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Σιδηροράβδιον, βαρδούκιον, ματζούκιον, κορύνη:
THE WAR-MACE OF BYZANTIUM, 9th-15th C. AD.
NEW EVIDENCE FROM THE BALKANS IN THE COLLECTION
OF THE WORLD MUSEUM OF MAN, FLORIDA

Abstract:

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Analyzing the collection of war-maces from the Balkans kept in the World Museum of Man and Prehistory located in Central Florida, U.S.A., this article presents a fine array of 30 Byzantine era mace heads of iron and bronze, said to have come from battlefield areas of the eastern Balkans along the Danube River Valley. The number as well as the diverse shapes and characteristics of these specimens, in comparison with already existing specimens and with the images of the war-mace in the East-Roman art, could allow for the first time an attempt of classification of the war-mace used at Byzantium between the 9th and the 15th c. AD.

Keywords: Byzantium, mace, typology, cavalry, infantry

The World Museum of Man and Prehistory (www.WorldMuseumofMan.org), located in Central Florida, U.S.A., was founded and is currently directed by Mr. John McNamara¹ who, out of his great love and passion for ancient cultures and civilizations, decided some years ago to establish a private Museum² of paleontological and archaeological artefacts from private collections not formerly known to the academic community. A sector of the Museum³ is dedicated to a rare collection of artefacts from the areas of the Balkans formerly under the domination of Byzantium which once employed a somewhat consistent group of weapons. This article focuses on that part of the collection of the Museum which includes a fine array of 30 Byzantine era mace heads of iron and bronze, said to have come from battlefield

areas of the eastern Balkans along the Danube River Valley. The number as well as the diverse shapes and characteristics of these specimens, in comparison with already existing specimens and with the images of the war-mace in the East-Roman art, could allow for the first time an attempt of classification of the war-mace used at Byzantium between the 9th and the 15th c. AD.

The war-mace of the Roman medieval warrior

The club or staff represented a simple weapon that was easy to use in combat, requiring very little skill or training to be both intimidating and deadly. The developed form of the club, the war mace, was one of the earliest and most primitive weapons in almost all civilizations, and mainly in the East, where it became popular in use. We can see

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² A catalogue of numerous artefacts kept in the museum is still in preparation, but some important artefacts are available on the site <http://www.worldmuseumofman.org>.

³ The collection of the museum Byzantine pieces can be seen online at <http://www.worldmuseumofman.org/byzantine1.htm>.



Fig. 1. Skylitzēs Matritensis, 2nd half of the 12th c.: 1 – The future emperor Basil I the Macedonian hunting in presence of the Emperor Michael III, folio 86r; 2 – Hunt of the Emperor Michael III, folio 85v; 3 – The battle of the River Spercheios, folio 185r (after Skylitzēs Matritensis 2006).

Ryc. 1. Kronika Jana Skylitzesa, 2. połowa XII w.: 1 – Przyszły cesarz Bazyli I Macedończyk na polowaniu w towarzystwie cesarza Michała III, folio 86r; 2 – Łowy cesarza Michała III, folio 85v; 3 – Bitwa w wąwozie rzeki Spercheios, folio 185r (wg Skylitzēs Matritensis 2006).

early samples of it in Assyria and Egypt, where the carrying of this weapon was also sometimes indicative of rank⁴.

Already used in the Late Roman Army at least since the 2nd c. AD⁵, the war-mace, composed of a wooden shaft and a metallic head, was transformed in the middle period of Byzantium to become a favourite weapon of the heavy armed cavalryman, and was used with devastating effects

on the battlefields⁶. Since the late Empire, this weapon developed in response to changing mobile tactics involving cavalry and complex forms of armours such as chain mail and scale. This was especially due to the battlefield contact that the Romans had with Iranian peoples and from the 5th c. AD with the nomadic tribes of horsemen arriving in Europe from Inner Asia, which made a very wide use of it. In Byzantium, the widespread

⁴ See Assyrians, Officer's maces from Ashurnasirpal II and Sennacherib Ages, 9th-7th c. BC (Healy 1991, 62, Pl. I) or Egyptians, the statue of the *Ka* of Toutânkhamon or Saleh (Sourouzian 1987, cat. 180).

⁵ See the early 3rd c. AD stela of Markos Aurelios Alexis from Lakonia in the National Museum of Athens (Cowan 2003, 27); the Roman cavalryman already in the 2nd c. AD was armed with *small war-maces fitted with spikes all around the sphere* i.e. οἱ δὲ καὶ πέλεκεις μικροῦς φέρουσι, πάντοθεν ἐν κύκλῳ ἄκωνας ἔχοντες (Arrian 1683, IV,8). Arrian uses the word *pelekis*, usually translated as axe, to indicate the mace, but the description does not leave doubts about the kind of weapon – for an example of a Roman (cavalry?) 4th-6th c. AD mace see *Romans & Barbarians* 1976, 75 cat. 106 – the bronze specimen is 8,3 cm long.

⁶ The main analysis of the employment of the war-mace in the middle period of Byzantium is still that of T. Koliaš (1988, 173-184); about the use of the mace by the heavy *Kataphraktoi* in the 10th c. see McGeer (1995, 115, 119, 216-217, 309-310); see also A. Hoffmeyer (1966, 112-113), with reference to the maces illustrated in the *Skylitzēs Matritensis* (Bibl. Nac. Mss. Vitr. 26-2, Madrid).



Fig. 2. *Three Saints cavalrymen*. Fresco from Monastery of Diskouri at Mylopotamos in Crete, late 14th c. AD (1); detail (2) (photo by courtesy of Dr. B. Tsamakdá).

Ryc. 2. *Trzech świętych jeźdźców*. Malowidło ściennie, Klasztor Diskouri w Mylopotamos, Kreta, koniec XIV w. (1); fragment (2) (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. B. Tsamakdy).

deployment of the fighting mace was in direct correlation to the importance and development of the heavy cavalry, which in the Eastern Roman Empire underwent a new revival from the late 9th and the whole 10th c., especially under Nikephoros Phokas (963-969 AD)⁷ (Kolias 1993, 54-56).

Many words were used in the Greek medieval military language to indicate respectively the fighting mace and the club: κορύνη⁸, ράβδος⁹, ρόπαλον¹⁰, σαλίβα¹¹, ματζούκιον, βαρδούκιον and σιδηροράβδιον. It is not easy however to understand from written sources

⁷ Recently on this subject see also the excellent work of P. Grotowski (2010); unfortunately I was not able to deal it with before the conclusion of this article.

⁸ See a 10th c. source: *indeed Vardas, having seized the mace which he held suspended around the hand, getting around suddenly hit the man upon the helmet; this one, with the helmet and the head broken, fell down without a word* (Fig. 3:2; *Leonis Diaconis...* 1828, 125, 12 ff., VII, 8).

⁹ *Immediately I grasped the mace and the manual shield* (χειροσκουτάριον) (χειροσκουτάριον) (*Digenis Akritas...* 1995, VI, 144).

¹⁰ *The most had armed their hands of maces and wooden staves taken from the armouries* (Niketas Choniates 1994, 345, 80 ff.).

¹¹ *Ὅτι μαρτζοβάρβουλον ελέγετο νύν σαλίβα* □ (*L'Extrait Tactique...* 1942 – *Excerptum Tacticum* – Z98, 88) i.e., the actual *saliva* was once called *martio-barbulum*; originally the *martio-barbulum* was a Late Roman throwing weapon, a kind of javelin fitted with a lead weight at the top, under the point (see Vegetius 2004, I, 17). In the military language



Fig. 3. Skylitzès *Matritentis*, 2nd half of the 12th c.: 1 – Duel between Konstantinos Skleros and a Russian cavalryman, *folio* 162r; 2 – Vardas Phokas bit one of his followers, *folio* 164r; 3 – Russian cavalryman biting with a mace on the helmet the *Magistros* Vardas Skleros, *folio* 162r; 4 – The Roman Champion Anemas killing the Russian Warrior Icmor, *folio* 169v; 5 – The Roman Champion Anemas against Svjatoslav, *folio* 171r (after *Skylitzès Matritentis* 2006).

Ryc. 3. Kronika Jana Skylitzesa, 2. połowa XII w.: 1 – Pojedynek Konstantyna Sklerosa z ruskim kawalerzystą, *folio* 162r; 2 – Vardas Fokas uderza w jednego ze ścigających, *folio* 164r; 3 – Ruskim konny wojownik uderzający buławą w hełm Vardasa Sklerosa, *folio* 162r; 4 – Rzymski champion Anemas zabija ruskiego wojownika Icmora, *folio* 169v; 5 – Rzymski champion Anemas walczy przeciwko Światosławowi, *folio* 171r (wg *Skylitzès Matritentis* 2006).

of Byzantium it was translated as μαρτζοβάρβουλον (*Strategikon*... 1981, XII,B,2) and probably still used in the Roman army until the 8th-9th c. AD, when it was substituted on the battlefield by the throwing axe or mace. Leo, although he follows Pseudo-Maurikios in his *Problemata* (*Leonis VI*... 1935 XII,4), in his *Tactica* substitutes this word as τζικοῦρια ὀστομα, i.e. battle-axes; we cannot even exclude that *saliva* was the direct descendant of the throwing axe called *francisca*, introduced in the Late Roman Army by the Franks and Alamannians in the 4th c. AD. However, although it is impossible to deny that in the 10th c. the axe and the throwing mace substituted the weight-ledged javelin, we cannot exclude that the *saliva* were the last development of the late-



whether different terms indicate the same weapon or there are elements of distinction amongst them.

Sidioravdion, *σιδηροράβδιον* (or simply *ravdion*, *ραβδίον*), was the war-mace used, according to the 10th c. tacticians and to the epic poem of the Digenis Akritas, both by infantry and

Roman *martiobarbuli*, similar to the *τρίβολοι* according to Pseudo-Codinus, in the 14th c. AD. The word *saliva* would have been used instead *σειρομάστης*, which, according to my previous analysis of the sources, may have been originally a sort of javelin similar to the *akontion*, but already in the 11th-12th c. the fighting mace fitted with chains and iron pendants, i.e., the flail (Kolias 1988, 177; D'Amato 2005, 24-25 and particularly n. 125). For an example of it being mounted on the pole and used by Veneto-Byzantine infantrymen see the scene of the betrayal in San Marco at Venezia (Babuin 2009, Fig. 1070 – the 13th c.). This last typology is, however, to be rather considered as similar to the *mazzafrusto* (like the later central European *stella del mattino* or *morgenstern*) used by western European infantrymen in the 14th-15th c. (see some example from the 15th c. kept in the Museum of the Polish Army in Warszawa (Tapac 2010, 88).

Fig. 4. Skylitzès *Matritentis*, 2nd half of the 12th c.: 1 – Battle between the army of Vardas Skleros and the army of Vardas Phokas, *folio* 178r; 2 – Duel between Vardas Skleros and Vardas Phokas, *folio* 178r; 3 – The army of Vardas Skleros pursuing the troops of Basil II, *folio* 175v (after Skylitzès *Matritentis* 2006).

Ryc. 4. Kronika Jana Skylitzesa, 2. połowa XII w.: 1 – Bitwa pomiędzy armiami Vardasa Sklerosa i Vardasa Fokasa, *folio* 178r; 2 – Pojedynek Vardasa Sklerosa z Vardasem Fokasem, *folio* 178r; 3 – Armia Vardasa Sklerosa ściga oddziały Bazylego II, *folio* 175v (wg Skylitzès *Matritentis* 2006).



Fig. 5. Duel between Digenis Akritas and the Amazon Maximò, about 1289/1290 AD, Church of the Panaghia Krysaftissa at Krisafa, Laconia (1); Maximò – detail (2); detail of the mace (3) Digenis – detail (4). *Photo by R. D'Amato.*

Ryc. 5. Pojedynek pomiędzy Digenisem Akritasem i amazonką Maximò, ok. 1289/1290, Kościół Panagii Krysaftissy w Krisafie, Lakonia (1); Maximò – detal (2); zbliżenie buławy (3); Digenis – detal (4). *Fot. R. D'Amato.*



Fig. 6. St. George, Cathedral of the Perivleptos, Ohrid, late 13th c. (1); detail (2) (photo by courtesy of Dr. M. Tutko).

Ryc. 6. Święty Jerzy, Katedra Matki Boskiej Peribleptos, Ochryda, koniec XIII w. (1); fragment przedstawienia (2) (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. M. Tutko).

cavalry¹², and was mainly made of an iron head (*iron maces with all-iron heads*¹³) mounted upon a wooden shaft. On the other hand, there were also maces made entirely of iron with sharply cornered iron heads. The mace prescribed for the heavy cavalymen or *Kataphraktoi* was designed mainly for use in combat at close quarters, and was conceived as a weapon able to defeat helmets, armour and even horses (*Digenis Akritas...* 1995, VI,260 ff.).

The war mace was employed not only as a striking weapon, although it was mainly used in

this role, but also as an effective throwing weapon (Michalak 2010, 11 ff). In the 10th c. the *Tactica* of Leo shows as the *τζικούριον* (the throwing axe), the *βαρδούκιον* and the *ματζούκιον* (the maces) were employed as throwing weapons in place of the late Roman javelin known as *μαρτζοβάρβουλον* (*Leonis Imperatoris...* 1857-1866, VI,27,VII,3; Kolia 1988, 176-177; see n. 7). In the *Life of the Emperor Basil I* (867-886) reported by *Theophanes Continuatus* and the Emperor Constantine VII, the text describes an imperial hunt in which the future Emperor Basil, grandfather of Constantine

¹² *Praecepta Militaria...* 1995, I,1,25 (infantry): *They must have... certainly swords girded at the waist, axes or iron maces;* (ibidem) III,7,54-57 (cavalry); *Nikephoros Ouranos* 1995, 56, 29 (infantry); 60,69,84; 61,211 (cavalry) (see McGeer 1995, 14, 36, 90, 114, 116, 128, 206).

¹³ *σιδηροραβδία ολοσίδερα έχοντα κεφάλια* □ □ (*Praecepta Militaria...* 1995, III, 7, 54).



Fig. 7. St. George, *Katholikon* of the Vatopedi Monastery, about 1312 AD (1); detail (2) (photo by courtesy of Prof. N. Emertzidis).

Ryc. 7. Święty Jerzy, *Katholikon* w klasztorze Vatopedi, ok. 1312 (1); fragment przedstawienia (2) (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Prof. N. Emertzidisa).



