



## Close Helmet

### Date

1560–1570

### Primary Maker

Northern Italian

### Medium

steel (once blued) with gilding, brass, iron and modern leather

### Description

The well-formed ovoid SKULL is of one piece, drawn up into a moderately high chisel-roped comb, itself bordered below with low embossed bands etched with roping. Either side of the comb is etched with closely spaced martial trophies (including armor parts,

swords, spears, powder flasks, shields) and other motives (dolphins, urns, slotted scrolls, musical instruments and coronets), all on an etched, granular ground once gilded. Near its apex, the upper half of the skull has an arched etched frieze filled in the Manneristic manner with trophies, and bordered below by four arched scrolls, their voluted ends connected by short bars of strapwork. The sides of the skull are pierced for hearing with eight holes in a circular medallion around a centered ninth. The holes are part of an etched spoked design of eight petals surrounded by two concentric etched and gilded circles. Encircling the back of the neck is a row of six lining-rivet holes, framed below by an etched guilloche band. To the left of the comb base is a restored leaf-shaped plume holder secured by a pair of brass rivets. The anterior edge of the skull is unturned and etched with tendrils, and arches up across the brow, filled with ten flush lining-rivets with flat internal heads. Fastened to the skull sides is the bevor and visor assembly of two pieces. These are secured by a restored pair of stepped domed visor-pivots with scalloped edges and fitted with threaded shanks and matching nuts within. The base of the skull is finished with a narrow, downturned flange to which are riveted three upwardly-overlapping NAPE PLATES. These are curved, and are of more or less equal depth, and are bluntly pointed on the upper edge at the rivets near the ends. The top two lames are transversely etched with an undulating foliate tendril motif on a gilded ground as above. The basal lame is transversely embossed at mid-height with a low rib which is etched and gilded with guilloche, above and below which are trophy-filled etched bands. The lower band is filled with modern domed brass rivets and circular washers within; the basal edge is inwardly turned over a wire core, deeply chisel-roped and retaining traces of gilding. The plates work on rivets in diagonal slots. The LOWER BEVOR has a deep opening in the face, with inwardly turned, chisel-roped and gilded edge, bordered with a trophy-filled etched band filled with six lining-rivets, in turn bordered with a low embossed rib, guilloche-edged and gilded, edged by a pair of close-set etched and gilded lines. The defense projects forward in a defined slightly downturned chin modeled with a medial ridge to the narrow downturned flange below. This is fitted with four lining-rivets and a modern pair of brass rivets and circular washers at the ends, to which is attached the anterior set of three throat-plates en suite with those of the rear. The throat is encircled with guilloche as found on the skull. Extending down the medial line and framed within a pair of narrow etched and gilded bands is an etched trophy-filled band on the granular ground. The bevor was probably once secured to the skull by a now-lost buckle and strap around the throat. There is no provision for a visor-prop on the bevor, but a restored pivot-hook on the right side engages a pierced lug riveted to the lower right edge of the upper bevor. The UPPER BEVOR has a steeply angular profile and sweeps rearward along the unturned top and bottom edges to the rounded terminals. The edges are etched with framed bands of foliate tendrils, and that of the upper right is cut with a deep angular notch for the lifting-peg of the visor. Extending down the medial ridge is the etched band found on the bevor below. Centered on the faces to either side are etched medallions similar to those found on the skull. That of the right side has twelve petals, and is pierced for ventilation with twelve holes around a thirteenth; the left medallion has eight petals and is not pierced. The VISOR is of notably robust metal. It has a divided sight, with somewhat rough working around the sights, probably due to the heavy metal and difficulty of execution. The visor is deep in profile and extends deeply up over the brow, where it is etched with triangular friezes of trophies to either side of the comb above the sights, and formed with an obtuse cusp to either side of the comb, on the posterior foliate-edged edge. Below the sight the visor projects forward in a point, and is inwardly angled on the basal edge which is trophy etched and pierced on the right side for the lost lifting-peg which may have been locked by a pivot hook riveted into one of the breath-holes. The visor fits deeply into the upper bevor, but may not belong, although the etched decoration seems correct. The smoothness of line at the overlapping of the components at the pivots is imperfect, as is the fit of the visor into the upper-bevor. Most importantly, while it is embossed to

accommodate the anterior end of a comb, it is not chisel roped en suite, but roped with pairs of etched recurved lines 90 degrees out of phase with the chisel roping. The embossed ribs to either side of the comb are here only suggested in the form of etched bands of guilloché.

**Dimensions**

33 × 24.1 × 35.6 cm (13 × 9 1/2 × 14 in.), 8 lb, 8 oz (weight)