

AN EARLY BRONZE AGE PORTABLE STOVE FROM THE VAN CASTLE MOUND*

Davut YİĞİTPAŞA**

Abstract

Since The Lake Van Basin contains few stratigraphic evidences and is an isolated region, there is just a limited amount of information available about the development of the Karaz Culture, one of the most common cultures of the Near East.

Stoves, which are generally portable or wall-mounted, have different forms, dimensions, and ornamentations depending on their intended uses. Portable stoves having the shape of a horseshoe and having two or three horn-like protrusions were found in Erzurum Karaz, Pulur, Güzelova, Norşuntepe, Tepecik, and Sos mounds. Besides important samples obtained in these regions, an unprecedented portable stove was found in the Lake Van Basin. Samples similar to the portable stove having the shape of a horseshoe found in the Castle Van Mound were found in such centers of Elazığ and Malatya regions as Tepecik, Sakyol, and Pulur. This stove may contribute to understanding the religious beliefs of the Karaz Culture.

Key Words: Early Bronze Age, Eastern Anatolia Region, Karaz, Castle Van Mound, Stove.

VAN KALESİ HÖYÜĞÜ'NDEN BİR İLK TUNÇ ÇAĞI SEYYAR OCAĞI

Özet

Yakındoğu coğrafyasının en yaygın kültürlerinden biri olan “Karaz Kültürü”, Van Gölü Havzası’nda özellikle stratigrafik kanıtların az ve izole bir bölge olmasından dolayı bu kültürün gelişimi hakkında sınırlı bilgilere sahibiz.

Genellikle taşınabilir veya duvara bitişik olarak yapılan ocaklar kullanım amacına göre farklı form, boyut ve süsleme gösterirler. At nalı şeklinde olan taşınabilir ocaklar özellikle Erzurum Karaz, Pulur, Güzelova, Norşuntepe, Tepecik ve Sos Höyük’te iki veya üç tane boynuz şeklinde çıkıntıya sahip olan ocaklar ele geçirilmiştir. Söz konusu merkezlerde ele geçen örneklerden başka daha önce Van Havzası’nda örneği görülmemiş olan taşınabilir ocağın ele geçirilmesi bakımından önemlidir. Van Kalesi Höyüğü’nde ele geçirilen at nalı şeklindeki taşınabilir ocağın benzer örneklerine Tepecik, Sakyol, Pulur gibi Elazığ ve Malatya bölgelerine ait merkezlerde rastlanmıştır. Ayrıca söz konusu ocağın Karaz kültürünün dini inançlarını anlamamıza katkı sağlaması bakımından da önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlk Tunç Çağı, Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi, Karaz, Van Kalesi Höyüğü, Ocak.

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1-Introduction:

The Karaz culture, which characterizes the Early Bronze Age (EBA) in the Eastern Anatolia Region, covers Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Northwest Iran, and the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. From this perspective, the Karaz culture that makes its presence felt in a large part of the Near East is one of the chronologically and geographically widest cultures of the region.¹ If “Khirbet-Kerak” part of the culture in Suriye–Levant section is ignored, the natural obstacle formed by the Taurus Mountains constitutes the southern border of the culture for Eastern Anatolia.² This culture is characterized by handmade, engraved, relief-ornamented, and well-polished pots and pans tradition, an architecture having rectangular, square, and round plans and involving adobe and/or mud wattle-and-dub technique, and fixed or portable “ornamental” stoves.

The data obtained from the settlements in the Lake Van Basin provide quite limited information in regard to the development of this culture. Fewness of stratigraphic data and the fact that the region is conservative and isolated in terms of foreign relations lead to this picture. Karagündüz and Dilkaya mounds that have been excavated recently have not changed that, either. A. Çilingiroğlu reports the stages II and III of culture in Dilkaya. The stratification of Karagündüz³, which is another important settlement, indicates that it was settled in the stages II and III of EBA, which was the case in Dilkaya, too.

