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Schlüsselwörter: Bronze, Axt, Erzurum, Kars, Sammlung
Keywords: Bronze, Axe, Erzurum, Kars, Corpus
Anahtar sözcükler: Tunç, Balta, Erzurum, Kars, Korpus

Introduction

In geographical terms, the Erzurum-Kars Plateau is in the north-eastern part of the Anatolian Peninsula, forming the highest plains of the country (*fig. 1*). The upper plains of the Kargapazarı, Palandöken and Allauekber mountains exhibit a slightly rugged and volcanic landscape, especially shaped by basaltic formations, between Erzurum and Ardahan. This highland, appearing as split-off by the branches of the Aras River, is called the »North-eastern Anatolian Plateau«. The main topographical figures in the region are the vast plains with heights varying between 2.500 and 3.000 meters. These high plateaus are interrupted only by some deep valleys and depression zones. These depressions, forming the major habitation areas in the region, spread in a certain direction. In the West, the depressions begin with the Aşkale Basin, and continue eastwards with the Erzurum, Kağızman and Iğdır depressions. Amongst the aforementioned depressions, Erzurum and Aşkale unload their water to the Euphrates with the help of the Karasu River, and can be accepted as the »ecological niches« of the Euphrates Basin. On the other side, after passing through the »Deveboynu« mountain pass, the low ravine between the plains of Erzurum and Pasinler, one reaches a new drainage basin, i. e. the Aras Basin, and here begins another series of ecological niches. Along this basin appear the depression zones of Kars-Selim, Oltu-Göle and Ardahan. This range of depressions also maintains the best interaction and interconnection routes between Eastern Anatolia and the Transcaucasus. The bedrocks of these depressions are the deposits of freshwater lakes of the geological periods, and are covered by rich alluvium deposits[1], especially the Erzurum, Göle, Iğdır and Ardahan basins.

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1 Erinç 1953, 91.

Fig. 1 Map showing the Erzurum-Kars area and the finding places of axes according to museum records

This region, part of the natural routes to the Caucasian World, is not very well-known in archaeological terms. The lack of information is much more definite for Kars, the eastern part of the region[2]. The geographical similarities between the Southern Caucasus and the region reflect on the cultural identity. The South Caucasian plains adjoining the Erzurum-Kars Plateau create a particular cultural zone in Near Asian prehistory, and in recent years, excavations at Sos Höyük have revealed precise data on the possible cultural connections and uniformities between the Southern Caucasus and the Erzurum-Kars Region[3]. The evidence about the »con-

[2] For the history of the researches in the region as a whole and specifically in the Kars Region, see Işıklı 2007, 40–51.
[3] Kiguradze – Sagona 2003, 38–94.

nective network» shows that this process starts in the middle of the 4th millennium B. C., and proceeds without disruption. The Southern Caucasus is one of the crucial mining areas of the Near East beginning with the Early Bronze Age[4], and is remarkable in all periods for its rich raw materials of metal. However, the real metallurgical take-off in the region happens in the Middle Bronze Age. The monumental kurgan burials of this period with flourishing metal findings are the clearest archaeological confirmations of the process. However, North-eastern Anatolia is far from presenting the same scene in the same period. In fact, the scarce metal objects on hand are the only verification suggesting that the existing interaction is not totally decreased. This scarcity of evidence should be evaluated certainly in relation to the insufficiency of the research in the region.

In this paper, the authors aim to examine a special group of findings in the ancient metalwork, the axes, within the perspective summarised above, and attempt to compose a corpus for the bronze axes from the North-eastern Anatolian Region. The original material studied in this work consists of 23 bronze axes, today preserved in the museums of Erzurum and Kars. It is sad to announce that the majority of artefacts forming this group do not come from scientific excavations but from illicit activities, and moreover, the stratigraphical data provided by the earlier excavations is not quite so easy to figure out. In this paper, nine bronze axes from the Erzurum Museum and 14 from the Kars Museum were examined. All Erzurum samples, except for the one purchased by the museum, come from the Karaz and Pulur excavations conducted by H. Z. Koşay in the 40's and 50's, which were the earliest archaeological works in the Erzurum Region. Unfortunately, all 14 Kars samples purchased by the museum, come from different parts of the region. The authors are eager to point out that they do not aim to »introduce« the illicitly discovered material, but try to understand the potential of the region and its interaction with other regions, in the sense of metal production and consumption traditions.

Bronze Axes from the Erzurum-Kars Region

Bronze axes preserved in both the Erzurum and Kars museums form two major typological groups: »bronze axes with shaft-holes« and »chisel type flat bronze axes«. All axes were moulded. »Bronze axes with shaft-holes« are in the majority with 20 and only 3 samples are chisel type flat ones. The axes were divided into two groups, the Erzurum and the Kars Group (*figs 2–5*).

The Erzurum Group

As noted above, five samples of this group come from excavations (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 1–9). The excavations in the Erzurum Region were started in 1942 by H. Z. Koşay, with Karaz Sounding[5], and in 1944, this sounding was followed by a one-season excavation. The number of axes from the Karaz excavation is three[6]. In 1960, an excavation, again for one season, was conducted in Pulur Höyük on the same plain, and provided two more axes[7]. Of course, the metal inventory

4 Chernykh 1992, 7–10.

5 For three earlier excavations in the region and their results, see Işıklı 2005, 405–496.

6 Koşay – Turfan 1959, 409.

7 Koşay – Vary 1964, 51, pl. L. XCII. CX.

is not limited to these artefacts[8], but, on the other hand, these excavations could hardly provide any satisfactory answers to the potential of mining and metallurgy in the region. Apart from these samples, four more axes were purchased, one recorded with Oltu-Şahmı village as the »finding place« (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 2. 3. 6. 9).

In this group, two typological groups, »bronze axes with shaft-holes« and »chisel type flat bronze axes« are both attested. While the first type is represented by six samples, the number for the flat type is three. Two of the shaft-holed ones come from the Karaz excavation, one from the Pulur excavation, and additionally three by purchase. According to the excavation reports, two of the axes with shaft-holes were unearthed in the upper levels (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 1. 4)[9]. These axes with curved blades and bevelled forms have a plain body. The body enlarges slightly from the head to the edge. The shaft-holes are round and the eye, as seen on the *figs 2* and *4* Cat. No. 1 widens before the cheeks. Additional to these three, the other three samples have the same typological features (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 3).

These shaft-holed samples reveal quite similar typological features when compared to the »Martkopi-Bedeni type« shaft-holed axes, which is one of the most important axe groups in the ancient metallurgy of the Southern Caucasus[10].We can also see similar examples of this group in the Kars Group (*figs 3 c. 5 c*: Cat. No. 22. 23). The last sample of the shaft-holed axes from Erzurum is the one from the Pulur excavation (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 5). This burial find, with flat and thick poll, elliptical eye and semi-circular edge, can be classified as »Colchidic« or »Colchis type«[11].

The second typological class of the Erzurum Group, »chisel type flat axes«, is represented by three samples (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 7–9). Two of these come from excavations, one from Karaz[12] and one from Pulur[13] (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 7. 8). According to the excavation reports, these samples were unearthed in the upper levels[14]. The last one is another chisel type flat axe, purchased by the museum (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 9). All three draw attention with the widening shape from back to the edge, and with a relatively thin form.

The last sample of the Erzurum Group is a well-preserved shaft-holed axe, demonstrating a fairly well craftsmanship. The shaft of the axe is decorated with stout grooves and two spurs on the conjunction point of the shaft and the body. The body is thin and long, slightly widening on the blade (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 6).

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8 Metal artefacts from these three excavations were evaluated in another study. See Işıklı 2008c, 99–118; Işıklı 2008b, 55–80.

9 Koşay – Vary 1959, 409.

10 Chernykh 1992, 60–66 fig. 20.

11 Koşay – Vary 1964, pl. L.

12 Koşay – Turfan 1959, 409.

13 This object was defined as »bronze chisel«. See Koşay – Vary 1964, 32, pl. L.

14 The Karaz example comes from trench BII, level 2,5 m (Koşay – Turfan 1959, 409); the Pulur example from trench T, level 2,00 m (Koşay – Vary 1964, 32).

