



Close Helmet

Date

possibly about 1580–1590

Primary Maker

Austrian

Medium

steel, brass and copper with leather

Description

Close-helmet for field and tilt, with two-part visor assembly, and single gorget plates each front and rear. The one-piece skull is beaten up into a keel-like comb that is wide at its base, and is roped at the narrow top with sharply-cut file marks from the edge of the brow rearward to the plume-pipe. The comb curves beyond the rear vertical, then gently recurves down to the basal edge. This is finished in a level, curved flange which is embossed slightly to better fit the collar below. Above the flange, extending across the back of the neck is a row of five iron lining-rivets with soldered, domed brass caps. As with the other rivets, these have rough circular iron washers within, beneath which is the leather lining-band. The tubular plume-pipe of brass is riveted to the base of the skull through lobated mounts. The pipe is decoratively stamped with intertwined arabesques of strapwork and tendrils. At either

side the skull is pierced with four large holes in a square, each hole encircled by smaller, punched dots. The holes could have held brass eyelets now lost. On the right anterior edge the skull has a large spring-catch with domed, brass-capped peg and a pierced, restored lug for the pivot-hook of the bevor. The facial opening is curved at the bevelled sides, and curves across the brow in a low arc, where it is roped as the comb, bordered above by a narrow incised line. The facial opening itself is bordered by ten flush lining-rivets. The temples of the skull are pierced with squared holes for the visor-pivots on which work the bevor, upper-bevor and visor assemblies. The pivots themselves are large bolts with mitered squarish internal heads and stout, coarsely threaded shanks fitted with oblate domed nuts on the outside. The nuts are slotted for spanners and vertically incised between the slots. The visor assembly is of two parts. The visor proper has a single, unbroken sight and a deep rounded brow-plate which curves up to a medial cusp keeled and roped as the skull. The pivot terminals are rounded and circularly pierced. At the lower right anterior side is a laterally-working pivot-catch. This has been remounted in recent times, and now has a brass or bronze lifting peg cum operating handle where the original cord was once fitted. The visor fits into the upper-bevor. This has a profile close to the vertical, and curved near-imperceptively outward at the top. The upper edge is level at the sights and is cut out with a hole and deep notch for the visor-catch. The lower edge and the remainder of the upper edge are bevelled and sweep up in long, rounded terminals. Below the sight of the visor, the right basal edge of the upper bevor is cut with three notches for the bevor-prop, now lost. Forward of this, near the medial ridge is an oblong slot for the lost catch (portions of the spring of which survive within) that locked the upper and lower bevors closed. The faces of the upper-bevor are pierced with breaths; those of the left are small and circular, punched in four staggered rows of 6, 5, 4, 2 (top to bottom). Those on the right are oblong, with rounded ends and mid-length lobes. These are obliquely reversed in three rows of 6, 5, 4 (top to bottom). Near the medial ridge, and below the top row of breaths on the right is a riveted, flush insert for a reinforcing-bevor. The bevor has a deep, pointed facial opening, decorated to match the skull. It too is bordered by flush lining-rivets. The chin is strong, with a medial ridge to the right of which the facial opening is cut with a deep L-shaped notch for the upper-bevor catch. The upper bevor sides and upper edges are bevelled and curve to rounded terminals at the pivots. Near the bottom of the right side edge is an oblong opening for the lug of the skull spring-catch, further secured by a remounted pivot-hook on the bevor. Encircling the throat at the same level is a row of six lining-rivets, five of which have brass caps. The lower edge of the bevor is drawn out in a downturned, dipped flange which is bluntly pointed at center and near either end. Like the skull, it is lightly embossed for the collar. Both the skull and bevor flanges are fitted with single, curved gorget-plates riveted at the ends and on a bifurcated strap at mid-length. The deep plates are pointed, with a low medial ridge. The edges are inwardly turned over a wire core and deeply file roped. The edges are also bordered with brass-capped rivets as above. The fit here is less than perfect, with some later re-working or re-use of rivets, but the plates seem to belong, and may be contemporary additions.

Dimensions

39.9 x 28 x 36.5 cm (15 11/16 x 11 x 14 3/8 in.), 8 lb 8 oz (weight)