2-Castle Van Mound Stove:

The Castle Van Mound is located to immediate north of the Castle Van and extends parallel to the citadel in the east-west direction. The mound has a length of approximately 750 m. In excavation works performed in 14 trenches in the area A and

¹ Different names were given to this culture by different researchers. They are “Yanik Culture”, “Kura-Araxes Culture”, “The Neolithic Culture of Caucasia”, “Khirbet Kerak Culture”, “Eastern Anatolia Early Bronze Age Culture”, “Early Transcaucasian Culture”, and “Karaz Culture”. This culture, which is given different names depending on its location, is mostly referred to as Karaz Culture by the researchers in Anatolia. Burney-Lang 1971: 43; Dyson 1973: 686; Koşay-Turfan 1959: 359; Arsebük 1974; Braidwood 1960: 49; Burney 1958: 157; Kuftin 1943: 92; Yiğitpaşa-Can 2012: 276.

² Işıklı 2005; Yaylalı 2007: 179.

³ Sevin et al. 2000: 849.

the area B, EBA stoneware was found besides Medieval, Late Iron Age, and Urartian earthenware pieces. Such stoneware was all mixed.

Area A: Tuşpa-Castle Van Mound provides characteristic stoneware types and typologies of EBA. However, the excavation works performed so far have not introduced adequate architectural traces belonging to the above-mentioned period. The excavation works in 2012 presented some weak architectural traces from EBA. A base made of compressed clay was found in the trenches N27 and O27 on the southern slope of the mound. It is clear from the sections that the base was renewed once, and there is the trace of a second base. Orange ceramics, which were among the typical ceramics of EBA, and grey and bright Karaz (Kura-Araxes) ceramics with a dark face and a black polish were found on the base. In 2014, drilling was performed in the eastern adjacent part of the Urartian wall in order to obtain earlier strata in the trench M28 and see stratification in the mound. The Karaz (Kura-Araxes) ceramics found beneath the Urartian base demonstrated that the filling might be from EBA. Carving-ornamented mouth and body pieces with geometric motifs as well as various bone and obsidian pieces were found in the area. The density of the stoneware implies that the base is close in the area. The fact that the base is immediately beneath the Urartian wall is important in terms of stratification in the mound. In the trench M29, EBA earthenware pieces were found on the base of the grave with locus number 00837. Such pieces included pots with short and high necks, thin-wall broad pots, handles, bottoms, and amorphous pieces. They mostly have dark grey, reddish yellow, and brown primes as well as good bright polishes.

There are 3 (three) 10 m x 10 m trenches in the area B that is in the middle of the mound (approximately 270 m to the east of the area A). Their codes are N57, O57, and P57 (Photos 1-2; Drawing 10). The works in the area B have not provided any architectural data in regard to Urartu and EBA stratum. However, the Urartian and EBA ceramics found in the ash pits belonging to the late stage as well as portable stove made of terra-cotta and animal figurine made from terra-cotta imply that architectural data about early strata may be found in the area in future works (Photos 3-4; Drawing 10). Another important EBA finding is portable stove (Photo 5a-c; Drawing 11). In the locus number 00924 in the trench numbered N57, it was found as several pieces along

with some medieval earthenware pieces at the bottom of the medieval ash pit. The stove has a length of 31.5 cm, a width of 28 cm, and a height of 5.8 cm at the lowest endpoint and a height of 13.5 cm at the highest point. The stove which has the shape of a horseshoe is made from terra-cotta. There is a nodular protrusion in the middle of it. The upper part of the stove is decorated with thumb ornaments made in a certain order and a perpendicular thumb chute reaching the bottom behind the nodule.

3- Evaluation and Conclusion

The fact that a floor furnace in Erzurum/Pulur⁴ and a horned object in Sos Mound⁵ have been dated to the Late Chalcolithic Period is important in that it shows the history of Eastern Anatolia stove and floor furnace tradition.

Stoves, which are generally portable or mounted to wall, gave different forms, dimensions, and ornamentations depending on their intended used (Drawings 1-9, 11; Photos 5a-c).⁶ Round stoves encased in ground are observed in Erzurum/Sos Mound and Erzurum/Karaz. Portable stoves having the shape of a horseshoe are common in Eastern Anatolia and Armenia.⁷ Two or three portable stoves having protrusions in the form of a horn have been found in Erzurum Karaz (Drawings 1, 4), Pulur (Drawings 1-2, 5), Güzelova (Drawing 1), Norşuntepe (Drawing 1), Tepecik (Drawing 1), and Sos Mound (Drawings 6-7).⁸ Some researchers stated that these stones were “*pot bases*”. However, such thoughts should be addressed suspiciously because pots with a pointed bottom were few in that period, and such terra-cotta works do not contain any sign implying that fire was started through fire holes.⁹ Some experts thinking that protrusions having the shape of a horn symbolize “male reproductive organ” say that early Transcaucasian communities had a patriarchal structure. We, on the other hand, think that they were used for ceremonial and religious purposes apart from daily use because the horn sections of some samples end with schematic animal reliefs made

⁴ Koşay-Vary 1964.

