

1,500-year-old shoe resembling Roman sandal found in Norwegian alpine pass

April 27 2022, by Bob Yirka



A hiker in the mountains discovered the leather sandal in the ice. Credit: Espen Finstad/Secrets of the Ice

A team of researchers working on what has been named the "Secrets of the Ice" project has come into possession of a 1,500-year-old shoe that was found in a Norwegian alpine pass—one that resembles an ancient Roman sandal. The group has not yet published their paper describing their work analyzing the shoe but has posted updates on [Facebook](#) and

[Twitter.](#)

Researchers working on the project have been canvassing the high mountain areas in Norway that are believed to be part of ancient passes—where people walked back and forth between valleys in the [mountains](#) and [coastal areas](#)—for the past 15 years. During that time, they have found a large number of artifacts, from horse bones to dung and horseshoes. But the human [shoe](#) is unique due to its age.

A mountain guide found the shoe in 2019 in a part of a pass known as Horse Ice Patch. That year summer temperatures rose abnormally high, so much so that a lot of snow and ice in the area had melted, revealing the shoe and several other items. The guide contacted the researchers, who raced to the scene ahead of an impending snow storm. There they found the shoe and also some textiles, arrow shafts and leaf fodder. After collecting as many items as they could, they retreated to shelter. They returned the next day to find the area covered with new snow, likely hiding other finds.

In studying the shoe, the researchers found it to be approximately 1,500 years old—and it had been found at an elevation of approximately 2,000 meters above sea level and far from the coast. It represented a mystery due to its construction, since it would not have served very well in an icy realm. Indeed, it very much looked like sandals worn by people in much warmer parts of the Roman Empire. The researchers suspect it was discarded by someone who had found it less than useful in the [snow](#) and ice. Still, the researchers insist finding it adds another piece to the puzzle of the mountain passes in the region and the people who used them. They also suggest that the sandal may have only been a part of the footwear, noting that the person who wore it likely covered their foot with some sort of fabric before adding the sandal.

More information: www.facebook.com/secretsoftheice

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Citation: 1,500-year-old shoe resembling Roman sandal found in Norwegian alpine pass (2022, April 27) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-04-year-old-resembling-roman-sandal-norwegian.html>

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