

Daggers in ancient Mesopotamia

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Abstract:

The daggers dates to human prehistory; it have been used throughout human experience in close combat it evolved out of prehistoric tools. and made of materials such as stones, bones, ivory in the 3rd millennium BC in Bronze Age daggers were usually made of copper or bronze or gold as for iron dagger Although the number of them were few but there is evidence used since Ur III period .

For most of us the term “dagger” might not need an explanation as we have a mental picture of a weapon which has a triangular blade with two cutting edges. Its primary purpose is accepted as a thrusting or a stabbing weapon. When we turn to military and archaeological literature, rather than popular opinion, there is still no clear consensus for the differentiation of bladed instruments .The main distinction between a knife and a dagger is that a knife has one cutting edge and its blade is not Symmetrical.

So we made here a study that deals only with Mesopotamian daggers, distinguishing them from others lexically, artistically and archeological typology.

Key word:

Bronze Age- Daggers- weapon- cylinder seals- blade- crescent - hilt – pommel

The dagger is a fighting weapon with a very sharp point used as a defensive or offensive weapon. Its design dates to human prehistory; daggers have been used throughout human experience in close combat ⁽¹⁾.Daggers evolved out of prehistoric tools. In Neolithic times, daggers were made of materials such as stones, ⁽²⁾bones, ⁽³⁾ivory ⁽⁴⁾ in the 3rd millennium BC in Bronze Age daggers were usually made of copper or bronze ⁽⁵⁾ while royalty had gold weapons. At least since Early dynastic⁽⁶⁾as for iron

dagger Although the number of them were few but there is evidence used since Ur III period.^(v)

The study of the daggers and their distribution will not only enable us to track the development of metallurgy in Mesopotamia, but also guide us to construct regional and interregional interaction models. In addition to these, the dagger typologies can be a great aid in chronological studies

The main distinction between a knife and a dagger is that a knife has one cutting edge and its blade is not symmetrical. So we can define a dagger as a pointed, symmetrical bladed weapon, the size of the weapons makes determining what classifies as a sword or a dagger a fairly difficult task. Many of them have been called both daggers and swords interchangeably in publications. Gordon's classify them as follow: ^(A)

Dagger (30,0 cm or less)

Dirk (30,0-01 cm)

Short sword (01-11 cm)

Long sword (over 11 cm)

But a simpler terminology is used to create just two divisions, swords and daggers, differentiated by those above and below 30 cm. the group of edged weapons falls neatly between 24 and 30 cm in overall length, will represent daggers ⁽³⁾

A dagger, considering its minimal length, should be able to serve a dual function: a tool that can serve a utilitarian purpose as well as a weapon capable of causing at least a minimal injury for defensive or aggressive purposes. In this sense, we should consider a blade length of less than 0cm not as a dagger but a razor. On its maximum length, we should once again consider its dual purpose. A dagger should not be a weapon that can be solely used as a device to keep aggressors at a distance to have advantage in a fight, much like a spear or a sword. If this is accepted, any blade longer than 30cm has no utilitarian purpose other than being a fighting instrument. The threshold between a short sword and a sword is beyond the issues considered in this study. ⁽¹¹⁾

The terms used for daggers

The Sumerian term *giri*, *Gir* = in Akkadian *patru* = *naglabu*, *mašraṭu*, *magzazu*, *namšaru* ⁽¹¹⁾

But the term *gir* or *giri* and *patru* are the general terms for "knife, dagger, e." is shown by lexical texts which explain various types of knives with these terms. *Gir* used also in (SB. NA. NB). ⁽¹²⁾

The oldest form of the sign *gir* is much like the blade of a dagger.

*  **giri-gir-gir-giš** ⁽¹³⁾ and here we have some examples for using such term

-ED Sumerian stone tongue from Girsu now in Semitic museum Harvard University SM 19133, 2, 18. ⁽¹⁴⁾

-ED Sumerian tablets in VAT 4798 ; 4722 ; 4737 ; 4844 ; ⁽¹⁵⁾

- ED Sumerian tablet from Girsu in state Hermitage museum ERM 14.46 14.48, 145. ⁽¹⁶⁾

- ED Sumerian tablet from Adab in Nies Babylonian collection ,Yale Babylonian collection ,NBC.0910 ⁽¹⁷⁾

- ED Sumerian tablets from Girsu in Louvre museum AO 13042, 13086, 13087, 13090, 13096, 136.2, 136.3, 13613. ⁽¹⁸⁾

-Two ED Sumerian tablet from lagash National museum of Iraq ⁽¹⁹⁾; IM 1.098 ⁽²⁰⁾

-Akkadian tablet from girsu in BM 86299 ⁽²¹⁾

-Akkadian tablet from girsu Arkeoloji Müzeleri Istanbul Ist L. 1304 ⁽²²⁾; 1196 ⁽²³⁾

- Akkadian tablet from Umma National museum of Iraq 1337 ⁽²⁴⁾

-Akkadian tablet from Adab in Oriental institute university of Chicago OIM .A. 0746 ⁽²⁵⁾

