

Archaeology

Typological Analysis of Weapons from Georgian Archaeological Sites of Classical Period (Spears, Battle-axes)

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ABSTRACT. The article refers to typological analysis of iron weapons (spears and battle axes) of the Classical Period (from 5th c.ury BC to 4th c.ury AD.) found on the territory of Georgia. According to main characteristic features 8 types of spearheads were distinguished: 1. narrow- bladed (from 6th to 3rd c. BC.); 2. rhomboid-bladed (from 5th to 3rd c. BC., some examples existed in the 1st c. BC.); 3. elongated triangular- bladed (from 5th c. BC to 2nd c. AD.); 4. with rounded shoulders (from 6th-5th cc. BC to 4th c. AD.); 5. with rounded sides (mainly discovered in graves of west Georgia dating back to 6th-4th cc. BC.); 6. arrow-like were found in the burials of west Georgia dating to 5th-4th cc. BC.); 7. with stem (found at Sokhumi mt. graves # 4 and 9, (4th-2nd cc. BC.); 8. bayonet- like (5th- 3rd cc. BC). Among battle axes 3 types are distinguished: 1. with a short, hammer like butt, oval hole for handle, prolonged blade with oval, asymmetrical, narrow cutting edge; 2. with a short, hammer-like butt, an oval hole for handle, the outlined shoulder for a handle, narrow neck, wide, asymmetrical, or symmetrical cutting edge; 3. “Bearded“ battle-axes, which have long, distinctly outlined, or sometimes slightly noticeable, tubular socket for a shaft. The wide, assymetrical cutting edge expands to the lower corner . © 2018 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: Classical Period, spears, battle axes

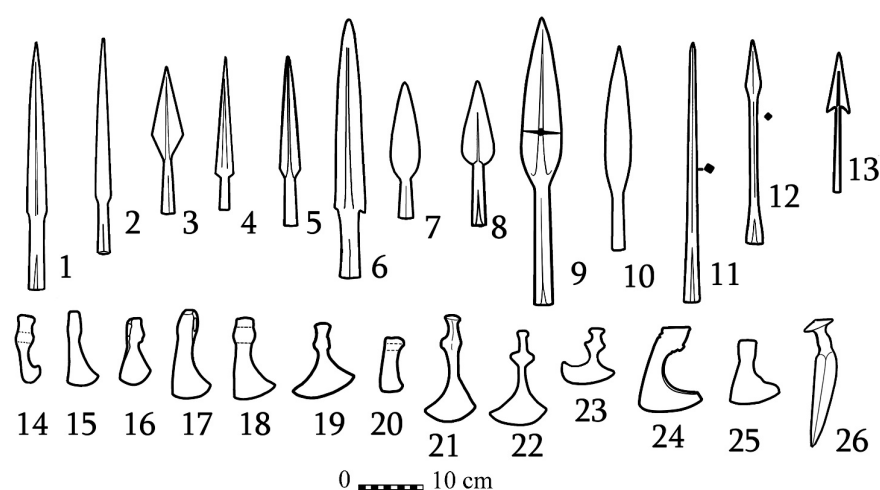
During Classical Period (from 5th c.ury BC to 4th c.ury AD.) different kinds of weapons were spread in Georgia. Further we will review typological data of the spears and battle axes, that were discovered at the archaeological sites of Classical Period Georgia.

Iron spear was the main weapon in Georgia throughout the Classical Period. While classifying

spears the main characteristic is a spearhead as wooden handles have not survived.

The following types of spearheads are known in Classical Period Georgia:

Type I - The narrow- bladed spearheads (Fig. 1-2). They have long and narrow blades, evenly narrowing sides toward their points and conical, opened sockets; width of blade is a bit bigger than



Figs. 1-13: Iron spearheads; **14-25:** Iron Battle-axes; **26:** Iron pole-axe

the socket's itself. They were uncovered at archaeological sites of Georgia dating back to 5th-3rd cc. BC: Tsiteli Shuqura cemetery graves ##2, 4, 28, 88 (6th-5th cc. BC.) [1: 118-119], Beshtasheni, grave # 55 (4th c. BC), Gomareti (4th-3rd cc. BC.), Shavsakdara I (4th-3rd cc. BC), Chkhikvta (5th-3rd cc. BC.), Etso (4th c. BC.) [2:142-143], Kanchaeti (4th c. BC) [3: 52-53, Fig. XI, 35], Tsnori (4th c. BC) [4: Fig. XXX 1], Guadikhu cemetery, younger group graves ##1, 8, 38 (4th-3rd cc. BC.), Sokhumi mt. grave # 2 and # 6 [1: 118], Vani, grave # 93rd quarter of 4th c. BC.) [5: 203, Fig. 175 1- 4], Dablagomi (3rd c. BC.) [6: 76, Fig. 117, 1,2].

