



Lower Lames from a Backplate "alla Romana" (in the Roman style)

Date

about 1545–1550

Primary Maker

Northern Italian

Medium

blued steel with gilding, brass and leather

Description

Two repoussed, blued, now russet and gilded steel lames from a loin-guard in alla Romana style. The two appear to be part of the same unit but were probably connected together by a third lame

between them. Of the usual form, they encircle the loins, the upper edge of each recurved at the middle. The upper edge of each is embossed with a sunken, slotted-scrollwork border of three main sections, the addorsed, reversed volutes of which are connected together with an embossed, boxed bar. The joins are embossed so as to appear resting upon triangular pads above and below. At the medial point, there is an embossed pendant acanthus-leaf motif. This is formed as if falling over from the uppermost border of the scroll, with a triangular base developed into a large central and two smaller side leaves each with a slight, raised central vein. On each outer edge of the side leaves, there is a volute formed from the lower edge of the raised scroll above. As mentioned above, the upper lame has brass--or bronze-- rosetted fittings with iron rivets for the now-lost waistbelt. Just below these is a transverse incised line encircling the waist at the point where the rough-cut lower edge flares out to attach the now-lost lame below. This would have worked on two articulating rivets and two of the four internal leathers of the upper lame. The lower lame is a basal one. Extending transversely along its middle is a chevron pattern at nominal 12 mm intervals. Rising from the sunken border formed below is an edge of eighteen divergent recurved scroll-like embossed pendants with simulated rolled termini. In the intervals produced by each pair is a small, slightly rounded rivet. The internal bases of these secure the remnants of the lining-band and decorative fabric, probably once cut as scallops or squared pteruges. The upper lame may be later. The internal patination is not a clear match. The confidence, execution and artistic quality of the repousse work does not seem to be of the same degree as that of the lame below, although this may indicate the hand of a pupil.

Dimensions

5.8 × 29 × 17.3 cm (2 5/16 × 11 7/16 × 6 13/16 in.), 6 oz (weight)