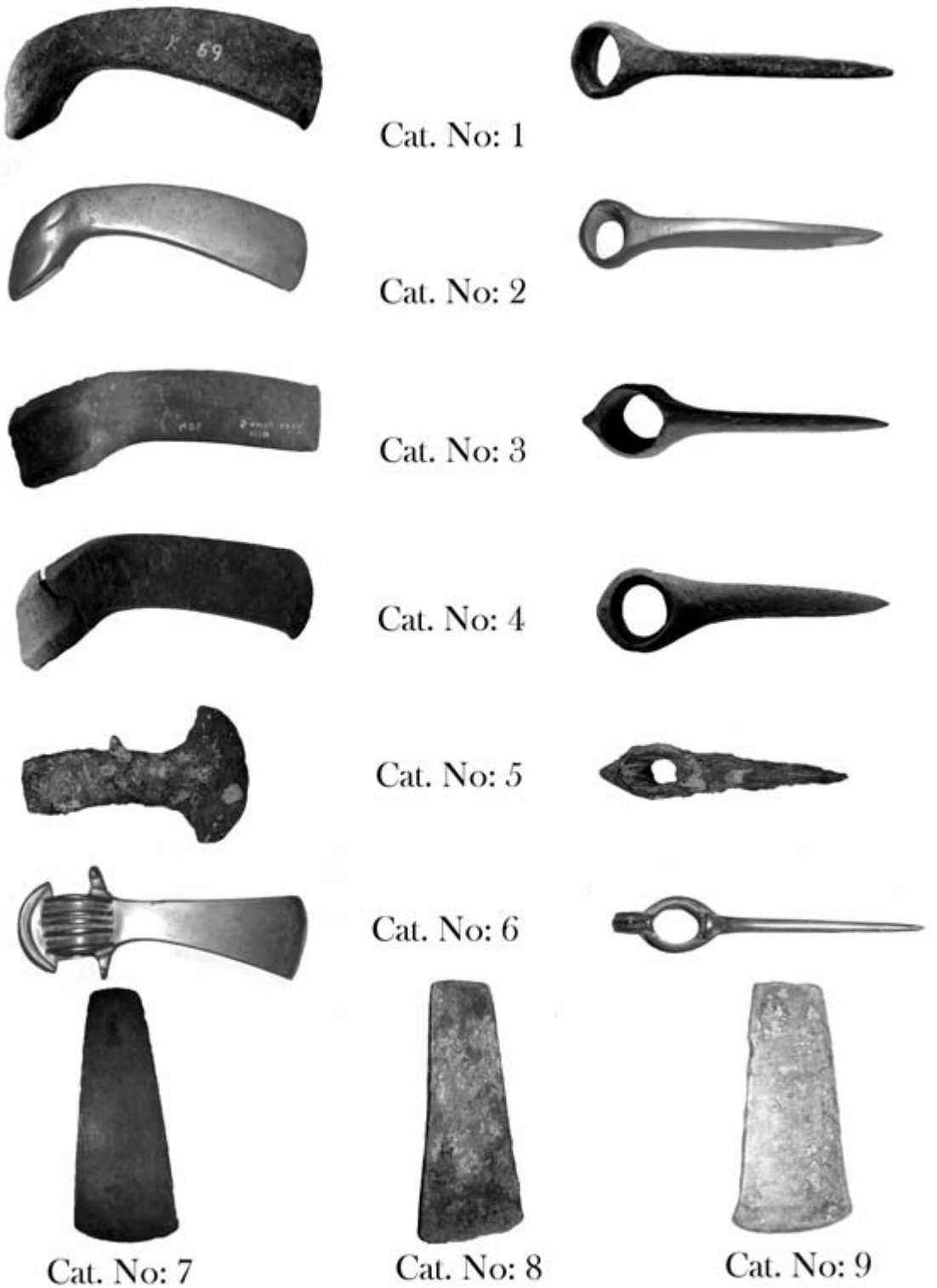

Fig. 2 Bronze Axes of the Erzurum Group. Scale 1:4

The Kars Group

All 14 samples in this group were purchased from different parts of the region by the Kars Museum (*figs 3 a–c. 5 a–c*)[15]. The group consists of »shaft-holed axes«, all cast of bronze. Since the entire group has common features like wide eyes, long blades and semi-circular edges, the axes from Kars can be examined in six typological subgroups:

The first group of the Kars axes are the »Martkopi-Bedeni type shaft-holed axes«, and resemble the exact features of the same group we have already discussed within the Erzurum examples (*figs 3 c. 5 c*: Cat. No. 22. 23). The second group (*figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 10. 11) are the »Colchis« type axes with long blades, wide elliptical eyes and semi-circular edges. The third group represented by a battle axe (*figs 3 c. 5 c*: Cat. No. 20) is again a form quite like the Colchis type. The fourth group (*figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 12–14) draws attention with flat and square sectioned long blades, wide shaft-holes, and semi-circular wide edges. On two samples (*figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 12. 13), the back of the shaft is flattened. Cat. No. 13 is peculiar with the small rostrum closer to the neck of the axe, and the same features can be observed in Cat. No. 14. The mentioned group can easily be classified as a part of »Hammer Headed Colchis Axes«[16].

A fifth subdivision can be suggested for the Kars Group, the »adze headed axes« (*figs 3 b. 5 b*: Cat. No. 15–19)[17]. The typical features of this group seem to be double-heads, short blades and long shafts. While the front part has a regular and relatively semi-circular edge, the butt has a second blade with a semi-circular edge. The long and tube-shaped shafts have relief decorations, mostly in forms of two concentric circles, or relief dots, aligned downwards along the shaft. The last sample (*figs 3 c. 5 c*: Cat. No. 21) is a shaft-holed axe, forming its own group. The sample is distinguishable by its flattened and thin blade. The blade, narrowing before the shaft, widens through the blade and is completed with a semi-circular edge. The simple marks of retouching on the artefact show an undeveloped craftsmanship.

Commentary

Although H. Z. Koşay made the first attempt to discuss the shaft-holed axes of the Karaz samples from the Erzurum Group, he avoided dating or interpreting these artefacts, and gave only the inventory information (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 1–4)[18]. After Koşay, the first serious comparative work was attempted by T. Özgüç. Studying a shaft-holed axe preserved in the Tokat Museum, Özgüç claimed that the Karaz sample was the closest parallel to the axe from Tokat. Likewise, Koşay and Özgüç do not give any detailed information, and generalise these artefacts as »bronze axe samples of the Early Bronze Age«[19]. The first comprehensive work on these axes was made by S. Güneri. After taking into consideration these axes and some other metal artefacts, he suggested some answers to the question about the population process in the second millennium B. C.[20].

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15 According to the inventory records of the museum, axes in Cat. No. 10. 13. 20. 22. 23 come from Kars, Cat. No. 11. 12 and 14 come from Pasof town in Kars, Cat. No. 15–19. 21 come from Iğdır. About all of them we have no information except the museum records *»purchased«*.

16 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 344–346.

17 Moorey 1971, 64.

18 Koşay – Turfan 1959, 376–377. 409.

19 Özgüç 1978, 35 fig. 88, pl. 70, 4.

20 Güneri 2007, 267–324.

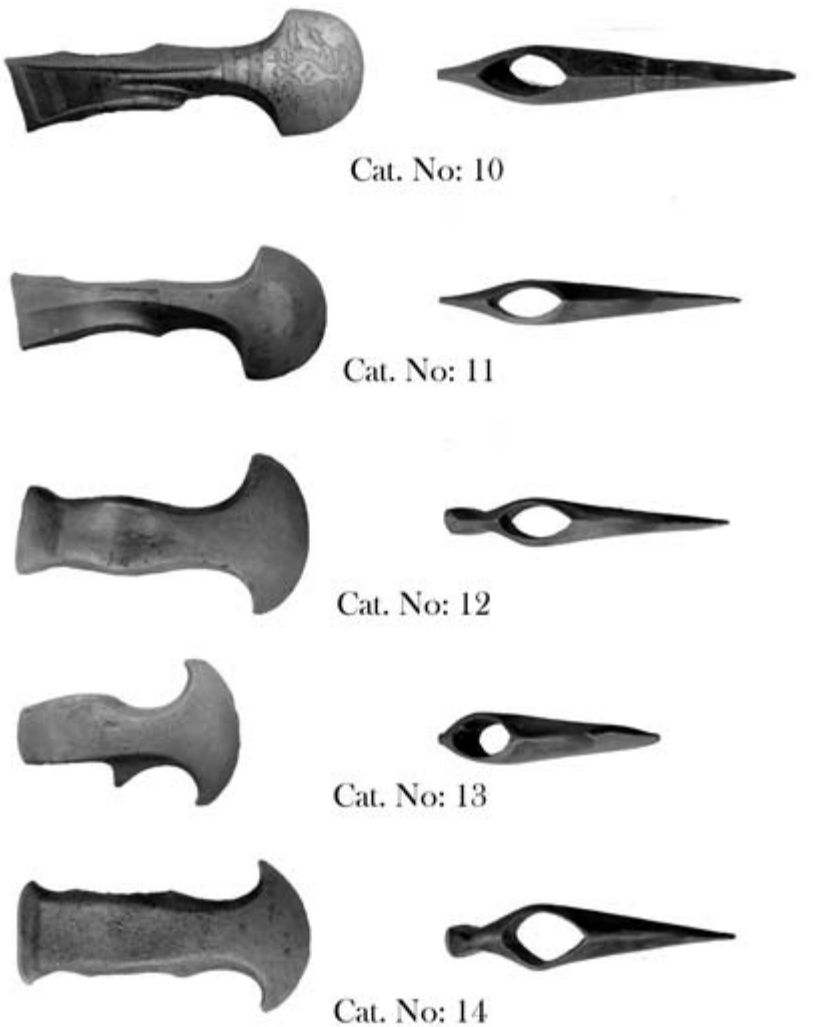

Fig. 3 a Bronze Axes of the Kars Group. Scale 1 : 4

In his work, the author claims that the closest parallels to the Karaz samples can be seen in the »Fatyonovo Culture«, a cultural term used to determine a process, examined in three phases, appearing in the second quarter of the second millennium B. C. up to the beginnings of the first millennium B. C., and known from the burials like Elinbor, Volosovo Saktis and Fatyonovo[21].

[21] Sulimirski, 1970, 195–199 Map XIV/VIII.

