

EUROPEAN HELMETS, 1450-1650

*Treasures from the Reserve Collection*



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

EUROPEAN HELMETS, 1450–1650

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

# CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Catalogue	6
Marks and Inscriptions	46
Bibliography	48

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# INTRODUCTION

Helmets, the earliest known form of body armor, remain an essential element of protection for the modern soldier and firefighter as well as the sportsman. In the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, European helmet design reached its apogee, with armorers creating headpieces in steel of ingenious construction and powerful sculptural form. Whether intended for aristocratic mounted knights or humble infantrymen, helmets had to provide maximum defense for the most vital, and vulnerable, part of the body while offering reasonable comfort of wear with adequate sight and ventilation. The forging of a helmet was thus the armorer's greatest challenge and, very often, his finest achievement. Indeed, a well-made helmet balances the practical function of defense with the aesthetics of line and mass.

Since the early nineteenth century, when the collecting of medieval and later arms and armor began in earnest, helmets have been the focus of study and pursuit by generations of antiquarians, historians, and collectors. The helmet is the most complete element of armor and therefore is eminently displayable as an independent work. Its form, construction, and decoration are sure indications of its intended purpose—for war, sport, or parade—and provide considerable evidence of its place and date of manufacture and perhaps even the rank and wealth of its owner. Helmets continue to fascinate collectors and museum visitors today. The stylized cranial and facial shapes of helmets and their brightly polished steel surfaces accord with the modern taste for abstraction; their mysterious masklike character and inevitable romantic associations with the heroes of chivalry broaden their appeal.

Utilizing the Metropolitan Museum's outstanding collection of arms and armor—in this case, items

from the reserve collection that have long been out of public view—this exhibition explores the evolution, technology, form, and fashion of European head defenses over two centuries, from 1450 to 1650. These years marked the waning of the Middle Ages and the dawn of the modern era, when new tactics and improved weaponry revolutionized warfare, ultimately driving the fully armored knight off the battlefield. The armorer was continually challenged to devise new defenses to compensate for the increasing use and accuracy of firearms, which were commonplace on the battlefield by the early sixteenth century. He was also called upon to create new types of armor to outfit the growing number of differentiated mounted troops (heavy, medium, and light cavalry and, later, cuirassiers and arquebusiers) and infantrymen (pikemen and musketeers). His expertise was equally in demand in times of peace, when a variety of martial sports—notably the joust, tourney, and foot combat at the barriers—required specialized equipment. At the same time, national and regional styles were becoming more clearly discernible, and Turkish influences in eastern Europe inspired the adoption of Oriental elements. Armor decoration also changed dramatically in this period, the late medieval practice of covering the plates with textile and metal appliqué being replaced by the development of integral decoration, worked directly into the steel surfaces, in the form of etching, engraving, punching, embossing, and damascening.

Helmets have been the subject of several studies—the earliest being the illustrated catalogue of the Uboldo collection in Milan (1841) and von Suttner's monograph *Der Helm* (1853)—but seemingly of only two specialized exhibitions. The earlier of these was the landmark "Ancient Helmets and Examples of

Mail” organized by the baron de Cosson and William Burges at the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in London in July 1880. Published the following year, the catalogue included line drawings of the most important items, all lent from private collections, and established a new standard of scholarship. More than a dozen helmets included in that exhibition have since entered the Metropolitan Museum, two of which are in this exhibition (cat. nos. 54, 57).

The second exhibition, organized by Bashford Dean, curator of Arms and Armor, was held at the Metropolitan Museum in 1924 and, like its predecessor, comprised pieces from private collections, in this case mostly from members of the Armor and Arms Club of New York. Unfortunately, no catalogue was produced. In announcing the exhibition in the Museum’s *Bulletin* (vol. 19, no. 7 [July 1924], pp. 162–63), Dean explained his choice of theme, which he hoped would demonstrate the evolution, variety, and intrinsic beauty of helmets while revealing, “even to the casual visitor,” the art of the armorer.

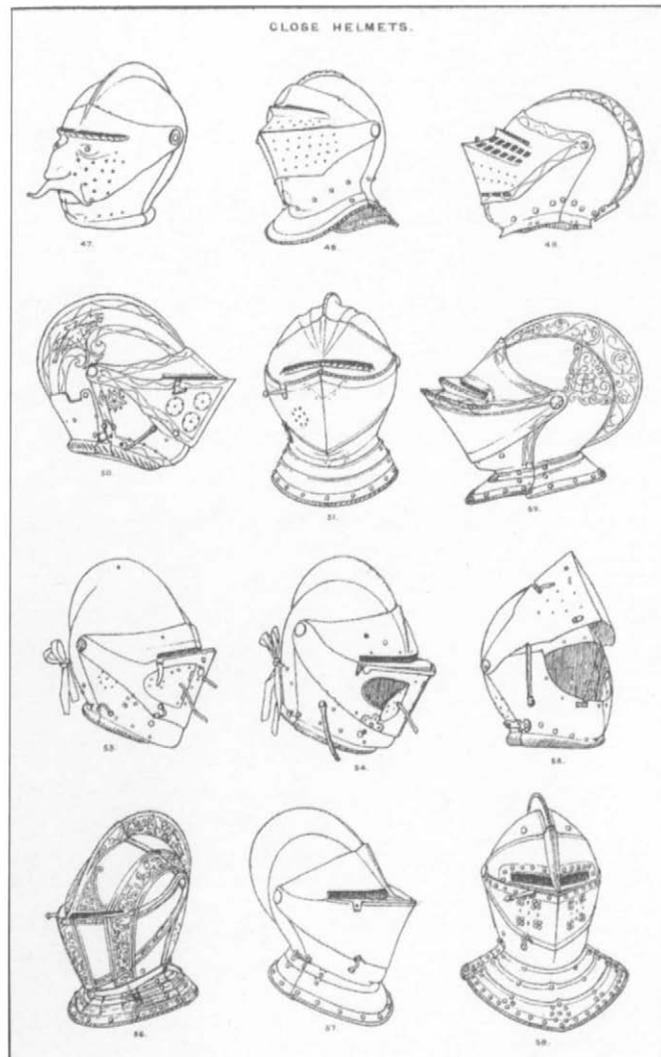
The present exhibition maintains these goals but has the added virtue of focusing on the Metropolitan’s own superb reserve holdings. Indeed, the total collection numbers about four hundred separately catalogued European helmets (exclusive of those mounted with armors) and is thus one of the largest and most diverse assemblages of its kind. The majority of the helmets, like the bulk of our European arms, come from three private collections: that of Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, which was purchased en bloc in 1904; that given by William H. Riggs in 1913; and that of Bashford Dean, which was acquired by bequest, gift, and purchase in 1928–29. These in turn encompass items from the distinguished collections formed by earlier

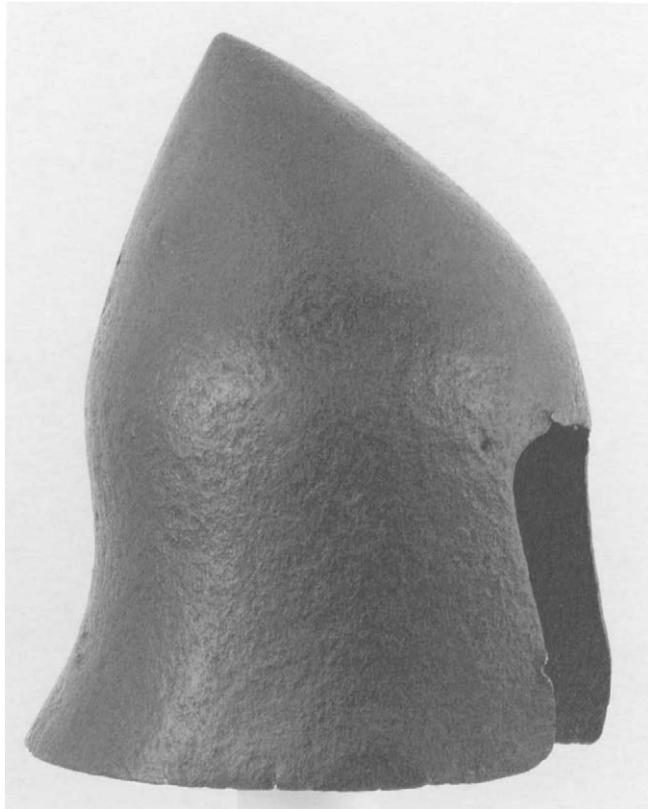
generations of enthusiasts and connoisseurs, including Meyrick, Uboldo, Soltykoff, Resson, Londesborough, de Cosson, and Keasbey.

While the Museum’s finest helmets are on permanent display in the Arms and Armor Galleries, more than two hundred remain in storage as a study and reference collection. Some of these duplicate types that are already in the galleries or are of comparatively modest quality and others suffer from problems of condition or excessive restoration. Many of them, however, are of considerable interest because of their particular construction, form, or decoration or because of the presence of makers’ marks. Among these helmets are works of considerable artistic merit of which any museum would be proud. These include the fluted German armet with its expressive mask visor (cat. no. 25), examples attributed to Kolman Helmschmid (cat. nos. 26, 27) and Kunz Lochner (cat. no. 30), and our newly acquired etched morion associated with the Brunswick court (cat. no. 48). Other examples, also richly decorated, have intriguing historic associations, like the burgonets worn by the guard of Pier Luigi Farnese (cat. no. 32) and Pope Julius III (cat. no. 33) and the newly identified helmet of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, duke of Mantua (cat. no. 58). Still others possess rare original textile linings (cat. nos. 55, 56, 70, 73) or represent large classes of unadorned practical head defenses, such as siege helmets (cat. nos. 71, 72), which are unlikely objects for display in an art museum. The exhibition therefore offers a rare glimpse of an important, yet virtually unknown, collection of helmets, pieces that have seldom been exhibited or published. It is hoped that this illustrated checklist will thus be a useful reference tool for future research on the subject.

Stuart W. Pyhrr

# EUROPEAN HELMETS, 1450-1650





1 ▲

### Great Sallet

Italian, possibly late 14th century

Steel; weight 4 lb. 13 oz. (2184 g)

Ex colls.: Historical Museum, Athens; Bashford Dean,  
New York; Clarence Mackay, Roslyn, Long Island

Gift of Stephen V. Grancsay, 1942

42.50.33

This helmet comes from an important group of late medieval armor found in 1840 in the ruins of the Venetian fortress at Chalcis (then called Negroponte), on the Greek island of Euboea, which fell to a Turkish invasion in 1470. The Chalcis hoard provides unique evidence of the armor worn in the Italian colonies in the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean regions, though its place of manufacture, whether on the Italian mainland or in an eastern center, such as Ragusa (modern Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia), is disputed. The tall conical shape of this example suggests that it dates to the end of the fourteenth century, thus preceding by several decades the appearance of the more typical Italian sallets with rounded profiles, such as cat. nos. 3 and 4.

