with the highlights of the rivets and the ridges of the cuirass following from the breastplate to the backplate. Notice that neither knight has a shield; in fact, there are no shields in this painting. Full protection during combat evolved with the improvements of metal plating

led to a shieldless age in the mid fifteenth century. Shields were no longer necessary by the sixteenth century.[12] Not having a shield gives a mounted knight more flexibility so he can move quickly.

On the far right we see the French fleeing the field under the red banner embroidered with a white cross with their backs to the English and the Imperials. This is English Tudor propaganda at its finest as Henry wanted to exploit his successes as much as possible in northern France to anyone who visited Whitehall palace, which were members of parliament, subjects, or foreign dignitaries. The event, the Battle of the Spurs, is looked upon as a grand battle that paved the way for Henry's military successes in his later life, but it was not that large of a battle; it is considered more as a skirmish with only 40 casualties.[13] The climax of the engagement in the painting shows five bodies: (going from left to right) the first knight lies on his breastplate with a white cross painted on the backplate , the second looks like the lower half of his body is being crushed by the rump of a horse, the third is lying underneath Henry's horse's belly with his hands over his head, the fourth is being carried by a fellow knight and a page, and the fifth knight has his armet off laying in the bottom right corner of the canvas. Adding to the propaganda of a just campaign and fight we will focus on the fourth deceased knight carried by a knight and page. Most monarchs believed that they were divinely called to fight against his enemies, and dying for that cause would make martyrs. This knight lays limp with a darkened and decaying face in his comrades' arms with his armet off looks as though he was taken from a scene of the *Descension of the Cross* with the knight's body

[12] Claude Blair. *European Armour: circa 1066 to circa 1700*. (London: Batsford, 1958), 182
[13] Cruickshank, *Henry VIII's Invasion*, 119

similar to that of Christ carried by John the Apostle and Joseph of Arimathea; this was a very popular characteristic in Renaissance England with influences from Flemish and German painters across the Channel characterizing the ideal model of sacrifice for Christianity or the king.

Henry not only brought cavalry to this engagement. To keep his security intact, Henry brought with him billmen (a spear with a long blade and hook meant to dismount cavalry) to fight off enemy cavalry in case any flanking French came at the sides or rear.[14] We can barely see them in the painting as faint dabbles of painted highlights above Henry's head. The French knights would have avoided them at all cost. Other non-cavalry units that Henry brought with him to the fight were mounted archers for his own bodyguards and bowmen and soldiers armed with firearms whom he and Maximilian placed on a nearby hill, giving the English and Imperial knights covering fire.[15] We do not see the bowmen in the painting, but we can clearly see a mounted archer (between Henry and the billmen) ready to release an arrow at the fleeing French. He may be aiming at the knight who is carrying the *fleur de lis* banner or a French knight close to it.

This painting was a source for political propaganda, but the effectiveness of this painting as propaganda was short-lived. In the *Histoire du bon Chevalier,* the French give a detailed account of what happened in the battle and why the French cavalry left in such a hurry.[16] The French cavalry had no infantry to support them in a fight, and their mission was to get supplies into Thérouanne under the cover of darkness in order to avoid any English cavalry patrols during the day. However, the French cavalry commander, de

[14] Davies, "Henry VIII and Henry V", 246
[15] Cruickshank, *Henry VIII's Invasion,* 114
[16] Ibid. 114

Piennes, got lost and ran into the English cavalry.[17] Under the false assumption, the English knights and Henry thought that the French ran away in fear after the battle. Louis XII had ordered le Piennes not to engage the enemy and to break contact quickly if they did.[18] Henry should have considered himself fortunate that he never had a battle with the French army that was fighting in the Italian states with Louis against Pope Julius II.[19] If Henry had, then his army would have been annihilated. We should give Henry some credit for planning his invasion of France while the French army was not there to defend it. The events leading to this battle certainly took place and Henry's excitement for a victory was over-celebrated, but the painting shows the climax of the English and the Imperials defeating the French. In lesser words, the victors commission paintings as to why Henry commissioned this painting because his siege in Thérouanne was a success.

