



Maces of the Neolithic and Aeneolithic periods: Slovakia

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Abstract: A group of polished stone industry artefacts represented by maces were analysed from typological and petrographical points of view. This group includes drilled stone artefacts that were not used for work and other similar ones characterized by absence of traces of a working activity. They are made of such raw materials which did not allow their use in working process. In general they are considered to be symbols of power, fighting force or a weapon. They were revealed in site excavations (objects) or found in testing pits on a locality. In Slovakia stone maces are known from Neolithic and Aeneolithic localities plotted on Fig. 1.

Key words: Globular, discoid, two-shoulders maces, Neolithic/Aeneolithic, Slovakia

Introduction

A group of polished stone industry artefacts represented by maces was analysed from typological and petrographical points of view. After J. Štelcl and J. Malina (1972) this group includes drilled stone artefacts that were not used for work, and other similar ones, characterized by absence of traces of a working activity. They are of such raw materials which did not allow their use in working process, e.g. globular, discoid and two-shouldered maces. The only exception in this group are hammer-shaped maces, on which traces of working activities are observable. In this case they are known under denomination "hammers".

As their concerns functioning, maces served for various purposes. Opinions on their function, use and social sphere, are different. In general they are considered to be symbols of power, fighting force or a weapon.

Up to now no adequate attention has been paid to them, they used to be treated as a part of polished stone industry. M. Berounská (1987) mentioned also maces from Slovakia supporting information published by J. Lichardus (1960). The only exception are globular maces, typology of which together with their occurrences, production and raw materials on the territory of central Europe were elaborated by M. Berounská (1987). The set of Neolithic and Aeneolithic maces from Slovakia has been completed with further finds and the results of our studies are presented here.

The Neolithic and Aeneolithic maces are relatively rare among stone artefacts. They were revealed in site excavations (objects) or found in testing pits on a locality. From typological point of view globular maces prevail, discoid macehead was found only in one case and two-shouldered ones in two cases. After J. Lichardus (1960) 30 types of axes, axe-hammers and maces (5 types are

globular maces) have been known in Slovakia up to now. Their surface is glacially polished, what depends on the raw material used for their production.

Basic characteristics

1. Globular maces - are artefacts prevailing of round cross-section (characterized by their diameter and height) with perforation in their centres. Diameter of this mace in the perpendicular cut to the perforation is only a little bigger than its height. The globular maces are known from several Neolithic and Aeneolithic sites in Slovakia (Fig. 2). Globular maces prevail among those mentioned here. To semiproducts of a globular or slightly discoid macehead also the find from Borovce (Staščíková-Štukovská, oral communication) can be added. It is a river pebble (raw material quartzite) with indicated perforation on one side. Globular maces are the most often made of the raw material different from that used for polished industry, e.g. limestone of grey or white colour with darker tones. According to the J. Lichardus's (1960) typology globular maces found in Slovakia belong to the type 28, according to the M. Berounská's (1987) typology (morphology) to the type 1. The perforation is slightly conical, drilled from one side. Globular maces that were found in central Europe are made of various raw materials. After M. Berounská (1987) the most often used raw material is limestone, followed by serpentinite, sandstone, limonite, amphibolite, rarely granite, basalt, marble and jadeite.

2. Discoid maces - are artefacts of discoid shape, plan-convex or biconvex cut, with a perforation approximately in their centre. Their size is characterized by diameter and height, with the diameter several times higher than its height. In Slovakia we know the discoid maces semiproduct from Abrahám (B. Novotný 1958) a half of