*Unpublished.*

2 ▼

### War Hat

European, 15th century(?)

Steel; weight 2 lb. 13 oz. (1264 g)

Ex colls.: Maurice Chabrières and Auguste François Ferdinand  
Chabrières-Arlès, Lyon and Paris; Constantine Ressiman, Florence;  
Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.234

Said to have been found in Lake Morat, Switzerland, this helmet traditionally has been considered Swiss and of mid-fifteenth-century date. However, the presence of similarly large, deep helmets of this general type in fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century Italian paintings suggests that both the attribution and date are subject to further review. The steel surface retains traces of its original tinning, an early form of rustproofing.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.7, pl. 7; Dean 1905, p. 126, fig. 50B; Laking 1920-22, vol. 2, p. 64, fig. 416.*





◀ 3

### Sallet

Italian (Milan), ca. 1470–80

Steel; weight 6 lb. 9 oz. (2989 g)

Ex colls.: Constantine Ressiman, Florence; Maurice de Talleyrand-  
Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.232

The term *sallet* (from the Italian *celata*) is applied to a wide variety of fifteenth-century helmets that have open faces or, if visored, leave the lower face and neck exposed. This tall form of sallet is typically Italian and is sometimes referred to as a *barbute*. It is struck twice on the right side at the back with the same armorer's mark: two Gothic S's beneath a split-legged cross. The same mark is found alone, or in combination with other marks, on four other armor elements in the Metropolitan Museum: two similar sallets (acc. nos. 14.25.580, 49.163.2) and two arm defenses (acc. nos. 29.150.18, 29.150.137). Struck on the right cheek is the Lion of Saint Mark, a control mark that perhaps denotes the helmet's former presence in the Venice arsenal.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.14, pl. 7.*

4 ▶

### Sallet

Italian (Milan), ca. 1470–80

Steel; weight 5 lb. 14 oz. (2658 g)

Ex colls.: Constantine Ressiman, Florence; Maurice de Talleyrand-  
Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.231

The proportions of this helmet are notable, as it is taller than most examples and extends almost to the shoulders. The rivet holes encircling the center of the bowl originally served as an attachment for the lining, with a pair of holes below on each side for the Y-shaped chin straps. Additional holes around the edge, one of them filled with a copper rivet, indicate that this example was once covered with textile and fitted with gilt-copper mounts in the Venetian style (see cat. no. 5), fittings that probably were added later in the helmet's working life. The bowl is stamped on the left side near the back with Milanese-style armorers' marks: two letters (*IO?*) beneath a crown and below, struck twice, two letters (*AO?*) beneath a double-armed cross.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.13, pl. 7.*





◀ 5

Sallet “in the Venetian Style”

Italian, ca. 1460

Steel, gilt copper, textile; weight 4 lb. 12 oz. (2144 g)

Ex colls.: Count Gino Cittadella Vigodarzere, Villa Saonara, near Padua; Luigi Grassi, Florence; Bashford Dean, New York

The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Funds from various donors, 1929

29.158.17

Sallets covered with textile and mounted with decorative metal appliqué were worn for parades and tournaments throughout Italy in the fifteenth century. The practice apparently was continued into the eighteenth century, particularly in Venice; hence these colorful helmets came to be called *alla veneziana*. The present example is covered with an old red velvet (but possibly applied in modern times) and mounted with a border of gilt-copper leaves, probably of seventeenth-century date (the leaves at the front and across the top are restorations). Unused rivet holes visible inside the bowl indicate that the helmet was once fitted with different appliqué.

*Pylhrr 1994, pp. 17, 20 n. 28.*



◀ 6

Sallet

Italian (Milan), ca. 1470–80

Steel; weight 3 lb. 9 oz. (1625 g)

Ex coll.: Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.230

Numerous holes along the edge and at the front and back indicate that this sallet, like cat. no. 5, probably was mounted several times during its working life with textile coverings and gilt-metal appliqué in the Venetian fashion. The bowl's rough, unfinished edge suggests that it has been trimmed. On the right side at the back are three Milanese-style armorers' marks: *BE*(?) beneath a crown and below, struck twice, three letters (*A* over *AP*?) beneath a split-legged cross. The same marks are found on a slightly earlier Italian cuirass in the Historisches Museum, Lucerne, Switzerland.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.15, pl. 8; Dean 1905, p. 128, figs. 50H, 66.*



◀ 7

### Sallet

Italian(?), in Franco-Burgundian style, late 15th century

Steel; weight 3 lb. 13 oz. (1737 g)

Ex colls.: Baron Vidal de Lery, Paris; Bashford Dean, New York

Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Bequest of Bashford Dean, 1928

29.150.13

This sallet is one of the few surviving examples in the Franco-Burgundian fashion. Although constructed in the contemporary Italian manner, with separate brow and tail plates, the pointed bowl is characteristic of sallets illustrated in French and Burgundian manuscripts and tapestries and of several surviving examples preserved in English churches. The generally similar sallet preserved at Coventry Cathedral bears Milanese-style marks thought to be those of an Italian armorer working in Bruges who is also recorded as having an English clientele. Reportedly found in a river in France (the Somme and Meuse are both cited as its source), our sallet was deeply corroded and has been extensively repaired.

*New York 1911, no. 51, pl. 28; Laking 1920–22, vol. 2, pp. 21–22, fig. 360; Kienbusch and Grancsay 1933, no. 34, pl. 3.*



◀ 8

### Sallet

Spanish, ca. 1450–1500

Steel; weight 4 lb. 8 oz. (2050 g)

Ex coll.: Maurice Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.239

Close-fitting caplike helmets of this type, with cutouts for the ears, were worn by Spanish infantrymen during the second half of the fifteenth century. Unlike most known examples, which have a strong median ridge from front to back, this sallet has a smooth hemispherical bowl that suggest one of the earlier (mid-century?) examples. Acquired in Spain in the nineteenth century, it is said to have come from a tomb in Aragon. Now dark and heavily corroded, the surface was probably once brightly polished.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.16, pl. 8; Dean 1905, fig. 50k.*



10▼

### War Hat

Spanish, late 15th century  
 Steel, copper, textile; weight 3 lb. 12 oz. (1697 g)  
 Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York  
 Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,  
 Bequest of Bashford Dean, 1928  
 29.150.9a

Little is known about armor-making in Spain, and the majority of securely identifiable Spanish examples date from the late fifteenth century. War hats of this type, with either round or pointed bowls and deeply sloped brims, are uniquely Spanish and are frequently decorated with applied bands of gilt copper around the base of the bowl and the edge of the brim. The Museum's helmet has lost these appliqué, for which only rivet holes (now filled with modern copper rivets) remain. Struck three times on the right side at the back is an armorer's mark: a crowned letter. The front of the bowl is filled with a brow plate covered on its outer face with red textile, possibly part of the original lining.

*Unpublished.*

9▲

### Sallet

Spanish or Italian, late 15th century  
 Steel, paint; weight 2 lb. 9 oz. (1151 g)  
 Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York  
 The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,  
 Funds from various donors, 1929  
 29.158.3a

Intended for infantrymen, sallets of this distinctive type are found in large numbers in the armory of the dukes of Medinaceli in the Museo Ejercito, Madrid. Some of them are struck with Milanese-style marks, suggesting they may have been made in Italy for export to Spain; alternately, they may have been made in Spain and marked in imitation of the more prestigious and expensive Italian originals. This example, which is unmarked, retains the fragment of an iron plume-holder(?) at the front and appears to have been painted.

*Kienbusch and Grancsay 1933, no. 32, pl. 3; Boccia, Rossi, and Morin 1980, p. 78, pl. 65.*





### 1 1 ▲

#### Sallet

German, ca. 1450–60

Steel; weight 6 lb. 9 oz. (2984g)

Ex colls.: Count Eugen Czernin, Schloss Petersburg, Bohemia;  
Bashford Dean, New York

Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,  
Bequest of Bashford Dean, 1928

29.150.12

This sallet is notable for its exceptionally deep form. Despite heavy corrosion and damage by fire, it preserves its powerful sculptural presence. A similar example was excavated from the city walls of Istanbul, which fell during the Ottoman siege of the Byzantine capital in May 1453.

*Kienbusch and Grancsay 1933, no. 36, pl. 3.*



### ◀ 1 2

#### Sallet

German, ca. 1470–80

Steel; weight 7 lb. 2 oz. (3232 g)

Ex colls.: Count Hans Wilczek, Schloss Kreuzenstein, near Vienna;  
Bashford Dean, New York

The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,  
Funds from various donors, 1929

29.158.11

Generally shallow in form and covering only the upper half of the face, visored sallets were invariably complemented by a separate bevor, a defense covering the chin and throat that was strapped around the back of the neck. German sallets typically have long pointed tails, the angularity of which reflects the late Gothic style. This example is stamped on the right side of the tail with an armorer's mark: a rooster(?) within a shield.

*Kienbusch and Grancsay 1933, no. 39, pl. 4.*

### 13 ►

#### Sallet

German (Nuremberg), ca. 1490

Steel; weight 6 lb. 2 oz. (2769 g)

Ex colls.: Albert Denison, first baron Londesborough; William Henry Denison, earl of Londesborough; Maurice Chabrières and Auguste François Ferdinand Chabrières-Arlès, Lyon and Paris; Constantine Ressiman, Florence; Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris  
Rogers Fund, 1904  
04.3.226

The wide, flat comb suggests that this sallet is a late example dating to the end of the fifteenth century. The visor has been modified or may be associated. The tail is unusually long and spatulate and is struck with two marks: that of the city of Nuremberg and an armorer's mark in the shape of a horse-shoe enclosing a letter, possibly that of Hans Grünewalt (ca. 1440–1503).

*Londesborough sale, Christie's, London, July 4–11, 1888, lot 448; de Cosson 1901, no. B.II, pl. 7; Dean 1905, fig. 50L.*



### 14 ▲

#### Sallet

German or Austrian (Innsbruck), ca. 1510

Steel; weight 4 lb. 13 oz. (2172 g)

Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York  
Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,  
Funds from various donors, 1929  
29.158.34

Developing from the late Gothic German sallet, characterized by a horizontal profile and pointed tail, this early-sixteenth-century example has a taller, rounder, and more



*cat. no. 14, front*

compact form, a transformation that reflects Italian influence. The large visor, pierced for sight and ventilation, has an unmistakable masklike quality. Pairs of holes at the top and sides of the bowl allowed for the exit of the lining laces, by which the padded lining (now missing) could be adjusted from the outside for a comfortable fit. A similar sallet in the Museum's collection (acc. no. 29.158.35) bears the mark of Hans Maystetter (active 1508–30) of Innsbruck.