A few weeks after the Battle of the Spurs, the French garrison at Thérouanne consisting of approximately 4,000 men surrendered on 23 August 1513 and Henry allowed them to join another French army to the south.[20] This was a very chivalric act that Henry did having been obsessed with fighting the French, but he must have known that showing mercy to the enemy would have benefited himself if he were on the other side of a surrender in the future; this was very courteous for a conqueror. Unfortunately, Henry would never enjoy his newly prized city because the allied rivalry between himself and Maximilian led them to destroy the town so neither monarch would feel resentful.[21] Henry would not have the same courtesy of a friendly ally with Maximilian's successor

[17] Ibid. 114
[18] Cruickshank, *Henry VIII's Invasion*, 115
[19] Ibid. 105
[20] Ibid. 117
[21] Ibid. 118

Charles V who convinces Henry to invade France again in 1522 leaving Henry to do the fighting and Charles gaining the captured land.[22] The English and Imperials then moved on to Tournai and the city surrendered to Henry without a siege.[23] To celebrate his victory, he paraded through the streets as liberator dressed in full armor.[24] It is possible that Henry had brought with him parade armor to match the occasion, and would have changed into battle armor when the time called for it—wearing it when conducting military operations and engaging in combat.

The results from the invasion of 1513 were bittersweet for Henry. He did not fight the large-scale battle that he desired for as Henry V had at Agincourt, and Henry did not even take part directly in the fighting at *the Battle of the Spurs* at the request of his war counsel.[25] It must have been distasteful for Henry to know that he did not get the victory he wanted over the French and hearing the news from northern England that there was a large-scale battle and victory against the Scots at Flodden (an enemy that he did not believe was worth invading). What made his invasion more distasteful was the truce with 1514 with Louis that stopped Henry's campaign and gave back Tournai and the rest of his conquered provinces to Francis I in 1518 leading to the peace-settling tournament *the Field of Cloth of Gold* outside of Calais in 1520.[26] In the end, Henry's dream campaign against France and victories were short-lived and so were his two later invasions in 1522 and 1544 having to return his captured provinces. Fortunately, France never retaliated to

[22] Gunn, *Arms & the Man*, 45
[23] Davies, "Henry VIII and Henry V", 238
[24] Gunn, *Arms & the Man*, 44
[25] Cruickshank, *Henry VIII's Invasion*, 114, 118
[26] Gunn, *Arms & the Man*, 45

the point of invading English soil across the Channel, meaning Henry never fought a battle in his own kingdom.[27] Henry simply could not win in France.

I will now address the possible origins of the painter of *the Battle of the Spurs* by comparing it to an Italian Renaissance painting containing Italian armor and a German engraving with German armor. The first of these two is a battle painting titled *the Battle of San Romano* (Figure 3) by Paolo Uccello (ca. 1440). It is very unlikely whoever painted *The Battle of the Spurs* was a student of Uccello's; however, we must look at the layout of both paintings and the armor to understand what techniques and principles this painter used on the English painting. The most obvious similarity is the left side of both paintings. Both *the Battle of the Spurs* and *the Battle of San Romano* have profile-mounted lancers overlapping thickly facing toward the center of the canvases. These lancers set the pace for the viewer's gaze since most of these battle paintings start from left to right. We can identify the Florentine lancers from the orange tree (the Florentine insignia) behind them[28], and in *the Battle of the Spurs*, trumpeters wearing the English monarch's coat-of-arms of the lion and the *fleur de lis* follow the English lancers. The layout of the landscape and the battle are evenly balanced. In *the Battle of the Spurs*, we see the engagement in the lower half of the canvas, and the background with the landscape and the cityscape fill in the negative space. The battle keeps our eyes fixed and weighed down so we do not linger too long away from the skirmish.

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[27] Geoffrey Elton, "War and the English in the Reign of Henry VIII." *War, Strategy, and International Politics; Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard*. (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1992), 2

[28] The National Gallery, "The Battle of San Romano," http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/paolo-uccello-the-battle-of-san-romano, (Accessed 9 April, 2014).

Both paintings have knights wearing the standard armet with the robin-beak visor indicating that the mixing of German and Italian armets was common among the French and English knights at the Battle of the Spurs. It was common for the French and English to borrow the styles that the Germans and Italians made in their armor making coat-of-arms and banners more important. There are no tournament helms from my catalog in either painting as it would have limited the knights' flexibility and vision in combat, but *the Battle of San Romano* have similar armets as to Henry's silvered and engraved armor.

The Battle of San Romano has precisely the same format of figures in a landscape. The bottom half has the battle with the Florentine Niccolò da Tolentino mounted on a white steed leading his knights against the Sienese[29], and the upper half is a foreshortened landscape that gives the viewer a break from the fighting but quickly leads him back down to the battle. One vital similarity both of these paintings have is the focal point. A white horse is in both battle paintings acting as the focal point to draw the viewer in; Tolentino on his white steed and an unknown English knight in a fighting frenzy on his white steed in the far left of *the Battle of the Spurs* canvas. Henry VIII blends into the battle and he is not that noticeable, so the knight on the white steed acts as the anchor to draw the viewer to the king when reading from left to right. *The Battle of San Romano* has a plastic appearance with solid colors and lines, and the limited shading schemes make the figures and the landscape appears rather flat. *The Battle of the Spurs* has a very natural approach to painting with more value and shading (yet it does not risk in foreshortening its figures as Uccello has in *the Battle of San Romano*). Both paintings stay with the plane format with all of the figures, and there is no recession.

