

**FLUTED MACES IN THE SYSTEM OF  
LONG-DISTANCE EXCHANGE TRAILS  
OF THE BRONZE AGE: 2350-800 BC**

**Viktor I. Klochko**

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**BALTIC-PONTIC STUDIES**

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## Editor's Foreword

Fluted maces (*Kannelierte Streitkolben*) have not been an object of a monographic study so far. The reasons for this deficiency was the paucity of assemblage finds (mainly grave ones) and the fact that they occurred in the borderland between the East and West of Europe. Both reasons made it difficult to identify them chronologically and keep a full record of finds. The present monograph sums up almost 25 years of studies that at the outset were limited to Poland and only gradually were expanded to include the whole continent. This was made possible owing to the goodwill of many people and institutions from the Danube area, the Balkans and the Russian Plain.

The present volume of *Baltic-Pontic Studies* consists of two parts devoted, respectively, to the current state of knowledge on the position of the mace in the Near East and North Pontic civilizations, and the forms, chronology, origins, functions and socio-organizational significance of one of its types, namely the fluted mace.

As in previous volumes in this series, our intention is to inspire team, interdisciplinary studies involving scholars from different centres and countries. Only such a wide-range co-operation will bring about new developments in the areas discussed in this volume.

## Editorial comment

1. All dates in the B-PS are calibrated [see: Radiocarbon vol.28, 1986, and the next volumes]. Deviations from this rule will be point out in notes.
2. The names of the archaeological cultures and sites are standarized to the English literature on the subject (e.g. M. Gimbutas, J. P. Mallory). In the case of a new term, the author's original name has been retained.
3. The spelling of names of localities having the rank of administrative centres follows official, state, English language cartographic publications (e.g. *Ukraine, scale 1 : 2 000 000*, Kiev: Mapa LTD, edition of 1996; *Rèspublika BELARUS; REVIEW-TOPOGRAPHIC MAP*, scale 1:1 000 000, Minsk: BYELORUSSIAN CARTOGRAPHIC AN GEODETIC ENTERPISE, edition 1993).

## **ERRATA**

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### **Page 45, fig. 11:**

1 – single maces from the Baltic zone; 2 – sets of maces from the Baltic zone;  
3 – single maces from the Pontic-Caspian zone; 4 – sets of maces from the  
Pontic-Caspian zone

### **Page 53, fig. 16:**

3 – southern limit of the Nordic circle; 6 – approx. borderline between  
Corded Ware culture (west) and Fatyanovo culture (east)

Viktor I. Klochko

## MACES OF THE NEOLITHIC–BRONZE AGE OF THE NORTHERN PONTIC REGION

This article addresses one of the oldest kinds of specialized weaponry: maces, both weapons and ‘insignia’ of military power. Maces are among the oldest types of weapons in Eurasia, with their origin linked to the Near East [Berounská 1985; see Popko, Mace-heads. . . , in this volume; Taracha, The Mace. . . , in this volume]. Let us discuss the find of maces in the Northern Pontic area.

### 1. NEOLITHIC–ENEOLITHIC AGE (5000-2800 BC)

The oldest maces of the Northern Pontic area were found in eneolithic steppe monuments of the Mariupol type that belong to the **Dnieper-Donets** and the **Sredni Stog cultures** [Arkheologiya 1985:156-319].

A round flattened mace with a ‘collar’ at the lower hole, made of firm stone, was found in the Mykolsky cemetery [Telegin 1991] (Fig. 1:1). Cruciform jade maces with four bulges, found in graves 8 and 31 of the Mariupol cemetery [Makarenko 1933] (Fig. 1:2-3), are the oldest maces of that shape in the Northern Pontic Region and represent prototypes of the Borodino type of maces of the Bronze Age. Therefore, I propose to define such type of maces as the ‘Mariupol-Borodino’.

