

SOME EARLY BRONZE AGE OBJECTS FROM THE DISTRICT OF ÇORUM

TAHSİN ÖZGÜÇ

We have carried out a study of the Early Bronze Age metal objects which have been found either by chance or by illicit excavations in the Çorum - Amasya - Tokat region and its vicinity¹. Published in this article are the metal objects known with certainty to be from this area and which are presently on exhibit at the Istanbul and Çorum Archaeological Museums. I would like to extend my gratitude both to the former curator of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, my colleague Mr. Necati Dolunay, and to the Director of the Çorum Museum, Mr. A. Ertekin, for permitting me to publish these finds.

Certain very important problems exist for the archaeology of early Anatolia. As our country modernizes its methods of agriculture, much of the farm work is now being done by machinery and of other developments brought about by industrialization, we can quote the construction of highways, hydro-electric dams, factories and various highly technical installations. All of these have contributed toward the problem of accidental destruction of early sites in the Çorum - Amasya - Tokat region. Added to this is the existence of organized looters who plunder exposed sites in search of saleable antiquities. The Early Bronze Age objects from the cemeteries of *Oymaağaç* and *Göller* came to light under such unfortunate circumstances and before any properly controlled excavations could be carried out at these sites.

* * *

¹ Tahsin Özgüç - Mahmut Akok, Objects from Horoztepe (Belleten XXI/82, 1957, s. 211 ff.; Tahsin Özgüç - Mahmut Akok, Horoztepe, An Early Bronze Age settlement and cemetery (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından - V. Seri, No. 18) Ankara 1958; "To be referred to as: Horoztepe"; Tahsin Özgüç, New Finds from Horoztepe (Anatolia VIII, 1964, p. 1 ff. and Tahsin Özgüç, Excavations at Maşat Höyük and Investigations in its Vicinity (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, V. Dizi sa. 38) Ankara 1978, p. 89-99.

The metal objects currently on exhibit at the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul were purchased in 1971. The collection consists of a sun-disc, a scepter-head, a hilt, a "hook", five silver cups, a dagger and a shaft-hole axe. Museum records suggest that these objects probably originated from Oymaağaç Cemetery, located about 50 kilometers northeast of Çorum. However, there is also the possibility that they came from Göller Cemetery near Merzifon, since similar objects are known from both sites. These two Early Bronze Age cemeteries have been completely destroyed by looters and most of their burial offerings have therefore ended up in the hands of dealers and in private collections. The Cemetery of Göller, situated on the south slope of a rather flat mound, mostly consisted of pot-graves. Today, a large area of this slope is covered with the irregular stone lids of the pot-graves and numerous pits made by the plunderers (Pl. I, 1-2).

The first object presented from this collection in the Istanbul Museum (Inventory Number 13061) is a bronze or copper sun-disc decorated with two bull figures. The disc is 15.8 cm. high and 13.3 cm. wide, while the bull figures measure 8.5 cm. in length and 6.2 cm. in height (Pls. II-IV). The hoop of the disc consists of a cast ring of 51 adjoining bracelet-shaped rings. Standing parallel to each other on the four-faceted rod connecting the lower ends of the hoop are the two bull figures. The heads and haunches of the bulls project beyond the plane of the hoop. Situated on the extended, connecting inner horns of the bulls is a smaller 11-toothed disc 2.6 cm. in diameter. Three of the teeth of this smaller disc touch the lower edge of the outer hoop. Although the large ears, nostrils, mouths and tails of the bulls are preserved, it is impossible to discern any detail on the faces or feet, and in spite of the extensive oxidation of the piece, it is evident that there was originally no detail in these areas. The two supporting feet of the disc are interconnected by a thin horizontal rod. They are dull at their lower ends and are rectangular in cross section.

At first glance it can be observed that this double bull figure belongs to the same group as Alaca Höyük's single and triple-deer and bull-figured discs from Tombs A, B, D and L². However, in our

² Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Les Fouilles d'Alaca Höyük 1935* (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından, V. Seri, No. 1) Ankara 1937, Lev. 196, Al. 656; 199, Al. 657; Hamit

example, the pair of horns that circle the base of the Alaca Höyük discs is missing³. But we do know of several discs from Alaca Höyük which are also lacking these horns. As proven by the disc found at Horoztepe⁴, these distinctive copper or bronze objects are not peculiar to Alaca Höyük but extend to the North, probably as far as the Black Sea coast. It would be misleading to only associate these objects with the graves of the royal family. They are found in public cemeteries as well and appear to belong to a burial tradition common to northern central Anatolia and the central Pontic region.

The most important feature of our disc is the smaller 11 - toothed disc attached to the bulls' horns - indicating a utilitarian use for a type of object otherwise known only as a funerary gift. W. Orthmann suggests that these discs were attached to the poles and yokes of carts that were buried with the dead⁵. The importance of this new discovery, in my opinion, is that it further strengthens W. Orthmann's suggestion.

Being the first copper or bronze 'hook' found outside of Alaca Höyük, the second object discussed here is also of some importance. This hook (Inventory Number 13063) is 11.2 cm. in diameter and 2 cm. thick and has a circular cross section (Pl. V; Fig. 2). It is perforated by three small holes, two with the same direction of axis, and has two pointed spurs. Thirty-one such hooks have been discovered in Alaca Höyük graves⁶. It is possible to divide these strange objects into secondary types - mainly according to the varying shapes and relative orientation of these spurs (some of them extend out to almost form a complete circle). There are hooks in the Alaca Höyük collection that are almost identical to ours. When they were

Koşay, *Ausgrabungen von Alaca Höyük 1936* (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından, V. Seri, No. 2), Ankara 1938, Lev. 90 and Hamit Koşay, *Les Fouilles d'Alaca Höyük 1937-1939*, Ankara 1951, Pl. 151-152, 193-194.

