

CERAMIC OBJECTS

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There is one series of ceramic finds that is directly connected with the everyday economic activities of the settlement inhabitants – these are fishing-net weights, loomweights, *etc.* Some of these objects were made on the spot from a material that was always available and free – that is to say, clay, outcrops of which still exist today in the shoreline bluffs. Ordinary domestic hearths were evidently employed for the firing. Other objects in this series were made from parts of vessels that were broken or otherwise unfit for their normal use: thus kantharos feet, walls and feet of amphorae, *etc.* were adapted for new and different purposes. It should be noted that such utilisation of broken or defective ceramic vessels is a further indication of an extreme thriftiness if not stinginess among those who lived here.

The first category of these finds includes barrel- and disc-shaped spindle whorls used for increasing the weight of the spindles when twisting woollen yarn. Similar spindle whorls are very common on the sites of the northern Black Sea region, both in cities and rural settlements. Generally, they were made on the spot, although the high degree of standardisation among them does not rule out the possibility of specialised production.

M 1. U6 room 39. 1975. Pl. 175.

Hand-made barrel-shaped ceramic spindle whorl of dense well-kneaded paste that assumed a greyish black colour on firing. The surface is well smoothed. A hole, 0.6 cm in diameter, runs from top to bottom. Dimensions: D. 3.3 cm; H. 2.5 mm.

M 2. U6 courtyard, V-2. 1971. Pl. 175.

Hand-made barrel-shaped ceramic spindle whorl of greyish brown clay. The paste is dense and well-kneaded; uniformly fired. The surface is smoothed. A hole, 0.3 cm in diameter, runs right through the centre. Dimensions: D. 2.1 cm; H. 2.0 cm.

M 3. U6 courtyard, V-4. 1973. Pl. 175.

Ceramic spindle whorl of truncated bi-conical shape; made by hand from clay that assumed a greyish black colour on firing. The surface is smoothed. The paste is friable and tempered with finely ground sea-shells; poorly fired. The item is fragmented, the lower part having flaked off. Dimensions: D. of central hole 5.0 cm; maximum D. 6.9 cm; H. 4.0 cm.

M 4. U6 courtyard, V-4. 1973. Pl. 175.

Flat, disc-shaped ceramic spindle whorl; made by hand of poorly kneaded paste tempered with sea sand and pounded lime. On firing the colour became greyish black; judging by its imperfect hardness the article was poorly and irregularly fired. Dimensions: D. of central hole *c.* 0.5 cm; maximum D. 4.8 cm; thickness 1.2 cm.

As noted above, some of the spindle whorls were fashioned from fragments of ceramic vessels that were broken or had otherwise become unfit for use (**M 5-10**). Of those, four were made from black-glazed kantharoi feet,¹ and one (**M 11**) from the foot of a Chian amphora;² another (**M 12**) was made from the wall of a grey-ware jug.

M 5. U6 room 13. Find list 8/39. 1971. Pls. 63, 71 and 175.

Ceramic spindle whorl made from the foot of a black-glazed kantharos. The fracture surface (at the top) smoothed down. Dimensions: D. of central hole 0.5 cm; maximum D. 4.4 cm; H. 2.5 cm. *Cf. B 31.*

M 6. U6 room 22. Find list 6/10. 1972. Pls. 63, 71 and 175.

Ceramic spindle whorl made from the foot of a black-glazed kantharos. The fracture surface (at the top) rubbed down and smoothed with an abrader. Dimensions: D. of central hole 0.6 cm; maximum D. 4.0 cm; H. 2.4 cm. *Cf. B 67 and H 24.*

M 7. U6 courtyard, B-6. Find list 16/105. 1972. Pl. 175.

Ceramic spindle whorl made from the foot of a black-glazed kantharos. The fracture surface (at the top) neatly smoothed with an abrader. Dimensions: D. of central hole 0.6 cm; maximum D. 4.0 cm; H. 2.4 cm. *Cf. B 86.*

M 8. U6 courtyard, B-6. 1971. Pl. 175.

Ceramic spindle whorl made from the foot of a black-glazed kantharos. The fracture surface (at the top) neatly smoothed with an abrader. Dimensions: D. of central hole 0.6 cm; maximum D. 4.0 cm; H. 2.7 cm. *Cf. B 83.*

M 9. U6 courtyard, D-2. 1973. Pl. 175.

