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## Preliminary Study and Introduction of Recovered Armaments from Parthian Catacombs at Vestemin, Kiasar, Sari, Considering 2015, 2017, and 2018 Excavation Seasons

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### Article Info

### Abstract

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The contractor of the gas line transition from Damghan to Neka destroyed and recovered two tombs in 2014. The site is located 80 km south of Sari. Archaeological excavations led to discovering two historical cemeteries, settlements, and an Islamic castle and cemetery. Architectural remains and objects indicate historical catacomb burials. There are questions about the site including the architectural structure of the catacombs, burial method and dating. Systematic survey and excavation and subsequent comparison of data, with burial method, suggest a vast Parthian settlement in the site. Vestemin is the first Parthian site in Mazandaran. What distinguishes the site from the other Parthian cemeteries is the family catacombs. The Vestemin catacombs consist of three parts, including 1) the rectangular space or the corridor, 2) threshold or entrance between the rectangular space and the catacomb chamber, 3) the catacomb chamber. Armaments including swords, daggers, arrowheads, trefoil arrowheads, and armor were among the findings of the cemetery. Varieties of the objects and using armaments as gifts, had nothing to do with the deceased's gender. Investigating the types of armaments reveal how the cavalries applied them, because armaments such as swords, daggers, and arrowheads, are light weapons that Agile Parthian cavalries used against the romans' heavy weapons, as their classic enemy.

#### Keywords:

armament, Sari, Vestemin, Parthian, archaeology .

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## 1. Introduction

The contractor activities on transitional gas lines from Damghan to Neka revealed and partially destroyed the remains of two catacombs at Vestemin village, 80 Km south of Sari. The local MCHTO office was immediately informed which was followed by a preliminary investigation and the prevention of the development project. The preliminary investigation and recognition of anomalous burials in Mazandaran, an excavation program proposed, accepted, and financed, which began after mapping and drawing 10\*10 networks. Three seasons of excavations led to the finding of two historical cemeteries, a settlement, castle and an Islamic cemetery. Several questions were proposed about the site, including understanding the architectural structure of the cemeteries, recognizing burial method, and dating. Survey and comparison of data, and burial style, confirmed a Parthian vast settlement in the region. Vestemin site is the first Parthian site that was archaeologically excavated in Mazandaran. Family catacombs distinguishes the site from the other contemporary sites. The catacombs consist of 1) a rectangular space or corridor, 2) threshold or entrance between two rectangular space and the catacomb chamber, and 3) the catacomb chamber. The present paper uniquely explains the recovered armaments from the site. Armaments such as swords, daggers, arrowheads, trefoil arrows and armors with the other objects were burial gifts. Historical sources present very little information about the Parthian period, including Mazandaran during the Parthian era, in comparison to the other periods. Following the Parthian foundation at northeastern Iran, Arashk and Tirdad, then Artaban I conquered Hirkania and Mazandaran, respectively (Colledge 2001: 23), whereas the historical sources only referred to the kings' invasions to the southern strip of Caspian Sea. Again, historical sources talk of the people of Mazandaran during Pharaates I. In his first days, Mards or Amards were displeased of their neighbor's, Parthian movements and probably raised and rioted. On the other hand, Hirkania opposed and rioted against Parthians (Pirnia 2010: 1828). Tapooris, who lived between these two people, allied with the rioters. Therefore, Pharaates quelled the uprisings by leading his troops to the territories of Mards. Passing through the land of Tapooris, he went to the Mards' land. Probably, he defeated the Hirkanis and the Tapooris before the Mards, because he had to pass through their lands to reach Mards'. He fought hardly to Mards and finally dominated them. Then he ordered his troops to move from Tapooris to the Mards lands. From then on, sources rarely point to Mards in Mazandaran, hereby known as Tapooris.

Historical sources remain silent about the people of the south of the Caspian Sea, after Pharaates I, 176-174 BC, until Vologases I. However, during the reign of Vologases I another group of people from eastern Mazandaran, the Hirkanis, rioted in the region. Expeditions to the eastern regions of Mazandaran, Hirkani, was among the considerable actions of Vologases I. There was an uprising at 58 A.D. at Hirkania that Tacitus says in his annals, it was the reason that the Romans Proceeded to Rome during the reign of Vologases I. The Hirkani people rioted against Vologases and claimed independence, then sent representatives to Neron's court and ask for an alliance against Vologases. The event was in 58 AD, the year that Gorgan, as one of the oldest regions of the Parthian territory, departed from the country. Probably, the Romans could not effectively help the Hirkani rioters, due to the long distances. Therefore, the Hirkani ambassadors returned from Rome quite quickly, passed Euphrates and met Korbolo next to Militen (Parviz 2011: 136). The Hirkani uprising, continued from 58 to 75 AD, when the central Parthian government succeeded to suppress the riot (Haqiqat 2000: 162).

There is no information regarding the Parthian presence from Vologases' reign until the early Sassanid period, however, enlightening information was revealed when Gashnasf Shah, the king of Farashvadgar and Tabaristan, Exchanged letters to Tansar, minister of Ardashir Babakan.