³ Alaca Höyük 1937-1939, Pl. 193.

⁴ Horoztepe, p. 44, Pl. VII, 2.

⁵ W. Orthmann, *Zu den "Standarten" aus Alaca Höyük* (Istanbuler Mitteilungen 17/1967, p. 34 ff.).

⁶ 3 hooks from tomb B; 6 from tomb T (Alaca Höyük 1935, p. 208-209 Al. 659-661, p. 272-273, Al. 1096-1100, Al. 1738); 4 from A; 1 from A (Alaca Höyük 1936, p. 102, 7, 23; 104, 57-59 and 114, 17); 1 from H; 5 from D; 2 from E; 1 from K; 3 from L; 4 from S (Alaca Höyük 1937-1939, Pl. 135, 1 "95"; 149, 1-6; 163, 5; 164, 4; Pl. 183, 3; Pl. 193-194; 20, Al. 56, p. 75 (one of them made of silver)).

originally discovered, they were thought to have been associated with various cults⁷. However, based on the fact that they were almost always discovered right next to the discs, W. Orthmann suggests that the two objects were functionally related. In fact, he thought the hooks were used for tying yokes⁸. Had the excavations at Oymaağaç and Göller been carried out in a systematical manner, we would have been better informed about the possible uses and meaning of these hooks.

The discovery of the scepter-head or hilt added to the body of artifacts outside of the types particular to Alaca Höyük. This object (Inventory Number 13062) is 5.8 cm. long and 6 cm. in diameter (Pls. VI-VII). Its cylindrical body is ornamented with mushroom-shaped protuberances. The shaft hole is 2.6 cm. in diameter on the exterior and 2 cm. on the interior. The tip and body of the piece are ornamented with deep grooves which form regular parallel lozenges and triangles on the body. Traces of a hard paste can still be found inside the shaft-hole. The closest parallel known for this example is the golden hilt from Tomb B at Alaca Höyük⁹. The first known example of this type from outside of Alaca Höyük, the hilt adorned a metal or precious wooden scepter.

The shaft-hole axe (Inventory Number 13065) measures 17.2 cm. long with a cutting blade 3.2 cm. wide. The shaft-hole, penetrating the axe at its center, is fairly round in diameter. The upper rim of the hole is moulded slightly higher than the rest of the upper edge of the axe (Pl. VIII, 1a-b; Fig. 1). Although this object resembles the silver axe found in Tomb E of Building Level 6 at Alaca Höyük¹⁰ and the bronze axe in the Amasya Museum¹¹, it also displays local peculiarities.

The dagger (Inventory Number 13064) measures 20.1 cm. in length. It has a prominent midrib and the upper part of its flat tang is pierced by two rivet holes (Pl. IX; Fig. 3). The blade is distinguished

⁷ Alaca Höyük 1935, p. 208-209; Franz Hancar, *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Asien* 12, 1938, p. 20 and Tahsin Özgüç, *Die Bestattungsbräuche im vorgeschichtlichen Anatolien*, Ankara 1938, p. 107.

⁸ W. Orthmann, p. 53, note: 90.

⁹ Alaca Höyük 1935, p. 172, Al. 243.

¹⁰ Alaca Höyük 1937-1939, Pl. 166, 1.

¹¹ Maşat Höyük, p. 34, Fig. 87, Pl. 70, 1.

by angular shoulders and two wide and two narrow facets. The technical skill evident in the execution of this dagger can easily be compared to that of the silver dagger from Tomb K at Alaca Höyük¹² and of the dagger from *Bayındır köy*¹³.

The miniature, cup-shaped objects wrought in silver are thin-walled and lack any attachment holes on the rims (Pl. X, 1-5). Two are 6 cm. in diameter (Numbers 13067 and 13068) while the remaining three (Numbers 13069, 13070 and 13071) measure 4.5 cm. in diameter. All of them are 1 cm. in depth. In my opinion, these were models for the larger silver vessels. Evidently, they were often deposited in tombs as inexpensive, symbolic replicas of the larger, more valuable vessels for which they were substituted. Possibly they might be lids.

* * *

The Early Bronze Age objects on exhibit in the Çorum Museum further contribute to our knowledge of the area concerned. The dealers who sold these objects to the Museum claimed that they came from the vicinity of *Iskilib* but they were unable to identify the exact location.

The sun-disc from this collection (Inventory Number 32-203-74) is 12 cm. wide and, including the handle, 14 cm. high (Pl. XI, 1). The disc encircles four flat, intersecting rods which form an irregular grid of nine geometric spaces. This simple disc is a counterpart of similar discs from Tombs B, T, C and D at Alaca Höyük¹⁴. Together with the one found at Horoztepe¹⁵, this is the second disc discovered outside of Alaca Höyük.

The bronze bull figure (Inventory Number 36-43-74) measures 19 cm. high. The animal stands on a small base with all four legs joined together at the bottom - the front legs curving towards the rear for this reason (Pl. XII, 1a, b, c). The face is cylindrical and the only detail it features is the mouth, which is expressed as a

¹² Alaca Höyük 1937-1939, Pl. 183, 2.

¹³ D. B. Stronach, The development and diffusion of metal types in Early Bronze Age Anatolia (Anatolian Studies VII, 1957, p. 98, Fig. 1, 14 and Pl. VII b, 1).

¹⁴ Alaca Höyük 1935, Pl. 262-263, Alaca Höyük 1936, Pl. 101, 32 and Alaca Höyük 1937-1939, Pl. 154, 6.

