

# The Basiliscope Mercury 449

## The Internet newsletter for the arms and armour community

### Arms and armour in the news

Ancient Greek throwing machines, snails on the menu, Grandmaster's sword (and hat) and a large number of exhibitions to view. And the V&A opens a new branch.

#### Ancient arms & forts

In depth study of stone knives from Estonia

<https://arkeonews.net/stone-age-swiss-army-knife-experimental-archaeology-reveals-surprising-use-of-bone-tools-at-estonia-site/>

Earliest whale tools identified from the Basque regions

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/history/archaeology/spain-whale-bone-tools-ancient-humans/>

Did the Greeks invent repeating ballistae?

<https://www.labrujulaverde.com/enss/2025/05/evidence-of-the-use-of-a-polybolos-the-mythical-greek-repeating-weapon-at-pompeii-in-89-bce-discovered/>

<https://greekreporter.com/2025/05/23/evidence-ancient-greek-machine-gun-polybolos-pompeii/>

Roman camp found in the Netherlands

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/article307345096.html>

### Hunting round the world and through the ages

Fishing in prehistoric Iran

<https://archaeology.org/news/2025/05/21/prehistoric-fishing-site-found-in-southeast-iran/>

Mosaic with hunting scenes goes on show in Isreal

<https://artdaily.com/news/182286/A-spectacular-1-600-year-old-mosaic--one-of-the-most-impressive-ever-discovered-in-Israel--was-unveiled-to-the-public>

#### Grave stories

Investigating a 17000 year old murder in Italy

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/it-was-probably-some-kind-of-an-ambush-17-000-years-ago-a-man-died-in-a-projectile-weapon-attack-in-what-is-now-italy>

Bournemouth University sets the record straight on Maidan Castle massacre  
<https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/news/2025-05-20/roman-massacre-never-happened-according-new-study-iconic-archaeological-site>

Ancient tombs in Vietnam being targeted by looters  
<https://vietnamnet.vn/en/tombs-of-vietnam-s-kings-and-nobles-raided-for-relics-and-treasures-2404896.html>

### **Through the arrow-slit . . .**

Medieval walls of Asia  
<https://phys.org/news/2025-05-great-wall-exploring-asia-medieval.html>

Excavations at Chichester's castle  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpqe7xjd48do>

Illustrated piece on James VI and the properties he knew  
<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/the-last-king-of-scots>

Orchardton Tower re-opens  
<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/scotlands-only-free-standing-round-tower-reopens-to-the-public/>

Short film celebrating Craigievar Castle  
<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/why-we-love-craigievar-castle>

### **Cannons to the left, cannon to the right**

Fort Ticonderoga receives gift of historic cannon and mortars  
[https://fortticonderoga.org/news/historic-gift-of-spanish-artillery-from-yale-to-fort-ticonderoga-strengthens-legacy-of-preservation-and-education-highlighted-during-national-preservation-month/?fbclid=IwY2xjawKaYFVleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETFoUU5SzFnNW\\_hwNUVabHdhAR41Ra-PC\\_rsxubZKY2Gd1Ax3BswWjN7OYJYjNX3mXOjDQG2OVWV5s9xu8hzzQaem\\_Ho7UqhTAWEXdmuzJ3TwtgQ](https://fortticonderoga.org/news/historic-gift-of-spanish-artillery-from-yale-to-fort-ticonderoga-strengthens-legacy-of-preservation-and-education-highlighted-during-national-preservation-month/?fbclid=IwY2xjawKaYFVleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETFoUU5SzFnNW_hwNUVabHdhAR41Ra-PC_rsxubZKY2Gd1Ax3BswWjN7OYJYjNX3mXOjDQG2OVWV5s9xu8hzzQaem_Ho7UqhTAWEXdmuzJ3TwtgQ)

One of Canada's Crimean cannon to be conserved and moved to museum  
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/kitchener/article/historic-cannon-will-be-removed-from-brantford-park/>

### **Café Basiliscoe: this week's menu**

Snails and oysters  
<https://theconversation.com/from-peasant-fodder-to-posh-fare-how-snails-and-oysters-became-luxury-foods-254299>

5000-year-old bread  
<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/archaeology-around-the-world/article-855162>

Or Rye cultivation

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/rethinking-rye-study-reveals-medieval-cultivation-was-intensive-and-strategic/>

Washed down with 5000-year-old wine

<https://indiandefencereview.com/5000-year-wine-jars-egyptian-queens-tomb/>

## **Princesses and Amazons**

Valkyries still a popular topic, this time they're pregnant

<https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/vikings/viking-age-women-may-have-wielded-weapons-when-pregnant-sagas-and-ancient-artifacts-hint>

## **Into the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Remembering the Faversham explosion

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgq3ey841glo>

Montrose's war horse

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq543w45930o>

WW2 London tunnels to be opened to the public

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq8551183p4o>

Cache of WW2 heritage found buried in Polish forest

<https://www.heritagedaily.com/2025/05/nationally-important-wwii-military-treasures-uneearthed/155288>

## **Nautical news**

New research on Viking sailing

<https://phys.org/news/2025-05-archaeologist-viking-unexpected-discoveries.html>

Has the *Recovery* - lost off Ireland in 1787 – been found?

