

SIDE GUTTERING ON POMPEII SCABBARDS

By David Hare

After 6 years of work by Martin White and myself, all of the older and incorrect Pompeii scabbards have been eradicated from The Guard. Those old scabbards requiring replacement were the old interpretation of the Long Windsor evidence (see *Exercitus* Vol.3 No. 2), seen in the Osprey books by M. Simkins, and older plain scabbards which had brass (or tinplate) side guttering running the full length of the scabbard.

Other groups are still using and making the above, and even combining the two "reconstructions" together to produce another mule.

There is a case for edge guttering on Pompeii scabbards. The recently displayed Herculaneum soldier's scabbard is clearly a Pompeii type, has guttered edging down its full length, but also has embossed decorative plates on its front - not unlike the (Mainz type) scabbard from Fulham. (see *Exercitus* Vol.2 No. 9)

The remains of scabbards from Pompeii itself, Vindonissa, Mainz, Nijmegen, Oosterbeek all consist of a top "locket" about 150mm long, plus a "chape" covering only the bottom tip of the scabbard. There is no edging in between.

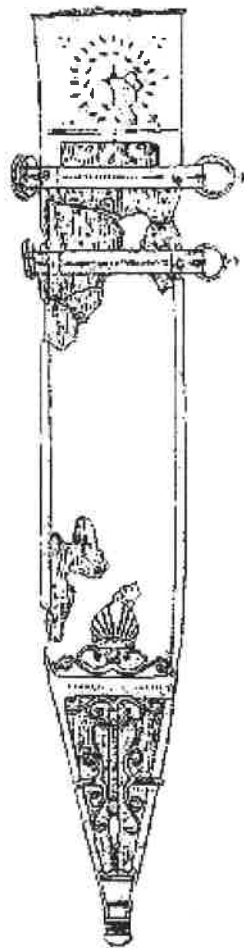
The Adamklissi Tropaeum shows several legionaries, standard bearers and musicians with side gutters on their scabbards for (presumably) Pompeii swords. This may suggest that edging persisted into the 2nd century AD.

A relief from Pula shows a sword and scabbard attached to a belt with what look like buttons or a dagger frog type arrangement. This scabbard has side gutters, and could be a Pompeii type sword.

C. Valerius Valens from Corinth (Claudio-Neronian) has a side guttered scabbard, but though it could be a Pompeii scabbard, its proportions have been very badly reproduced by the sculptor.

An unknown *miles* from Mainz (Flavian), holding a diploma or wax-tablet, has a scabbard with possibly side guttering represented on it.

Whilst not strictly a Pompeii gladius, there is also a relief (tombstone?) from Cologne showing a 1st Century AD cavalryman. His *spatha* scabbard clearly has guttering running down its entire length.



The Porto-Novo Scabbard

A possible lead for these representations from published finds is a scabbard from Porto-Novo, Corsica. This scabbard is classified as a Mainz type, and has side guttering; but it also has a top locket similar to the Long Windsor or Valkenberg lockets, along with palmette decoration seen on Pompeii scabbards. The shape of the sword blade is unknown, as it resides firmly corroded into the scabbard.

We should now consider the Long Windsor finds as being from a Mainz type scabbard, probably similar in construction to the Porto-Novo scabbard. It is now also clear that there is an overlap in scabbard styles as the Pompeii swords gradually displaced the Mainz types and that it is possible to see features supposedly peculiar to one type on the other type.

Bibliography

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