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**SPEAR BUTTS OR SCEPTRE HEADS? TOWARDS
THE FERRULES FROM LORI BERD**

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Key words: *Lori Berd, Iron ages, ferrule, weapon, spear butt, sceptre.*

H. Martirosyan's contribution in the development of archaeology in Armenia is enormous.¹ Thanks to his efforts, the archaeology in Armenia reached a new level. As for our article, it is important to mention that the excavations at the necropolis of Lori Berd were initiated and supported by H. Martirosyan, who was the head of the Department of Prehistoric Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Soviet Armenia back then. Moreover, he supervised the PhD thesis of S. Devedjyan (one of the contributors of this article).

Introduction: Burial rites of prehistoric Armenia were of particular interest for H. Martirosyan. In this regard, our article refers to ferrules, special category of burial goods, found at the Iron Age tombs of Lori Berd and other sites of the Caucasus. The aim of this article is the presentation of their types, context and discussion on the possible functions of the mentioned objects. Thirteen ferrules were detected at eight tombs numbered 2, 29, 30, 62, 100-2, 114, 115, 117, dating from 12th to the 7th/6th centuries BC (Tab. 1).

Types of Ferrules
Type 1 (nos. 1-4): Four ferrules with cylindrical bodies and rounded heads come from tombs 29 and 30. They date back from 12th to 10th cent. BC². The diameter of each is between 3 and 4 cm, the length is 9.5 cm. There are round perforations on the rims and longitudinal lines on the bodies (Pl. I.1-2). In contrast to types 3-5, which have similar body shapes, knobbed tips are missing for ferrules of type 1.

¹ For a comprehensive look on H. Martirosyan's academic legacy as well as personal information see **Kalantaryan, Bobokhyan-2005**. pp.172-179; **Devedjyan-2018**. pp. 280-284.

² **Devedjyan-1983**. pp. 5-6.

Ferrule 1 from tomb 29 (l.: 2.5 x w.: 2.4 x h.: 3.6) was found together with a bronze dagger, knives, chisel, belt fragments, torcs and bone beads.

Ferrules 2-4 come from tomb 30 (l.: 2.25 x w.: 1.65 x h.: 3.35): from a context of a bronze bident and a horse tack.

Stylistically, this group of ferrules is related to groups 1 and 2 constituted by Yesayan and find its parallels in Gyumri, Kirovakan, Kalakent and other sites of South Caucasus.³

Type 2 (no. 5): A single conical object from iron with a hole at the bottom is 12.5 in length and 2.6 in diameter⁴. It was found in tomb 2, presumably in the context of the upper burial. The excavations of a relatively big chamber (l.: 5.8 x w.: 2.35 x h.: 2.45 m) resulted in the discovery of a poorly preserved human skull and two horses accompanied by numerous grave goods, such as golden diadems, torcs, bracelets, beads, seals, as well as knives, daggers and pottery.

Related conical objects for N. 5 come from other sites of Armenia. They were found in Golovino⁵, tomb 10a of Sisian, and tomb 2 at Harjis in Syunik⁶. Both in Golovino and Syunik the pointy ferrules were found in tombs with spears or lances.

Type 3 (nos. 6-9): Ferrules belonging to this type are represented by socketed hemispheres having a tiny knob at the top. Tubular sockets are flared at the bottom and marked by side perforations enabling to insert a wooden pole into the ferrule. They are characterised by relief lines around the sockets and the vertical lozenges at the top.

All examples of this type come from tombs 114, 115 and 117, arranged on one line in the southern part of the necropolis. The chambers are 1 x 1 m in length and width. Ferrule 6 from tomb 114 is marked with an elongated socket (Pl. I.3). It was placed in the west of the chamber, with a socket-side directed to the wall stone. Except the ferrule, a bronze dagger, toggle, pendants, other bronze objects and pottery vessels were revealed in tomb 114. Ferrule 7 from tomb 115 was discovered close to a female skeleton with ankylosing spondylitis, close to an iron spear, arrowhead, knife, pick axe, dagger, chisel and pottery vessels (Pl. I.4).⁷

Quite a remarkable situation was documented in tomb 117: three relatively big jugs were lying on the eastern part, whereas bronze arrowheads and two ferrules were lying in the southwestern part of the chamber. Nos. 8 and 9 were diagonally oriented upwards (Pl. II.1-2).

