

## Collection of Bi-Metal Swords

This module contains an unsystematic collection of bi-metal sword pictures plus whatever information is available. This is usually not all that much because almost all pictures show unprovenanced swords, found in the antiquity trade.

First some pictures of bi-metal swords that I have already presented elsewhere in this Hyperscript:



**Left:** Auction catalogue; identified as Luristani, 1000 BC.  
**Middle:** Teheran Museum, dated to probably 1000 BC. From Khorasani's book. "Not excavated, confiscated".  
**Right:** The "Essen" sword investigated and (wrongly) assigned to 1200 BC Hittite by Yalcin. Provenance is given as "?"; i.e. it was not excavated.

Two more swords from unclear sources:

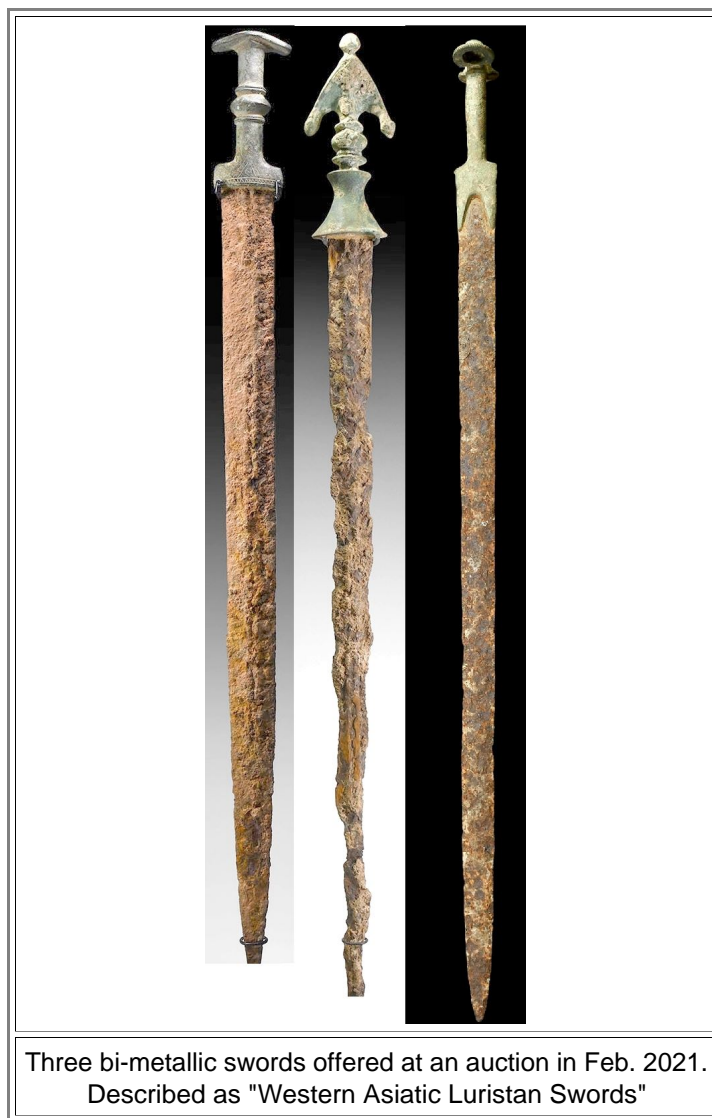
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**Left:** From somewhere in the Internet without identification and description. Probably not from an excavation