*Kienbusch and Grancsay 1933, no. 49, pl. 4.*

### Armet with Wrapper

Italian, ca. 1460–70 (armet) and 1450 (wrapper)  
 Steel; weight (armet) 8 lb. (3618 g), (wrapper) 4 lb. (1801 g)  
 Ex coll.: Marchesa di Salvo di Ferrara, Palermo  
 Rogers Fund, 1920  
 20.150.1



The armet was the typical headpiece of the Italian mounted knight in the fifteenth century. Completely enveloping the head, it was constructed of a bowl with separate brow reinforcement, close-fitting cheekpieces hinged at the sides and closing at the chin, and a pivoting visor. The armet usually was worn with a secondary face defense, or wrapper, that covered the lower face and neck and prevented the visor from being struck open. The wrapper strapped around the armet and buckled at the back; the rondel projecting from the base of the bowl protected the straps and the closing of the cheekpieces at the back.

The Museum's armet and wrapper are contemporary but associated. The bowl is struck on either side of the medial ridge at the back with a Brescian-style amorer's mark consisting of the letters *LA*(?) beneath an abbreviation sign. The wrapper bears the marks of the famous Missaglia family of Milan used before 1452: the letters *MY* beneath a crown and below, struck twice, an *M* beneath a split-legged cross. Both pieces were etched at a later date with arms said to be those of the Piombini family. (The visor is associated and the rondel is modern; the wrapper has been altered.)



*wrapper*

*Unpublished.*

16 ▶

Armet

Italian (Milan), ca. 1490, with later additions

Steel, brass; weight 6 lb. 7 oz. (2903 g)

Ex colls.: Evelyn Whitehead, London; S. J. Whawell, London; Seymour Lucas, R.A., London; Henry G. Keasbey, Eastbourne, England; George D. Pratt, New York

Gift of George D. Pratt, 1928

28.74.2

The medieval English custom of hanging a helmet over a tomb as part of the deceased's funerary "achievement" continued well into the seventeenth century. Thanks to this practice, numerous early helmets have been preserved. Like many "church helmets," this example is composite, being made up of old, reused parts assembled somewhat haphazardly for mortuary use. The bowl, which originally was fitted with a brow reinforce, and the cheekpieces are Italian. The right side of the bowl at the back bears faint traces of three Milanese armorers' marks: a crown surmounting letters and, struck twice below, a split-legged cross enclosing two letters. (The visor and upper bevor are adapted from other helmets and the rondel is modern.)

*Lucas sale, Christie's, London, May 27, 1903, lot 27; Laking 1920–22, vol. 2, pp. 88–89, fig. 442-C; Keasbey sale, American Art Galleries, New York, December 5–6, 1924, lot 302, pl. 35; Pybrr 1994, p. 22.*



◀ 17

Armet

Anglo-Flemish, ca. 1520

Steel; weight 6 lb. (2721 g)

Ex coll.: Peter Dale Ltd., London

Purchase, Bequest of Stephen V. Grancsay, by exchange, and Rogers Fund, 1985

1985.259.3



Formerly part of a funerary achievement hung over a knight's tomb, this helmet originally appeared on the art market surmounted with a spike intended to support a heraldic crest. The location of the chapel and the identity of the knight are not recorded.

This late form of armet (now incomplete) originally had a pivoting visor and articulated collar lames. Several features are especially noteworthy: the large cusped brow reinforce that overlaps a secondary reinforce covering the back of the bowl; the articulating lames covering the back of the neck; and the placement of the hinges of the cheekpieces at the back rather than at the top. While its overall form is Italianate, the armet's unusual construction recalls other helmets found in English churches, some of which are thought to be of English or Flemish manufacture.

*Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, November 13, 1985, lot 70, ill.*

## Tournament Helm

Anglo-Flemish, ca. 1510–20

Steel; weight 10 lb. 5 oz. (4670 g)

Ex colls.: Adalbert von Kolasinski, Warsaw;

Bashford Dean, New York

Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Funds from various donors, 1929

29.158.38

Helms bolted to the breast- and backplate and having large visors with multiple apertures for maximum sight and ventilation were typically used both in the tourney and in foot combat. The former was a mock combat fought by groups of mounted contestants armed with lances and rebated swords or clubs; in the latter, two armored contestants fought on foot within a wooden enclosure, the favored weapons usually being polaxes or swords, their strokes carefully monitored by referees. This helm bears faint traces of a mark, an *M* surmounted by a crescent, which is thought to be that of Martin van Royné (active ca. 1500–1540), a Flemish armorer who emigrated to England and was already master of the Royal Armor Workshops at Greenwich by 1515. The same mark appears on three other elements of armor in the Metropolitan Museum: an armet (acc. no. 29.158.52); an elbow defense, or couter (acc. no. 29.158.1 h, where it is struck twice); and the front half of a tournament helm (see cat. no. 19).

*Kolasinski sale, Lepke, Berlin, March 27–31, 1917, lot 1471;*  
*Kienbusch and Grancsay 1933, no. 45, pl. 4; Los Angeles 1953,*  
*no. 22; Nickel, Pyhrr, and Tarassuk 1982, no. 8.*



## ◀ 19

## Front Half of a Tournament Helm

Anglo-Flemish, ca. 1510–20

Steel; weight 9 lb. 11 oz. (4398 g)

Ex colls.: Albert Denison, first Baron Londesborough; William Henry Denison, earl of Londesborough; William H. Riggs, Paris  
 Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

I4.25.572



Constructed of two sturdy plates of steel capable of withstanding the blow of an opponent's blunted lance, this front half of a helm for the joust was originally secured by pivots to the rear half (now missing) of lighter metal. The helm was bolted to the jouster's cuirass, thus rendering the head and torso rigid. The large ventilation opening on the right side is protected by a thick flange. Similar helms are recorded in English churches; this one is reputed to have come from Battle Abbey, Sussex. Traces of an armorer's mark, apparently an *M* surmounted by a crescent, as on cat. no. 18, are evident on the left side (only the tips of the crescent are discernible).

*London 1875, p. 38, no. 1000; Londesborough sale, Christie's, London, July 4–11, 1888, lot 430; Laking 1920–22, vol. 2, p. 114, fig. 458.*

## ◀ 20

## Bowl of a Sallet

Italian (probably Milan), ca. 1510–15

Steel, gold; weight 2 lb. 6 oz. (1088 g)

Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York  
 Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Funds from various donors, 1929

29.158.1a



Etching with acid is known to have been used for the embellishment of weapons since at least the thirteenth century, but the technique seems to have been applied to armor beginning in the late fifteenth century, several decades before it was adopted as a printmaking technique. Formerly gilt, the etched decoration on this example includes bands of foliage set against a diagonally hatched background. Similar ornament is found in contemporary Italian prints. The sallet was probably fitted with a large bellows visor pivoting at the sides and was intended for use by a light cavalryman.

*Unpublished.*

## 21 ▼

### Bowl of a Close-Helmet

Italian (Milan or Brescia), ca. 1515

Steel, gold; weight 3 lb. 11 oz. (1679 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.560

This bowl is the sole surviving fragment of a rare etched and gilt Italian close-helmet “in the German style” (*alla tedesca*). The term refers to the channeled surfaces, or fluting, a decorative treatment characteristic of German armors of 1510 to 1530 (see cat. nos. 20, 22, 23) that was enthusiastically imitated by Italian armorers. Struck at the back are two armorers’ marks: an unusual monogram comprising the letters *P* and *I* supporting a *T*(?) on a crossbar and a two-towered castle—perhaps the marks of the da Castello family of Brescia. After about 1520, for reasons unknown, Italian armorers generally discontinued the time-honored practice of marking their wares; thus, the workshop of origin of few armors made after that date can be identified. The roped comb is a feature dating after about 1515.

*Louisville 1952, no. 15; Flint 1967, no. 23.*



## 22 ▲

### Close-Helmet for the Field

Italian (Milan), ca. 1525–30

Steel; weight 8 lb. 11 oz. (3940 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.515

Supplanting the armet in the early sixteenth century, the close-helmet was intended for mounted use in the field and typically was constructed with a visor and bevor (lower face and chin defense) rotating on the same pivots at the sides of the bowl. Although this close-helmet apparently is Italian in origin, certain features, such as the stepped profile of the visor and the use of a separate plate to complete the lower part of the bowl at the back, recall helmets found in France and England. This example may, therefore, have been intended for export north of the Alps. (The two front collar lames and the lower rear lame are modern, as is the lifting peg of the visor.)

*Unpublished.*

## 23 ▶

### Armet

German, ca. 1510–15

Steel; weight 6 lb. 3 oz. (2799 g)

Ex colls.: Raoul Richards, Rome; Bachereau firm, Paris;

Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.242

While retaining earlier armet construction, with hinged cheekpieces closing in front of the chin, this helmet also exhibits features current in the early sixteenth century: fluted surfaces, the lower edge of the helmet embossed so as to turn on the rim of the gorget, and a small “sparrow’s-beak” visor. A Moor’s head stamped on the right side of the visor may be a mark of ownership, perhaps referring to the patrician Tucher family of Nuremberg, rather than the personal mark of the armorer. (The right cheekpiece is a restoration.)

*Richards sale, Giacomini et Capobianchi, Rome, March 2–29, 1890, lot 1028; de Cosson 1901, no. B.23, pl. 8; Laking 1920–22, vol. 4, p. 95, fig. 1176; Los Angeles 1953, no. 24.*



## ◀ 24

### Close-Helmet for the Field

German (Nuremberg), ca. 1520

Steel; weight 6 lb. (2709 g)

Ex coll.: Boy, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.549



Although fluted surfaces generally characterize German armor of about 1510–30, smooth-surfaced harnesses were equally commonplace and were more quickly and cheaply manufactured. This helmet is fitted with a new form of visor, one of elaborately forged “bellows” shape, whereas the articulated neck lames look back to earlier sallet construction (see cat. no. 14). The right side of the bevor is struck on the outside with the arms of Nuremberg; inside the same plate is a stamped *N* within a pearled circle, another Nuremberg control mark. Along with Augsburg, the city of Nuremberg was a major center for armor manufacture in Germany and was especially renowned for its fluted harnesses.