This group of ferrules correspond to types 2 and 4 of S. Yesayan's typology.⁸ Close parallels for ferrules from 115 and 117 come from Karmir Berd⁹, Gavar¹⁰, Avranlo¹¹, Ghachaghan¹², Cinckaro and Tak-Kilise¹³. Similar form but with longer socket (such as the ferrule from 114) finds its comparison in Musieri¹⁴, Paradiesfestung¹⁵ and in tomb 51 at Samtavro¹⁶.

³ Summarized in **Yesayan-1989**, pp. 29- 30.

⁴ **Devedjyan-1981**, p. 34, pl. VIII.21.

⁵ **Martirosyan-1956**, p. 21, pl. 3.4-5, pl. 13.13, 16.

⁶ **Xnkikyan-2002**: pl. 51.5, 72.26.

⁷ For anthropological investigations of the skeleton see: **Khudaverdyan et al.**- 2021, pp. 85-100.

⁸ **Yesayan-1989**, pp. 30-32.

⁹ **Yesayan-1969**: pl. 26.6.

¹⁰ **Lalayan-1931**: fig. 116

¹¹ **Narimanishvili et al.-2010**: pl. 16.6.

¹² **Martirosyan-1969**: pl. 24. 17.

¹³ **Kuftin-1941**: Pl: 34.

¹⁴ **Morgan-1889**, p. 96, fig. 49.

¹⁵ **Nagel, Strommenger-1985**, pp. 78-79, fig. 49.

¹⁶ **Picchelaury-1997**: Pl. 114. 23.

Type 4 (nos. 10-12): Two ferrules from 100-2 are similar to each other in regard of their knobbed tips and are conical in section, however the sockets show differences: no. 10 has a tubular-shaped socket (Pl. II.4), whereas no. 11 is marked with three triangular extensions with holes (Pl. II.3). Both were found in a plundered chamber (l: 6.9 x w: 2 x h: 2.8), in a spot, where a bronze mace head and several golden beads were uncovered. Similar to them, N. 12 from tomb 62 has a sharpening tip with a knob, but, instead, is octagonal in section. It was found in a relatively large chamber (l.: 11.2 x w.: 4.8 x w.: 3.1 m), close to two iron spears. A similar sample can be found at Karmir Berd.¹⁷

Type 5 (no. 13): 21 cm in length, the ferrule from tomb 62 is the longest at Lori Berd. It has a slightly waisted body, is flared at the bottom. Circular in section, it possesses cast ledges in the form of rhombi and perforations for fixing a wooden pole (Pl. II.5). On the surface, there are three rows of triple perforations arranged longitudinally. A fourth hole is made secondary. As in the case of the previous two variations, the top is knobbed. With its shape, this ferrule is related to the ones belonging to type 1, but is longer and more elaborated.

Related objects also belong to type 4, variation 2 according to S. Yesayan's classification¹⁸, which contains ferrules from Haghartsin, Akner¹⁹, Shirakavan²⁰, Gogdaya²¹, Mingeaur²² and Ballukaya²³. Two objects of this kind are kept in the Regional Museum of Vanadzor.²⁴

Interpretation of the Ferrules Found in South Caucasus

So far, published objects of this type are interpreted in two ways: either as spear shoes or butts or as sceptres. In B. Piotrovskiy's opinion, these were inserted at the bottom of the lances.²⁵ His argument is based on ferrules from Kirkizhan treasure close to Stepanakert²⁶ and from Mingeaur.²⁷ B. Piotrovskiy and K. Kushnareva mentioned the animal images which are supposed to be inserted at the bottom of a pole (the socket adjusted upwards), otherwise the animal image would have been upside down.²⁸ B. Piotrovskiy argued that these lance shoes and lance heads were probably taken off the spear and put into the chamber as a symbol of the entire lance, since the ancient Caucasian spears were often too long for tomb chambers²⁹. This statement is supported by H. Martirosyan who mentioned that these objects were mainly found with lances or spears.³⁰

Some other scholars interpret these objects as sceptres. V. Belck called the ferrules from Paradiesfestung as "commander truncheon".³¹ Also, the ones from Shirakavan are considered as sceptre heads.³² After summarising different opinions, S. Yesayan concluded that both versions can be correct. Principally, he agreed that it is evident that the object has served as a spear butt, but

¹⁷ Yesayan-1969: pl. 26.6.