(at that time *Protostrator*) took part (*Theophanes Continuatus...* 1838, 231,22-232,8). He rode, as prescribed, before the Emperor, and wore at the belt the imperial war mace (*τό ρόπαλον το βασιλικόν επί της ζώνης αυτού*), usually called *Vardoukion*. Then suddenly a wolf appeared: Basil rode against him and threw on its back the imperial *vardoukion*, which hit the animal in the middle of the head and divided it in two parts. The illuminated codex *Skilitzès Matritensis*, in which the scene is represented (*folio 86r*), shows with good detail the shape of the weapon (Fig. 1:1). The *βαρδούκιον* was indeed the fighting imperial mace, which could be also thrown, used for hunting as well as for war¹⁴. This mace, of oriental type according to A. Hoffmeyer

¹⁴ Kukules (1953, 392) classifies the *Vardoukion* as the imperial hunting mace, but the passage of Leo's *Tactica* makes clear that the weapon was just a mace, used both for war and hunting (see Kolias 1988, 177, n. 23). Also in the *Digenis Akritas* Poem the mace is used for war and hunt for wild animals (*Digenis Akritas...* 1995, VI, 96).



Fig. 8. 1 – *The Betrayal*, detail, Church of Aghioi Apostoloi, Pec, circa 1300 AD (photo by courtesy of Dr. B. Popovic); 2 – *The Betrayal*, detail, Church of Aghios Nikolaos, Prilep, circa 1298 AD (photo by courtesy of Dr. M. Tutko); 3 – *The Betrayal*, detail, Church of Aghios Nikolaos Orphanos, Thessaloniki, circa 1310-1320 AD (photo by courtesy of Dr. A. Babuin).

Ryc. 8. 1 – *Zdrada*, fragment sceny, Kościół Świętych Apostołów, Pec, ok. 1300 r. (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. B. Popovica); 2 – *Zdrada*, fragment sceny, Kościół Świętego Mikołaja, Prilep, ok. 1298 (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. M. Tutko); 3 – *Zdrada*, fragment sceny, Kościół Świętego Mikołaja Sieroty (Orphanos), Saloniki, ok. 1310-1320 (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. A. Babuina).

(1966, 112), is again represented in the hand of the Emperor Michael III (842-867 AD) hunting a hare (Fig. 1:2; *Johannis Scylitzae...* 2000, Folio 85v).

The situation could be identical for the ματζούκιον, which demonstrated a strong similarity to the Vardoukion¹⁵. To ματζούκια fitted with spikes

¹⁵ The Greek word, according to Mihăescu (1968, 492), belongs to the same root as the Rumenian *maciuca*, French *massue*, or Italian *mazza*.



Fig. 9. *Sleeping Guards at the Sepulchre*, detail, *Katholikon* of the Vatopedi Monastery, about 1312 AD (photo by courtesy of Prof. N. Emertzidis).

Ryc. 9. *Śpiąca Straż przy Grobie Pańskim*, fragment, *Katolikon* w klasztorze Vatopedi, ok. 1312 r. (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Prof. N. Emertzidisa).

(έγκεντρα) the fighters gave the same function of the πυρφόροι τρίβολοι on the sea: they were fitted with fired materials and thrown against wooden constructions, to set them on fire (*Parekbolai...* 1949, 44,30; see also Koliass 1988, 175, 177). βαρδούκια and ματζούκια were maces thrown against the enemy by both infantrymen and

cavalrymen, at a certain distance. It is interesting to note that also in the *Sylloge Tacticorum*, two kind of maces are listed for the heavy cavalrymen: the vardoukia and the sideroravdia. The denomination bardoukia in the *Sylloge Tacticorum* (1938, 39,3) has been translated with the meaning of iron clubs¹⁶ but basing upon the mentioned passage of Theophanes Continuatus we can hypothesize that the βαρδούκιον was the throwing mace and the σιδεροραβδίων the fighting mace. So the Roman cavalryman of the 10th c. was equipped with at least two kinds of maces, or maybe more.

According to the *Praecepta Militaria* of the Emperor Nikephoros Phokas, the maces and the swords or sabres were the impact weapons of the cavalryman. The mace was used by all heavy cavalrymen of the first four lines of their battle formations who wielded exclusively the iron maces as shock weapons. From the fifth line on to the rear the *Kataphraktoi* on the flanks should set up like this – one man armed with a lance and one armed with a mace or else one of the men carrying a sabre, and so they should be all the way to the back lines (*Praecepta Militaria...* 1995, III,7, 60-65; see also Nikephoros Ouranos 1995, 60.70 ff.; McGeer 1994, 286). The Emperor stresses the employment of the mace by the cavalryman in further passages: mentioning also that the light cavalrymen or archers placed inside the *Kataphraktoi* can be armed with maces (σιδηροραβδάτοι), together with swords and lances (*Praecepta Militaria...* 1995, III,9,70-72)¹⁷, and describing the main armament of the cavalry *vandon* (cavalry unit of about 50 men – see McGeer 1994, 284) as composed of lamellar or scale armours (*klivania*), lances (*kontaria*), swords (*spathia*) and maces (*ravdia*) (*Praecepta Militaria...* 1995, IV,6-7)¹⁸.

The war tactics of the charging *Kataphraktoi* with their maces are well illustrated by tactical manuals. The charging mass of the *Kataphraktoi*' trapezoidal formations (McGeer 1994, 286-287) was considered as an unbreakable force able to break any enemy's array if used in the appropriate way: *With God lending us aid through the intercession of His Immaculate Mother, the enemy will put to flight by the triangular formation of Kataphraktoi. For the spears and menavlia* (heavy javelins) *of the enemy will be broken to pieces*

¹⁶ But it probably refers to the iron heads of the weapon (see also βαρδούκιον in Du Cange s.v., col. 177).

¹⁷ In Nikephoros Ouranos' *Taktika* only the lancers should have swords and iron maces as should the javeliners (Nikephoros Ouranos 1995, 60.83-85).

¹⁸ See also a note in *Praecepta Militaria* (1995, IV,9-11) which specifies that, concerning the selected 500 *Prokoursatores*: one hundred ten or 120 of them must be proficient archers also wearing *klivania* and helmets, else *lorikia* (mail armours) as well as swords and maces; in Nikephoros Ouranos' *Taktika* only *klivania*, *spathia* and *ravdia* are mentioned; while all of the 500 *Prokoursatores* should be armed with maces (Nikephoros Ouranos 1995, 61.9).



Fig. 10. *St. Demetrius*, Markov Monastery, Skopje, about 1376-1377 (1); detail (2). *Photo by R. D'Amato* .

Ryc. 10. *Św. Dymitr*, klasztor Markov, Skopje, ok. 1376-1377 (1); fragment (2). *Fot. R. D'Amato* .



Fig. 11. *St. Demetrius and St. George*, Church of The Presentation of the Virgin, Kalenič, c. 1427 AD (photo by courtesy of Dr. B. Popovic).

Ryc. 11. *Św. Dymitr i św. Jerzy*, Kościół Objawienia Najświętszej Marii Panny, Kalenič, ok. 1427 r. (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. B. Popovica).

by the Kataphraktoi and their arrows will be ineffective. And then the Kataphraktoi gain in courage and boldness, they will smash the heads and bodies of the enemies and their horses with their iron maces and sabres, they will break into and dismember their formations, and from there break through them and so completely destroy them (Nikephoros Ouranos 1995, 61.204 ff.).

From the way in which the men were placed inside the formation it is clear that the first four rows

of the *Kataphraktoi* were essential at the moment of the impact or melee with the enemy's formations, when they would have employed their heavy iron maces to hammer their way through the enemy's battle array. It also explains why the Romans decided to encase the horse and the cavalryman in heavy armour, arming the *Kataphraktos* with such a powerful impact weapon as the iron mace (McGeer 1994, 310). The dreadful destiny of the Bulgarian warriors at the Spercheios Battle in



Fig. 12. 1 – *St. Theodore Tyrus*, Church of Rečani, 1360-1370 AD (photo by courtesy of Dr. B. Popovic); 2 – *St. George*, Church of the Saviour in Tsalendjikha, Georgia, work of Manuel Eugenikos from Constantinople, 1384-1396 AD (photo by courtesy of Dr. A. Babuin).

Ryc. 12. 1 – *Św. Teodor z Tyru*, Kościół w Rečani, 1360-1370 (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. B. Popovica); 2 – *Św. Jerzy*, Kościół Zbawcy w Tsalendjikha, Gruzja, autorstwo Manuela Eugenikosa z Konstantynopola, 1384-1396 (fotografia udostępniona dzięki uprzejmości Dr. A. Babuina).

997 AD was to succumb under the hits of the spears and the maces of the Roman *Kataphraktoi*, as it is well illustrated in the *Skylitzes Manuscript* (Fig. 1:3; *Johannis Scylitzae...* 2000, Folio 185r; McGeer 1994, 344-345). Roman champions' *aristeia* described by the authors echo the Phokas' chilling image of the butcher's blows to be dealt by the heavy cavalymen using their iron maces. Leo the Deacon tells of the Theodore Lalakon's deeds, who *slew a great many of the foe with an iron mace (σιδηρά κορύνη) bringing it down with the might of his hand, he shattered both the helmet and the head encased within it (Leonis Diaconis...* 1828, 144-145).

The mace or the club (ράβδος, ραβδίον) was also the favourite weapon of the frontier *Akritai*,

the defenders of the borders of the Empire, as well as of the *Apelatai* (*Digenis Akritas...* 1995, IV, 1072), the irregular soldiers or brigands of the Byzantine Anatolian borders in the 9th-10th c. So much so that sometimes the mace was called *apelatiki*, *απελατίκιον*¹⁹. In the *Digenis Akritas Poem* there are several passages in which the mace is used for battles or single duels (*ibidem*, VI, 144 ff.; VI, 204 ff.; 504 ff.; VIII, 114) or even to kill savage animals²⁰. The hero is always mounted on horseback with the spear and the mace (*ibidem*, IV, 1041), and it is interesting to note that in his first duel with the leaders of the *Apelatai*, the warriors fight with small maces (υπόκοντα ραβδία) (*ibidem*, IV, 1635 ff.). This small mace is used only for thrusting by Basilios Akritas and

¹⁹ *Chronikon Moreos* Z. 1156-1158: in the battle of Adrianople of 1205 AD the Cumans of Kalojan fought successfully with Turkish *saliva* and *apelatikia* against the Franks of Emperor Baldwin, using these weapons as throwing maces against the helmets of the Crusaders (Schmitt 1967, 78).

²⁰ The father of Digenis killing a lion with his ραβδίον □ (*Digenis Akritas...* 1995, III, 99); the young Basil Digenis Akritas fights the bears only with his mace (*ibidem*, IV, 109ff.).



Fig. 13. Skylitzès Matritentis, 2nd half of the 12th c.: 1 – Patzinaks attacking the Romans, folio 161r; 2 – duel between Konstantinos Skleros and a Russian cavalryman, folio 162r; 3 – Charging Kataphraktoi of Georgios Maniakes against the Arabs at Teluch, folio 202v; 4 – Roman Kataphraktoi versus Pechenegs, folio 161v; 5 – Roman cavalrymen of Emperor Tzimiskès pursuing Russians, folio 167r (after facsimile Edition 2006).

Ryc. 13. Kronika Jana Skylitzesa, 2. połowa XII w.: 1 – Patzinaks (Pieczynowie) atakujący Rzymian, folio 161r; 2 – pojedynek Konstantinosa Sklerosa z ruskim jeźdźcą, folio 162r; 3 – Katafrakti Georgiosa Maniakesa szarżują przeciw Arabom pod Teluch (Telouch), folio 202v; 4 – Rzymscy Katafrakti w walce przeciwko Pieczyngom, folio 161v; 5 – Rzymska jazda cesarza Tzimiskesa ściga Rusinów, folio 167r (wg facsimile Edition 2006).

the *Apelatai*, and its shape is possibly visible on a famous ceramic vessel from Athens Agora dated to the 12th c. AD where Digenis is represented in full armour brandishing a small round-head spiked mace in his right hand (Kolias 1988, Pl. V:2). The importance of the mace amongst the *Akritai* was so critical that even around the grave of Digenis his *Agouroi* (companions) were complaining *could we still see him handle his club! (Digenis Akritas... 1995, VIII, 292).*

In any case, the employment of the mace as a cavalry weapon in hand to hand fighting reached its apex in Byzantium in the 10th c., and so lasted until at least the end of the 12th c. The mace was a typical weapon of the armoured warriors, often of the *archontes* and nobles, especially in duels. Indeed the commanders and the aristocratic warriors were equipped with the best possible armour, not only because of their rank and of their means, but also because such a display had a positive effect on the morale of the army and the outcome of the battle may have possibly been compromised if such important battlefield leaders were defeated. Moreover, they fought against enemies who were also well armoured and mounted on horses. Therefore, the soldiers of Byzantium relied on effective fighting maces. After all, the purpose of the mace was in fact to defeat the heavy armour of the enemy. It was especially used against the helmet, the shoulders and the hands of the enemy, with the intention to kill him or at least knock him out so to finish him when he was injured and helpless. Deadly wounds to the head by penetration of the helmet, described the kind of mace-club which is called *κασσιδολίτζιν*²¹ in the epic of the *Digenis Akritas*.

In a more general meaning, between the 10th and the 13th c., the Roman authors use mainly the word *κορύνη*, to indicate always the war-mace, especially that of the cavalryman. With their cherished iron war-maces (*korrhinê*), the 12th c. Eastern Roman cavalry were a deadly force to

be reckoned with in battle. The Hungarians, in particular under Istvan III, felt the full force of this weapon and suffered a dreadful defeat in 1167 at the hands of Andronikos Kontostephanos, *Strategos* (general) under Manuel I²². The Roman cavalryman, feared by the Hungarians, wearing this weapon in the right hand, with a spherical spiked head, was called *korrhinêphoros (Eustathii Thessalonicensis... 1892, 35, 11-36, 14).*

The carrying of the mace

During the middle and the late periods of Byzantium, the mace was therefore an integral part of the equipment of the heavy-cavalry warriors, who carried it in three different ways:

a) in a sheath attached to their saddles²³; this was probably provided especially for the maces made of a rather delicate or oxydable material, like bronze, which could be damaged by bad weather, so that it was necessary to keep them in a leather case when not in use (Hoffmeyer 1966, 113);

b) or, as we have seen in Theophanes Continuatus, at their belts²⁴;

c) or, according to Leo Diaconus, by means of a string or lace wrapped around the wrist (see n. 5).

The presence of a fastening system for the mace is also attested in the *Digenis Akritas* poem, when the hero orders to prepare his horse for the kidnapping of his future wife from the house of her father: *hang the good sword-mace to the saddle*²⁵ (*Digenis Akritas... 1995 IV, 378*).

The hanging system is specified in a further passage, as formed by a special hook for the fastening, called *rabdovastakin (ραβδοβαστάκιν)*²⁶. The uncle of the hero, preparing himself for a duel with the Arab Emir who kidnapped his sister, *attached the club (or the mace) to the mace-holder*²⁷. This was a sort of case from which it was easy to draw the mace or the club at the moment of the fight. Sometimes it was a leather case and sometimes it was a simple hook which

²¹ *He brandished also in his hand the mace-breaker of the helmets (Digenis Akritas... 1995, E 931; Kolias 1988, 183, n. 57).*

²² *In this case the Romans, having taken up with hands the iron maces – they were accustomed to wear this kind of weapon beside the other weapons when they went to the fight – began to beat the Hungarians (Choniates... 1994, VI, 203-204).*

²³ *Attached to the saddles they should have throwing maces and fighting maces (Sylloge Tacticorum... 1938, 39; see also Parani 2003, 138).*

²⁴ This was also the way in which the mace was worn by the infantrymen (see n. 9).