### 2. EARLY BRONZE AGE (2500-1900 BC)

A pear-shaped mace of black diorite, very similar to maces of the Catacomb culture (see below) (Fig. 1:4) was found in grave 3 of barrow 33 (Hostra Mohyla) of the Alkaliya cemetery near the village of Shyrokye of the Bilgorod-Dniestrovsky

District, the Odesa Region [Subbotin 1995:195-196; Fig. 2:1-11]. The grave was made in stone, therefore, its cultural attribution is rather complicated: it may be referred either to the late Yamnaya culture (as it was actually described in the report about the excavation) or to monuments of the Kemi-Oba type [Subbotin 1995]. However, the weaponry complex from that grave, in general, differs from weaponry of the Yamnaya culture. Monuments of the Kemi-Oba culture, generally synchronous with the Yamnaya culture, are located mostly in the steppe Crimea, but also occur in the south of the right-bank Steppe [Arkheologiya 1985]. Unfortunately, monuments of that culture are very poorly processed and almost none of them have been described in publications.

At that time maces were a rather typical kind of weapons of the steppe cattle-breeding tribes of the Catacomb culture historical community. Common features of that community that populated the steppe and forest-steppe zones of Eastern Europe from the Lower Danube to foothills of the Caucasus and to the east up to the Volga river included the method of burying the dead in catacombs, as well as some other features of the burial rite and inventory [Arkheologiya 1985:404]. In the territory of Ukraine, the following four Catacomb cultures have been distinguished: the Kharkiv-Voronezh, the Donets, the Dnipro-Azov, and the Inhul. The best studied of them are the Donets (a) and the Inhul (b) cultures.

**a.** Globular and pear-shaped maces are typical for the **Donets Catacomb** sites.

*Globular maces*\*: the Kudinov kurgan, 1.9; Novocherkask Institute of Winery 2.11; Pokrovske 205.6 [Bratchenko 1976:Fig. 26:4, 5; 55:10] (Fig. 2:1, 2). Marble globular maces come from 'classic Donets' graves of the Astakhovo cemetery in the Sverdlovsk District of the Luhansk Region [Yevdokimov 1991] — Astakhovo 18.9 and 18.10 (Fig. 2:4-5). A globular white limestone mace was found in the Kindrativka 1.9 cemetery near Mariupol [Kulbaka, Kachur 1998:Fig.11:1] (Fig. 2:6). The latter three maces had a bulge near the lower hole. The globular flattened mace was found in the Mayachka 1.14 grave in the Kherson Region [see Klochko 2001:104].

*Pear-shaped maces* were found in the Kotovka 2.3.2, Kolpakivka 3.4.1, Blahodatne 4.5.6 and 4.13.16 cemeteries in the Orel-Samara river area [Kovaleva 1983:79] (Fig. 2:7-10). A flattened pear-shaped mace with a rim around the lower hole was found in a grave near the Shevchenka 2.13 settlement on the Molochna river [Smirnov 1960:172].

Also known are finds of cross-shaped maces of the 'Mariupol-Borodino' type. A mace of that kind was found in the 'late Donets' grave Pidhorodnye 7.9.6 in the Orel-Samara river area [Kovaleva 1983:79], and graves Luhansk of the year of 1929, 1.20, and Starytsya 30.5 [Bratchenko 1976:Fig. 55:14; 72, II 5] (Fig. 2:11-12).

**b.** Finds of the **Catacomb Inhul** graves can be classed into globular, pear-shaped, cross-shaped and hammer-like mace-heads.

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\* The said typological unit comprises also forms classified as type B — according to A. Koško [Fluted maces. . . , in this volume]