[29] The National Gallery

The second image to compare to *the Battle of the Spurs* is Lucas Cranach the Elder's wood engraving, *Tournament with Swords* (ca. 1509; figure 4). This is a self-contained melee with mounted knights (wearing the same armets and decorated tonlets as Henry's silvered and engraved armor) and referees with wooden batons keeping the knights in check with the chivalric rules of the game. This print and *the Battle of the Spurs* both have an entangling design between the opponents, but *Tournament with Swords* is more complicating as the knights mistily blend together, which makes it confusing to notice who is fighting whom. In the *Tournament with Swords* we see over two dozen knights fighting and mixing with one another in their armor, swords, plumes, shattered lances, making an unrecognizable mesh of objects randomly put on a surface. There is not much of a background with only the base of a structure and spectators looking outside from the stage and a small half circle window to the right. Cranach recognized the commotion in a tournament by depicting the melee as the most complicating composition imaginable. *The Battle of the Spurs* has the same frenzied approach to a melee with the use of color, which makes differentiating the knights easier than in a monochromatic print. One item that we see in *the Battle of the Spurs* that we do not see in *the Battle of San Romano* nor *Tournament with Swords* are knights who have lost their armets and continue fighting. Tolentino does not count in *the Battle of San Romano* because he never had an armet to begin with and wears a silk turban to signify his authority and class. He may have worn an armet, but the turban helps identify him on canvas.

The tournament was an essential part of aristocratic life to train for war and to celebrate times of peace. Mock-battles much like the one seen in *Tournament with*

Swords were carefully planned and supervised so as to have no accidental fatalities[30], which is why the print has mounted officials carrying batons trying to interject amongst the combatants. Melee battles like the one in the print were common as a way of team building for those fighting and a more spectacular scene for the audience's entertainment; similar to ancient Rome except for the part of actually trying to kill each other for the entertainment of the public. The biggest difference between knights fighting in the tournament and gladiators in the amphitheater was the knights were nobles and the gladiators were slaves. Two items that drastically lowered deaths in the tournament by the sixteenth century were the dulled sword and the blunted lance tip (a coronel) to knock an opponent off his horse rather than stab him.[31] Cranach engraved broken lances on the ground, which was the first weapon used in a melee, then the knights would draw their swords, and depending on the rules, the swords would not be sharp, like those in *Tournament with Swords*.

There are no tournament officials or referees in the painting, *the Battle of the Spurs* to enforce the rules of chivalry; neither bystanders nor an audience are present to acknowledge or praise the winners; some knights are fighting without an armet, making a safety hazard, and slain knights lay among the fighting. The size of the engagement matches the number needed for a tournament melee with over 40 figures on the canvas—the same number of dead on the actual field outside of Thérouanne. One significant similarity is the knights in *the Battle of the Spurs* and *Tournament with Swords* are all equipped with the same weapons. Unlike Cranach's woodcut where all lances have

[30] Helmut Nickel, "The Tournament", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, No. 4 (1973/1974), 67
[31] Ibid. 69

broken, the lances in the painting are either carried by the English knights entering the field on the left and the French leaving the field on the right while the knights currently fighting are only armed with sharpened swords with shattered lances on the ground—with the exception of the mounted archer mentioned earlier. It is always best to have the upper hand when choosing weapons. Bow beats sword.

This motif of the knight on a white horse in *the Battle of the Spurs* references the iconic image of Saint George slaying the dragon, which was one of the most popular images of knighthood. One Early Renaissance painting that matches this knight is Bernat Martorell's *Saint George Killing the Dragon*, (ca. 1434; figure 5). Both images have the knight dressed in full plated armor mounted on a white horse, horse galloping on its hind legs, the knight looking downward as he slays his foe, and the knights' legs are extended bracing for the impact. One item in both paintings that makes the iconography of St. George more relevant in *The Battle of the Spurs* is the cross of St. George. St. George in Martorell's painting wears a tunic over his cuirass with the St. George cross of red on white embroidered into it. During the Crusades, Christian knights—associated with the Templars—wore the cross of St. George when fighting against the "infidels" and followed the orders and laws of chivalry throughout their lives.[32] Spain, where Martorell was from, embellished the cross of St. George as they bordered Islamic/Moorish kingdoms and were constantly fighting making leeway for chivalric orders to emerge.[33] Some of the most popular orders were the Order of the Golden Fleece in Hapsburg Burgundy, the Order of the Porcupine in France, and the Order of Santiago in Spain.