²⁵ The employed word, *spathorravdin*, is difficult to interpret, because it can be translated as *the good sword and the mace* or also *the good sword-mace*. The author personally believes that this was a particular kind of mace used by the *Akritai*, having a hilt like a sword but the head like a mace; also according to Kolias the *σπαθορράβδιν* was a particular weapon which united the fencing and cutting function of the sword with that of thrusting typical of the mace. Anyway the system of attaching to the saddle was the same as used for the proper mace (see also *Digenis Akritas... 1995, IV, 645*). For a possible representation of a sword-mace in *Skylitzès* see Hoffmeyer (1966, Fig. 18:8), which can be compared with similar Persian Sassanid sword-maces of the 7th c. cavalryman (see for instance Nicolle 1996, 59); in 14th c. Italy see the Polittic of Paolo Veneziano of about 1321 AD in Firenze, representing the legend of Saint Orsola (Babuin 2009, Fig. 1099).

²⁶ *And he wore the mace at the mace-holder (Digenes Akritas 1971, G 119).*

²⁷ *εβάσταξε και τό ραβδίν εις τό ραβδοβαστάκιν (Digenis Akritas... 1995, v. 148).*



Fig. 14. Skylitzēs Matritentis, 2nd half of the 12th c.: 1 – *Kataphraktoi* of Maniakes at the battle of Troina, folio 213r; 2 – Imperial Officer visiting Bardas Skleros with a message of the Emperor Tzimiskēs, folio 162v (after facsimile Edition 2006).

Ryc. 14. Kronika Jana Skylitzesa, 2. połowa XII w.: 1 – Katarfrakci Maniakesa w bitwie pod Troiną, folio 213r; 2 – Cesarski oficer z wizytą u Bardasa Sklerosa z wiadomością od cesarza Tzimiskesa, folio 162v (wg facsimile Edition 2006).

fastened the mace at the saddle, at the height of the right leg of the cavalryman. This hook is illustrated in Late East Roman paintings representing military Saints: a fresco of the late 14th c. AD from Crete, preserved in the Monastery of Diskouri at Mylopotamos, shows Aghios Demetrios with a horseman, having the head of his mace attached with a hook-ring at the saddle, visible beside the right leg of the cavalryman (Fig. 2). Although the fresco illustrates a hanging system of a late period, there is no reason to exclude that similar hooks were used since the 9th-10th c., besides leather cases for the maces attached to the saddle. In the *Praecepta Militaria* the three systems are mentioned as possibly employed contemporaneously by the 10th c. *Kataphraktos*: they should have their iron maces and sabers in their hands and have other iron maces either on their belts or saddles²⁸ (*Praecepta Militaria*... 1995, III,7, 57-60).

It is clear that here the author speaks about heavy cavalrymen armed either with maces with laces wrapped around the wrist, i.e. κατείτωσαν εἰς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν, either with other maces attached to the saddle or worn at the belts. Probably it deals with throwing maces and fighting maces. But the name of βαρδούκια, σαλίβα is completely substituted here by the expression σιδηροραβδία. Considering that these weapons were very often

²⁸ In the parallel passage of Nikephoros Ouranos only hanging from belts and attaching to saddles are mentioned (*Nikephoros Ouranos* 1995, 60.69-70).



Fig. 15. *The Betrayal*, Church of Panaghia Myriokephala, Crete, the 11th c. Photos by R. D'Amato.

Ryc. 15. *Zdrada*, Kościół Panagii Myriokefalońskiej, Kreta, XI w. Fot. R. D'Amato.

broken or lost in the clash of the battle, the prescription of the manuals refer not only to different kind of maces, but to the carrying of extra maces attached to the saddles and the belts (McGeer 1994, 217).

The way of wearing the mace using a lace passed around the wrist is well documented in

late paintings, such as that representing Saint George in Kariès Protaton, dated to 1290 AD (Babuín 2009, Fig. 240). Still in the early 15th c. we find examples of maces worn inside the belt, such as is seen on an icon representing Saint Demetrios and preserved in the Arts Museum of Belgrade (*ibidem*, Fig. 902).

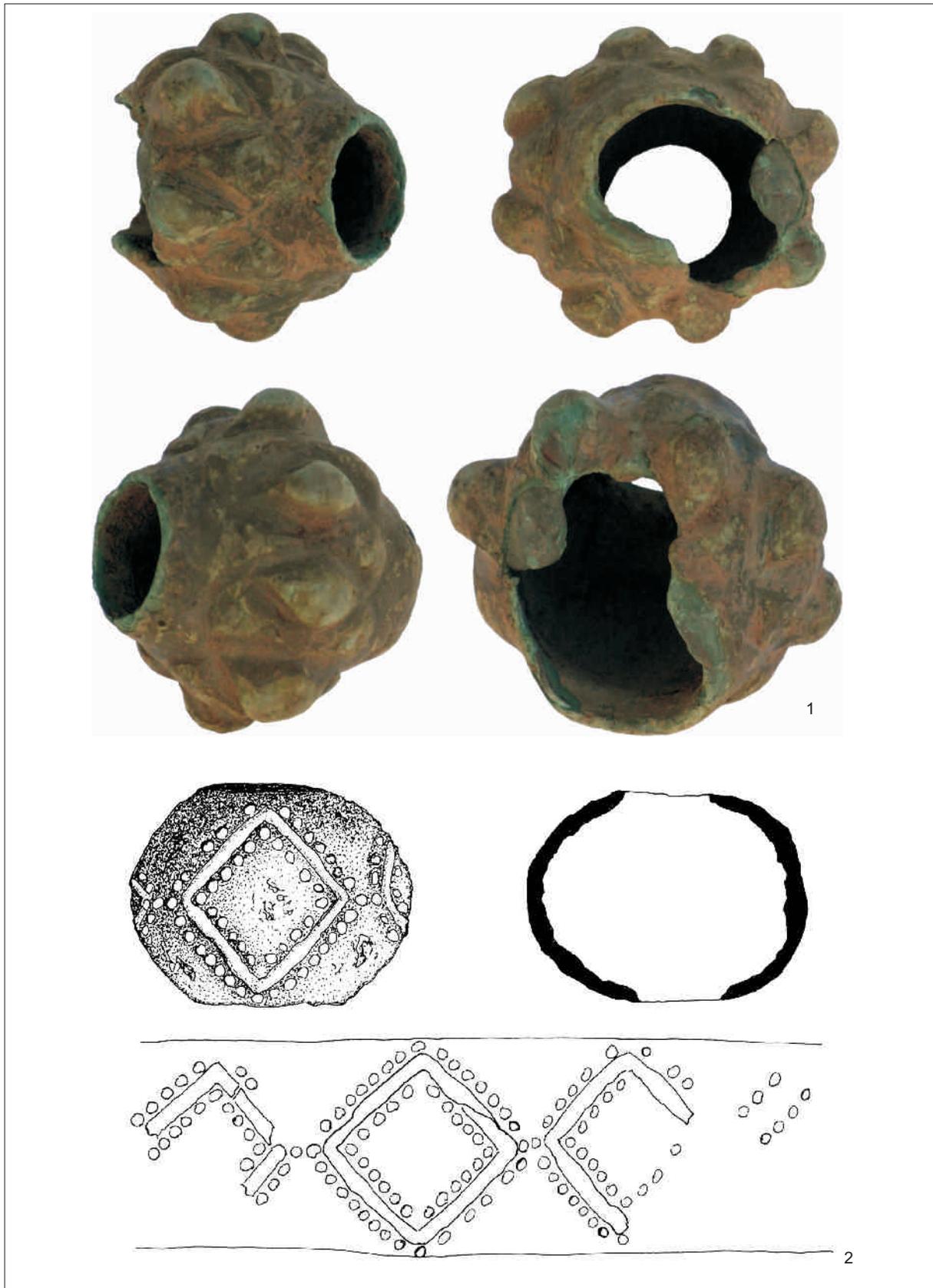


Fig. 16. Maces: 1 – mace head found on the Drastar battlefield, Bulgaria, 1087 AD (photos by courtesy of Prof. B. Totev and Dr. V. Lomakin); 2 – spherical mace head from Panagurište with silver decorations, the 10th-11th c. (after *Āomos 2006*).

Ryc. 16. Buławy: 1 – głowica buławy odkryta na polu bitwy pod Dristrą (1087), Bułgaria (fotografie udostępnione dzięki uprzejmości Prof. B. Toteva i Dr. V. Lomakina); 2 – kulista głowica buławy z Panagurište ze srebrną dekoracją, X-XI w. (wg *Āomos 2006*).

The mace as command symbol

In the hands of military commanders the mace assumed a particular role as command rank and received in this way a symbolic meaning. This was linked with the idea of the mace-sceptre being depicted as a symbol of supreme power. Since ancient times in the East the mace had a double function of a fighting weapon and a rank symbol. It is enough to remember the elaborated mace shaped like a bull-head described for the hero Rustam in the *Chah-Name*, based upon original images of a Sasanian General of the 7th c. AD (Lebedynsky 1992, 113). This double function of the mace passed from Persia to Byzantium²⁹. Probably this habit originated from reciprocal influences with the Easterners, such as the Turks, the Mongols, and the Persians. The image of a Mongol Commander in front of his troops holding in hand a polygonal winged mace is well visible in folio 127v of the Ms.20 of the Edinburgh University Library (Babuín 2009, Fig. 1017).

This concept was the forerunner of the idea of the mace being made to be a symbol of command. A notion that the Slavic peoples, as well as the Westerners, inherited from Byzantium and the Easterners. The mace, widespread from the East to Eastern Europe, also became a favourite weapon of cavalymen in Russia and Poland. In the late Middle Ages the mace was considered, to some degree, a sign of dignity, like a marshall-staff, worn by military commanders³⁰. It is interesting to compare these images with that of the Venetian *Doge Vitale II Michiel* attacking the island of Chios under the Roman Suzerainty. He is depicted with a command mace in hand in the mosaics of San Marco in Venezia (Babuín 2009, Figs. 1113, 1258-1355 AD, representing events of 1171 AD).

A very interesting image of a Late Byzantine commander in ceremonial armour with a polygonal winged mace in hand – a late shape of the *Apelatikion* (Kolias 1988, 182, n. 53) – is shown in the miniature of *Codex Lipsiensis Gr. 35*, dated to about 1354-1374 AD (Cupane 1995, 480; Babuín 2009, Fig. 793). Here the particular combination of the Court cap *Skiadion* with the *Thorax Heroikon* and the war-mace does not leave doubt about the circumstances that the image of the commander was copied from the reality of



Fig. 17. *The power of Eros*, folio 33r of Oppianus Cynegetica Ms. Gr. Z 479 (= 881), Marciana Library, Venezia (after Eleuteri, Marcon, Furlan 2002).

Ryc. 17. *Moc Erosa*, folio 33r z Oppianus Cynegetica Ms. Gr. Z 479 (= 881), Biblioteka Marciana, Wenecja (wg Eleuteri, Marcon, Furlan 2002).

the mid-14th c., and that the mace was then also considered a rank symbol.

The portrait of the Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, with his richly embroidered costume and his command mace in hand³¹ (Babuín 2009, Fig. 1137), is not so different from the images of the Balkanic, Slavic, Rumanian and Turkish Atamans and Vizirs of the 15th-17th c.³²

Shape and typology: Literature and iconography

Regarding concerns of the shape and nature of the fighting maces, we should remember that according to the military manuals, it is written that the cavalry mace should have a spiked head (*Johannis Scylitzae...* 2000, Folio 85v; see Fig. 1:1), i.e. furnished with iron points or nails, and adapted to cause serious wounds. However, for the double function of a throwing and thrusting weapon, if on the one hand it could be heavier than

³⁰ See for instance: the Livonian Order (Щербачков, Дзысь 2001, 54-55); the Russians (*ibidem*, 70-71); Poland (*Żołnierz polski...* 1960, 130-131, Pl. 48); a reconstruction of Charles Touphia, the mid-14th c., Albania (Nicolle 1988, Pl. F).

³¹ See folio 51v of the *Les très riches heures du Duc de Berry* – the source, kept in the Musée Condé de Chantilly, was prepared by a contemporary western artist about 1420 AD, who copied the Emperor during his travel in the West searching for military help against the Turks.

³² See for instance: Bohemian, the 15th c. (Turnbull 2004); the Ottoman Turks, the 15th-16th c. (Nicolle 1983, 16); the grave slab of Radu de la Afumati, Prince of Wallachia (Popescu 1999, 167, cat. 30); Marko Kralievic, Serbia, the 14th c. but the portrait comes from 1850 (Grodsnie 2003, Pl. 14).



Fig. 18. *The Betrayal*, Church of St. John, Arabissos (Karsi Kilise), Kappadokia, c. 1212 AD. Photos by R. D'Amato.

Ryc. 18. *Zdrada*, Kościół Św. Jana, Arabissos (Karsi Kilise), Kapadocja, ok. 1212 r. Fot. R. D'Amato.

the ancient *plumbata*, the mace could not be too heavy, to avoid obstacle for the practical use as a throwing weapon. Many representations and rare descriptions of written sources allow us, as observed by T. Kolias, to calculate the shaft length, which was mostly between 60 and 80 cm (Kolias

1988, 180). Rarely we found a length of 1 m or more³³. The “head” usually has a spherical or polygonal shape, whose dimensions could change. Concerning the basic material of a mace employed as a throwing weapon, it could have a handle made of wood with a weight, designed to be thrown, and it could be reinforced regularly with iron in the head part. The miniatures of *Skyllitzès Matritensis* show medium reddish-brown shafts of maces, which means that they were made of wood.

In the images of illuminated manuscripts, frescoes, and carved woods we can observe the distinction, on the basis of their shape, between the fighting maces with simply round and polished spherical heads, for which the shaft still continues after the head and fighting maces having heads with dented surfaces, similar to the afore-mentioned spiked type. The best illustrations of these different kind of maces from the 12th c. are the miniatures of the *Skilitzès Matritensis* (Hoffmeyer 1966, 112-114, Figs. 18:7-18)³⁴. They show mainly duels between cavalymen of the 10th c. (Figs. 3; 4:1-2), or between armoured *Kataphraktoi* and infantrymen and cavalymen. Frequently, the battles on horseback show maces being swung or thrown by the soldiers.

Based on the shapes shown in the *Skilitzès Matritensis*, and the shapes shown in other artworks, we can distinguish the following shapes of the maces used in Byzantium and the Balkans between the 9th and the 15th c. AD:

- a) Polygonal heads: 1) triangular 2) squared 3) hexagonal 4) octagonal 5) winged and flanged with sub-variants
- b) Flanged bulbous heads
- c) Round heads: 1) simple, 2) flanged,
- 3) polygonal spiked or 4) knobbed
- d) Piked heads.