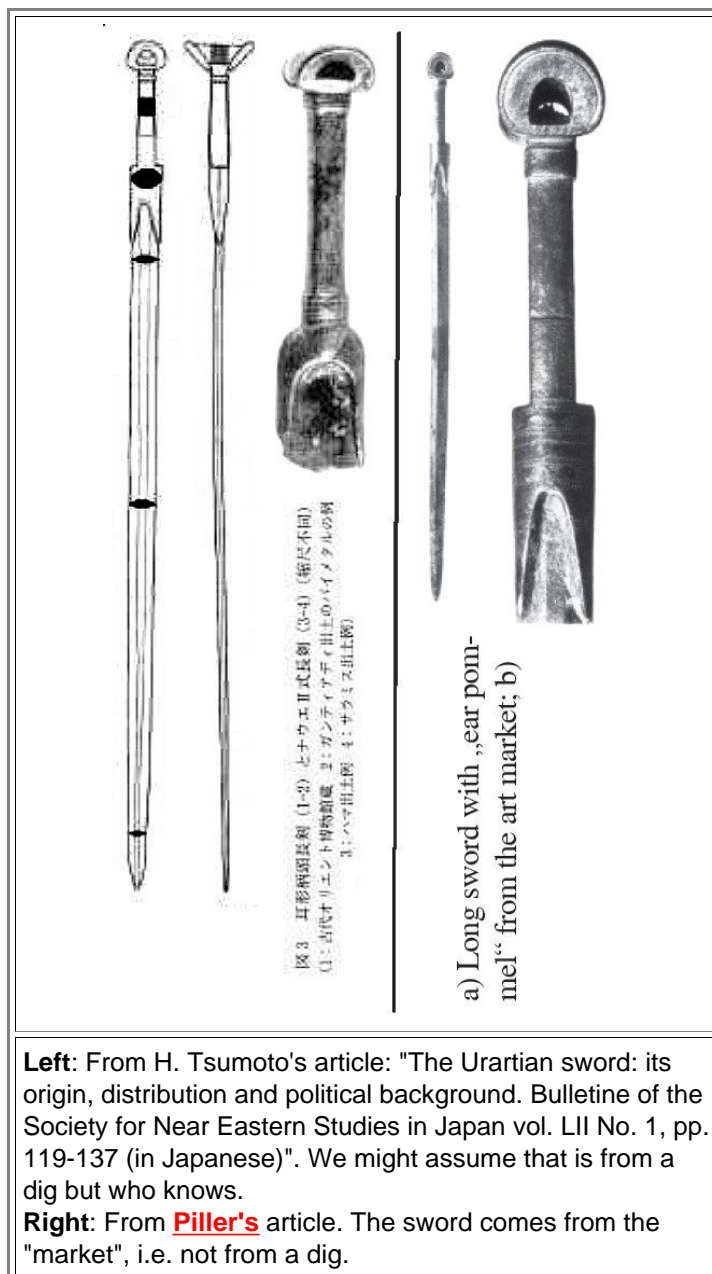
**Right:** Acquired at an auction and donated to the Brussels Royal Museum of History and Art. It is also an example of a "[cotton reel pommel](#)" sword.

Next three remarkably well preserved examples offered at an auction (Timeline) in Feb. 2021 and obviously not excavated:



- The sword in the middle shows traces of (mineralized) wood from the sheath on the blade. This might allow to determine the age of the wood (and thus possibly an educated guess at the age of the blade) except that (German) institutes capable of doing advanced radiocarbon dating will not touch "unprovenanced" objects because the German "[Kulturgutschutzgesetz](#)" interferes.

Next I show are all the pictures of bi-metallic swords I found in the scientific literature with the relevant figure caption



● Once more: Even this sword was not scientifically excavated. Obviously no good picture of an excavated one was available for the article.

▀ That's it in June 20121. I do not claim that there are not more bi-metallic swords around, in museums as well as in private hands. There certainly are. I do claim, however, that they are not ubiquitous and that most of them come from unscientific digs. I also claim that just one (the "Essen" sword) has ever been metallographically analyzed.

● Given the importance of these swords for understanding the development of early iron technology, it follows:

**We must move these swords from private hands into the public domain (i.e. suitable museums)**

▀ Now some new findings



Timeline Auction, Sept. 2019. Described as:  
Western Asiatic Luristan Bronze Hilted Long Sword; 8 - 7th  
century BC; 77 cm long



On sale (June 20121) by Ancient & Oriental in London.  
Described as:  
"Large Luristan Bronze Sword with Iron Blade. Date: Circa  
1800-600 BC"

- All these swords must have been very expensive show-off items for the rich and mighty. It is surprising, up to a point, that none bears an inscription giving the name of its owner. Could it be that these swords were so rare and distinctive that this was unnecessary since all and sundry knew that this was King Assur Slimeball's famous sword?

