



Arms and Armor from Iran

The Bronze Age to the End of the Qajar Period

Publication

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Editors

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PUBLICITY | Beate Dillmann-Gräsing works as a freelance editor and translator in the areas of archaeology, art history, cultural history, oriental studies.

September 2007

What an opulent work! The author presents Iranian arms and armor from 3000 B.C. to the 20th century A.D. on 776 pages. In eight-years of research and work, he catalogued, analyzed, and evaluated 505 artifacts from Iranian museums as well as European and American private collections. He prepared line drawings and/or pictures of all artifacts to illustrate his work, with 439 black and white pictures and circa 2800 colored pictures. Many of the artifacts that are shown, have not been published before and have not been accessible to the public. Therefore, it is of minor importance when some of the colored pictures are not technically perfect.

Although the weight of the book of 4,5 kg, which does not make it handy, its contents are far from being dry. Although it had been better to publish the catalogue separately to handle the book [better], the contents are clearly arranged in an exemplary way. This enables the reader of this comprehensive book to have clear orientation, and to find systematic and comprehensive information about a topic. In order to facilitate and orient the reader, a timetable, map, names and subject indices are at the beginning of the book. Footnotes that appear below each text column and a detailed bibliography further aid and orient the reader.

The systematic table of contents serves the same purpose. The author starts with a short historical overview where he describes the metallurgical development of Iranian arms and armor in its historical and cultural field, and he shows the influence and the impact on other nations as well as the interaction with other art genres. Chapters based on excavation types are next. They present the manufacture, use, origin, tradition, and meaning of each type of weapons based on excavated archaeological examples as well as representations on reliefs, statues, explanations in contemporary manuscripts or literary works. Special emphasis is placed on manufacture techniques as well as an iconography

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...er special emphasis is placed on manufacture techniques as well as on iconography and symbolism. Various black and white pictures and tables illustrate the text. Half of the book consists of the catalogue. In chronological order, the catalogue shows 505 artifacts in detail: measures, technique, origin, dating, provenance, and inventory number as well as makers' marks and cartouches/inscriptions in transcribed format as well as their translation. It is a pity that in this respect transcriptions of Arabic and Persian texts are not done consistently.

Next to the immense value that such a detailed array of unpublished weapons has for research and also for the collectors, the work is a real quarry of information. Because the author does not analyze the artifacts isolated but in their global and regional cultural and historical background, he reaches conclusions that contradict, at times, established doctrines and questions findings that have been accepted up to now. Nevertheless, by way of comparison, he maintains an objective view as he provides controversial views as well and quotes them with corresponding references so that the readers are able to follow the line of argumentation and make their own opinions. All in all, it is an invaluable as well as aesthetic work that makes the heart of each scientist and collector of antique arms beat faster. Therefore, for such a book, the price of EUR 149,80 is more than justified.

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