Different types of fighting maces are also recorded by the Arab writer Al-Tartusi (the 12th c.). In his work, which is a record of weaponry prepared for the famous Sultan Sala-hid-din), he writes about different kinds of maces as follows: *in some of them, the head has got a round shape covered by big or small iron forged spikes, in others the metal is polished and an elongated form shaped like a cucumber with raised processes shaped like sabres and stars* (Al-Tartusi 1948, 139). All these weapons were designed to cause secondary wounds,

in the same way as other striking weapons fitted with chains and big rings.

a) Polygonal heads

With the polygonal mace made of heavy iron, the shape of the head is not fitted with spikes or nails but consists of iron hammered plaques. These fighting maces with more sides and corners compare favorably to the polygonal maces of different provenience found in all Eastern Europe³⁵. The polygonal type fighting mace was made of hammered iron plaques, and with the head of heavy iron, it is well described in the *Praecepta Militaria* of the Emperor Nikephoros Phokas. These “iron staffs” (σιδηροραβδία) are prescribed for the heavy cavalry: they should have been iron staffs with iron massive heads. These heads should have had acute sides: i.e., they were of triangular, squared or hexagonal shape (*Praecepta Militaria*... 1995, III,7,53 ff.; see also Kolia 1988, 180 ff): *The Kataphraktoi should have the following weapons: iron maces with all iron-heads – the heads must have sharp corners and be three-cornered, four cornered, or six-cornered – or else other iron maces.*

Also the shaft was (as the name σιδηροραβδία suggests = iron staffs) most likely entirely of iron, so it is highly probable that at least some of these maces were only thrusting and not throwing weapons.

In the parallel passage of Nikephoros Ouranos’ *Taktika* there are no doubts about the material of these maces (*Nikephoros Ouranos* 1995, 60.66ff): *The weapons of the Kataphraktoi should be of the following: maces, made completely of iron, with sharp corners on the heads so that they are three-cornered, four cornered, or six-cornered – or other iron maces.*

The general of Basil II uses specifically the word ολοσίδηρα (*olosidira*), to indicate maces made completely of iron. Also Eustathios of Thessaloniki, in his commentaries to Homer, wrote that a certain kind of thrusting mace or club, mentioned in the Iliad, was made completely of iron, not only concerning the head (*Eustathii Archiepiscopi*... 1960, II. 672, 8 ff). It is definitely worth quoting Al-Tartusi, who, describing the 12th c. maces, said: *Some of them are made exclusively in iron. Others have an iron head and a wooden shaft*

³³ Like in the *Cod. London Add. 19352*, folios 41v, 63v,74v, 105v,178v,191r; in *Der Nersessian* (1970): Figs. 72, 102, 119, 173, 281, and 299.

³⁴ The mace occurs particularly in the illuminations of the third painter of the manuscript, although examples are also visible in the illuminations of the first and second ones.

³⁵ Bulgaria (Vitliantov 1996, Pls. XV:6-12, XVI:6-13; Парушев 1998, nn. 2-3, 7-11; Йотов 2004, cat. nn. 655, 658, 660); Russia (Kirpichnikov 1968, Fig. 13; Кирпичников 1971, табл. XXVI-XXIX; Щербakov, Дзысь 2001, 48, 52); Balkans (Vetnic 1983, Pl. V:8-10; Nicolle 1999, 82:a – Serbia; Костић 2003, 30 – Serbia); Romania-Moldavia-Wallachia (Stefan, Barnea, Cosma 1967, 346, Fig. 184:23, 25; Spinei 1986, Figs. 21, 23; Nicolle 1988, 8:M – Bukovina-Moldavia).

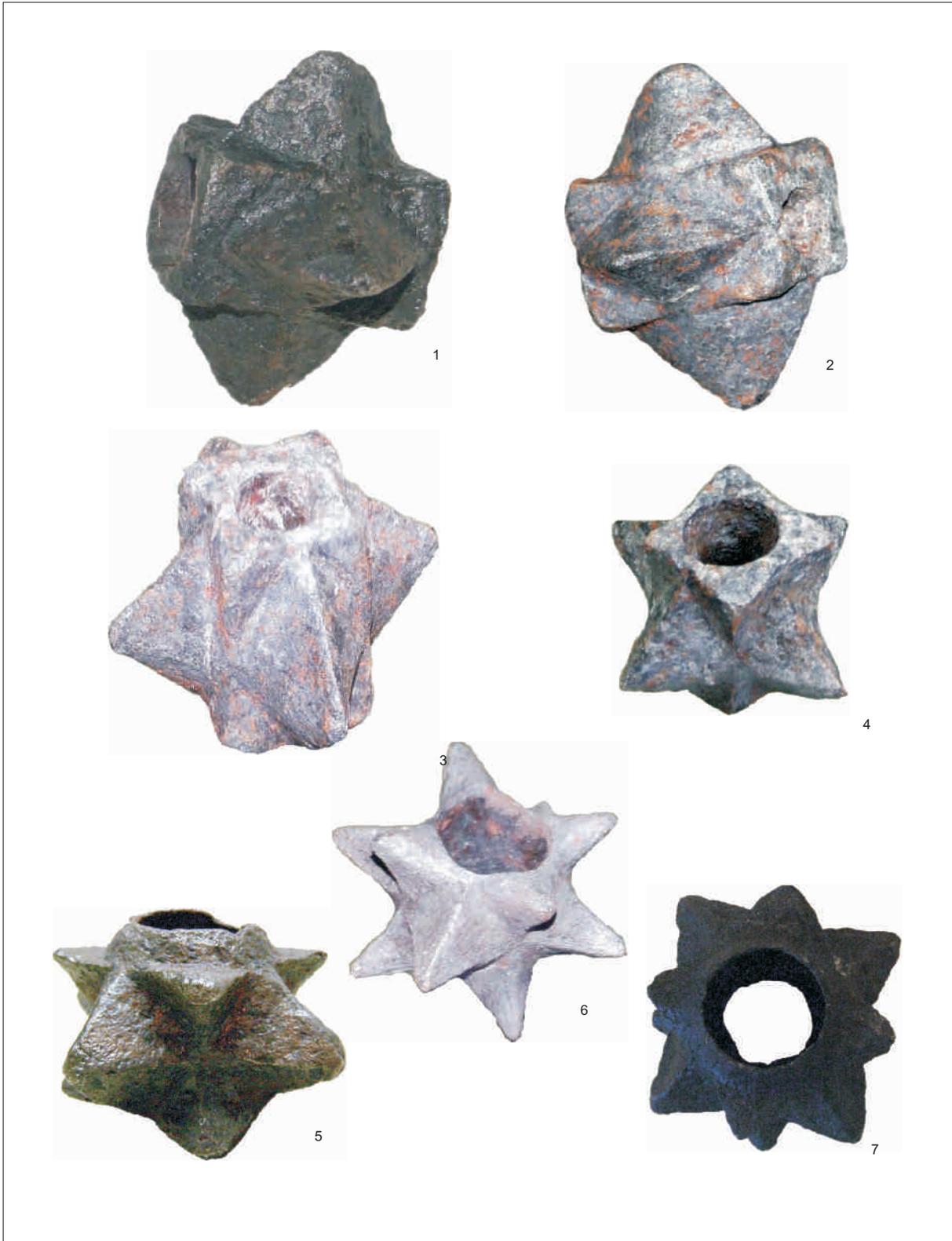


Fig. 19. Mace: 1 – mace head found on the Drastar battlefield, Bulgaria, 1087 AD; 2-4 – mace heads, from North-east Bulgaria, late 11th – 14th c., Varna Museum; 5 – mace head from the Plevan Region, the 14th c., Plevan Museum; 6 – mace head from North-East Bulgaria, the 12th c., Varna Museum; 7 – mace head from the Kazanlik Region, late 12th to 14th c., Kazanlik Regional Museum, inv. 641(1-6 – photos by courtesy of Prof. V. Yotov; 7 – photo by R. D'Amato).

Ryc. 19. Buławy: 1 – głowica buławy odkryta na polu bitwy pod Dristrą, Bułgaria, 1087 r.; 2-4 – głowice buław z północno-wschodniej Bułgarii, koniec XI – XIV w., Muzeum w Warnie; 5 – głowica buławy z rejonu Plevan, XIV w., Muzeum w Plevan; 6 – głowica buławy z północno-wschodniej Bułgarii, XII w., Muzeum w Warnie; 7 – głowica buławy z rejonu Kazanlyk, koniec XII – XIV w., Muzeum Regionalne w Kazanlyk, nr inw. 641 (1-6 – fotografie dzięki uprzejmości prof. V. Jotova; 7 – fot. R. D'Amato).

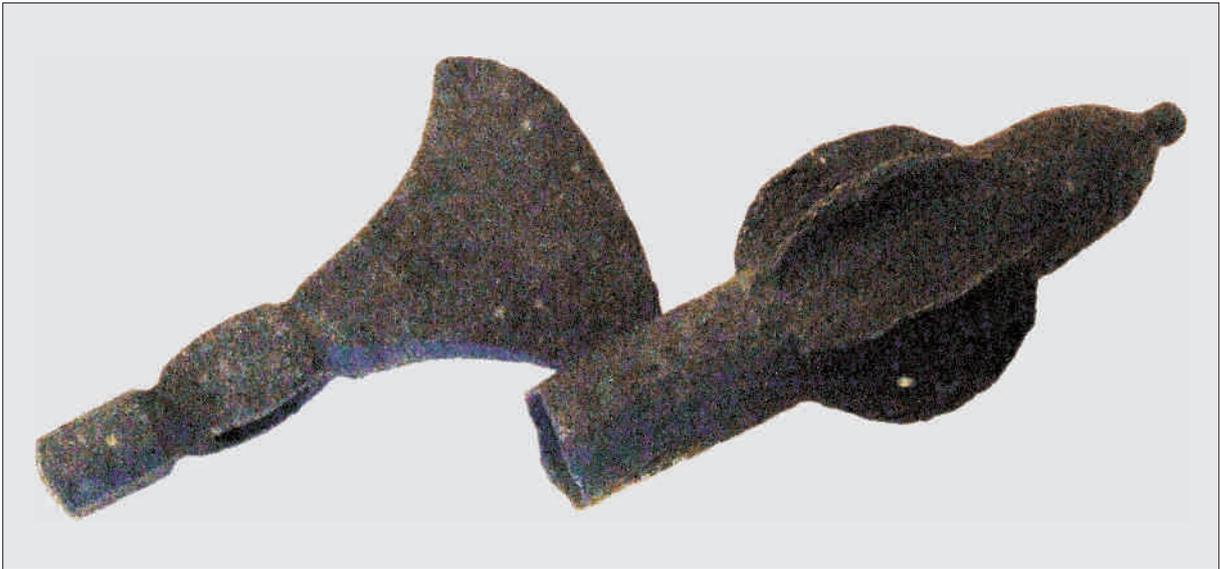


Fig. 20. 14th c. mace head from Stara Zagora region, Bulgaria, Kazanlik Regional Museum. Photo by R. D'Amato.

Fig. 20. XIV-wieczna głowica buławy z okolic Starej Zagory, Bułgaria, Muzeum Regionalne w Kazanlyk. Fot. R. D'Amato.

of appropriate strength and rounding, covered by kimukht and arranged with decorations, while others are not bearing neither painting neither dying and are beautiful of their round shape (Al Tartusi 1948, 139; see also Kolias 1988, 181 n. 49 and 182).

For the 12th c., but referring to episodes related to the 10th c., we have the best representations of polygonal maces in the *Skylitzès* manuscript. They are worn especially by high military commanders: for instance Vardas Phokas (Figs. 3:2; 4:2) and Vardas Skleros (Figs. 4:1,3) (*Folio* 164r; 171v; 178r). Hoffmeyer describes them as having a head *shaped like a flower with four or five petals*, but there is little doubt that these are among the best representations in East-Roman art of the *Kataphraktoi* maces described by Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Ouranos. The polygonal maces of the *Skylitzès* compare favorably with the throwing maces illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry, used by the Normans against the Anglo-Saxons (Wilson 2004, 54, 61, 73). The use of the mace as a throwing weapon should be considered a foreign element in the Norman or Anglo-Saxon weaponry,

in all probability imported from the military contacts with Byzantium in Southern Italy, where the Normans fought both as enemies or mercenaries of the Empire³⁶.

From the polygonal mace the hexagonal winged mace developed. Originating in the East, this weapon spread across Eastern Europe during the 13th c. AD, and from there to the West. The winged mace, used by the western Europeans, was almost certainly based upon Byzantine or Islamic prototypes, with Iran being the most likely place of origin (Nicolle 1999, 222). It is relevant to note that the polygonal mace of both shapes was widely used by Eastern Cavalrymen such as the Turks and the Mongols, during the entire 14th c.³⁷

The maces painted in *Skylitzès* are of more simple and plain type than the maces seen in the Persian manuscripts, and they are more stylized: but we have to consider that they were painted more than 100 years earlier, maybe copied from previous paintings on the topic they represented. Instead, in the Church paintings the frescoes are very detailed – like in the Islamic illuminations – and

³⁶ It is absolutely true that there are early examples of the use of maces in Scandinavia (Sandstedt 1992, 73-103; 1998, 243-245). The war-maces are present in any military culture, and of course they were used by western warriors before the 11th c., but the throwing maces of the shape illustrated in the *Bayeux Tapestry* and this way of employment are early mentioned only in the East-Roman military treaties of the 10th c. and (at my knowledge) attested for the Normans for the first time in the 11th c. *Bayeux Tapestry*. However we cannot exclude a direct influence on the Late Roman Technology from the Steppe's warriors on both Western and Eastern Europe simultaneously (see also Thorne 1982, 48-50 – where also the symbolic meaning of the mace as command symbol is underlined, and this can be only linked with the Eastern military tradition).

³⁷ See for instance the Mongol Cavalryman of the Ms.20 of the Edinburg University Library (*Jāmi' al-tawārikh*), painted by order of Rashid ed-Din about 1304-1314 AD (Nicolle 1999, Fig. 626:p.y.ac; Babuin 2009, Fig. 1016) and the miniature of the *Shah-nama*, from Tabriz, at the Topkapi Saray, Ms. Haz. 2153, folio 55r, of about 1370 AD (Babuin 2009, Fig. 1021). In this last miniature both kinds of hexagonal polygonal maces are well illustrated. Hoffmeyer (1966, 113) said that these maces were of Persian type.

they depict the same winged polygonal mace, with its conical lantern shape and sharp projecting edges.