*Unpublished.*



◀ 25

### Armet

German (Nuremberg) or Austrian (Innsbruck), ca. 1520–25

Steel; weight 7 lb. 2 oz. (3234 g)

Ex colls.: Albert Denison, first Baron Londesborough; William-Henry Denison, earl of Londesborough; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.562

Helmets fitted with masklike visors were a popular German fashion about 1510 to 1540. Visors forged as humorous or grotesque human masks were often worn in tournaments held during the exuberant pre-Lenten (Shrovetide) festivals, celebrations somewhat akin to modern Mardi Gras. The deep cuts on the left side of this example suggest that it was used in a mock battle, or tourney, fought by groups of horsemen armed with lances and swords. The helmet's powerful sculptural form, technical accomplishment, and imaginative conception demonstrate the armorer's virtuosity.

*London 1875, cat. no. 650(?); Londesborough sale, Christie's, London, July 4–11, 1888, lot 464; New Orleans 1961, no. 19.*

26 ▶

### Closed Burgonet

Attributed to Kolman Helmschmid (1470–1532)

German (Augsburg), ca. 1525–30

Steel; weight 6 lb. 10 oz. (3004 g)

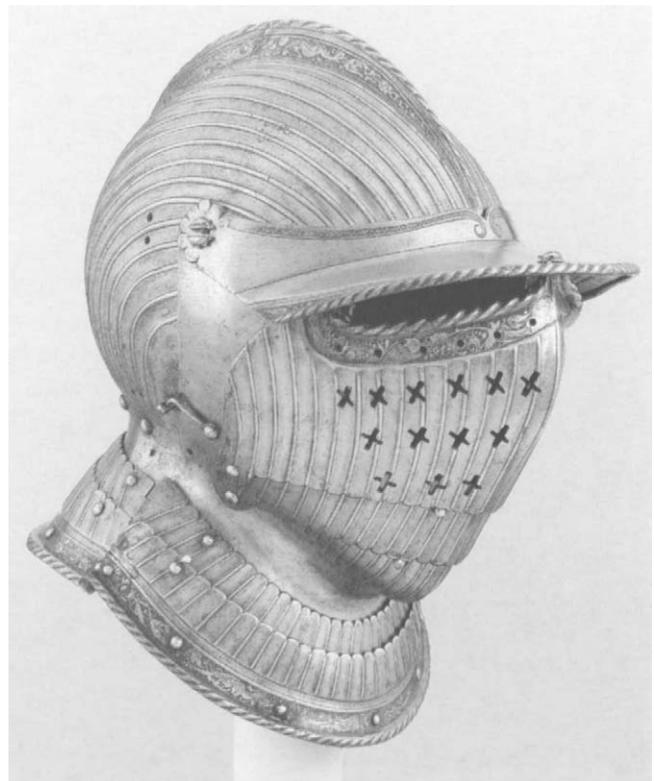
Ex coll.: Guillermo Casanova, marqués de Dos Aguas, Valencia, Spain

Gift of George D. Pratt, 1927

27.159.18

This helmet type combines features common to burgonets, notably the projecting peak and falling buff, with close-helmet construction, in which all elements of the face defense pivot together at the sides of the bowl. Closed burgonets in the fluted style are particularly rare. This finely made example is etched in the manner of Daniel Hopfer (1470–1536) of Augsburg and may have been made by Kolman Helmschmid, the leading Augsburg armorer of his generation, with whom Hopfer seems to have been associated.

*Dean 1928, p. 16, fig. 4; Grancsay 1938, p. 180.*



## 27 ▶

### Close-Helmet for a Boy

Attributed to Kolman Helmschmid (1470–1532)

German (Augsburg), ca. 1525–30

Steel; weight 4 lb. 4 oz. (1921 g)

Ex colls.: Sir Andrew Fontaine, Narford Hall, Norfolk, England;

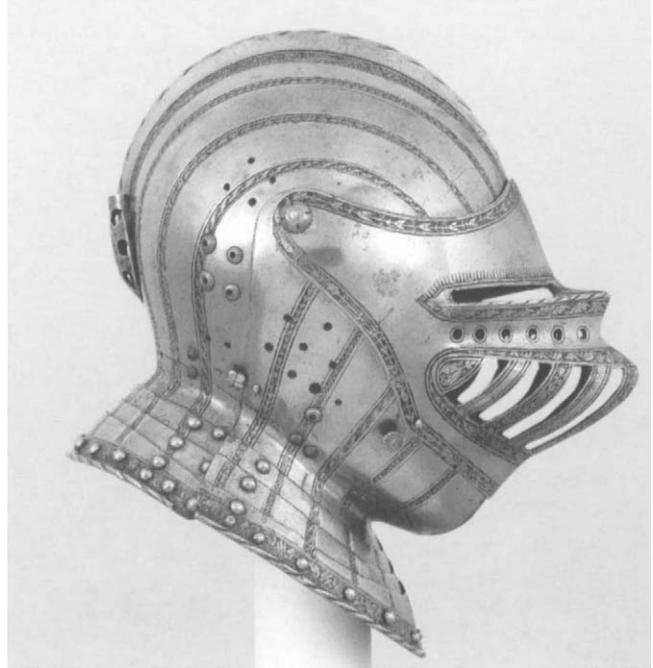
William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.621

Male children of aristocratic families were traditionally trained in the arts of horsemanship and fencing and began wearing armor at an early age. This finely wrought helmet, the openwork visor of which is clearly not intended for dangerous sport, was made for a boy. The distinctive one-piece visor, with its curved profile and etched ornament in the style of Daniel Hopper, recalls late works by Kolman Helmschmid of Augsburg.

*Fontaine sale, Christie's, London, June 16–19, 1884, lot 560.*



## 28 ▶

### Burgonet

German (Augsburg), ca. 1540–50

Steel; weight 4 lb. 15 oz. (2251 g)

Ex colls.: Bécoulet, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.556

This burgonet belongs to a series of virtually identical examples having three raised and engrailed combs that were worn by the guards attached to a noble German or Austrian house. Several helmets bear the mark of Augsburg and that of Desiderius Helmschmid (1513–1579), the city's leading armorer in this period (the Metropolitan's burgonet is unmarked). Pairs of holes in the bowl suggest that the surface was covered with fabric, stitched in place, leaving only the tall combs exposed. The forging of a helmet bowl with three tall combs from a single plate of steel required considerable skill; the challenge was also met by Italian armorers, who created triple-combed burgonets for the Farnese guard (see cat. no. 32). (The cheekpieces are modern replacements made by the Museum's armorer Leonard Heinrich in 1932.)

*Bécoulet sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, June 6–9, 1883, lot 90.*



## 29 ▶

### Burgonet

German (probably Augsburg), ca. 1540–50

Steel, brass; weight 4 lb. 5 oz. (1954 g)

Ex colls.: Theodore Winter, Munich; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.642

The decoration of this helmet is attributable to the Augsburg etcher Ulrich Holzmann (recorded 1534–62). The position of the plume-holder at the side of the bowl, rather than at the back, is unusual and perhaps reflects an Oriental influence.

*Unpublished.*



## 30 ▶

### Burgonet

Attributed to Kunz Lochner (ca. 1510–1567)

German (Nuremberg), ca. 1540–50

Steel; weight 3 lb. 15 oz. (1775 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.628

The peak is struck with the city arms of Nuremberg. The finely etched decoration, particularly the merman on either side of the bowl, recalls signed works by Kunz Lochner, Nuremberg's leading armorer in the mid-sixteenth century.

*Unpublished.*





cat. no. 31, front

### 31▲

#### Burgonet all'Antica

Italian (Milan), ca. 1535–40

Steel, gold, silver; weight 3 lb. 12 oz. (1711 g)

Ex colls.: Monsieur Pluquet, Bayeaux(?); William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.597

Classically inspired helmets embossed in high relief, sometimes in the form of fantastic beasts, were a specialty of Milanese armorers in the 1530s and 1540s. Unlike etching, embossing thinned and weakened the steel and compromised its deflective qualities, so the technique generally was limited to armors intended for ceremonial wear. While this burgonet falls far short of the high standard of modeling and finish typical of works by Filippo Negroli (ca. 1510–1579) or his cousin

Giovan Paolo (ca. 1513–1569), the leading masters of armor *all'antica* (“in the antique manner”), it nevertheless remains a characteristic example of this classicizing Renaissance art form. The helmet is forged from a single plate of steel, the surfaces retaining only faint traces of the original fire-gilding and silver damascened details.

*Allou* 1835, p. 78; *L'Art pour tous*, 21st year (1882), no. 531, p. 2222, figs. 4648–50; *Dean* 1915, pl. 35; *Scalini* 1987, p. 29, fig. 20.



### 32 ▲

#### Burgonet for the Farnese Guard

Italian, ca. 1545

Steel, gold, brass; weight 2 lb. 11 oz. (1232 g)

Ex coll.: Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris  
Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.219

This triple-combed burgonet is part of an extensive series of similarly embossed parade helmets thought to have been made for the guard of Pier Luigi Farnese (1525–1547), who ruled briefly as duke of Parma and Piacenza in 1545 until his assassination in 1547. The fleur-de-lis at the sides is the heraldic emblem of the Farnese family. Ninety-six helmets of this type were recorded in an inventory of the Farnese armory in 1731, twenty-four of which are today in the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.33, pl. 9.*



*cat. no. 32, front*

### 33 ▶

#### Burgonet of the Guard of Pope Julius III

Italian (Brescia), ca. 1550–55

Steel, gold, brass; weight 3 lb. 14 oz. (1758 g)

Ex coll.: Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris  
Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.222

The bold and colorful decoration, etched and gilt on a blued ground, includes a medallion containing the profile portrait of Pope Julius III (Giovanni Maria del Monte, 1487–1555, elected pope in 1550) surmounted by the stylized three-lobed mountain of the del Monte arms. The style and technique of the decoration anticipate the Brescian-made armors traditionally worn by the Papal Swiss Guard from the late sixteenth century.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.31, pl. 9; Dean 1905, p. 113, fig. 49D; Laking 1920–22, vol. 4, pp. 164–65, fig. 1243; Houston 1960, no. 71; Flint 1967, no. 25, ill.*



### 34 ▼

#### Burgonet

Italian (Milan), ca. 1560–70

Steel, gold, silver, textile; weight 4 lb. (1813 g)

Ex coll.: Marqués de Bosch, Valencia, Spain; Maurice de  
Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.205

Richly damascened in gold and silver, this helmet is decorated with five oval vignettes depicting exotic scenes, with Oriental figures on land and ships and oared galleys at sea. The extensive pictorial use of damascening on a smooth, rather than embossed, surface is highly unusual but relates to damascened iron furniture made in Milan in the second half of the sixteenth century. The shape of the burgonet is also noteworthy, the arched comb alluding to ancient Roman helmets. (The left cheekpiece is missing.)