¹⁵ Horoztepe, p. 44, Pl. VII, 2. see also : AfO XXII, p. 102, Abb. 3

deep groove. The ears under the horns are well-designed and are attached to the head above a long neck which is out of proportion with the rest of the body. The tail is attached to the body along its entire length. The only other detail expressed on the figure is in the treatment of the knees. This piece is a simpler and cruder counterpart of the bull figures found at Horoztepe and Alaca Höyük.

The spouted bronze teapot (Inventory Number 32-1-74) measures 10.5 cm. high and 12 cm. wide. The base of the pot is slightly rounded and the handle has a rectangular cross section (Pl. XI,2). The flared rim thickens above a long neck. Early Bronze Age pottery vessels of similar type were manufactured in imitation of metal prototypes.

The bronze shaft-hole axe (Inventory Number 35-2-75) is 12 cm. long and 3 cm. wide, with its splayed blade measuring 3 cm. wide. The long handle shaft is cylindrical while the shaft hole is oval (Pl. XIII, 1). This particular axe is of a very rare Anatolian sub-type of shaft-hole axes belonging to the last quarter of the Early Bronze Age. Apart from a thinner waist, it reminds us of the shaft-hole axe from Horoztepe¹⁶. Now, to count among the several sub-types of Early Bronze Age axes known to us, we can identify the local characteristics of an axe style belonging to the Iskilib region. It is thinner than other Anatolian axes and the blunt part around the shaft hole is flattened out like a hammer while the point extends into a very sharp projection.

The other axe (Inventory Number 35-1-75) is of the same type as the shaft-hole axes from Mahmatlar, which no doubt formed part of a hoard¹⁷. It measures 8.6 cm. high and 8 cm. wide (Pl. XIII, 3). Similar types of halberds, characterized by their short, strongly-hooked butts, were found at Mahmatlar by illegal excavations in 1949. No counterparts to this highly developed axe-type were found at Horoztepe or at Alaca Höyük. As with the Mahmatlar halberds, this example bears a pronounced moulding along the back of the blade and along the sides of the well preserved butt. This discovery strengthens the evidence for these halberds being common to this area during the last quarter of the second millenium B. C.

¹⁶ Horoztepe, p. 46, Pl. 8, 10.

¹⁷ H. Koşay - M. Akok, Amasya Mahmatlar Köyü Definesi (Belleten XIV/55, 1950, p. 485, Pl. 15 and D. B. Stronach, p. 121-122.

The three bronze spearheads (Inventory Numbers 7-190-70, 32-2-74 and 32-3-74) belong to a type found throughout the Çorum-Tokat region¹⁸. With respect to their respective numbers above, they measure 26.5 cm., 6.5 cm. and 15 cm. in length; and 6.7 cm., 6.5 cm. and 3.5 cm. in width (Pl. XIV, 1-3). All three have bent tangs which are rectangular in section, and although they all have midribs, that of number 32-2-74 is much more pronounced. The widest part of each blade is perforated by two slits. Two of the blades are two-faceted while one (Number 32-3-74) is four-faceted. The facets are wide at the center of the blade and narrow toward the point. All three blades have sloping shoulders.

The third shaft-hole axe (Inventory Number 7-188-70) was discovered at *Yeni Hayat Köyü* in the Province of Çorum. It is 10.3 cm. long, with a blade width of 4 cm. (Pl. XIII, 2). The upper part is rounded and the shaft hole is oval. This piece belongs to the same type as shaft-hole axe now on exhibit at the Amasya Museum¹⁹.

The majority of these objects are assumed to have been burial gifts found by robbers in the cemeteries around Iskilib and Yeni Hayat Köyü. However, like several of the metal pieces from the unstratified collection from Mahmatlar, a few of these objects (such as Number 31-1-75) definitely belong to a hoard. It is now an acute necessity that scientific expeditions be organized to conduct research in this area. Those objects which have been discussed in this paper were purchased between 1971 and 1975 - none have since been bought by any museum.

* * *

An extensive collection of bronze objects in the Archaeological Museum of Ankara are also believed to originate from the cemetery of Oymaağaç. This collection of bronze pieces consists of weapons (daggers, spearheads, axes, flat celts and swords), cymbals, animal figurines, pins, heavy lead jars and spindles. I would like to introduce here an interesting piece from the collection - a shaft-hole axe (Pl. XIV, 4). I am most grateful to my colleague, Mr. Raci Temizer, Director of the Museum, for permitting me to publish this object, and for his kind assistance.

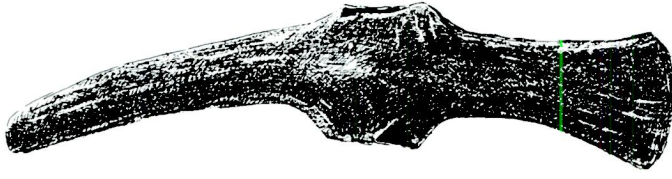
¹⁸ Maşat Höyük, p. 91.

¹⁹ Maşat Höyük, p. 97, Pl. 70, 5.

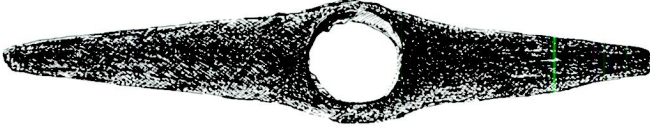
The axe measures 6 cm. long and 3 cm. wide. Its most peculiar aspect lies in the treatment of the butt, which curves down inward like a hook. Many axes of similar type are owned by the Museum. Early Bronze Age axes of this type are not to be found in other regions of the Near East, or in Europe. There are many types of shaft-hole axes originating from the region under discussion and which belong to the last quarter of the third millenium B. C. In addition, there are sub-types of shaft-hole axes which are peculiar to this region.

In previous publications we have discussed the importance of the region as well as the chronological interpretation of the objects²⁰. Therefore we will omit such discussion here.