A noteworthy interesting early image of such maces used in a single fight is the only existing representation (at my knowledge) of the duel amongst Digenis Akritas and the Amazon Maximò (*Digenis Akritas...* 1995, VI, 580ff., 732ff.), painted about 1289/1290 AD at Krisafa (Laconia) and preserved in the beautiful Church of the Panaghia Krysafitissa (Fig. 5). The two warriors are represented with two different maces: Maximò held a polygonal mace of the old type, showing different spikes inserted on a squared body; Digenis fights instead with a winged mace, shaped like a cucumber, exactly as in the description of Al-Tartusi.

Frescoes representing military Saints and episodes of the New Testament are rich in images of this mace. One of the best specimens comes from the Ochrida Cathedral of the Perivleptos, showing St. George as a heavy cavalryman of the late 13th c. AD (Fig. 6). The frescoes of this Church were made by painters from Constantinople, in an area still under the control of the Roman Empire, about 1294-1295 AD. The detail is striking. The mace is a squared winged specimen, attached to a shaft of medium length of brown colour. Around the upper part of the shaft red straps of the loop are perfectly visible. The loop was used to hold firmly the mace around the wrist. The top of the mace ends in an iron knob. In the *Katholikon* of the Vatopedi Monastery (about 1312 AD, Fig. 7) a perfect example of hexagonal winged mace is again represented in the hands of St. George, dressed in high uniform of the early 14th c. AD. The mace lacks the iron knob at the top, thereby showing the use of various kinds of winged maces in the same period. This mace was used until the very late period of the Empire. An elaborate late example (1413 AD) is visible in the hands of St. Theodore Tyro, in the Church of St. Paraskevi at Monodendri, in Epyrus (Fig. 21). The specimen in the hands of the Saint is very western in shape. The head is made of six flanges and topped with a spherical pommel, and it seems to be the forerunner of a typology diffused slightly later. We can compare it for instance, with an early 16th c. specimen from Germany (Tarassuk, Blair 1992, 313, n. 3), furnished with heavy iron plaques, and with other actual

specimens made in Germany or Italy (Gilliot 2008, 156).

The “cucumber” winged mace with the knob is also shown in the hands of infantrymen, such as the warriors of the betrayal of the St. Apostles Church in Pec (c. 1300), contemporary to that of the Perivleptos (Fig. 8:2). Although this last fresco could perhaps represent Serbian warriors, who were the models for the painter, it is clear that the hexagonal mace head was part of the fitting of the Balkanic warriors of this age, either the Romans (Byzantines), or the Slavs, the Serbians, and the Bulgarians.

The scene of the betrayal of Our Lord and his arrest in the Gethsemane Garden is a rich document for the illustration of infantry maces, which since the 11th c. seem to have been mounted on pole shafts. In the Church of St. Nicholas in Prilep (c. 1298) the Balkanic warriors are shown with octagonal maces over their heads (Fig. 8:1). The *militia* of Thessaloniki perhaps provided the models for the scene of the betrayal in the Church of St. Nicholas Orphanos (about 1310-1320 AD), where a polygonal winged mace is well represented amongst other weapons (Fig. 8:3). Another important iconography for the representation of infantry maces is that of the Myrophores, i.e. the pious women going to the Holy Sepulchre. Under the feet of the Angel there are unusually precisely depicted sleeping Roman soldiers in uniforms of the age of different frescoes. The most striking Roman example is that of the Vatopedi Monastery (1312 AD), where a winged mace (of the same typology as that in Fig. 6) emerges above the sleeping soldiers (Fig. 9).

Amongst the Balkan states, several examples of warriors armed with polygonal and winged maces are visible in the churches built from the 13th to the 15th c. under the patronage of Serbian, Bulgarian or Slavic rulers, like in Čučer (St. Nicholas³⁸ – Babuin 2009, Fig. 435), Treskavac (The Dormition of the Virgin³⁹ – *ibidem*, Fig. 592), the Markov Monastery⁴⁰ (Fig. 10; *ibidem*, Fig. 926), Resava (Holy Trinity⁴¹ – *ibidem*, Fig. 938), Kalenič (the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin⁴² – *ibidem*, Figs. 955-956). A good example of squared hexagonal head was painted in the hands of a Serbian-Byzantine Military Saint⁴³ (*ibidem*, Fig. 819) in the now lost Church of Rečani (Fig. 12:1).

³⁸ St. Nicetas, about 1307 AD.

³⁹ St. Eutropios, about 1334-1343 AD.

⁴⁰ St. Demetrius, about 1376-1377 AD. The warrior is a perfect example of the elite Serbian Cavalrymen who fought against the Turks at Kosovo in 1389 AD.

⁴¹ About 1407-1418.

⁴² St. Demetrius and St. George, about 1427 AD (Fig. 11).

⁴³ St. Theodore Tyro, about 1360-1370 AD.



Fig. 21. St. Theodore Tyro, Church of St. Paraskevi at Monodendri, Epyrus, 1413 (photos by courtesy of Dr. A. Babuin).

Ryc. 21. Św. Teodor z Tyru, Kościół św. Paraskewii w Monodendri, Epir, 1413 r. (fotografie udostępnione dzięki uprzejmości dr. A. Babuina).



An interesting issue is how the last defenders of Constantinople were dressed and what kind of weapons they used. An interesting icon of 1450 AD, by Andreas Pavias, preserved in the Church of St. Paraskevi at Gheroskipou, shows warriors at the Crucifixion of Our Lord equipped in a mixed Balkanic-European and Turkish style. Two cavalymen are armed with big polygonal winged maces (*ibidem*, Figs. 987-988). This precious icon can give a real answer to the last appearance of the last defenders of the Roman Empire, or at least to the appearance of the Greek elite fighting for the Latin rulers of Cyprus in the middle of the 15th c. AD. A further fresco of 1475 AD from Cyprus, at Pedoulas, illustrates Saint George and its mace attached to the saddle (*ibidem*, Fig. 996). The fresco is of course post-Byzantine, but in the years following the fall of Constantinople many images of military Saints produced in the art of the Aegean islands under Christian control might also reflect the equipment of the last defenders of Byzantium.

b) Flanged bulbous heads

This shape is a sub-category of the polygonal head and appears in Byzantine paintings only in the 14th and the 15th c. Probably this form of mace originated in the East, as could be proved by the image of a charging Persian-Mongol cavalryman holding such a mace in a miniature of about 1330-1335 from Tabriz⁴⁴ (Nicolle 1999, Fig. 632:j; Babuin 2009, Fig. 1019). The best example is visible in the cavalymen of the Church of Diskouri (Fig. 2), representing Greek élite Cretan noblemen of the late 14th c., who formed, under permission of their Venetian masters, the last guardsmen of the Emperors of Byzantium (Heath 1984, 19). Another interesting example, where both the mace and a similar fastening system are visible, is seen in the Church of Tsalendjikha, in Georgia (Fig. 12:2). The painter of this Church was a certain Manuel

⁴⁴ *Ardashir battling with Bahman*, from *The Demotte Shāhnāmāh*, Tabriz, folio preserved in the Detroit Institute of Art (inv. no. 35.54). See also the maces represented in folio 105r of the *Shahnamah* in Topkapi Library, Istanbul, Ms. Haz. 1511, 1371 AD (Nicolle 1990, 6).

Eugenikos from Constantinople, who operated there between 1384 and 1396 AD. It is highly possible that the warrior (St. George) was copied from one of the last elite Byzantine cavalrymen.

This mace-head was widespread in the Balkans since the 14th c. AD and was the prototype of some command-maces of the following centuries (for example Shpakovsky, Nicolle 2006, 39, Pl. G). Good examples in churches built by Slavic rulers were visible in the now lost Church of St. George in Rečani⁴⁵ (Babuin 2009, Fig. 818). Specimens of the late 14th – early 15th c. are visible in Serbian and Croatian museums (Vetnić 1983, Pl. V:6-7 – 15th-16th c.; Nicolle 1988, 8:G; Ćirković 1992, Fig. 199; Jakovljević 2008, Pl. I). It is interesting to note that a half of the shaft is of iron as is the head, and the lower part of the shaft is of wood. A further specimen of the 15th c. that can be also associated with those used by the late Roman elites is preserved in the Bucharest museum (Popescu 1999, cat.162c⁴⁶). Other specimens of the same century come from Bulgaria (Кызов 2002, Pl. III:19-21).

c) Round heads

The round head was probably an oriental shape imported from Persia and India, where cylindrical or spherical mace heads, sometimes furnished with spikes and hafted upon a slender shaft were in favour (Hoffmeyer 1966, 113). This is the main shape shown for the throwing imperial *vardoukion* in the *Skilitzès Matritensis* (Fig. 1:1-2). Round spiked maces are attested in the iconography both for infantrymen and cavalrymen, but especially in the hands of officers and nobles (Fig. 13:1-3; *Johannis Scylitzae...* 2000, Folio 161r)⁴⁷. Simple round maces without spikes are represented as well in the hands of fighting cavalrymen (Figs. 13:4-5; 14:1)⁴⁸ or Imperial Officers and Bodyguards (Fig. 14:2)⁴⁹. These maces are usually represented in the manuscript with a long, slender shaft.

For the infantrymen using round maces of both spiked or smooth round shape we have a very early iconography in the scene of the betrayal. In

the 11th c. mosaic of Nea Moni in Chios, smooth round maces are mounted on shafts and are worn by the soldiers arresting Christ (Mouriki 1985, II, Pl. 106), and again these long pole mounted maces are shown in the parallel scene of the Church of Panaghia Myriokephala, in Crete, dated to the 11th c. (Fig. 15) (Spatharakis 1998, 40-41). Here spiked maces and smooth maces are both represented beside one another: and it is interesting to note that in both churches the soldiers arresting Jesus Christ could be interpreted as Varangians (D'Amato 2010, 8, 15). A mace found on the battlefield of Drastar (Fig. 16:1) in a part of the Roman camp where various Varangian equipment was found, shows a striking similarity to some of the maces of the Cretan fresco. It could be exactly a specimen of a mace mounted upon a shaft and used by elite infantrymen, such as the Varangians, against the cavalry.

Smooth mace heads have been confirmed by the military archaeology of Byzantium, mainly in the Bulgarian territory: a simple spherical head comes from the village of Balik, in the Tervel Region (Папушев 1998, 67, Fig. 1; Ёотов 2004, cat. 645)⁵⁰, while a head decorated with silver has been found in Panagjuriste (Fig. 16:2; Ёотов 2004, cat. 644)⁵¹. Gilded or silvered specimens are mentioned in the sources as prerogatives of high military commanders and even the Emperor: the *folio 33r* of *Oppianus Cynegetica Ms. Gr. Z 479* (= 881) in the Marciana Library of Venezia shows us an Imperial *Emilochita* using a silvered mace against a courtier (Fig. 17)⁵². Also the mace brandished by the warrior on the left in Fig. 15 seems to be silvered. Although found out of the territory of the Eastern Roman Empire, early examples of this kind of maces have been discovered in Poland (the Młodzikowo inhumation cemetery in Greater Poland, dated to the 11th c.), and Prussia, also from the 11th c. (Michalak 2005, 199-200; 2006, 57-59).

A pottery fragment from Corinth, dated 1180-1200 AD, shows a warrior holding a simple round headed mace, with concentric circles inside,

⁴⁵ St. George, about 1360-1370 AD.

⁴⁶ Here only the iron part is preserved.

⁴⁷ They are represented in the hands of the Pechenegs and not of the Romans, see: *Folio 162r* (a duel between Konstantinos Skleros and a Russian cavalryman), *Folio 202v* (charging *Kataphraktoi* of Georgios Maniakes against the Arabs at Teluch) (Hoffmeyer 1966, 113).

⁴⁸ See *Johannis Scylitzae...* 2000, Folio 161v (Roman cavalrymen versus Pechenegs); Folio 167r, v (Roman cavalrymen of Emperor Tzimiskès pursuing Russians); Folio 213r (*Kataphraktoi* of Maniakes at the battle of Troina).

⁴⁹ See *Johannis Scylitzae...* 2000, Folio 162v (an Imperial Officer visiting Bardas Skleros with a message from the Emperor Tzimiskès); Folio 169v (the Roman champion Anemas Kouropas killing the *Rus* Icmor); Folio 171r (the Roman champion Anemas Kouropas hitting the Prince Svjatoslav of Kiev).

⁵⁰ Variant B of Yotov's typology, dated to the 2nd half of the 10th or the early 11th c.

⁵¹ Variant A of Yotov's typology.

⁵² The manuscript has been recently dated to 1054 AD (Eleuteri, Marcon, Furlan 2002, 39 ff., 112).

perhaps intended to represent a nailed side or the top of the weapon (Babuín 2009, Fig. 105)⁵³. The heads of several spiked maces are again visible above the heads of the warriors arresting Jesus in the betrayal scene of the Church of St. John in Arabissos, dated to about 1212 AD (Fig. 18) (*ibidem*, Figs. 154-155). These warriors were probably copied from the *militia* of Theodore Laskaris I of Nikea, and I have recently proposed the identification of them with members of the Varangian Regiment serving under the Nicean Emperors, due to their red beards, together with the long shafted axes represented as well in the fresco (D'Amato 2010). Round and polygonal “star” maces are here represented alongside each other. Also in the churches of the Epirote Despotate, several examples are visible, like in the Church of the Blachernes in Arta, where an officer holds a round spiked mace whose top is clearly evident (Babuín 2009, Fig. 167 – the mid-13th c.). A polished shaft round mace is visible in the betrayal of the Vatopedi *Katholikon* (1312 AD) (*ibidem*, Fig. 479). In the Church of St. Nicholas in Monemvasia (about 1260-1300 AD) sleeping warriors at the Sepulchre of the Palaeologian Age are shown again with round spiked maces above their heads (*ibidem*, Fig. 199).

d) Piked cylindrical heads

The piked fluted elongated maces used by the Romans were more or less similar to certain Islamic and Indian types (Hoffmeyer 1966, 113; Nicolle 1994, Pl. F: 45, 53 – the 12th c.), although actual specimens have been found in Eastern Iran (Nicolle 1999, nn. 665 (miniature), 666, 675)⁵⁴. We do not have however many specimens of this typology, which seems to be illustrated in the *Skilitzès* only in one miniature (Fig. 3:3)⁵⁵. The only concrete published Byzantine find of this category is a head-mace said to have been found in Constantinople. It is made of bronze (Scalini 2007, 121, cat. 16)⁵⁶, and is dated to the 13th-14th c. AD. A curious thing is that the depiction of this kind of mace is more widely known from iconography, such as *the Holy Lance held by Adhemar du Puy before Antioch*, the 13th c. miniature from the collection of British Library Manuscript in the Yates Thompson Collection (No. 12, f, 29)⁵⁷. In most cases they are held by Muslim warriors. Bulgarian specimens, published by Kuzov (Кυζοβ 2002, Pl. III:15-16a-b) and kept in the collection of the Varna Museum, are dated to the age of the Second Bulgarian Empire (the 12th-14th c.).

Later winged or flanged maces may have evolved from this relatively simple polygonal typology.

dr Raffaele D'Amato
University of Ferrara

Catalogue

Polygonal quadrangular types (the 9th-14th c.)

