

Authentication Report

Ancient Bronze Sword from Luristan Circa 900 BC



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Priceless Past

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Item Description:

This piece is alleged to be a bronze sword from northwestern Iran, possibly from Luristan, and dating to circa 900 BC. The flanged hilt is similar to known examples as is the crescent guard. The decorated blade is also similar to known examples. However, we currently know of no examples in which all three of these characteristics exist together.

This sword has a very dark, waxy looking patina with what appear to be deep surface scratches. It is not uncommon to see scratches such as these in a piece that someone has tried to clean. The raised surfaces of the blade, some of the blade edges, and some of the handle edges appear to be non-patinated bronze.

The crescent guard is fairly asymmetrical and does not appear to be well cast. The blade is also uncharacteristically asymmetrical, especially near the guard. Again, it appears on first inspection that the sword was poorly cast, which is not typical of swords from this area and time period.

The pommel is also not in line with the tip of the sword, indicating either a poor casting, a repair, or a bend. Visual inspection shows no sign that the metal was bent, leading us to conclude that the misalignment is a result of either poor casting or a poorly done repair.

Analysis:

Analysis of this piece consisted of visual, microscopic, solvent and heat testing.

As stated earlier, raised areas and edges of this piece appeared to be largely non-patinated bronze. This was confirmed by viewing the piece under magnification. This particular characteristic is unusual for authentic ancient bronze as patinas form first on stressed metal. Edges and ridges are structurally more

than flat surfaces and should begin to corrode first. While occasionally we find that aggressive cleaning to a piece may remove corrosion down to the base metal, especially on raised surfaces and edges, that does not appear to be the case in this instance.

Further microscopic inspection showed that the *entire* patinated surface had a waxy, brown appearance intermixed with granular, amorphous coloring. The color grains were not consistent with those we find in natural patinas. Basic crystalline structures associated with oxides of copper were suspiciously absent.

Applying either xylene or MEK to random, isolated areas of the patina caused the patina to dissolve in every instance. This would not occur in a natural patina. On one spot at the blade edge, a small amount of solvent removed the artificial patina instantly to reveal a shiny base metal. Again, this is consistent with an artificially created patina.

Areas were then selected at random where a probe was heated and applied to the patina. In each case the patina readily melted away, indicating that the patina was artificial and likely composed primarily of wax or epoxy.

Examination of the area where the blade joins the guard showed no evidence of a bend or a repair, indicating that the aforementioned misalignment was likely part of the original casting. (also see photos on page 3)

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Photos



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Left:

Close-up of midrib showing fairly clean, non-patinated surface.



Above: From left to right at 10x magnification - photos show the undisturbed patina, the patina with the heated probe in place, and then the same area where the heated probe has been moved to reveal the melted area of the artificial patina.

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Additional Photo and Conclusion



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Artificial patina removed exposing bare metal

Conclusion: Based on the information contained in this report, it is our finding that this piece, in its entirety, is a modern production.

Authorized signature Richard A. Nable owner/operator of Priceless Past Authentications

Date

All the information contained in this document is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

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