-Ur III Sumerian Tablet from Nippur Hilprecht collection, university of Jena Germany ,HS 1308 ⁽²⁶⁾

- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Drehem in Siegfried horn museum institute of archeology AUAM 73, 145. ⁽²⁷⁾

-Ur III Sumerian tablet dates to shulgi (private collection) ⁽²⁸⁾

-Ur III Sumerian tablet from Drehem dates to shu-suen in Rosicruian Egyptian museum, RC 862. ⁽²⁹⁾

- Ur III Sumerian tablet in Louver museum AO. 00010, 00029⁽³⁰⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Girsu in BM. 13944 // 1837, // 18371⁽³¹⁾ // 13762.⁽³²⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Girsu in Oriental Institute University of Chicago OIM. A31928.⁽³³⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Girsu Arkeoloji Müzeleri Istanbul Ist. L0047⁽³⁴⁾; L6722⁽³⁵⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Girsu in Musée d'art et d'histoire Geneva MAH 19471.⁽³⁶⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Nippur in Oriental Institute University of Chicago OIM. A30, 37.⁽³⁷⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Nippur Hilprecht collection, University of Jena Germany, HS 134⁽³⁸⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in Yale Babylonian collection YBC 10333.⁽³⁹⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in BM 10548⁽⁴⁰⁾; 13, 22, // 13, 232 // 13, 274⁽⁴¹⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in a Special Collections and Archives, John Richardson Library (souva37)⁽⁴²⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in a Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Archeological Museum Jerusalem StBi 7, 8⁽⁴³⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in Syracuse University Library SUL 3, 4 // 4, 5⁽⁴⁴⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in Louver Museum AO 6, 44⁽⁴⁵⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Umma in Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto ROM 967, 287, 45⁽⁴⁶⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Ur in National Museum of Iraq IM—⁽⁴⁷⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet from Ur in University of Pennsylvania Museum UM 47-29-039; 47-29-136⁽⁴⁸⁾
- Ur III Sumerian tablet in National Museum of Iraq IM 43647.⁽⁴⁹⁾

-Ur III Sumerian tablets from Derhem Yale Babylonian Collection YCB 00948//03637//00588 (°°)

-Ur III Sumerian tablets from Umma in Utah museum of natural history UMNH. 3846 (°¹)

-Ur III Sumerian tablets from Umma in Arkeoloji Museleri Istanbul. Ist UM 3604 ; 3800 (°²)

-Ur III Sumerian tablets from Umma in Ashm 1911, 1811 (°³)

-Ur III Sumerian tablets from Umma in Yale Babylonian Collection YBC 00110 (°⁴)

Sometimes the gir₁ appear with adjective gir₁.gal, and gir₁.tur " great dagger, small dagger We may note in specific ally military context the large numbers of (gir₁ , gir₁ .tur, gir₁.gal) taken as booty , etc . Sargon , for instance , took 389 ivory gir .meš and gir.tu fi.meš as well as daggers of ebony from Urartu . In the same booty were six gold gir.meš and gir.tur.meš. In these Instances, one must see the "small daggers" as probably "daggers and the gir as a short sword. The same text records the taking of 300, 112 as sorted weapons among which were" strong" and light " gir.meš. Apparently these "strong "and "light " The adjectives " strong " and " light " may refer to the construction of the blade, having a rib or not , or it may indicate difference in the metal used .another writing to the same term in Sumerian (°⁵)

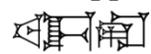
 urud giri₁ (uruda giri₁)

-Ur III Sumerian tablets from Derhrm in Yale Babylonian Collection YBC 3671 (°⁶)

And we have only one example to the term me₁-er translated as dagger

 me₁-er in old Babylonian text " ur im-di me 1-er im-di" (°⁷)
*ba-da-ra Dagger(Old Babylonian) wr. ba-dar; ba-da-ra"dagger, weapon"

And in most cases it appears with giri₁

 ba-da  ba-da-ra

The term ba- dar used as dagger also in Sumerian text

- UR III Sumerian tablet, in VA, Berlin, VAT. 6901^(6A)
- UR III Sumerian tablet, in Princeton theological seminary PTS 68.2⁽⁶⁹⁾.
- Old akkadian tablet from Nippur in university of Pennsylvania museum CBS 6274⁽⁷⁰⁾

