

7. The small finds

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Abstract. This paper presents an exhaustive catalogue of finds recovered from the site of Borġ in-Nadur and now stored in the National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta. Seventeen objects are dated to the Bronze Age whereas two date to the Late Neolithic (Temple period). Artefacts which have not been traced are also considered. Part of the discussion looks for comparative material from contemporary contexts, both local and foreign. The functional aspect of the objects is dealt with briefly.

Keywords: stone objects, sculpture, terracotta, Bronze Age.

7.1. Introduction

This chapter examines some classes of artefacts recovered from the excavations of the prehistoric temple at Borġ in-Nadur; in particular, we will consider the stone objects (axes, grinding stones, spindle whorls), figurative sculpture, some clay objects (spindle whorls, a clay anchor), metals, and the worked bone. The whereabouts of several pieces that were published could not be determined and these are considered misplaced or lost (Table 7.1). In some cases, images of these objects are shown for information and comparative purposes.

7.2. Small finds catalogue

The description of the objects was made following a thorough visual examination at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta. A review of the inventory cards drawn up by J. D. Evans in the early 1950s has revealed that all the objects he recorded were

found during this study with the exception of the following pieces: BN/Sa ('idol'), BN/Sb ('phallus'), BN/Sc (cylindrical stone), BN/Sd (bone awl); two of these objects, namely BN/Sa and BN/Sb, had already been published by Murray in 1929. Where it was deemed necessary, drawings were made, including in a few instances pieces already published. The inventory number was recorded when this had been written in ink on the object (abbreviations: BN/P[ottery] and BN/S[tone]). In those cases when one inventory number was found to correspond to several objects, a number or a letter was added following instructions received from the Principal Curator in charge of the collection. For a description of the fabric of the clay objects, we made use of the distinct categories adopted for the pottery by Tanasi in this volume. The catalogue includes objects kept at the National Museum of Archaeology and stored with the label 'Borġ in-Nadur 1948 Stone - 8B'. Based on the class and the material of the artefacts, the catalogue is divided in five sections: stone objects, figurative sculpture, terracotta objects, metals, worked bones.

Stone objects

Inv. no. BN/S15

Stone axe.

Grey basalt.

Ground polished stone axe of triangular shape with a plump body and slightly oblique cutting edge.

L[ength]. 10.6 cm; w[idth]. 7.3 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/S16

Hammer.

Globigerina Limestone.

Flattish oval pebble nicked on either side for hafting.

L. 8.9 cm; w. 6 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/S17

Perforated pebble (spindle whorl).

Globigerina Limestone.

Spindle whorl, cylindrical shape.

H. 2.9 cm; Ø [diameter] 5.5 cm; Ø hole 0.6 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/S18

Sling stone.

Globigerina Limestone.

Biconical object, bluntly pointed at either end, so-called lemon-shaped sling stone.

L. 8.6 cm; Ø 4.5 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/S19

Whetstone.

Square section prism with slightly tapering sides of close grained hard stone.

L. 5.2 cm; w. 2 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/S21

Grinding stone.

Coralline Limestone.

Slab of Coralline Limestone with one face ground smooth by use.

10.6 x 9.4 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/Sc

Cylindrical stone.

Globigerina Limestone.

Cylindrical stone with onset of perforation at the summit (spindle whorl?).

H. 4.3 cm; Ø 3.8 cm.

Bronze Age.

Figurative sculpture**Inv. no. BN/Sa**

'Betyl/idol'.

Globigerina Limestone.

Standing male anthropomorphic idol, with a trapezoidal shape, on oval base: globular head, smooth face and featureless, except for a vertical groove that continues, which is developed in two deep cuts on the head (an inverted "T"). Two side tabs to simulate the hands, simple chest characterisation and of the male pelvis, flat base. Deep horizontal groove to characterise the neck, incision on the abdomen (belt?) that continues in the back. Series of oblique incisions on the back.

H. 14.4 cm; w. 11.6 cm; th[ickness]. 5.8 cm.

Late Temple period.

Inv. no. BN/Sb

'Phallus'.

Globigerina Limestone.

Cylindrical stone with a flat base. The whole object is slightly curved. It is probably a representation of a 'phallus'.

L. 8.6 cm; w. 4.2 cm.

Temple period.

Terracotta objects**Inv. no. BN/P75**

Hut-model.

Clay model of a circular building, globular shape slightly extended, wire inside, flat base; irregularly shaped hole margined with a frame in relief on the front.

Fabric 2.5 Y 8/6 *yellow*, core 2.5 Y 8/6 *light gray*; slip R 6/8 *light red* – 10 R 4/6 *red*. Hard mixture, semi-fine clay, with calcareous inclusions and little grog; reddish slip. Undecorated.

Handmade. Signs of remodeling inside the top; fingerprints left by a bed of crushed stone on the shelf.

H. 12.2 cm; w. 9 cm; Ø base 9.8 cm; th. 0.8-1.3 cm; Ø hole 9.5 x 8.8 cm.

Borg in-Nadur phase (II B3).

Inv. no. BN/Se

Spindle whorl.

Depressed globular body. Preserved for one quarter of the body.

Fabric 7.

H. 4.5; w. 4; Ø hole 1.2 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1001

Clay anchor.

Anchor-shaped object. Curved lines have been sawn after firing (by string?) into either side of the shank and across the base of each fluke. Abraded surface, unslipped.

Fabric 1.

H. 7.1; w. 6.8; th. 2.2 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1002a

Spindle whorls.

Spindle whorl, broken vertically in half; truncated biconical shape.

Fabric 7.

H. 3.7; Ø 5.4; Ø hole 0.5 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1002b

Spindle whorls.

Spindle whorl, vertically broken in half; truncated globular shape.

Fabric 7.

H. 3.8; diam. 4.8; Ø hole 0.6 cm.

Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1003a

Spindle whorls.

Spindle whorl, chipped at one end; rounded biconical shape.

Fabric 7.

H. 4.3; Ø 5.2; Ø hole 0.9 cm.
Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1003b

Spindle whorls.
Spindle whorl, chipped at end; rounded biconical shape.
Fabric 7.
H. 3.8; Ø 5.2; Ø hole 0.7 cm.
Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1004a

Spindle whorls.
Spindle whorl, vertically broken in half; truncated globular shape. Abraded surface.
Fabric 7.
H. 6; Ø 7; Ø hole 0.9 cm.
Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/P1004b

Spindle whorls.
Spindle whorl, broken in half horizontally; truncated globular shape.
Fabric 7.
H. 2.9; Ø 4.9; Ø hole 0.7 cm.
Bronze Age.

