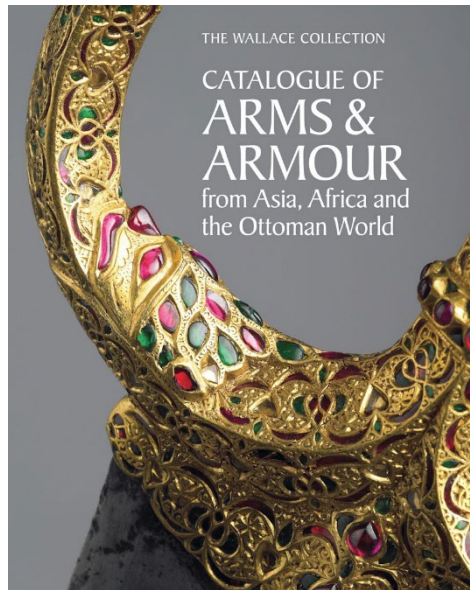


Over five centuries of arms & armour from Asia, Africa and the Ottoman World in one landmark book, two decades in the making



This month, a new and comprehensive catalogue of arms and armour - from bejewelled weapons to gold-embellished armour - will be made available as a beautifully illustrated hardback book.

[*The Wallace Collection Catalogue of Arms and Armour from Asia, Africa and the Ottoman World*](#) features over 1200 objects across 550 pages, complete with information on materials and provenance, as well as many richly detailed photographs.

From an Iranian helmet in the form of a demon's head to a Mughal dagger inlaid with diamonds, emeralds and rubies and an Indian sword in the style of an ascetic's crutch, the book spans arms, armour and objects from the 15th century to the mid 19th century.

It is the first time ever the Wallace Collection's holding of arms, armour and decorative arts from beyond Western Europe has been catalogued in such a way.

The artistic triumph and technical functionality that these objects embody will give readers a unique window into history, with a close-up look at civilisations through the incredible arms and armour they adorned themselves with.

The pieces are drawn from Africa, Asia and the Ottoman world, primarily the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Most were acquired by Richard Seymour-Conway, 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800–1870) and Sir Richard Wallace (1818–1890), the art collector who bequeathed his collection to the nation. A history of how many of these objects were collected is covered in this book.

Appearing on the European art market, these objects' journeys were closely bound up with diplomatic exchange, trade and colonial expansion, particularly into India, Southeast Asia and North Africa.

Many of these objects are on display at the Wallace Collection and are also loaned out to galleries and museums around the world. Now, centuries of human history can be enjoyed and viewed from home and libraries with this detailed, thorough and wonderfully illustrated volume.

Stories behind their manufacture include a 19th century *kris* dagger from Java with its distinctive wavy-edged blade. Forged from meteoric iron at the palace of Surakata, it bears a pseudo-inscription of a repeated letter, strongly suggesting it was made for the export market.

Up-close details are investigated such as an Iranian *shamshir* by Husayn Sayyid Kuchaka which amusingly bears the Persian couplet "*Its tip is sharper than Plato's wit*" on its elegant steel blade.

An object's provenance, and the fascinating history that comes from objects passing through several hands, is also explored. One, a Caucasian dagger known as a *kindjal*, might even have been handled by Napoleon Bonaparte. According to the 1865 sale catalogue, it was gifted to the Emperor by a Circassian prince but was reportedly turned down as it lacked accompanying documentation.

These objects, and many more, are all brought together for the first time as a must-have for history lovers and arms and armour enthusiasts.

To coincide with the launch, on Friday 13 March and Saturday 14 March, the [Wallace Collection will hold a conference](#) bringing together leading experts in arms and armour, military history, art history and material culture.

The lineup of speakers, whose work spans prestigious academic and cultural institutions across the UK, Europe, Asia and North America, includes Dr Rachel Parikh, Curator of Islamic Art at the Dallas Museum of Art; Dr Jean-Baptiste Clais, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts at the Louvre; and Barnaby Phillips, journalist and author who formerly worked for the BBC and Al Jazeera English.

[Visitors can book single or multi-day tickets here.](#) Students receive a discounted price of £10 for a single day or £15 for both days.

The event will also be broadcast live from the museum on Zoom. All ticketholders will also receive a link to view a recording of the event, which will be available for two weeks.

Keith Downen, Curator of Arms and Armour at the Wallace Collection, says:

"This much-anticipated catalogue is the fruit of many years of work by the Wallace Collection team past and present. It forms an invaluable contribution to arms and armour scholarship, and provides us with a deeper understanding of the treasures in our care, and the journeys that brought them to London.

"The new studio photography illuminates the wondrous detail embellishing so many of these pieces, making the catalogue a visual feast to browse as well as a trove of information for researchers, collectors and enthusiasts. It's been a privilege to be one of the many people who have played a part in bringing this landmark book to publication."

The Wallace Collection Catalogue of Arms and Armour from Asia, Africa and the Ottoman World has been edited by Tom Richardson FSA, former deputy master at the Royal Armouries, and Paula Turner, also formerly of the Royal Armouries as Head of Publications.

It is published by Philip Wilson Publishers and is available from the [Wallace Collection shop and website](#). (£125). **Members receive 10% off.**

NOTES FOR EDITORS

IMAGES:

1. Helmet (*kulah khud*), Iran, 19th century © The Wallace Collection
2. Dagger (*khanjar*), North India, early 17th century © The Wallace Collection

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE

About the editors

Thom Richardson FSA worked as a curator of oriental art at the British Museum and Manchester City Art Gallery, then as a curator of armour and Asian collections at the Royal Armouries, retiring as deputy master in 2016. He has a PhD in history from the University of York published in 2016 as *The Tower Armoury in the Fourteenth Century*, is author of over 150 books and academic articles on arms and armour, and has been the editor of the *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society* and *Arms & Armour*. He is now retired and works as a consultant to museums in the UK and abroad while continuing to write about historical arms and armour.

Paula Turner has worked on a great variety of books, including a spell as head of publications at the Royal Armouries where arms and armour became something of a speciality. She is now concentrating on the study of coins from the ancient and early medieval periods, especially those of Rome and South Asia. For this she is preparing the second edition of her book, *Roman Coins from India*, and is the editor of the *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*.

About the Wallace Collection

As one of Britain's preeminent cultural institutions, the Wallace Collection is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th centuries by artists such as Titian, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of 18th-century French paintings and decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm. www.wallacecollection.org

Instagram: @wallacemuseum

Facebook: @wallacecollection

Twitter: @WallaceMuseum

YouTube: TheWallacecollection

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

Tracy Jones, Brera PR – tracy@brera-london.com / 01702 216658 / 07887
514984 / www.brera-london.com

As with all such projects, this beautiful, scholarly publication would not have been possible without the generous support of:

The Leverhulme Trust
Hutton McRoberts
Michael and Angela Cronk
Olympia Auctions
E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation
David and Molly Lowell Borthwick
Howard Ricketts
The John S Cohen Foundation
The Goldsmiths' Company
Sir Paul Ruddock
Pilgrim Trust
The Barakat Trust
Niels Arthur Andersen
Christian Levett
The Radcliffe Trust
Mrs Jan Jeffcoat in memory of David Jeffcoat
The Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust
Davinder Toor
The Aurelius Charitable Trust
Giles Ellwood and Philippe Sacerdot