The term ba-da-ra used as dagger or blade of dagger

- The poem of Inana and Enki line 60 "giri ba-da-ra [ba-e-de]" - "giri ba-da-ra saġ ur saġ" "Where are the dagger and club, the cultic functionary saġ-ursaġ."⁽⁷¹⁾
- The poem of Inana and Ebih line 173 "kur-ġar-ra ġiri ba-da-ra mu-na-šum" " I have given the kurġara cult performers a dagger and prod"⁽⁷²⁾
- The lament for Eridug line 9 "šu -a-na ġiri ba-da-ra šu bi-in-du teš-bi i-gu-e" . She held a dagger and a sword in her two hands - they clashed together.⁽⁷³⁾
- The death of Ur-Namma (Ur-Namma A 120) (^{na}kišib za-gin ba-da-ra i-la-ra) he gave a lapis-lazuli seal hanging from a pin, and a gold and silver blade.⁽⁷⁴⁾
- A hymn to Inana for Iddin-Dagan (Iddin-Dagan A L 48) "ġiri ba-da-ra igi-ni-še" sword and dagger for her
- A hymn to Inana for Iddin-Dagan (Iddin-Dagan A L 56) "kur-ġar-ra ed-da ba-da-ra šu bi-in-du-uš" they parade before her, holy Inana. With daggers in their hands.⁽⁷⁵⁾
- The exaltation of Inana (Inana B, L 108) ġiri ba-da-ra ma-an-šum a-ra-ab-du ma-an-dug "He gave me a knife and dagger, saying to me "These are appropriate ornaments for you."⁽⁷⁶⁾

The Akkadian term patru: "dagger" masc .and fem ;knife or dagger

-In OA " urkatamma pá-at-ra-am taddinamma uta 'erakkumma" ,later on you give me a dagger but I returned to you.⁽⁷⁷⁾

- "pá-at-ri ša ušáḫizu šépiš," have the daggers made concerning which I gave instructions.⁽⁷⁸⁾

- **in OB** " *ḫnaglabi 4 pa-at-ri ana eṭlini* " ,four razors,five daggers for our man .⁽¹⁹⁾

-**in SB** *ina pa-tar bi-ni (ina gir giš.šinig), nakāsu* " to cut with a knife made of tamarisk wood"⁽²⁰⁾

- **in LB** "*fem. An.bar ana pat-ra-a-ta* " "one talent of iron for daggers"⁽²¹⁾

a double-edged dagger, its haft/top lapis lazuli ... for B., the butcher of the netherworld".

𐎠𐎢𐎣 *naglabu* give the meaning of dagger or razor,barber's knife from OB on⁽²²⁾

namšaru ,mašraṭu, magzazu,

the *namšaru* was gir.gal in Akkadian . We have found no occurrence of gir.gal's being given as anything but namsaru which also may be a short sword .but the difference between all these terms isn't clear

The differentiation in lexical between them implies a standard size for daggers

The parts of the gir apparently are the méšeletu="blade". lišānu =tongue pū ="mouth"šéltu= "edge" . ziqpu="point" karru="hilt or knob". sikkat karri ="hilt/pins/nails/rivets"

šélu=" rib " .šipru "pommel or crescent - shaped hilt ornament" ; ihzu 'fitting or decoration of metal " .⁽²³⁾ (fig.1)

Dagger usage:

In addition to using the dagger as a defensive and offensive weapon in wars (fig .2) and Hunting (fig. 3), It seems to have been frequently used for ceremonial and ritual purposes, and reliefs portraying the rites before the sacred tree show pairs of daggers worn in the belt of the winged figures. These figures represent the apkallu carries three daggers sometimes two, tucked into a belt with their handles visible at chest level, sometimes one of them is animal-headed dagger.(fig. 4)

-Neo Assyrian relief from Nimrud in Brooklyn mus. N. 00,102/00,100/

-Neo Assyrian Relief panels from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud in

Metro.mus 17,190,2077//17,190,2078//17,190,2080//17,190,2081//31,72,2//32,143,6//32,143,7// 32,143,8//32,143,9
//32,143,10//32,143,11 //32,143. 12 //32,143,14.^(Vε)

- Neo Assyrian reliefs from Nimrud in Louvre mus. AO 19849;
19878

Other ritual scenes are enacted by the lion demon (ugallu) who are armed with daggers and raises it in offensive position.(fig 5)^(Vο)

-OB cylinder seals in Museum of Fine art Boston nos. 60,1029 ;
60,1491

show (Ugallu) with upraised dagger holds animal in other hand.

-Neo-Assyrian wall panel reliefs in BM nos. 118911^(Vγ); 118912^(Vγ) ; 118917^(Vλ) ; 118918^(Vθ) ; 118932^(Λο) ;
124826.^(Λ1)

- Fragment of kudurru in louver mus. n Sb 3.^(Λ2)

an references in the texts to the apakallu or sages to the lion man and the divine seven, the great gods state that copper dagger formed part of their magical equipment .extant examples of these figures have been found at UR and for the priests and those partaking in the ritual the different cult implements each endowed with formidable apotropaic power must have effectively symbolized the triumph of the protective figures in their battle with the evil spirits.^(Λ3)

Several texts of that period have oaths taken on the Iron dagger of a god^(Λε) The practice of taking oaths on the iron dagger of a god extended into the Neo-Babylonian Period. And we have mentions to the dagger of aššur as a divine symbol gir ša Aššur, pá-at-ri ša Aššur, in judicial contexts to be sworn at^(Λς)

The gir -gal "great dagger" is a much used epithet of gods and goddesses. It occurs in the personal name (Pa.Pap.Bil.Ga.g'r.gal) on a round socket with - reliefs from Tello, and the deities Nanna, Nanše, and Gatumdu are all called Gffi.Gal.^(Λ7)