Metals

Inv. no. BN/S1

Bronze vessel.
Ragged flat sheet of bronze, with concave profile, and grinding marks. Regular round hole.
W. 7.5 x 6.1 cm; Ø hole 0,01 cm; 43.70 g.
Bronze Age.

Inv. no. BN/S2

Lead sheet.
Thin oval plate (?) of lead with a rib round the edge. One side broken. Probably modern (?).
W. 8.2 x 3.7 cm; 12.90 g.
Bronze Age.

Worked bone

Inv. no. BN/Sd

Bone awl.
Bone awl. 2 row of parallel/not parallel incised dots.
L. 8; th. 0.9 cm.
Bronze Age.

	<i>Object</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>References</i>
<i>Stone Objects</i>	1 weight	NW Apse	Murray 1923: pl. 8.21.
	1 loom – weight	Chapel A	Murray 1929: pl. 8.7.
	1 stone (veiled female shape)	NW Apse	Murray 1923: pl. 21.3.
	1 stone (animal shape)	Open Area	Murray 1923: pl. 8.22.
	1 trap door	Open Area	Murray 1923: pl. 8.26.
	1 trap door	–	Murray 1923: pl. 8.7.
	1 weight	Pavement under torba	Murray 1923: pl. 8.16.
	1 weight	Pavement under torba	Murray 1923: pl. 8.17.
	1 lamp	Open Area, E	Murray 1923: pl. 8.23.
	1 ring stone	Near Apsidal Building	Murray 1929: pls 8.2, 19.6.
	1 limestone polisher	Main Enclosure	Murray 1923: pl. 8.8; 1929: pls 8.8, 19.4.
	1 limestone mould	Double Chapel	Murray 1929: pls 8.3, 19.1.
<i>Figurative Sculpture</i>	1 betyl	Chamber 6	Murray 1923: pl. 8.19.
	1 betyl	NE Apse	Murray 1923: pl. 8.20.
	1 betyl ('phallus')	–	Murray 1929: pls 8.4, 19.10.
	1 carved stone	N end of the trench W of the sanctuary	Murray 1925: pls 16.6, 19.11a-d.
<i>Clay Objects</i>	1 anchor	Dolmen wall	Murray 1923: pl. 8.4; 1929, pl. 16.9.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1925: pl. 17.11.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.1.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.3.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.4.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.5.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.6.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.8.
	1 anchor	Extreme W of the limiting stones	Murray 1929: pl. 28.9.
	1 loom weight	Entrance South	Murray 1923, pl. 8.2.
<i>Metals</i>	1 bronze disk	–	Murray 1929: pl. 17.1.
	1 bronze bar	–	Murray 1929: pl. 17.2.
	1 bronze ring	–	Murray 1929: pls 17, 19.7.
	1 bronze ring	–	Murray 1929: pls 17.5, 19.8.

Table 7.1. List of misplaced or lost objects (after Murray 1923, 1925, 1929).

7.3. Stone objects

This discussion includes the objects made from local limestone, which consist of two categories: axes and grinding and polishing stones. With regard to the axes, of the two pieces catalogued here, the first one is a polished stone of triangular shape, with thickened body and slightly oblique cutting edge (BN/S15, Fig. 7.1); the second one is a hammer (BN/S16, Fig. 7.1), derived from a pebble, oval-shaped and flat, nicked on either side for hafting.

The grinding and polishing stones include a piece (BN/S21) made from a Coralline Limestone slab with a polished worn surface and a stone prism-shaped object with a square section. The extremities of the latter object are slightly attenuated and the object may be considered a hone (BN/S19, Fig. 7.1).

Other lithic material recovered from the site includes two spindle whorls and a sling stone. The only complete spindle whorl in stone looks like a perforated stone object, which takes the form of a cylindrical spindle whorl (BN/S17, Fig. 7.1); the other stone object is also cylindrical, pierced on the upper part, perhaps also an unfinished spindle whorl (BN/Sc, Fig. 7.1). Finally, there is a stone object in Globigerina Limestone, of biconical shape, which thins abruptly at both ends. It has been interpreted as a lemon-shaped sling stone¹ (BN/S18, Fig. 7.1). There are also six objects that in Evans' inventory cards have the number BN/S20 given by him to hammer stones. In actual fact these are smooth pebbles of different sizes, largely spherical in shape without any signs of wear.

Among the stone objects that have been misplaced or are lost are some unworked and worked stone pieces, like the weight from the NW Apse² (Fig. 7.3, 1); similar to this is a loom-weight from Chapel A³ (Fig. 7.3, 2); another stone⁴ (Fig. 7.4, 14), from the fill of the NW Apse, with a flat base 'has the effect of a statuette of a veiled woman, either enceinte or holding a child in her lap'⁵; a

¹ Magro Conti 1999: 196.

² Murray 1923: pl. 8.21.

³ Murray 1929: pl. 8.7.

⁴ Murray 1923: pl. 21.3.

⁵ Murray 1923: 42.

stone from the Open Area⁶ (Fig. 7.3, 3) with two holes, which could be a sort of animal's head⁷. A singular kind of carved stone is the object identified by Murray as a cover for a trapdoor found in the Open Area⁸ (Fig. 7.3, 4); another one, similar to the latter but smaller in size⁹ (Fig. 7.3, 5); two other objects from the floor, beneath the *torba*, which could be interpreted as weights¹⁰ (Fig. 7.3, 6-7), the second of which 'has been burnt, and may perhaps have been a stone used for heating water'¹¹; an object from the Open Area, E, with a circular recess at the top¹² but of an unknown function (perhaps a lamp?)¹³ (Fig. 7.3, 8); a ring of stone recovered near the apsidal Building¹⁴ (Fig. 7.3, 9); a limestone polisher from the Main Enclosure¹⁵ (Fig. 7.3, 10) 'has been cut so as to give a good grip for the hand'¹⁶, which was interpreted by Murray as a 'miniature bethel stone'¹⁷. Finally, there is a stone mould for a metal ornament recovered from the Double Chapel¹⁸ (Fig. 7.3, 11).

Practically all the sites of the Temple period and of the Bronze Age have produced grinding stones¹⁹. As for the axes, the triangular shape finds parallels with an object from Skorba²⁰ (Fig. 7.7, 1), and with other pieces from the Brochtorff Circle at Xaghra²¹. A similar hammer to ours comes from the Tarxien temples²² (Fig. 7.7, 2). The use of these axes could be to fell or fashion timber but they could

⁶ Murray 1923: pl. 8.22.

⁷ Murray 1923: 42.

⁸ Murray 1923: 42, pl. 8.26.

⁹ Murray 1923: pl. 8.7.

¹⁰ Murray 1923: pl. 8.16-17.

¹¹ Murray 1929: 43.

¹² Murray 1923: pl. 8.23.

¹³ Murray 1923: 43.

