

**THE NEW SEARCHES FOR KURA-ARAXES CULTURAL  
COMPLEX :  
THE PETROGRAPHIC AND GEOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS  
OF SOS HÖYÜK KURA-ARAXES CERAMICS**

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The Early Bronze Age culture of northern mountainous zone, namely Kura-Araxes Culture, Karaz Culture or Early Trans-Caucasian Culture had existed in a huge area which extends from the Caucasus range to Philistine. This cultural complex can be discerned with its own peculiar architecture (rectangular and round shaped houses, socio-economic livelihood methods, limited agricultural activities and expansive animal husbandry-pastoral groups) and cultural materials (pottery, distinct clay objects and limited metal objects). The culture lasted almost two thousand years from mid. 4<sup>th</sup> to mid. 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, and this long-termed endurance created several chronological and geographical complicated problems in the understanding of the structure of the mentioned culture. The problems appear also in its denomination and chronology. Because of its existence in a wide ranging time interval and its huge geographical propagation, the culture is seen as “a cultural complex” by most archaeologists.

According to most scholars, these very complicated problems can be solved by increasing local investigations. The most expansive remains of this culture are pottery. The most distinctive features of the pottery of Kura-Araxes Cultural Complex are summarised as follows; they are mostly hand made. The dominant colours are black, red, brown and grey tons. The pots are generally decorated with incised, grooved, dropped and relief techniques. The form repertoire consists of varieties of jars and bowls. Pottery is also a significant source in solving complicated problems. The studies involving pottery show diversity from traditional methods to several analysis techniques. Particularly analytical work (petrographic analysis) on the pottery has been carried out recently. This kind of analytical studies can give information in a wide field, ranging from manufacturing stages to expansion of culture.

In this study we want to focus on Erzurum Region which is situated roughly in the north corner of Anatolia Peninsula. As known, the Erzurum Region, especially with Karaz, Pulur, Güzelova and Sos mounds, has a special place within the spectrum of this culture. Especially Sos Excavation is a key site in form of main features of archaeology in this region. Sos Höyük was excavated by A. Sagona from 1994 to 2003, which presented a settling continuity from Late Chalcolithic period to Mediaeval Ages. In this work we report petrographic, major and trace element analysis of Kura-Araxes wares from Sos Höyük. The aims of the study are constrain the provenance of selected samples and to determine the production pattern of Kura-Araxes ceramics during the Late Chalcolithic to the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 3500-1500 BC) in Sos Höyük. The results will also be discussed with regard to the socio-economic organization in this region and compared with the results carried out in previous works in other regions (Amuq Valley, Malatya region, Godin Tepe in central western Iran). Archaeometrical results suggest that the analyzed samples were locally produced, most probably for household use. In relation to the ceramic tradition and socio-economic organization, our data are comparable to those of previous works from Amuq valley, Malatya region and Godin Tepe. Contrary to these regions, in Sos Höyük there has been no technological innovation or changes in the ceramic production during the Late Chalcolithic to the Middle Bronze Age, which indicates the arrival of new population to the region.