Type II - rhomboid-bladed spearheads (Fig. 3) are characterized by elongated rhomboid forms. They have clearly distinguished shoulders, conical, opened sockets. Such spearhead can be long-socketed and short socketed, with or without midribs. Such spearheads were discovered at the sites dating back from 5th-4th to BC and 1st cc. BC.: Abelia, Beshtasheni, grave # 41, Etso, Skhalta, Shavsakdara, Kiketi, [2:143], Kamarakhevi [7: 179, Fig. 1385], Kanchaeti [5: 53, Fig. XI,36], Tsiteli Shuqura cemetery elder group graves, Sokhumi (4th-3rd cc. BC.), Guadikhu elder group - 5th- 4th cc. BC graves [1: 120], Vani burials ## 9 and 14 (3rd quarter of 4th c. BC.) [5: 203, 211, Fig.175-5,6], also in the cultural layers of 1st c. BC. of Vani city-site.

Type III - elongated triangular- bladed spearheads (Fig. 4,5,6) have elongated blades, straight sides, and conic, open sockets. Such spearheads were discovered at the sites dating back from 5th c. BC. to the 2nd c. AD.: Akhul Abaa grave # 1 [8:225], Tsiteli Shuqura elder group graves [1: 120], Abulmugi, Beshtasheni, Etso, Tashbashi. Skhalta, Shavsakdara I [2: 143], Kanchaeti [3: 52, Fig. XI,34], Kldeeti [9:140, Fig. XXI 2 b].

Type IV - spearheads with rounded shoulders exist throughout the whole Classical Period. They have rounded shoulders, straight and narrowing sides towards the points (Fig. 7,8). The earliest examples of these spearheads were found at Tsiteli Shuqura (6th-5th cc. BC.) and Guadikhu elder group grave (4th c. BC.) [1: 121]. Such spearheads were also found at Beshtasheni (5th-4th cc. BC.) [2 : 141] and Varsimaantkari (5th-4th c. BC). [11: Fig. XVIII, 8, 508]. Analogous spearheads were found in burials dating back to the 4th and 4th-3rd cc. BC: Kanchaeti [3: 52], Santa, Tashbashi [2:141], Vani, grave # 9 [5: 203, 211, Fig. 175-7,8], Dablagomi [6: 76, Fig. 117, 3], in 3rd- 2nd c. burial from Sairkhe [12: 66], 2nd-1st cc. burial from Kazreti [2:141]. This weapon is also characteristic for the Roman period sites of Georgia and is found in burials of 2nd c. – Bandza, Bejhanbagi, Duisi, Zeda Gora, Kldeeti, [9: 140,142 Fig. 29a Fig. XXI 2 d], Jhinvali [13: 22,

Fig. XI,382], Modinakhe [14:94, Fig. 61] and Tsikhisdziri grave # 1 which dates back to the 4th c. AD. [15: 83, Fig. XXXII 6].

Type V - The spearheads with rounded sides (Fig. 9-10) have the blade widened towards the point, then, in the middle it reaches its fullest width and after this at the end of its length it narrows again. This type is also known as “lanceolate” or “laurel leaf-like” type. Such spearheads were mainly discovered in west Georgia: at Guadikhu burial ground 6th-4th cc. graves, at Sokhumi mt., grave # 9 [1: 120], 2 examples were found in Vani grave # 2 (3rd c. BC.). [15: 181, Fig. 137, 45], in Dablagomi, cultural layers of 1st c. of Vani [5: 182; Fig. 138, 4,5, 6; 35 75, Fig. 55 - 3]. Such spearheads were also discovered in Eastern Georgia sites dating back to 4th c. BC: Abulmugi and Skhalta [2: 144].

Type VI - Arrow-like spearheads (Fig. 13). The spearheads of this type have triangular blades; the shoulders go down in such a way that gives the blade arrow like shape. They have long and open sockets. They were found at Sokhumi mt. (5th-4th cc. and early 4th c. BC.) [1:126]; Vani, grave # 2 (3rd c. BC.) [15: 181, Fig. 137, 1-3]; Dablagomi rich burial (early 3rd c. BC.) [6: Fig. 117].