⁵ Sagona-Sagona 2000.

⁶ Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1971: 62; Koşay 1979; Takaoğlu 2000: 11 vd.

⁷ Essayan 1980; Işıklı 2005: 405; 2009: 341; 2011: 76 vd.

⁸ Koşay-Turfan 1959; Koşay-Vary 1964; Koşay-Vary 1967; Koşay-Akok 1973; Darga 1985; Naumann 1985; Özgüç 1986; Neve 1996; Sagona-Erkmen-Thomas 1996; Esin 1979: 88-89; Sagona-Sagona 2000: 17; Takaoğlu 2000; Hauptmann 2003: 24; Mellaart 2003.

⁹ Diamant-Rutter 1969; Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1970: 161 vd.; Diamant-Rutter 1969: 147 vd.; Burney-Lang 1971: 57; Koşay 1979; Takaoğlu 2000.

through engraving, and the body sections of some samples are ornamented through engraving.¹⁰ If that is considered true, where did use for cult purposes take place? While some researchers think that there were “domestic uses”,¹¹ some others argue that there were non-domestic uses (temple, etc.)¹². In addition, the fact that sacred portable stoves prevailed in all strata of EBA indicates the existence of a long religious tradition.

In regard to non-domestic religious practices, places called “temple” or “sacred space” were found in Georgia (Amiranis Gora¹³ and Kvatskhelebi¹⁴), Azerbaijan (Baba Dervis II¹⁵), Armenia (Mokhra-Blur III and Shengavit),¹⁶ and Eastern Anatolia of Turkey (Pulur/Sakyol and Korucutepe).

Broad U-shape portable altars are common in Elazığ-Malatya region. The most striking anthropomorphic stoves (i.e. stove ornamented with human face and geometric decorations) were found in Pulur/Sakyol (Drawing 2) and Erzurum/Cinis Mound (Drawing 9). Eyes, noses, and ears are quite clear in human faces on sacred stove pieces in Cinis Mound. Neck part, which is quite long from the bottom of chin, is ornamented with broad V-shape engraved lines one under the other.¹⁷

In Erzurum Karaz (Drawing 4) and Sos Mound (Drawing 6), a circular stove with three protrusions at the center was found, and its edges contained engraved double-spiral branch motifs.¹⁸

In the rooms of Pulur/Sakyol (XI-IX) settlements, a main stove with an ash chute, a furnace looking like that stove, and a stove having the shape of a horseshoe were found.¹⁹ *“Sacred mother goddess/god stoves were depicted as extending their skirts in the rooms numbered 79, 80, and 83 of the 10th building floor where there were*

¹⁰ Koşay-Turfan 1959: 358; Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1970: 181; Koşay 1979; Takaoğlu 2000: 11 vd.; Işıklı 2009: 341.

¹¹ Sagona 1998: 13-25; Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1971: 162-163.

¹² Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1971: 162-163.

¹³ Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1971: 65-66; Resim 21. 10-16.

¹⁴ Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1971: 75 vd.; Resim 26. 16, 31.

¹⁵ Kuşnareva-Çubinişvili 1971: 78; Resim 28; 1-3, 12-28.

¹⁶ Kuşnareva 1997: 226.

¹⁷ Ceylan 2000: 30.

¹⁸ Koşay-Turfan 1959: 397; Sagona 2000: 334; Sagona-Sagona 2000: Fig 46-47.