- We have more than 100 cylinder seal in the BM from the Akkadian and, OA, OB periods represents the sun god with his saw-toothed dagger with other gods⁽¹⁵⁾

The Akkadian and Sumerian Weapons included, daggers were kept in a special arsenal, inside a temple complex, which were protected by images of divine beings. King Gudea gave a description of one of these arsenals: "in the inner [arsenal] where the weapons hang, [at] its Battle Gate, [Gudea] posted the warriors 'deer-of-six-heads' and 'Mount Siar' " -the latter apparently being images of mythical warrior demons slain by Ningirsu. a description of a ritual inspection tour by Gudea of Lagash included a catalog of some of the weapons at the temple arsenal at Lagash: Gudea brings to [the god] Ningirsu ... [the officer] Shulshaga ... holding dagger blades [eme-gir] .And ritual of blessing was given by the mythological Imdugud.⁽¹⁶⁾

In a "Hymn to Inanna", the goddess of war in triumphal procession, describes such a triumph "Daggers and maces rage before her ... The kurgaru [warriors] mounted on chariots...Core is covering the daggers, blood sprinkles."⁽¹⁷⁾

Representations of Daggers

The pictorial evidence for daggers is complicated by the manner in which the Mesopotamian artist hid many of the weapons features as a time saving measure. We have many representations for dagger in Early Dynastic and Akkadian seals in contest scenes especially with animals. (fig. 7)

-Sumerian cylinder seal with two registers separated by band of Geometrical shapes. the lower register shows eight human figures each has one arm raised and holds a dagger in the other hand.⁽¹⁸⁾

-Sumerian cylinder seal with a human figure leads a horned animal toward a doorway. A second figure follows holding a dagger.⁽¹⁹⁾

-Sumerian cylinder seal with two pairs of figures the first consist of a lion and a deer, the deer is attacked with dagger by a man, the second group shows a lion and bullman, the latter aims his dagger at the group first described.⁽²⁰⁾

-Sumerian cylinder seal a human figure holds a lion and a long horned animal each by its hind leg, behind the animals another man attacks the animal with dagger and grasps it by the tail. ⁽¹³⁾

- Sumerian cylinder seal shows a nude human figure holds by their throats two antelopes each attacked by a lion from behind, in a second group a bull-man holds a deer by its throat and threatens it with dagger. ⁽¹⁴⁾

-Sumerian cylinder seal shows two rampant lions, heads turned backward, symmetrically grouped above an antelope lying on its back attacked by two bullmen with daggers. ⁽¹⁵⁾

- ED or AK cylinder seal shows a lion attacking a bull is in turn menaced by a bull-man who holds a large dagger. ⁽¹⁶⁾

- ED or AK cylinder seal shows two heroes in contest with beasts the first holds a dagger ready to kill a bull which is attacked by a lion. ⁽¹⁷⁾

- Third Dynasty of Ur cylinder of peculiar interest. Here we seem to see the god in three several conflicts. In the second scene the god with a dagger stabs a monster with the upper body of a man and the lower body of a bull. ⁽¹⁸⁾

-Third Dynasty of Ur cylinder seal (BM n. 18832) contest scene: a hero attacks a lion from behind and grasps its tail and throat. The lion turns to look back at this first assailant while attempting to ward off the attack of a second who grasps its paw and throat. Alternatively the heroes may be plunging daggers into the lion's neck. ⁽¹⁹⁾

- Akkadian cylinder seal (BM 19.74) shows a hunter with a bow shooting at a wild bull on a mountain. Behind him is a nude attendant holding a dagger, below which is a second dagger. ⁽²⁰⁾

-Akkadian cylinder seal shows bearded god with horned crown to the left hold in his left hand a mace and the right hand a dagger, and a group of four figures one of them ray like designs rise from his shoulders threaten and attacking a naked god with dagger ⁽²¹⁾

-Akkadian cylinder seal dates to the age of Sargon I. now (BM n. 19137)

There are seven figures in the design, besides the inscription. The leader carries in one hand a bow, in the other what may be an arrow; and a quiver with dagger hangs on his back^(1,2)

-Akkadian Cylinder seal (BM 19.96) bearded god wearing a striped skirt and holding a mace in his right hand, prods the captive bird-man in the back with a dart. The bird-man has his hands clasped or tied in front of him and preceded by the two-faced attendant god who wears a striped skirt, holds a dagger and raises his left hand. ^(1,3)

-Akkadian cylinder seal (BM 19.463) show contest scene; two bearded naked heroes wrestling; each grasps the other's leg while plugging a brandishing a dagger. Below, a small figure kneels facing left and clasping one of the lions a bearded hero, brandishing a dagger; a mace. ^(1,4)

- Akkadian cylinder seal (BM 19.224) show a battle of the gods; three pairs of bearded, naked gods, wrestling with each other. In each case the left-hand god is grasping the head-dress of the right-hand god with his left hand. holds a curved dagger; plunges a dagger into his adversary's chest. ^(1,5)

- Akkadian cylinder seal in (Morgan library n.149) show a crowned hero grasping bull and two nude bearded heroes each holding one of two human-headed bulls and one of them stepped a human-headed bulls^(1,6)