However, historical sources are silent about Mazandaran during the Parthian period, archaeological findings including sites, cemeteries, and castles across Mazandaran, explain the Parthian presence in the region. One of the valuable Parthian sites is located at Vestemin village at the so called Latte Sar region of Sari, which is now known as Vestemin site. The site is considerable because of its approximation to the Parthian capital, Sad Darvazeh, and the Silk Road. It is 46 Km (air distance) from Sad Darvazeh, on the other hand, it is on the old road that connected the Parthian capital to Sari, capital of the Farashvadgar Province, and 80 Km far from Sari.

Following the gas line project from Qusheh Damghan to the Neka Power Plant, the pipe line directly passed through the site and damaged parts of the castle and the Eastern Cemetery, at the same time, road construction heavy machinery destroyed several catacombs in the Western Cemetery. Fortunately, Soortijie and his colleagues surveyed and documented the site, which led to the prevention of the Gas Company development activity. Then, during the summer and fall of 1394, 1396 and 2018 Sharifi excavated the site, of which the present paper's studies recovered armaments from 2015, 2017, and 2018 seasons.

## **2. History of research**

Even though, Parthians governed for a long time, approximately 500 years, one should acknowledge there is little information for such a long period. Historical and non-historical sources of Parthian period are rare, compared to the other earlier and later periods, which was followed by a lack of scholar trends. Apparently, there is scarce information about the Parthian culture and civilization, let alone the Parthian armaments.

Scholars including Poor Davood (2003), Hekmat (1971), Narman Sharp (2005), Schippman (2005), Zia Poor (1964), Kaveh Farrokh (2008), and Nayyer Noori (1966) have written chapters about ancient Iranian armaments, however, they are not specialized and there are no detailed references to Parthian armaments.

## **3. Methodology**

The authors enjoyed bibliography and field work to introduce and understand armaments. The studied material evidence discovered after several seasons of field work. The evidences prepared the following collection of historical sources about the history of Parthians, historical events and reports of wars, documentation of armaments such as swords, daggers, arrows, arrowheads, spears, armors, and shields, which were measured using instrumentation and calipers, photography, digital scan, and drawings. Finally, the extracted information was prepared by Excel software, as a table of abundant armament findings from Vestemin.

## **4- Location and geography of "Latt-i-Sar", Vestemin**

Vestemin site located 9 Km southeast of Kia Sar, is the center of Chahrdangeh district, of the Sari environs. The Site is named after the village that is located 3 Km away. The main name of the Parthian site is "Latt-i-Sar", which was changed to the name of the village, which it is located in.

The village is located in a mountainous region, it is limited in the east to Terkam village, in the north it reaches the KiaSar road to the Cement Factory, from the south it

is surrounded by the Sari-Semnan road, and finally, regional forests in the western frontiers of the region. Latt-i-Sar, is located in a mountainous region, and includes a Settlement, an Eastern Cemetery, a Western Cemetery, and the Castle.

The site, is on a gentle slope of the mountain, that stretches east-westwardly, it starts from the east and ends after 300 m at a valley in the west. Furthermore, there is a shallow valley at the south of the site, which was created due the so called Latt-i-Sar spring and in the north the Parthian site reaches to a deeper valley where another spring is located, which is known as Babr Cheshmeh [the tiger spring]. The Site is at an altitude of 2010 m, 053 35' 149" longitude, and 36 14' 317" latitude (map 1, fig. 1).



Map 1. The location of Vestemin of Let -Sar in Mazandaran



Figure 1. The location of Vestemin of Let-Sar.

### 5. Stylistics of Parthian armaments

Swords, daggers, bows and arrows, quivers, spears, axes and battle axes, javelins, clubs, slings, armors, shields, and helmets were included in the Iranian ancient armaments. Swords were very useful in ancient Iranian warfare. In other words, they were "... the main armaments of the battlefield..." (Hekmat 1971: 191), when swords were specialized to the cavalries. The weapons were long, wide and double bladed, which were tied on the waist using a leather band passing through the sheath (Zia Pur 1964: 294-5). Every belt passed through a "P" form joint, that had a changeable curve that let the soldiers draw the sword as quick as possible (Farrokh 2008: 21). Parthian swords were normally smaller and thinner than later Sassanian swords; Sassanids increased the lengths of the swords to 110 cm with a 5-8 cm width (Farrokh 2008: 20).

Parthians were accustomed to horse riding and archery since early childhood, and were popular as *Pahlavan/ Pahlav/ Parthua*, which is a term used even today (Shapur Shahbazi 1986: 489). Bows and arrows were the long range offensive weapons that were used, not only in game hunting, but also, in battlefields. The weapons were engraved in a Tang-i-Sarvak relief with a chivalry (Mohammadifar 2008: 219). The contemporary arrows were made of wood, similar to bows, which were called "...Tigr and in Avest Tigr..." (Purdavood 1967: 32). The Parthian's arrows were made so that they could shoot quickly and thoroughly to penetrate the armors of the roman legionnaires (Debevoise 1983:86). The arrowheads were made of iron, then they were poisoned. For more lethality against enemies, sometimes, they were made of trefoil.

**Quiver:** it was used as a holster for arrows by the archers. The word for quiver in Avest is "akan", in Pahlavi "kantir", and in Persian "Tarkesh" (Purdavood 1967: 41). The form of the quiver is engraved in the Tang-i-Sarvak relief, which is with the cavalry on the right side of the horse (Mohammadifar 2008: 219). Quivers are clearly visible in Firuz Abad reliefs of Ardashir I and his son Shapur I, two of the earlier Sassanid kings.

