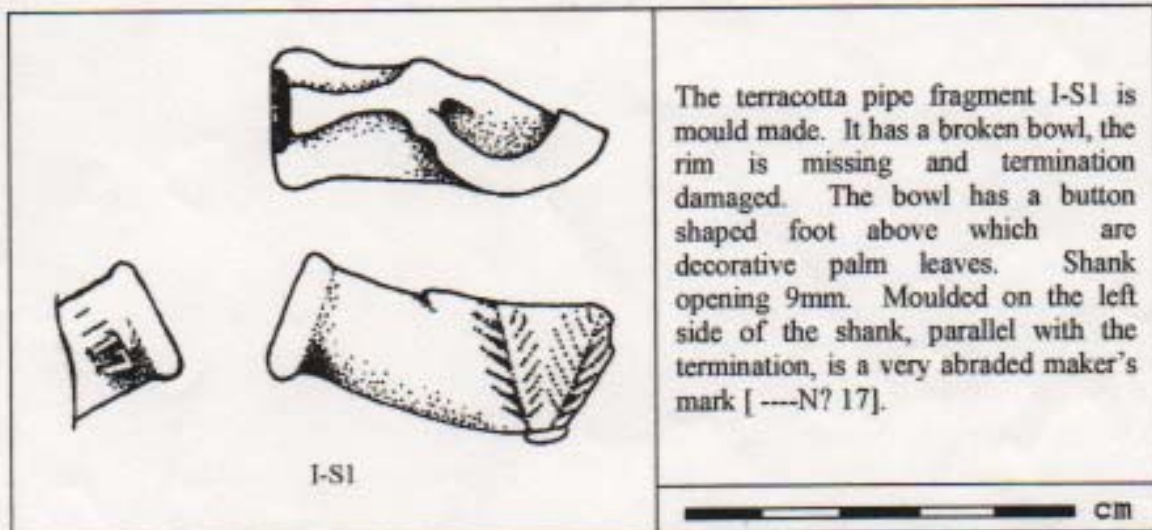# Pipa tal-Qasba from Xaghra, Gozo.

This terracotta fragment I-S1 was collected in September 1999 from the roof of a farmhouse at Is-Srug[1]. Its lichen covered state corroborates the fact that it had been abandoned for some time, together with a number of other shards. This practice of hoarding broken domestic pottery goes back at least to medieval times and was described by Francesco Laparelli in 1566[2]. For a more up to date account see Jaccarini[3] "Traditionally, rooftops and terraces were waterproofed with a special mixture of *deffun* – small pieces of broken earthenware pots, powdered earthenware, lime and water made up into a paste – which was laid evenly over the *torba* layer (earth and stone chippings mixed) to a thickness of about 0.95cm, keeping a slight fall to allow rain water to run off in one direction". Locally quarried earthenware pounders were called *deffuna*. The description goes on to say "Waterproofing was customarily a womans' job. For this she used a semicircular length of wood with a handle, rhythmically beating and tapping the *deffun* mixture to extrude the excess water. Repeated sprinkling of the fine *deffun* dust gradually dried it up, and when all the water had been removed, the surface was smoothed with a trowel, working backwards bit by bit in strips until a fine glazed terracotta-colour finish was produced. Finally damp straw or seaweed was left covering the roof surface for about a fortnight to prevent it from cracking". A custom still remembered by an older generation.



I-S1

The terracotta pipe fragment I-S1 is mould made. It has a broken bowl, the rim is missing and termination damaged. The bowl has a button shaped foot above which are decorative palm leaves. Shank opening 9mm. Moulded on the left side of the shank, parallel with the termination, is a very abraded maker's mark [ ----N? 17].

cm

1. Geo. Azzopardi, National Museum, Gozo. Personal communication.
2. Luttrell, A. *Medieval Malta* The British School at Rome, London (1975).
3. Jaccarini, C. *Ir-Razzett*, Malta. (1998).