times of which we have any record among all people who have acquired any skill in metal-work. There are two very ancient types, which we may call the straight-edged and the leaf-shaped. Assyrian monuments represent a straight and naτrow sword, better fitted for thrusting than cutting. Bronze swords of this form have been found in many parts of Europe, at Mycenae, side by side with leaf-shaped specimens, and more lately in Crete.@@1 We have also from Mycenae some very curious and elaborately wrought blades, so broad and short that they must be called ornamental daggers rather than swords. The leaf-shaped blade is common everywhere among the remains of men in the “ Bronze Period ” of civilization, and this was the shape used by the Greeks in historical times, and is the shape familiar to us in Greek works of art. It is impossible, however, to say whether the Homeric heroes were conceived by the poet as wearing the leaf-shaped sword, as we see it, for example, on the Mausoleum sculptures, or a narrow straight-edged blade of the Minoan and Mycenaean pattern. In any case, the sword holds a quite inferior position with Greek warriors of all times.

The relation of the Minoan long sword to the Greek leaf-shaped blade is obscure. It is conceivable that the leaf-shape was modified from a longer straight blade for the sake of handiness and cutting power, but not less so that the leaf-shape was independently produced by imitation in metal of flint daggers. Independence appears, on the whole, slightly more probable; the existence of specimens which might belong to an intermediate type is only an ambiguous fact without a more exact chronology than we have as yet, as it may be due to experiment or imitation after both types were in use. Strange as it is to a modern swordsman, representations in Minoan art seem to show that not only the bronze daggers but the long swords were used with an overhand stabbing action like a modem Asiatic dagger.@@2 The handles are too short for any but a rigid grip without finger-play. Before about 1500 b.c. the rapier type was the prevailing one; but there is no evidence of historical connexion between the Assyrian and the Minoan rapiers. It is thought that the leaf-shaped blade came to the Mediterranean countries from the north. So far as we know from works of art, it was mostly used with a downright cutting blow, regardless of the consequent exposure of the swordsman’s body; this, however, matters little when defence is left to a shield or armour, or both. Attic vases also show warriors giving, point, though less often. The use of the sword as a weapon of combined offence and defence— swordsmanship as we now understand it—is quite modem. If the sword was developed from a spearhead or dagger, it would naturally have been (and it seems in fact to have been) a thrusting weapon before it was a cutting one. But when we come to historical times we find that uncivilized people use only the edge, and that the effective use of the point is a mark of advanced skill and superior civilization. The Romans paid special attention to it, and Tacitus tells us how Agricola’s legionaries made short work of the clumsy and pointless arms of the Britons when battle was fairly joined.@@3 The tradition was preserved at least as late as the time of Vegetius, who, as a technical writer, gives details of the Roman soldier’s sword exercise. Asiatics to this day treat the sword merely as a cutting weapon, and most Asiatic swords cannot be handled in any other way.

The normal types of swords which we meet with in historical times, and from which all forms now in use among civilized nations are derived, may be broadly classified as straight- edged or curved. In the straight-edged type, in itself a very ancient one, either thrusting or cutting qualities may predominate, and the blade may be double-edged or single-edged. The double-edged form was prevalent in Europe down to the 17th century. The single-edged blade, or back­sword as it was called in England, is well exemplified among the Scottish weapons commonly but improperly known as claymores (the real claymore, *i.e.* great sword, *claidheamh mór,* is an earlier medieval form), and is now all but exclusively employed for military weapons. But these, with few exceptions, have been more or less influenced by the curved Oriental sabτe. Among early double-edged swords the Roman pattern *(gladius,* the thrusting sword, contrasted with the barbarian *ensis)* stands out as a workmanlike and formidable weapon for close fight. In the middle ages the Roman tradition disappeared, and a new start was made from the clumsy barbarian arm which the Romans had despised. Gradually the broad and all but pointless blade was lightened and tapered, and the thrust, although its real power was unknown, was more or less practised from the 12th century onwards. St Louis anticipated Napoleon in calling on his men to use the point; and the heroes of dismounted combats in the *Morte d’Arthur* are described as “ foining ” at one another. In the first half of the 16th century a well- proportioned and well-mounted cut-and-thrust sword was in general use, and great artistic ingenuity was expended, for those who could afford it, on the mounting and adornment. The growth and variations of the different parts of the hilt, curiously resembling those of a living species, would alone be matter enough for an archaeological study. One peculiar form, that of the Scottish basket-hilt, derived from the Venetian pattern known as *schiavone,* has persisted without material change.

@@@1 The Cretan finds are fully described by Arthur T. Evans, “ The Prehistoric Tombs of Knossos," *(Archaeologia* (1905), 59, pt. 2; also separately published (1906). There are Ions (91—95 cm., 341 in.- 37 I in.) and short (50-61 cm., 20-24∙2 in ), swords, daggers and bronze knives. A fine original specimen and several facsimiles (Mycenaean as well as Minoan) may be seen in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. Bronze daggers preceded both swords and spear­heads (Greenwell and Brewis, in *Archaeologia,* 61, pp. 443, 453).

@@@s As the spear still was in historical times (Furtwängler-Reichhold, *Gr. Vasenmalerei,* iii. 122).

*@@@s Agric.* 36 : “ Britannorum gladii sine mucrone complexum armorum et in aperto pugnam non tolerabant.” The short Roman infantry sword, however, dates only from the Second Punic War.