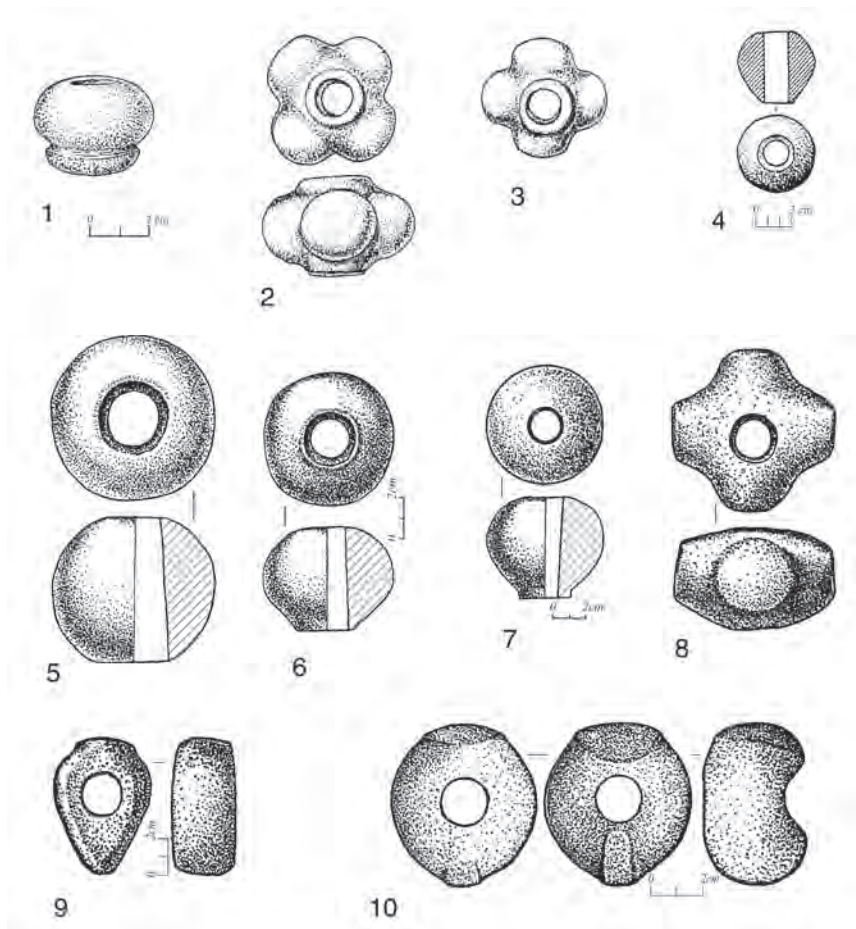


Fig. 1. Maces of the Northern Pontic area. 1 - Mykolsky; 2, 3 - the Mariupol cemetery; 4 - Shyroke 33.3; 5 - Mengikury 1.29; 6 - Vynogradne 3.36; 7 - Bohdanivka 3.9; 8 - Filativka 12.2; 9 - Vasylivka 2.5; 10 - Vasylivka 2.5.5.

*Globular maces* were found in the complexes of Mengikury 1.29; V. Tokmak 1.9; Davydivka 1.5 and 2.3 (the last two are globular maces with a rim at the lower hole) in the Kherson Region [see Klochko 2001:116]; Korpach 3.7 in the Yedinets District of Moldova [Yarovoy 1984:Fig. 12:7] (Fig. 1:5). A flattened globular mace was found in grave 5.3.1. of the Kamianka barrow field in the Dnipropetrovsk Region [Androsov, Yaremchenko, Martiushenko 1990:Fig. 5:5].

*Pear-shaped maces* were found in Vynogradne 3.36 grave, in grave 3.9.11. near the village of Bohdanivka of the Pavlohrad District, the Dnipropetrovsk Region [Ma-

