

# PASH ANTIQUES

A. PASH & SONS OF MAYFAIR

## The Sigman Shield

Elkington & Co

REF: 10754

Dia: 77.44 cm (30.49")

**£6,800**



A rare silver plated electrotype copy of The Sigman Shield.

The 16th century original is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

During the 16th century armour was not only used in war and tournaments but was worn for parades, royal entries into towns and other state occasions to denote the wealth, status and majesty of noble households. The shield is richly decorated with scenes from the history of Rome and from its central boss gazes a high relief Medusa's head. This recalls the legend of Perseus killing the fearsome monster, Medusa, whose gaze had turned her enemies to stone. Perseus presented Medusa's head to Athena, Goddess of War, who fixed it to her shield so

that it faced her enemies.

Jörg Sigman (ca. 1527-1601) was the best known German goldsmith to decorate armour. He was first employed by the celebrated armourer Desiderius Colman Helmschmid to help emboss an armour for Prince Philip, later Philip II of Spain, suggesting an unusual talent and reputation at such a young age. The employment of goldsmiths to decorate armour became increasingly common during the second half of the 16th century as the increased use of firearms redirected armourers towards producing stronger body protection covering only the vital parts: head and torso. Parade armour became more decorative and less functional: this shield's strength as a work of art is its weakness as a piece of armour.

The shield may have been made for a Rustkammer or treasury of armour. Such treasuries were set up in the 16th century by princes as displays of wealth and learning and were the forerunners of museums. Famous examples are at the Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck and the Real Armeria in Madrid, built by Philip II in 1565 as a tribute to his warrior father, the Emperor Charles V.