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235 EAST 60TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10022
212.989.9743 / 646.326.0820
WWW.HIXENBAUGH.NET
INFO@HIXENBAUGH.NET

Roman Iron Pugio

An ancient Roman iron dagger or pugio. The blade is wide at the hilt with a long tang, waisted in the middle with a central mid-rib, tapering to the triangular point.

Ca. 1st - 2nd century AD.
Length: 15 1/4 in. (39 cm).



The Iberic short sword or Gladius Hispaniensis was adapted by the Romans as early as the second century BC, and was the direct predecessor of both the Mainz-Type gladius Romanus and the shortened, broad bladed pugio dagger. As a close quarters weapon, the pugio was able to deliver a mortal blow in a single thrust. In the later empire, the pugio grew larger with a more pronounced mid-rib.

cf.: Bishop & Coulston, Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome, (Oxford, 2006), pp. 83-87.

Formerly in the E. S. collection, Berlin, acquired in the 1990s.

inventory number: 6279

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