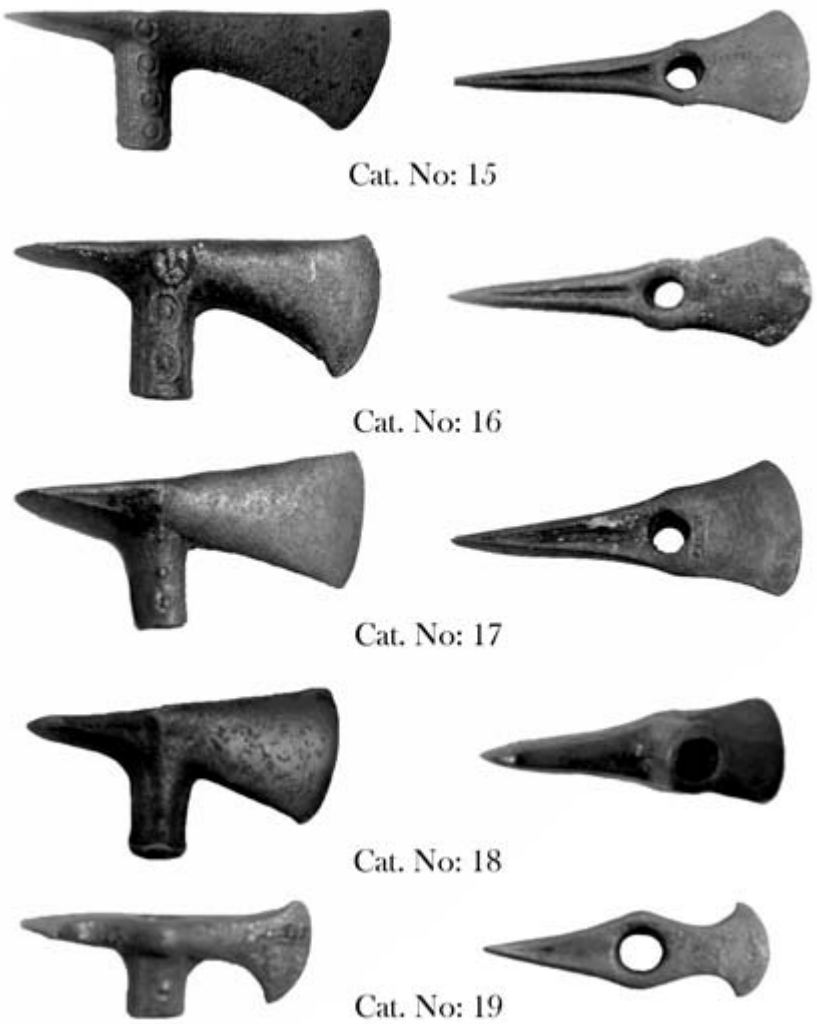

Fig. 3 b Bronze Axes of the Kars Group. Scale 1 : 4

Güneri dates the shaft-holed Karaz axes to the first quarter of the second millennium B.C., according to the resemblances between Karaz and Fatyonovo samples[22].

Within the geographical zone related to our interest, the earliest examples of the shaft-holed bronze axes appear in the Southern Caucasus. First parallels of this group appear in the Martkopi-Bedeni process, an important metallurgical centre especially at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. However, moulds and moulded samples of these axes can be attested before this process, in the latter phase of the Kura-Araxes/Karaz/Early Transcaucasian cultural

[22] Güneri states that the most similar example for the Karaz Axe is the copper axe from Solnechno. See Güneri 2007, 267–324.

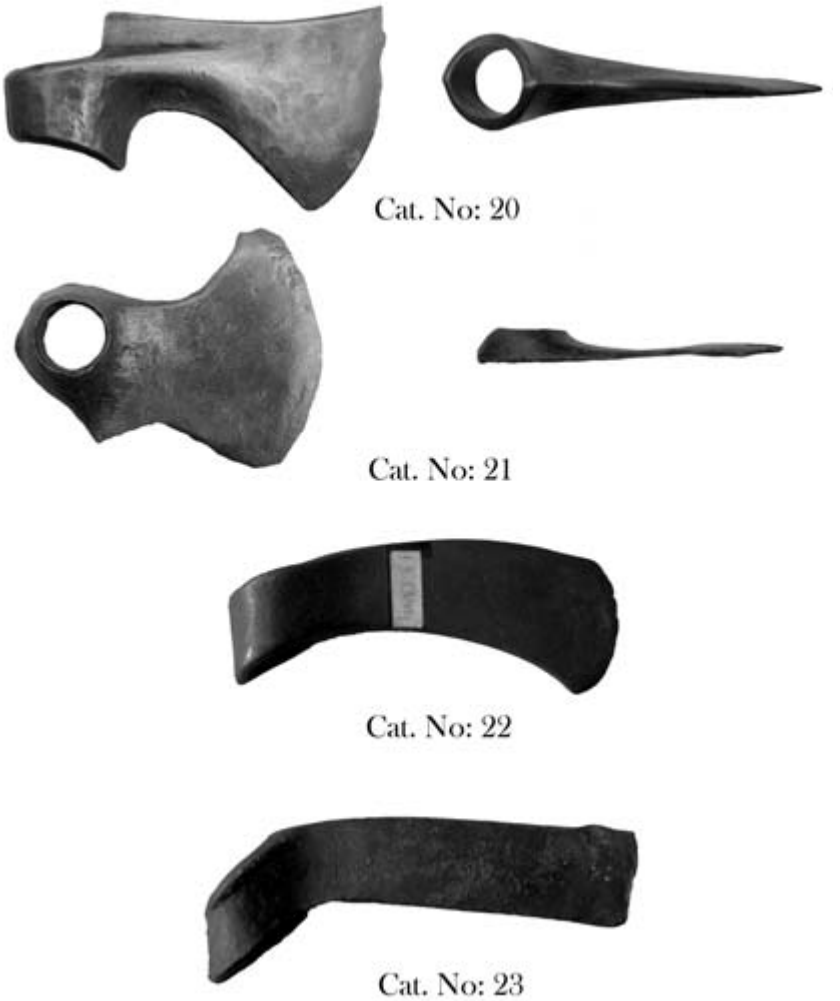

Fig. 3 c Bronze Axes of the Kars Group. Scale 1 : 4

continuum, and Maikop Culture. Some fragmentary moulds have been found in Kura-Araxes settlements such as Garni, Kültepe II, Şengavit and Galgalatlı[23]. Early samples of this type were also occasionally attested in Anatolia, mostly from Artvin-Yusufeli[24].

Right after the end of »cultural unity« brought to the Near East by the Kura-Araxes process, Transcaucasia hosted much more regional cultures such as Martkopi-Bedeni. Some settlements in

[23] Fragmentary moulds from Transcaucasia come from Kura-Araxes settlements such as Garni, Kültepe II, Şengavit and Galgalatlı. See Kushnareva 1997, 74–79. For a recent discussion on the chronology and the metal findings from Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan, see Schachner 2002, 115–130. Also see Schachner 2005, 79–93.

[24] It is known that similar examples of this type mostly come from the vicinity of Artvin-Yusufeli. See Chernykh 1992, 63 fig. 20.

the Transcaucasus exhibit both Bedeni and Late Kura-Araxes phases. The most well-known of these settlements are at Beri Kldebi, Tetri-Tskaro and Sioni. Axes from the »transitional« levels of these settlements display quite a strong similarity to the Karaz samples, and are accepted as the latest products of the Kura-Araxes metalworking, which is not the best part of the culture[25].

Due to the studies on the typological classification of the shaft-holed axes, nine major typological groups have been identified[26]. According to this classification, moulds from the late phases of Kura-Araxes settlements, and samples from Late Kura-Araxes/Bedeni transitional layers seem to be type I and type IIa[27]. The best characteristic samples for the shaft-holed axes seen in the long period beginning with the Late Bronze Age through to the Iron Ages, come from the Maikop burials. Until today, approximately 40 shaft-holed bronze axes were unearthed in Maikop burials, and were all included in type I and type IIa. Samples from Nalchik and Novosbodnaya are dated to the earliest phases. Two particular ones from Nalchik draw attention with their decoration of silver nails[28].

During the next period of the Maikop Culture, Novosvobodnaya phase in regional terminology, new types of the shaft-holed axes make an appearance. These are type IV, V, VI and VII[29]. In the light of the Maikop evidence, the earliest date for the shaft-holed axes can be suggested as the 27th century B. C. However, when one takes the products of the Martkopi-Bedeni process into consideration, the approximate date for the intensive manufacture of these axes seems to be the 25th century B. C., as the earliest[30].

The parallels for the shaft-holed axes from Karaz studied here can be found among the samples unearthed in Martkopi Kurgan 4, and settlements such as Tetri-Tskaro[31], Ztelisabatlo, Chaschuri, Meteci and Badaani[32]. The samples from Kurgan 4 at Martkopi especially are the closest ones, and the date suggested for the Martkopi pieces is the second half of the second millennium B. C. In the light of the Bedeni and Sachkere kurgans, these shaft-holed axes survive in the Transcaucasus until 2100/2000 B. C.[33]. According to the data above, the most likely date for the shaft-holed Karaz axes seems to be the span between 2500–2000 B. C. As will be seen below, two axes from the Kars region (*figs 3 c. 5 c*: Cat. No. 22. 23) also belong to the same period.

A peculiar sample within the Erzurum Group is the shaft-holed axe with grooves and spurs (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 6). The axe seems to get its origin from far lands, Central Anatolia, literally, the Hittite Land. H. Erkanal defines this type as »Nackenkammäxte vom Typ Fıraktin« and points to the Hittite landscape as the expansion area[34]. Erkanal dates this type to the Hittite

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25 Chernykh 1992, 104–106 fig. 32 and 33.

26 Chernykh 1992, 61 fig. 18.

27 No axe examples are known from Kura–Araxes settlements. We are only aware of a few early examples, of which the origin is not clear and said to be acquired from the Artvin region. Still, no comprehensive studies have been done about these early examples conserved in the museums of Ankara and Istanbul. See Chernykh 1992, 63 (note 2).

