

Basic Detail Report



Pollaxe

Date

late 1400s

Primary Maker

Northern European

Medium

steel, brass, and ash wood

Description

This is a pollaxe of the latten-inlaid form found in a number of collections. Steel head of two parts affixed to 19th century wood (ash?) haft with apical thrusting spike of stiff diamond section

tapering abruptly from thick base to point. At base spike flares out and extends over axehead in pair of relatively short, decoratively pierced & incised langets. These are cut-out with crude pair of rectangular, long "windows" each of which is capped with semicircular cut-out, the whole topped by inverted heart-shaped piercing. Near the base, each langet is notched at sides, and has an expanded cross-hatched swelling below, and ends in an incised, scallop-shell terminal. The langets are fastened to the haft by a transverse nail at the base of the fenestration. This nail has oblate spheroidal heads. The two parts of head are locked together and to haft by set of restored side spikes which project perpendicularly from the join at the base of the apical spike. The spikes are stout and pyramidal, and one is integrally forged with a threaded bolt to which the other is screwed. Axeblade is triangular, with vertical cutting edge that terminates in clipped points above and below. Face of blade is centrally pierced with quatrefoil, and further decorated by inlaid latten strips radiating from vertical bar at base of shank. These extend along the back edges and across the faces in two groups of stalk-like bands ending in trefoils. Axeblade is opposed by a latten-inlaid, rectangular hammerhead. The striking face is formed with six pyramidal bosssets dispersed in two vertical rows, themselves divided transversely by a pair of latten strips. Hammerhead, axehead, and windows of langets are framed by single rows of pointillé decoration. It should be noted that some of those on the langets (at the base of the apical; spike, for example) appear to be later, as the patina surrounding them is disturbed. Furthermore, the pointillé at the arched base of the apical spike is triangular in character, not circular as the others. Beneath the langets of head is another set of long plain straps. These are each secured by three domed nails and one flush-headed type. The latter are beneath the langets of the apical spike. Wooden haft, which appears to be old, is of octagonal section, and flattened in the plane of the axehead, and is cut off straight at the butt-end. The haft may be from a halberd. There is no provision for a roundel to protect the hand.

Dimensions

183.4 x 64.9 x 18.5 cm (72 3/16 x 25 9/16 x 7 5/16 in.), 5 lb, 11 oz (weight)