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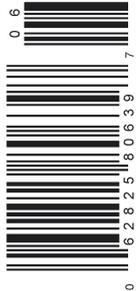
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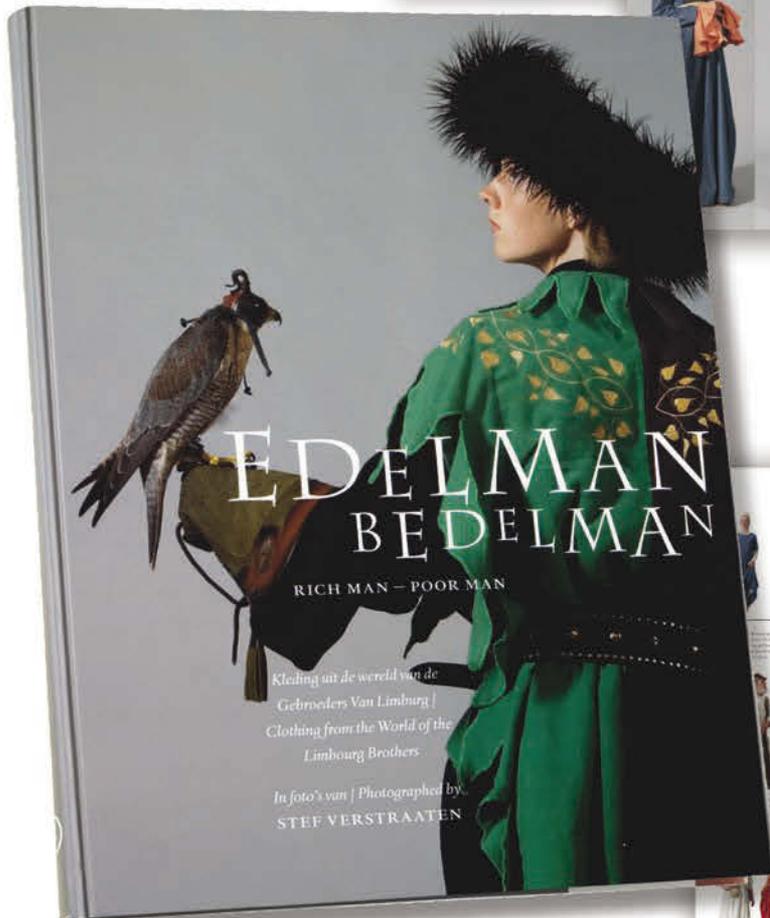
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News & Letters

Note from the editor

In this issue, we take a look at the conflicts which after centuries of warfare, would mean the end of Roman rule in Italy. Contrary to what many might think, the culprits were not the Goths, even though they undoubtedly played their part in the collapse of Byzantine power in the west. Instead, we are looking at the Byzantine-Lombard Wars. These may not have been as spectacular as the wars with the Goths, as there were less pitched battles, and fewer legendary Byzantine generals who took to the field. But the Lombard invasions did cause a slow erosion of Byzantine power in Italy, even if the war was mostly fought through raids, skirmishes and sieges.

This issue of *Medieval Warfare* highlights the main episodes during the conflicts, including the successes of the Lombards and the failures of the Byzantine Exarchate. In order, you get to read about the Lombard invasions themselves, the first attempts of the Byzantines to drive them back, the successes of the Lombard King Rothari, and Emperor Constans II's final failed Italian expedition. The Byzantine defeat came about despite a very successful military reorganization put forward by Emperor Maurice, as discussed by James Gilmer. However, aside from the deteriorating military situation of the Byzantine Empire as a whole, Gabriele Esposito shows that the

Byzantine failure was also due to the effective military organization of the Lombards.

When it came to non-theme articles, the choice for the Battle of Clontarf was an easy one, as 2014 marks its 1000th anniversary, and I couldn't let such an opportunity go by. This battle is covered by a new contributor, Kerry Cathers. Another new author is Joanna Arman, who has provided us with, in my opinion, a fascinating article discussing whether or not Henry V's Agincourt campaign was due to religious extremism. Last but not least, for our 'The Weapon' section, Gareth Williams writes about the hand-and-a-half sword, its origins and its use.

This is the final *Medieval Warfare* of 2014, and I must say, I am very pleased with the topics we've had this year, with the Scottish War of Independence issue being a personal favourite. Naturally, preparations for 2015 already began months ago. The themes of Volume V are now fixed, the contents of the first two issues already decided, and we have started working on our Special for 2015. Visit our website for further news and updates. If you have any comments or questions, please send me an email at: editor@medieval-warfare.com.

— Dirk van Gorp
Editor, *Medieval Warfare* magazine

Viking Fortress discovered in Denmark

Archaeologists from The Danish Castle Centre and Aarhus University have made a sensational discovery south of Copenhagen, Denmark. On fields at Vallø Estate, near Køge, they have discovered traces of a massive Viking fortress built with heavy timbers and earthen embankments. The perfectly circular fortress is similar to the famous so-called 'Trelleborg' fortresses, which were built by King Harald Bluetooth around AD 980.

"This is the first time for more than 60 years that a new Viking ringed fortress has been discovered in Denmark," explains Nanna Holm, an archaeologist and curator at the Danish Castle Centre. Søren Sindbæk, professor of medieval archaeology at Aarhus University, adds: "The Vikings have a reputation as berserk-

ers and pirates. It comes as a surprise to many that they were also capable of building magnificent fortresses. The discovery of the new Viking fortress is a unique opportunity to learn more about the battles and conflicts of the Vikings."

It was new, precise laser measurements of the landscape that led curator Nanna Holm on the trail of the fortress. An almost invisible rise in the field was shown to have a clear circular outline. Nanna Holm explains: "It is a huge monument. The fortress measures 145m from side to side. We recognize the 'Trelleborg' fortresses by the precise circular shape of the ramparts and by the four massive gates that are oriented at the four corners of the compass. Our investigations show that the new fortress was perfectly circular and