28 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 102; Miron – Orthmann 1995, 230, Abb. 69.

29 Chernykh 1992 fig. 18.

30 Chernykh 1992, 78.

31 The ceramic evidences also reveal similarities with Pulur and Güzelova material. Makharadze 1994, 83–85, fig. XXXI; for axe example, see Chernykh 1992 fig. 33.20.

32 Güneri 1995, 127–132, pl. 25.

33 Chernykh 1992, 110; Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 161; Lordkipanizde 1991, 44.

34 Erkanal 1977, 13–15, Taf. 5, 50–56; 9 A.

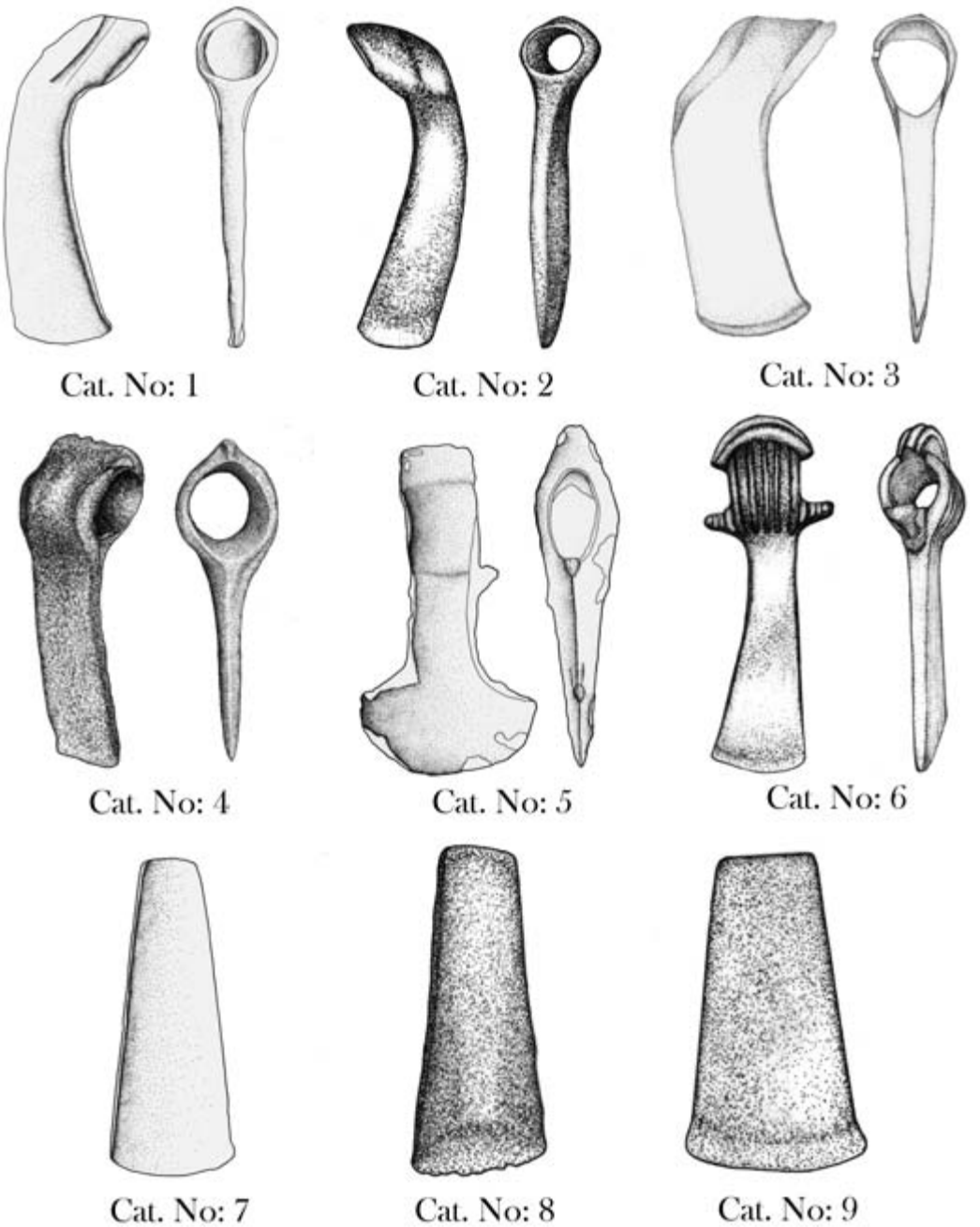

Fig. 4 Drawings of the Erzurum Group Axes. Scale 1:4

Imperial Period, between 1400–1200 B.C.[35]. Maxwell-Hyslop's study classifies these axes as »type 22«, and marks Central Anatolia and Syria as the expansion area, suggesting a date for the 2nd half of the 2nd millennium B.C.[36].

The last shaft-holed axe in the Erzurum Group comes from the Pulur excavation (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 5). The axe, found in one of the three burials, is distinguishable by its wide and long shaft, and semi-circular edge[37]. The axe is a typical example of the »Colchis type«, well-known from Transcaucasia, and exposes a rich repertory in the Kars Group, which will be discussed below. This type appears in Transcaucasia especially beginning with the Late Bronze Age. During this period, the western parts of the region – in the lower districts on the Black Sea coast – exhibit the indicators of the Colchis and Koban cultures[38].

One of the most important and stratigraphically excavated centres of the period is the Tli necropolis, in Southern Ossetia[39], with more than three hundred burials. The objects unearthed there were dated to the 16th and 15th century B.C. The axes form the most important group amongst the metal findings. This necropolis also provided significant evidence for the transition process from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age[40]. Tli axes draw attention with their elaborately incised animal and plant decorations. The adventure of the Colchis and Koban type axes appearing in the 16th century B.C. continued until the 6th century B.C., accompanied by the typological diversities in the Transcaucasus[41]. Lordkipanidze considers the most popular period of the Colchis type axes as the time between the 15th and 13th century B.C.[42]. Thus, the most likely dating for the Pulur axe discussed above can roughly be accepted as the same.

The second type of the Erzurum Group, the »chisel typed flat axes«, is represented by three examples (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 7. 8). They are typologically close to each other, and draw attention with their bodies widening on the edge. These axes have a plain and simple craftsmanship. The general terminology on this type of axes is problematic, but they are known in the Caucasus as »flat chisels«[43].

The appearance of these axes/chisels is a subject of discussion. Although researches of the region have claimed the emergence of metal working in the Caucasus was in relation to the Kura-Araxes (Karaz/Early Transcaucasian) Culture, metal findings discovered in the context of this culture are too few, and the strata of some of them is not satisfying[44]. The earliest examples of the »chisel typed flat axes« were accepted as appearing in the same period mentioned above, but the real emergence of this type is the »transitional period« at the end of the Kura-Araxes cultural

35 Erkanal 1977, Taf. 19.

36 Maxwell-Hyslop 1949, 113–114, pl. XXV.22.

37 Koşay – Vary 1964, pl. XCII.

38 Chernykh 1992, 275–295.

39 For detailed information, see Tekhov 1981.

40 Müller-Karpe 1995, 227–229, Abb. 2.

41 For detailed studies about these axes, see Uvarov 1900; Hancar 1934, 32. Besides, according to some recent typological classifications, these axes appear by the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C. and last until the 6th century B.C. See Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 161; Lordkipanizde 1991, 44.