¹⁴ Murray 1929: pls 8.2; 19.6.

¹⁵ Murray 1923: pl. 8.8; Murray 1929: pls 8.8, 19.4.

¹⁶ Murray 1929: 11.

¹⁷ Murray 1923: 32.

¹⁸ Murray 1929: pls 8.3, 19. 1.

¹⁹ Malone *et al.* 2009b: 237-239.

²⁰ Evans 1971: fig. 45.

²¹ Malone *et al.* 2009b: 232, fig. 10.30, 91, 142, 153.

²² Evans 1971: 146, pl. 66, 5.

also have been used as a bludgeoning weapon, typical of the Bronze Age²³.

With regard to the sling stone, specimens are known from several temple sites, but the clearest evidence comes from the Ħal Saflieni Hypogeum²⁴ (Fig. 7.7, 3), where there are as many as 56 objects of the same kind²⁵, of various sizes. They were found in a row and covered with a thin layer of *torba*²⁶. Sling stones are objects typical of the shepherd or hunter²⁷: the sling was often made of perishable materials, such as sinew, animal skin or indeed vegetable fibers. The sling was used to launch these missiles, using centrifugal force²⁸.

Spindle whorls in stone are known from the Cemetery context at Tarxien²⁹ (Fig. 7.7, 4). Possible parallels can be found amidst the finds from the Brochtorff Circle at Xaghra³⁰. The unfinished nature of our piece, however, would suggest that the clay variety was more common.

7.4. Figurative sculpture

Prehistoric Malta is famous for the richness of the figurative material in stone produced during the Late Neolithic. The Maltese production is part of a wider Mediterranean and European phenomenon about which much has been written³¹.

This discussion covers two classes of materials, the so-called ‘phallic’ stones and that of the figurative representations themselves.

The first category include a cylindrical stone object (BN/Sb, Fig. 7.1), slightly tilted to one side and standing on a flat base. It may be

²³ Magro Conti 1999: 197.

²⁴ Zammit *et al.* 1912: 9.

²⁵ Five examples have a biconical perforation, perhaps meant for a chord to pass through (Magro Conti 1999: 197).

²⁶ Evans 1971: 66, pl. 66, 9.

²⁷ Magro Conti 1999: 196-197.

²⁸ O’Connell 1989: 22.

²⁹ Evans 1971: 164, pls 64, 10-11.

³⁰ Malone *et al.* 2009b : 238, fig. 10.34. 32, 370, 667.

³¹ Bonanno 1986; Malone 1998; Vella Gregory 2005; Vella 2007.

a schematic representation of a ‘phallus’, a class of objects known from prehistoric contexts in Malta³².

Other similar objects, now lost or misplaced, are three betyls. The first one, having an elongated oval shape, was found in chamber 6 of the Apsidal Building³³ (Fig. 7.3, 12). The second one³⁴ (Fig. 7.3, 13), cylindrical in shape with a convex top was found in the east corner of the NE Apse of the Apsidal Building³⁵. The third one, for which a provenance was not given in Murray’s reports, is cylindrical in shape and may fall under the category of phallic objects as well. It is decorated with crossed horizontal and vertical incisions³⁶ (Fig. 7.3, 14). Another fragmented object has a cylindrical shape and a flat base; it too could represent a miniature ‘phallus’³⁷ (Fig. 7.3, 16).

Several objects of the same type were found in temple contexts including Ta’ Ħaġrat, where three conical stone objects are reported³⁸; others come from Ħaġar Qim³⁹ (Fig. 7.7, 7). An earlier example of this kind of freestanding object would seem to lie in the so-called ‘phallic’ niches or shrines which represent a megalithic set-up, at the centre of which are a pair of ‘phalli’⁴⁰. Most of them were found at the Tarxien temples (Fig. 7.7, 5-6), one from the back of the so-called oracle room⁴¹, another two were found in area 6 of the complex⁴², another four were recovered from the proximity of area 6⁴³.

The ‘idol’ (BN/Sa, Fig. 7.1) was found in the space between the limiting stones and Chapel B, lying on the ground⁴⁴. It shows what we believe are male anthropomorphic features. The figure is shown

³² Bonanno 1993: 86-89; Vella Gregory 2005: 165-171.

³³ Murray 1923: pl. 8.19.

³⁴ Murray 1923: pl. 8.20.

³⁵ Murray 1923: 22.

³⁶ Murray 1929: pls 8.4, 29.10.

³⁷ Murray 1923: pl. 8.8.

³⁸ Evans 1971: 35, pl. 33,14.

³⁹ Evans 1971: 93, pl. 41, 4.

⁴⁰ Evans 1971: 145, pls 50, 9-10, 51, 1-3.

⁴¹ Evans 1959: pl. 87.

⁴² Zammit 1916: fig. 2; Zammit 1930: pl. 24,1.

⁴³ Zammit 1916: pl. 24,2; Zammit 1930: pl. 24,1-2.

⁴⁴ Murray 1929: 11.

standing and has a spherical head marked with two deep cuts forming a T on the top and another deep incision that separates the head from the rest of the body. The trunk is trapezoidal in shape and leans slightly to one side. The chest is marked with thin incised lines while a circular protuberance marks the pubis. An incision on the abdomen (belt?) continues on the back side of the figure. The same line passes over two ledges on the sides which represent what may be taken to be the hands. The back is also marked by a series of parallel oblique lines which descend from the neck to the 'belt'. The lower surface is flat, with slight incisions.

One of the most interesting of the misplaced or lost objects is a carved stone, recovered from the N end of trench W located in the sanctuary. It looks like a relief decoration⁴⁵ (Fig. 7.3, 15). Murray had pointed out that many Neolithic pottery sherds were recovered from the same trench⁴⁶. This relief seems to carry a zoomorphic representation and may have once been a frieze comparable to those recovered from the Tarxien temples⁴⁷ (Fig. 7.8, 10-12).

As for the sculpture, we can see important parallels with another stone 'idol' from the Mnajdra temples⁴⁸ (Fig. 7.7,8): the figurine consists of a trunk of conic form, standing on a circular base, having a smooth surface with the exception of a slight groove separating the chin and face from the rest of the body⁴⁹. The forerunner of the class is to be found perhaps, in the so-called 'statue menhirs' of the Żebbuġ phase found in rock-cut tombs at Xagħra in Gozo⁵⁰ and Ta' Trapna in Malta⁵¹ (Fig. 7.7, 9-10). Another possible development for this type of object could be that they represent an alternative form of a 'phallus', since some of these objects have the same features of phallic stones, that is a flat base with pseudo cylindrical body. In this perspective, the schematic anthropomorphism of object BN/Sa could suggest its belonging to a transitional phase of the production of stone objects

⁴⁵ Murray 1925: pls 17.6, 19.11 a-d.