¹⁸ Yesayan-1989. p. 30.

¹⁹ Martirosyan-1969: Pl. 14.6; 14. 9.

²⁰ Torosyan et al.-2002: fig. 16.

²¹ Nagel, Strommenger-1985: pl. 69. 4.

²² Aslanov et al.-1959: pl. 16.9,11,13.

²³ Kushnareva-1957: fig. 8.7.

²⁴ Martirosyan-1964: fig. 59: 5-6.

²⁵ Piotrovskiy- 1949. p. 83.

²⁶ Kushnareva-1957: fig. 19.1, 3.

²⁷ Aslanov et al.-1959: pl. 16. 4, 6.

²⁸ Kushnareva-1957. p. 164.

²⁹ Piotrovskiy-1949. p. 83.

³⁰ Martirosyan-1969. p. 30.

³¹ Nagel, Strommenger-1985. p. 79.

³² Torosyan et al.-2002. pp. 99-100, fig. 16.

excludes the ones which end in an animal shape and thus are not applicable for that purpose³³ and should be considered as sceptres. He also pointed out a staff head from Mingeaur,³⁴ which is marked by an ornament of a relief arrow head. In case of using it as a spear butt, the arrow head is directed downward.³⁵

Overview on Spear Butts from the Near East

Spear butts (also called as spear shoes) are seldomly found in archaeological context in the Near East, but they were certainly known in the warfare. The earliest spear shoe with a flat surface comes from the well-known PG 789 at Ur which dates back to mid-3rd millennium BC.³⁶

Their amount is being increased from the mid 2nd millennium BC. Double-pronged spear butts are known from Hasanlu³⁷, as well as from Palestine and Egypt³⁸. Sharp ferrules, described as spear butts, are known from excavations at Toprakkale³⁹, Boğazköy⁴⁰, Zincirli⁴¹, Nimrud⁴², several tombs in Lachish⁴³ and other necropolises in Palestine⁴⁴. Most of them correspond to type 1 ferrule from Lori Berd. Nevertheless, other ferrule shapes from Lori Berd and South Caucasus are not pointy. They have, instead, round and knobbed tips. In this regard, they match in some extent to the depictions from Neo-Assyrian reliefs, e.g. images of spear butts come from Nimrud and Khorsabad.⁴⁵

Images of spear butts are well documented for the Achaemenid period. According to Herodotus, the spears of the soldiers in the army of Xerxes are marked with *round butts in the forms of pomegranates and apples*, made from gold and silver.⁴⁶ His records are very well illustrated on images of the lance bearers on the palace reliefs in Susa and Persepolis, as well as on the seals⁴⁷. In this sense, the ferrule with triangular extensions from Lori Berd matches with those depicted in Susa.

Ferrules of Lori Berd contribute largely to the interpretation of the ferrules overall, since the context is relatively good documented.

A sharp ferrule from tomb 2 was found in a secondary burial, which, to some extent, disturbed the context in the chamber.

The ferrules no. 7 and no. 12 were found close to spear heads.

Somewhat problematic is also the context of two ferrules from the heavily looted tomb 100-2. However, the comparisons with Achaemenid iconography enable their identification as spear butts.

³³ Yesayan-1989. p. 33.

³⁴ Aslanov et al.-1959: tab. 16.3.

³⁵ Yesayan-1989. p. 33. S. Yesayan also mentions a staff head with cast fleur-de-lis motifs and argues that it also would be directed downwards in case of usage as a lance shoe. Indeed, a similar object from Kalakent (Nagel, Strommeyer-1985: fig. 49) shows the same motif seems to be directed in form of fleur-de-lis. However, since it is not a figurative image, a fixed direction cannot be insisted on.

³⁶ Woolley-1934: pl. 153, U.10411, U.10472.

³⁷ Muscarella- 1988. p. 56, no. 67.

³⁸ Dothan-1976. pp.20-34.

³⁹ Wartke-1990. p. 123, fig. 31a.

⁴⁰ Boehmer-1972. pp.143-144, pl. XLV. Nos. 1276-1284.

⁴¹ Luschan-1943. p.86, Abb. 99: five specimens with an average length of 23 cm.

⁴² Curtis-2013. pp.38-39, pl. 10.