42 Lordkipanidze 1991, 44.

43 Chernykh 1992, 63.

44 Chernykh 1992, 57–67.

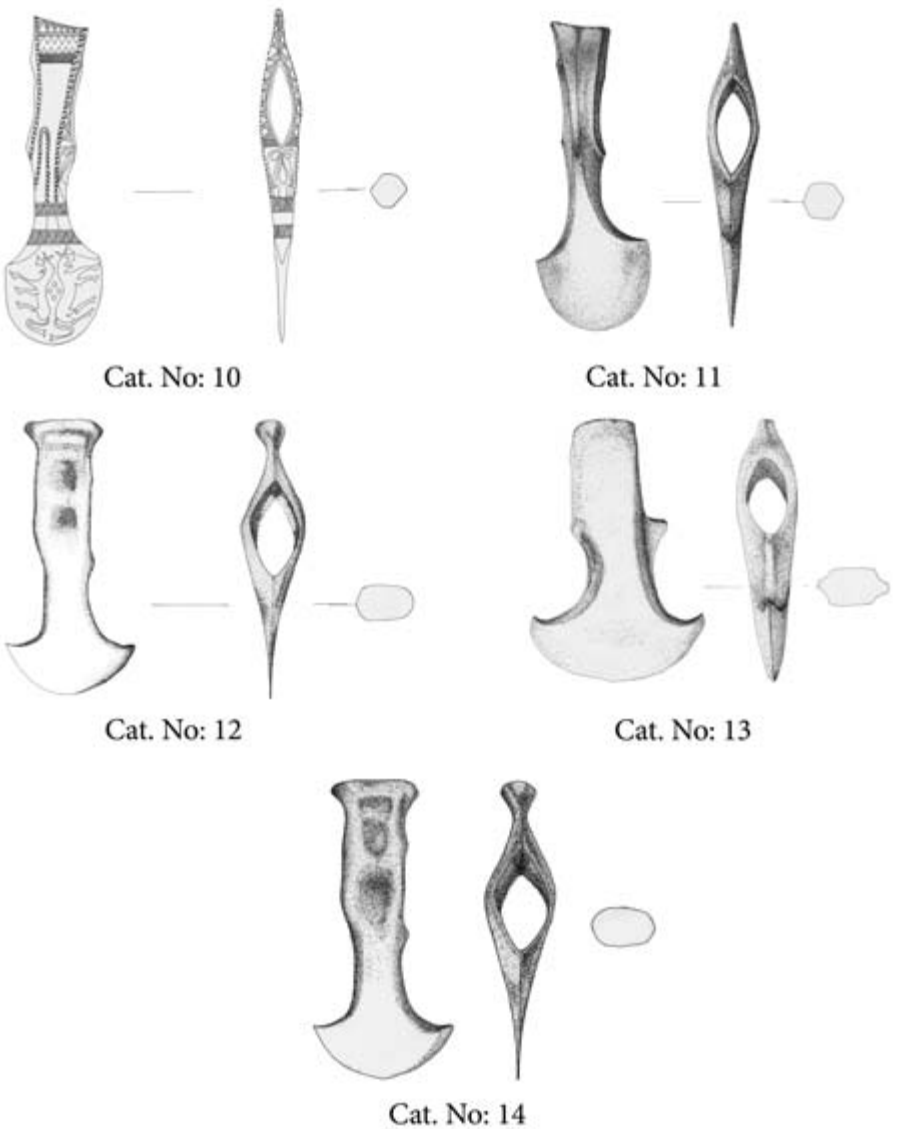

Fig. 5 a Drawings of the Kars Group Axes. Scale 1 : 4

complex, and the beginning of Bedeni-Martkopi cultures[45]. In fact, it is hard to chronologically and geographically classify these types of axes, for they have a quite plain shape.

Martkopi Kurgans have exposed nearly forty similar objects, defined as chisels or axes[46]. Additionally, similar flat axes were found in the burials of Trialeti[47]. The existence of similar

[45] Kushnareva 1997, 210–212.
[46] Kushnareva – Markovin 1994, fig. 54; Chernykh 1992, 74 fig. 23, 5; 24, 11–13.
[47] Kushnareva – Markovin 1994, fig. 17.

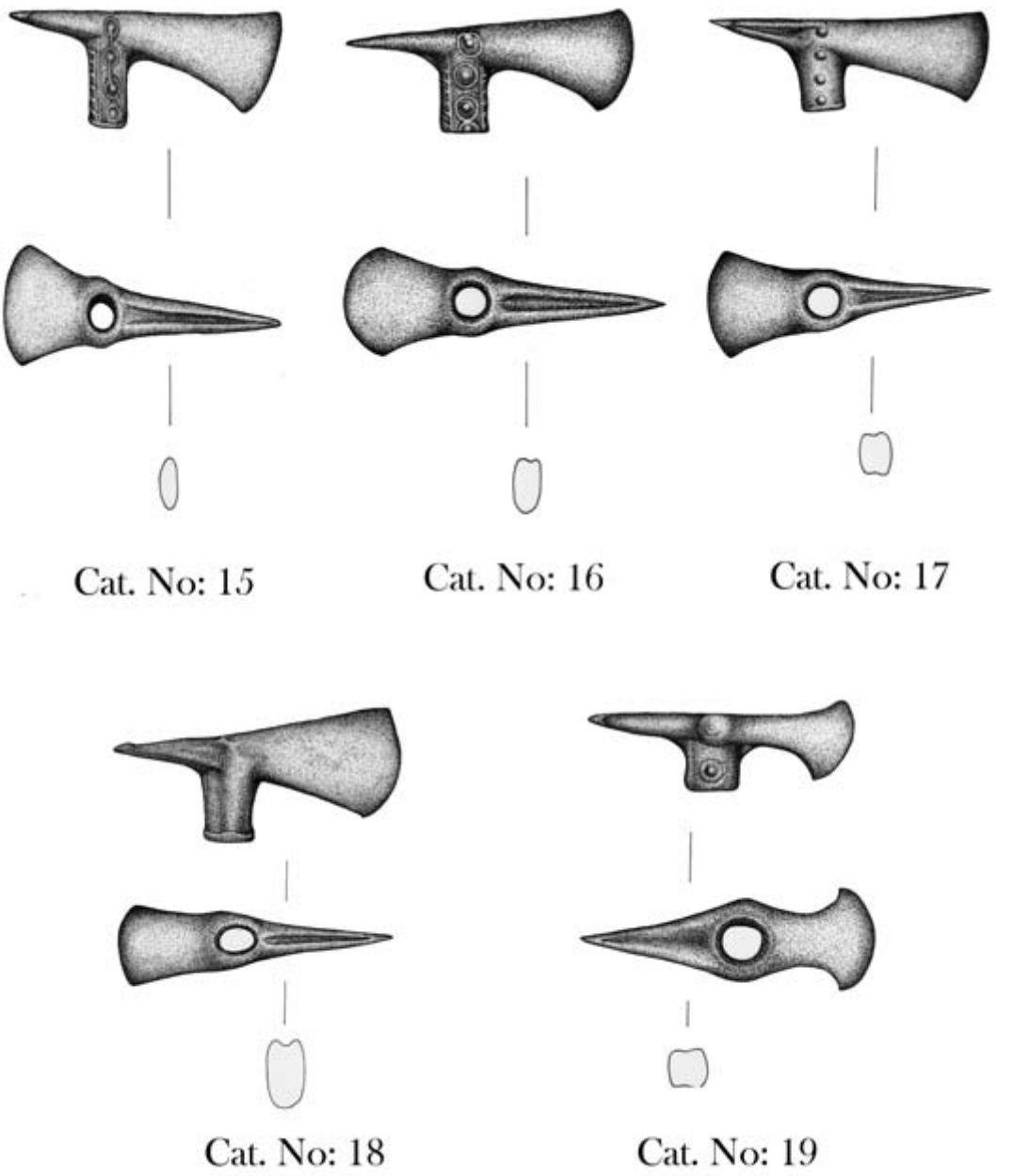

Fig. 5 b Drawings of the Kars Group Axes. Scale 1 : 4

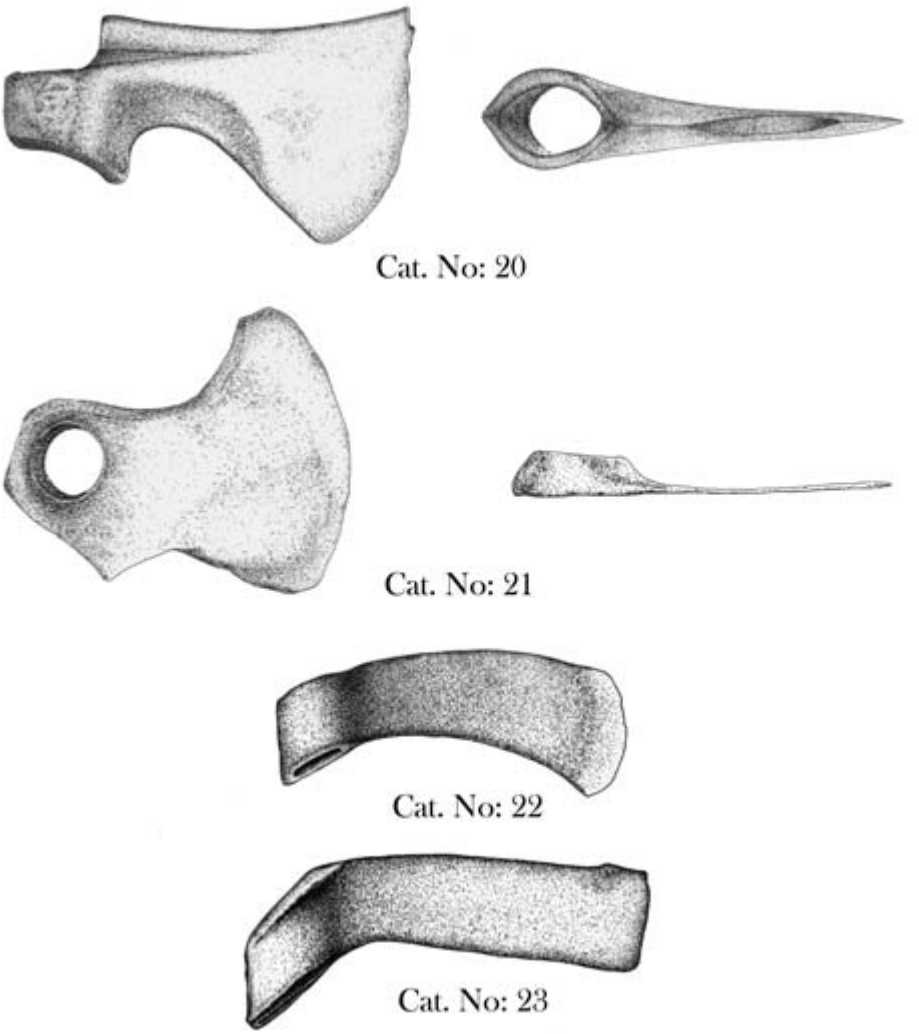

Fig. 5 c Drawings of the Kars Group Axes. Scale 1 : 4

type axes/chisels in Potavka burials in the Volga-Ural region[48], and in the Usatovo culture on the north-western part of the Black Sea[49] indicates a vast expansion for this type of axe.