⁴⁶ Murray 1925: 24.

⁴⁷ Zammit 1930: pl. 3, fig. 3; Evans 1971: pl. 18,4.

⁴⁸ Zammit and Singer 1924: pl. 27.34.

⁴⁹ Evans 1971: 103, pl. 41,18.

⁵⁰ Malone *et al.* 2009b: 258, fig. 10.46.

⁵¹ Evans 1971: fig. 57.

of this type: from ‘phallus/betyl’ to ‘betyl/idol’. But such a development is hypothetical and requires more evidence. As for the date of this piece from Borġ in-Nadur, the comparisons with similar objects found in various sites in Malta do not point to a late, Bronze Age chronology (Borġ in-Nadur phase) but rather to the Temple period, perhaps in its last phase, supporting Murray’s view that the roughness of the execution would point ‘to an early stage of sculpture, and it is possible that it may belong to a period before the Bronze Age’⁵².

7.5. Terracotta objects

The objects in terracotta include a clay model of a building, seven spindle whorls and a clay anchor. In actual fact, ten clay anchors were found during Murray’s excavations at Borġ in-Nadur but only one is included in this discussion together with four loom weights⁵³.

The model of a building was recovered from the Open Area (BN/P75, Fig. 7.2). It is an elongated, cone-shaped object, open on the front, resting on a flat circular surface. The object does not appear in Murray’s reports and was mistakenly identified as a lamp stand fragment by Evans⁵⁴. Tanasi has argued that the terracotta object represents a model of a circular building or hut reproducing architectural features⁵⁵, dating to the last phase (II B 3) of the periodisation scheme put forth by Trump for the Bronze Age⁵⁶.

Amongst the terracotta objects, the more important are probably the spindle whorls which can be divided into two types: rounded biconical (BN/P1002a, BN/P1003a, BN/P1003b, Fig. 7.2) and globular (BN/P1002b, BN/P1004a, BN/P1004b, BN/Se, Fig. 7.2). One of the biconical specimens (BN/P1003a) has a vertical linear decoration, impressed before firing.

Among the terracotta objects, very relevant is a small anchor-shaped object (BN/P1001, Fig. 7.2), fragmented, which has traces

⁵² Murray 1929: 11.

⁵³ Murray 1929; Tanasi 2008; Trump 1999.

⁵⁴ Evans 1971: 16-17.

⁵⁵ Tanasi 2009: 3-4.

⁵⁶ Tanasi 2009a: 4; Trump 1961: 262.

of curved grooves in the inner part of the 'shank', perhaps caused by the constant friction of a thong that was tied to it.

The clay anchors published by Murray and now lost or misplaced are the following: a fragment of the upper part, from the dolmen wall⁵⁷ (Fig. 7.4, 1); an anchor missing only one arm⁵⁸ (Fig. 7.4, 2); six other anchors, fragmentary, some with a horizontal perforation through the upper end, recovered from the extreme west end of the limiting stones⁵⁹ (Fig. 7.4, 3-8). Another misplaced or lost object is a loom-weight found near some megaliths near the Entrance⁶⁰ (Fig. 7.4, 9).

The well-known terracotta models of the megalithic temples, thought to be veritable representations of architects' cut-out models of the fourth and third millennia BC⁶¹, are not similar to the terracotta object discussed here. Tanasi has argued that the closest parallels are found in the Aegean⁶², in particular Crete where a long tradition for this type of object is known to exist (Fig. 7.8, 1-6), with the oldest examples going back to the early third millennium BC (Early Minoan I)⁶³, and developed uninterruptedly over the centuries until the Late Geometric period. These products are variously interpreted as lamps, miniature reproductions of a real architectural set-up, as symbolic representations of a circular house, or architectural evocations of an abstract space connected with the cult of the house or a symbolic representation of the Cretan tholoi, used for domestic cults in honour of dead ancestors⁶⁴. Putting aside the well-known examples from Sicily which belong to a production particular to the Sikania of the seventh and sixth centuries BC (for which a Cretan ancestry has also been suggested⁶⁵), a Cretan source for the Borġ in-Nadur hut model seems to be most likely⁶⁶.

⁵⁷ Murray 1923: pl. 8.4; Murray 1929: pl. 16.9.

⁵⁸ Murray 1925: pl. 17.11.

⁵⁹ Murray 1929: 14, pls 16.6, 7, 10, 28.1, 3-6, 8-9.

⁶⁰ Murray 1923: 29, pl. 8.2.

⁶¹ Trump 2002: 81-82; Torpiano 2004: 347-365.

⁶² Tanasi 2009a: 5.

⁶³ Alexiou-Warren 2004: 114, pl. 109 a-b.

⁶⁴ Hägg 1990; Mavriyannaki 1972; Mersereau 1993; Palermo 1997; Petrakis 2006; Todaro 2003.

⁶⁵ La Rosa 1985: 167-179; La Rosa 1993-1994: 38; Palermo 1997.

⁶⁶ Tanasi 2009a: 6.

The clay anchors also offer interpretative challenges despite the fact that contemporary examples are known from Mediterranean contexts⁶⁷ (Fig. 7.8, 8). According to Murray, these were models of anchors placed by seamen as votive offerings marking safe trips or productive fishing⁶⁸. Trump's position is quite different and considers these objects as instruments linked to a textile industry⁶⁹. The presence together at the site of Borġ in-Nadur of several spindle whorls, loom weights, and clay anchors, which held light grooves, interpreted by Trump as 'signs left by thin threads looped over the hooks and sawn back and forth'⁷⁰, may indeed suggest the presence of a flourishing textile industry during the Bronze Age, linked perhaps to a local market⁷¹.

7.6. Metals

Several factors testify to the metallurgical activities that must have taken place at Borġ in-Nadur. These include finished ornaments, semi-finished products, and waste⁷². Unfortunately, few objects have come down to us and these are in fact limited to two fragments: a ragged flat sheet in bronze⁷³ (BN/S1, Fig. 7.6), and a thin oval piece of lead⁷⁴ (BN/S2, Fig. 7.6), probably to be considered waste from the manufacturing process. The bronze object was found during Murray's excavations of the Main Enclosure: 'a small flat piece was in the upper levels of the open area; it had evidently been crushed under a heavy weight, as it was not only broken but the edges were split and crackled'. She later interpreted the same object as 'a piece of bronze of indeterminate shape. This appears to be the overflow from round the pouring hole of a casting'⁷⁵. A more accurate reading of the piece by Tanasi has suggested that this is in fact a

⁶⁷ Blakolmer 2003: 4.

⁶⁸ Murray 1925: 29; Murray 1961: 59-60.