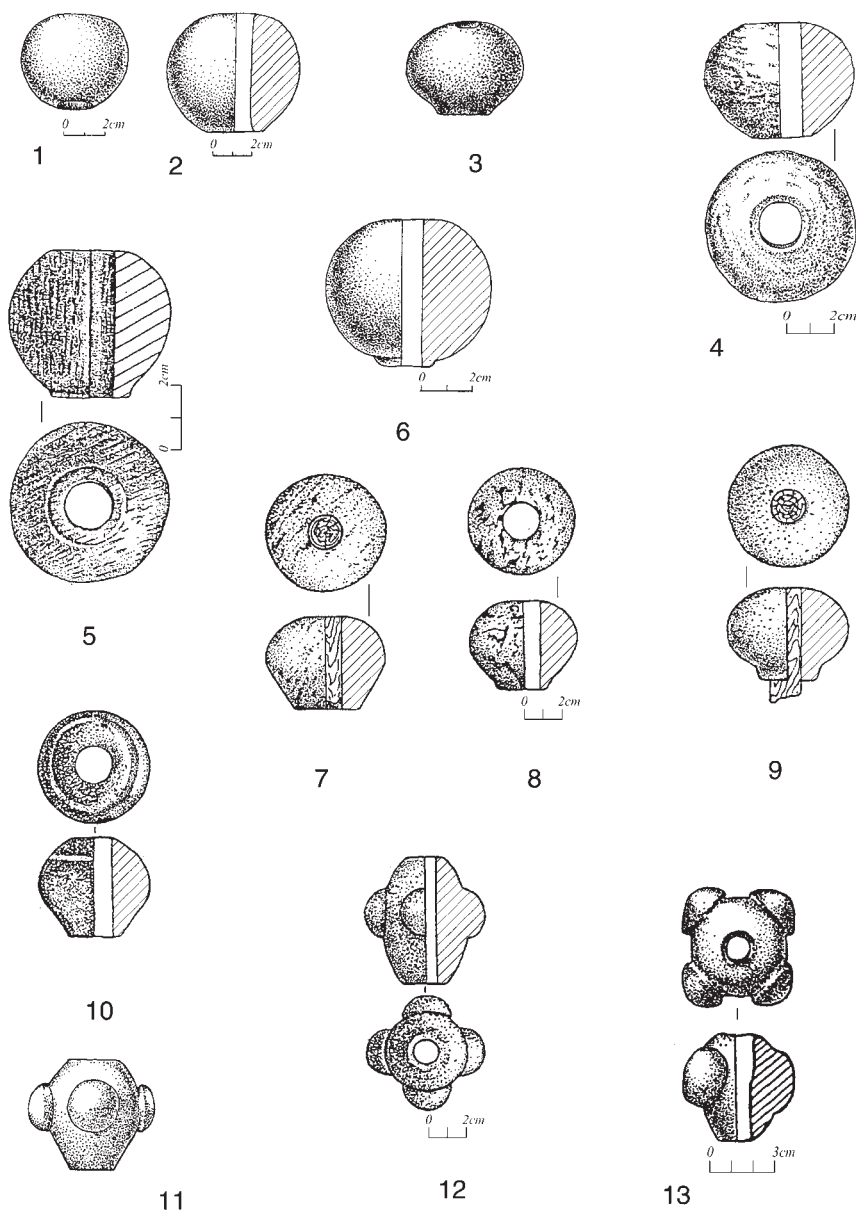


Fig. 2. Maces of the Northern Pontic area. 1 - Kudinov kurgan 1.9; 2 - Novocherkask 2.11; 3 - Pokrovske 205.6; 4 - Astakhovo 18.9; 5 - Astakhovo 18.10; 6 - Kindrativka 1.9; 7 - Kotovka 2.3.2; 8 - Kovpakivka 3.4.1; 9,10 - Blahodatne 4.13.16; 11 - Luhansk,1929b 1.20; 12 - Pidhorodnye 7.9.6

rina, Romashko, Severin 1995:Fig. 3], N. Mayachka 30.2 in the Kherson Region, Mayorivka 3.15 in the Mykolayiv Region; Vynogradne 23.3 in the Zaporizhya Region [see Klochko 2001:16-119]; (Fig. 1:6-7).

A *cruciform mace* of the 'Mariupol-Borodino' type was found in the Filativka 12.2 grave [Klochko, Pustovalov 1994] (Fig. 1:8).

*Hammer-like maces.* A strange artifact — a mace decorated with a minor butt and imitation of a blade at the opposite side (Fig. 1:9) — was found in grave 2.5.5 near the village of Vasylivka in the Dnipropetrovsk Upper Rapids area [Kovaleva, Mukhopad, Shalobudov 1995:Fig. 9]. A very similar artifact was found in grave Tomarino 1.6 in the Kherson Region [see Klochko 2001:119]. Small globular stone axe-hammers, very similar in shape to maces found in graves of Vasylivka 2.5 in the Dnipropetrovsk Region [Kovaleva, Mukhopad, Shalobudov 1995:Fig. 9] and N. Mayachka 2.29 in the Kherson Region (Fig. 1:10). Hammer-like maces were found only in the 'Inhul' monuments; no finds in other cultures of Europe have occurred.

The **Middle Dnieper culture** occupied a large area of the Middle and Upper Dnieper Region that covered the contemporary territories of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. On the territory of Ukraine its monuments have been studied mostly in the Kyiv and the Chernihiv Regions [Arkheologiya 1985], but the research into that culture had been incomplete. I believe that those monuments should be singled out in a separate Middle Dnieper version. A cross-shaped mace of the 'Mariupol-Borodino' type, with an egg-like body and four 'knobs', made of white, veined marble, was found in grave 3 of the mound near the village of Vasyliyivka of the Dykanka District, the Poltava Region, referred by researchers to the Middle Dnipro culture [Suprunenko 1994:15-20, Fig. 6:2]. A cone-shaped hole was drilled in the head of the mace from above: the outer diameter is 1.6 cm, the inner diameter is 1.4 cm. The dimensions of the mace are as follows: height — 5.0 cm; diameter of body — 5.7 cm; maximum diameter ('cones' included) — 6.5 cm. (Fig. 2:13). Among the cross-shaped maces of the Neolithic-Bronze period found on the territory of Ukraine, the closest shape was observed in a mace from the late Catacomb grave 20 of barrow 1, Luhansk, 1929 [Bratchenko 1976:Fig. 75:5].