If a contemporary date for the emergence of these axes/chisels with the »shaft-holed axes« is to be proposed, the most likely date can be accepted as the span around the 27th–26th century B. C. However, the period in which this kind of object becomes popular is the Middle Bronze

48 Chernykh 1992, 86 fig. 28, 19–21. 30.
49 Chernykh 1992, 92–95 fig. 30, 21–23.

Age. Although rare, the same kinds of objects were attested among the rich metal finds of Bedeni and Trialeti kurgans[50]. The Trialeti example exhibits some different features in shape: two spurs on both sides of the flat body draw attention. Local terminology defines these examples as »high shouldered flat chisels«[51]. The next phase, Late Bronze Age, also exhibits the same kind of flat bodied sharpened objects, with a decrease in the number and some modifications in the shape. The modifications in the shape are the two spurs on both sides of the flat body, like the Trialeti example. Additionally, one can see an expansion of the blade which has almost a lunette form; the appearance of a handle-like rostrum on the upper part; a lengthened and narrow body; and incised decoration patterns on some of these flat bodies. These can be found among the rich metal collection from Artik burials in Shirak-Armenia[52] and Evklu burials[53]. When these groups of findings, which are less problematic for dating, are taken into consideration, it is likely to assume that the presence of the flat axe/chisels lasts until the midst of the Iron Age.

The fourteen better preserved examples in the »Kars Group« reveal a rich but purchased inventory of the »shaft-holed axes« (*figs 3 a–c. 5 a–c*). Kars axes, generally better preserved than the previous ones, draw attention with their elaborate craftsmanship. One example especially (*figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 10), diverges from the other examples of the group with its incised decorations of fantastic animals on the body and the semi-circular blade[54].

The Kars Group typologically can be examined under six subgroups: the first subgroup is the Bedeni-Martkopi shaft holed axes (*figs 3c. 5c*: Cat. No. 22. 23) which we can date between 2500 and 2000 B.C. These two resemble the similar features with the largest subgroup of the Erzurum axes (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 1–4). The second group (*figs 3a. 5a*: Cat. No. 10. 11) consists of »Colchis-Koban« type axes. One similar example of these can be seen in Pulur, in the Erzurum Group (*figs 2. 4*: Cat. No. 5) Colchis-Koban type axes create a special assemblage within the ancient Transcaucasian metalworking. During the Late Bronze Age (roughly the 16th–12th century B.C.), the Transcaucasus is known to be an important metalworking centre. The plain and lower western part of the region, lying on the coastal part of the Black Sea, is known as the »Koban-Colchidic Zone«[55] and the characteristic archaeological products of this area are the axes named after this zone. Koban-type axes mostly come from the northern part of the region. This type is distinguishable with the elliptical shaft, hammer-shaped butt, curled long body and wide, circular blade[56]. The Colchis type has a broader expansion zone and is common in the region, and draws attention with a wider shaft, long and smoothly curved body and semi-circular wide blade.

Typological and chronological classification attempts on the axes of Transcaucasia and related regions demonstrate certain variations during their periods[57]. Although limited, this kind of study provides us with a much less problematic group in contrast to the other groups of axes[58].

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50 The example coming from the Bedeni context was found in the kurgan in Tetri-Tskaro. Chernykh 1992, 104–105, fig. 33.21.

51 This example is one of the metal objects found in the kurgans of Kirovakan in Armenia. Chernykh 1992, 113, fig. 36.5.

52 Chernykh 1992, fig. 99.5.

53 Chernykh 1992, fig. 102.9. For close parallels of this group, found in Rize, see Özkan – Çakır 2000, 87–94.

54 This axe was published by A. Müller-Karpe. Müller-Karpe 1995, 227–231.

55 Chernykh 1992, 277–278 fig. 80.

56 Chernykh 1992, 278 fig. 95, 1. 2.

57 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 161; Lordkipanizde 1991, 44.

58 For two important studies, see Gambaschidze et al. 2001; Lordkipanizde 1991.

When one considers these studies, the earlier emergence of Colchis and Koban type axes in the Transcaucasus is around the 16th/15th century B.C. These axes survive for a relatively long time, and can be seen in this vast region until the 7th/6th century B.C. These dates are suggested due to the data acquired from certain burial grounds of Western Transcaucasia.

The Tli burials in Southern Ossetia mentioned above are the major source within this kind of burial[59]. According to the classification studies, the axes from this burial, especially the incised ones, are dated between Tli B and Tli D phases, which is to say, between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 6th century B.C. Besides many metal objects, fibulae play a crucial role for this dating[60]. Decorated axes from this burial are important for our example in *figs 3a. 5a*: Cat. No. 10, and previously studied by Müller-Karpe, who dates this axe between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 6th century B.C., in the light of the Tli examples[61] (*figs 3 a–c. 5 a–c*) and the date is probably acceptable. On the other hand, a group of »decorated Colchis axes« from Ossetia, dated between the 9th and the 7th century B.C. and today conserved in the Moscow National Museum, reminds one of the Kars axes (*figs 3 a. 5a*: Cat. No. 10. 11), both in shape and decoration.

The third subgroup contains only one example (*figs 3 c. 5c*: Cat. No. 20) and this is a battle-axe resembling the Colchis type axes with its general features. This example differs typologically from the other Colchis type axes. It draws attention with its wide and short shaft, and with its wide and semi-circular blade connected to the short body. The parallels of this type are generally found in Armenia. Martirosyan defines this kind of axe as a »battle-axe« and according to his own chronological classification, includes them in the second phase of the Armenian Middle Bronze Age, suggesting a contemporary existence with the »Tazekent-Kirovakan Groups«, during the long period between the 20th and 15th century B.C.[62]. Assuming that this type of axe is the prototype of the latter Late Bronze Age battle-axes, Martirosyan mentions a widespread presence for this type in Kirovakan Kurgans, roughly dated to the 15th century B.C.[63]. Apart from these examples, an example from Gyumri dated between the 18th–17th century B.C. is really similar to the axe from Kars[64]. Besides, a recent study on the general typological and chronological classification of the axes shows this type is evaluated within the group dated to the first half of the second millennium B.C., with the help of the Leninakan, Shamshadin and Bodorna example[65]. Thus, a similar date would be proper for the axe in question.

The fourth subgroup (*figs 3 a. 5a*: Cat. No. 12–14), looks like the flat axes in form, but differs from them with wide shaft holes: while the body and the blade shows similarities in form, their wide and elliptic shaft holes differ from the flat axes. The subgroup draws attention with a flat and tabular rectangular profiled long body, wide shaft-hole and wide semi-circular blade, they are in fact typologically very close to the Koban type axes. Additionally, the butt end in *figs 3 a.*

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59 Chernykh 1992, 278; Müller-Karpe 1995, 227–228; additionally, the data about the Tli burials and excavation was published in Russian and Georgian. See Tekhov 1981.

60 Karpe 1995, 228–229, fig. 2.

61 Karpe 1995, 227–231.

62 Martirosyan 1964, 51–53 fig. 26 and 27.

63 For the Kirovakan examples, see Kushnareva – Markovin 1994, 23–25 fig. 31.

64 The Gyumri example was acquired from the internet site of the Shirak Regional Museum <http://www.shirakmuseum.am/HTML/EN/main_fr.html> (03.02.2010).

65 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 161.

5 a: Cat. No. 13. 14 is flattened. *Figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 13 is distinguishable with the spur below the blade, where it joins the shaft. Some similarity can be seen in *figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 14.

This type is known as »hammer headed Colchis axes« in the Transcaucasian literature[66]. Only the example in *figs 3 a. 5 a*: Cat. No. 12 lacks a butt end in shape of a hammer head. Axes very similar to this group, flat axes with semi-circular blades, are known to be common by the beginning of the 14th century B.C., in Transcaucasia general[67]. However, the examples above should be considered as a part of the Colchis type axes. Two parallel examples come from the Keda region of Batum and were dated between the 12th and 11th century B.C.[68]. Also similar samples are known from the LBA graves in Artik graveyards in Armenia[69]. Thus, this subgroup of these examples can be dated between the 13th and 11th century B.C. as earliest examples[70].

Another subgroup of the Kars Group is the »adze headed axes« (*figs 3 b. 5 b*: Cat. No. 15–19). This kind of double-headed and long-shafted axe is mostly known from the sites in Iran. The earlier existence of this kind of axe was reported due to the illegal excavations of the pillagers, in the Gilan and Mazanderan regions to the North of Iran, on the southern coasts of the Caspian Sea[71]. The same type exists also within the assemblage of the »Astrabad Treasure«, dug out during the illegal excavations to the South-east of the Caspian Sea[72]. For a long time, the origin of this type was suggested as the region mentioned above[73]. This group, which has a problematic dating, was later roughly dated to the end of the second millennium B.C., in the light of the data from the Marlik burials[74]. As the number of the systematic excavations in Iran increased, the answers on the dating of these axes became relatively easier. The excavations in Tepe Hisar have been conducted since the midst of the 1960's, and findings of axes and axe moulds in Level III B–C, demonstrates that this type can go to the end of the third millennium B.C. at the earliest[75]. In a study where a group of bronze artefacts from Iranian origin in the Ashmolean Museum were examined, Moorey mentions the existence of the same type of axes and gives a date consistent with the date above[76]. Thus, according to the data above, a similar date between the end of the third millennium B.C. and the end of the second millennium B.C. should be proper for the Kars examples.

The sixth and last subgroup of the Kars Group is a »shaft-holed axe«. The axe draws attention with a flat and thin body, semi-circular and unbalanced blade and the large circular shaft-hole (*figs 3 c. 5 c*: Cat. No. 21). Parallels of this type again can be found in some of the assemblages of Anatolia and the Transcaucasus. According to Prezeworski's pioneer study of the Anatolian metal industry, a very similar piece was dated within a wide range between 1500 and 700 B.C., and Sazazkale was nominated as its origin[77]. On the other hand, Chernykh defines this type as a variation of the »Colchidic type« and dates it to the Late Bronze Age (1500–1000 B.C.).