Type VII - Spearhead with stem (Fig. 12). This type is very rare. They have short rhomboid blades and long sockets. The socket is connected with blade by narrow, long and quadrangular in section waist. They were found at Sokhumi mt. graves # 4 and 9 [1: 125].

Type VIII - Bayonet- like spearhead (Fig. 10) is more a throwing and thrusting bayonet- like weapon than spearhead. It has quadrangular in section, long blade and open socket. Such spearheads were found in Tsinandali and Asureti [2: 142], also in west Georgia, namely in Guadikhu elder group burial # 13 (55) and Sokhumi mt. # 4 burial [1: 125].

The iron battle-axe is an iron weapon for hacking which have been attested at many sites of Classical Period Georgia. This weapon with its wooden handle consists of a butt, a hole for a handle and a cutting edge. Cutting edges can be wide and narrow.

Following types are distinguishable among them in terms of characteristics during the Classical Period:

Type I - has a short, hammer like butt, oval hole for handle, prolonged blade with oval, asymmetrical, narrow cutting edge. (Fig. 14-17). Three subtypes can be distinguished here: A. The characteristic feature of this subtype is a well outlined butt and a bit crooked blade (Fig. 14). Such battle axe was found in Abano grave # 2, which dates back to the 6th-5th c. BC [16: 61-73]. B. A well outlined hammer-like butt is a bit prolonged (Fig. 15). They were found in Abulmugi graves ## 18 and 24, Beshtasheni grave # 49, Skhalta cemetery, in ruined graves (2 examples) and grave # 18, Etso, graves ## 72, 69, 95, 107 [2: 142], Shori, grave #6 [17:48, Fig. V 140], Guadikhu elder group graves ## 1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 31, 32; Tsiteli Shuqura elder group graves ## 4 and 38, Sokhumi mt. graves ## 10 and 12 [1: 130], Eshera [18: Fig. LXII,4], and Dablagomi. All these burials are dated from 5th to 3rd c. BC. C. A hammer-like, tetrahedral butt is low and flat (Fig. 16). Such battle-axes were found in burial assemblages dated to 5th- 3rd cc. BC: Asureti, Gomareti, Manglisi, Santa, Shavsakdara I [2: 142]. The battle axes from Kldeeti (2nd c. AD.) and Zeda Gora (1st-2nd cc. AD.) [9: 15, Fig. XXI,1 d] are rare examples of subtype C and are dated to the Roman period. The battle –axe from Kldeeti (Fig. 16) is a classic example of this subtype and the weapon from Zeda Gora (Fig. 17) bears some features of subtype A (the butt is more outlined and the blade is a bit crooked).

Type II - the second type of the battle axe has a short, hammer-like butt, an oval hole for handle, the outlined shoulder for a handle, narrow neck, wide, asymmetrical, or symmetrical cutting edge. (Fig. 19-23). Following subtypes can be distinguished in this type: A. The characteristic feature of this subtype is a short, narrow neck with an outlined shoulder for a handle (Fig. 19, 23). Such battle axe with a symmetric cutting edge was found in Sokhumi mt. grave #2 (3rd-2nd cc. BC.) [1: 131], and in east Georgia, at Kanchaeti

burial (4th c. BC.) [3: 52, Fig. XI, 33]. The battle axes with asymmetrical cutting edge of subtype A were found at Sokhumi mt. grave #6 (3rd-2nd cc. BC.), Guadikhu graves ## 1, 8 [1: 132], Akhul Abaa grave # 5 (2nd part of 4th c. BC.) [8:225, Fig. 2-14], Eshera [18: 47, Fig.LXII]. B. The battle axes of this subtype have a narrow hammer-like butt, narrow, long, quadrangular in section neck and clearly outlined shoulder for a handle (Fig. I 21, 22). Sokhumi mt. graves ##3, 4, 6, 8 (3rd-2nd cc. BC.), Guadikhu grave # 49 [1: 132]. As we have seen, the battle axes of this type are mainly characteristic of west Georgia and date back to the period from the 5th-4th cc. to of 3rd-2nd cc. BC.