**Spear:** Iranians used the weapon since ancient times. The Avestan and ancient Persian word for spear is "Arashti" and it is "Nichak" in Pahlavi, which was changed to "Nizak" in Arabic (Purdavood 2003: 471). Darius I was proud of his spear throwing, and his ability to use the weapon on horse and on foot (Sharp 1988: 47). It should be noted that a short spear is called a javelin, with an approximate 1 m length.

**Armor:** It is war clothing, made of leather or woven of metal rings or plates, that has a long history in Iran. Parts of an armor, with scale-like plates that were woven on leather, were recovered in the 1996 excavation season in Zivieh, Kurdistan. Parthians wore scaled armor in comparison to Sassanians who wore chain armors (Shipmann 2005: 114). The cavalry weren't the only ones who wore armor, but their horses also used armors that were called "Bargostovan" (Nirnoori 1966: 174). There is an armored horse with scaled armor in the Tang-i-Sarvak relief (Mohammadifar 2008: 219). A Parthian cavalry man (Cataphract) is engraved in the Dura-Europos reliefs (fig. 2).



**Figure 2. Parthian Heavy cavalry painted on the walls of Dura-Europos.**

**Shield:** it is a portable armament of a soldier that was used to prevent hits from swords and spears from enemies (Amid 2002: the following words). The weight and width of shields vary throughout the history of Iran; they were made occasionally of light and thin wood and covered by leather, while some had copper and gold ornaments (Hekmat 1971: 194).

### **6. The Architecture of the Burials of Vestemin**

Vestemin site has two eastern and western cemeteries, whereas only one burial was excavated through the 2015 season, while the main excavation activities were in the Western Cemetery. The western cemetery of Vestemin has a unique architecture of catacombs, which rarely appeared in the Parthian cultural range; therefore, the present paper involves a summary about the cemetery, before any discussion regarding the recovered armament from the cemetery.

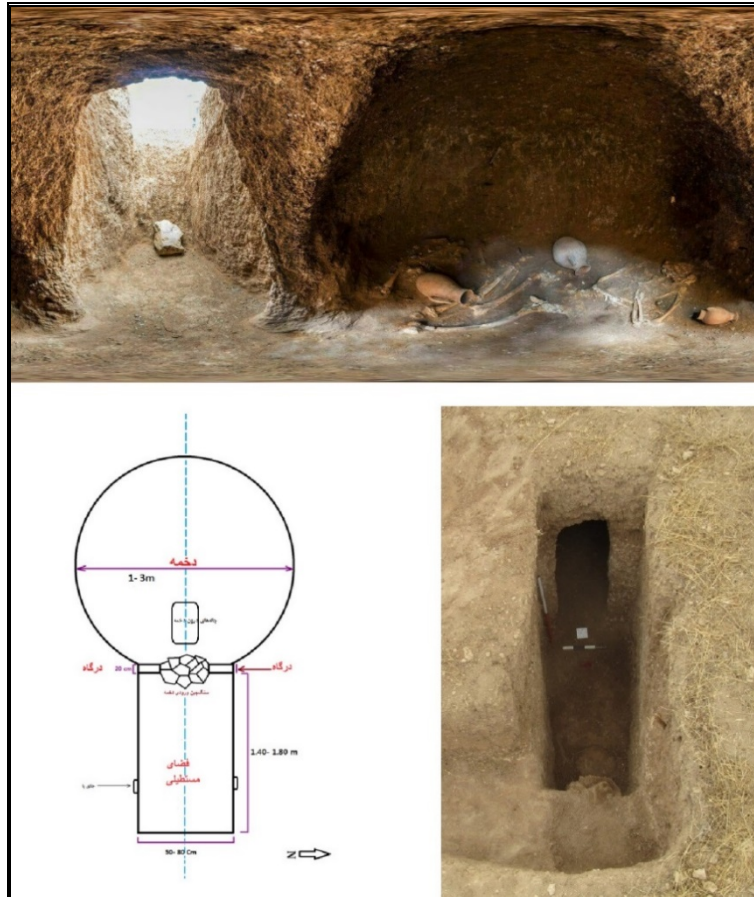
#### **6-1. The Architecture of Catacombs**

The catacombs consist of three parts, including 1) rectangular space (corridor), 2) the threshold-like entrance, and 3) catacomb. On Average, the rectangular spaces have a 1.6 m length that varies from 1.4 to 1.8 m. The chambers have a variable width between 60 cm to 80 cm. Considering the west-east land slope, the spaces vary from 1.8-3 m in depth. The other architectural section is a connecting structure between the rectangular chamber and the catacomb, in a threshold form. Following the digging of the rectangular space, the structure continued at the western side, with an arched hole, 50 cm high and 45 cm wide, at the beginning of the catacomb. The threshold space was applied at the entrance of the catacomb, and was closed by stone and mud after the burial in the catacomb.

The main part of the catacomb structure is the catacomb itself, which usually is at the western side of the rectangular space. The catacombs, with variable sizes, usually appear as a domical earth, with circular or oval sections that varies from 1 to 3 meters, however, the fall of walls and clay-lime domes make figuring the dimensions of the structures ambiguous. Several intact and unfallen catacombs indicate a height of 110-150 cm (fig. 3).