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66 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 345–346.
67 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 161.
68 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, Object number: 245.
69 Badalyan and Avetisyan 2007, 70, pl. II.6; 73, pl. V.2. VI.7.
70 Gambaschidze et al. 2001, 161; Kushnareva – Markovin 1994 fig. 17.
71 Moorey 1971, 64 fig. II.
72 Rostovtzeff 1920, 4–27 fig. 3.
73 Deshayes 1960, 445 fig. 3126–3129.
74 Negahban 1964, fig. 124.
75 The examples from Tepe Hissar generally lack decoration on the shaft. Schmidt 1937, 185. 205 fig. 120, pl. LII. XLIV.
76 Moorey 1971, 64, nos. 35, 36 fig. II.
77 Prezeworski 1939, pl. III, 4.

Final Remarks

The North-eastern Anatolian Region, lying among the hilly zone as a natural barrier between Northern Mesopotamia and the Southern Caucasus, has hosted important cultures since the Late Prehistoric period, in contrast to the negative geographical conditions. Some of these cultures come into prominence especially in regard to ancient metalworking. This is especially acceptable for the period following the Early Bronze Age. Beginning with the Middle Bronze Age, the Southern Caucasus emerges as an important metalworking centre.

Unfortunately, today so little is known about the status of the region in question here, or its role in ancient metallurgical activities. The main reason for this ignorance is the lack of archaeological research that never could have been achieved parallel to the archaeological potential of the region. But, an inventory of a few metal objects provides us with clues about this potential. The aim of this study has so far been to present an understanding about this potential in the region, beginning with the Middle Bronze Age and later, in the light of the bronze axes, to show a special assemblage of ancient metalworking. Most of the axes studied here were acquired by »purchase«, which is to say, were dug out of their contexts by the pillagers, and are not totally satisfactory to answer the questions in mind. Nevertheless, archaeologically excavated examples within the Erzurum Group should be considered as real clues leading us to further possible answers.

Bronze axes from Erzurum and Kars reveal an interrelation between the South Caucasus and related regions – especially Eastern Anatolia and Iran – during a long period, beginning from the Early Bronze Age to the midst of the Iron Age (between the 27th and 7th century B.C.). The novel cultural regional formations such as the representatives of new ethnic movements as Bedeni-Martkopi cultural complexes following the end of the Kura-Araxes culture, also bring a jump in metallurgical activities. Rich metal findings from the kurgans prove this without any doubt. However, apart from the metal findings, other archaeological data directly reveals that the region was an important complement to process. Recent data especially shows that the process following 2500 B.C., which is somehow a precursor for the cultural transformation, should be much more brilliant than ever guessed[78]. Thus, excavations in Sos Höyük and the material from Pulur and Güzelova recently re-evaluated, points to a different Middle Bronze Age in the region in contrast to that so far known[79]. Further systematic projects will reveal the details of the clues collected until now. It is clear that metallurgy and metalworking will be inseparable and form crucial parts of further work. The material studied here is the pioneer support of future investigations[80].

The traces that lead us to think that there is a lot to say about the ancient metalworking during the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age come from the axes in the Kars Museum. Although these were gathered by purchase from different parts of the region, an excavated similar find in the Pulur burials should be kept in mind[81]. Additionally, the sounding carried out on Pulur Höyük in 2001 proves the existence of strong cultural deposits in the mound contemporary to the burials[82]. The wide angled Colchis type axes in the Kars Museum should be accepted

78 Sagona 2004, 475–538; Işıklı 2005, 497–553.
79 Sagona 2004, 475–538; Işıklı 2005, 497–553; Güneri 2007, 267–324.
80 Işıklı 2008c, 55–80.
81 Işıklı – Can 2007, 153–166.
82 Işıklı 2008a, 267–290.

as important evidence to the presence of ancient metallurgy and metalworking in the region between the 16th to 7th century B.C.

Today, North-eastern Anatolia still remains as a dark spot in the map of ancient metallurgy and metalworking. Nevertheless, it is sometimes just enough to open the door to see what is inside the room, for we know that the room is not empty, but just needs some more light.

Catalogue

Catalogue No. 1
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 69
Finding Place: Karaz Excavation, Trench B I, Level 4,00 m
Length: 15,5 cm
Height: 5 cm
Thickness: 2 cm
Edge Width: 5 cm
Edge Angle: 9 cm
Blade Length: 10,5 cm
Blade Thickness: 1 cm
Shaft Width: 4 cm
Eye Diameter: 3 cm

Catalogue No. 2
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 180.97
Length: 15 cm
Height: 3,5 cm
Thickness: 0,5 cm
Edge Width: 3,2 cm
Blade Length: 11,7 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,5 cm
Shaft Width: 2,4 cm
Eye Diameter: 2,1 cm

Catalogue No. 3
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 406
Finding Place: Oltu, Şahmı Village, Erzurum
Length: 18 cm
Height: 4,5 cm
Thickness: 1,5 cm
Edge Width: 4 cm
Edge Angle: 7 cm
Blade Length: 9 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,5 cm
Shaft Width: 3 cm
Eye Diameter: 2,5 cm

Catalogue No. 4
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 1423
Finding Place: Karaz Excavation, Trench B I
Length: 15 cm
Height: 7 cm
Thickness: 1,8 cm
Edge Width: 5,5 cm
Edge Angle: 10 cm
Blade Length: 9 cm
Blade Thickness: 1,2 cm
Shaft Width: 4 cm
Eye Diameter: 4 cm

Catalogue No. 5
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 612
Finding Place: Pulur Excavation, Grave 1
Length: 14 cm
Height: 6 cm
Thickness: 2,5 cm
Edge Width: 7,5 cm
Edge Angle: 8 cm
Blade Length: 9 cm
Blade Thickness: 1 cm
Shaft Width: 3,5 cm
Eye Diameter: 2,3 cm

Catalogue No. 6
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 2004/48(A)
Length: 16,5 cm
Height: 4 cm
Thickness: 1 cm
Edge Width: 5 cm
Blade Length: 11 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,7 cm
Shaft Width: 3,1 cm
Eye Diameter: 2,2 cm

Catalogue No. 7
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 1424
Finding Place: Karaz Excavation, Trench B II, Level 2,5 m
Length: 12,5 cm
Height: 3,5 cm
Thickness: 0,4 cm
Edge Width: 5,5 cm
Edge Angle: 11 cm

Catalogue No. 8
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum

Inventory Number: 1356
Finding Place: Pulur Excavation, Trench T, Level 2,00 m
Length: 10,5 cm
Height: 6 cm
Thickness: 0,5 cm
Edge Width: 5 cm
Edge Angle: 8 cm

Catalogue No. 9
Bronze Axe
Erzurum Museum
Inventory Number: 1577
Length: 9,9 cm
Thickness: 0,5 cm
Edge Width: 4,5 cm

Catalogue No. 10
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1.9.87
Finding Place: Kars
Length: 17,5 cm
Height: 5,5 cm
Thickness: 2,1 cm
Edge Width: 6 cm
Edge Angle: 6 cm
Blade Length: 9 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,5 cm
Shaft Width: 2,5 cm
Eye Diameter: 1,4 cm

Catalogue No. 11
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1.1.69
Finding Place: Gönülaçan Village, Posof, Kars
Length: 19,5 cm
Height: 8,5 cm
Thickness: 1,9 cm
Edge Width: 7,5 cm
Edge Angle: 8 cm
Blade Length: 8 cm
Blade Thickness: 1 cm
Shaft Width: 3 cm
Eye Diameter: 2 cm

Catalogue No. 12
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 2.1.69
Finding Place: Gönülaçan Village, Posof, Kars
Length: 12 cm
Height: 5,5 cm
Thickness: 3 cm
Edge Width: 5,7 cm
Edge Angle: 6 cm
Blade Length: 3,5 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,4 cm
Shaft Width: 2,6 cm
Eye Diameter: 2 cm

Catalogue No. 13
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1.3.65
Finding Place: Kars
Length: 17 cm
Height: 10,5 cm
Thickness: 3 cm
Edge Width: 10,5 cm
Edge Angle: 13 cm
Blade Length: 8 cm
Blade Thickness: 2 cm
Shaft Width: 3,7 cm
Eye Diameter: 2,5 cm

Catalogue No. 14
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 3.11.1969
Finding Place: Gönülalan Village, Posof, Kars
Length: 12 cm
Height: 6 cm
Thickness: 2,5 cm
Edge Width: 5,7 cm
Edge Angle: 6 cm
Blade Length: 3,5 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,4 cm
Shaft Width: 2,5 cm
Eye Diameter: 2 cm

Catalogue No. 15
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1.13.1987
Finding Place: Iğdır
Length: 14,5 cm
Height: 7 cm
Thickness: 4,3 cm
Edge Width: 4 cm
Edge Angle: 9 cm
Blade Length: 8 cm
Blade Thickness: 1,2 cm
Shaft Width: 2,8 cm
Eye Diameter: 1,5 cm

Catalogue No. 16
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 2.13.1987
Finding Place: Iğdır
Length: 17,5 cm
Height: 5,5 cm
Thickness: 4 cm
Edge Width: 4,3 cm
Edge Angle: 7 cm
Blade Length: 6 cm
Blade Thickness: 1,3 cm
Shaft Width: 3 cm
Eye Diameter: 1,2 cm