-Akkadian Cylinder seal in BM n. 19.008 show; contest scene of two lions back to back in the centre, The lion on the left is attacking a human-headed bull which a naked, bearded hero is stretching up to grasp by one horn. The lion on the right is attacking a deer which a long-haired bull-man is about to grasp by the ear in a posture balancing that of the naked, bearded hero. In the field, a dagger. ^(1,7)

- Akkadian cylinder seal in BM n 19.070. Show battle of the gods; bull-man, facing left, but looking back at a bearded god who is naked except for a belt and grasps him by the tail and one horn. Between them is a dagger has dropped. ^(1,8)

- Akkadian cylinder seal in (BM n.19.2034) show contest scene human-headed bull being protected by a naked bearded hero. Bull

looking back at an attacking lion . Two heroes in conflict, This group is separated from the others by a dagger in the field, on each side.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

- Akkadian cylinder seal in (BM n. 113872) show contest scene in group consisting of two human-headed bulls, in the centre being protected by a bearded hero who is naked except for a belt, and by a bearded hero who is wearing a flat cap and skirt. Bull facing left and looking back at an attacking lion .two short horizontal lines and a dagger below.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

-in reliefs we have a very special relief show, two soldiers carry daggers on belts as booty. The daggers have hemispherical Pommel and a hilt which attaches to the blade near the sides, perhaps having no tang the belt seems to have had a buckle which fitted in to the indentation ⁽¹¹¹⁾

As we can see the crescent hilted type appears in many seals and one seal shows not only the crescent pommel and the guard and mid rib as well, but the most inserting point that dagger in many seals stands in the field as dependant symbol.

In Babylonian representation in most scenes a god thrusts a dagger into a monster the dagger seems to be of a type which is sharpened on only one side since it is not symmetrical.

- Old Babylonian Cylinder seal and modern impression: heroes and animals in combat, head of the monster Humbaba (Metro.mus 1999. 320. 24) shows a pair of nude, belted, bearded heroes with frontal heads subduing a lion. One hero steps on the lion's neck while the second hero holds plunges a dagger into its belly.⁽¹¹²⁾

- Late Babylonian cylinder seal (BM 89318) show group with a four-winged hero facing right between two rearing winged bulls (which he grasps the forelegs of), which look back over their shoulders towards a god (Ashur) in a winged disc; the hero raising a dagger.⁽¹¹³⁾ (fig.7)

-Babylonian cylinder seal (MFA 60,1361)show a contest scene. Bearded “hero” with kilt and holding shield thrusting dagger at winged lion-griffin. Ninurta overcoming Anzu

-old Babylonian cylinder seal formerly in the Charterhouse Collection shows a god raised his foot on the back of kneeling slave and raised his right hand with dagger. ⁽¹¹⁴⁾

-Old Babylonian cylinder MFA seal n. 40,769 Show Bearded divinity holding dagger, with one foot placed on a stool, facing a bearded royal figure, and holds a quadruped (goat) as offering.

- Babylonian cylinder seal in Metro mus. 1980,307,12. show a god stands over a falling victim whom he is slaying by means of a dagger and three headed club. ⁽¹¹⁵⁾

-Babylonian (Metro.mus 1983,314,13)Cylinder seal and modern impression: scorpion-man and bull-man attacking kneeling nude male

The impression of the seal shows a kneeling nude male figure with six curls attacked on either side by a scorpion-man and bull-man brandishing dagger. ⁽¹¹⁶⁾

-Babylonian boundary stones, daggers appear in the belt of The king Marduk - nadin - ahhe. The two daggers are alike, with crescent - shaped pommels and decorated sheaths. The king in this scene wears a long skirt decorated much like later (Assyrian) kings' robes and carries a bow and arrow. ⁽¹¹⁷⁾ (fig.8)

The Assyrian daggers as shown in reliefs or seals are sometimes like those of Marduk-nadin-ahhe, with a rounded hilt, crescent pommel. However, most of the Assyrian examples seem to have flat hilts with laid decoration and rivets. The dagger differs from the sword in Assyrian reliefs in being worn in the girdle on the right side, never on the left, though the Marduk-nadin-ahhe (MB) examples just given were on the left. In almost all cases, the dagger or daggers are in the girdle of the king (fig 9)

- Assyrian cylinder seal in the Morgan library no. 608 show griffin Fighting griffin demon armed with dagger for small calf below (fig 10)

- Middle Assyrian cylinder seal in the Morgan library no. 097 show bearded hero with daggers between two ibexes facing tree (fig 11)

- Assyrian Relief from Nimrud (Metro.mus ٣٢, ١٤٣, ٤) this relief, from the palace Ashurnasirpal II (. ٨٨٣-٨٥٩ B.C.), depicts a king, probably himself, and an attendant. The king has two daggers tucked into his cloths. ^(١١٨)(fig. ١٠)

