

The Basiliscope Mercury 448

The Internet newsletter for the arms and armour community

This week's weapon from a watery grave is a trident from Anatolia. Otherwise, swords and helmets, a dagger and other arms from a Swedish Castle excavation, a number of grave stories and a book from Glasgow.

Arms and armour in the news

Ancient arms

Neanderthals made the oldest spears found in Europe

<https://archaeology.org/news/2025/04/30/neanderthals-made-the-oldest-bone-spear-tip-found-in-europe/>

<https://phys.org/news/2025-05-ancient-wooden-spears-germany-wielded.html>

Ancient fortifications and barracks found in Sinai

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/4/139894/Ancient-Fortifications-Soldier-Quarters-Unearthed-in-North-Sinai>

Trident found in Anatolian Lake

<https://arkeonews.net/poseidons-trident-discovered-in-lake-iznik/>

More info on one of the swords from the French iron-age cemetery

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/2-300-year-old-sword-with-swastikas-unearthed-at-necropolis-in-france>

These sandals were made for marching

<https://www.zmescience.com/science/archaeology/ancient-roman-sandals-germany/>

Gladiator helmet returned to Bulgaria

<https://fakti.bg/en/bulgaria/971028-varnaha-na-balgaria-gladiatorski-shlem-koito-se-ocenava-na-3-mln-evro>

Round the world

How a battle destroyed a Chinese forest

<https://archaeology.org/news/2025/05/02/battle-irrevocably-destroyed-ancient-chinese-cypress-forest/>

Grave stories

Violent times in ancient China

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/18-stab-wounds-to-3-700-year-old-skull-reveal-fierce-feuding-in-ancient-china>

Re-investigating the tomb of Philip of Macedonia

<https://phys.org/news/2025-04-great-tumulus-vergina-philip-ii.html>

Feature on the mausoleums at Samarkand and the Taj Mahal

https://grave-stories.com/the-taj-mahal-the-most-beautiful-mausoleum-in-the-world/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=the-taj-mahal-the-most-beautiful-mausoleum-in-the-world

Investigating the graves of Union black soldiers

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/mass-graves-of-black-union-soldiers-slaughtered-by-confederate-guerrillas-possibly-identified-in-kentucky>

Skeletons of Chinese victims of Japanese invaders examined

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202505/1333972.shtml>

Through the arrow-slit . . .

Investigating a hidden vault in a Ukraine Castle

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2025/05/archaeologists-finally-gain-access-to-a-mystery-chamber-beneath-galician-castle/155181>

Medieval ring found in excavations at Wawel Castle

<https://tvpworld.com/86661621/mysterious-500-year-old-ring-unearthed-at-wawel-royal-castle-in-poland>

Weapons uncovered at Gullberg Castle

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2025/05/bollocks-shaped-dagger-among-new-discoveries-at-gullberg-fortress/155220>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14711003/Archaeologists-discover-distinctive-dagger.html>

On the frontlines

New displays on the Battle of Naseby

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce82dz2ep4po>

Through the gunloop...

Work begins on restoring Heugh Battery

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c93y825gvg3o>

How Fort George was captured

<https://www.lakegeorgeexaminer.com/who-really-captured-fort-george-250-years-ago/>

Cannons to the left, cannon to the right

Arrest in the stolen Kansas's cannon case

<https://people.com/kansas-man-arrested-stealing-historic-cannon-pay-off-drug-debt-11729769>

Significant artillery pieces unearthed on Vancouver building site
<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/ww-machine-guns-1870s-cannons-120029506.html>

Fredericton's restored cannons returned to Officers' Square
<https://thebruns.ca/2025/05/10/frederictons-restored-cannons-returned-to-officers-square/>

Café Basiliscoe

Violence and Croatian pubs in the Middle Ages
<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/crime-taverns-medieval-dubrovnik/>

History of beer
<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/when-was-beer-invented>

Princesses and Amazons

Valkyrie's grave?
<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/vikings/if-it-was-a-man-we-would-say-thats-a-warriors-grave-weapon-filled-burials-are-shaking-up-what-we-know-about-womens-role-in-viking-society>

Golden Valkyrie
<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/vikings/harby- Valkyrie-a-1-200-year-old-gold-viking-age-woman-sporting-a-sword-shield-and-ponytail>

Into the 20th century

22 soldiers found in Ypres
<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/archaeology-around-the-world/article-851945>