There are rectangular, square, or circular pits, with various dimensions, at the threshold or center of most of the catacombs. However, their function is unknown. Except two of the pits that contained daggers, most of the pits were empty, without any cultural or human data. There were bones, vessels or other objects in some of the pits, which appeared during later penetration into burials, under natural factors such as earthquakes or water. In one case, there is a narrow canal on, with a gentle slope, on the

floor and toward the pit. The application of the pits as an altar or as a drain for the deceased's leaks, demands more similar findings. As it was a family burial site, for some of the new burials, earlier bones and objects were moved to the rectangular chamber, due to the lack of space for the new deceased (The most amount of new burials discovered in a catacomb were 5).



**Figure 3. The example of Catacomb of Let –Sar site**

### **7.The Armaments of Vestemin**

Armaments generally directly follow every government martial strategy and method, which changed and developed through times. After Alexander, his descendants, Seleucids, enjoyed earlier strategies of Achaemenid chivalries. Later, the Parthian chivalries changed martial tactics and technics that led to dominance on Greeks. The Parthian chivalries, very similar to ancient Northern Scythes and Masagets, could apply their martial technics against Greek foot soldiers [infantries] and defeated them. They used armor and helmet and used another armor for their horses, however, bows and arrows were their main weaponry (Farrokh 2008: 9). Furthermore, Parthian chivalries, the most efficient Parthian force, enjoyed sword, dagger and other light weaponries, because Parthians knew they could not rely efficiently on their foot soldiers against experienced Roman legionnaires that were of the best heavy weapon foot soldiers of the world in hand to hand combats. However, comparing to Parthian chivalries who had nomadic lifestyle and agility, Roman legionnaires were weaker and not so effective and useful in battlefields (Ibid 10).

According to the Parthian war technics, the recovered armaments from the burials of Vestemin can be categorized. Some 66 burials were excavated in the excavations of the Vestemin cemetery, which led to the recovery of armaments such as swords, daggers, arrowheads, trefoil arrowheads, and armors from 42 burials. The most abundant armament was trefoil arrowheads, while shields and armors were the rarest.

#### **7-1. Sword**

It was very applicable in ancient Iranian wars; in other words, it was: "... the main armament of the battlefield..." from the Achaemenid to the Sassanian eras (Hekmat 1971: 191). Swords were recovered from 6 burials from the Western Cemetery, except 1 case that was unearthed from the Eastern Cemetery. Five swords were recovered next to male bodies, and one sword next to a female body, whereas another woman and a child, probably 3 years old, were buried as well; The swords were 74-92 cm. the swords were made of iron and had wooden sheaths, considering the remains of wood on the blades. Table 1 presents the dimensions of the swords. All 6 swords were straight and uncurved, even at their blade points. The swords have integrated blades and hilts, whereas cross guards [quillon] were in between and makes a cruciform of the swords. The hilts, due to the fact that they were covered with woods, were no longer than 16 cm. There is a round pommel at the end of the grip that was probably used to keep the wooden handle, which prevents it from coming out of the metal part of the hilt.

The five swords that were unearthed from the Western Cemetery, the catacombs, are typologically similar (fig. 4), while the sword that was recovered from the single burial of the Eastern Cemetery differs from the other swords. It is 92 cm long and 6 cm wide at the center of the blade, with an integrated hilt and uncurved blade (fig. 5).

Differences between the hilt of the swords are of the most important differences between this sword and the other ones that were recovered from the Vestemin cemeteries, because it does not have a cross-guard. The end of the hilt curved towards the blade and created a space for the handle. Furthermore, there are two appendices at both sides of the sword that were probably used to fasten the wooden sheath to a belt.

Another interesting point is the location of the swords in the burials. In the catacombs of the Western Cemetery, the swords were laid or stood next to the deceased, while the sword of the Eastern Cemetery is under the neck of the skeleton. The graves and burial objects, including the swords, were hardly disturbed, following the development activities of machineries before the systematic excavations. It should be noted that any explanation of the Eastern Cemetery relies on future excavations and unearthing more burials. Figs. 6 and 7 reveal the locations of the swords in the western catacombs and Eastern Cemetery.