¹⁹ Koşay 1976a: Lev. 117.

also temple goods, which reflects a social life where religious elements prevailed". In these sacred stoves, goddess/god faces were triangle. Their eyes and mouths are depicted with engraved circles, and their noses are depicted with engraved lines. Other faces were depicted at the ends of arms of the sculptures. In this way, an attempt may have been made to demonstrate the pantheon of gods. Vagina was indicated in a stove sculpture. Such stoves had a width of approximately 60 cm, a length of 100 cm, and a height of 50 cm. They had a stone protrusion on their backs. It is thought that portable stoves having god depictions at their ends were placed on this protrusion in the back by means of a stick. Small canals on the terrace in the back of the sculpture stove may have been made to drain animal blood. Of the two sculptures facing west in the rooms numbered 79 and 80, one is god altar, and the other is goddess altar.²⁰ A clay ox head relief was found between the arms of the stove in the room numbered 74 that functioned as pot stand. The fact that the horseshoe stoves and the furnaces that were used in the daily life existed in the same spaces indicates that the stoves were made for religious purposes alone. H. Z Koşay argues that these spaces were family temples.

Round, rectangular, and horseshoe-shape stoves found in Van-Dilkaya were generally in a 'stove section' and on top of one another.²¹

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²⁰ Koşay 1976a: 16; Lev. 37.

²¹ Çilingiroğlu 1988: 262 vd.

we understand more clearly that these objects about religion may be found not only in some but in all of the coverage area of the culture.

Similar samples were found in such centers of Elazığ and Malatya regions as Tepecik, Sakyol and Pulur, but it is unprecedented in the Lake Van Basin.²²

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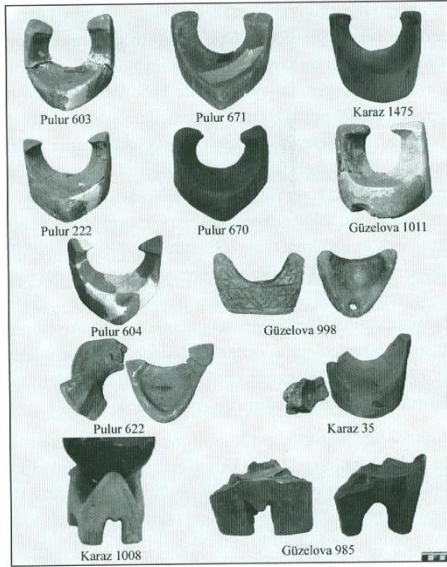
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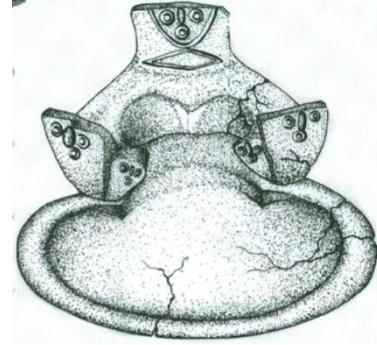
²² Konyar 2011: 31; Konyar ve diğ. 2012: 246, Fig. 20.

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PHOTOS AND DRAWINGS



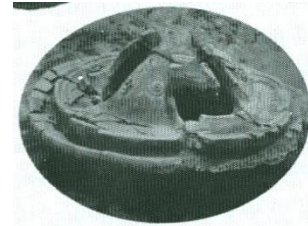
Drawing 1: EBA Eastern Anatolia portable stoves (Işıklı 2009).



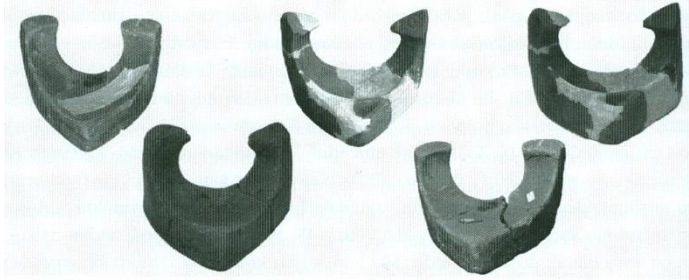
Drawing 2: EBA Pulur/Sakyol portable stove.



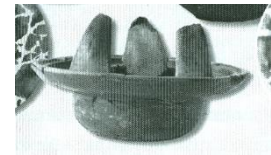
Drawing 3: EBA Elazığ Museum portable stove (Işıklı 2009).



Drawing 4: EBA Karaz Mound portable stove.



Drawing 5: EBA Pulur Mound portable stove.



