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A unique Parthian sword in the Bonyad-e Mostazafan Museum

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Abstract: *This study is going to introduce one of the unique and less known Parthian sword which have not been released to public for purpose of exhibit and study so far.*

Key words: Parthian military, sword, Bonyad-e Mostazafan Museum, Iran

This study is going to introduce one of the unique and less known Parthian sword which have not been released to public for purpose of exhibit and study so far. There is one Parthian sword made of Iron, double edges in the Bonyad-e Mostazafan Museum, Tehran (inv. 44797). The handle of the sword properly was in wood or bone because of badly decay there is no sign of handle however the handle bar is still survived.



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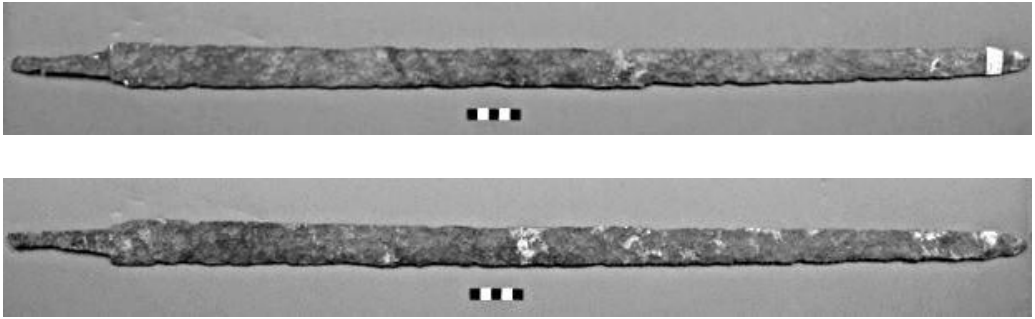


Fig. 1. Parthian sword, the Bonyad-e Museum; Tehran, inv. 44797.

Total measurements are as follows:

Total length: 98 cm

Length of handle: 9.7 cm

Width of the blade close to the handle part: 4.3 cm

Width of the blade in the middle part: 3.6 cm

The closest Parthian swords to the Bonyad-e sample is one of the Parthian swords in Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran. It is long kind of Parthian sword made of Iron with 83 cm length and blade and handle are so similar to Bonyad-e sword style.

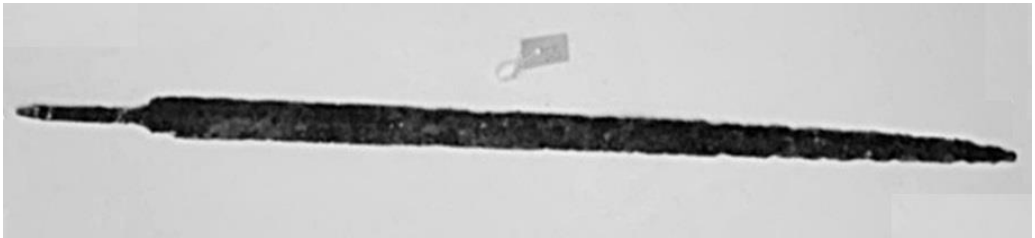


Fig. 2. Parthian sword, Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran; inv. 1604/18029.

There is another Parthian sword in Iran Bastan Museum. It is long category of the Parthian swords with 84 cm. length. It is also iron made like Bonyad-e sword.



Fig. 3. Parthian sword, Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran; inv. 3630/19198.

Table 1: Comparison of Parthian long swords housed at Iran Bastan Museum

	Inv. No: 1603/18028	Inv. No: 1604/18029	Inv. No: 3630/19198	Inv. No: 3631/19199
Characteristics	no designs	no designs, small nail at end of sword	no designs	no designs
Length (handle to sword tip)	62 cm	83 cm	84 cm	87.5 cm
Weight	495 gm	438 gm	na	na
Color	“Burnt” dark brown	“Burnt” dark brown	na	na
Material	Iron	Iron	Iron	Iron
Excavation site	Nowruz Mahalleh, Deylaman	Nowruz Mahalleh, Deylaman	Rasht, Gilan	Rasht, Gilan
Excavation year	1960	1960	1966	1966
Current condition	Rusted	Rusted	Rusted, part of blade broken off	Rusted, slight bend, broken

Table 2: Dimensions of excavated swords from gravesites/crypts at Vestemin

	Length of sword handle (cm)	Length of sword blade (cm)	Width of blade (at center) (cm)	Dimensions of hand guard (cm)	Blade thickness (mm)	Total sword length (cm)
Sword 1	7.5	63	3.5	10 x 2 x 1.3	5.0	74.0
Sword 2	10.5	68	3.7	10 x 1.5 x 1.2	4.0	80.0
Sword 3	10.0	78.5	4.0	10 x 2 x 1.3	5.0	90.0
Sword 4	6.4	67	3.3	10 x 1.5 x 0.6	4.0	74.0
Sword 5	16	76	6.0	na	5.0	92.0

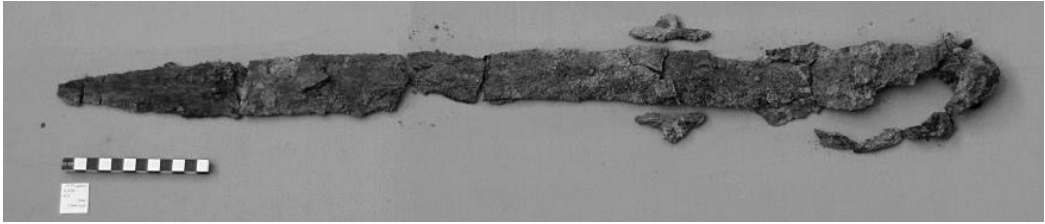


Fig. 4. Parthian sword excavated from a crypt/grave at the eastern side of the Vestemin site – for dimensions see “Sword 5” in Table 2.

Five swords have been discovered at Vestemin. The swords range from a maximum length of 92 cm to the shortest at 74 cm. One of the unique characteristics of the Bonyad-e sword as compared to the other Parthian sword samples is its measurements. The Bonyad-e Parthian sword is the longest among all Parthian swords which have ever been found. The following table shows the measurements of recent Parthian swords found in Vestemin which have been studied by authors. No swords in this site are as long as the Bonyad-e sample.

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