Ref #: 9

Measurements: 8.9 cm. x 5.0 cm (Fig. 22:1-1a);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Eastern Balkans;

Yotov's classification: Type 2;

The specimen, of polygonal cubic shape, finds its correspondence with a very similar item of iron found in Pliska (Bulgaria), dated between the 9th and the 11th c. (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XVI:5). On the squared body are inserted four pointed knobs (γωνία) (see Fig. 4:3 for analogies). This is probably the type described by the military manuals as *Tetragonos* (four-cornered) (See supra p. 10). Our specimen presents the singularity

of traces of silver geometric decoration still visible in some regions beneath the incrustations. It may have belonged to an officer or an Imperial bodyguard.

Theodore, Metropolit of Nikea, in his letter to the Emperor Constantine VII written in the mid-10th c., speaks about such an iron covered war mace, describing the ambush laid on him by the men of Vasilios Koitonites in Constantinople. One of the drunken men, armed with iron covered maces, inflicted him a thick wound between the eyelashes and the temple. From the depth of the wound, extending to the bone, he assumes that the iron mace head was of the hexagonal shape, or at least he supposes that it was covered with iron interlaced chains (Darrouzès 1960, VII:3, 16);

⁵³ Preserved in Archaeological Museum of Corinth, inv. C 1934 0092, but at the present not on display.

⁵⁴ 11th-13th c., probably the *Latt* of the written Iranian sources.

⁵⁵ *Folio* 162r – a Russian cavalryman hitting with a mace against the helmet of the *Magistros* Vardas Skleros; interestingly, in the text of Kedrenos the weapon used by the Russian cavalryman is reported as a sword – *xiphos* (see: Kedrenos Georgios 1839, 387).

⁵⁶ Kept in the Museo Storico della caccia e del territorio, (14 x 3,5 cm). Dr. Scalini compares it with that illustrated on the funerary slab of Colaccio Beccatelli at Imola, died in 1341 AD, underlining a clear link of this representation with the East, where the image of the mace is correctly interpreted as an instrument to resemble the weapons coming from Constantinople or at least from the Latin *Outremer*.

⁵⁷ I would like to express my thanks to A. Michalak MA for this suggestion (see also <http://www.imagesonline.bl.uk/results.asp?image=064832&image=1&searchnum=3>).

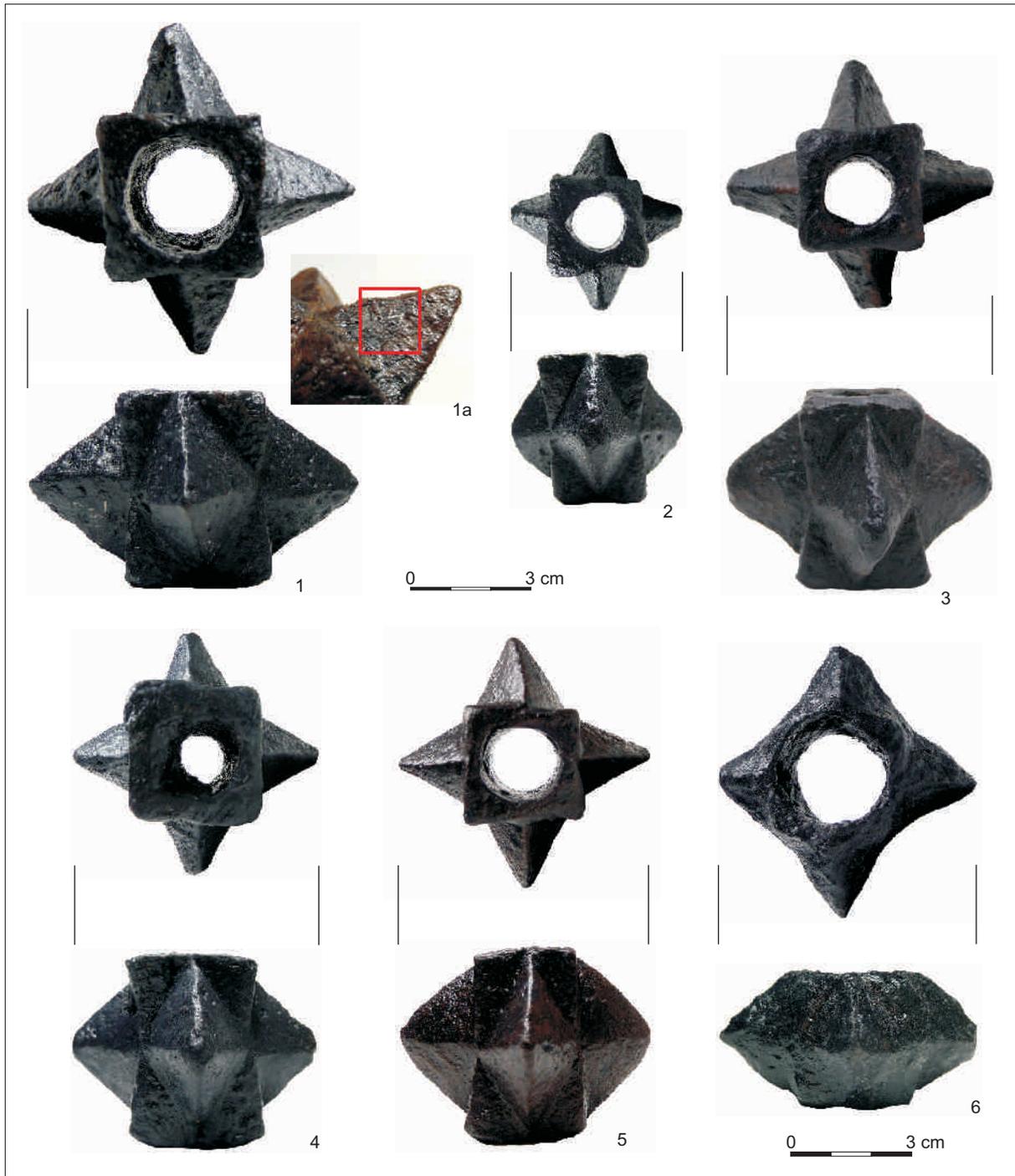


Fig. 22. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1-1a – Ref. 9; 2 – Ref. 10; 3 – Ref. 678; 4 – Ref. 589; 5 – Ref. 590; 6 – Ref. 891. Photo by J. McNamara.

Ryc. 22. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1-1a – nr kat. 9; 2 – nr kat. 10; 3 – nr kat. 678; 4 – nr kat. 589; 5 – nr kat. 590; 6 – nr kat. 891. Fot. J. McNamara.

Other parallels: Pliska (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XV:6); Varna (Кузов 2002, Pl. I:6 – where it is proposed that this kind of cubic mace was continuously used from the 9th to the 13th c.)⁵⁸.

Ref #: 10
 Measurements: 6,35 cm. x 3,8 cm (Fig. 22:2);
 Material: iron;
 Provenance: Eastern Balkans;

⁵⁸ Very similar examples were classified by L. Kovács (1971, 168-170) and A. N. Kirpičnikov (1966, 48) as Type I, and they dated these items from the 9th to the 11th c. – the earliest example of this type from the Caucasus Mountains was dated to the 9th c.

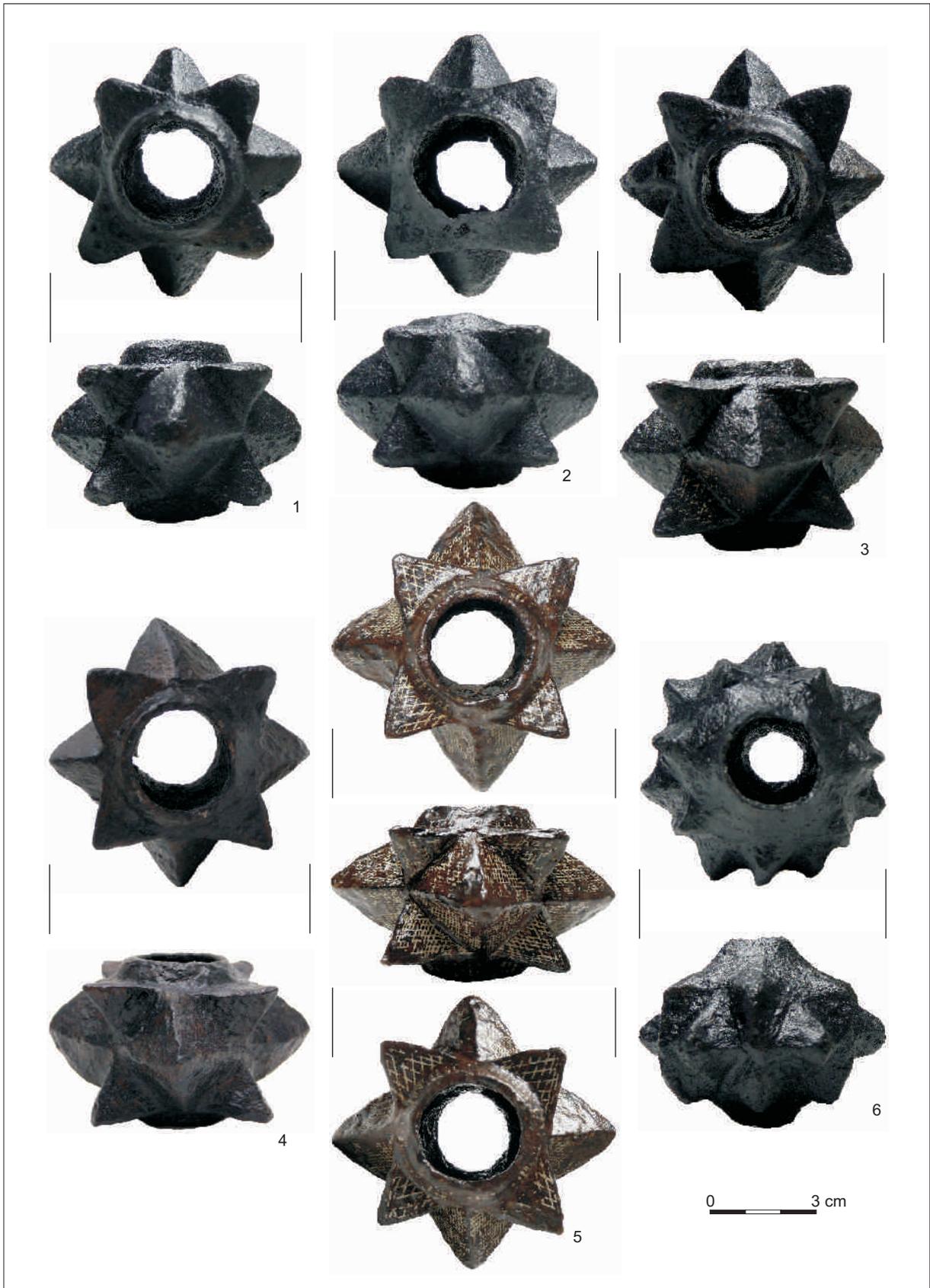


Fig. 23. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1 – Ref. 11; 2 – Ref. 364; 3 – Ref. 889; 4 – Ref. 675; 5 – Ref. 890; 6 – Ref. 328. Photo by J. McNamara.

Ryc. 23. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1 – nr kat. 11; 2 – nr kat. 364; 3 – nr kat. 889; 4 – nr kat. 675; 5 – nr kat. 890; 6 – nr kat. 328. Fot. J. McNamara.

Yotov's classification: Type 2;

The war mace here illustrated is very akin to a iron specimen coming from the archaeological site of Vielki Preslav and dated by Vitliyanov to the 11th-12th c. (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XVI:6), when Bulgaria was under the Roman rule, after the victorious wars of Basil II. It presents again a squared body, with four wide knobs disposed on the 4 sides. This kind of weapon could be well used both by cavalry and infantry. This kind of mace was provided with a iron body (sometimes leather lined). In the body of the mace the hole is larger probably to enable cast lead to be put around the shaft. The shaft's length could be calculated at about 60 cm;

Other parallels: Pliska (*ibidem*, Pl. XV:7); Varna (Йотов 2004, cat. 660, dated to the 9th-10th c.).

Ref#: 678

Measurements: 7 cm wide x 5 cm high (Fig. 22:3);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Type 2;

Also this war mace, made of forged iron, belongs to the earlier specimens of the 10th-11th c., but the use of this category could be extended until the time of the second Bulgarian Empire, i.e., to the 14th c. It finds a good parallel in a specimen from Tumensko (Йотов 2002, cat. 658);

Other parallels: Varna (Кузов 2002, Pl. I:4-5).

Ref#: 589

Measurements: 7 cm wide x 5 cm high (Fig. 22:4);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Eastern Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Type 2;

Same typology as the previous one. The war mace was not known in Bulgaria until the 10th c. and found its wide application amongst the Bulgarian warriors only with the advent of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Therefore, most maces of that kind which are related to the 10th-11th c. were probably used by the Romans. The best parallel is a mace-head from the region of Provardia, dated about the 11th-13th c. (Парушев 1998, 68, n. 8);

Other parallels: Zel-Smjadovo (*ibidem*, 68, n. 7); Bdinici-Dobrič (*ibidem*, 68, n.9).

Ref#: 590

Measurements: 6.5 cm wide x 5 cm high (Fig. 22:5);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Type 2;

Iron maces with rectangular heads and 4 pyramidal points were used by the Roman Cataphracts at the

battle of Drastar against the Pechenegs. A very similar example to Ref. 590 is a mace-head from this battlefield, preserved in the Varna museum (Fig. 19:1)⁵⁹, that can be dated with a certain precision to 1087; the most part of the specimens included in this type are most likely of Byzantium origin. Most finds from Poland, Ukraine, Hungary are rather of cubic than rectangular shape⁶⁰.

Other parallels: specimens from North-Eastern Bulgaria, the late 11th – 14th c. (Fig. 19:2-4); Varna Museum.

Ref#: 891

Measurements: 3.5 cm high and 5.4 cm across (Fig. 22:6);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Danube River Valley, Balkans;

Squared mace-head with four knobs projecting diagonally. Dated to the 11th c. based on comparison with a bronze specimen of Dinogetia (Stefan, Barnea, Cosma 1967, 346, Fig. 184:23);

Other parallels: the author has not found parallels in the Roman territories, but this specimen is very similar to artefacts published by L. Kovács (1971) and A. N. Kirpičnikov (1966), because of the more "cubical" shape of the body.

Polygonal "star" types with 12 knobs (the 11th-14th c.)

Ref#: 11

Measurements: 8.1 cm x 5.3 cm (Fig. 23:1);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Eastern Balkans;

This mace head is similar to a specimen found on the site of Pliska dated to the turn of the 12th and the 13th c. (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XV:10). The pyramidal shape of this weapon represents a further evolution of previous specimens. The use of such kind of weapon was mainly reserved to the armored cavalryman, even though spiked maces like this were depicted as being also worn by infantrymen (see Fig. 5 for analogies);

Other parallels: Varna (Кузов 2002, Pl. II:14, dated from the 12th to the 14th c.); Pliska (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XV:9)⁶¹.