-Assyrian relief of king (Ashur-nasirpal II), about to pour a libation, royal inscription carved into relief. From The Palace of Ashurnasirpal II Nimrud (Fitzwilliam mus. n. ANE. ٤٥, ١٩٢٧.)^(١١٩) (fig. ١١)

- Assyrian Stele (BM ,n ١١٨٨٠٥)of Ashurnasirpal II the king wears the royal hat and holds a mace symbolizing authority; he wears a pair of matched daggers and one with a horse or calf head .The horse- head type may have a Small chain from the mouth to the neck ^(١٢٠)(fig. ١٢)

- the dagger is also worn by semi- divine creatures .as in Assyrian relief (BM n. ١٢٤٩١٨) carved; presents three protective spirits, each carrying a small axe in his raised right hand and a wide-bladed dagger in the left, but traces indicate that originally there was a bow in the left hand. ^(١٢١)

Dagger, was the most efficient weapon for the common soldier it made the soldier's load a little lighter, was easier to sharpen than the long sword

- Neo Assyrian relief (BM n. ١٢٤٩٤١) show an Assyrian soldier on a battlefield about to cut off the head of an Elamite officer named Ituni. Above and beside them are dead bodies, one knawel by a vulture which pecks out its eyes. There are traces of feet moving to right in the upper register. There is an inscription. ^(١٢٢)

-Neo-Assyrian relief (BM n. ١١٨٩٠٤) dates to Tiglath-pileser III. Three Assyrian soldiers, behind a siege-shield facing, attack a city. The drawing shows another identical group standing behind them. The first, an archer, held at the waist by girdle. The second archer has a full beard, a long garment, and a sword. The third soldier, with a full beard, has a dagger in his right hand. ^(١٢٣)

Daggers types:

Maxwell-Hyslop presents a great daggers typology; these types are based on the variations in the method of hafting, the outline of the blade, and form of the shoulders. Other individual differences within the determined type necessitated the further division of

"types" into "sub-types". it has a wide geographical framework, consisting of the whole known Old World from Mesopotamia to Egypt, including some discussion of typological influences in Western Europe which covers a time span more than 4000 years. And most of the types came from Asia Minor or Iran. The end result consists of fifty-six types of daggers and some 106 sub-types. ⁽¹²⁴⁾.

Madhloom also described six different types of daggers from Assyrian period only, once more subdivided into smaller categories on the basis of sheath decoration. However, Madhloom's typology appears to ignore the basic structural elements in the design of the daggers,. Furthermore, some of Madhloom's Types only illustrated being worn by supernatural beings or, in one case, by a possible priest in a ceremonial setting. As such, they should be considered ritual in ⁽¹²⁵⁾

We shall use only Mesopotamian examples. Based only on the different variations of shapes avoiding the usage of subtypes.

Type 1

This is the most primitive form of dagger it consists of a simple, pointed blade with lightly convex outline shoulders sloping to a short tang which has no rivets, and was probably hafted to wood with bitumen. Examples of the type come from Kish, Ur, example has been dated to the "Jemdet Nasr Period," while the Ur date from the Early Dynastic to Sargonic Periods. ⁽¹²⁶⁾ (fig. 13)

Type 2

This type represents an improvement on type 1 while the blade remains leaf-shaped and only slightly curved in section, the rivets in the tang ensured that the hilt and blade remained securely fastened together when the weapons used. The dagger consists of a flat blade, slightly convex in outline, having a tang with from one to three rivets, from Ur, was the "most common type of Early Dynastic blade, and two gold examples were found in graves [at Ur] The hilt has curved guards lightly wider than the blade and a handle with a slender grip welling out to a pear-shaped pommel which was usually made of wood. . . ." One example of this Type from Kish has a pommel of openwork in bronze. This pommel is very similar to one from Tell Asmar and

both these items resemble a gold sheath from Ur in technique of manufacture .The pommel of wood could be plated With silver and it and the guard were often decorated with gold , copper, silver or lapis lazuli studs . One such dagger, with a gold blade , has a handle of lapis lazuli studded with gold .Besides copper and gold bladed examples found at Ur, this type has been found at Kish , Tell Asmar, Khafajah, Tello ,Assur,. All date from about 2,000 B.C, are from the Early Dynastic or Agade Periods ⁽¹²⁵⁾ (fig. 14)

Type 3:

is much like Type 2 except that the rivets are replaced so as to assure a better hafting .The three rivets, one on the tang and two at the base of the tang on the blade form a triangle . Such daggers have been found in Kish ,Tell Asmar, Tello, Ur, and Tell Barsib.⁽¹²⁶⁾ (fig. 15)

Type 4:

Consists of a flat blade, angular shoulders, concave sides, sharp point and has three rivets, running vertically up the tang. Examples of the sharp pointed type have been found in Early Dynastic and Sargonic levels at Ur, The " spatula -shaped" type seems to us to have little connection with the sharp pointed type either in shape or in time . It seems much more related to a type which appears first in OB Kish These specimens have a wider blade at the end than at the tang, both have only two rivets, and both are from roughly the Old Babylonian Period .⁽¹²⁷⁾ (fig. 16)

