

A UNIQUE DAGGER FROM İKİZTEPE

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A bronze¹ dagger and haft with a terminus reminiscent of a hammer (İ/85-206) was uncovered upon the right hand and forearm of a skeleton (Sk. 581, extended with head to the west; Pl. I, Fig. 1) from a modest earthen inhumation. This burial in grid-square D-2/IV-10 (b. 2267) on Mound I of İkiztepe was excavated during the 1985 campaign at the site.

This exceptionally well preserved dagger (Pl. II, Figs. 3-5) weighing 436 grams is 36.5 cm long with a maximum thickness of 1.8 cm at the haft. The haft, cast separately from the blade, boasts incised decoration and a string-hole centered at the terminus of the grip. The symmetrical blade with a pronounced mid-rib is double-edged; the bowing apparent in the vertical section is subsequent to the casting. Hafting was facilitated by a crescent-shaped frame, grooved to receive the blade, and bent inwards to hold it securely in place. A cavity left after the mechanical attachment was apparently filled with molten bronze.

That both the blade and the haft were molded is clear from faults in the casting process most evident upon the haft. Air bubbles in the molten liquid have resulted in pits of various sizes. No attempt seems to have been made to redress these flaws, as is likewise the case with a crack in the crescent frame. The edges of the cast blade appear to have been sharpened through percussion.

In both form and manufacture this dagger is unique among the finds from İkiztepe². Recovered from a grave of the EB III extramural cemetery, it should date to the fourth quarter of the third millennium B.C. Other objects from this burial include a bronze dagger without haft (İ/85-207), a bronze harpoon (İ/85-204), a pair of golden earrings (İ/85-209, 210), a disc-shaped lead pendant (İ/85-213); a necklace of frit beads (İ/85-208) and a ceramic

¹ Metal composition analysis done by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hadi Özal of the University of Boğaziçi-İstanbul has shown that this dagger is made of arsenical copper as the other İkiztepe objects (Cu: 88.2, As: 5.3, Ni: 0.11, Zn: 0.02, Pb: 0.01, Fe: 0.03, Ag: 0.0145).

² A total of four other daggers with hafts have been recovered at İkiztepe. The termini of their hafts are varied: double-spiral decoration appears, semicircular and hobnail forms.

bowl (I/85-212). The bowl (Pl. 1, Fig. 2), which enables one to date the burial securely, is handmade and well burnished, shiny black on the exterior and reddish buff on the interior. The wall of the bowl flares outward from a ring base to a wide convex body curving slightly inward to a plain rim. Below the rim at equal intervals are spaced four vertical lugs, each horizontally pierced by a pair of string-holes. These features identify the bowl as a vessel typical of Anatolian EB III, representing the beginnings of the period³.

Parallels for the dagger from İkiztepe are unknown from other Anatolian sites yielding contemporary material, for example Alaca Höyük, Horoztepe, Göler-Merzifon⁴, or Troy. Nevertheless, one similar dagger, said to have come from Kültepe but actually acquired at Çanakpınar in the Kayseri plain, was published by K. Bittel and A. M. Schneider in 1940 (*AA* 55, 1940, p. 554). This piece displays the same technique of manufacture as the İkiztepe dagger, as well as similar decoration on the haft. The terminus of the haft, however, forms a semicircle, and the crescent-shaped frame which secures the blade boasts two additional projections over the mid-rib of the blade. On this Çanakpınar dagger the terminus and the crescent frame as well are embellished with incised lines. These further developed features suggest a slightly later date than that of the İkiztepe dagger.

The asymmetrical curved terminus of the İkiztepe dagger—which we have likened to a hammer in view of its one pointed end opposite a blunt end—remains at present unique, both within Anatolia and farther afield⁵. At first glance one might assume that the terminus here had originally been symmetrical, recalling that of the gold crescent-shaped haft on an iron dagger⁶ from the Early Bronze Age Tomb K at Alaca Höyük and the daggers depicted in the belts of the kings and deities portrayed in Hittite reliefs

³ Parallels for this bowl have not appeared in the building levels of the EB II period into which the graves were dug. In the deeper-lying burials, however, this bowl form appears on a higher ring base (low pedestal) with white-painted geometric patterns similar to those of the pottery of the EB II period.