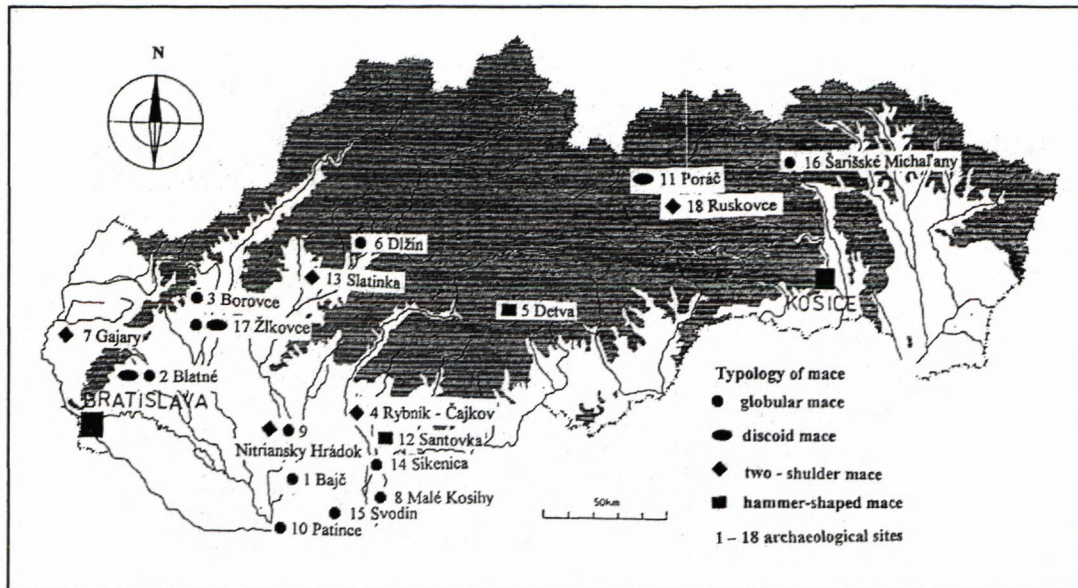


Fig. 1 Occurrences of maces in Slovakia

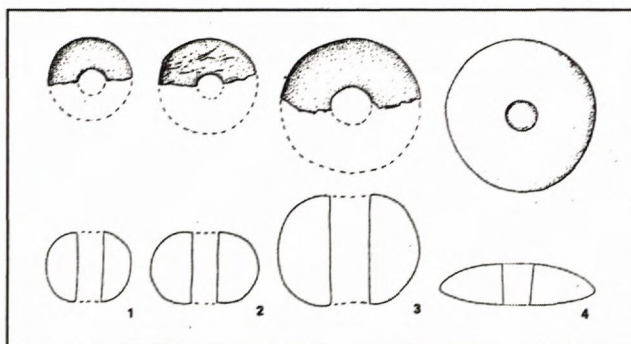


Fig. 2 Fragments of globular maces in Slovakia and their raw materials: 1 – Svodín, marble, 2 – Nitriansky Hrádok-Zámeček, marble, 3 – Malé Kosihy, amphibole schist, 4 – Poráč, discoid mace, antigorite serpentinite

discoid mace from Žlkovce (J. Pavúk, unpublished written report), semiproduct of discoid mace from Blatné. They were made of metamorphic schists of dark grey colour and Lower-Triassic quartzite of the same colour. According to the J. Lichardus's (1960) typology the discoid maces from Žlkovce, Abrahám and Poráč belongs to the type 27.

3. Two-shoulders maces - are artefacts with equal shoulders and perforation in its centre. They used to be of plan-convex to biconvex shape, with rectangular profile sometimes narrowing to the edge (Štelcl & Malina 1972). The height maximum is in the middle of the mace, where the perforation is drilled. The back is convex, sometimes widened, the lower side is level, sometimes slightly raising to the edge. Its length ranges between 170-320 mm. The most often they were made of amphibole schist. By their morphology J. Lichardus (1960) classifies them as shoe-last chisels and attaches exclusive position and importance to them. In Slovakia two-shoulders maces are known from some localities, e. g. Rybník - Čajkov (Janšák, 1938), Gajary (Eisner, 1933), Nitriansky Hrádok - Zámeček

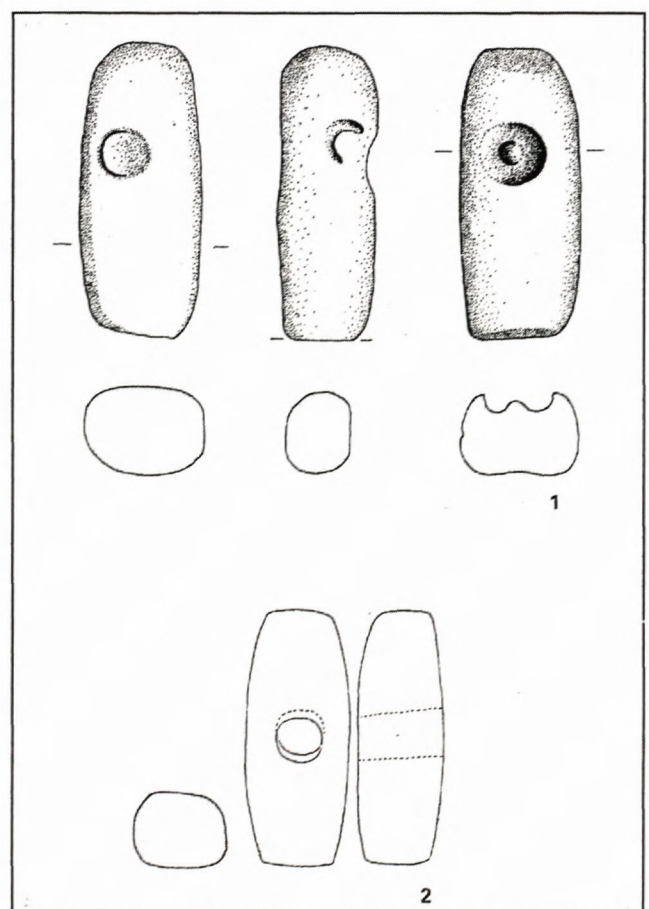


Fig. 3 1 - hammer-shaped mace with traces of drilling, site in Detva, 2 - reconstruction (by Vencl, 1960)

(Illášová & Hovorka, 1999 - fragment of a two-shouldered mace with partially preserved perforation, secondary used) and Ruskovce (Hovorka & Soják, 1997).