Type 5

Characterized by a mid-rib and a short, triangular tang with three rivets. This type has Been found in Early Dynastic III and Sargonic context at Ur, and Kish.⁽¹²⁸⁾ (fig. 17)

Type 6

Has a leaf shaped blade, strengthened by a single rib, a bronze guard separate from the blade which is socketed to take the wooden handle." Standard Royal Cemetery type , including most of the gold examples." This type (dates only from the Early Dynastic period . Some of these blades may have riveted tangs or may have incised lines down the center of the blade instead of the

rib. Examples of the type come from Ur ; Kish, Tello . The Ur daggers are especially remarkable for the granular-like studding on the hilt and pommel the guard is very sharply canted up. Sometimes, a hole is bored through the hilt and " lined with a metal tube through which would be passed al any ardor , possibly 'peace strings ' fastening the dagger to Its sheath .⁽¹³¹⁾(fig.18)

Type V

Is characterized by multiple ribbing and one Second Dynasty example from Ur Is unique for Mesopotamia ⁽¹³²⁾(fig.19)

Type A

has the Hilt and blade cast in one piece. The blade has a slight mid rib, and the hilt is in the shape of two recumbent lions which eat the blade .If this dagger dates from the Early Dynastic Period, as it appears it does, it represents great mastery in casting a ta very early date .⁽¹³³⁾(fig.20)

Type 9

is a blade with a wide Central flange .This type is not common in Mesopotamia .Our example dates from the Old Babylonian Period.⁽¹³⁴⁾(fig.21)

Type 10,

A dagger which is cast in one piece, usually , are recessed hilt for inlay .Some times, flanges on the hilt are bent over the hollow area . this type of dagger definitely extends into the first millennium since examples of it have been found at Nimrud , Assur . The daggers shown on the Neo- Assyrian reliefs must be of this same type ,even though the hilts on the reliefs seem to be rounded . The roundness could be explained by the inlay which is missing from the daggers found ⁽¹³⁵⁾(fig.22).The connection of our Type 10 ,especially of Examples with crescent- shaped pommels with Early Dynastic crescent-hilted daggers may be Justified. The fact that Luristan bronzes in general have many early Mesopotamian motif sand elements, for example the hero with lions ,Allows us some latitude for proposing a tradition reaching from The Early Dynastic to the second millennium.⁽¹³⁶⁾ (fig.23)

Conclusion:

The daggers are one of the most primitive weapons used by humans for defensive or offensive purposes. This is because they are easy to carry, easy to use. They are classified as personal weapons. Wearing them was a sign of courage and wealthy. They were included in the tools of religious rites that have the ability to defeat evil spirits.

If most of the researches confuse them with the swords especially the short ones, the separation between them is not difficult either lexically or in archaeological remains only in the context of talking about the ancient Mesopotamia .

Footnote:

١- Burton, W. E., Knives for Fighting Men, *Popular Science*, ١٩٤٤, Vol. ١٤٥ No. ١, p. ١٥٠

٢- The only stone dagger hilts to have survived appear to be those in rich graves as at Ur (Woolley C. L, Ur excavations Vol ٢ The royal cemetery A report on And Sargonid The predynastic Graves excavated Between ١٩٢٦ and ١٩٣١ ,NY. ١٩٣٤, p ٣١٧, pI. ١٥ ; ١٩٠: U. ٩٣٦١) or deposited in temples as votives, some inscribed (as Kish: Ashmolean Mus. ١٩٣٧, ٦٥ (Moorey. Ancient Mesopotamian materials and industries the archaeological evidence , Oxford, ١٩٩٤, p٧١)

٣- It is not easy to document the use of bone though Woolley (Woolley ,C.L. Ur Excavations IV: The Early Periods ,London, ١٩٥٦ p٨٢) reported a knife or wand made from an ox rib, the end rounded, the blade flattened and roughly shaped', in a late prehistoric or Early Dynastic context and were used as weapons since the earliest periods of human civilization.

٤- Used for a dagger-handle At Kish, in Cemetery A, ivory was (Mackay. E A Sumerian palace and the 'A' Cemetery at kish, Mesopotamia Part II Field museum - oxford ١٩٢٩: p١٣٥, pI. XXXIX.S).

٥- Copper daggers appear in the early Bronze Age, in the ٣rd millennium BC from a Kish grave of Early Dynastic I (Watelin. Excavations at Kish, IV (Paris). ١٩٣٤: pI.XVIII.I) ,in Jamdt Nasr graves' at Ur; show two copper daggers (Moorey , Mesopotamian materials ,p٢٥٨)

٦- The use of gold for the working parts of weapons and tools is only archaeologically evident in the royal tombs of Early Dynastic III A at Ur. RT ٧٨٩ contained a gold dagger (Woolley ,The royal cemetery, p٤٣٦, pI. ١٥٢); RT ٥٨٠ (Woolley ,The royal cemetery ٤٣٢-٥, pI. ١٥١) had a gold , also RTs ١٠٥٤ (Woolley ,The royal cemetery ٤٥٠, pI. ١٥b) and ١٦١٨ (Woolley ,The royal cemetery. ٤٧٦)

