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Source: *Iran & the Caucasus*, Vol. 5 (2001), pp. 213-216

Published by: BRILL

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030863>

Accessed: 17/04/2010 13:08

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## AGRICULTURAL TOOLS IN THE EARLY BRONZE COLCHIS

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*Tbilisi*

Within the last period uncovered in the area of the Colchis lowland was a large number of noteworthy relics, among them an outstanding compound of artificially erected settlement of Pichori.

The monument is located in the North-Western part of Colchis, North-East of Gali city, along the right shore of the river Enguri, at 0.5 km. off the sea (*Jibladze 1987, pp. 91-83*).

In the central part of the settlement system (12ha.) there is a hill 5m. high, ellipsoidal, 70m x 30m. A stratigraphic section of the monument shows 8 cultural layers chronologically defined as the final stage of the 3rd Millennium B.C. – beginning of the 4th century B.C. (*Baramidze, p. 4*).

An important research material was discovered in the 8-7th cultural layers of a populated hill dated as the final stage of the early Bronze period (23-21st centuries B.C.). To be noted in the mentioned material are 8 hoes of bronze (fig. I.1-8) and 25 units of moulds made of sandstone (fig. I.9,10, fig. II, 1, 2, 3) (*Jibladze 1987, pp. 81-83; Dzidziguri 2000, p. 155*). A solid base for exact dating of layers is provided by the ceramic material characteristic for this period of the Colchis culture: pottery with organic admixture of straw and imprints of weft on the bottom, communicating vessels, thin-wall black smooth pottery (*Jibladze 1987, pp. 52-88*).

It is to be noted that besides the hoes, the mentioned strata showed moulds for hatchets and spears. Also found were multi-cell moulds and fixtures for secondary metallurgical processing (*Jibladze 1987, p. 79*).

Six bronze hoes are mainly of one kind: a straight thin-stem body evenly narrowing to a slightly oval sickly-shaped blade (fig. I. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6). A round orifice for the handle is in the top part of the hoe, is not separated from the body, inscribing itself into the total outline of the latter. The hoe length is 12-13cm. while the widest part of the working section reaches 7cm. A hoe of a slightly different shape was found in the VIII cultural level: there is a triangular body and horizontal shoulders (fig. I, 7). This specimen, in contrast to other hoes has a sharpened working blade and a round hole in the middle part of the body. The specimen hoe preserved as a fragment (fig. I, 8) should be numbered among the same type, although the preserved part most certainly shows another form of the opening for the handle: the opening is pipe-shaped and is more deflected away from the general configuration of the tool (*Dzidziguri 1994, p. 62*).

Dated much later is the hoe of the so-called Ureki type, found in the 1st windrow layer of the central Pichori hill (settlement Ureki, South-East Colchis) yielding the typical tools for the first time. This tool has a straight body, rounded shoulders and a trigonal blade. This specimen has a handle opening also located in the widest top part of the body (fig. I, 4) (length 14.5cm.). The described type of hoes shows a projection line along the entire inside length. This part contributed to a greater strength of the tool during operation (*Sakharova, p. 160*).

All configurations and casings from Pichori are more or less replica of the identical hoe shapes. This fact, with other data, clearly shows that the mentioned agricultural tools were locally produced.

One can discover the nearest parallels to the hoes found in Pichori on the areas South of Pichori, in casings of hoes of the littoral relic (Anaklia II) (fig. II. 4, 5). That is despite the fact that more typical for the latter is a straight form of the body (*Mikeladze, pp. 12-13*).

The Colchis hoes may be analogous along certain features with the types of hoes found in the Near-Eastern materials (*Jibladze 1995, p. 11*): Sialk, 3rd Millennium B.C. (*Masson, p. 122-*

123), Susa (Fobres, pp. 17-21) (the layer dated 4th mil. B.C.) (fig. II. 6, 7, 8).

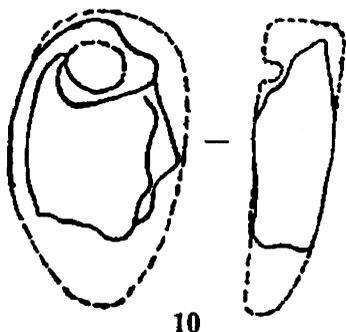
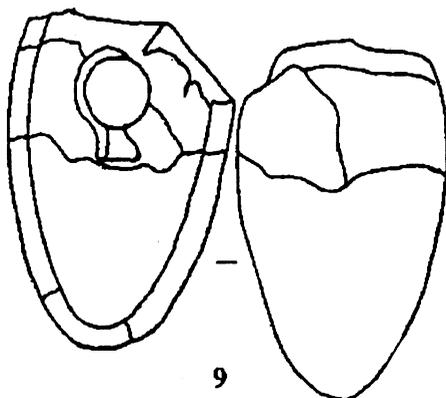
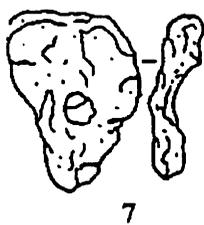
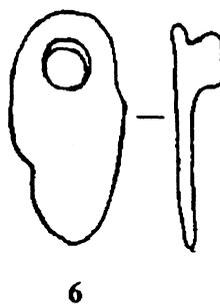
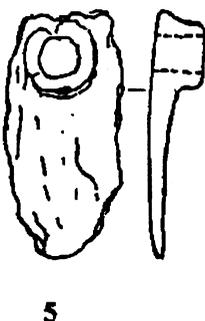
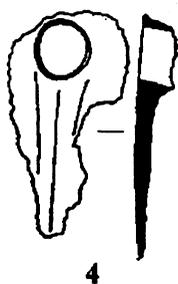
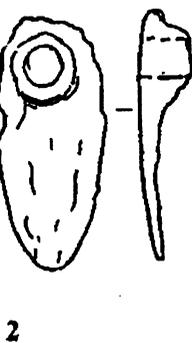
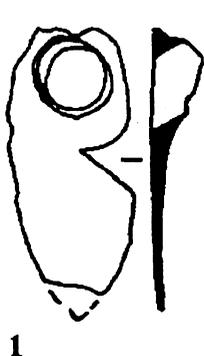
Thus, the Colchis area, as far back as early Bronze, is characterized by a hoe-tilling agriculture (also found in this monument was a wooden plow); and, with regard to the fact that produced here continually since the Neolith were implements of stone, bones and horns, which is corroborated by uncovering the Neolithic- and early Bronze-time grain cultures (*Dzidziguri 2000*, pp. 109-171), it is then easy to see the exclusive role of this area in the development of agriculture.

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**FIGURES**

I



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II

