Armatura Italiana conservata a Philadelphia

Armatura italiana, Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art, fine XV secolo. In particolare: corazza, spallacci e braccia 1500-1510; elmo a rondella 1490-1500

The third helmet (fig. 23) (ndr l'autore fa riferimento a due elmi precedenti della stessa tipologia datati 1470 e 1490, quindi il suddetto è l'ultimo in ordine cronologico) is the latest of the group. The bowl bears a strong comb of trapezoidal section, which is extended into the narrow neckguard ending in a wedge that engages the rear edges of the cheekpieces (the rondel and the post are, as usual, modern). The frontal is more protective than the two previous examples; it reaches far back, with the lateral edges cut obtusely, and then rises obliquely to form the usual median cusp, being less open at the top. The cheekpieces too, reach far back to form a neckguard; their rearedges nearly meet and are cut away to accommodate the post of the rondel; the lower rim has a turned edge. The facial opening is arched, has a turned edge at the sides, and is cut in a wide trapezoidal shape in front of the mouth. The visor a ventaglia is of advanced design, with concealed hinges, and a raised, protruding lip at its upper edge; the beak is still rather low but the lateral corners rise slightly, bowlike. Its lower edge is not straight or slightly convex as usual, but runs concave from the hinges and then, forming a distinct angle, runs straight to the chin. The lower right-hand side bears eight vetilation holes arranged in a triangle, as well as one hole for the missing lifting peg. This headpiece is also unmarked, but it is Lombard; the shape of the lower edge of the visor betrays some influence from Southern Germany, and an acceptable date would be the last decade of the fifteenth century". 
Unlike the preceding piece (*ndr una coraza da uomo d'arme appiedato alla tedesca), the next breastplate (fig. 37) is to be worn on horseback, as is clear from the attachments for a lance-rest on the right. It is very slim and slightly curved and ribbed; the lip at the bottom as three pairs of holes for attaching the fauld. The neckline is bordered by a boldly turned boxed edge modeled as a triangle with the front surface flattened at the apex. The arm openings are cur somewhat obliquely and are bordere like the neckline. On the right side of the chest are four holes for attaching the lance-rest; at present these are filled by four blocks riveted in place. The piece is certainly Italian and datable to around 1500. It is closely related to the breastplate of a suit (B 5) in the Diocesan Museum of Mantua, to two others in Cleveland, and to others -one of which is engraved with foliage- in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
L'armatura di Mantova cui fa riferimento il Boccia è stata anche quella che casualmente ho preso, all'inizio della ricerca, come termine di paragone usando il testo *Armi in Occidente* di Arturo Puricelli-Guerra, della quale c'è una breve descrizione: "bellissimo esemplare dell'arte degli armaioli milanesi. Il petto della corazza ha una forma più ellittica. La panziera a lamine con i fiancali è fissata esteriormente. L'armatura è diventata asimmetrica. La parte destra destinata all'offesa è alleggerita e guadagna in mobilità ed è in articolazione. La parte sinistra, destinata invece alla difesa, è in compenso meno mobile, ma più rinforzata."

Per uno studio più approfondito si rimanda all'opera di Boccia *Le armature di S. Maria delle Grazie di Curtatone di Mantova e l'armatura lombarda del '400*

*Armatura, ultimo quarto del XV secolo. Mantova, Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie.*