⁶⁹ Trump 1960: 295; Trump 1962: 224-255.

⁷⁰ Trump 1960: 295.

⁷¹ Tanasi 2010.

⁷² Farrugia 2001; Tanasi 2009b: 19-20.

⁷³ Murray 1929: pl. 17.7.

⁷⁴ Murray 1929: pl. 17.6.

⁷⁵ Murray 1923: 43; Murray 1929: 17.

fragment of a curved profile of a metal pot, not slag, with a hole for housing a rivet⁷⁶. This discovery is an example of a metal pot found in what appears to be a domestic context, rather than a funerary context more common elsewhere⁷⁷.

Other lost or misplaced objects include a bronze disk⁷⁸ (Fig. 7.4, 10), a small bronze rod⁷⁹ (Fig. 7.4, 11), and two bronze rings with traces of gold plating⁸⁰ (Fig. 7.4, 12-13).

The absence of other evidence for metal vessels in the Maltese archipelago, excepting the pair of bronze rivets recovered from room N at the cave site of Ghar Mirdum⁸¹ (Fig. 7.8, 7), leads one to search for comparanda elsewhere. The relevant specimens from Sicily are those of Caldare, Monte Campanella and Capreria, thought to date to a period between the fifteenth and eleventh centuries BC. The prototypes find a home in the Aegean but the examples from Sicily were produced locally if we go by the find of bronze hammers used for metal working and especially by the presence of imported raw materials, such as the ox-hide ingots discovered at the sites of Thapsos, Ognina and Cannatello⁸², but also by the discovery of casting moulds⁸³. This local development of a craft specialisation should be interpreted as an expression of a Mycenaean presence in Sicily, which takes various forms (such as imports, imitations, hybrids). If this reading of a local Sicilian production of metal basins is valid, the Maltese evidence can be best understood in the context of the contacts entertained between the two islands for a good part of the Bronze Age⁸⁴. Evidence related to autonomous metallurgical activities in the Maltese archipelago in the Bronze Age is, to date, scant; the few objects from the site of Borġ in-Nadur would seem to be imports of finished products rather than an example of craft production in loco. Since the strong relationship between Malta and Sicily was always

⁷⁶ Tanasi 2009b:16.

⁷⁷ Tanasi 2010:116.

⁷⁸ Murray 1929: 15, pl. 17.1.

⁷⁹ Murray 1929: 15, pl. 17.2.

⁸⁰ Murray 1929: 15, pls 17.4-5, 19.7-8.

⁸¹ MAR 1965: 1; Tanasi 2009b: 49, fig. 11, b.

⁸² Alberti 2008: 136.

⁸³ Albanese Procelli 2000.

⁸⁴ Tanasi 2009b: 18-21.

characterised by the necessity of acquiring raw materials for the Maltese islanders, it is reasonable that also, during Bronze Age, metals and metallic object found in Malta were imported from the larger island⁸⁵.

7.7. Worked bone

The worked bone was found in limited quantities and only one object has been traced in the collection. The fragility of the material and the particular way in which early twentieth-century excavations were conducted, may not have favoured its preservation. These prehistoric artefacts, typical of other sites, were derived from the long bones of domesticated animals, and were used for different purposes, such as decoration of ceramics and craftsmanship in general.

The object in the museum collection is a fragment of a bone awl (BN/Sd, Fig. 7.6) approximately 8 cm in length and has an incised decoration consisting of two rows of points (10 on the right and 15 on the left) which meet at the tip of the object. Comparisons for the object in question are difficult to find; typologically similar tools made from bone are known from the Tarxien temples⁸⁶, including chisels, needles and blades⁸⁷ (Fig. 7.8, 9), and from the funerary contexts of the Brochtorff Circle at Xaghra⁸⁸. These tools are not decorated, however⁸⁹.

7.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the small finds provide evidence of different activities taking place at Borg in-Nadur during the Middle Bronze Age, particularly of handicraft, such as the working of bone and stone. The latter activity appears to have been important for

⁸⁵ Bonanno 2008: 32-35; Tanasi 2009b: 16.

⁸⁶ Zammit 1916: pl. 25, fig. 1; Zammit 1930: pl. 25, 2.

⁸⁷ Evans 1971: 146, pl. 67, 2-7.

⁸⁸ Malone *et al.* 2009b : 257, fig. 10.45.

⁸⁹ The only known bone object with a decorative row of incised circles is a bone hilt found at Ghar Mir dum (MAR 1965).

religious and cultic activities if the standing stones are taken to represent ‘betyls’. The terracotta objects, in particular the spindle whorls and the loom weights, allow us to infer the existence of textile production at the site. To such an activity appear to be related the clay anchors found at Borġ in-Nadur and other contemporary sites, such as Baħrija.

Terracotta and metal objects – absent in the previous Temple period – are particularly relevant for defining the external relations the community dwelling in the temple area had. These were relations that in some way were connected with the Mycenaean commercial network in the south-central Mediterranean, as is suggested by the Mycenaean potsherds from Borġ in-Nadur and Tas-Silġ and Borġ in-Nadur-type pottery recovered in Sicily⁹⁰.

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⁹⁰ Tanasi, this volume (chapter 10); Tanasi and Vella forthcoming.

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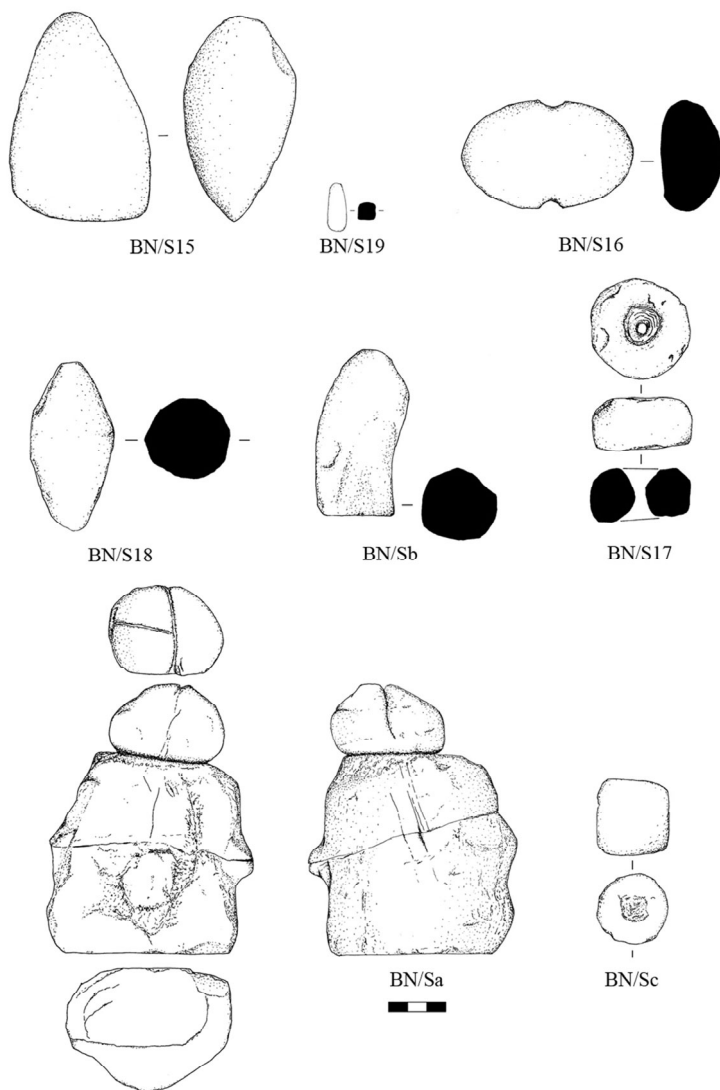