Ref#: 364

Measurements: 8 cm x 5 cm (Fig. 23:2);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Eastern Balkan Region;

Same typology as the previous one. Can be dated to the 13th c. based on the analogy with the specimen from Vatra-Moldovitei (Spinei 1996, Fig. 23:1). Sometimes these maces were mounted on a pole, to be used against the cavalry by the infantry. In this instance the shaft length could also reach 1 m, as it could be seen in many

⁵⁹ Unpublished. The author thanks his dear friend Valeri Yotov for the kind permission to publish it in this article. The head measures c. 7 x 6 cm.

⁶⁰ A. Michalak MA suggests to me correctly to consider the use of iron as a further meaningful element for the identification of such maces as of Byzantine origin.

⁶¹ Parallel specimens, but made of bronze were classified by A. N. Kirpičnikov (1966, 52) and L. Kovács (1971, 174) as Type IV (see in Michalak 2005, 193-196 – extension of this typology: IVA; for other numerous specimens found in a territory not far from the East-Roman Dobrugia see the finds in the Alba Iulia Museum – Simina, Anghel 1998, Fig. 4:2).

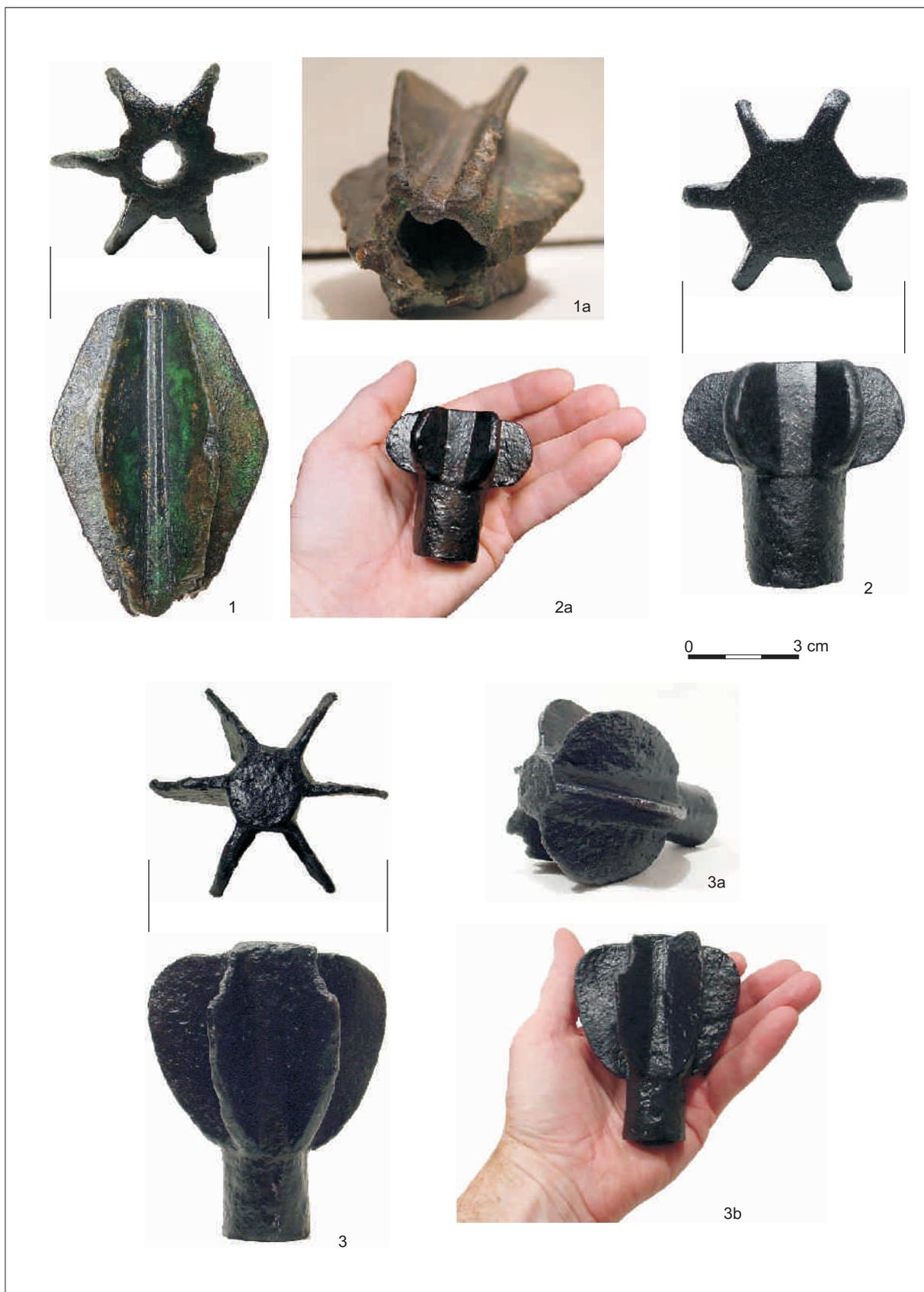


Fig. 24. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1-1a – Ref. 304; 2-2a – Ref. 346; 3-3b – Ref. 592. *Photo by J. McNamara.*

Ryc. 24. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1-1a – nr kat. 304; 2-2a – nr kat. 346; 3-3b – nr kat. 592. *Fot. J. McNamara, R. D'Amato.*



Fig. 25. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1 – Ref. 327; 2 – Ref. 587; 3 – Ref. 588. Photo by J. McNamara.

Ryc. 25. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1 – nr kat. 327; 2 – nr kat. 587; 3 – nr kat. 588. Fot. J. McNamara.

paintings representing the Gospel episode of the Judas betrayal (Figs. 8:3; 9; 15);

Other parallels: Serbia, the specimen preserved in the museum of Krajevo (Милованович 1986, 80, cat. 177, dated to the 12th-14th c.); Dobrina-Provadija (Парушев 1998, 69, n.11).

Ref#: 889

Measurements: 5.5 cm high x 8 cm across (Fig. 23:3);

Material: iron with silver decoration;

Provenance: Danube River Valley, Balkans;

This mace head is similar to the iron specimen found on the site of Doliste, in the municipal area of Aksakovo, dated to the turn of the 13th and the 14th c. (Парушев 1998, 69, n.10). It still presents traces of silver geometric decoration on the surface, like the Doliste specimen, so it is probably a high rank mace for a cavalry officer (see Fig. 4:2 for analogies);

Other parallels: the specimen preserved in the museum of Pleven, the 14th c. (Fig. 19:5); Serbia, the specimen preserved in the Museum of Arts of Beograd (Милованович 1986, 114, cat. 278, dated to the 14th c.).

Ref#: 675

Measurements: 8.5 cm wide x 4.8 cm high (Fig. 23:4);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

The specimen can be dated to the 12th-14th c.

A good parallel is the mace-head from North-Eastern Bulgaria preserved in the Varna Museum (Fig. 19:6). A specific illustration which shows the use of this weapon by light infantrymen is in the miniature of Cod. Par. Suppl. gr. 27, fol. 118v, preserved in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, and dated to the 12th c. (Kolias 1988, Pl. XVII:1). In the Biblical scene representing the arrest of Jesus, a mob of armed men is shown holding axes, war-hammers and torches, mounted on poles. Among the other weapons, there is a spiked mace with 12 points, of the same shape as our specimen here. A slightly different example is shown on the same episode represented on the mosaic of Saint Marco Cathedral in Venezia, and dated to the 13th c. (*ibidem*, Pl. XX:1). From early on, the equipment of the Venetian army was very similar to the East Roman army so it is no wonder to see soldiers with similar equipment in the Venetian mosaic;

Other parallels: Serbia, specimens preserved in the War Museum of Beograd (Пековић 2006, 113, inv. 16370 and 17024, dated to the 11th-12th and 12th-14th c. respectively).

Ref#: 890

Measurements: 5 cm high x 9 cm across (Fig. 23:5);

Material: iron with silver decoration;

Provenance: Danube River Valley, Balkans;

The specimen is the pearl of the Museum collection.



Fig. 26. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1 – Ref. 586; 2 – Ref. 674; 3 – Ref. 677; 4 – Ref. 679; 5 – Ref. 680; 6 – Ref. 591. *Photo by J. Mcnamara*

Ryc. 26. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1 – nr kat. 586; 2 – nr kat. 674; 3 – nr kat. 677; 4 – nr kat. 679; 5 – nr kat. 680; 6 – nr kat. 591. *Fot. J. Mcnamara.*

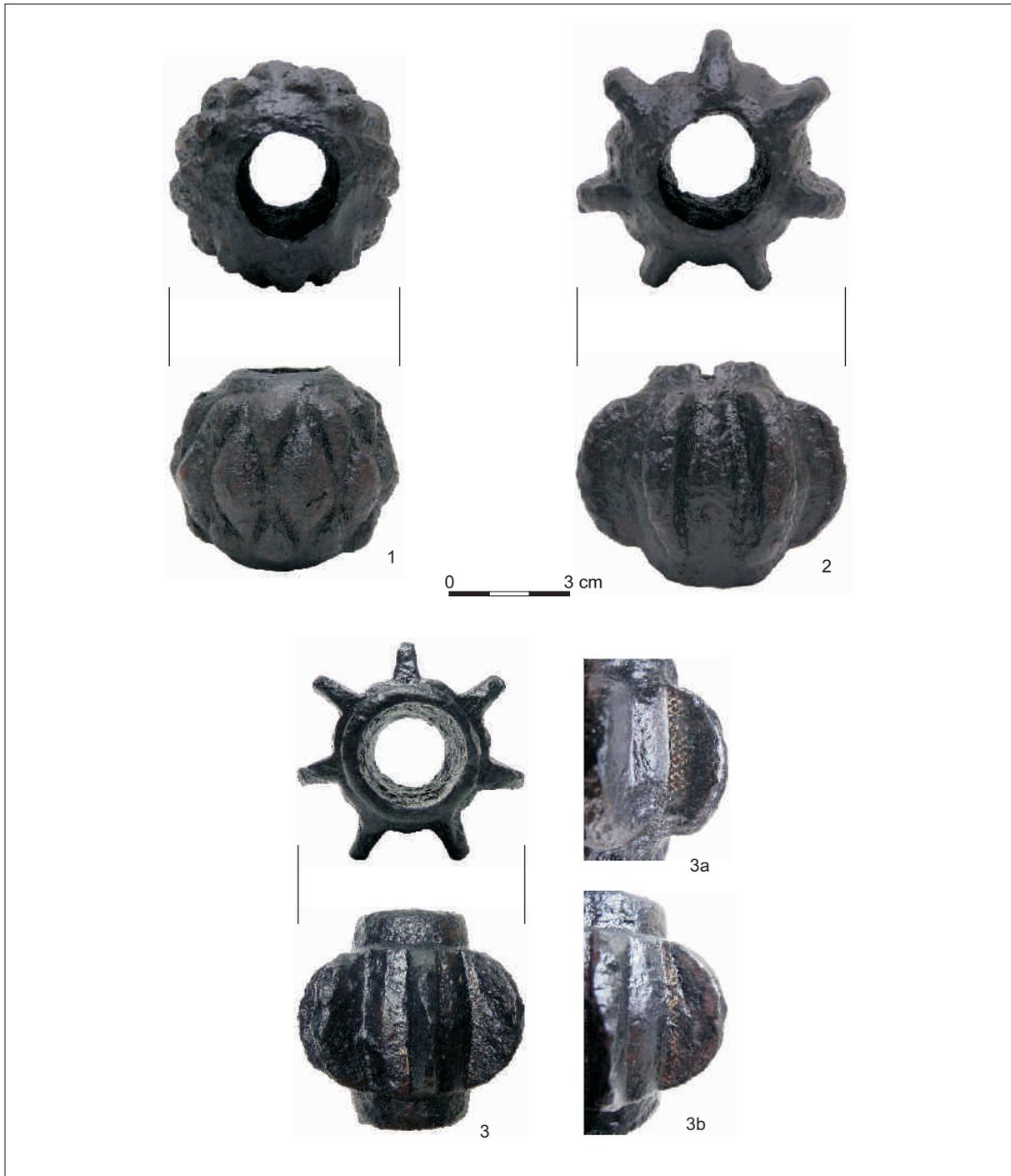


Fig. 27. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1 – Ref. 683; 2 – Ref. 676; 3-3b – Ref. 682. Photo by J. Mcnamara.

Ryc. 27. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1 – nr kat. 683; 2 – nr kat. 676; 3-3b – nr kat. 682. Fot. J. Mcnamara.

Most of the silver decoration is still present, preserved after an attentive work of cleaning. Probably it is the mace of an officer, or a high military commander. In the Skylitzès these kinds of maces are represented in the hands of Generals (Fig. 4:1). The specimen can be dated from the late 12th to the 14th c., based on the similar find in Kazanlik museum (inv. 641, Fig.19:7);

Other parallels: see Ref#: 889.

Polygonal “star” types with 21 knobs (the 11th-12th c.)

Ref#: 328

Measurements: 5.5 cm high x 7.5 cm wide (Fig. 23:6);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

This type finds a good parallel in one specimen

from the region of Gabrovo, dated to the 11th-13th c. (Папушев 1998, Pl. 68:6), and maybe in one very damaged specimen from Dinogetia (Stefan, Barnea, Cosma 1967, 346, Fig. 184:25)⁶². Specimens of this kind seem to have an intermediary shape between the round and the polygonal form, maybe corresponding to those brandished by the warriors in Fig. 13:1;

Other parallels: not found.

Flanged hexagonal types (12th-15th c.)

Ref#: 304

Measurements: 8.8 cm high x 6 cm wide (Fig. 24:1-1a);

Material: bronze;

Provenance: Eastern Balkans;

This bronze specimen with its six vertical flanges could be dated to the 13th-14th c. It shares striking analogies with a similar example from Madara, an important site of the second Bulgarian Empire (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XVI:10). As with the specimen from Madara, the shaft of our specimen should have been a metallic one even though the Madara mace has got an iron head. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that this specimen has two restored flanges, but it was originally split from its main body by a violent stroke which broke the missing lower edge of its head. This kind of mace was introduced in Bulgaria by the Romans and was found there among the Bulgarian warriors. Its widest application was at the height of the feudal period of the second Bulgarian Empire, between the 12th and the beginning of the 15th c. (a similar mace is represented in Fig. 5:4);

Other parallels: Pliska and Veliki Preslav (*ibidem*, Pls. XV:11; XVI:12; see also Simina, Anghel 1998, Fig. 4:3).