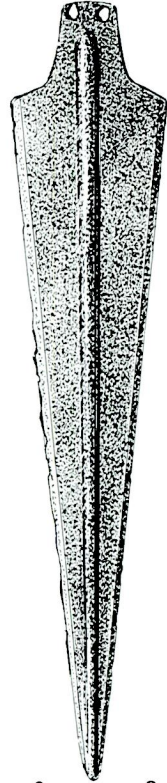
²⁰ Horoztepe, p. 53 ff.; Objects from Horoztepe, p. 208-209; Maşat Höyük, p. 98-99



0 cm 5

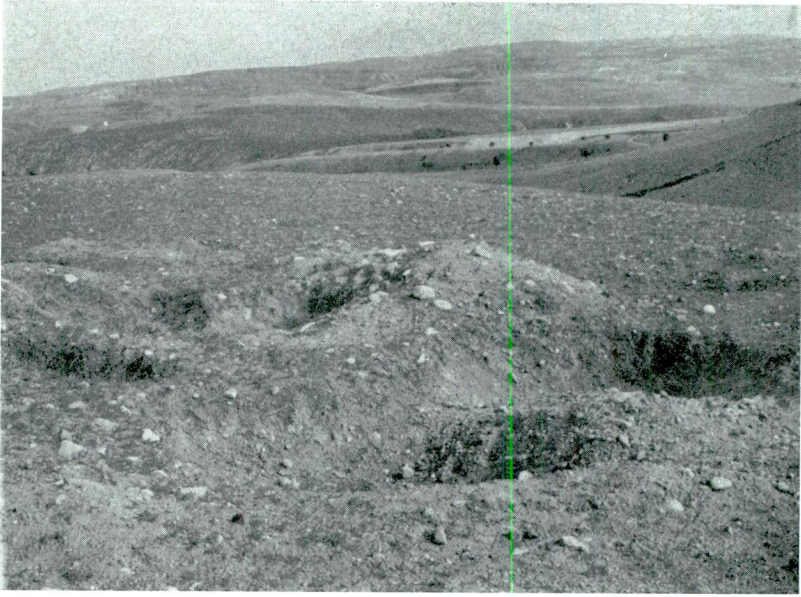