٧- Although there is very few iron daggers reported for any Period in Mesopotamia, there is ample evidence of them in the Neo-Assyrian Period .In the Neo- Babylonian texts, daggers seem to have been always of iron. Prior to the first millennium, they seem to have been mainly of bronze, though there is evidence in Texts of iron daggers as early as the Ur III Period (rusted fragments of (dagger/knife) from RT ٥٨٠ at Ur (Woolley ,The royal cemetery ,p٤٩, ٥٤٢)

Also Several Legal texts of that period have oaths taken on the Iron dagger of a god (Gibson, M ,The Mace, the Axe and the Dagger in Ancient Mesopotamia., Chicago. ١٩٦٤., p١٦٤-٦٥)

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٩- Barron, A E. Late assyrian arms and amour: art versus artifact ٢٠١٠ ,p٤٩-٥٠

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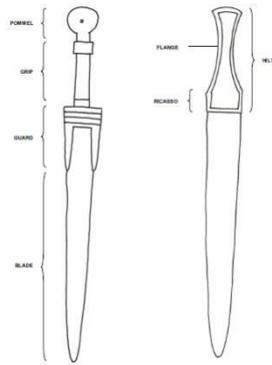


Fig (1) Barron 2010, fig 2, 1



BM 118904 Gadd 1936.pl. 9 / Gadd 1936 p.130 BM 124004 / Barnett, 1976, plXXI (Walters, mues, 21, 6)

Fig 2



Barnett 1976 p.42, pl.XXIV BM 124941

Fig 3



Barnett 1976 p.38, pl.XI BM n124801

Fig. 4



Walters, muse n. 21.9



Metro .muse 17 32, 143, 7



Metro .muse 17, 190, 2078

Fig 4



Wall panel / relief BM 118917

Barnett 1976 p. 36, pl. IV



Wall panel / relief BM 118911

Barnett 1976 p. 50, pl. XLV



Fig 5



E D III period Morgan Seal no. 80



Ward , seal cylinders, p 72 n. 509 BM 89074



Akkadian cylinder seal in BM n. 102534

Collon Seals II, p 26, pl. V



Akkadian cylinder seal in BM n. 113872

Collon, Seals II, p 20, pl. IV



Akkadian cylinder seal BM 89008

Collon seals, 2, pl. I

Fig 6



Ward, seal cylinder, n 718. BM 89318



Marduk -nadin-ahhe
walters.muse. 21, 10, king Babylonian Boundary pl. 9

Fig^v

fig[^]



Ornated handles of daggers (Nimrud).



Handle of dagger, with chain (Nimrud).



Fig[^]



king Ashurnasirpal II 132, 133, 134



Paley, S. King of the World p.52 pl.6
Fitz William muse ANE.45.1927



Ashurnasirpal II Stela BM 118805 Paley S M 1976a pl. 17b

fig 10

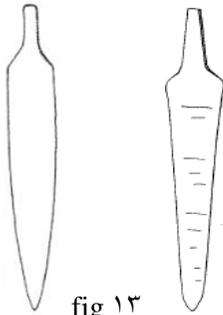
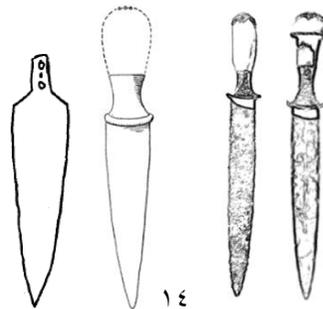


fig 13

Woolley ,royal cemetery II, pL. 228, U. 12679
II, pL. 228, U. 8601 ; 9121

fig 11



14

Woolley ,royal cemetery

, 13782 ,Kish.I, Pl. XIX, 13

fig 12

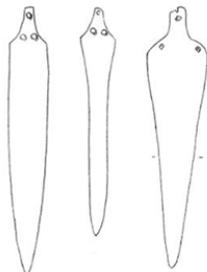


Fig 10

Woolley ,royal cemetery II , pI.228,U.9117,U.8108



Fig 18



fig 19

fig 16

Maxwell,pl 1



fig 20

fig 17

Woolley,II. pI.228,U.8140 .



fig 21

Maxwell,pl 1,n.9-10 U. 14222 Woolley ,II,PI.228,U.12479. axe.p 176

Gibson, the mace the

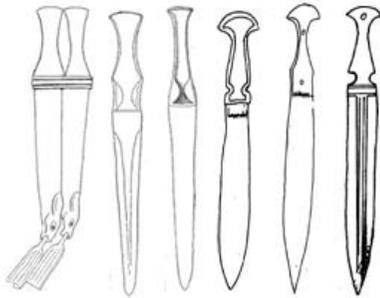
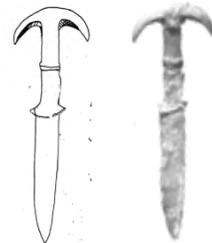


Fig 22



Fig 23



Maxwell ,daggers,plIV,fig32-33 ;Gibson the mace the axen72-75,

Gibson the mace the axe n77

BM130444