### 3. MIDDLE BRONZE AGE (1900-1600 BC)

The Middle Bronze Age in the steppe and most of the forest-steppe zones of the Central and left-bank Ukraine is represented by the **Mnogovalikovoi Pottery culture** [Arkheologiya 1985]. The Borodino treasure, referred to that culture, contained tree stone mace-heads: a globular one with an impressed 'belt' in the

middle, (Fig. 3:1); a globular flattened head with a rim around the lower hole (Fig. 3:2); a pear-shaped head with four ‘knobs’ (the ‘Mariupol-Borodino’ type) (Fig. 3:3) [Krivtsova-Grakowa 1949]. All these types of maces occur in Catacomb sites of Ukraine; therefore, at least at the end of the early Bronze Age they could be regarded as local types. All maces of the Borodino treasure were made of talc shale — a rather soft kind of stone, plastic enough to facilitate making the artifacts but too soft to make the weapons strong; therefore, there are reasons to doubt that they were actually used as weapons. Most probably, those were ceremonial objects. However, I might be wrong about properties of that stone.

A pear-shaped mace made of diorite with four knobbls was found in the Semenivka grave in the Dniester estuary area [Subbotin 1985:Fig. 7:1-2]. The mace, made of diorite, is 5.3 cm. long, 3.8 cm. wide, the diameter of the top is 1.3 cm (Fig. 3:4). It is very close in shape to the Borodino mace and differs only by its larger knobs. This monument is a confirmation that the Borodino treasure belongs to the Mnogovalikovo Pottery culture.

The **Old Srubnaya (Pokrovsk) culture** is one of the largest cultures of the late Bronze Age of Eurasia. It occupied a major territory of the Don, the Volga and the Front Urals Regions [Otroschenko 1994:150-153]. Maces of that culture were found mainly in the old Srubnaya monuments of the Volga Region. By the form of the head, they can be classed into several types.

*X-shaped maces.* A bronze-cast X-shaped mace-head was found in the grave 7 of the Nataliynsky barrow near the Natalivka village in the Balakovka District of the Saratov Region [Malov 1991:13] (Fig. 3:5). The object is 3.8 cm. long, the external diameter of the bushing is 2.5 cm. The handle of the mace has a conical shape. The head has four hollow knobbls with metal balls inside. The lower edge of the bushing is reinforced with the roll. One of the knobbls has a through-hole 2.5 cm in diameter reaching up to the bushing, quite likely, for fastening the shaft. I deem that such an elaborated mace-head could be cast only in a two-ply casting mould with a clay slip with four raised portions so that to make the bushing’s hole, hollow knobbls and a through-hole in one of the knobbls. I believe this mace to be a metal modification of the Northern Pontic stone maces of the ‘Mariupol-Borodino’ type. According to M.M. Malov, three more stone X-shaped maces were found in the Srubnaya cemeteries in the area between the Don and Volga rivers, including of the mace from the Mykolaiv cemetery, barrow 1, grave 5 (Fig. 3:6). He argues that those maces belong to the Neolithic tradition of the Lower Volga Region [Malov 1991:33] and does not take into account the artifacts found in the territory of Ukraine. In my viewpoint, the X-shaped maces rather belong to the general Eastern European type proliferated in the Northern Pontic and the Volga Regions. According to P.F. Kuznetsov and A.A. Khokhlov [Kuznetsov, Khokhlov 1998:33], the combat usage of x-shaped maces in the Srubnaya period may be proven by the wound on the skull of the man,

whose remains were found in the Syntashtynsk-Potapovsk barrow 8 of the Potapovsk cemetery.