0 cm 3

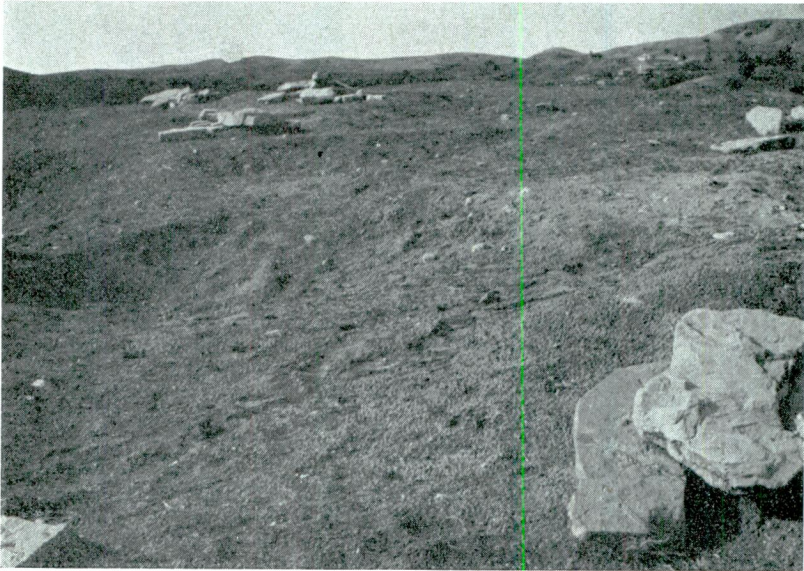


0 cm 3

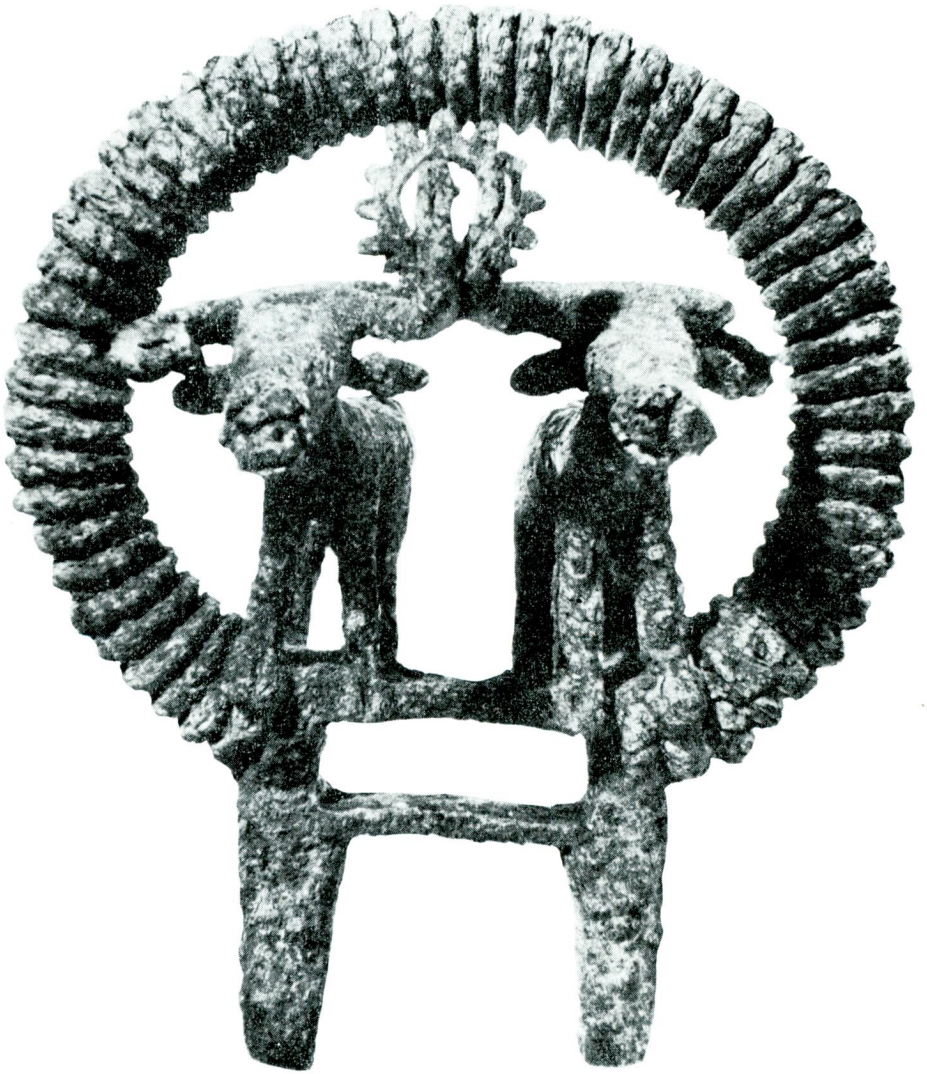
Res. - Fig. 1 - 3

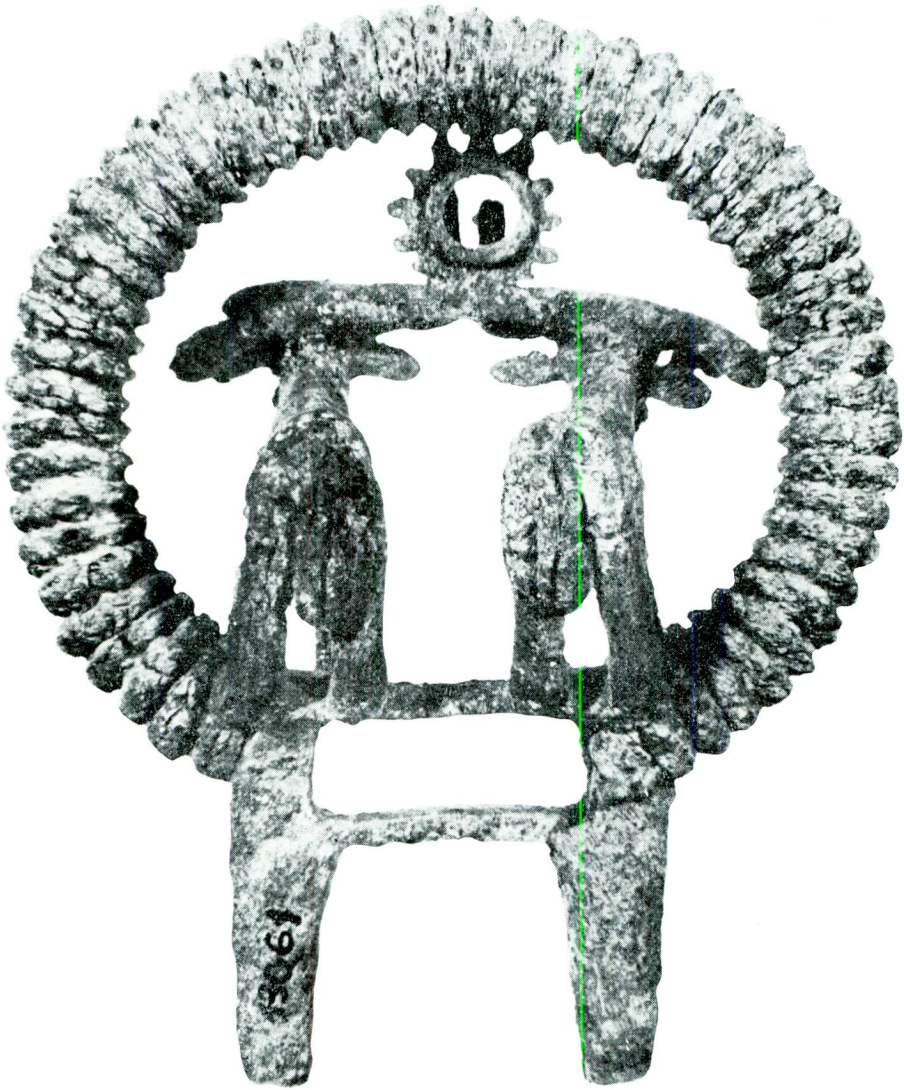


I