[32] Helmut Nickel, "The Art of Chivalry", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, No. 4 (1973/1974), 55-60
[33] Ibid. 55-60

Unfortunately, England's orders were few with only the Order of the Garter being the only internationally notable assembly, which led Henry to join the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1505.[34]

In *The Battle of the Spurs*, the English knight does not wear this insignia, but the St. George banner flapping to the rear signifies that this knight is directly related to the iconic image of the angelic warrior representing England. Henry could have depicted himself on a white horse in the exact same pose, but that may have been too closely sacrilege. Henry himself has the exact same pose as Martorell's *St. George*, but does not cross the line of having any items relating to the saint on himself such as the red cross, or on a white horse. It does indirectly compare Henry as St. George slaying the dragon who is Bayard in a merciful way because Henry raised his arm as if gripping a lance, but it is only the reins of his horse. Whoever painted this battle painting paid close attention to detail to have the English representing St. George and vice versa.

St. George and the English knight are wearing the exact same armor as found in *the Battle of San Romano*, and their armor matches to that of Henry's silvered and engraved armor. Again, the main feature that is identical with all three armors is the armet. St. George's armet has a bevor, a robin-beak visor, and a rondel. His entire armor from the pauldrons to the sabatons have a black toned surface that is a natural occurrence, making painting the armor black unnecessary. This style of armet and armor has been a popular style for nearly a century with first the Italians and Germans, the Spanish, the French, and would be the foundation for English armor.

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[34] Thom Richardson, *The Armour & Arms of Henry VIII*. (United Kingdom: Royal Armories Museum, 2002), 11

Now that we have discussed *The Battle of the Spurs* and compared it to other artworks, we can now analyze the armor worn by Henry in the painting and compare it to English armor emanating from his royal armory at Greenwich. By the time Henry founded his armory at Greenwich in 1514, Maximilian had inherited armories and founded his own armories that were superior to Henry's.[35, 36] We also know that Henry sent out a number of envoys, one mentioned in record was Sir H. Jerningham, to scout out armories in Germany and Italy and report back to him what competition the he was up against.[37] What Jerningham reported was that Henry was outclassed and our-resourced. Henry would have had a difficult time buying off Maximilian's armorers to move across the Channel for lesser pay, which means he needed to find independent armorers not under contract with Maximilian. English armor in 1513 really did not have an English identity unless it was cheaply made by the current Armour's Guild in London and if a monarch's ancestors passed the armor down the family. This would have made the English armor out of date compared to the Continent who could afford to decorate their armor. This is a negative introduction to English armor, but the English aristocracy did not have the armorers or the resources that the Continent had making finely crafted armor. Before 1514, English nobleman had to hire armories (under Maximilian) across the Channel to have any fine armor in their possession, but no foreign armorers from my research were found to have set up an armory in England before 1509.[38] Henry's armor in *The Battle of the Spurs* has the polished, blackened tone of newly forged armor with the

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[35] Sharp, "The Story of the Greenwich Armoury,", 154
[36] Helmut Nickel, "Gentleman's Jewelry", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, No. 4 (1973/1974), (pages not cited online)
[37] Sharp, "The Story of the Greenwich Armoury," 154

gold trimmings (and the figure is too small on the canvas making it difficult to add any mythological creatures for a viewer to see). Henry is wearing battle armor so there were probably no highly decorated figures etched or engraved on the armor. We can see little emphasis put into the pauldrons with deflectors on top of his shoulders bordered with gold trimming. Henry's horse also has a well detailed bard and the laminations over the crest are finely polished, and the plates around the neck overlap in a dragon-scale-like manner giving full protection. Gold was Henry's favorite color so it is no surprise that all his and his horse armor contained either gold as trimming.

