

Editorial

By Lars Lind

Master & Chief Instructor of Weapons Combat Systems™



Dresscode – In the past we have had problems getting the right uniforms – Weapons Combat Escrima T-shirt and black trousers – those day should be past. So now we will start enforcing the drescode in training and at seminars. So remember to “dress for the occation”.

When we get the T-shirt for Historical the same will be applied here.

At the last seminar I had in Helsinki, we had a lot of injuries, including myself. I will just ask you all to remember to be carefull out there – training with weapons can be dangeroues!

Take care
Master Lars

Weapons Combat Escrima – Special Eseminar on Focus and Balance in Haderslev March 5th

By Ulrik S. Mikkelsen 12th SG Weapons Combat Escrima

On the seminar we went through the concepts of "focus" and "balance". We trained exclusively useful and functional exercises during sparring with a partner and in groups. The exercises should give us the right mind set in a fight and make us aware of our stance and movement.

During the training we trained armed as well as unarmed. We trained both in the context of attack and defense with single- as well as double sticks, knives and staffs.

You are used to having a good grounding and balance during training but in one exercise the opponent should attack with an angled attack and push you, thereby destroying your balance and grounding. You should after the attack recover your balance as quick as possible, and get back to the optimal stance again.

Another really useful and quite mind opening exercise focused on that you in a dizzy state, which should simulate, that you had received a hard hit, should attack and defend yourself against several opponents. In practice you should spin around yourself ten times and afterwards try to keep the balance and try to maintain the focus on the opponents.

A really instructive and worth-while experience with useful practical exercises and theories as well as a good mood and training environment.

The following students passed their grades:

Jesper Madsen 3rd SG
Carmen Mortensen, 9th SG
Ulrik Thomsen, 12th SG



Seminar participants

Weapons Combat Escrima – Seminar weekend in Helsinki March 26th – 27th

By Maria Broederbaue, 10^b SG Weapons Combat Escrima

Once again we had the pleasure to welcome Master Lars Lind to Helsinki! What we expected were a “normal” grading seminar on Saturday and a special seminar about the “new box” on Sunday. We got all that. And a bit more. Because what the weekend had in store for us was quite some excitement...



On both days the seminar was very well attended, mostly by regular students from Helsinki, but also some newcomers made an appearance, one even coming from Tampere. Also the heads from our schools in Lappeenranta and Ylivieska came for a visit. The atmosphere was good.

On Saturday we began in the usual manner, but not too far into the seminar a series of injuries started to take its course. The most severe also caused us to eventually call an ambulance. An experience we certainly could have done without. In the end no one had to go to the hospital, but

nevertheless Kati got a concussion as a “souvenir” from the seminar. All the mishaps caused some confusion, naturally, but we managed to bring the seminar to a “happy ending”, also having quite a number of people who passed their grades.

The evening we spent traditionally in good company and with a lot of beer as well as a bit of “fighting” at the table. In the manner of a true escrimador...

The maybe biggest obstacle on Sunday was taken effortlessly: Despite the change back to summer time at night, no one was late. Probably people were afraid of the crazy Austrian who had been nagging everyone about the end of winter time for the whole Saturday...

So, right on time we started off into the seminar, during which Master Lars introduced us to the “new box”, “ex-box”, “improved box”, or whatever it’s going to be called in the future. The first part of the seminar took us back in time to the “traditional” box of Angel Cabales and Serrada Escrima. We moved on to the box as we used to practice it in WCS and finally went to have a look at the changes. It seems the system has become even more straightforward.

We might want to work on the way how we treat our guests up here – hitting them with sticks might not be the best option to make sure they come again... Surely there was a certain amount of bad luck involved, but it goes without saying, that during the last training sessions we were focusing on weapon control a bit more than usual.

I personally left the seminar a bit shaken and with mixed feelings, but it was good to have Master Lars up here again: Thank you for coming, see you next time in Lappeenranta!

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Seminar participants Saturday



Seminar participants Sunday

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The Sword of the Danish Bronze Age – part 3

An Investigation into the Significance of the Bronze Sword in Danish Cultural and Social Life through a Non-Dualistic Spectrum

By Rolf Fabricius, Assistant Instructor, Weapons Combat Escrima, student of Archaeology

Conclusion

Based on the material and the relevant interpretations presented here, it is possible to formulate certain conclusions: the ritual nature of swords was not limited only to the curved swords of the Early Bronze Age, but it was a phenomenon which continued up throughout the Late Bronze Age in varying forms - even in forms of a practical appearances. Often these appear in graves and appear to be used as some sort of status symbols. This ritualistic armament phenomenon in Denmark was not only limited to swords, but other armaments as well, such as shields, axes and - taken the Viksø discovery into account - even helmets. But to gain an adequate understanding of the society's relation to their swords, it is necessary also to examine the ritual sword's counterpart, the practical sword.