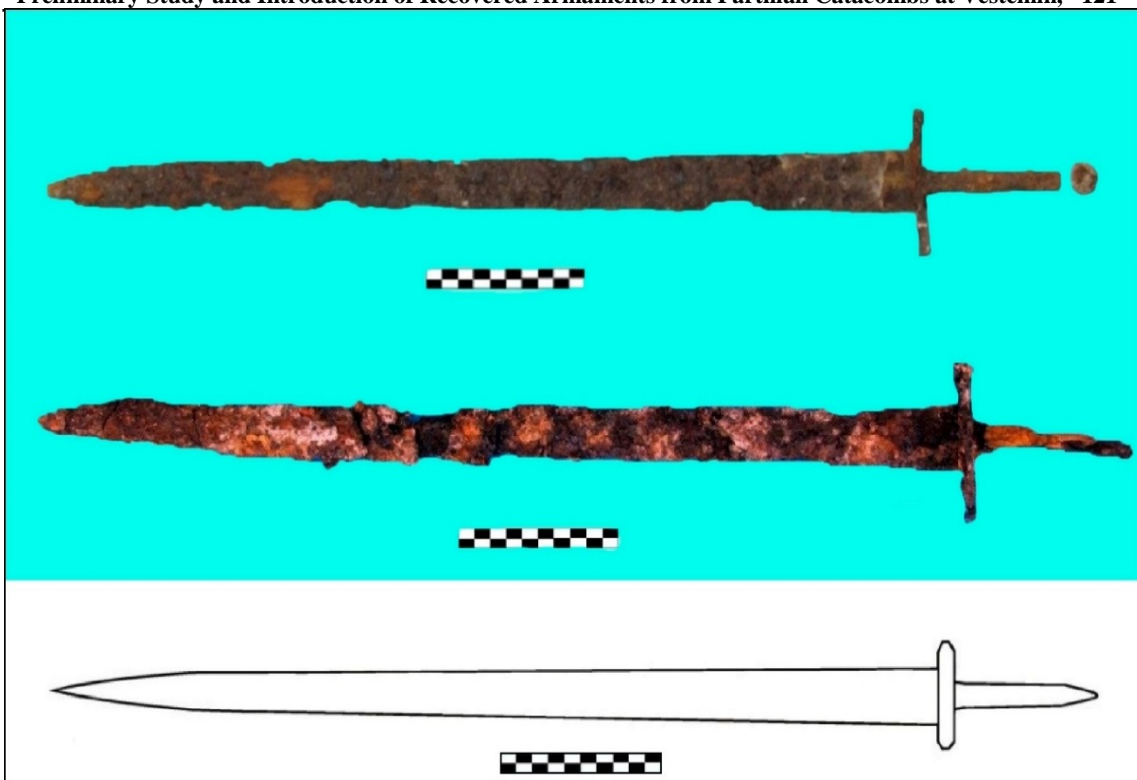


Figure 4. The example of a claymore in the western cemetery

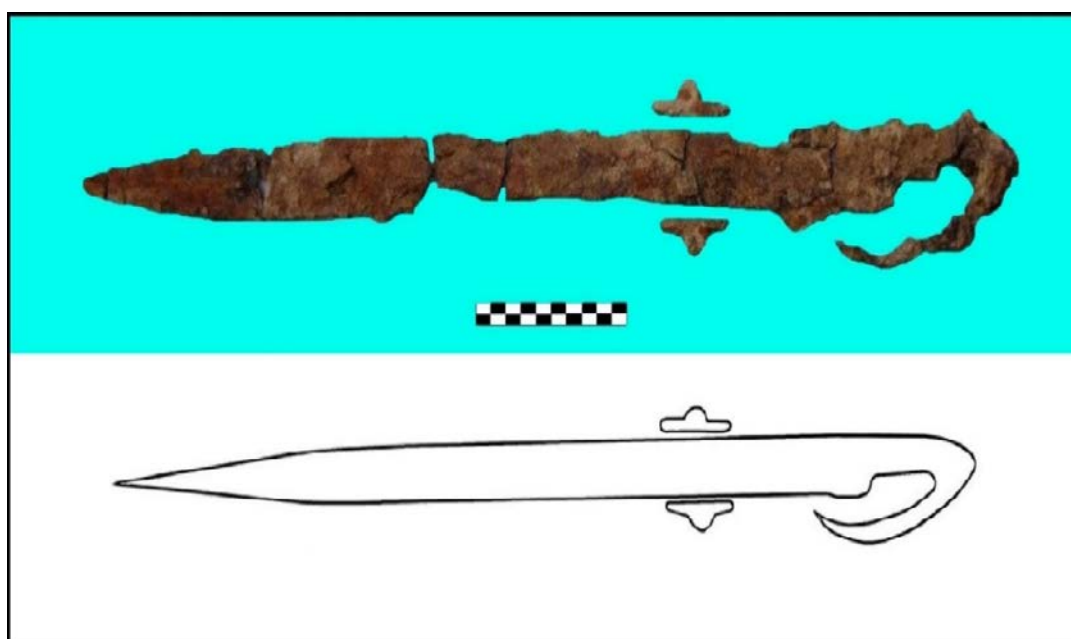


Figure 5. The example of a claymore in the eastern cemetery



Figure 6- The claymore in the western catacomb.



Figure 7- The claymore located on the neck of the corpse in the eastern cemetery.

Table 2: Identification of the claymores of Vestemin cemetery.

NO	Handle length (cm)	Blade length (cm)	Blade center width (cm)	Hand protection size (cm)	Blade diameter (mm)	Total size of swords
1	7.5	63	3.5	10 × 2 × 1.3	5	74
2	10.5	68	3.7	10 × 1.5 × 1.2	4	80
3	10	78.5	4	10 × 2 × 1.3	5	90
4	6.4	67	3.3	× 1.5 × 0.6 10	4	74
5	16	76	6	-	5	92
6	13	70	4	10.5 × 1.8 × 1	4	83

## 7-2. Daggers

34 daggers were recovered, all made of iron, from 25 burials of the total 66 excavated ones. They are all made from iron and unearthed from the western catacombs. There was no dagger from the eastern cemetery. There were two recovered daggers from every one of the 7 excavated burials. Fourteen daggers were next to females and 16 daggers next to males, while in two cases, daggers were at the corridor or the rectangular space. It appears that the location of the daggers in burials was unisex, for both male and female burials. The daggers were sometimes sometimes standing, laid back on a wall, or laid on the floor next to the deceased.