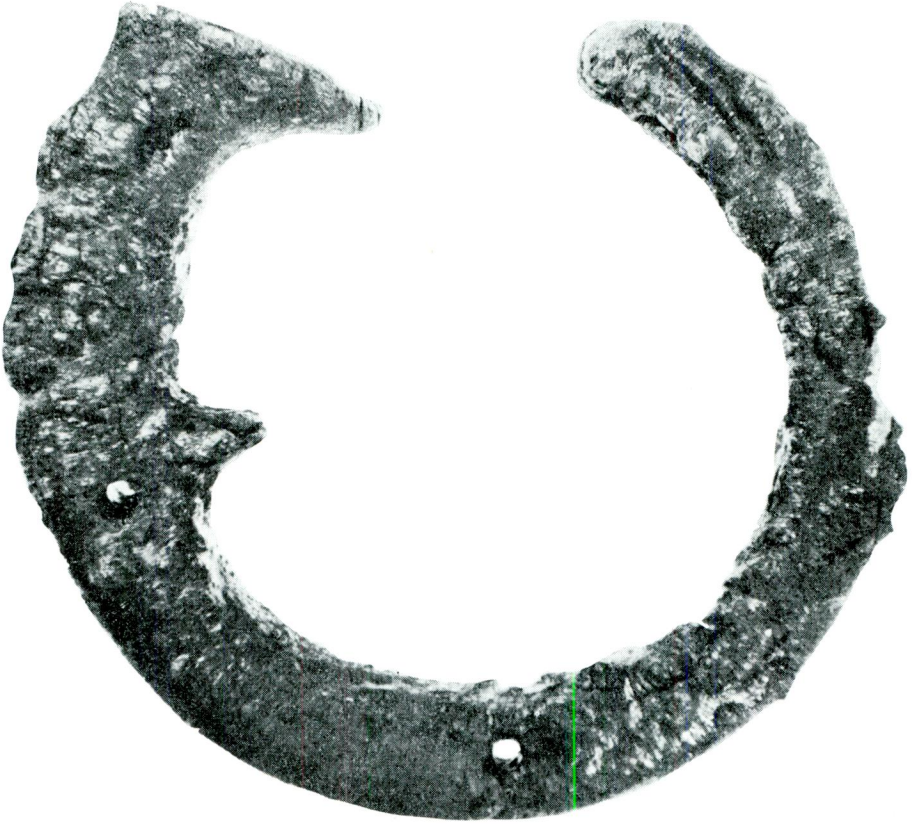


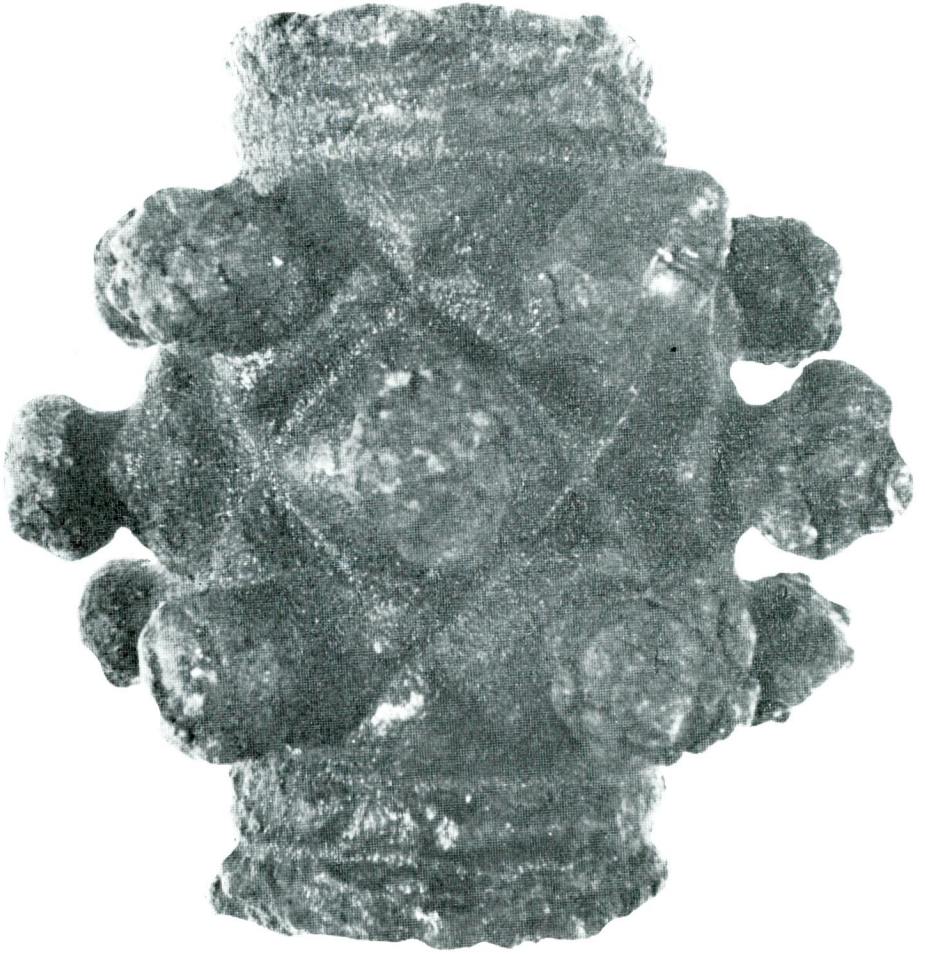
2

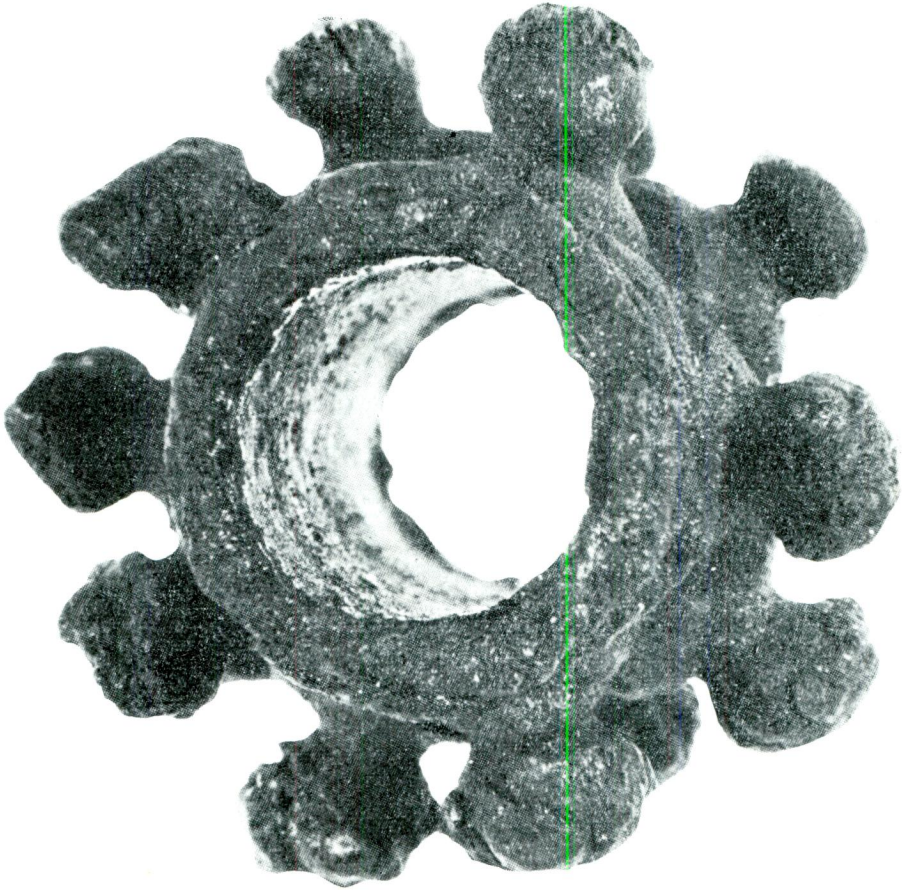










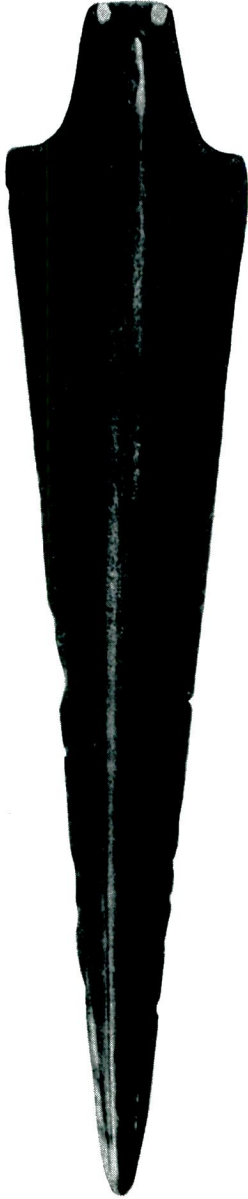