When examining the practical phenomenon of the sword, we find, first of all, that there are some signs of violence during this era and that there, indeed, existed an environment in which the practical aspects of the sword could thrive. Hoard finds are difficult to interpret due to the lack of context; but it appears as if swords are deposited without being repaired and that in some cases their location was marked, so as to be reacquired at some later point. Though some essential components of the practical sword is missing (such as the shield) in the Danish material, some may be explained by the fact that they most likely were made out of organic material, now long gone.

Though the sword's morphological potential seems to have been realized in period V, there are some unexpected damages to the swords that should not be there. These can partly be explained, but further investigation is needed. The current writer would suggest that an analysis of the level of damage on the blades, as well as what percentage of these blades have been damaged would reveal further indications. So, too, would a comparative study with other broader sword types from period IV; and should it be observed that these broader types have considerably more damaged edges, then it would certainly appear as if the stabbing potentials of the sword were realized in period V. Also, should vigorous muscular insertions be found on either of the arms of deceased, it could be concluded that these may result from extensive use of his sword's arm in training and combat, resulting in bony alternations (of course, the possibility of lack of evidence in post-period III material should be taken into consideration due to the new, and rather disappointing, cremation trend). Any evidence of Bronze Age martial traditions and combat practice echoed in these physical remains would be sensational. Why? Because it would prove the emergence of a system of early European martial arts, and this, as noted by Kristiansen, "defined the warrior as an institution. It included rules of etiquette and of behavior, from training programmes and the conduct of combat to the rituals of the dead warrior and his weapons".

Perhaps the most significant observation of this paper is that the practical appearance may not always imply practical use. The sword type may indicate the significance of the sword; but these are not very firm rules, making it exceptionally difficult to make a distinction between practical and ritual significances. It is even possible that some persons may have one different sword's type for each aspect (such as the Åstofte find). Judging from the context in which they are found, swords appear to belong to the top of the pyramid, to which also the ritualistic and cosmological elements belong. This can particularly be seen with the Grevensvænge figurines and the male from Garderhøj who not only has a sword in his grave, but several amulets, enforcing the strong bond between the practical and ritual. The two phenomena appear in many cases to be inseparable.

In our age it is fashionable to approach the issues in archeological and historical studies scientifically; and our science, such as it is today, is founded in the scientific naturalism of the 19th century. The methodological assumptions of that science still underlie a great deal of our approaches in understanding things; and, subsequently, some grave consequences of simplistic positioning follow – eminently, dualism. It seems true, indeed, that various scholars employ a dualistic scientific approach, which amounts to high dogma in academic circles. Such approaches are not only negative in this respect, but it ensures a constant debate when scholars come in disagreement with each other. The question, therefore, is not whether the sword should be considered as more of a ritual or practical phenomenon; but how it was regarded in a society in which armaments are so deeply connected to ritualistic aspects, that even some of the combatants are forced to wear, and use, rather impractical weaponry?

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As a final remark, the author would like to point out that this investigation aimed at presenting an overview and constructive reflection upon the general significances of the bronze sword, and therefore could not limit itself to merely the Early or Late Bronze Age, since the development and material differentiation was essential for interpretation; and though this investigation has but only touched the surface of the significance of the sword, it may present some evidence in a new light and, hopefully, in a non-dualistic spectrum.

Appendix

(1) The curved swords from Rørby



Retrieved from [The Rørby Swords – curved swords from the Bronze Age](http://oldtiden.natmus.dk/udstillingen/bronzealderen/roerbysvaerdene/language/uk). National Museet [online] [cited 10 December 2010]

<http://oldtiden.natmus.dk/udstillingen/bronzealderen/roerbysvaerdene/language/uk>

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- (2) The Favrskov curved sword of flint next to one of the Rørby curved swords



Retrieved from The Rørby Swords – curved swords from the Bronze Age. National Museet [online] [cited 10 December 2010]
<http://oldtiden.natmus.dk/udstillingen/bronzealderen/roerbysvaerdene/language/uk>

- (3) Depiction of man with a curved sword. From Kville Hundred, Sweden.



Retrieved from Osgood, Richard (2000); p, 31

- (4) Rock carving from Tröttelanda, Bohuslän western Sweden. Depictions of dance?



