



*Did You know that*  
*the oldest object with the likeness of a dragon*  
*in Continental Europe was found in Tallinn?*

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The knife sheath, presumably made in London in the 13th century, is in the archaeological collection of the Estonian History Museum.

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Tiesitkö, että Manner-Euroopan vanhin lohikäärme kuvioinen esine on löydetty Tallinnasta? Luultavasti Lontoossa 1200-luvulla valmistettu puukon tuppi sijaitsee Viron historiallisen museon arkeologisella osastolla.

Знаете ли вы, что старейший на континентальной Европе предмет с изображением змея найден в Таллинне?

Вероятно изготовленные в Лондоне в XIII веке ножны для ножа находятся в археологическом собрании Эстонского исторического музея.

Kas teadsid, et vanim lohekujutisega ese Mandri-Euroopas on leitud Tallinnast?

Arvatavasti Londonis 13. sajandil valmistatud noatupp asub Eesti Ajaloomuuseumi arheoloogiakogus.



The knife sheath originates in a merchant's travel chest from the 1280s found in Tallinn Harbour, at a depth of 6 metres. The find is unique in Northern and Central Europe.



The pine-wood travel chest lifted out of Tallinn Harbour mostly contained goods from England: knives and knife sheaths, silver coins, a set of scales and a merchant's personal belongings.



Merchants carried with them a set of scales, since coins were small and goods were paid for with money that was weighed.



Tallinn's merchants grew rich through long-distance trade. Furs, wax, honey and cereals brought from the East were sold to the West. In exchange, fine fabrics, leather items, herring, tableware, spices and wines were brought over.

Pictured is a wine pitcher made in Northern Germany in the 13th century, one of the few of its kind to have survived intact. Estonian History Museum

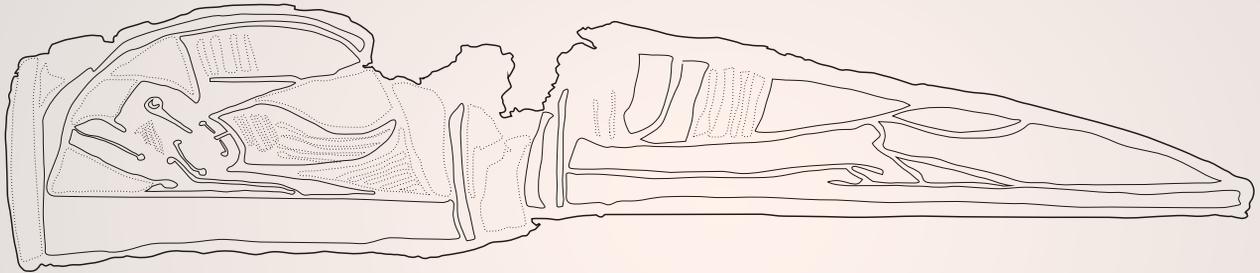


In the Middle Ages, it was said that Tallinn was built on salt, the most important commodity to pass through its harbour. To prevent profit from being used for the excessive flaunting of clothes and property, the City Council of Tallinn enacted several regulations.

Pictured: Copper engraving by Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell, 1839. "First landing of Bremen merchants at the mouth of the River Düna in 1156" (1839). Estonian History Museum



The Gothic-style building of the Merchant Guild was completed in 1410 and has survived to this day, almost unchanged. Now the Estonian History Museum is housed here. The doors of the building are adorned by lion-head knockers from the 15th century. Lettering in Low German on one knocker reads: “God bless everything here now and yet to come.”



The dragon design, which became fashionable in Continental Europe in the 14th century, was a symbol of power and might. In the Middle Ages, the dragon was mostly known as a paragon of evil but also as a representative of wisdom, youth and eternal life.



Estonia got its own currency as early as the first half of the 13th century; the knife merchant's travel chest contained coins from Visby, Riga, Tartu and Tallinn.



It is not known how the merchant's chest came to be in the sea.

Pictured: The patron saint of merchants and seafarers, St Nicholas, rescues a cargo vessel in maritime distress. A scene from the retablo of the main altarpiece in St Nicholas' Church in Tallinn, also showing the coats of arms of the Merchant Guild and the Brotherhood of BlackHeads (workshop of (Hermen Rode, 1478–1481). Niguliste Museum



In addition to abiding by shared principles in business and taking care of the Guild Brothers and their families, entertainment was also at the Merchant Guild; for example, Earl of May (Maigraf) celebrations were held.

Pictured: Leopold von Pezold's lunette "Earl of May [Maigraf] rides into Tallinn" (1869).  
Estonian History Museum



Successful long-distance merchants became concentrated in the Merchant Guild, the most important merchant organisation in Tallinn. Many aldermen and stewards of urban life were selected from the members of the Guild.

Pictured: The symbol of the office of Alderman, Chief of the Merchant Guild, was a ceremonial staff or hammer. Estonian History Museum