Figure 7.1. Small finds: (BN/S15) stone axe; (BN/S16) stone hammer; (BN/S19) hone; (BN/S18) sling limestone; (BN/Sb) 'phallus'; (BN/S17) stone spindle whorl; (BN/Sa) 'betyl/idol'; (BN/Sc) cylindrical stone (1:3, drawings by Carlo Veca).

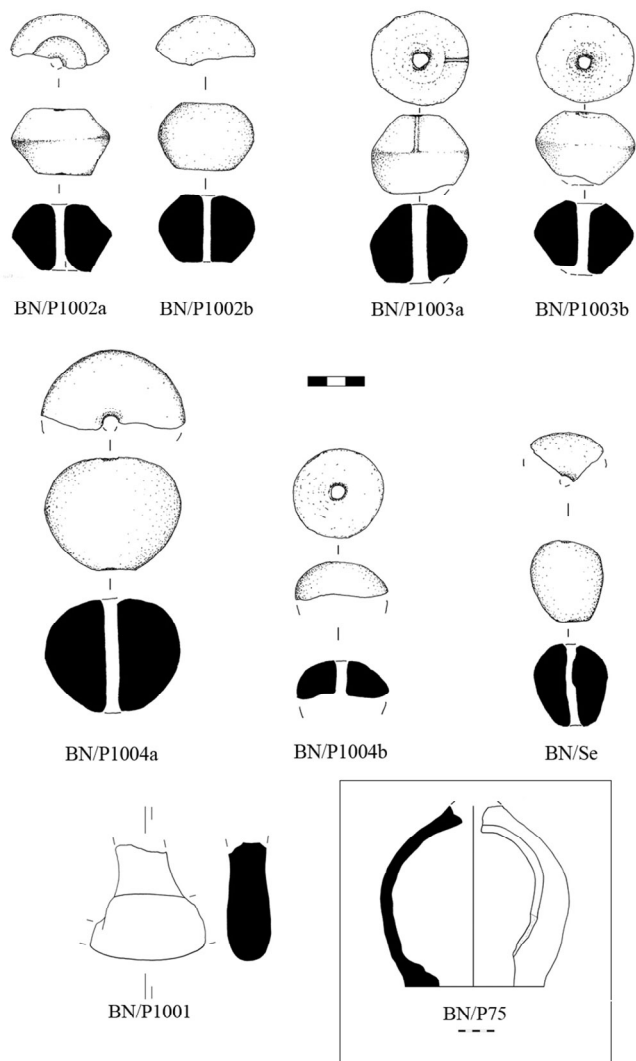


Figure 7.2. Small finds: (BN/P1002a) spindle whorl; (BN/P1002b) spindle whorl; (BN/P1003a) spindle whorl; (BN/P1003b) spindle whorl; (BN/P1004a) spindle whorl; (BN/P1004b) spindle whorl; (BN/Se) spindle whorl (1:3, drawings by Carlo Veca); clay anchor (BN/P1001); (BN/P75) clay hut model (1:4 drawings by Denise Cali).

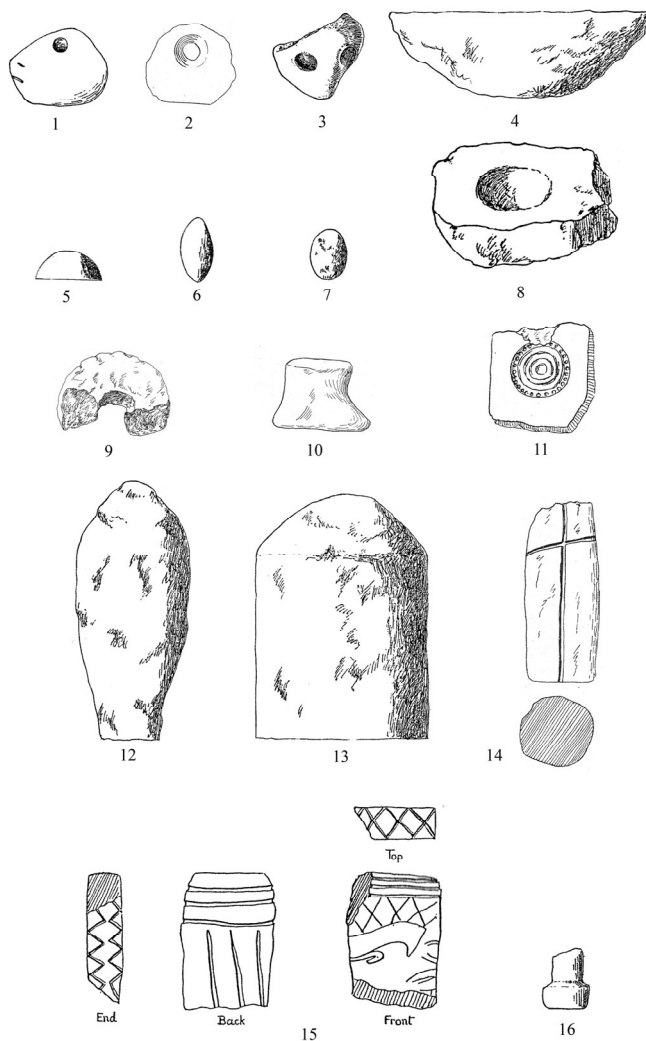


Figure 7.3. Lost or misplaced objects: (1), weight; (2), loom weight; (3), stone; (4), Cover of trapdoor; (5), cover of trapdoor; (6-7), weights; (8), lamp; (9), ring stone; (10), limestone polisher; (11), stone mould; (12), betyl stone; (13), betyl stone; (14), phallus; (15), carved stone; (16), miniature betyl (Murray 1923: pls 8,8, 16-17, 19-23, 26; Murray 1929: pls 8,2-4, 7, 17,6, 19,11a-d, 19, 1, 4, 6, 10).