⁴³ Rothenberg-1975. p. 79, n. 17.

⁴⁴ Yadin-1963. p. 62.

⁴⁵ Madhloom-1970: Pl. 26.1, 5, 10-12.

⁴⁶ Herodotus, VII, 41, 2.

⁴⁷ Lloyd-1964: fig. 206, 247; Merrillees-2005: fig. 5, 6a, 6d, 7a, 7d, 10a etc.

The situations at tombs 114 and 117 are worth to pay a special attention to. As mentioned before, the ferrule from tomb 114 was directed to the wall. Regarding the fact that the chamber did not show any traces of looting, no wooden stick extension should be assumed: i.e. it was merely a votive item. Also, four ferrules from tombs 29 and 30 can be considered as such, which were placed in the chamber with *pars pro toto* principle⁴⁸. In tomb 117 they were lying not far from two arrowheads with longish stems with diagonally directed sockets.

Should one assume that the described ferrules were used as sceptre heads, they must be considered as a symbol of power and/or items of prestige. Nevertheless, in the case of Lori Berd, it is hard to prove that tombs 114, 115 and 117, tombs with one of the smallest and, to some extent, also poorest chambers in Lori Berd, contain sceptres, whereas these objects are missing in the rich contemptuous tombs such as 56, 63 or 64.⁴⁹ This surely does not mean that the ferrules did not have any representative meaning or devote a certain group, like it has been suggested for Persian army. Alternatively, the spear butts in the form they appear in the South Caucasus can be simply a result of the fashion of that time.

Conclusion: By stating the above, we argue that the observed ferrules were most probably used as spear butts and had a practical application. The conical ferrules of type 2 enabled the weapon to be stuck in the ground when not in use. They could also be used as an offensive weapon.⁵⁰

Types 1 and 3-4, instead, provided the necessary weight to balance the javelin in the flight, on one hand. The longish ferrule of type 5 with its length of more than 20 cm can be only used as a spear butt for a relatively long pole. Alternately, it can be implemented as a staff head.

The elaborate ornamentations suggested that they were a “popular” part of the weaponry, those with animal depictions can be even classified as a work of art.

Concerning the long-term tradition of spear butts in the South Caucasus, their influence on the shapes and design of Persian spears is very likely.

Table 1

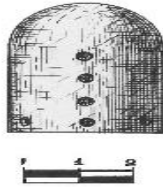
Ferrule no.	Tomb no.	Dating	Accompanying Objects	Length	Diameter	Type
1	29	12 th -10 th cent. BC	bronze dagger, knives, chisel, belt fragments, torcs and bone beads	6.3	4	1
2	30	12 th -10 th cent. BC	bronze bident and horse tack, ferrules 3-4.	9.5	3	1
3	30	12 th -10 th cent. BC	-	6.5	3.3	1
4	30	12 th -10 th cent. BC	-	3	3	1
5	2	8 th -6 th cent. BC	horse and human bones, golden diadems, torcs, bracelets, beads, seal, as	12.5	2.6	2

⁴⁸ Tombs 29 and 30 included horse tack without horse skeletons, which were put in the chamber also with the same principle: **Devedjyan-1983**, pp. 5-6.

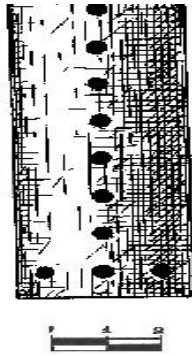
⁴⁹ **Devedjyan-2007**, pp.135-150.

⁵⁰ Y. Yadin refers to the Biblical story where Asahel is being killed by Abner: “But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel’s stomach...”(**Yidal-1973**, pp. 62; translation by Biblica 1973: **Samuel II**, 2: 23).