Catalogue No. 17
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 3.13.1987
Finding Place: Iğdır
Length: 17 cm
Height: 5,5 cm

Thickness: 4,3 cm
Edge Width: 4,2 cm
Edge Angle: 8 cm
Blade Length: 5 cm
Blade Thickness: 1 cm
Shaft Width: 3 cm
Eye Diameter: 1,5 cm

Catalogue No. 18
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 4.13.1987
Finding Place: Iğdır
Length: 14 cm
Height: 6,5 cm
Thickness: 3,9 cm
Edge Width: 7 cm
Edge Angle: 11 cm
Blade Length: 6 cm
Blade Thickness: 1,3 cm
Shaft Width: 3,5 cm
Eye Diameter: 1,5 cm

Catalogue No. 19
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 5.13.1987
Finding Place: Iğdır, Kars
Length: 13 cm
Height: 4 cm
Thickness: 3,9 cm
Edge Width: 4,5 cm
Edge Angle: 6 cm
Blade Length: 5,5 cm
Blade Thickness: 1,5 cm
Shaft Width: 4,5 cm
Eye Diameter: 1,8 cm

Catalogue No. 20
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1.1.67
Finding Place: Gönülaçan Village, Posof, Kars
Length: 19 cm
Height: 9 cm
Thickness: 2,7 cm
Edge Width: 10,5 cm
Edge Angle: 13 cm
Blade Length: 10,5 cm
Blade Thickness: 1 cm
Shaft Width: 4 cm
Eye Diameter: 3 cm

Catalogue No. 21
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 4.1.1969
Finding Place: Gönülalan Village, Posof, Kars
Length: 11,6 cm
Height: 9 cm
Thickness: 1 cm
Edge Width: 9 cm
Edge Angle: 13 cm
Blade Length: 6 cm
Blade Thickness: 0,2 cm
Shaft Width: 4 cm
Eye Diameter: 2 cm

Catalogue No. 22
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1565
Finding Place: Sulakyurt Village, Ardahan
Length: 20 cm
Height: 6 cm
Thickness: 2,5 cm
Edge Width: 8,5 cm
Edge Angle: 6 cm
Blade Length: 11 cm
Blade Thickness: 1 cm
Shaft Width: 2,5 cm
Eye Diameter: 2 cm

Catalogue No. 23
Bronze Axe
Kars Museum
Inventory Number: 1589
Finding Place: Kars
Length: 18 cm
Height: 7 cm
Thickness: 2,2 cm
Edge Width: 4,5 cm
Edge Angle: 8 cm
Blade Length: 11 cm
Blade Thickness: 1,5 cm
Shaft Width: 3 cm
Eye Diameter: 2 cm

Abstract: The ›Erzurum-Kars Plateau‹, forming the highest plains of the Anatolian Peninsula, is a natural extension of the Southern Caucasus, in geographical and cultural terms. Besides, the same region hosts the natural passages between the Caucasian World and Anatolia. Despite this particular position, the region still remains as one of the void spaces from the archaeological view.

Recent studies demonstrate that the Caucasus, especially the southern part, has been an important ›metallurgical‹ region since the Middle Bronze Age. Although being a natural part of the same region, the Erzurum-Kars Plateau still cannot provide much evidence due to the lack of search. The metallurgical process can only be traced with the help of data provided by a limited number of excavations, but also unfortunately according to the illegal digs and the material seized from the pillagers.

This paper aims to focus on a special group of metal findings, the bronze axes, today being preserved in the Erzurum and Kars museum, and to stage an elementary corpus for the Northeastern Anatolian region. The mainstay of this study is based on twenty-three bronze axes, nine from the Erzurum and fourteen from the Kars museum. However, only four of the Erzurum examples were uncovered at archaeological excavations, and the stratigraphical data accompanying these is insufficient and obscure. Five other examples from Erzurum and all Kars examples were ›purchased‹ or sized from the pillagers. It is for sure that a chronological sequence is hard to create with such an assemblage, and the authors are eager to point out that they do not aim to ›introduce‹ the illicitly discovered material, but to try to make an introductive study to make an understanding of the metallurgical potential of the region and its interaction with other regions, due to analogical and typological examples.

Bronzeäxte aus der Erzurum-Kars Region
Eine grundlegende Sammlung

Zusammenfassung: Das ›Erzurum-Kars Plateau‹ im Osten der heutigen Türkei umfaßt die höchsten Ebenen Kleinasiens und ist in geographischer wie kultureller Hinsicht die natürliche Fortsetzung des südlichen Kaukasus. Außerdem befinden sich hier die natürlichen Verbindungen zwischen der kaukasischen und der anatolischen Welt. Trotz dieser besonderen Stellung zählt die Region immer noch zu den wenig beachteten Bereichen der Archäologie.

Jüngste Forschungen zeigen, daß der Kaukasus, besonders der südliche Teil, seit der mittleren Bronzezeit eine wichtige Region der Metallproduktion war. Obwohl Teil derselben Region liefert das Erzurum-Kars Plateau aufgrund fehlender Untersuchungen kaum Belege hierfür. Die Entwicklung der Metallurgie kann nur durch eine begrenzte Anzahl von Ausgrabungen nachgewiesen werden; ergänzt werden diese unglücklicherweise aber auch durch illegale Grabungen und Material, das beschlagnahmt worden ist.

Dieser Beitrag konzentriert sich auf eine spezielle Gruppe von Metallobjekten – die Bronzeäxte –, die in den Museen von Erzurum und Kars aufbewahrt werden und eine exemplarische Sammlung für Nordostanatolien darstellen. Der Hauptteil dieser Studie stützt sich auf 23 Bronzeäxte – neun aus Erzurum und 14 aus dem Museum in Kars. Doch nur vier der Stücke aus Erzurum wurden bei archäologischen Ausgrabungen geborgen. Fünf weitere Beispiele aus Erzurum und alle aus Kars wurden von Plünderern ›angekauft‹ oder beschlagnahmt. Unter diesen Voraussetzungen ist eine chronologische Einordnung schwierig; die Autoren beabsichtigen deshalb nicht das rechtswidrig ausgegrabene Material ›vorzustellen‹, sondern es wird vielmehr eine

generelle Studie angestrebt, um mit Hilfe eines typologischen Ansatzes die Bedeutung der Region für die Entwicklung der Metallurgie und die Verbindungen zu anderen Regionen darzustellen.

Erzurum – Kars bölgesi tunç baltaları
Bir giriş korpusu

Özet: Anadolu Yarımadası'nın en yüksek düzlüklerini oluşturan ›Erzurum-Kars Platosu‹, coğrafi ve kültürel açıdan Güney Kafkasların doğal bir uzantısı şeklindedir. Aynı zamanda bölge, Kafkas Dünyası ile Anadolu arasındaki doğal bağlantı yollarını bünyesinde barındırmaktadır. Bu özel konumuna rağmen bölge arkeolojik açıdan Yakındoğu coğrafyasının az bilinen kesimlerindendir. Son yıllarda yapılan çalışmalar Kafkasların, özellikle Güney Kafkasya'nın, Orta Tunç Çağdan itibaren önemli bir ›metalürjik bölge‹ olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu durum özellikle GTÇ ve onu izleyen Demir Çağ için zirve yapacaktır. Buna rağmen durum, çalışmamızın temel coğrafyası olan ve Güney Kafkasların doğal bir uzantısı kabul edilen Erzurum-Kars kesimi için araştırmaların azlığı nedeniyle hala karanlıktır. Bu süreci daha çok bölge müzelerinde bulunan ve çoğunluğu kaçak kazılardan veya kaçakçılık yoluyla müzelere gelmiş çeşitli metal eserlerle izleyebilmekteyiz.

Bu çalışmada, bu karanlığı kısmen de olsa aydınlatabilmek amacıyla bölgenin iki önemli müzesi olan Erzurum ve Kars müzelerinde korunan ve metal eserler içersinde özel bir grup oluşturan tunç baltaları ele almayı ve Kuzeydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi tunç baltaları için bir ›külliyat‹ oluşturmayı amaçladık. Bu çalışmanın orijinal ana malzeme grubunu bugün Erzurum ve Kars müzelerinde korunan toplam 23 adet tunç balta oluşturmaktadır. Bu baltalar, söz konusu müzelere kazı veya satın alma yolu gelmiş eserlerdir. Bu grup içersinde ne yazık ki sistemli kazılardan gelen balta sayısı son derece azdır. Ayrıca bu baltaların stratigrafik bilgileri de kazıların eskiliği nedeniyle çok anlaşılır değildir. Çalışmanın ana malzemesini oluşturan tümü tunç ve kalıp-döküm tekniğinde yapılan baltalardan 9 tanesi Erzurum Müzesi'nden 14 tanesi ise Kars Müzesi'ndendir. Erzurum Müzesi'ndeki baltalardan dört tanesi kazılardan beş tanesi ise ›satın alma‹ yoluyla müzeye gelmiş eserdir. Kars Müzesi'nde yer alan toplam 14 baltanın ise hepsi satın alma yolu ile bölgenin değişik yerlerinden gelmiştir. Elbette ki böyle bir malzeme grubu üzerinden kronolojik bir silsile çıkartmak mümkün değildir. Bu çalışmanın öncelikli amacı, söz konusu baltaları toplu olarak tanıtmak ve Yakındoğu'daki paralelleri doğrultusunda genel bir tipolojik tasnife tabi tutmaktır.

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INHALT

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