▀ Next we have two good ones:



**Left:** "A North-West Persian Iron Sword; early first millennium BC"; recently sold by Christies (together with the bronze sword)

**Right:** A uncommented pictures from a sword lovers blog. Remarkably well preserved and with a "[double disc pommel](#)" hilt

● The hilt of the one on the right looks rather like the one of the [British Museum pastche](#)

▀ So, yes, bi-metal swords (and daggers) were plentiful, sort of. There might be as many as Luristan mask swords (around a 100) or even some more floating around in the "market". Here are two swords that came up in a recent auctions:



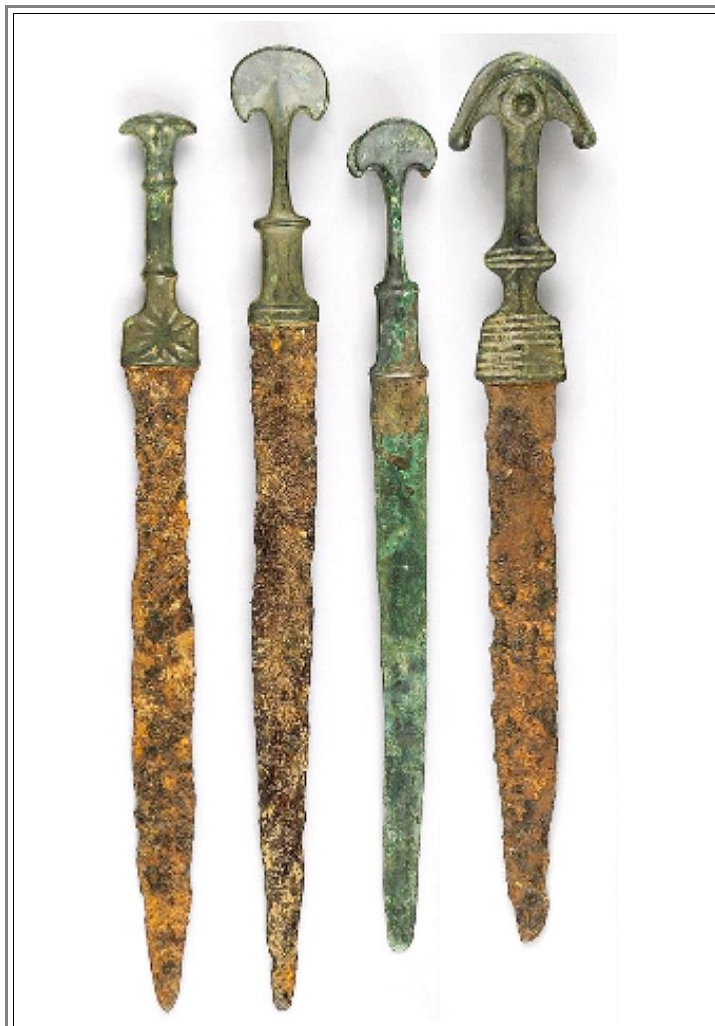
Offered at an auctions (Catawiki) in June 2021  
Described as: Bronze Age Iron Extremely large Luristan  
sword - 830x45x3 mm



Sold at an auction by Catawiki. Described as:  
"Rare Bronze and Iron Sword - 51.7x6.3x4.2 cm"

Next some short bi-metal swords or daggers:





Found on the Internet page "Ancient to Medieval (And Slightly Later) History"; Nov. 2013. Described as:" Persian Bronze and Iron Short Swords, Late 2nd - early 1st Millennium BC"

▀ The next one is on sale by Hermann Historica in June 2021. It's blade is heavily corroded but the hilt is a bit unusual and richly decorated



Described as: "Eisenschwert mit Bronzegriff; Luristan,, 9. - 8. Jhdt. v. Chr.

▀ I still have to see a bi-metal sword being displayed in a museum, though. It is a bit curious that many Luristan *mask swords* have .made it from the market to museums (by donations or outright buying) but obviously not many bi-metal swords.

I also still need to see a bi-metallic sword that was excavated. Well - here it is (perhaps):

▀ The next picture shows a rather well preserved bi-metallic sword that an acquaintance of mine acquired some time ago:

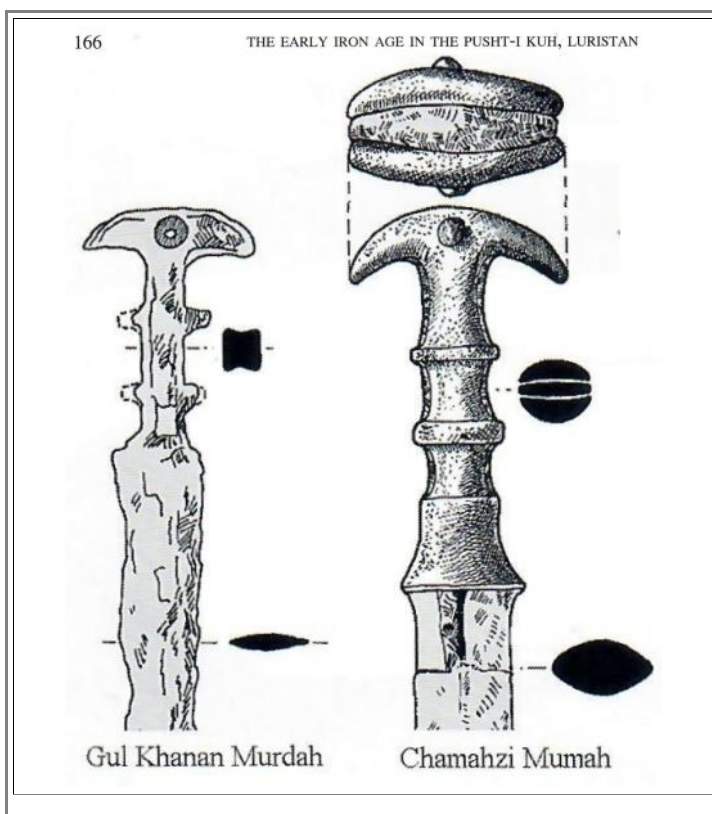


**Bi-metallic sword from a private collection**

Source: Picture given to me by an acquaintance (private collector)

● While the hilt shape is not uncommon, this is the first bi-metallic sword with this kind of hilt that I'm aware of.

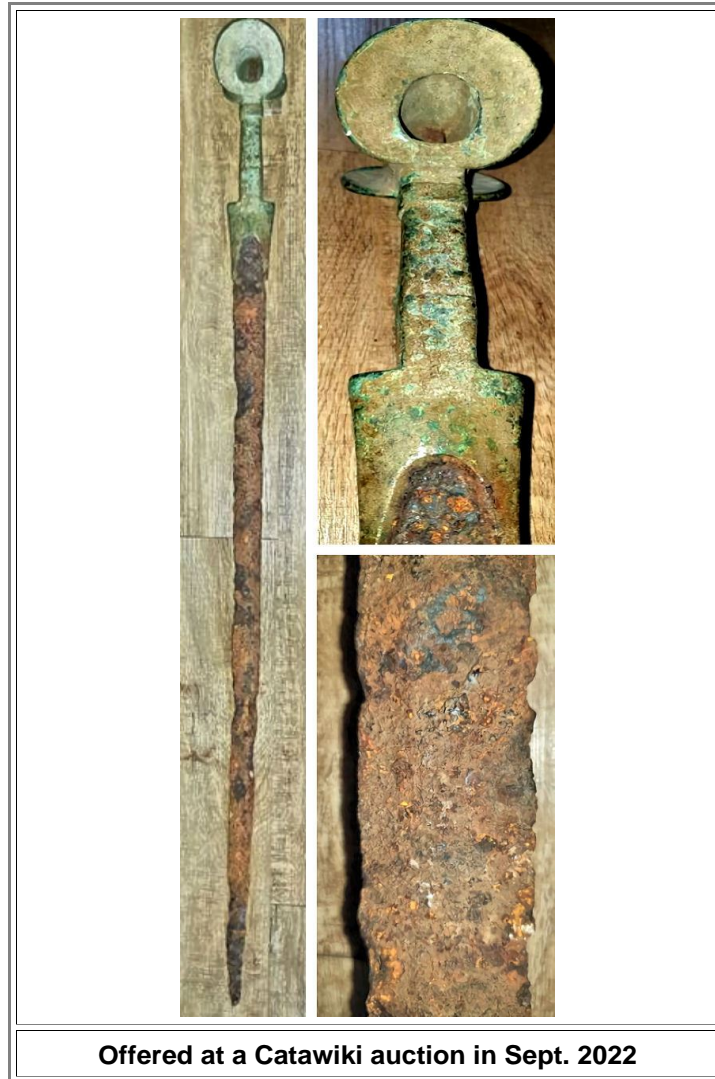
▀ Here is a particular interesting one:



**Fig. 133: Sword form Iron Age III tombs in Pusht-i Kuh**

- This probably bi-metallic sword (on the right) I found in our old friend, the "[Acta Iranica](#)", the huge volume (by **Bruno Overlaet**) containing the Luristan excavation documents. The Chamahzi Mumah gravesite is dated to 800 - 700 BC. So far this seems to be the only properly excavated bi-metal sword!

Here is one from a Sept. 2022 auction (Catawiki). The last offer I saw was Euro 800.-



Here is one from a fall 2022 auction (Hermann Historica). The starting price is Euro 1-200



**Offered at a Hermann Historica auction; fall 2022**