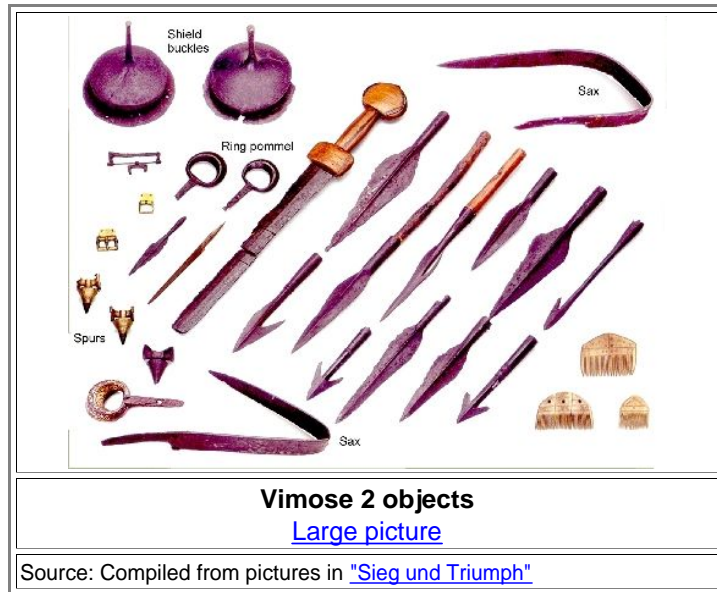


## Vimose

Vimose is a big bog, about 50.000 m<sup>2</sup>. [Engelhardt](#) was digging in it before 1859 and found a huge amount of objects. Even before Engelhardt started, more than 1500 objects had been found at random, including an anchor in 1512.

- There were at least [3 big deposits](#):
  - Vimose 1; around 70 AD - 150 AD (B2); no swords.
  - Vimose 2; around 150 AD (C1a)
  - Vimose 3; around 230 AD (C1b); large number of objects
  - Vimose 4 etc.; some from C2 (late 3rd century) up to migration period (5th century). Late Roman empire swords.
- We have "only" 85 swords - but 135 chapes and about 300 sword belts. One wonders. Did some cunning old Danes hold back the really precious stuff and just pitched in empty sheaths? Than we have 800 lance and 3190 spear points. And shield buckles, spurs, combs, and so on. Here are a few of these objects dating from Vimose 2:



- Vimose 2 contained remains of Roman "ring-pommel swords" ([Ringknaufschwert](#) or [Ringgriffsschwert](#) in the [true language](#)), rather unusual items. Don't mix them up with the "pommel rings" often found on Merovingian [pyramid pommel hilts](#). The remains are the ring pommels as shown above. What the whole sword looked like can be seen here:



**Ring pommel sword (Ringknaußschwert) Mainz;  
Vimose**

[Source](#) Christian Miks

- The almost perfectly preserved sword shown above was found in 1981 in Mainz, Germany. Its ring pommel is rather similar to one from Vimose. This kind of pommel was not uncommon in the Eastern parts of the Roman empire around 50 AD - 200 AD but rather rare elsewhere. Only about 20 specimen have been found in the "Barbaricum"; at least 4 from Vimose.

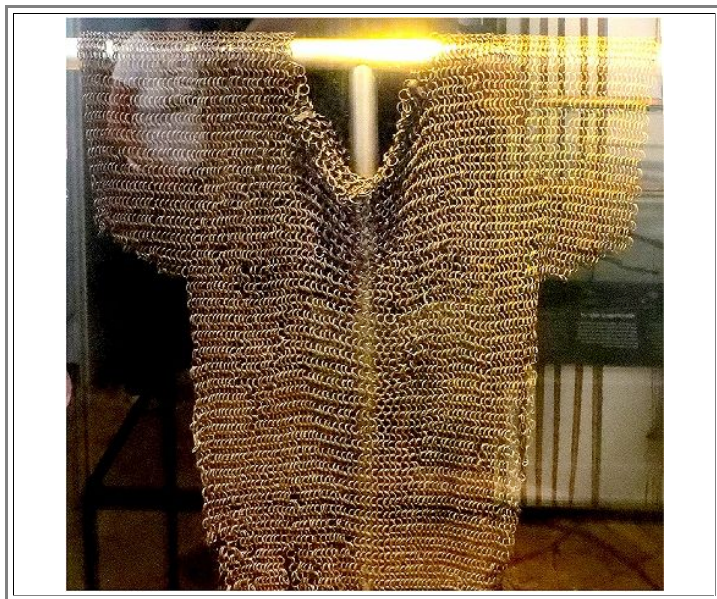
The sword appears to be not pattern welded.

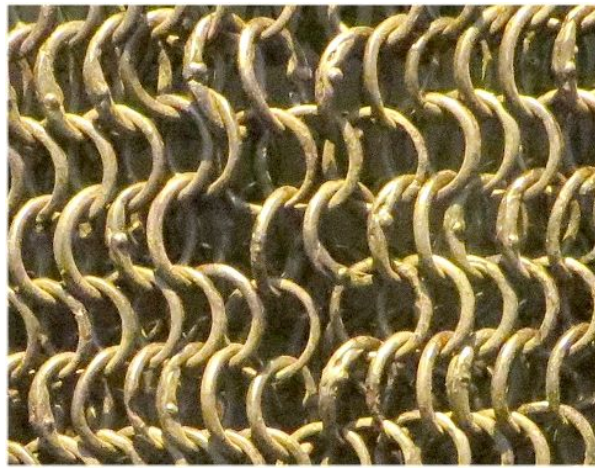
- ▀ Vimose 2 also contained 17 saxes; the picture above shows 2 bend ones. The 67 spatha type double-edged swords (mostly [Vimose-Illerup type](#)), however, mostly date from Vimose 3. Here is an example:



- The sword look decidedly pattern welded and this seems to be true for a good number of them. 19 out of 67 swords have "factory" stamps and pretty much all of them must be Roman.

- One of the most spectacular finds from Vimose is the oldest completely preserved **chain mail** from Northern Europe. No date is given; my guess is Vimose 3.





**Chain mail from Vimose**

Source: Photographed in the [Copenhagen Museum](#)

- More than 20,000 small rings have been interlocked by riveting; the weight is around 10 kg. The style is typical for Roman chain mail from the 3rd century AD, and Germanic "auxiliarer" (mercenaries) also used it. Chain mail like this must have been very precious and expensive and was only affordable for top officers. If we take the circumference of one ring to be about 3 cm, 600 m of steel wire was needed for the construction, involving a lot of [wire drawing](#).
- ▶ Vimose is about the only bog that contained very early stuff, including swords, *and* late things. The way the objects sacrificed changed with time has already triggered studies into the changes of warfare and fighting, including the changes in weapons.
- The many iron artifacts (besides swords we have also all the lance and spear points) offer a unique opportunity to study the development of iron and steel technology in the time frame critical for pattern welding. I am not aware of such a study but entertain high hopes that it will be done in the not-so-distant future.

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<sup>1)</sup> Christian Miks: "Ein römisches Schwert mit Ringknäufgriff aus dem Rhein bei Mainz", Mainzer Archäologische Zeitschrift 8, 2009, pp 129–165.