Type III –“Bearded “ battle-axes (Fig. 24, 25) (so called “Tsebeldian” battle axes - named by the place in Georgia (Abkhazia), where a big number of such weapons were found) have long, distinctly outlined, or sometimes slightly noticeable, tubular socket for a shaft. The wide, asymmetrical cutting edge expands to the lower corner of the cutting edge, which is called the "beard". It provides a wide cutting surface while keeping the overall weight of the axe low. The "beard" of the axe was useful to pull weapons out of the defender's grasp, or to pull down a shield. “Bearded “ battle-axes of the period of our interest from Georgia were found in the grave assemblages of Abgidzrakhu, Akhaiatsarkhu, Aukhuamakhu, Alrakhu, Akhacharu (all from Tsebelda, 3rd-4th cc. BC.), [19: 31- 114; Figs. V-2, VIII-3, XXI-7, XXII-5, 9, XXXIV-3, XXXIX-2, XLI-2, XLVII-1; XIV-10, XXI-8], Olginskoe, Pichvnari, Ureki, Tsikhisdziri, Jieti. There are also lots of examples of “bearded “ battle-axes which were found accidentally or were unearthed during the excavations of later period archaeological sites. Even though the majority of this type of weapon was found in Abkhazia (Georgia), there are lots of examples found in other parts of west Georgia. It should be noted that the “bearded “ battle-axes were widely spread in Europe of the Late Roman and the

Early Middle Ages and they have common features with so called Tsebeldian ones that is why the term “Tsebeldian” battle axes seem to be mistaken.

The pole-axe (Fig. 26) is a piercing-edged weapon. It is an independent kind of weapon, though some experts consider it to classify under war hammer or battle-axe. The blade of the pole-axe can be used, not only for simply hacking down the opponent, but also tripping him, blocking weapon. The main characteristic of such weapons is pointed blades. The weapon of this group was found in Zestaphoni, in the damaged grave of 5th c. BC. The hole of the handle is placed in the control part of the pole-axe, the butt is long and faceted, and the head is flattened. The characteristic feature of this example is that their blades are a bit bent and the blade joins the handle with a narrow, tetrahedral neck [20: 106-107, Fig. 31]. This feature is more clearly expressed on the iron pole-axe of unknown origin preserved in the funds of the Georgian National Museum (inv. # 1-36:129). The fragment of the pole-axe from Narekvavi grave # 43, which is dated to the late 6th and early 5th cc. BC might be of the same type. Its butt head is of a hemispheric form. One more example of pole axes was discovered in Brili necropolis (6th-4th cc. BC.). It has a rhomboid in cross section cutting edge with a point, the blade as well as the butt is bent towards the handle. This kind of weapon had its premise in previous epoch and is known from 7th-5th cc. BC sites [20: 106-107]. All above mentioned pole-axes have very close resemblance with those bladed iron weapons that were discovered in the N Caucasus 6th-5th cc. BC. burials. As it seems, in the Caucasus, where the axe was widely spread as a weapon in the 6th-5th cc. BC. newly made pointed blades were combined with butts of various forms and thus we got different types of iron pole-axes [20: 107, Fig. IV, 31-43].

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არქეოლოგია

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**ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ჰუმანიტარული ფაკულტეტის ხელოვნების ისტორიის და თეორიის ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის დ. მუსხელიშვილის მიერ)

ნაშრომში განხილულია საქართველოს ტერიტორიაზე აღმოჩენილი ანტიკური ხანის შუბები და ცულები. შუბისპირებს შორის გამოიყოფა 8 ტიპი: ვიწროპირიანი, რომბისებურპირიანი, წაგრძელებულ სამკუთხაპირიანი, მომრგვალებულ მხრებიანი, მომრგვალებულ გვერდებიანი ე.წ. ისრისმაგვარი მოკლე რომბულ პირიანი და გრძელ მასრიანი, რომელიც პირს ვიწრო და გრძელი, განივკვეთში ოთხკუთხა "წელით" უკავშირდება; ხიშტისმაგვარი საბრძოლო ცულები სამ ტიპად იყოფა: I – დაბალ, ჩაქურჩისებურპირიანი, პირი წაგრძელებული, ასიმეტრიული და ვიწროა; II - ჩაქურჩისებურპირიანი, გამოკვეთილმხარეანი, ვიწროყელიანი, ფართო, ასიმეტრიულ ან სიმეტრიულპირიანი; III – “წებელდური” ცულები, რომელთათვისაც დამახასიათებელია მოკლე ან გრძელი ყუა და ცალ მხარეს გაფართოებული პირი. ცულის მსგავსი იარაღია ჩუგლუგი, რომლის მთავარი მახასიათებელია შუბისმაგვარი პირი და სოკოსებური ან ჩაქურჩისებური ყუა.

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