

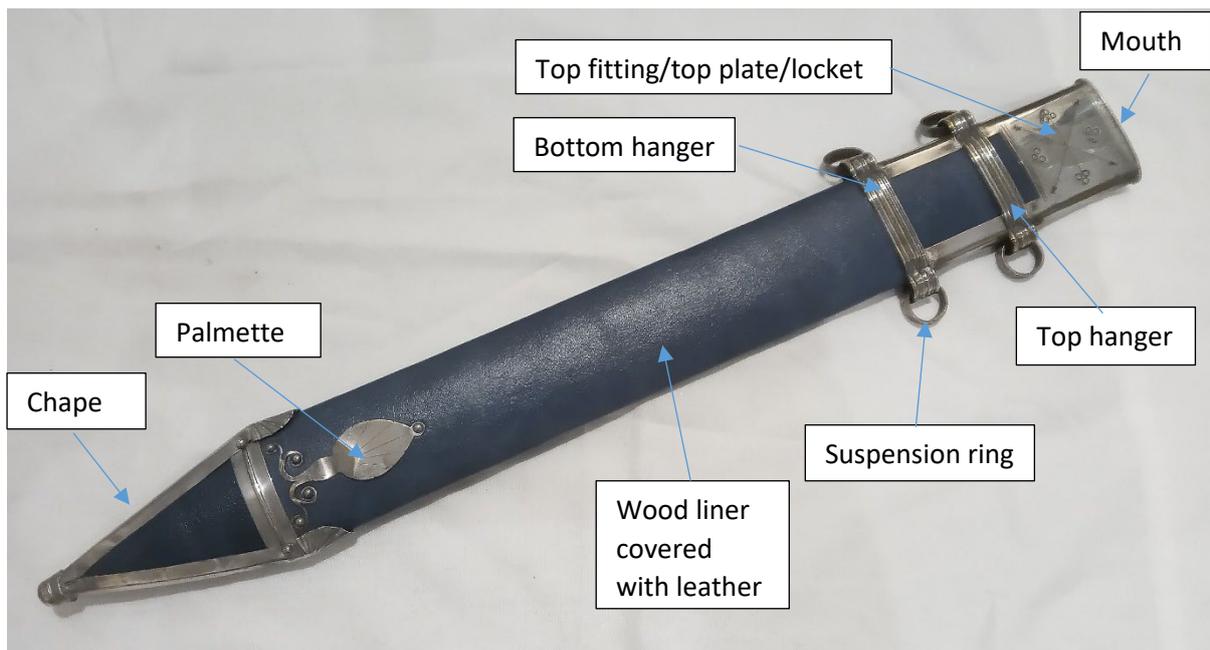
This preamble is to give an introduction to some of the Ermine Street Guard's research. This series of articles date back some 25 years, starting in 1996 with one of several articles Martin White wrote, resumed again in 2005 and 2007 by David Hare, and recently in 2021 (and *finally*; the original drafts from 2009-10 were lost).

### **Naming Of The Parts:**

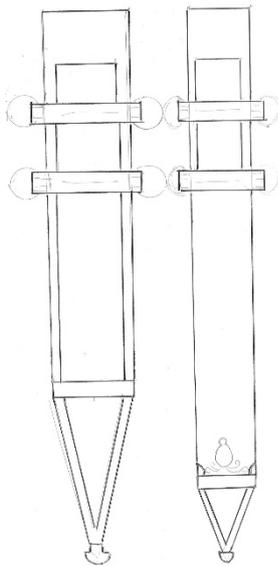
As these articles often discuss the parts of a Roman gladius scabbard, a pictorial glossary of terminology is provided in this piece:

In essence a Roman gladius scabbard is made up from the following:

- A wooden liner that the blade of the gladius is actually inserted into. This is made from two thin pieces of wood shaped in halves to go around the blade. This liner is then generally covered in thin leather.
- A locket or top fitting, fitted at the top of the scabbard, this holds the top of the wood liner together, and has a mouth through which the blade passes into the wood liner.
- Cross hangers, which are strips of metal about 12mm wide formed into a band, often embossed with fluted decoration. These constitutes the means with which the scabbard is secured to either a baldric or directly secured to a belt via suspension rings. Each cross hanger has two suspension rings.
- Guttering, where top fitting does not go all the way down to the bottom hanger, guttering links the top hanger to bottom hanger. In some cases, this gutter will then go down the entire length of the scabbard.
- The Palmette is a decorative item situated near the bottom of the scabbard, often directly secured to the wooden liner just above the chape.
- The Chape is the bottom of the scabbard, and sometimes separate from the top fitting and guttering. Usually triangular, and formed from u shaped guttering, it wraps around the bottom of the wood and leather liner to secure it together. The chape is usually terminated with a knob to hold the ends of the chape together, and to provide a robust termination to the scabbard.



For Roman gladii so far discovered and attributed to the first century AD, gladius scabbards are classified as a generic group by the shape of the blade that goes inside. So a Mainz type scabbard will have a wide parallel straight edged portion from the mouth and taper to a fairly long triangular chape section. This type often also features side guttering that runs the entire length of the scabbard, which serves to hold the wooden liners inside the frame formed. A Pompeii type scabbard is a narrower parallel straight edged form from mouth to chape, and the chape is a much smaller triangular form in keeping with the form of the blade. The top fitting/loket is a fitting that covers the top of the scabbard and down to the bottom cross hanger. The chape is generally totally separate, and the liners are generally reconstructed covered with leather, which is stitched up at the back to hold the liners together.



*Above: comparison of the general shape of a Mainz type scabbard (L) and a Pompeii type (R).*

As some of the discussion in the series of articles that this preamble now precedes suggests, strict categorisation of the features of each type of scabbard can lead to exceptions, one significant example being the Pompeii type sword from the assemblage of equipment belonging to the Herculaneum soldier; this shape of this scabbard suggests a Pompeii type sword, but has full side guttering and embossed decorative plates much more like the Mainz type of scabbard.