As I have already described in *The Battle of the Spurs*, all of the combatants' armor besides Henry and Bayard look exactly alike. Each knight is wearing the standard harness of the armet comprised of parts listed from top to bottom: the skull of the helmet, the visor and bevor (selected knights have plume), the gorget, pauldrons, vambraces, couters, gauntlets, breastplate, cuirass and backplate, fauld, tassets, cuisses, poleyns, greaves, and sabatons. All of the remaining plates are riveted with lames and laminating of overlapping plates. The artist carefully painted the armor with great attention to detail to the glares on the armor, the rivets in to the lames, and the fluting on the Imperial knights' pauldrons. Both the French and the English focused heavily on importing armor from Southern Germany and Milan making both English and French armor looking alike since Milan and Germany worked together on finalizing designs. After the victory at *The Battle of the Spurs* and the campaign, Henry was able to open up further relations with Maximilian,[39] resulting in an imperial gift from armorer Konrad Suesenhofer in 1514.[40]

[39] Robert Lacey, The Life & Times of Henry VIII, (New York: Cross Rivers Press, A Division of Abbeville Press Inc., 1972), 33

Having this armor in Henry's collection further motivated him to upgrade his Greenwich workshop to the same standard as those across the Channel.

The Battle of the Spurs gives a clear depiction of German armor design with the knights wearing sparrow beak visors on their armets, and the fluting on the gauntlets, breastplates and armets of the Imperial lancers, also called the Maximilian style. Nothing in this painting is consistent with English armor except its plainness. To put it frankly, English armor did not exist when the artist completed the painting. Looking back at Henry's armor, we can see that his armor has been blackened, which was a common practice in Northern Europe to make the armor highly contrasted with gold or brass gilding in sunlight making it glimmer.[41] This makes me hesitant to say that Henry wore this armor during the battle because it was meant for parade or ceremony. Armor will not become blackened until late in Henry's reign in the 1540s during the peak of his workshop. Armor stays a dark hue naturally after firing, but painters usually would coat the armor black or fire the armor longer to get a darker hue. To make armor lighter, the armorer would need to extensively and repetitively polish the surface. By the end of Henry's life in 1547 the Greenwich workshop had made a name for itself with armor that matched the patron's ornamentation and used new features such as the low comb on all armets, the extended-curved deflectors of the pauldrons, the curved-pointed visors, and simple two-dimensional decoration with only linear designs on the plates. The English were more focused engraving than sculpting armor, which the Germans were well known

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[40] Alan Williams & Anthony de Reuck, *The Royal Armory at Greenwich 1515-1649: A History of its Technology*, (Leeds, Royal Armories, 1995), 27.
[41] Thom Richardson. "An Early Greenwich Armet." Arms & Armour, Vol. 1, N 1 (2009), 11

for, but they did not sculpt armor for battle either, making the armor in *The Battle of the Spurs* German.

Armor for Henry was a valuable status symbol as most armor was during the sixteenth century. The most spectacular armor was usually reserved for the tournament, but most notably the parade. Henry dearly loved tournaments throughout his reign[42] and would always find a reason to hold one whether for a wedding, a political anniversary, or to awe a foreign dignitary. In most parts of Europe, armor was regarded as wearing treasure[43] as most tournament and parade armor were gilded in gold or silver and only affordable to aristocrats, usually kings and emperors. The armor worn by Henry in *The Battle of the Spurs* would have been considered field armor because it was armor worn for battle. A monarch would not risk losing his most precious armor in a battle, so it is better to fight in a harness that is easily repairable and replicable. The artist could get away with painting parade armor in a history battle painting. Propaganda and adornment go hand-in-hand because the armor that Henry is wearing is fancy with the gilding and blackening, but does not have sculptural decoration. It is possible that any artist commissioned for a battle painting could paint the hero in parade armor since parade armor cannot be damaged in a painting, but it depends on the patron if he wants to mix parade, tournament, and field armor in the wrong setting to make him look more heroic and godly.

It is hard to say that English armor really was English throughout the sixteenth century, particularly under Henry VIII's reign. He hired armorers, locksmiths, painters,

[42] Nickel. "Gentleman's Jewelry" (pages not cited online)
[43] Ibid. (pages not cited online)

gilders, and other craftsmen to sail across the Channel and work for him in his Royal Armory at Greenwich. *The Battle of the Spurs* lays out the characterization and classification of armor at the time of Henry's first and most successful battles in his first French campaign. English armor did not get its own identity overnight, but Henry's twenty-eight reign left a lot of work for a royal workshop to accomplish and a standard to keep.



Figure 1: Unknown artist, *The Battle of the Spurs*, ca. 1513, 4’ x 8.5’, Collection of Queen Elizabeth II, London





Details of *The Battle of the Spurs*



Figure 2: Unknown artist, *The Meeting of Henry VIII and Emperor Maximilian I*, ca. 1545



Figure 3: Paolo Uccello, *The Battle of San Romano*, ca. 1440



Figure 4: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Tournament with Swords*, 1509



Figure 5: Bernat Martorell, *Saint George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1434/35



Detail of *The Battle of the Spurs*

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