

A bronze axe from Ala (TN), similar to the Aldeno type

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ABSTRACT - This contribution presents a bronze axe found at the beginning of the century just south of the church San Pietro in Bosco in the district of Ala, on the left side of River Adige. It is a sporadic object, as yet unpublished, particularly interesting for the Protohistory of Vallagarina. It casts new light on the history of human settlement in the area at the beginning of the Iron Age.

KEY WORDS: Aldeno type Axe, Iron Age I, Typology, Diffusion

PAROLE CHIAVE: Ascia tipo Aldeno, Prima Età del Ferro, Tipologia, Diffusione

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This contribution presents a bronze axe found at the beginning of the century, in the countryside to the south of San Pietro in Bosco Church in the municipality of Ala, on the left side of the river Adige. It is a sporadic object as yet unpublished, particularly interesting for the Protohistory of Vallagarina. It testifies the diffusion of these metal types towards south and sheds light on the history of human settlement in this area at the beginning of the Iron Age.

The axe is very similar to the Dobbiaco, Aldeno and Mazzone type axes. The specific characteristics they have in common are the protruding shoulders with a sharp profile and the concave borders of the blade. The ellipsoidal form of the profile of the handle is similar only to the Aldeno and Mazzone type axes. There are three particular elements which are very similar in the Ala specimen and the Mazzone type: the width of the blade, which is the same or slightly bigger than the handle, the button connection between the base of the flaps and the top part of the blade and the straight edge of the blade. The Aldeno type features a more concave edge.

The precise chronological collocation of the three types of axes mentioned is difficult to assess because of the lack of stratigraphical contexts or definite associations as the findings are only spo-

radical. The only exception is the Aldeno type axe, found in the store-room of Pariana (Province of Massa-Toscana), which is a unique example of the Central Tirreno part of Italy. This store-room is datable to the X century BC.

Comparisons were sought in the regions to the North of the Alpine watershed. The type locally defined as "Lappenbeille mit Schulterbildung" seems to be represented sporadically in Austria. In particular an Aldeno type axe is spread from Partenion to the North-East of Villach along the lower part of the river Drava while another Aldeno type one comes from Hallstatt in Salzkammergut. Finally a third object comes from Kollmitzberg, around Amstetten on the Danube east of Linz. As for Austrian types, similar to our Dobbiaco type, an axe with an expanded but only slightly arched cutting edge, also with a slightly pointed or angular outline of the shoulder, was found in Rainberg in the Salzburg area. The "Mazzone" type that can be considered as a variation of the Aldeno type of the Carancini typology is not documented in Austria.

Among the Northern Alpine findings, we can assume a direct geographical connection with the Trentino types only in the following two cases and consequently locate them in relation to access routes such as waterways: the Partenion axe situ-

ated along a possible access way to Alto Adige and the axe found South of Salzburg along the Salzach valley. With regard to the other findings mentioned before, there is no concrete evidence for assuming medium or vast range distribution routes except for the similarity of the typology.

In conclusion, the distribution of the Dobbiaco-Mazzone-Aldeno type category is mainly doc-

umented in the region that now corresponds to Trentino-Alto Adige and it can be assumed that these types are a product of local workshops, probably located along the river Adige. Nevertheless these types or similar types are more sporadically found throughout a wide alpine area including Austria and the regions between the river Danube and the river Drava.

SUMMARY - This contribution presents a bronze axe found at the beginning of the century just South of the church San Pietro in Bosco in the district of Ala, on the left side of river Adige. It is a sporadic object, as yet unpublished, particularly interesting for the Protohistory of Vallagarina. It documents the southward diffusion of these metal objects (this axe is similar to Mazzone type), and casts new light on the history of human settlement in the area at the beginning of the Iron Age. The axe typologies more similar to the axe found at Ala are spread in present Trentino Alto Adige; therefore it can be assumed that they could have been produced in local workshops located along river Adige. But it seems that these axes, or similar types, can be more sporadically found through a wide Alpine area including Austria, with the regions encompassed by the rivers Danube and Drava.

RIASSUNTO - Si presenta in questo contributo un'ascia di bronzo rinvenuta all'inizio del secolo nelle campagne immediatamente a Sud della chiesa di San Pietro in Bosco nel Comune di Ala, sul versante idrografico sinistro dell'Adige. Trattasi di un oggetto sporadico, fino ad oggi inedito, di particolare interesse per la Protostoria della Vallagarina, che documenta ulteriormente la diffusione verso Sud di questi tipi metallici (l'ascia in questione è simile al tipo Mazzone) e aggiunge un nuovo tassello alla storia del popolamento dell'area all'inizio dell'Età del Ferro. Le tipologie di asce che più si avvicinano a quella di Ala sono diffuse nell'attuale Trentino Alto Adige, il che rende almeno ipotizzabile che siano il prodotto di officine locali verosimilmente ubicate lungo l'Adige; tuttavia questi tipi, o tipi affini, sembrano diffusi, sia pure più sporadicamente, in un ampio areale alpino che comprende anche l'Austria, con le regioni racchiuse tra il Danubio e la Drava.