The daggers consist of a hilt, separating point [cross-guard?], and a blade very similar to the recovered swords from the western cemetery of Vestemin. There was only part of an iron sheath, while in most of the cases there is remains of a wooden sheath on the blade. However, the diameter of the sheaths remains unknown, because only remains of wooden sheaths were found. The daggers vary in dimensions, however, there is not much typological difference. The daggers can be classified in three groups: 1) long daggers between 30 to 40 cm length, 2) middle daggers between 20 to 30 cm, and, 3) short daggers that are lower than 20 cm long. The shortest dagger is 16 cm and the lowest width is 2 cm. Table 2 presents dimensions of all recovered daggers from the Western Cemetery of Vestemin. Fig. 8 presents samples and drawings of recovered daggers from Vestemin.

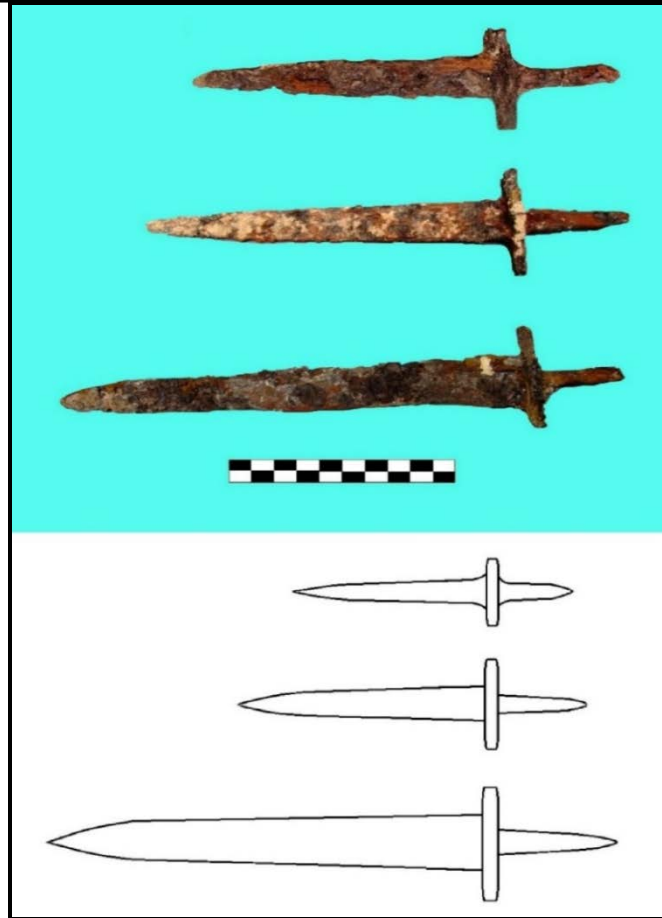


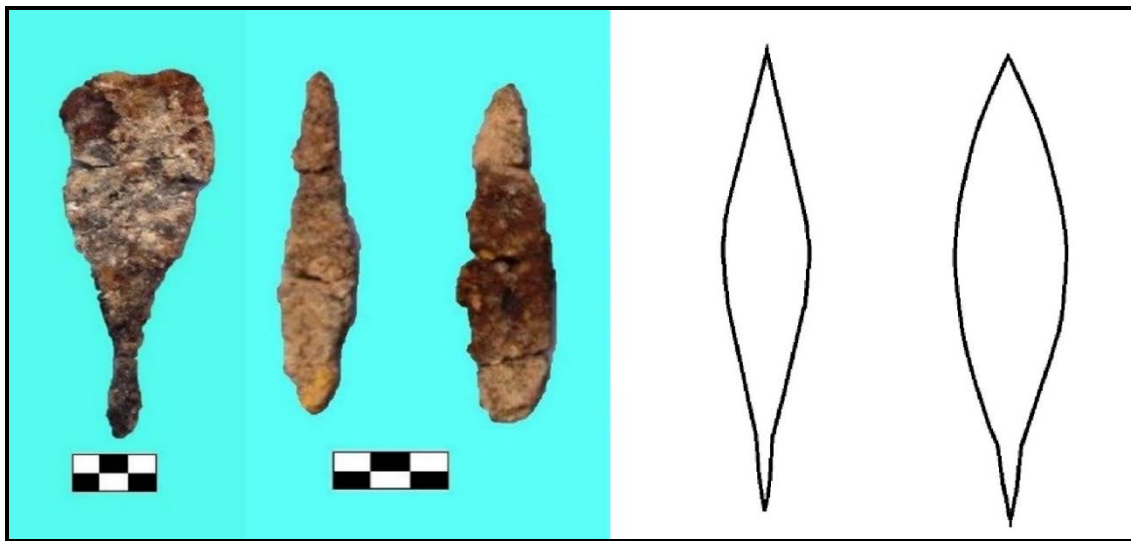
Figure 8- The daggers discovered in catacombs.

