

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer, Peter Wandel
(eds.). *Fighting, Hunting, Impressing: Arms and Armour
from the Islamic World 1500-1850*

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Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer, Peter Wandel (eds.). *Fighting, Hunting, Impressing: Arms and Armour from the Islamic World 1500-1850*. Copenhagen: Strandberg Publishing, 2021, 296 pp., 183 ill, ISBN: 9788792596109

- 1 Marking one of the largest special exhibitions dedicated to arms and armour from the Islamic world in Europe in recent decades, “*Fighting, Hunting, Impressing: Arms and Armour from the Islamic World 1500-1850*” was the first major post-pandemic exhibition organised by the David Collection in Copenhagen. Although it remained difficult for non-Danish residents to visit the exhibition in person due to the on-going travel restrictions, it will be remembered for its comprehensiveness thanks to the accompanied catalogue.
- 2 Edited by Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel, this lavishly illustrated 296-page book consists of seven chapter essays, followed by catalogue entries of 151 objects from the David Collection as well as other Danish collections, such as the National Museum of Denmark, Rosenborg Castle and Designmuseum Danmark. With three main themes in mind—fighting, hunting and impressing—each essay explores different aspects of armoury culture in the Islamic world: “The sword of Islam: concerning fighting and arms in the Koran and Hadith” (by Thomas Hoffmann); “Furusiyya: the teaching of chivalry in the Islamic world” (by Peter Wandel); “Inscriptions on Islamic weapons” (by Will Kwiatkowski); “From trophy to museum

object: collecting Islamic arms and armour” (by Joachim Meyer); “Fighting and warfare: means and ends” (by Kjeld von Folsach); “Hunting: the multifaceted pastime of princes” (by Peter Wandel); and “Impressing: the bloodless aspect of Islamic arms and armour” (by Joachim Meyer). Besides colour reproductions of all exhibits, supplemented by a few line drawings, appendices (including inscriptions, glossary and terminology) are particularly helpful for specialists and non-specialists alike to grasp the complexity and richness of the subject matter.

- 3 Among the topics under investigation, the chapter on Furusiyya, a chivalric code of the Muslim world, investigates this distinctive equestrian martial practice (pp. 24-29), while the catalogue also touches on the collection history and exhibition history of the arms and armour – both in the Islamic world and in the West (pp. 46-57).
- 4 In order to emphasise the artistic and cultural versatility of armouries, the display objects cover a wide range of regions, from North Africa in the West to India in the East, as well as a wide range of media, not only metalwork but also manuscript painting and other types of portable objects. The highlights from the Persian cultural lands include the saddle axe (no. 24), helmet (no. 61), saddle (no. 71) and the chamfron (no. 72), all from modern-day Iran and Central Asia, as well as an exquisite group of daggers (nos. 93-101 and 123-129) and priming flasks (no. 103-108), mostly from modern-day India.
- 5 This book deserves to be seen as the key publication of this subject in Europe. It should be consulted in tandem with the growing number of related publications in recent years, such as *Islamic Arms and Armor in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), *Islamic Arms and Armour* (Leeds: Royal Armouries, 2017) and *Furusiyya: The Art of Chivalry Between East and West* (Abu Dhabi: Louvre Abu Dhabi, 2020).

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