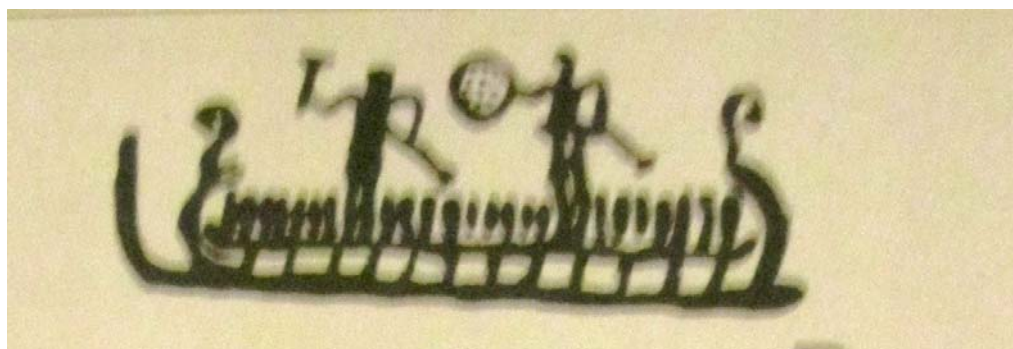
Retrieved from: Mænd gik med sværd. National Museet [online] [cited 09 December 2010]
http://oldtiden.natmus.dk/udstillingen/bronzealderen/kvinder_og_maend_i_bronzealderen/maend_gik_med_svaerd/

(5) The Asmat tribe of Papua New Guinea



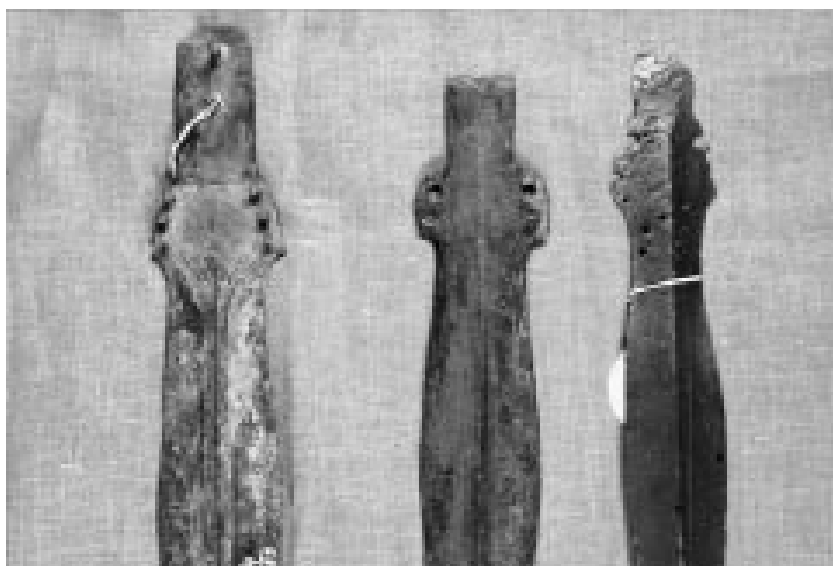
Retrieved from: Asmat 52'. ZED [online] [cited 8 December 2010]
<http://www.zed.fr/en/catalog/view/11>

(6) Depiction of the ceremonial use of the sun-disk and cult-axe. From Kville Hundred, Sweden



Retrieved from Osgood, Richard (2000); p, 31

(7) Three early rapiers. The sword to the right is heavily re-sharpened, especially on the right side under the hilt, the shoulders are damaged and the rivet holes broken. For comparison, two other swords in rather fresh condition are shown.



Retrieved from Kristiansen, Kristian (2002); p. 324

- (8) Images from gold sea-rings from Mycenae Shaft Grave III, showing (type A or B) sword being used to attack the throat area.



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- (9) Example of how to grip the hilt and shoulders of a Bronze Age sword, which allows the user to direct the movements very precisely



Retrieved from Kristiansen, Kristian (2002); p. 321

- (10) Illustration of how the scars from combat could have been created



Retrieved from Kristiansen, Kristian (2002); p. 325

- (11)
Kville



Man with sword and club (?). From
Hundred, Sweden

Retrieved from Osgood, Richard (2000); p. 31

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<http://oldtiden.natmus.dk/udstillingen/bronzealderen/roerbysvaerdene/language/uk>

What is happening?

In April

April 21st - 25th – Historical Weapons Combat Tour to Leeds and York

In May

May 7th – Lund – Weapons Combat Escrima – Grading and Technician seminar
Master Lars Lind

May 8th – Lund – Weapons Combat Escrima – Special seminar
Master Lars Lind

May 14th – Lappeenranta – Weapons Combat Escrima – Grading and Technician seminar
Master Lars Lind

May 15th – Lappeenranta – WingTsun Weapons Combat – Special seminar
Master Lars Lind

May 29th – WT Center – Weapons Combat Escrima – Grading seminar
Senior Instructor Peter “Lange” Tønder

Questions on this letter, seminars or Weapons Combat Systems™ can be put to me personally on telephone +45 40 30 48 39 or by mail to lars.lind@siemens.com

Master Lars, Chief instructor and founder Weapons Combat Systems

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