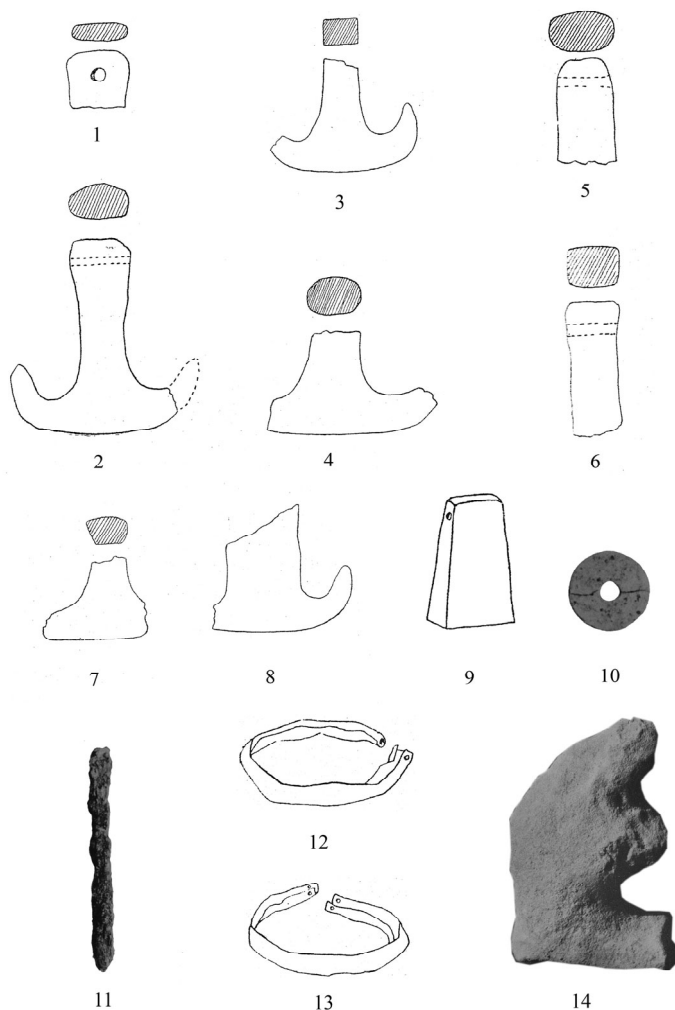


Figure 7.4. Lost objects: (1), clay anchor; (2), clay anchor; (3-8), clay anchors; (9), loom weight; (10), bronze disk; (11), bronze bar; (12-13), bronze rings; (14), stone figure (Murray 1923: pl. 8,2, 4; Murray 1925: pl. 17,11; Murray 1929: pl. 17,1-2, 4-5, 28,1, 3-6, 8, 9, 19,7-8, 21,3).

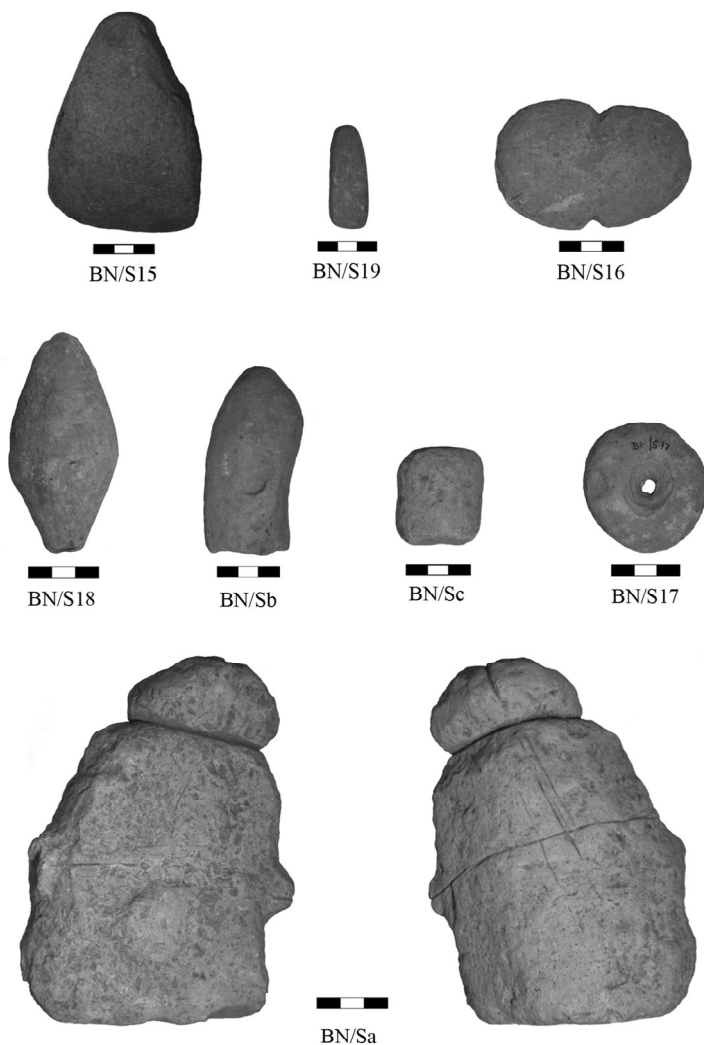


Figure 7.5. Small finds: (BN/S15) stone axe; (BN/S16) stone hammer; (BN/S19) hone; (BN/S18) sling limestone; (BN/Sb) 'phallus'; (BN/S17) stone spindle whorl; (BN/Sa) 'betyl/idol'; (BN/Sc) cylindrical stone.

