



Link by link:

New insights into mail armour

International symposium

National Museum of Slovenia – Metelkova, Ljubljana
15–17 October 2025



The invention of mail armour ranks among the more fascinating achievements of Iron Age technology. Combining the rigid strength of metal with the seemingly incompatible suppleness of woven fabric, the concept of a protective garment composed of interlocking rings has truly stood the test of time. Since its adoption by Celtic warriors and Roman legions, mail became the primary form of metal armour worn in Europe for almost two millennia. In various, sometimes quite distinct forms its use would spread throughout Africa and Asia, as far as the Indian subcontinent and Japan. Though eventually grown obsolete by the advances of early modern warfare, the unique properties of mail have ensured its survival in niche applications to the present day.

In contrast with other perhaps aesthetically more attractive types of armour, the study of mail defences was long neglected by scholars. Even the knowledge of their origins and

manufacture became lost to obscurity. During the 1950s, many of these omissions were addressed by the work of E. M. Burgess and his contemporaries, whose pioneering efforts have been continuously revised and improved upon by later generations following upon their footsteps. Even so, the study of mail armour remains a rather underreported field.

Due to a major surge of renewed interest and activity in recent years, the time seems right to bring together fellow mail armour scholars and enthusiasts interested in sharing the results of their work. In the spirit of friendly discussion and an exciting exchange of information you are warmly invited to the mail armour symposium hosted by the National Museum of Slovenia in Ljubljana between 15–17 October 2025.

Yours sincerely,

The organising committee:

Tomaž Lazar, PhD, Curator of arms & armour, Symposium chair

Nataša Nemeček, MA, Metalwork conservator-restorer

Eva Menart, PhD, Head of Department for Conservation and Restoration



PROGRAMME

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

13:00-14:00	Registration		
14:00-14:15	Opening address		
14:15-15:00	Keynote address	Alan Williams	Investigating the joining of mail by complementary techniques - metallography and neutron imaging
	Session 1	Between the Alps and the Adriatic	
15:00-15:25		Tomaž Lazar	Mail in the Slovenian territory between the Middle Ages and the early Modern Period
15:25-15:50		Tomaž Nabergoj	Material remains of mail defences in Slovenia
15:50-16:15		Janka Istenič, Lidija Korat Bensa	Mail armour from Neviodunum (Drnovo near Krško, SE Slovenia)
16:15-16:40		Leon Bošnjak	Mail armour in the Croatian History Museum
16:45-17:30	Guided tour	NMS Metelkova - Arms & armour collection	
17:30-19:00	Buffet dinner		

DAY 2 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

	Session 2	Between the Baltic and the Black Sea	
9:00-9:25		Arkadiusz Michalak	Between rings and realms. Technology and use of medieval mail in the borderland of Silesia, Brandenburg, Greater Poland and Lusatia
9:25-9:50		Piotr Kotowicz	„Lorice antique zerdzeviale”. Notes on the mail armour in Red Ruthenia region
9:50-10:15		Valeri Yotov	About the leg mail armor of skeleton No. 3 in grave 80 of Kyulevcha necropolis
10:20-10:40	Coffee break		
	Session 3	Investigative approaches	
10:40-11:05		Keith Downen	Mail armour, the Bayeux Tapestry and beyond
11:05-11:30		David Nicolle	Mail in medieval India
11:30-11:55		Marco Faccio	Mail armour in the Marzoli Museum in Brescia. Presentation and brief insights

12:00-13:00 Lunch break

Session 4 **Construction and manufacture**

13:00-13:25 David Edge Investigating solid mail links

13:25-13:50 Mark D. Chapman Evaluation of techniques of manufacture vs historical examples

Martijn A. Wijnhoven Repair and recycling on the Roman frontier. Insights from the Bonn hoard of mail armour

13:50-14:10 Sebastian Völk Counting in tens. The mail hauberk from Berane

14:10-14:20 Sebastian Völk Mail armour terminology

14:25-14:40 Coffee break

Session 5 **Conservation and restoration**

14:40-15:05 Phil Parkes The role of conservation ethics and decision making in the care of mail armour

15:05-15:30 Nataša Nemeček Historical approaches to conservation and restoration of armour in the National Museum of Slovenia

15:30-15:55 Zala Uršič Documentation and conservation-restoration challenges in the case of mail defences in the National Museum of Slovenia

16:00-17:00 Stroll through the historical city centre towards the old museum palace

17:00-18:00 Guided tour NMS - Old Museum Palace, archaeological collections

18:00 Dinner

DAY 3 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

9:00-18:00 Bus tour to Celje and Ptuj