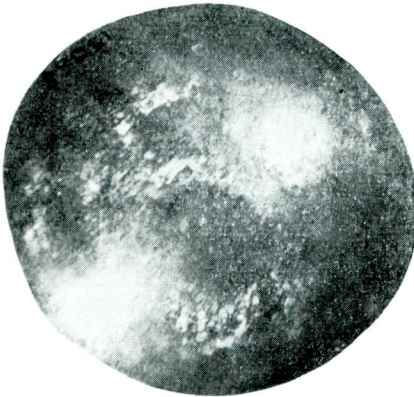
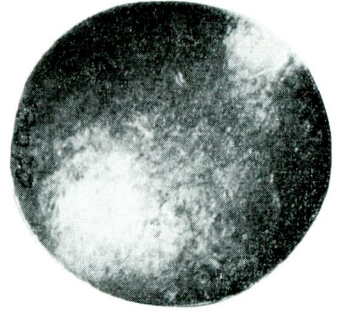


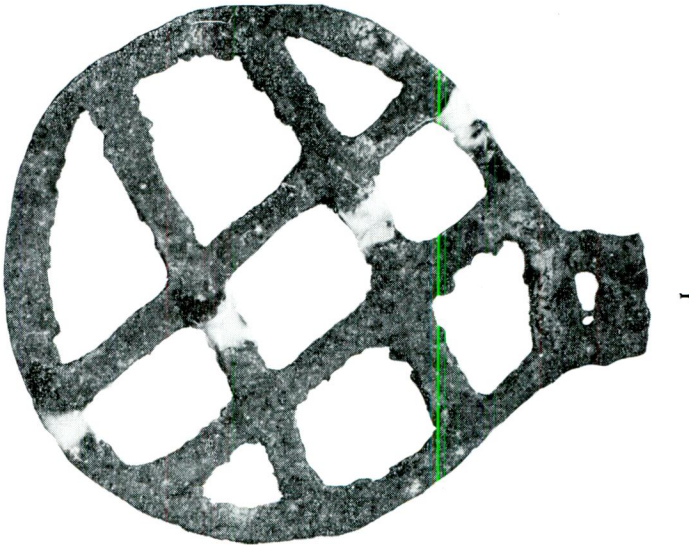
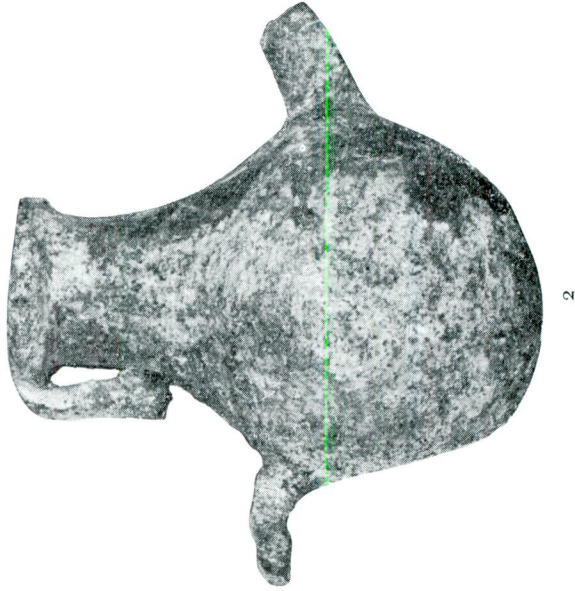
1 a