Modern WW2 cache found in Czech Republic
<https://www.mensjournal.com/news/hikers-discover-gold-treasure-czech-republic>

Still looking for the 'Gold Train'
<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/archaeology-around-the-world/article-853894>

Nautical news

Six ships found sunk as defence in Sweden
<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2025/05/centuries-old-shipwrecks-uncovered-in-varberg/15242>

Derry's Armada collection goes for conservation before move to new home
<https://www.derryjournal.com/news/people/restoration-works-begin-on-derrys-famous-la-trinidad-valencera-armada-shipwreck-collection-ahead-of-move-to-derry-north-atlantic-dna-museum-at-ebrington-5117095>

New theory in the wake of *Batavia*'s wrecking
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/may/06/batavia-shipwreck-new-theory-what-happened>

Museum news and exhibitions

News

Leaks at the Louvre
<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/05/05/louvre-water-leak-cimabue-exhibition>

Hohenzollerns and German government come to agreement
<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/05/16/family-of-prussian-kings-settles-century-old-dispute-with-germany-over-royal-treasures>

New museums

Sainsbury wing reopens in London's National Gallery
<https://artdaily.com/news/181796/Sainsbury-Wing-reopens-after-two-years-of-closure>

Museum musings

How the British Museum prepared for War
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/british-museum-and-blitz-eight-days-evacuate>

What the British museum director is thinking today
<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/05/bm-director-rules-out-restitution-as-he-outlines-plans-to-foster-collaboration>

Conservation corner

15th century painting of Archangel Michael to be restored
<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/15th-century-florentine-masterpiece-to-be-restored/>

Making swords in 19th century Dahomey
<https://phys.org/news/2025-05-revelations-sword-19th-century-dahomey.html>

Objects

Group of Doune pistols return to Doune, on display in the museum

<https://www.popsci.com/science/doune-pistols-exhibit/>

Exhibitions

Hiroshige in London

<https://artdaily.com/news/181494/Exhibition-offers-a-rare-insight-into-the-career-and-legacy-of-one-of-Japan-s-most-celebrated-artists>

Mamelukes in Paris

<https://artdaily.com/news/181471/-Mamluks--Sultans--Slaves--and-Scholars---Louvre-s-epic-exhibition-revives-a-lost-empire>

Decoding medieval manuscripts in LA

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/symbols-and-signs-getty-exhibition-explores-medieval-manuscript-codes/>

Morgan's latest acquisitions in NY

<https://artdaily.com/news/181769/Exhibition-featuring-new-acquisitions-made-in-honor-of-the-Morgan-s-centennial-to-opens>

Books

Ralph Moffat: The Burrell Collection: Introducing European Arms and Armour

<https://shop.glasgowlife.org.uk/products/introducing-european-arms-and-armour>

And many other Burrell Collection publications which you might enjoy

<https://shop.glasgowlife.org.uk/collections/glasgow-life-publications>

Popular culture

One-man play about being a museum guard at the Met

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/05/16/patrick-bringley-all-the-beauty-world-metropolitan-museum-guard-memoir-play>

Events

Calls for Papers

15-16 May 2026 Brussels: Army of Flanders

https://icomam.mini.icom.museum/call-for-papers-army-of-flanders-15-16-may-2026/?fbclid=IwY2xjawJrIDRleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHjbfq0bGm25lZsYMWmsfzmRHPxlrIFGHTNuOsIFSaJ4srApsLDCHnLXovxza_aem_wUUbH_3FcPd4dmgTNMuL9w

Sales, fairs and auctions

22 May 2025 Paris

Swords and cannon

<https://www.giquelloetassocies.fr/en/catalog/163011-tentationdeg3?saleSlug=tentationdeg3&>

22 May 2025 London

Islamic and Indian Art

<https://www.bonhams.com/auction/30703/islamic-and-indian-art/>

Antique Arms and Armour

24 June – 8 July 2025 | starting at 12:00 BST online

<https://www.bonhams.com/auction/30969/antique-arms-and-armour/>

Post Auction sale

<https://www.hermann-historica.de/en/>

Websites and downloads

1066 etc: Crusades, Bayeux Tapestry & destruction

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/seventh-crusade-new-research/>

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/things-know-bayeux-tapestry/>

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/new-medieval-books-history-in-flames/>

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