



"Maximilian" Breastplate and Fauld

Date

about 1510–1515

Primary Maker

Northern Italian

Medium

steel with later etching

Description

Breastplate of deeply fluted globose form on lower half, with frieze above, flexible gussets, inwardly turned angular plain borders. Shallow curved, wide neck opening formed with an angular, inwardly turned plain finish. The articulated gussets are similarly treated, and were once fitted with buckles or most probably straps at the squared tops, which form the shoulders. The sides of the mainplate are bluntly pointed at the ends, curving down to the level basal edge. To this is riveted a level waistplate that curves to the body and is pointed at the ends of the flanges. The undamaged right terminal fixed to the breastplate is slotted for articulation. The breastplate itself is rather flat along its upper half which is etched in an overall, intertwined strapwork pattern of thick arabesque foliation on a finely cross-hatched blackened ground. Centered below the neck is a large medallion with the Madonna and Christ child seated in a room scene, the whole within a thick

circular framing fillet. The whole of the decoration across the top half is framed by a pair of etched fillets. The lower half of the breastplate is beaten out in a radiating, shell-like motif of twelve triangular-section flutes which widen as they radiate upward from a scalloped basal edge, to a flattish step that is etched in a scale pattern. Except for the etched pair at the center, alternate flutes are etched with a compartmentalized motif of thick, voluted foliation on a blackened single-hatched ground. The central flutes differ in that their motif are candelabra-like, with slotted strapwork and foliated supporters. Running, voluted foliate tendril fronds also follow the turn of the gussets, the side edges of the mainplate, and the bend of the waistlame. Upper half of breast etched with intertwined strapwork & foliation on a cross-hatched ground, carrying over to sides. Central circular medallion of Virgin and Christ child, probably enhanced at a later date. Lower half boldly embossed with deeply concave flutings, alternate channels etched with foliate arabesques and trophies. Gussets similarly decorated. Proper left side of breast bears same owner's mark as collar (associated). Lower edge of breast fitted with single-lame waist plate, itself repaired at proper left upper edge. This is decorated transversely with similar arabesques. Skirt of four lames (3 not in 1911 catalogue); bottom 2 restored by S. Marchat (signed on interior of lower lame, proper left corner) decorated and fluted to match; interior bears modern gloss black paint. Lower lame has simple sunken unrolled border (except at fork) and is foliate etched. There seems to have been an additional lame at the top, now lost, based on the poor alignment with the waist lame and the inscription that suggests the former top lame was made by Marchat, whereas the current top lame appears to be original. Breastplate may be compared to RAM III.1087, pl. CXII in catalogue a portrait of Admiral Giovanni Moro; Milanese armor of ca. 1510. ex-Ubaldo, de Cosson, and Riggs Collection #14.25.726 Met Museum of Art, NYC, and Boccia, pp. 188-191, 223-230 (duca d'Urbino Harness). Prior to November 1990, the restored fauld (originally added by Dean/Marchat in 1912) consisted of four upwardly overlapping lames of which only the second lame from the top was old. This group has been removed, the topmost lame taken out and stored, and the remaining lames associated with the waistplate. While the topmost lame is of the same general type appropriate to the breastplate, it may well be an association. Except for one lame, the fauld was certainly not in place as of 1911, and could well have come from Dean's hoard of miscellaneous parts. In addition, although alternate flutes are decorated, they do not follow the sequencing above, they consist only of voluted tendril scrolls, the flutes are themselves much broader and quite flat compared to those above, and rather than spreading uniformly across the lame, are grouped 4-2-4, widening and narrowing alternately. At present, the fauld consists of three lames overlapping upward, each lame more or less level as it curves across the top of the hips to its squared ends where they pivot on modern brass, domed rivets. The top two lames are of equal depth, and the terminal lame somewhat deeper. A wide, shallow recessed band follows the basal edge of this

lame, rising in a low arc at the angular turn at the fork. This band is decorated en suite with the marginal borders of the breastplate. The top edge of all three lames is bluntly dentated across the fluting. The interior surface has been heavily cleaned.

Dimensions

40.6 × 38.1 × 17.8 cm (16 × 15 × 7 in.), 7 lb 2 oz (weight)