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.27, pl. 9.*



*cat. no. 34, left side (detail)*

### 35 ▶

#### Helmet Crest for the Burgonet of Sforza Pallavicino

Italian (Milan), ca. 1560

Steel, gold; weight 1 lb. 8 oz. (675 g)

Ex colls.: Max and Maurice Rosenheim, London; Clarence Mackay, Roslyn, Long Island; George H. Warren, Newport, Rhode Island

Gift of Mrs. George H. Warren, in memory of her husband, 1972  
1972.144.4

The helmet crest as a badge of identity became a necessity in the thirteenth century, when European knights began to wear helmets that covered their faces. By the sixteenth century the use of crests tended to be limited to tournaments and funerary decorations in churches. For practical reasons most crests were fashioned from lightweight materials, such as gessoed and painted leather or wood, whereas this rare example is of gold-damascened iron. The seven-headed Hydra was the personal device of Sforza Pallavicino (ca. 1510–1585), a soldier who served in the imperial, papal, and Venetian armies. This crest, which is 7¼ inches in height, was intended to surmount a richly embossed and damascened helmet (now State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg)



that bears the same Hydra emblem. (The rear portion of the tail appears to be an inaccurate restoration.)

*Rosenheim sale, Sotheby's, London, April 30–May 4, 1923, lot 478; Mann 1945, pp. 37–38, pl. 40n; Tarassuk 1956, pp. 28–30, fig. 5.*

### 36 ▶

#### Close-Helmet for the Field

Western European, ca. 1550

Steel; weight 5 lb. 14 oz. (2656 g)

Ex colls.: Ralph Bernal; William Meyrick; Leonard Brassey; Clarence Mackay, Roslyn, Long Island

Gift of Stephen V. Grancsay, 1942

42.50.47

The rows of raised lobes along the sides of the comb and the edges of the visor and upper bevor are highly unusual, as is the boldly dentated edge of the comb. Combining Italian and German features, this helmet defies easy attribution. (The collar lames are missing.)

*Bernal sale, Christie's, London, March 52–April 30, 1855, lot 2538; Meyrick 1860, no. 1; Brassey sale, Christie's, London, February 21, 1922, lot 54.*





37 ▲

**Closed Burgonet**

Probably Austrian (Innsbruck), ca. 1550–60  
Steel, gold, brass; weight 6 lb. 11 oz. (3037 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris  
Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913  
14.25.524

The openwork visor, which allowed maximum ventilation while providing excellent protection from cuts, originally could be closed by a falling buff (now missing), which fitted over the pierced studs on either side of the bevor. The elegantly shaped bowl and scalloped edges of the plates recall Innsbruck armors made in the 1550s and early 1560s. (The rear collar lames are old but associated.)

*Unpublished.*



38 ▲

**Closed Burgonet**

Italian, ca. 1560

Steel, gold; weight 8 lb. 4 oz. (3755 g)

Ex colls.: Marchesa de Salvo di Ferrara, Palermo;  
Bashford Dean, New York  
Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,  
Gift of Miss Harriet M. Dean, 1929  
29.152.2

The etched decoration is nearly identical to that on another burgonet in the collection (cat. no. 39), which suggests that both were etched in the same workshop.

*Los Angeles 1953, no. 28.*



◀ 39

**Burgonet**

Italian (Milan?), ca. 1560

Steel, gold; weight 3 lb. 11 oz. (1685 g)

Ex coll.: Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris  
Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.221

The etched and gilt ornament, consisting of elegantly drawn foliate scrolls on a background of circles, matches that on the contemporary field armor of Cornelio Bentivoglio (Kunst-historisches Museum, Vienna), a soldier in the service of the dukes of Ferrara. Both presumably were made in the same workshop, one that appears to have specialized in fabricating arms for the Ferrarese court. Similar etching is seen on cat. nos. 38 and 40.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.28.*



◀ 40

**Close-Helmet for the Field**

Italian, ca. 1560–70

Steel, gold; weight 9 lb. 15 oz. (4515 g)

Ex colls.: Stefano Bardini, Florence; Samuel J. Whawell,  
Eastbourne and London; Theodore Offerman, New York  
Gift of Christian A. Zabriskie, 1937

37.189.13

In the 1560s it became fashionable in Italy to cover an armor with multiple narrow bands of foliate ornament, a practice carried to the extreme in this example. The presence of a large reinforcing brow plate on a close-helmet of this date is highly unusual, but it is found on similarly decorated armors made for the court at Ferrara. (The front collar lames are missing.)

*Laking 1920–22, vol. 4, pp. 111–12, fig. 1198; New York 1931, no. 78; Offerman sale, American Art Association–Anderson Galleries Inc., New York, November 11–13, 1937, lot 249, ill.*

41 ▶

Close-Helmet for the Field and Tourney

Italian (Brescia?), ca. 1560–65

Steel, gold; weight 6 lb. 13 oz. (3080 g)

Ex coll.: Marchesa di Salvo di Ferrara, Palermo

Rogers Fund, 1920

20.150.2

The style and design of the etched ornament are typically Brescian, though the confinement of the trophies to multiple narrow bands is highly unusual. The presence of a threaded hole on the right side of the upper bevor indicates that this helmet was fitted with a reinforce, presumably for use in the tourney. The three front collar lames are associated; their decoration indicates that they belong to a large armor garniture in the Real Armeria, Madrid, made in 1544 by Desiderius Helmschmid and etched by Ulrich Holzmann, both of Augsburg, for Emperor Charles V.

*Flint 1967, no. 26, ill.*



◀ 42

Pointed Morion

Italian (Milan), ca. 1560–70

Steel, gold, silver; weight 2 lb. 15 oz. (1341 g)

Ex colls.: Charles Stein, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.620



In contrast to the bold sculptural forms of earlier Milanese parade armor (for example, cat. no. 41), embossed armor made in the second half of the sixteenth century was flatter and more pictorial, often with entire figural scenes from prints reproduced on the steel surfaces. The costumes are invariably gold-damascened, the skin of the figures is silvered. This example is embossed on both sides with variant scenes depicting the Roman hero Mucius Scaevola placing his hand in the fire before King Porsena.

This distinctive form of lightweight infantryman's helmet, characterized by an almond-shaped bowl with turned-back point at the apex and a short brim, is referred to in contemporary English documents as a "Spanish morion." The term alludes to the common use of such helmets by Spanish troops rather than their place of manufacture, which was usually Italy.

*Stein sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, May 10–14, 1886, lot 133, ill.*



43▲

**Pointed Morion**

Italian (Brescia), ca. 1570–80

Steel, brass; weight 3 lb. 3 oz. (1449 g)

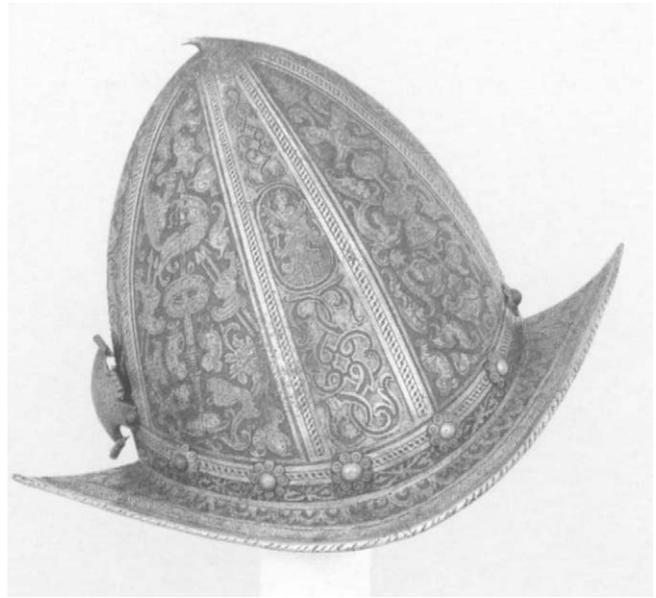
Ex colls.: Auguste Henry, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.532

The etched decoration includes a rampant lion, the heraldic emblem of the north Italian city of Brescia. Above the lion is a double-armed cross symbolizing the venerated reliquary of the Holy Cross in Brescia's cathedral, and to the sides are Saints Faustino and Giovita, protectors of the city. After Milan, Brescia was the largest producer of armor in Italy, and this helmet, which is one of a series of identical examples, provides concrete evidence of the Brescian style of armor decoration.

*Henry sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, April 19–22, 1886, lot 11.*



44▲

**Pointed Morion**

Italian (Milan), ca. 1590

Steel, gold, brass; weight 2 lb. 11 oz. (1213 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.629

The etched and gilt ornament on this morion is typical of Milanese armor of 1570–90. The decoration, which covers virtually the entire surface, consists of vertical bands of interlaced strapwork forming knots and cartouches enclosing human or allegorical figures alternating with bands of trophies. The etching is deep and precise, allowing the gilt ornament to stand in relief against the darkened pebble ground.

*Hagerstown 1955, no. 25.*

4 5 ▶

Pointed Morion

Italian (Brescia), ca. 1590

Steel, brass; weight 3 lb. 2 oz. (1407 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris  
Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.677a

Although worn with age, this elaborately etched morion is particularly interesting for the mark struck at the front of its brim—the Lion of Saint Mark, the Venetian control stamp. Venice had subjugated the armor-manufacturing city of Brescia in the fifteenth century, and, as a result, Brescia became the main supplier of armor used in Venetian service. Similarly marked morions are preserved in the former arsenal of the Serenissima in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice. The ornament, consisting of allover strapwork interlace enclosing trophies of arms, is in the French taste.

*Unpublished.*



◀ 4 6

Burgonet in Oriental Fashion

German (probably Nuremberg), ca. 1560

Steel, gold, brass; weight 2 lb. (895 g)

Ex coll.: Maurice Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino, Paris  
Rogers Fund, 1904

04.3.216

Despite the persistent threat of Turkish invasion in the sixteenth century, the courts in eastern and Central Europe were attracted to the exotic and colorful costumes and military equipment of their Ottoman enemies. Tournaments and parades in Turkish, or related Hungarian, fashion were held at the Hapsburg courts in Vienna and Prague by the mid-sixteenth century. This helmet provides evidence of that taste, as its fluted conical bowl, peak with sliding nasal (missing), large shaped cheekpieces (missing), and articulated neck plates (several missing) were copied directly from contemporary Turkish models. The surfaces are etched and gilt overall with decoration based on “Moresque” ornament of Oriental inspiration. A similar burgonet dated 1561, coming from the armory of the Princes Radziwill, is in Wawel Castle, Cracow.