*Ellipse-shaped maces.* An ellipse-shaped mace-head made of deep-green serpentine was found in the grave 6 of the Nataliynsky cemetery. The mace-head is 2.5 cm long and 5.5 cm, in diameter. The diameter of the bushing is 1.5 cm, at the bottom and narrows to 1 cm, at the top. Objects very close in terms of shape to the mace from the Natalijinsky barrow were found in the Bykovo grave 1.1.5 [Malov 1991:15, 36; Fig. 7:4, 7:7] (Fig. 3:7-8) and the Pryshyb grave 2.40 of the Donetsk Region [Gershkovich 1982:Fig. 5:1] (Fig. 3:10). This type of maces is very rare for Eastern Europe and more typical for Near Eastern countries (Egypt), where it emerged at the beginning of the Neolithic period [Müller-Karpe 1974]. However, ellipse-shaped maces can be also viewed as further modification of the oblate globular maces of the Catacomb horizon.

*Globular maces.* A globular mace-head made of chlorine serpentine was found in the grave 10 of the Nataliynsky barrow. The mace-head is 6 cm, long, its largest diameter is 7 cm. The diameter of the bushing is 2 cm at the bottom and 1.5 at the top. The analog of that mace was found in the Yertzovka grave 3.1.3 (Fig. 3:9, 3:11). The oblate maces from the graves Podkletnoe 13.2, V. Balykley 6.6 [Malov 1991:Fig. 7] and Yasinivka 2.3 of the Donetsk Region [Zhytnikov, Tsimidanov 1999:Fig. 1] can be regarded as a version of the above type (Fig. 3:12-14).

Numerous analogues have been found for all types of the Pokrovsk maces in Eastern European monuments of the Yamnaya-Catacomb chronological horizon.

#### 4. LATE BRONZE AGE, 1600-900 BC

That period includes finds in monuments of the Berezhnovka-Mayovka (late Srubnaya) culture. The **Berezhnovka-Mayovka Srubnaya culture**, identified by V.V. Otroshchenko [Otroshchenko 1994:150-153], occupied, mainly, the forest-steppe and the steppe zones of the left-bank Ukraine, as well as some areas along the right bank of the Dnipro (for instance, in the Kyiv Region). Stone maces were found in two Berezhnovka-Mayovka graves. A flattened globular mace was found in grave Kastyrsky 5.2.1 in the Donetsk Region [Zhytnikov, Tsimidanov 1999:Fig. 2, 3] (Fig. 3:15). A pear-shaped mace was found in grave Zhelanne 1.11 of the Yasinuvata District of the Donetsk Region [Polidovich 1993:Fig. 40:1] (Fig. 3:16). Both of the maces are very similar to maces of the Catacomb culture of the previous period.