Ref#: 346

Measurements: 6.3 cm high x 6.5 cm wide (Fig. 24:2-2b);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

This example of a late war-mace can be dated to the 14th-15th c. by comparison with a specimen preserved in the War Museum of Belgrade (Пековић 2006, 113, inv. 16365). It may have been used as a command staff (for analogies see Fig. 10:1-2);

Other parallels: Varna (Кузов 2002, Pl. III:17, dated from the 14th to the 15th c.).

Ref#: 592

Measurements: 8.3 cm high x 9.8 cm wide (Fig. 24:3);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Eastern Balkan Region;

Also this specimen can be dated to the 14th-15th c. by comparison with a specimen from Germany (Gilliot 2008, 159). This kind of command staff, composed of a cylindrical-hexagonal mace armed with flanges, was diffused in the Late Middle Age both in the West and the East;

Other parallels: Varna (Кузов 2002, Pl. III:17, dated from the 14th to the 15th c.).

Spiral flanged types (9th-14th c.)

Ref#: 327

Measurements: 4.5 cm high x 5 cm wide (Fig. 25:1);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Germany (?);

Yotov's classification: Variant D;

Fluted maces like this specimen could be dated to the 10th-11th c. based on a similar find in Kaskovo. The origin of this shape is probably Eastern, although several specimens have been found in the Bulgarian territory (Йотов 2004, 109, cat. 654);

Other parallels: Tumensko (*ibidem*, cat. 652, dated from the 9th to the 14th c.).

Ref#: 587

Measurements: 7 cm wide x 7.5 cm high (Fig. 25:2);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Variant D;

This variant of the fluted head presents thin flanged spirals wrapping the main body of the head;

Other parallels: Diadovo-Starozaronsko (*ibidem*, cat. 653, dated from the 11th to the 12th c.).

Ref#: 588

Measurements: 5.3 cm wide x 5.3 cm high (Fig. 25:3);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Similar to Ref#: 327;

Other parallels: Varna (Кузов 2002, Pl. I:1) dated to the 11th-12th c.

Round knobbed types (10th-12th c.)

Ref#: 586

Measurements: 5.5 cm wide x 3.5 cm high (Fig. 26:1);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Variant B;

The specimen can be dated to the 10th-11th c. based on a similar head found in Pliska (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XV:4). Maces of this kind usually had wooden shafts, and were lighter than those with polygonal heads, so probably some of them were throwing weapons (see analogies in Fig. 1:2);

Other parallels: Pliska and Kaskovo (Йотов 2004, cat. 647-648, the 10th-11th c.).

Ref#: 674

Measurements: 5.8 cm high x 7.5 cm wide (Fig. 26:2);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Variant C;

⁶² Same date as the Gabrovo specimen.

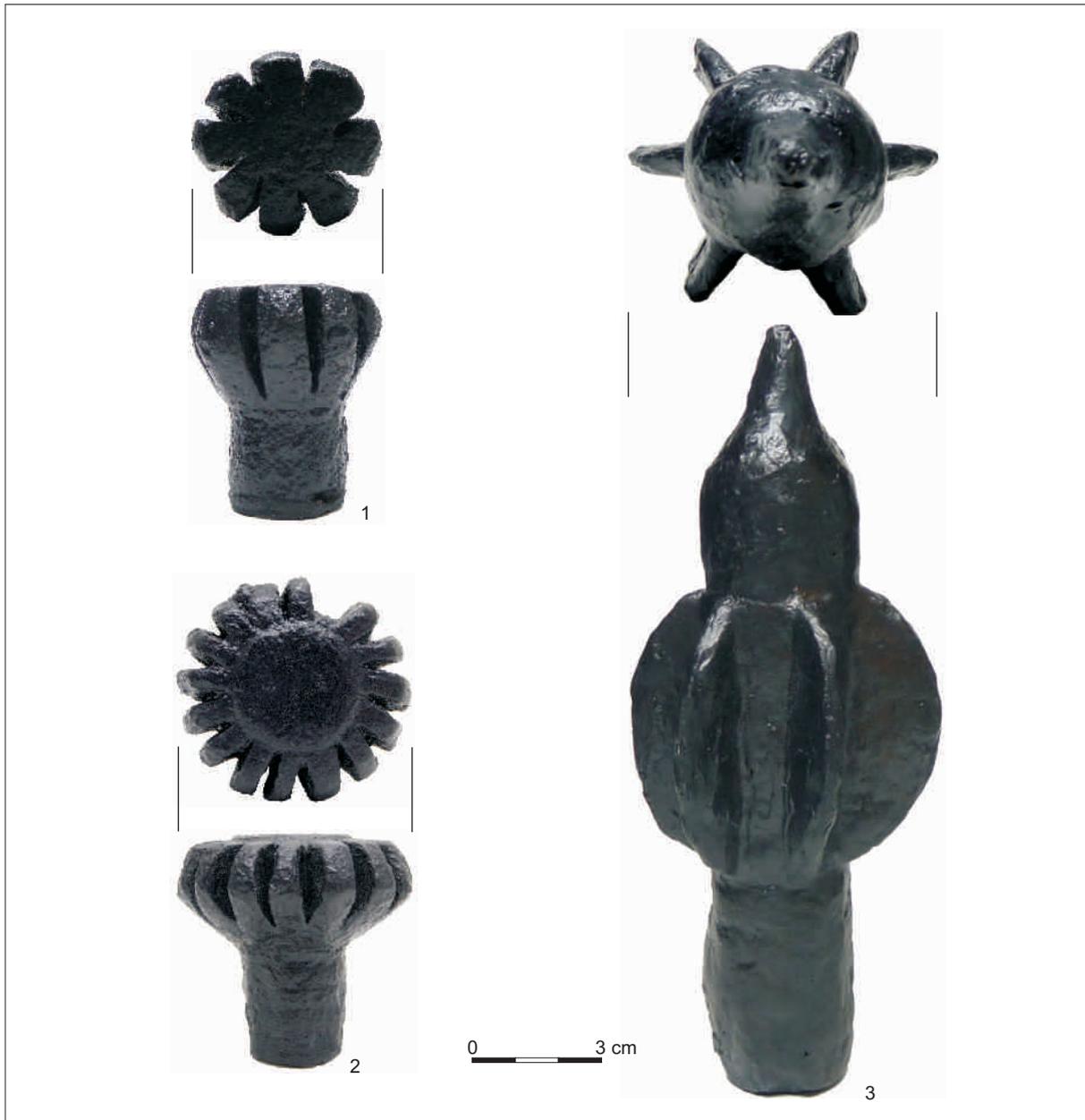


Fig. 28. Maces from the collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida, USA: 1 – Ref. 326; 2 – Ref. 681; 3 – Ref. 888. Photo by J. Mcnamara.

Ryc. 28. Głowice buław z kolekcji World Museum of Man, Floryda, USA: 1 – nr kat. 326; 2 – nr kat. 681; 3 – nr kat. 888. Fot. J. Mcnamara.

Also this specimen can be dated to the 10th-11th c. based on a similar head found in Pliska (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XV:5). Maces of this kind had very big knobs on their surfaces (see analogies in Fig. 14:2);

Other parallels: Veliki Preslav and Pernik (Йотов 2004, cat. 650-651, dated from the 7th to the 12th c.).

Ref#: 677

Measurements: 6 cm high x 6 cm wide (Fig. 26:3);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Variant C;

This particular specimen can be dated to the 10th-11th c. based on a similar head found in Veliki

Preslav (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XVI:2). But the presence of a double edge, on the top and on the bottom, allows to propose its employment as a weapon mounted on a long pole (see analogies in Fig. 15);

Other parallels: Pliska (*ibidem*, Pl. XVI:1).

Ref#: 679

Measurements: 5.5 cm high x 7.2 cm wide (Fig. 26:4);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Yotov's classification: Variant C;

Similar to 677, but with smaller and more pronounced *goniai*, so that it is more possible to think

about this head as that of a thrusting short mace, both for infantry or cavalry. Same date as for Ref # 586, 674, and 677, as well as for a similar specimen from Pliska (*ibidem*, Pl. XV:2);

Other parallels: Dinogetia (Stefan, Barnea, Cosma 1967, Fig. 184:24).

Ref#: 680

Measurements: 5.7 cm high x 7.2 cm wide (Fig. 26:5);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

This specimen can be dated to the 10th-12th c. based on a similar head preserved in the Varna collection (Кузов 2002, Pl. I:2). However, the striking similitude between this mace head and the mace of Maximò (Fig. 5:2-3) could not exclude its employment as a thrusting weapon;

Other parallels: Dinogetia (Stefan, Barnea, Cosma 1967, Fig. 184:24).

Ref#: 591

Measurements: 7.2 cm wide x 5.5 cm high (Fig. 26:6);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Identical to Ref#: 679;

Other parallels: Pliska (Витлянов 1996, Pl. XV:2), the 10th-11th c..

Round polygonal knobbed types (the 11th c.)

Ref#: 683

Measurements: 5 cm high x 6.5 cm wide (Fig. 27:1);
Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

This mace can be dated to the last quarter of the 11th c., by comparison with a bronze mace head recently found on the battlefield of Drastar (1087 AD) (Fig. 16:1)⁶³;

Other parallels: see Ref#: 677.

Round flanged types (the 11th-14th c.)

Ref#: 676

Measurements: 5.7 cm high x 7 cm wide (Fig. 27:2);
Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Identical to a specimen from Carevci dated to the 11th-13th c. (Папушев 1998, Fig. 68:4). It belongs to Type V in the classification of Kirpicnikov;

Other parallels: Old Isjaslav (Kirpicnikov 1986, Pl. XI:11).

Ref#: 682

Measurements: 5.6 cm high x 6.3 cm wide (Fig. 27:3-3b);

Material: iron with silver leaf decoration;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

This was likely an officer's mace as there is a fused silver leaf design overlaying the iron surface on the flanges. This elaborate decoration extends beyond what was exposed and shown above. It can be dated to the 13th-14th c. by comparison with a specimen from Germany (Gilliot 2008, 161). Also the maces of the Persians and the Turks are often represented as inlaid with ornaments, what is also confirmed by actual specimens (see for instance Nicolle 1999, Fig. 542: Iran, the 11th-13th c.);

Other parallels: analogy with the pole shafted weapons closed at the top of warriors in Fig. 18.

Cylindrical octagonal or polygonal flanged types (the 14th-16th c.)

Ref#: 326

Measurements: 5.5 cm high x 4.5 cm wide (Fig. 28:1);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Eastern Balkans;

Its shape resembles the small circular mace of Ref#: 346, but the octagonal shape is given by a circle and not formed from a polygonal figure. I will suggest a date of the late 14th-15th c. for this command staff, but a date of the 15th-16th c. (i.e., in the Post-Byzantine period) is also possible by comparison with a mace head of the Varna Museum collection – Кузов 2002, Pl. III:22)⁶⁴.

Ref#: 681

Measurements: 5.5 cm high x 5.8 cm wide (Fig. 28:2);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Balkan Region;

Probably the 15th-16th c. Same considerations as for Ref#: 326.

Ref#: 888

Measurements: 18 cm high and 7 cm across with a 3 cm thick shaft (Fig. 28:3);

Material: iron;

Provenance: Danube River Valley, Balkans;

This magnificent mace-head has a faceted side spike on the top bullet shape end. Large flanges and really large base to fit over the top and onto a large thick wooden pole. Dated to the 14th c. for comparison with the silvered specimen of Doliste-Aksakovo (Папушев 1998, 69, n. 12). This type of weapon, which appears in the Balkans from the mid-14th c., substituted slowly maces of the star type during the 15th c.;

Other parallels: the 14th c. specimen from Stara Zagora region, Bulgaria (Nicolle 1988, 8, lett. K, Fig. 40).

⁶³ Reproduced here by courtesy of Dr. Vladimir Lomakin and Prof. Boyan Totev. The dimensions of the bronze head are about 2,5 cm in diameter.

⁶⁴ This mace is decorated with small heads on the side of the top, but this top, if without any decoration, is identical to that of our No. 326.

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Raffaele D'Amato

Σιδηροράβδιον, βαρδούκιον, ματζούκιον, κορύνη: □
BIZANTYŃSKIE BUŁAWY BOJOWE, IX-XV W.
NOWE ŹRÓDŁA Z BAŁKANÓW W ZBIORACH
THE WORLD MUSEUM OF MAN NA FLORYDZIE

Streszczenie

Ulokowane w Centralnej Florydzie w Stanach Zjednoczonych, World Museum of Man and Prehistory (www.WorldMuseumofMan.org), założone i nadal kierowane przez Johna Mcnamarę, który z wielkiej miłości i pasji dla starożytnej kultury i cywilizacji, kilka lat temu zdecydował o utworzeniu prywatnej placówki muzealnej z zabytkami archeologicznymi i paleontologicznymi, nieznanymi wcześniej społeczności akademickiej, a pochodzącymi w prywatnych kolekcjach. Jeden z działów Muzeum poświęcono rzadkiemu zbiorowi zabytków z terenu Bałkanów, znajdującego się dawniej pod panowaniem Bizancjum, co spowodowało występowanie tam bizantyńskiego uzbrojenia. Artykuł poświęcono części kolekcji muzealnej, 30 wspinałom głowicom buław bojowych z brązu i żelaza z czasów Bizancjum, mających pochodzić z pól bitewnych wschodnich Bałkanów, wzdłuż doliny Dunaju. Liczba, jak i różnorodność form tych

okazów, w porównaniu z innymi analogicznymi zabytkami i wyobrażeniami buław bojowych znanych z wschodniorzymskich dzieł sztuki, pozwoliły podjąć po raz pierwszy próbę stworzenia klasyfikacji buław używanych w Bizancjum między IX a XV w.

Używane w późnej armii rzymskiej już co najmniej od II w. n.e., buławy bojowe, złożone z drewnianego drzewca i metalowej głowicy, stały się w średniowiecznym Bizancjum ulubioną bronią ciężkozbrojnej jazdy, używaną z niszczyielską mocą na polu walki. Ich szerokie rozpowszechnienie w Cesarstwie Wschodnim znajdowało się w bezpośredniej korelacji z dużym znaczeniem i rozwojem ciężkiej konnicy, która, odrodziła się w późnym IX i X w. w Bizancjum, szczególnie pod rządami cesarza Nicefora II Fokasa (963-969). Według dzieła *Praecepta Militaria*, którego autorstwo przypisuje się temu władcy, miały być one obok mieczy bądź szabel główną

bronią ataku kawalerzystów. Buław używali wszyscy ciężkozbrojni jeźdźcy pierwszych czterech linii szyku bojowego, używający żelaznych buław jako broni przełamującej.

Buławy przeznaczone dla ciężkiej jazdy albo Katafraktów, zaprojektowane do walki w bliskim kon-

takcie, pomyślane były jako broń zdolna unicestwić hełmy, zbroje a nawet konie. Okazy bojowe używane były nie tylko jako broń obuchowa, ale również jako efektywny oręż do rzucania. Artykuł wyjaśnia również różne terminy używane w średniowiecznej Grecji, na określenie tej strasznej broni.

Tłumaczył: Arkadiusz Michalak