Table 2: Identification of the daggers of Vestemin Cemetery

No	length (cm)	width (cm)	NO	length (cm)	width (cm)
1	32	4	18	27	2.8
2	21	2.5	19	38	3.8
3	28	2.8	20	26	3.3
4	25	4.5	21	35	4
5	16	4	22	40	4
6	19	2.2	23	34	3.8
7	35	3	24	33	4
8	28	2.6	25	33	4.5
9	18	3	26	34	4
10	31	4	27	30	4
11	31	4	28	27	4
12	39	3.8	29	30	3.5
13	32	3.3	30	25	4
14	36.5	3.3	31	30	3.2
15	32	4.7	32	29	3.3
16	25	2.9	33	40	4
17	26	2	34	34	3.8

**7.3- Arrowheads**

After trefoil arrowheads and daggers, simple arrowheads were amongst the most abundant among the recovered armaments from the western cemetery of Vestemin. They consist of blade and shaft parts, where wood residue remained on the few samples, which indicates that the producers shoved the shaft in a wooden handle. Totally, 16 arrowheads were recovered from the catacombs that dimensionally vary from 3.4 to 18 cm, however, erosion hides the exact dimensions of findings. The arrowheads, which are made of iron, are formally rhomboid or cedarn. The arrowheads were unearthed from the catacombs, in some cases from the rectangular space. Considering the distribution of bone findings, they cannot be sexually assigned to a given burial. On the other hand, they are from 13 burials of the total 66 excavated ones. One should consider that the arrowheads are broken, and 16 arrowheads out of the total 18 were broken and fragmented. However, debris was not so effective on the fragmentation of the arrowheads, an intentional breakage can be the probable suggestion, however that needs more excavations to be proven. Fig. 9 presents samples of the unearthed arrowheads and fig. 3 presents the dimensions of the findings.



**Figure 9- The remains of rhomboid points**

**Table 3: index of arrowheads from the cemetery of Vestemin**

NO	length (cm)	width (cm)	NO	length (cm)	width (cm)
1	18	6.5	9	11.5	1.8
2	11	2.6	10	11.5	2
3	7.4	1.6	11	10	2.1
4	7.2	2	12	10.3	2.1
5	7	2	13	3.4	1.3
6	8.3	1.8	14	6.6	1.5
7	6.4	1.8	15	7	1.5
8	10.3	1.4	16	13	2.2

#### 7.4- Trefoil Arrowheads

The most abundant armaments from the catacombs of Vestemin were trefoil arrowheads, which consists of 158 from the total 214 findings. The arrowheads are not longer than 5.5 cm, with a width of 1.1. The number of arrowheads range from 1 to 19 in the burials that were next to both males and females, and in some cases, they appear on the catacomb's floor. The arrowheads are a trefoil blade, with sharp and narrow points, and a shaft that has wooden remains. It should be noted that arrowheads are made of iron, which was badly damaged following the oxidation. Fig. 10 presents a few arrowhead findings.



Figure 10- The trefoil arrow head

#### 7-5. Armor

The only recovered armor from Vestemin is from the eastern cemetery that is from a young soldier's burial. It is made of iron plates, which is normally narrow strips on textile; there were recovered textile fragments from the burial (fig. 11).

Considering the variations of the recovered armaments from the eastern and western catacombs, one can suggest that both burials were from two different phases of the Parthian era, because the sword findings from the Eastern Cemetery differ to the same findings from the Western Cemetery, where no findings of armaments were reported of. Probably, martial strategies and/or burial customs varied through different periods, to be expected though, more excavations are required.



Figure 11- The mail discovered from the eastern cemetery

#### 7.6- Shield

It was only recovered from the western cemetery and catacombs. It is made of iron. It was located next to a dagger, under the feet of a corpse at the western corner of the catacomb. Formally, it is concave with the remains of textile on the inner surface. The inner diameter is 15.1 cm and it is 0.5 cm thick. It has an appendix that probably worked as a handle (fig. 12).



Figure 12- The iron shield

#### 7.7- Relevant non-Combat Tools:

In addition to armaments, some other tools were also recovered, which were relevant to armaments, including sharpener stones (fig. 13), baldric buckles and/or a belt to fasten sheaths or quivers, from the eastern and western cemeteries (fig. 14). Probably, the belts and baldrics were made of leather, because of the fragmented leather findings.