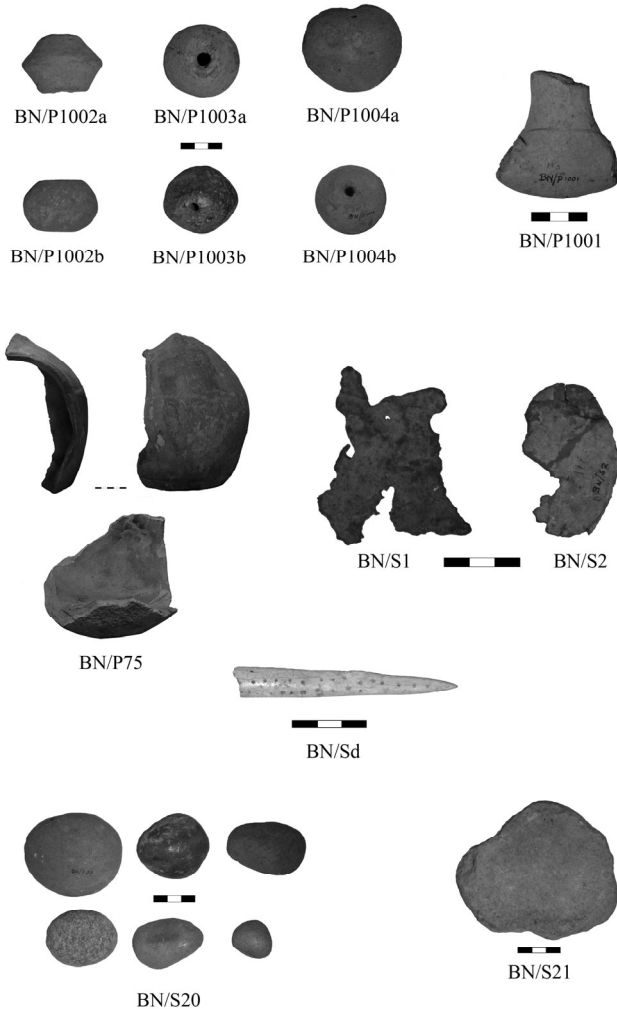


Figure 7.6. Small finds photos: (BN/P1002a) spindle whorl; (BN/P1002b) spindle whorl; (BN/P1003a) spindle whorl; (BN/P1003b) spindle whorl; (BN/P1004a) spindle whorl; (BN/P1004b) spindle whorl; (BN/P75) clay hut model (Tanasi 2010); (BN/P1001) clay anchor; (BN/S1) bronze vessel; (BN/S2) lead sheet; (BN/Sd) bone awl; (BN/S20) pebbles; (BN/S21) grinding stone.

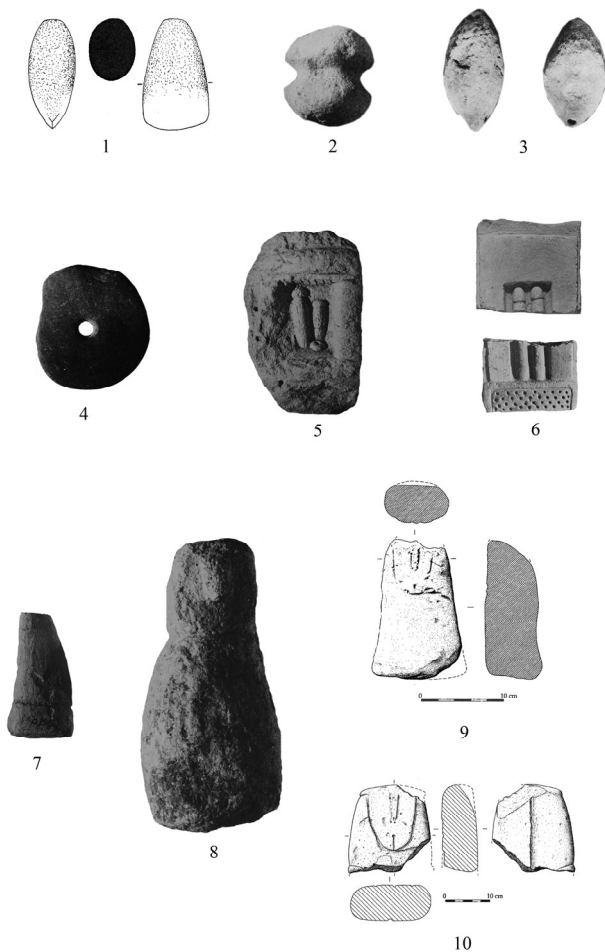


Figure 7.7. Parallels: (1), axe from Skorba (Evans 1971: fig. 45); (2), hammer from Tarxien (Evans 1971: pl. 66, 5); (3), sling stones from Hal Saflieni (Evans 1971: pl. 66, 9); (4), spindle whorl from Tarxien (Evans 1971: pl. 64, 10); (5-6), ‘phallic niches’ from Tarxien (Evans 1971: pl. 50, 9-11); (7), ‘phallus’ from Haġar Qim (Evans 1971: pl. 41, 4); (8), ‘idol’ from Mnajdra (Evans 1971: pls 41, 18); (9-10), ‘statue menhir’ from the Brochtorff Circle and Ta’ Trapna (Malone *et al.* 2009a: fig. 10.46; Evans 1971: fig. 57).

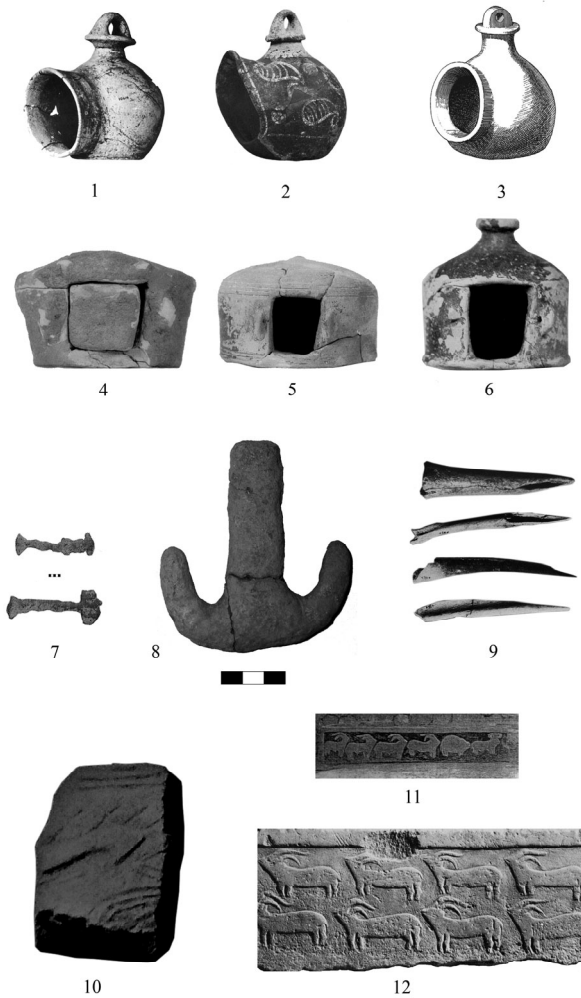


Figure 7.8. Parallels: (1-6), hut-models from the Aegean (Tanasi 2009a); (7), bronze rivets from Ghar Mirdum (MAR 1965); (8), clay anchor from Bahrija (photo by D. Tanasi); (9), worked bone object from Tarxien (Evans 1971: pl. 67, 2-5); (10), carved stone from Borġ in-Nadur (Murray 1929: pls 17,6, 19,11 a-d); (11), relief from Tarxien (Zammit 1930: pl. III, 3); (12), relief from Tarxien (Evans 1971: pl. 18, 4).