4. Hammer-shaped maces - are drilled implements; they are, on both ends, rounded. Conical perforation is in

Table 1

| Archaeological sites | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Bajč | X | | | | | |
| Blatné | X | X | | | | |
| Borovce | | | | | X | |
| Detva | | | | X | | |
| Dlžín | X | | | | | |
| Gajary | | | X | | | |
| Malé Kosihy | X | | | | | |
| Nitriansky Hrádok | X | | | X | X | X |
| Patince | X | | | | | |
| Poráč | | X | | | | |
| Ruskovce | | | X | | | |
| Rybník | | | X | | | |
| Santovka | | | | X | | |
| Sikenica | X | | | | | |
| Slatinka n. Bebravou | | | | | X | |
| Svodín | X | | | | | |
| Šarišské Michaľany | X | | | | | |
| Žlkovce | X | X | | | | |
| Spolu: | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

Notes: 1 - globular, 2 - discoid, 3 - two-shoulder mace, 4 - hammer-shaped, 5 - rough-worked pebbles, 6 - other type

the middle of the artefact. The mace cross-section is rectangular or square. Width and height are sometimes equal, length is remarkably prevailing. In Slovakia several fragments of these maces were found, some of them with perforation. They are of angular shapes. Their ends bear traces of working activities. An not entirely drilled up hammer-shaped mace was found in the site of Detva, position Kalamárka (Fig. 3 : 1 and reconstruction Fig. 3 : 2, by Venc 1960). It is made of fine-grained andesite, with traces of fire on its surface. The perforation is partially drilled but unfinished in several points (Šalkovský, 1994).

5. Other types of maces - In this group are included various maces in general: a) with perforation without detailed identification, b) without perforation. To the first group belong unidentified fragments or partially halves of maces broken in perforation. They are presupposed to be hammer-shaped ones. To the other group an egg-shaped mace with cutings from Nitriansky Hrádok-Zámeček (the Baden culture) can be included together with maces of angular and cuboidal shapes with deformations after working activities.

6. Rough-worked pebbles of elliptical and angular cross-section with a perforation indicated on one side. Such finds are known e. g. from Slatinka nad Bebravou (Bárta, 1983).

Conclusion

The find of not entirely drilled globular mace (Ožďani, 1983, unknown locality) shows that perforations were made with hollow drill, on the core (from one side). Also pebbles are presupposed to be used for production of globular mace. It is evidenced by the mace from Borovce, too (Staššiková-Štukovská, unpublished report).

In Slovakia stone maces are known from Neolithic and Aeneolithic localities plotted on Fig. 1. Globular maces

were excavated in Bajč (Cheben, 2000), Blatné (Illášová, 1988), Dlžín (Archives of the Archaeological Institute SAS), Malé Kosihy (Točík, 1969), Nitriansky Hrádok (Illášová & Hovorka, 1999), Patince (Cheben, 1987), Poráč (Hovorka & Soják, 1997), Sikenica-Trhňa (Archives of the Archaeological Institute SAS), Svodín (Illášová, 2000), Šarišské Michaľany (Šiška, unpublished report), Žlkovce (Pavúk, unpublished). Discoid maces were excavated in Blatné, Žlkovce and Ruskovce, two-shoulders maces were excavated in Rybník-Čajkov (Janšák, 1938), Gajary (Eisner, 1933), hammer-shaped in Detva (Šalkovský, 1994), Santovka (Pavúk, 1986, unpublished report), Nitriansky Hrádok. Rough-worked pebbles - semiproducts were excavated in Borovce (Staššiková-Štukovská, unpublished report), Slatinka nad Bebravou (Bárta, 1983) and Nitriansky Hrádok. Other types maces (hammered of form) were excavated in Nitriansky Hrádok (Table 1).

Stone maces of non-working character represented a symbol of fight and chieftain's power, weapon, ruler's sceptre, etc. This is evidenced mainly by finds from grave inventories of central Europe, published by M. Berounská (1987).

At the end it is necessary to such up that maces found in Slovakia were collected from site excavations and field surveys. We presuppose that the list of localities with their occurrence is not finished and further evaluation of problematic material is needed.

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