Figure 13- The Whetstone



Figure 14- The buckles discovered at the catacombs

Chart 1: distribution of recovered armaments from Vestemin

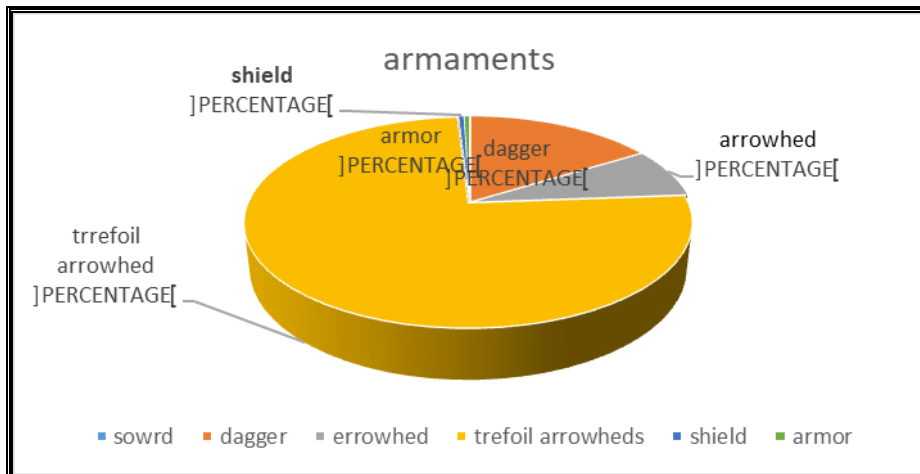
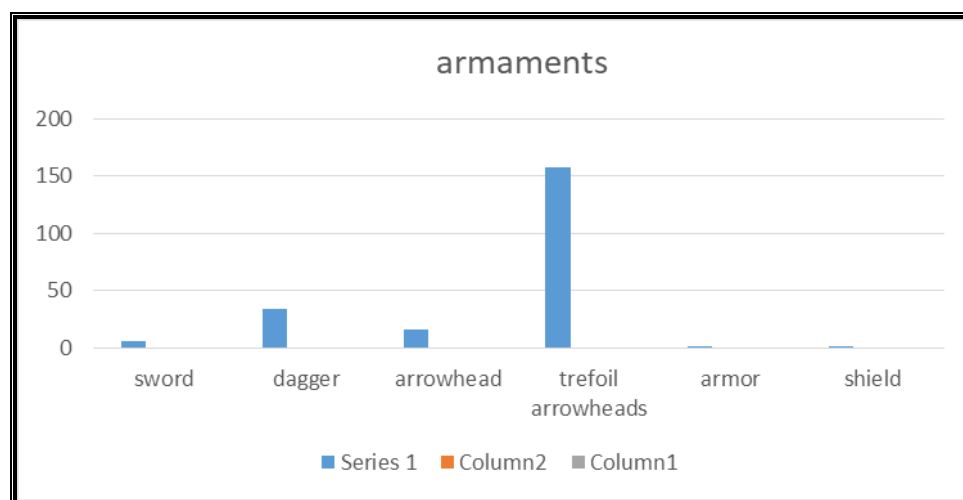


Chart 2: distribution of recovered armaments from Vestemin





## 8. Conclusion

Considering the recovered armaments from Vestemin, one can observe the irrelevance of sexuality in burial rites, because there was a sword in a female burial, in one case, and 14 daggers were recovered from the other female burials, a trend that could be seen for arrowheads and trefoil arrowheads as well. The Unearthed armaments included swords, daggers, shields, and arrowheads that were cavalry weaponries, the fact that these as well as light weapons, with several burial of horses were found at the western cemetery, reinforces the suspicion that the catacombs were for Parthian cavalries or/and their families, or at least the deceased were under martial culture influences. On the other hand, regarding the findings, one can confirm the significance of cavalries during the Parthian period. Furthermore, considering the difference of the burials in both the Eastern and Western cemeteries at Vestemin, with the variations of armaments, the other suggestion is that they were followed by two different Parthian phases that differed in their martial strategies. Secondly, the region was highly significant for its short distance to the Parthian 2<sup>nd</sup> capital, being located in the road from the capital city to Sari (relying on archaeological evidences), and it being a mint.

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## مطالعه مقدماتی و معرفی جنگ افزارهای مکشوفه از گورستان اشکانی و ستمین کیاسر

ساری، بر اساس کاوش‌های سال ۱۳۹۴، ۱۳۹۶ و ۱۳۹۷

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### چکیده

در سال ۱۳۹۳ شمسی شرکت پیمانکار مجری خط انتقال گاز دامغان - نکا، بقایای دو گوردخمه را در روستای و ستمین تخریب و نمایان ساخت. این محوطه در ۸۰ کیلومتری جنوب شهر ساری قرار دارد. فعالیت‌های باستان‌شناسی منجر به شناسایی دو گورستان تاریخی، محوطه استقرار، قلعه و گورستان اسلامی شد. بقایای معماری و اشیاء، مبین وجود قبوری به شکل گوردخمه از دوره تاریخی بوده است. سوالاتی که در خصوص این محوطه طرح گردید، آگاهی یافتن از ساختار معماری گورها، شناخت شیوه تدفین و تاریخ‌گذاری آن‌ها بوده است؟ کاوش علمی و بررسی میدانی و نیز مقایسه داده‌ها و شیوه تدفین وجود استقرار وسیع از دوره اشکانی را در این محوطه مسجل نمود. محوطه و ستمین نخستین محوطه اشکانی در مازندران است که مورد کاوش باستان‌شناسی قرار گرفته است. آنچه که گورستان این محوطه را از دیگر گورستان‌های اشکانی متمایز می‌نماید، وجود گوردخمه‌های خانوادگی است. گوردخمه‌های گورستان و ستمین دارای سه بخش شامل: ۱- فضای مستطیلی شکل یا راهرو ۲ - ورودی یا درگاه بین فضای مستطیل شکل و اتاق دخمه ۳- اتاق دخمه است. جنگ‌افزارهایی مانند شمشیر، خنجر، سرتیر، سرپیکان‌های سه‌پر و زره از جمله آثار یافت‌شده از این گورستان است. در کنار اشیاء متنوع، استفاده از جنگ‌افزارها به عنوان هدیه، جنسیت متوفی مطرح نبوده است. با بررسی نوع جنگ‌افزارها می‌توان به کاربرد آن‌ها برای سواره‌نظام اشکانی پی برد، چراکه تسلیحاتی مانند شمشیر، خنجر، سرتیر و سرپیکان جزء تسلیحات سبک محسوب می‌شده و برای سواره نظام چابک اشکانی در برابر رومیان سنگین‌اسلحه به عنوان دشمن سنتی اجتناب‌ناپذیر بوده است.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** جنگ‌افزار، ساری، و ستمین، اشکانی، باستان شناسی.

