

Luristan Type 2 Iron Swords

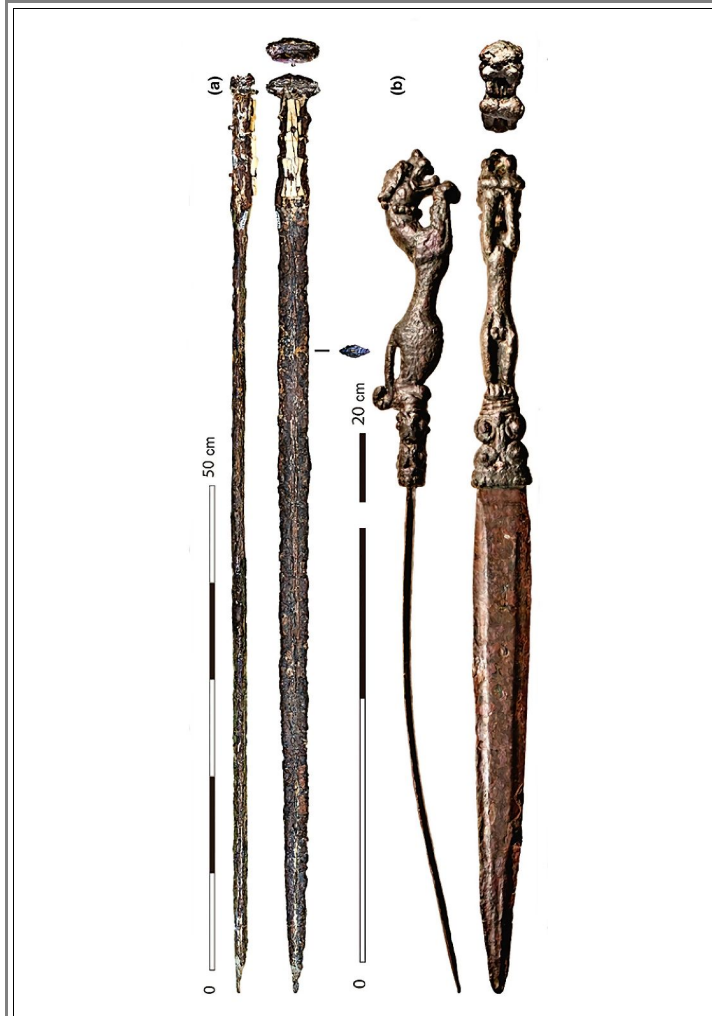
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First Iron Swords

Science

Is there anything I can tell you about the Luristan type 2 swords that I haven't already dealt with [here](#) under the heading "Early Mediterranean Swords"?

Not really - unfortunately. Just for fun, I give you a picture of a borderline case from [Saruq al-Hadid](#) together with a rather unusual one with a lion hilt



Representative types of ferrous remains from Dubai Municipality and SHARP excavations at Saruq al-Hadid. a) double-edged long sword with hilt and blade of iron; b) double-edged bimetallitic bronze iron dagger with hilt of bronze and blade of iron.

[Source:](#) Lloyd Weeks et al.: Recent archaeological research at Saruq al-Hadid, Dubai, UAE

The one on the right has a blade that is very reminiscent of the Luristan type I blades. Did somebody produce an early "pastiche" by fixing a fancy hilt to the blade of an original mask sword?

I could produce more pictures of type II swords but that doesn't really help. Let's recount what we know and what we don't

Here is the list

1. The hilt of these swords is quite similar to that of contemporary or somewhat older bronze swords and daggers. The following picture gives an example:



Luristan type II sword in bronze (top) and iron (bottom)

Source:

Top: From an auction catalogue: "Luristan bronze sword"
Bottom: Ebay or Cataeiki advertisement

2. Those swords are old but none has been properly dated. Numbers given vary between 1200 BC - 600 BC.
3. They are found everywhere in the Mediterranean: Israel, Greece. Luristan / Iran, Arabian peninsula,
4. Some museum (probably in Iran) has a whole [collection](#).
5. These swords are good for fighting - in contrast to the Luristan type I swords. Of course, they were precious and foremost prestige items but they may well have been superior to their bronze brethren in a fight.
6. None has ever been metallurgically investigated (discounting the wonderful studies of the [Saruq al-Hadid](#), rust pieces which may or may not relate to the Luristan type II swords. These studies strongly suggest that [faggoting / piling was used](#)).
7. Because of point 5 we don't really know how they were made

▶ The last point merits some comments. How do you make a one-piece-of-iron sword like these from a rather imperfect lump of iron like the famous [Khorsabad double pyramids](#)? It definitely needs a lot of good fire welding. I would not be surprised if one will find that a lot of folding was done like with the Luristan type I swords (and likely with the bi-metal swords).

And how do you forge that hilt? It is not clear to me at all. A modern smith might have some ideas of how do that. However it is done, it cannot be easy. Once more we encounter highly sophisticated craftsmanship.

To say it once more: these simple looking swords took substantial skills in iron working for their production.

▶ Nothing helps but a thorough metallurgical investigation of some specimen in the future. Let's hope somebody will do it.