*De Cosson 1901, no. B.41, pl. 8; Borchenski 1965, p. 110, fig. 4.*

## ◀ 47

## Burgonet in Oriental Fashion

German (probably Augsburg), late 16th century

Steel, gold, bronze, glass; weight 4 lb. 6 oz. (1976 g)

Ex colls.: Frédéric Spitzer, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.601



This finely etched, gilt, and jeweled burgonet recalls the sumptuously embellished helmet and cuirass acquired in Augsburg and offered in 1590 by the imperial court in Vienna as tribute to the Ottoman sultan. The Museum's helmet once was completed by large shaped cheekpieces in the Turkish fashion.

*Spitzer 1892, vol. 6, p. II, no. 37, ill.; Spitzer sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, June 10–14, 1895, lot 39.*

## ◀ 48

## Comb Morion

German (Brunswick?), ca. 1560–65

Steel; weight 4 lb. 8 oz. (2040 g)

Ex colls.: B. Kuntz, Vienna; Stephen V. Grancsay, Brooklyn;

John F. Hayward, London; David G. Alexander

Purchase, The Sulzberger Foundation Inc. and

Ronald S. Lauder Gifts, 1999

1999.62



An outstanding example of northern German etched armor, this morion appears to have been made at the court of the dukes of Brunswick, where the finest armors were typically decorated with lively figural subjects drawn from ancient history and the Bible. The left side of the comb shows a shield emblazoned with three small shields; these traditional arms of the painter's guild suggest that this helmet was an etcher's "masterpiece" required for matriculation into the guild. The morion, formed in two halves joined along the edge of the comb, is one of the earliest examples of two-part construction, which became widespread in the late sixteenth century (see, for example, cat. nos. 49–52, 61–69, 71–72).

*New York 1931, no. 90, ill.; Allentown 1964, no. 59; Hayward sale, Sotheby's, London, November 1, 1983, lot 26, ill.; Pyhr 1999, p. 28.*



*cat. no. 48, comb (detail)*

### Burgonet for the Guard of the Counts Khevenhüller zu Aichelberg

German, ca. 1580

Steel, lead, paint; weight 4 lb. 13 oz. (2178 g)

Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York

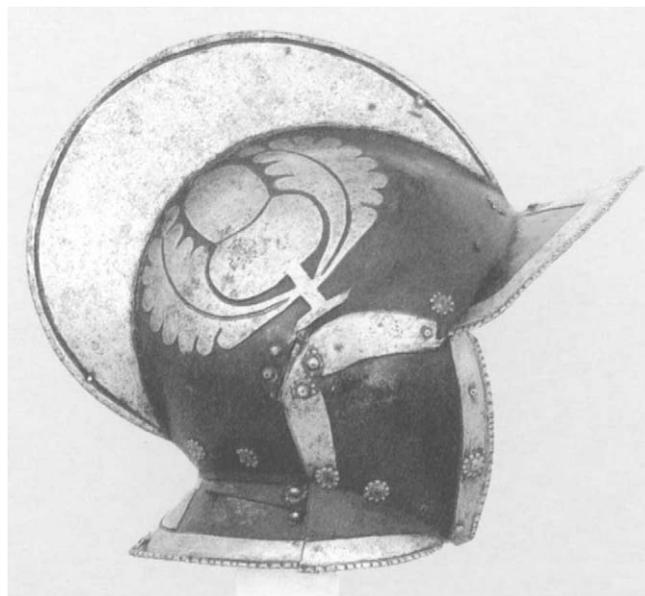
Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1929

29.156.46

The acorn and oak leaves embossed on the sides of the bowl are emblems of the noble Austrian family Khevenhüller zu Aichelberg (*Aichel* is German for “acorn”). A series of “black-and-white” armors mounted with similarly decorated burgonets or morions is preserved in the family’s castle of Hochosterwitz, near Klagenfurt, in the Austrian state of Carinthia.

Large numbers of standardized armors decorated with raised and brightly polished bands set off by the black-painted recessed surfaces were made for the German infantry (*Landesknechte*) in the second half of the sixteenth century. The majority were fabricated in Nuremberg, though similar harnesses were also made in the north (in the region of



Brunswick) and even in Innsbruck. This example is unusual, in that its decoration is specific to its owner.

*Unpublished.*

### ◀ 50

#### Comb Morion

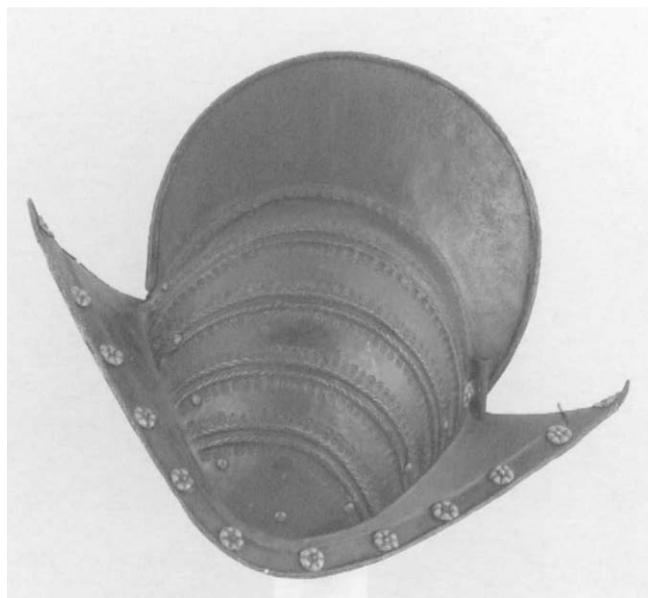
German (Brunswick?), ca. 1580–90

Steel, brass, leather; weight 3 lb. 15 oz. (1771 g)

Ex colls.: Dr. Büttner, Dresden; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.653



This morion matches a breastplate in the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, the deeply pointed waistline of which suggests a date for both pieces about 1580–90. The breastplate copies in steel a civilian doublet of textile, complete with buttons down the center. The decoration of raised bands outlined by rows of punched circles can thus be interpreted as an imitation of the strips of metallic braids applied over the seams of a textile costume. The high comb, deep V-shaped brim, and prominent use of decorative brass washers evoke comparisons with northern German armor of the so-called Brunswick school.

*Unpublished.*



51 ▲

**Comb Morion**

German, ca. 1600

Steel, lead, textile; weight 4 lb. (1819 g)

Ex coll.: Gregory Nycander, Ljungskile, Sweden

Rogers Fund, 1928

28.195.1

This example is one of a series of morions etched with the arms of the cooper's guild: a pair of compasses opened above a short-handled cooper's ax and supported by two goats. Helmets emblazoned with the heraldic arms of an individual ruler, an aristocratic house, or even a municipality are commonplace (see, for example, cat. nos. 32, 33, 43, 49), but this group is the only one recorded as bearing the emblem of a craft guild. These helmets are traditionally said to come from Cologne.

*Unpublished.*



52 ▲

**Comb Morion**

German, ca. 1600

Steel, lead; weight 2 lb. 11 oz. (1224 g)

Ex colls.: Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt;

Hans Müller-Hickler, Darmstadt; Bashford Dean, New York

Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Funds from various donors, 1929

29.158.48

This helmet is one of a series of etched morions that apparently were worn by the guard of the dukes of Hesse; the Metropolitan has one other example (acc. no. 29.158.48) and there are a dozen preserved in the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt. Judging from the similarity in form, the use of the same rosette-shaped lead washers beneath the lining rivets on exterior, and the pattern and style of etched decoration, the Darmstadt series was fabricated in the same center as cat. no. 51.

*Unpublished.*



◀ 53

### Close-Helmet for the Field

German (possibly Augsburg), dated 1594(?)

Steel, gold, brass; weight 9 lb. 5 oz. (4210 g)

Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York

Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,

Gift of Mrs. Harriet M. Dean, 1929

29.152.1

Although now marred by corrosion, the etched and gilt decoration on this helmet is of high quality. It is exceptional in that the etcher inscribed his name at the base of the bowl, *Mart[in] Schmidt*, and added the date, 1594, twice on the bottom rear collar lame. Few etcher's signatures are known, and this dated example by Schmidt, who is otherwise unrecorded, appears to be unique.

*Unpublished.*

54 ▶

### Close-Helmet for the Tilt

Austrian (Innsbruck), ca. 1580–90

Steel, leather, textile; weight 7 lb. 5 oz. (3321 g)

Ex colls.: C. A. de Cosson; Henry G. Keasbey, Eastbourne,

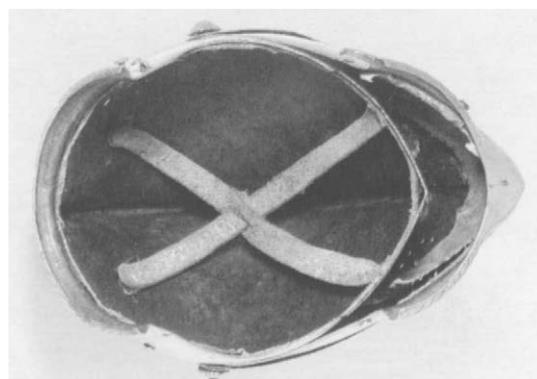
England; George D. Pratt, New York

Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935

48.149.30

Close-helmets for the tilt were typically fitted with a large ventilation door on the right side of the upper bevor, whereas the left side, which was more exposed to an opponent's lance, was covered by a reinforce (grandguard) bolted to the breastplate. This example retains its original leather lining straps and adjustable shock-absorbing cross-straps arranged as an X inside the bowl. To the ends of these straps were attached thin laces that passed through holes at the back of the bowl and allowed the wearer to adjust the tension on the straps. The leather-covered lining at the chin is preserved. The graceful lines of the bowl and the pairs of lightly engraved lines around the edges of the plates recall helmets made in the imperial court workshops at Innsbruck. (The brow reinforce is missing; the long threaded bolt at the front, intended to affix the grandguard, is a later modification.)