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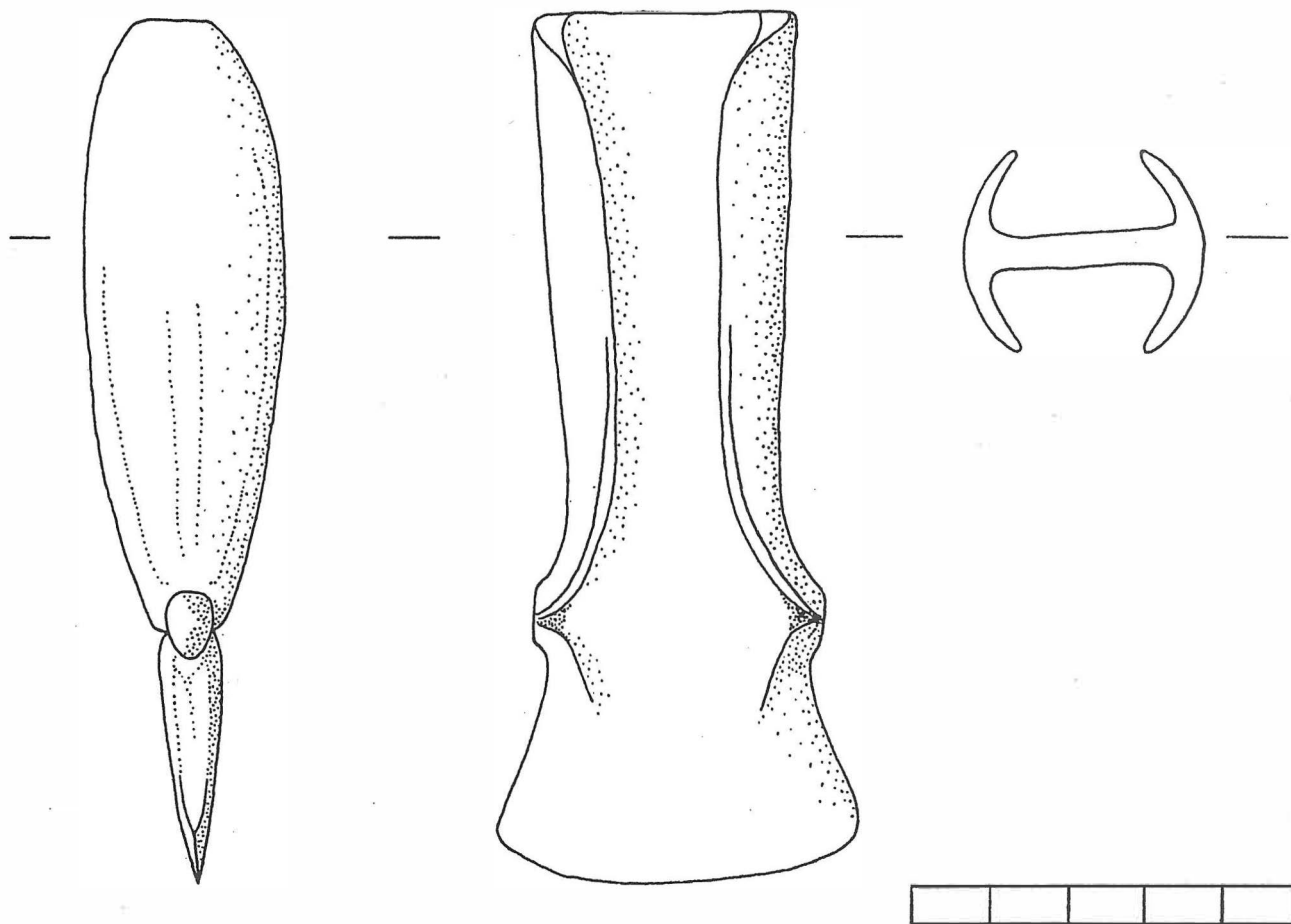


Fig. 1 - Drawing of axe (by U. Tecchiati)

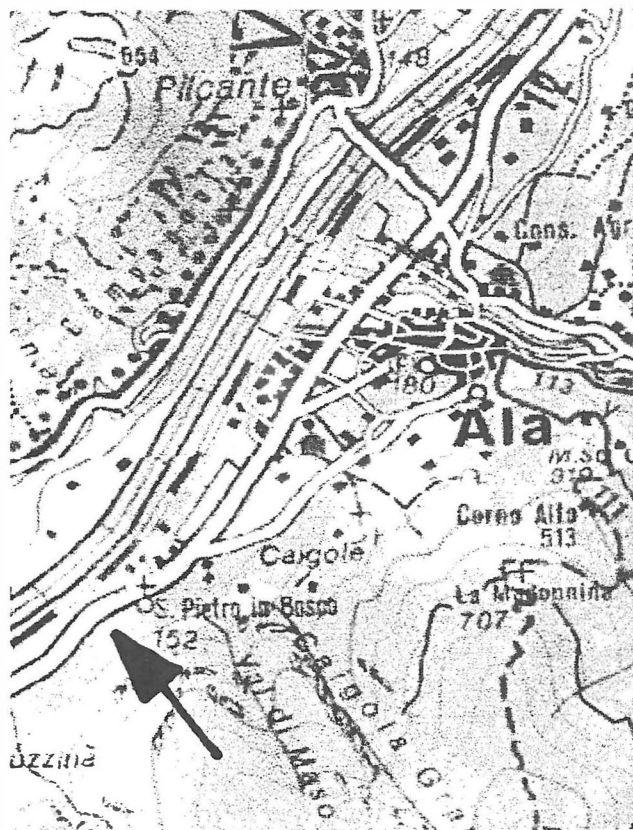


Fig. 2 - Finding place



Fig. 3 - Photograph of axe