Drawing 6: EBA Sos Mound portable stove.

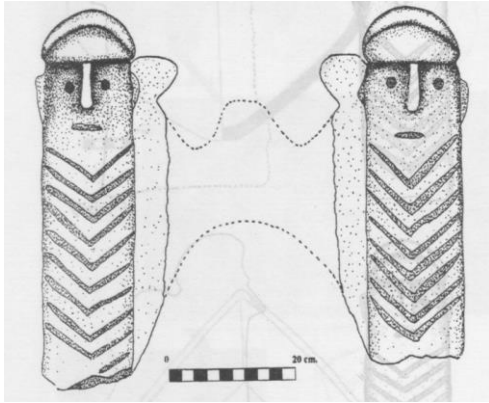
An Early Bronze Age Portable Stove From The Van Castle Mound (s.46-58)



Drawing 7: EBA Sos Mound portable stove.



Drawing 8: EBA Büyüktepe Mound portable stove.



Drawing 9: EBA Cinis Mound portable stove (Ceylan, Drawing 6).



Photo 1: Area B Trenches (Tushpa archive).

Davut YİĞİTPAŞA (s.46-58)



Photo 2: N57 Trench (Tushpa archive).



Photo 3: Medieval pit silo (Tushpa archive).

An Early Bronze Age Portable Stove From The Van Castle Mound (s.46-58)



Photo 4: EBA portable stove (Tushpa archive).



Photo 5a: EBA portable stove Photo (Tushpa archive).

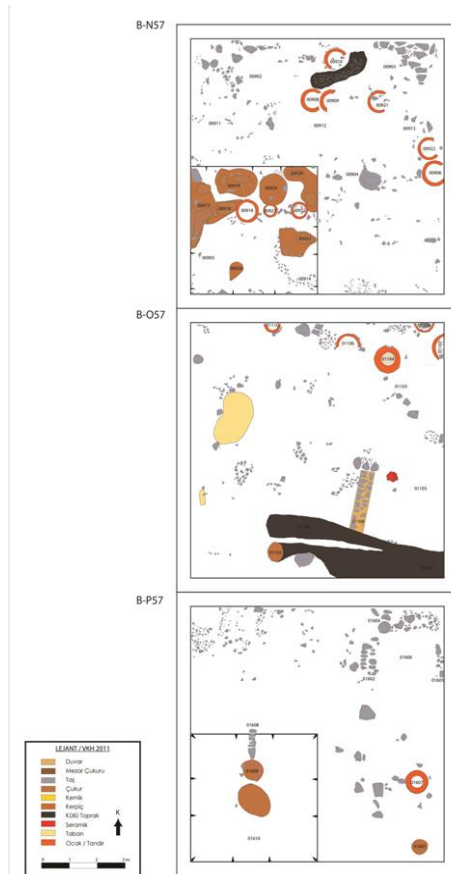


5b: EBA portable stove (Tushpa archive).

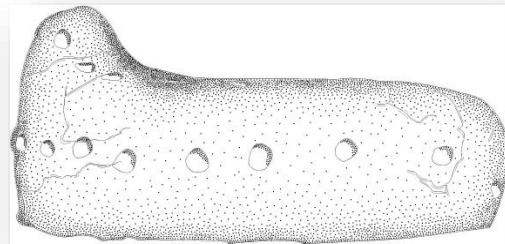
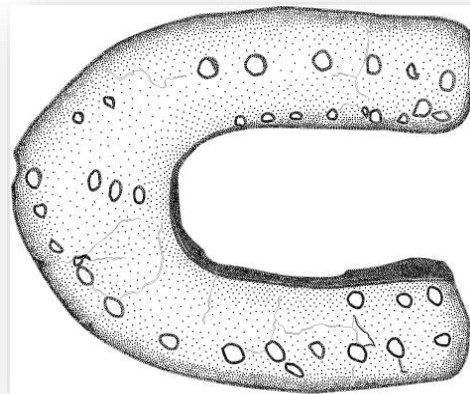
Davut YİĞİTPAŞA (s.46-58)



Photo 5c: EBA portable stove (Tushpa archive).



Drawing 10: Area B Trenches (Tushpa archive).



Drawing 11a-b: EBA portable stove (Tushpa archive).