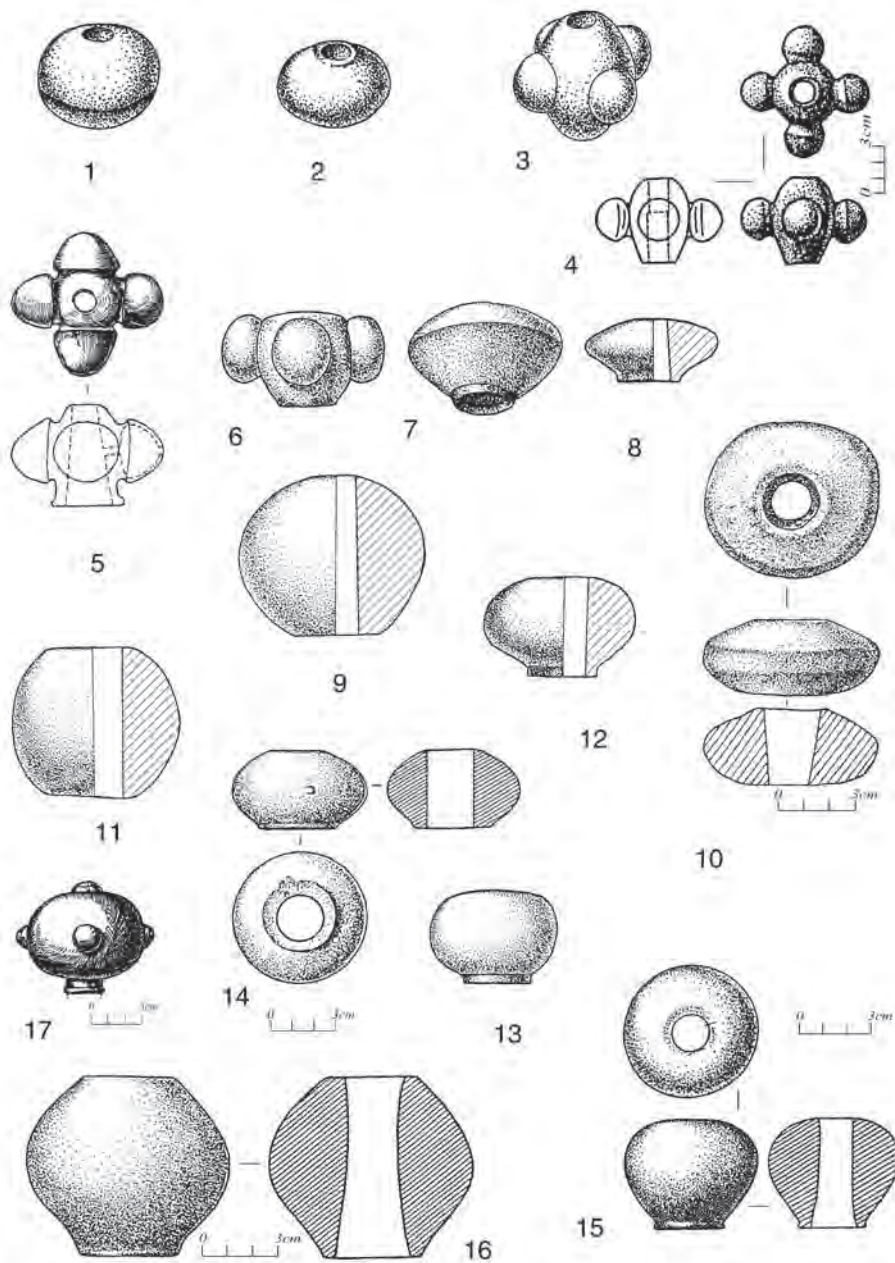


Fig. 3. Maces of the Northern Pontic area. 1-3 - the Borodino treasure; 4 - Semenivka 8.1; 5 - Natalivka 7; 6 - Nikolski 1.5; 7 - Bykovo 1.1.5; 8 - Natalivka 2.6; 9 - Natalivka 10; 10 - Pryshyb 2.40; 11 - Yezovka 3.1.3; 12 - Pidklitne 13.2; 13 - V. Balykei 6.6; 14 - Yasynivka 2.3; 15 - Zhelanne; 16 - Kastyrsky; 17 - the Rajhorodsky treasure.

A bronze mace with five symmetric 'knobbles' was found in the Rayhorodsky treasure near Luhansk [Leskov 1967:Fig. 9, 14] that refers to the late Bronze Age (Fig. 3:17). In my view, that mace represents a metal continuation of traditions of stone maces of the 'Mariupol-Borodino' type.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Maces emerged on the territory of Ukraine in the Eneolithic period (5000-2800 BC) and became common only in monuments of the steppe zone.
2. They occurred most broadly in the early and middle Bronze Age (2500-1600 BC); during that period they occurred both in the steppe and the forest-steppe zones.
3. The main types of mace-heads of the Eneolithic-Bronze Age of the Northern Pontic area were globular and cruciform ('X-shaped') maces (the 'Mariupol-Borodino' type).

*Translated by Inna Pidluska*

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AJA – American Journal of Archaeology, New York  
AnOr – Analecta Orientalia, Rome  
AnSt – Anatolian Studies, London  
BPS – Baltic-Pontic Studies, Poznań  
ČVSMO – Časopis Vlasteneckého spolku musejního v Olomouci, Olomouc  
IEJ – Israel Exploration Journal, Jerusalem  
JARCE – Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt, Boston  
M.A.R.I. – MARI. Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires, Paris  
MDP – Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique en Iran, Paris  
RA – Revue d'assyrologie et d'archéologie orientale, Paris  
RIA – Reallexikon für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie, Berlin – New York  
TGIM – Trudy Gosudarstvennogo istoricheskogo muzeia, Moskva  
WVDOG – Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, Leipzig – Berlin  
ZČSSA – Zprávy Československé společnosti archeologické při ČSAV, Praha – Brno – Nitra  
ZfE – Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Berlin

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