



Burgonet

Date

late 1500s–early 1600s, with decoration from 1800s

Primary Maker

Italian

Medium

reblued steel, copper and brass with gilding and modern leather

Description

Blued burgonet (Italian, last quarter of the 16th/early 17th century) with skull of one piece, integral peak, and integral medium-high, chisel-roped and gilded comb which is embossed at about two-thirds of the side height with a longitudinal sunken gilded band. To the rear of its apex, the top of the comb is pierced with a longitudinal set of holes. On each side of the comb, the skull is repoussed with a divergent grouping of five gilded ribs emanating from a point at the outer basal edge of the skull. The ribs run longitudinally over the skull to the front peak. The peak over the eyes is drawn out from the brow, and has a roped edge roughly turned inwards. At the rear, the base of the skull is fitted with a

restored, riveted single lame nape defense. The skull flange is cut at the medial point with a roughly hewn oblong slot, that might once have been the location of an articulating rivet. The hinges and cheek pieces are restorations, of medium depth, and once secured by a buckle and strap under the chin. The slightly dished faces are embossed with an eight-pointed star motif, four arms of which are pierced with triangular groupings of three holes each. At the star center is a single hole. The borders of the fall, nape defense and cheekpieces are also embossed with a rib, producing a shallow sunken border filled with later, eight-pointed brass stars and gilded florally-incised rivets. The medial area of the brow is transversely pierced with a rough, rectangular slot, cut through a pre-existing punched hole. This might have held a nasal guard, such as that seen on an Italian example at Montselice from the last quarter of the 16th century (see catalogue #23, illustrated, in Hayward). Now secured here is an associated embossed copper Medusa mask, with traces of fire-gilding in the hair and mouth cavities. This should be compared however, to an embossed mask on an armor made by ELISEUS LIBAERT of Amsterdam in 1562, and now in the Livrustkammaren, inv. #2605. (See Steneberg, p. 174, fig. 8.) Encircling the brow and nape is a row of punched holes for the rivets of the helmet lining, some of which are alternately filled with the star and floral rivets with squarish washers. These, and apparently all other like fittings are post- contemporary (see Condition). The embossing is somewhat rough compared to the execution of the plates themselves. Hammermarks inside the brow suggest that this area may have been reworked. It is not clear whether this is the same helmet shown in Asselineau 1845. The Medusa plaque could be mounted on the gorget in the Asselineau image.

Dimensions

28.3 × 19.8 × 13.8 cm (11 1/8 × 7 13/16 × 5 7/16 in.), 3 lb 10 oz (weight)