*De Cosson and Burges 1881, no. 56, fig. 53; Keasbey sale, American Art Galleries, New York, December 5–6, 1924, lot 298, pl. 33.*



*cat. no. 54, interior*

5 5 ▶

Close-Helmet for the Tournament

German (probably Augsburg), late 16th century

Steel, leather, textile; weight 10 lb. 6 oz. (4700 g)

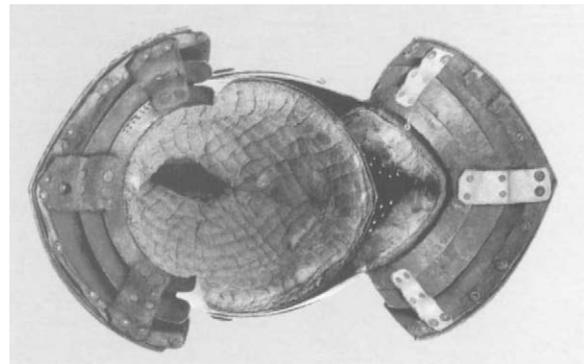
Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.548

This helmet seems to have been designed for foot combat at the barriers, a sport in which pairs of contestants wearing armor only to the waist (hitting below the belt was forbidden) fought with pikes or swords over a separating wooden barrier. A brow reinforce was originally riveted to the visor. The long threaded bolt projecting from the upper bevor is a later working-life addition apparently intended to affix a reinforce (buff) for mounted use in the tourney. The bowl and bevor retain their original linen-covered padded linings and shock-absorbing suspension straps between the bowl and the lining.

*Flint 1967, no. 28.*



*cat. no. 55, interior*

5 6 ▶

Close-Helmet for the Tournament on Foot

German (Dresden?), ca. 1640–50

Steel, leather, textile; weight 9 lb. 1 oz. (4105 g)

Ex coll.: John Stoneacre Ellis, Westchester, New York

John Stoneacre Ellis Collection, Gift of Mrs. Ellis and

Augustus Van Horne Ellis, 1896

96.5.115a

This helmet belongs to a series of foot-combat armors made for the Saxon court at Dresden during the reign of Prince-Elector Johann Georg I (1611–56). Numerous cuts on the left side give evidence of its active service in knightly contests. The helmet bowl retains portions of its original lining straps and cross-straps and the bevor has its chin pad of canvas stuffed with cotton.

*Dean 1905, p. 188, fig. 94.*





58 ▼

Close-Helmet of Vincenzo I Gonzaga

Italian (Milan), ca. 1587

Steel, gold, silver; weight 5 lb. 15 oz. (2701 g)

Ex colls.: Prince A.P. Basilewsky, Paris; Polycarpe Charles Séchan,  
Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris  
Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.607

Although incomplete—the face defense and collar lames are missing—this helmet is nevertheless an outstanding example of late-sixteenth-century Milanese armor. Its rich decoration, which is chiseled, punched, and damascened in gold and silver, includes eagles, crowns, and a monogram comprising the letters *V* and *F* (or *VFL*). An armor with identical decoration appears in a portrait of Vincenzo I Gonzaga (1562–1612), duke of Mantua (Palazzo Ducale, Mantua), thought to have been painted about 1587, the year of his accession. Other portions of this armor, which appears to have been a large garniture intended for field, mounted tournament, and foot combat at the barriers, are preserved in the Musée de l'Armée, Paris, and the Armeria Reale, Turin.

57 ▲

Sallet and Buff for a Rennzeug in the Saxon Fashion

German, ca. 1570–1600

Steel; weight 10 lb. 3 oz. (4598 g)

Ex colls.: Bernard Brocas; John Walker Bailey; W. Bailey;

C. A. de Cosson; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.589

The long-tailed German sallet was out of fashion as a field helmet by the early sixteenth century, but it continued to be used thereafter for the *Scharfrennen*, a joust fought between two contestants with sharp (rather than blunted) lances in an open field. Specially designed armors for this contest, known as *Rennzeuge*, included sallets bolted at the front to a buff—a large rigid defense covering the lower face and neck—which in turn was bolted to the breastplate so that the head and upper body remained immobile. This sallet and buff belong to a distinctive series of *Rennzeuge* made for use in the Saxon court at Dresden. Although unmarked, they are thought to have been made by the court armorers at Annaberg, in the Saxon territories. Two complete harnesses of this type are in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (acc. nos. 26.92.3, .4).

*Brocas sale, George Robins, London, March 19, 1834, lot 458; de Cosson and Burges 1881, no. 32, fig. 30; London 1890, p. 165, no. 703.*



## Close-Helmet for the Tournament on Foot

Italian (Milan), ca. 1600–1610

Steel, gold; weight 11 lb. 13 oz. (5360 g)

Ex colls.: Prince A. P. Basilewsky, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.598

Foot combat at the barriers, while strictly a friendly sport, required sturdy armor, particularly the helmet. This example weighs almost twelve pounds. The overall reticulated pattern is characteristic of Milanese armor decoration about 1600, particularly of the Master of the Castle, an anonymous armorer (or workshop) using the etched motif of a castle as a mark. On this helmet, foliate strapwork forms lozenges alternately filled with trophies of arms, palms passing through crowns, and flaming thunderbolts, the etched ornament brilliantly fire-gilt against a stippled darkened ground (the original coloring is preserved at the front of the bowl beneath the visor). The identical pattern is found on a left arm defense for the joust, also in the Metropolitan (acc. no. 14.25.825). These two elements belong to a large garniture of armor comprising pieces for tournament on horse and on foot; the armor for foot combat, now in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, is completed by the Museum's helmet.

*Basilewsky sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, April 26, 1869, lot 24(?).*



*cat. no. 59, front of bowl (detail)*



*cat. no. 58 (detail)*



*cat. no. 60 (detail)*

**60▲**

**Close-Helmet for the Tournament on Foot**

Italian (Milan) or Spanish (Eugui), ca. 1600–1610

Steel, gold, brass; weight 10 lb. 1 oz. (4963 g)

Ex colls.: Dukes of Alba, Madrid(?); Charles Davillier, Paris;

William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.595

The surfaces were originally blued, deeply engraved and punched, and damascened in gold; though worn with age, some of the original brilliant coloring is preserved beneath

the overlapping plates. The ornament includes pairs of entwined rings, a triangle (or delta) with paired palm branches, and crowns surmounting a complex monogram (either the owner's name or device). The form, decorative technique, and ornamental vocabulary are Milanese, but the helmet might also have been made by Milanese armorers working in the Spanish royal workshop at Eugui.

*Unpublished.*



◀ 6 1

### Closed Burgonet of "Savoyard" Type

Italian, ca. 1600–1620

Steel; weight 10 lb. 1 oz. (4562 g)

Ex colls.: Ambrogio Uboldo, Milan; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.512

"Savoyard" helmets are a distinctive form of late Italian close-helmet worn by cuirassiers, the heavy cavalry outfitted with plate armor worn only to the knee and armed with pistols and swords. The term *Savoyard* is a reference to the large number of these helmets that the Swiss captured from the troops of the duke of Savoy during an unsuccessful assault on the city of Geneva during the night of December 11–12, 1602. These helmets are also referred to as *Todenkopf* ("death's head," in German), an allusion to the eerie skull-like quality of the face defense. This example, which is unusual in having a fully embossed human nose, has a decidedly more cheerful countenance.

*Uboldo 1841, pl. 3, fig. A; Louisville 1952, no. 37; Hagerstown 1955, no. 30.*



◀ 6 2

### Closed Burgonet of "Savoyard" Type

Italian, ca. 1600–1620

Steel, gold; weight 9 lb. 11 oz. (4391 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.516

Set off by blued steel surfaces, the etched and gilt flames provide an attractive and thoroughly appropriate decoration for a soldier constantly exposed to firearms and cannon fire.

*Paris 1889, vol. 1, p. 61.*



◀ 63

### Closed Burgonet

Dutch, ca. 1620–30

Steel, gold, brass; weight 5 lb. 5 oz. (2414 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.513

This simple but handsome example was originally blued or blackened; the barred face defense and pivot hooks on the right side are gilt. The triple-barred visor and the single collar lame at the front and back, each shaped and engraved to suggest several articulated lames, are features frequently found on Dutch armors of the period.

*Unpublished.*

64 ▶

### Burgonet for a Harquebusier

Dutch or English, ca. 1610–20

Steel, gold, silver, textile; weight 2 lb. 9 oz. (1154 g)

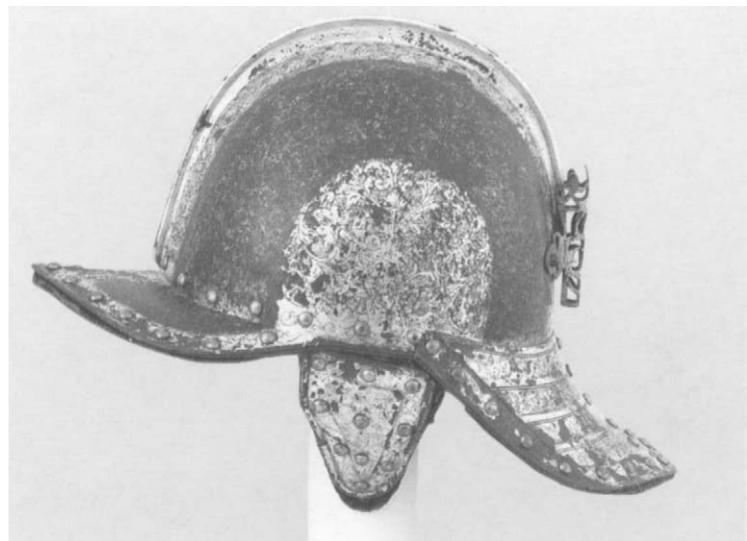
Ex coll.: William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.638

The harquebusier was a light cavalryman armed with a short carbine called a harquebus. He was usually outfitted with an open-faced helmet, a cuirass with reinforcing breastplate, and an elbow-length gauntlet for the left hand, which was supplemented by a coat of thick buff leather. In most instances the armor was of sturdy utilitarian make, without ornament.

The extraordinarily rich decoration of this example is exceptional. The surface of the bowl is completely covered by wide bands of chiseled and punched foliate ornament, alternately silvered and fire-gilt. Similar chiseled decoration, but gilt overall, is found on the Dutch armor (now Royal Armouries, Tower of London) ordered in 1612 for



Henry, Prince of Wales, from an armorer at the Hague. It is also tempting to speculate that this splendidly embellished helmet may have been made for the English court. (The one-piece tail plate, cheekpieces, and plume-holder are expert restorations, as is the velvet-covered lining.)

