

## Full Circle: The Reconstructions

The article "Full Circle" reached the conclusion that Roman swords and scabbards developed on parallel lines that occasionally jumped across to each other and blurred the certainty that a feature could only be diagnostically found on one type.

Some of this reconstruction work had been done in 2010, and, indeed, a reconstruction of the School of Gladiators scabbard from Pompeii has been in use for over 10 years (see below)



*Above: Reconstruction of the School of Gladiators scabbard top plate made by the author in about 2010.*

Some other work based on the Long Windsor and Lobith evidence was started in 2019. A suitable blade was reworked into the shape of the Lobith blade (Mainz pattern), and a reconstruction made of the top fitting/locket. To this was added the evidence for the chape from Long Windsor, given the similarities in some ways between the finds.

The Long Windsor evidence was also reassessed with a reconstruction, but it was also decided to use the design from the Budapest top fitting instead. The chape still followed the Long Windsor evidence. The reconstruction was built around a Pompeii pattern blade of 50mm width, in line with that found at Long Windsor.

A reconstruction of the Bulgarian example was also made. This one was complicated by the tapered design of the scabbard's wood liners, and meant that the cross hanger section had to be slid up the scabbard from the bottom (chape) end, rather than simply being slid onto the top of the scabbard. The blade had to be reconstructed from known Mainz pattern blades of the Haltern-Camulodunum sub-type, as the original has never been seen outside the scabbard from its discovery to the present.



*Above: Reconstructions (L-R) of the Lobith, Budapest/Long Windsor & Bulgarian scabbards.*

When seen together as reconstructions the Lobith (Mainz) and Long Windsor (Pompeii) scabbards could be seen to have more similarities than differences, serving to demonstrate that there is a possibility of a blurred line between defining each type of scabbard.



*Above: The Lobith (Mainz) & Budapest/Long Windsor (Pompeii) scabbards with their respective blades.*



*Above the Bulgarian scabbard with it's Mainz sub type Haltern-Camulodunum gladius.*

The Bulgarian scabbard is an amalgam of all kinds of styles and designs, the top fitting is of the Porto-Novo type of design, but the embossed/repousse decoration of a Romulus-Remus suckling the she-wolf is very reminiscent of definitively Mainz type scabbards with embossed plates (and, indeed many examples of embossed belt plates). The chape has all kinds of parallels; the chape resembles a spatha chape, but also the chape found at Hod Hill, and the palmette and scrolled floral/vine decoration is almost the same as the Porto-Novo scabbard.