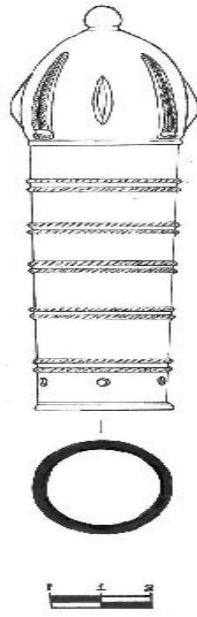
			well as knives, dagger and pottery			
6	114	7 th -6 th cent. BC	bronze dagger, toggle, pendants, pottery vessels	18.3	2	3
7	115	7 th -6 th cent. BC	iron spear, arrowhead, knife, pick axe, dagger, chisel, and pottery	7.2	2	3
8	117	7 th -6 th cent. BC	two arrow heads and ferrule 9	6.69	3.09	3
9	117	7 th -6 th cent. BC	-	6.67	3.12	3
10	100-2	7 th -6 th cent. BC	bronze mace head, several golden beads and ferrule 11	7.06	1,89	4
11	100-2	7 th -6 th cent. BC	-	9.61	3.32	4
12	62	7 th -6 th cent. BC	iron spears	1.43	1.6	4
13	62	7 th -6 th cent. BC	-	21	2.3	5



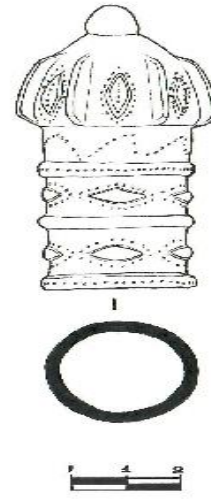
1. Ferrules no. 1



2. Ferrules no. 2



3. Ferrules no. 6



4. Ferrules no. 7

**ՆԻԶԱԿԻ ԾԱՅՐԱՊԱՆԱԿՆԵՐ, ԹԵ՞ ԳԱՎԱԶԱՆԻ ԳԼՈՒԽՆԵՐ. ԼՈՐԻ
ԲԵՐԴԻ ԶԵՎԱՎՈՐ ԿՈԹԱՌՆԵՐԻ ՇՈՒՐՁ
*Դեվեջյան Ս. Հ., Դավթյան Ռ. Հ.***

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Լոռի Բերդ, Երկաթի դար, զենք, նիզակի ծայրապանակ, գավազան:*

Սույն հոդվածը նվիրված է Լոռի Բերդի երկաթիդարյան ծայրապանակների ուսումնասիրությանը: Թվով տասներեք ծայրապանակները բաժանել ենք հինգ խմբի:

1-ին տիպի (դամբարան 29 և 30) չորս ծայրապանակները թվագրվում են մ.թ.ա. 12-10-րդ դդ-ով և իրենց կառուցվածքով դրանք տիպ 3-5-ի նախատիպերն են:

2-րդ (դամբարան 2), 3-րդ (դամբարաններ 114, 115 և 117) տիպի ծայրապանակները հանդիպում են Անդրկովկասի այլ հուշարձաններից և կարող էին օգտագործվել թե՛ որպես զենք՝ ամրացված նիզակի մյուս ծայրին, թե՛ հարմարանք նիզակները հողի մեջ կանգնեցնելու համար:

Տիպ 4-ը (դամբարաններ 62 և 100-2) ևս օգտագործվել են որպես նիզակների ծայրապանակ: Տիպ 2-ի և 3-ի նման, այս առարկաները հավանաբար ձևաբանական ազդեցություն են ունեցել արեմենյան նիզակների ծայրապանակների վրա:

Վերջին՝ 5-րդ (դամբարան 62) տիպի ծայրապանակը հավանաբար օգտագործվել է որպես մահակ:

**ВТОКИ КОПИЙ ИЛИ ГОЛОВЫ ЖЕЗЛОВ? О ФИГУРНЫХ ВТОКАХ
ИЗ ЛОРИБЕРДСКИХ ПОГРЕБЕНИЙ**

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Ключевые слова: *Лори Берд, Железный век, оружие, вток, скипетр.*

Данная статья посвящена изучению втоков железного века из погребений могильника Лори Берд. Тринадцать втоков были сгруппированы в пять типов.

Тип 1 (четыре втоков из погребений 29 и 30) датируются 12-10 вв. до н. э., по их форме представляют собой прототипы для вариантов 3-5.

Типы 2 (погребения 2) и 3 (погребение 114, 115 и 117) также встречаются в сопредельных памятниках Южного Кавказа и могли быть использованы как оружие в виде втоков копья или же как устройство для упора копья в землю.

Тип 4 (погребение 62 и 100-2) также употребляли в виде втоков копий. Как втоки 2-ого и 3-ого типов, эти предметы по всей вероятности повлияли на формы поздних втоков копий ахеменидского периода.

Тип 5 (погребение 62) скорее всего, представлял собой бронзовый конец дубинки.

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