*Unpublished.*



## ◀ 65

### Pikeman's Pot

Dutch, ca. 1610–20

Steel, lacquer, gold, brass; weight 3 lb. 14 oz. (1769 g)

Ex coll.: Bashford Dean, New York

Rogers Fund, 1904

04.4.12

The introduction of European culture into Japan in the sixteenth century greatly influenced the indigenous style of armor and tactics of warfare. Following the adoption of firearms, European armor, with its solid, sometimes shot-proof plates, was eagerly acquired by the Japanese in the original or was copied with considerable fidelity by local armorers. This finely made Dutch pikeman's helmet, referred to at the time as a pot, was adapted for use by a samurai with the addition of a Japanese-style brow plate and a laminated neck defense (since removed) and by lacquering the interior and exterior surfaces.

*Dean 1903, pp. 64–65, fig. 20.*



## ◀ 66

### Close-Helmet for the Field

French, ca. 1600–1610

Steel; weight 5 lb. 10 oz. (2544 g)

Ex colls.: Ernest de Rozière, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.618

The decoration of this helmet, with its raised ribs outlining parallel bands etched with trophies of arms, is typically French and is found on a distinctive group of armors dating to the reign of Henry IV (1590–1610). Among the trophies on this example are cannon bearing the fleurs-de-lis of France. (The front collar lame is a modern restoration.)

*Rozière sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, March 17–18, 1860, lot 37, ill.*

67 ▶

Close-Helmet for the Field

French, ca. 1620–30

Steel, gold; weight 13 lb. 14 oz. (6293 g)

Ex coll.: William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.514

The two-piece construction of the helmet bowl, the scalloped edges of the plates, and the distinctive snub-nosed profile of the visor recall French helmets of about 1620–30. The reinforcing shot-proof plates screwed to either side of the bowl, which add 3 pounds 10 ounces (1657 g) to the overall weight, are rare on close-helmets for cuirassiers. Beneath the reinforces, the original smooth blue-black surface of the bowl is preserved.

*Nickel 1969, p. 202, fig. 17.*



◀ 68

Burgonet for a Cuirassier

French, ca. 1620–30

Steel; weight 6 lb. (2724 g)

Ex colls.: Sir Richard Cosway, R.A., London; Samuel H. Whawell, London; Bashford Dean, New York

Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander McMillan Welch, 1929

29.153.2

The surfaces are somewhat crudely etched with an overall pattern of strapwork cartouches enclosing trophies, all set against a cross-hatched ground. The decoration and the distinctive profile of the helmet are typically French. The baluster-shaped finial at the apex and large rayed washer below it are features also found on contemporary Flemish helmets and appear to be a conscious revival of the applied helmet ornaments depicted in Burgundian tapestries of the late fifteenth century. This example once belonged to the celebrated English painter Sir Richard Cosway, R.A. (1740–1821), who collected arms and armor as studio props for his history paintings.

*Grose 1786, pl. 11.*

69 ▶

### Closed Burgonet

French, ca. 1630

Steel, gold; weight 7 lb. (3177 g)

Ex coll.: William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.518

Helmets with a faceted bowl surmounted by a pointed comb are characteristic of French examples worn during the reign of Louis XIII (1610–43). The somber dark steel surfaces are relieved by traces of original gilding on the plume-holder at the back, the baluster-shaped finial at the apex, and the unusual baluster rivet heads on the buff and collar. The helmet's large size and unusual type of falling buff with slotted sights are noteworthy. (The bottom collar lame at the front and back is a modern restoration.)

*Unpublished.*



70 ▼

### Zischägge

German, ca. 1630–40

Steel, gold, brass, leather, textile; weight 4 lb. 2 oz. (1880 g)

Ex coll.: William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

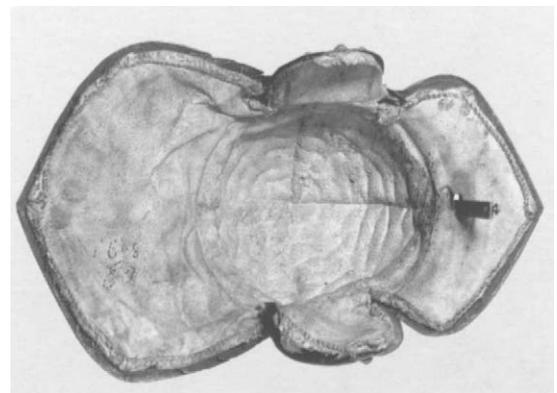
14.25.511

*Zischägge* refers to a distinctive type of seventeenth-century cavalry helmet consisting of a hemispherical bowl, peak with sliding nasal, cheekpieces, and long laminated tail. The German word is a corruption of the Turkish *chichak*, which

refers to a similarly constructed helmet used throughout much of the Ottoman world. Cat. nos. 51 and 52 are earlier examples of European helmets in the Oriental style.

Unlike most *Zischägge*, which were made in large numbers and lack quality of finish, this example has a finely fluted and ribbed bowl with baluster finial at the top, its surfaces blued and gilt. It also preserves its original leather-covered lining in the bowl, peak, tail, and cheekpieces. The finial of the nasal is stamped a *W* (or upside-down *M*?).

*Unpublished.*



*cat. no. 70, interior*



71 ▲

Siege Helmet

French, ca. 1600–1650  
 Steel; weight 20 lb. 9 oz. (9355 g)  
 Ex coll.: William H. Riggs, Paris  
 Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913  
 14.25.495

Siege engineers, sappers, and bombardiers regularly came under fire at close range and thus were equipped with extraordinarily heavy shot-proof armor. The bowl and cheeks of this example are protected by a double thickness of plates. The right side of the bowl has a proofmark—the dent caused by a bullet fired at a prescribed distance as proof of the armor plate’s strength—but the shot did not penetrate the sturdy reinforce to the bowl below.

*Unpublished.*



72 ▲

Siege Helmet

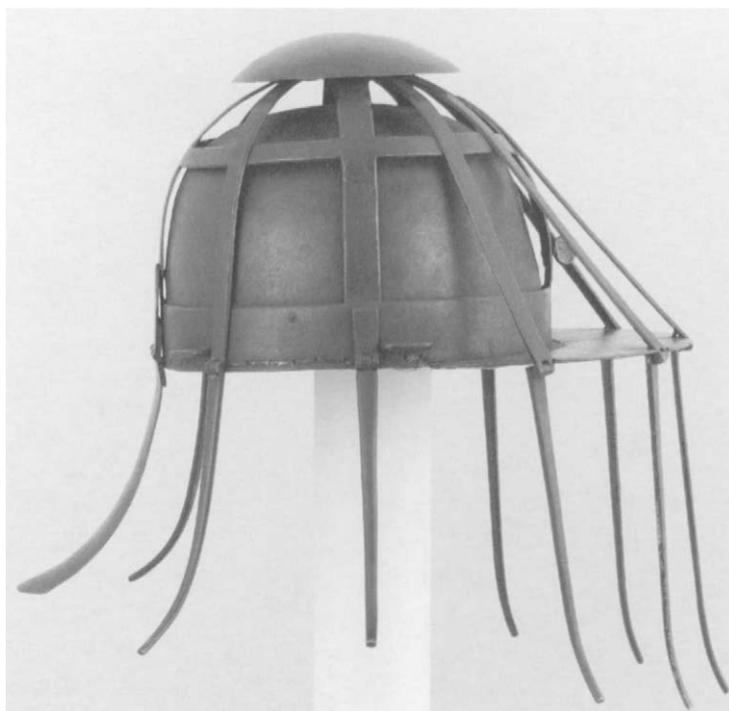
French, ca. 1650–1700  
 Steel; weight 22 lb. 6 oz. (10,170 g)  
 Ex coll.: Henry, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris  
 Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913  
 14.25.493

Wearing this extremely thick, heavy helmet could not have been comfortable. The adjustable face defense alone weighs almost four pounds. The shallow dent at the front of the bowl is a proofmark. The form of the bowl is curiously archaic, recalling sallets of the fifteenth century (for example, cat. nos. 6 and 9), whereas the sliding nasal—an Oriental innovation—is reversed, so that the enlarged finial has become the principal face defense (cf. cat. no. 47). The bowl and face defense are both stamped with the number 21, indicating that the helmet was part of a series.

*Paris 1889, p. 45, ill.*



*cat. no. 73, closed*



*cat. no. 73, open*

73 ▲

### Spider Helmet

English or French, ca. 1650–1700

Steel, paint, textile; weight 4 lb. 11 oz. (2152 g)

Ex colls.: Prince Pierre Soltykoff, Paris; William H. Riggs, Paris

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913

14.25.523

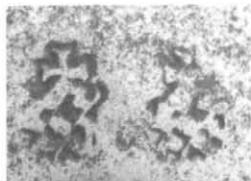
One of the most bizarre head defenses ever designed, the so-called spider helmet takes its name from the arrangement of narrow bars hinged around the rim of the domed bowl and projecting peak recalling the legs radiating from a spider's body. The hanging bars encircled the head and offered protection against cutting blows from swords. When not in use,

the bars were folded up and their ends fitted beneath the spring-held disk at the apex. A turn of the screw at the front released the spring, causing the disk to pop up and the bars to fall into place. The bowl retains its padded lining.

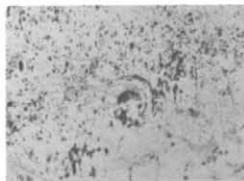
*Paris 1889, p. 68, ill.*

# MARKS AND INSCRIPTIONS

(not reproduced to scale)



*marks, cat. no. 3*



*mark, cat. no. 13*



*mark, cat. no. 3*



*mark, cat. no. 13*



*marks, cat. no. 4*



*mark, cat. no. 15*



*marks, cat. no. 6*



*mark, cat. no. 15*



*marks, cat. no. 10*



*marks, cat. no. 15*



*mark, cat. no. 12*



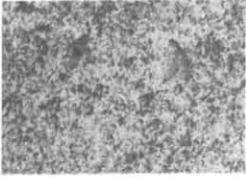
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*mark, cat. no. 18*



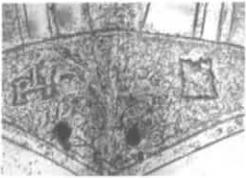
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*mark, cat. no. 19*



*inscription (signature), cat. no. 53*



*marks, cat. no. 21*



*inscription (date), cat. no. 53*



*mark, cat. no. 23*



*mark, cat. no. 70*



*mark, cat. no. 24*



*mark, cat. no. 72*



*mark, cat. no. 24*



*mark, cat. no. 72*



*mark, cat. no. 30*

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