⁴ Objects recovered from illicit excavations at this EB III cemetery are to be found in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara.

⁵ R. Maxwel-Hyslop, "Daggers and Swords in Western Asia," *Iraq* 8 (1946) 1; S. Przeworski, *Die Metallindustrie Anatoliens in der Zeit von 1500 bis 700 v. Chr.*, Leiden 1939; D. Stronach, "The Development and Diffusion of Metal Types in Early Bronze Age Anatolia," *AnatSt* 7 (1957).

⁶ H.Z. Koşay, *Alaca Höyük Kazısı: 1937-1939 daki çalışmalara ve keşiflere ait ilk rapor*, Ankara, 1951, p. 71, K. 14 with Pl. CLXXXII, Figs. 3, 4.

from the second half of the second millenium B.C.⁷ Macroscopic observation of the haft, however, displays clearly that there was no break here; the terminus is deliberately asymmetrical, whether to provide more efficient handling or for another reason. That the terminus was intended neither as a hammer nor as a piercing tool is clear from the total absence of wear upon it. Perhaps this hammer-like grip on the İkiztepe dagger was meant to convey the stylized profile of an animal head. Considering that the population of İkiztepe at this period was greatly occupied with hunting, such a representation is not at all improbable. The animal might be an ibex; the blunt end of the terminus represents the muzzle, the curving pointed end, the horns; and the string-hole is the animal's eye. This type of dagger is not unknown in Anatolia. The terminus of a dagger from the same period at Troy depicts, albeit rather more naturalistically, a crouching animal with horns, most probably a bull.⁸

⁷ E. Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites*, London 1962, Figs. 64, 65, 77 (below), 78, 84, 85, 99 (above), and 105 (above).

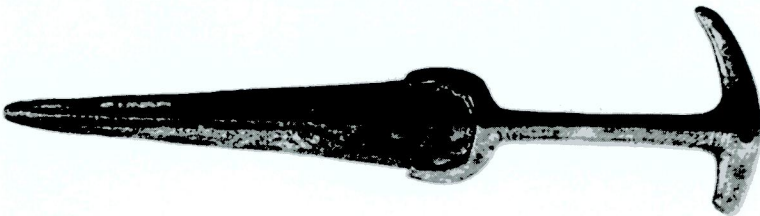
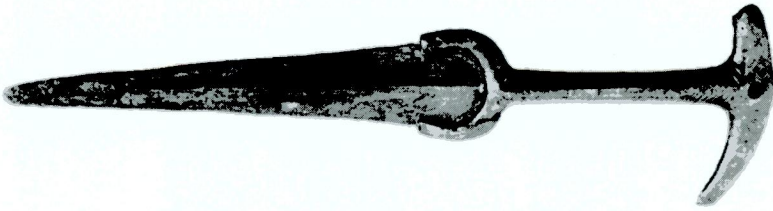
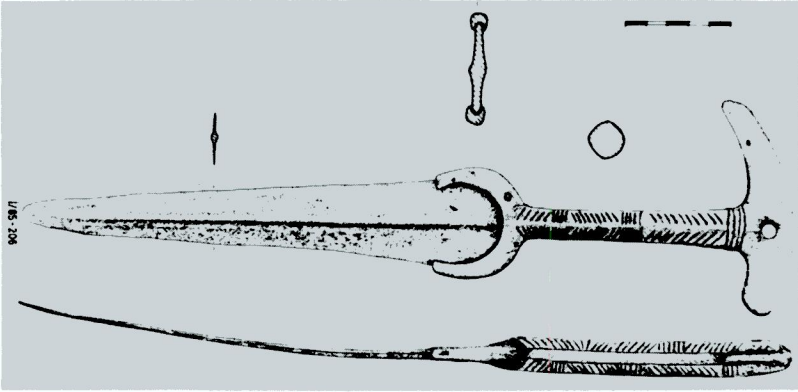
⁸ H. Schliemann, *Ilios: The City and Country of the Trojans*, New York 1976 (reprinted from the 1881 edition), p. 504 no. 927.



Res./Fig. 1



Res./Fig. 2



Res./Fig. 3-5