<https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/huge-clue-mystery-shipwreck-packed-35294001>

USS F-1, lost 1917, photographed

<https://phys.org/news/2025-05-deep-ocean-technology-images-lost.html>

The bell of HMCS *Trentonian*, sunk 1943 raised

<https://www.intelligencer.ca/news/hmcs-trentonian-ships-bell-raised-from-english-channel-seabed>

## **Museum news and exhibitions**

### **News**

Manchester museum European museum of the year

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/05/manchester-museum-named-european-museum-of-the-year/>  
<https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/>

Royal Armouries becomes a Leeds landowner

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4geej457zxo>

### **New museums**

V&A stores open to the public

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/05/28/pallets-not-plinths-the-va-opens-its-vast-storehouse-to-the-public>

National Museum of Brazil partially re-opens

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/06/02/national-museum-brazil-partial-reopening-devastating-fire>

### **Museum developments**

The sound of Hagia Sophia

<https://www.tovima.com/society/rediscovering-the-soundscape-of-6th-century-hagia-sophia>

### **Objects**

Grand Master de Valette and his sword and hat

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/de-valettes-sword-and-hat-new-evidence/>

James VI's gloves go on tour

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c86105dgl1xo>

Self-portrait of William Dobson acquired for British national collections

<https://artdaily.com/news/182477/Tate-and-the-National-Portrait-Gallery-jointly-acquire-rare-self-portrait-by-William-Dobson>

Viceroyal portraits on display in Madrid

<https://artdaily.com/news/182082/Prado-Museum-unveils-stunning-18th-century-viceregal-portraits>

## Exhibitions

Magna carta in London

<https://artdaily.com/news/182248/Society-of-Antiquaries-stages--Magna-Carta-1225--exhibition-for-nine-weeks-from-23-July-2025-to-mark-800th-anniversary>

The *London* in Southend

<https://www.southendmuseums.co.uk/exhibitions/the-london-shipwreck%3A-her-final-voyage>

Gladiators in Northampton

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3rpjnwrypdo>

Lee Miller retrospective planned for Tate later this year

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/may/22/uk-largest-lee-miller-retrospective-tate-britain>

Medieval manuscripts in Chantilly

<https://chateaudechantilly.fr/en/evenement/les-tres-riches-heures-du-duc-de-berry/>

<https://chateaudechantilly.fr/en/evenement/exhibition-books-of-hours-a-history-in-objects/>

Veronese in Madrid

<https://artdaily.com/news/182275/The-Prado-celebrates-Paolo-Veronese--the-great-Venetian-painter-who-dazzled-Europe>

Rubens in Barcelona

<https://artdaily.com/news/182480/Rubens-reigns-in-Barcelona--Prado-masterpieces-reveal-Baroque-genius-and-collaborative-spirit>

Venetians and Ottomans in Nashville

<https://artdaily.com/news/182343/Frist-Art-Museum-presents-exhibition-exploring-relationship-between-two-rival-Mediterranean-superpowers>

East Indian Company paintings in New Delhi

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckg4zx0x778o?fbclid=IwY2xjawKg6lBleHRuA2FlbQlzMQBicmlkETFoUU5SzMzFnNWwhNUVabHdhAR6OoElsJhSy92WINVTXB-AJgIpCf-Lh4JPcr4gPMkLceJMxCqpQU8jXKAbzNQ\\_aem\\_CxylfWlqrtjRBT0shQeN1w](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckg4zx0x778o?fbclid=IwY2xjawKg6lBleHRuA2FlbQlzMQBicmlkETFoUU5SzMzFnNWwhNUVabHdhAR6OoElsJhSy92WINVTXB-AJgIpCf-Lh4JPcr4gPMkLceJMxCqpQU8jXKAbzNQ_aem_CxylfWlqrtjRBT0shQeN1w)

## Popular culture

Sword fighter gets important recognition

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0mrp4v9pexo>

## Events

Online course in middle eastern medieval warfare

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/06/online-course-medieval-warfare-in-the-middle-east-europe-and-central-asia/>

## 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](https://icomam.mini.icom.museum/call-for-papers-army-of-flanders-15-16-may-2026/?fbclid=IwY2xjawJrIDRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHjbfq0bGm25lZsYMWmsfzmRHPxlrIFGHTNuOsIFSaJ4srApsLDCHnLXovxza_aem_wUUbH_3FcPd4dmgTNMuL9w)

## Sales, fairs and auctions

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

The Met are looking for contributions to their journals

Please send materials to: [journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org](mailto:journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org)

1066 etc: Constantinople sieges

<https://www.medievalists.net/2025/05/medieval-sieges-constantinople/>

**Compiled by Ruth Rhynas Brown – 1 June 2025**

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<http://www.basiliscoe.com>