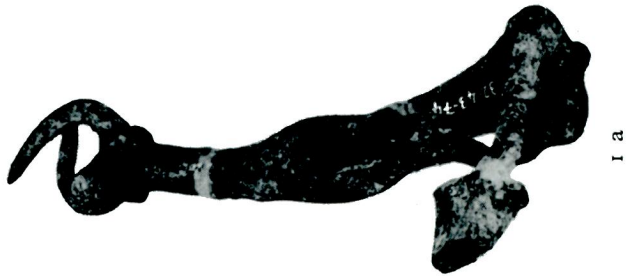


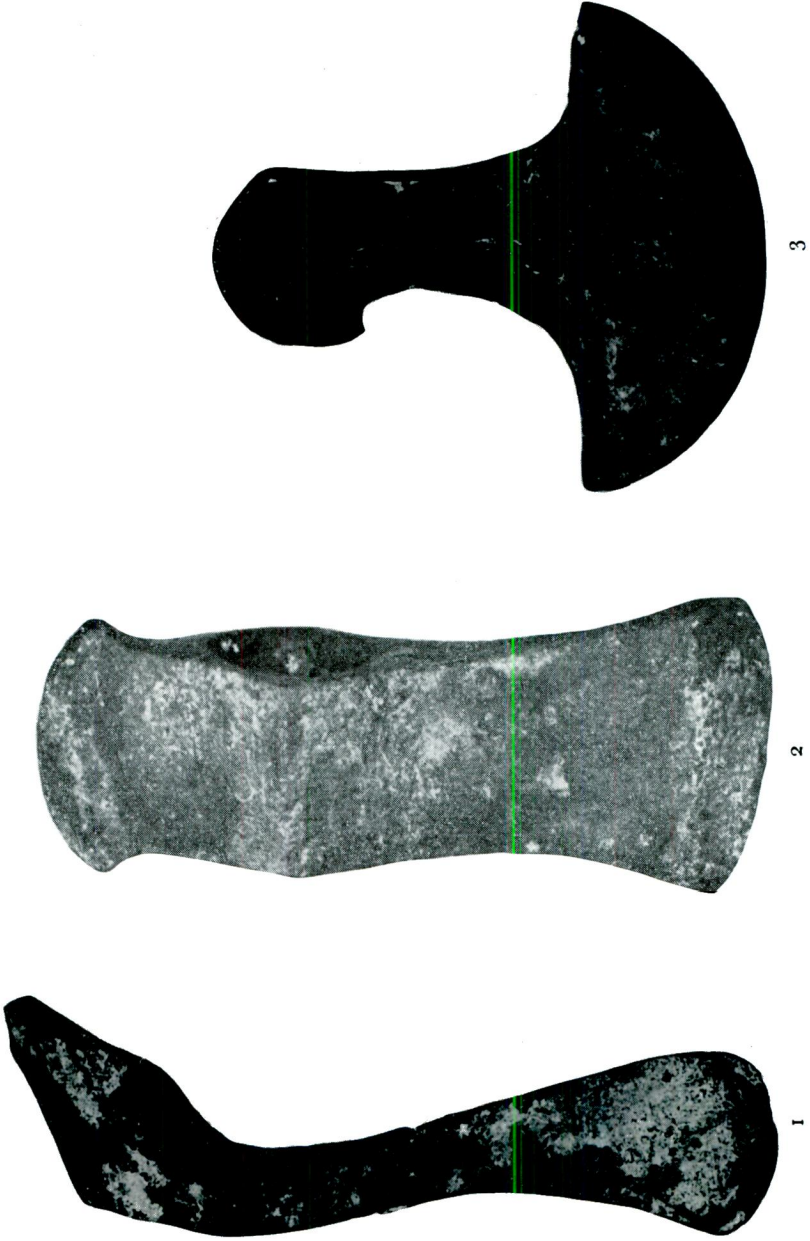
1 b

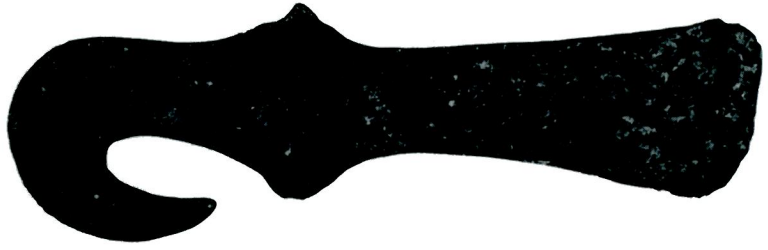








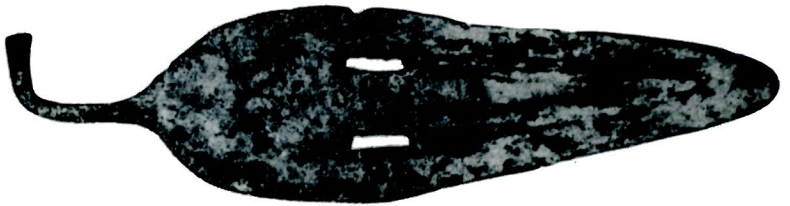




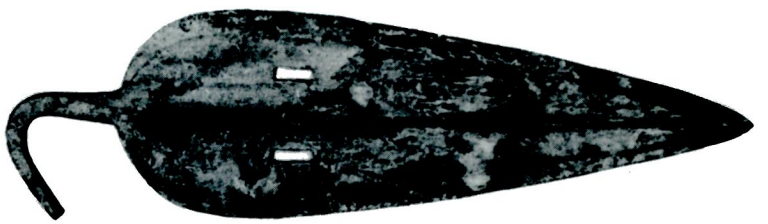
4



3



2



1