Ceramic spindle whorl made from a Chian amphora foot. The fracture surfaces neatly smoothed with an abrader. Dimensions: D. of central hole 0.6 cm; maximum D. 4.3 cm; H. 2.9 cm.

grey-ware jug. The fragment was neatly chipped and smoothed round its edge to make it circular. Dimensions: D. of central hole 0.6 cm; maximum D. 3.5 cm; thickness 0.5 cm. Parallel and perpendicular grooves for some undefined purpose were scratched on both upper and lower surfaces of the disc.

M 10. U6 square A-1. Find list 17/112. 1972. Pl. 175.

Disc-shaped ceramic spindle whorl made from the wall of a

A special group of finds comprises pyramidal ceramic weights. There is no generally accepted idea concerning the function of objects of this type. Some scholars regard them as sinkers for fishing-nets, while not ruling out their use for other purposes;³ others consider them to be children's toys, supports used for cooking, components of cow-bells, objects connected with the fire-cult, or supports for spooling threads.⁴ However, their main use was undoubtedly in weaving where they served as weights for tensioning the warp-threads of upright looms. The close link between weaving and domestic activities means of course that these weights formed an item of household equipment most commonly associated with the women of the house.⁵

At the same time, a considerable number of household articles of this kind were offered as votive gifts by their owners.⁶ Imitations of such things as loomweights, it may be said, were presented to sanctuaries by the poorest members of the population, who lacked the means to buy expensive votive vessels.⁷

It seems highly probable that it is precisely in such a cultic context that the finds of pyramidal weights from the excavation of building U6 should be regarded. There are sufficiently good reasons for such a supposition. First and foremost, we must take into account exactly where these finds came to light: the majority were found in the western corner of the building; or, more precisely, four examples were found in *room 13*; and one in the neighbouring *room 17*; both *rooms 13* and *17*, it will be recalled, are situated close to the sanctuary and indeed seem to have been directly connected with it. Only one other, badly fragmented example, was found, and that was in the centre of the courtyard.

A second point in favour of a cultic, rather than a practical, use is that all the weights that make up our set differ in size, and accordingly in mass, thus any attempt to use them for uniform tensioning of the warp-threads of a loom would have been problematical (to say the least) and would certainly have resulted in a poor-quality cloth. And there is yet another reason why their use for tensioning threads was hardly possible or perhaps even completely impossible – they were all made from extremely poorly kneaded paste tempered with a large quantity of sea sand, and so imperfectly hardened that we cannot even be sure that the firing was carried out in kilns, rather than just by chance during some incidental fire; one thing that is certain, however, is that these items easily crumble to pieces. Finally, the fact that only seven of these small pyramidal weights have been found within the U6 area cannot be disregarded, since so small a number would hardly have sufficed for tensioning cloth.

All these points taken together would therefore suggest that the weights were never originally intended for any practical purpose, but were made as votive models imitating the corresponding household article.

M 11. U6 courtyard, V-4. 1973. Pl. 175.

Fragmented ceramic pyramidal weight made of porous greyish brown clay tempered with sea sand and crushed stone. The sides are smoothed; the upper part is not preserved. H. 4.4 cm. The break occurred at the point where

the weight was traversed by a hole 0.4 cm in diameter.

M 12. U6 room 17. Find list 15/30. 1972. Pl. 175.

Ceramic pyramidal weight made of coarse poorly kneaded paste tempered with sea sand and pounded limestone; ir-

regularly and inadequately fired. Dimensions: H. 7.8 cm; base 5.4 x 5.6 cm; flat top 2.3 x 2.3 cm. The upper part of the weight is traversed by a hole 0.6 cm in diameter.

M 13. U6 room 13. Find list 8/52. 1972. Pl. 175.

Ceramic pyramidal weight made of non-homogeneous poorly kneaded paste tempered with sea sand and pounded limestone; irregularly fired; dirty grey in colour. Dimensions: H. 5.7 cm; base 3.0 x 3.4 cm; flat top 2.0 x 2.3 cm. The upper part of the weight is traversed by an oval hole 0.6 cm in diameter.

M 14. U6 room 13. Find list 8/52. 1971. Pl. 175.

Ceramic pyramidal weight made of non-homogeneous friable paste tempered with sea sand and pounded sea-shells; irregularly fired; greyish black in colour. The sides are smoothed. Dimensions: H. 5.8 cm; preserved W. of base 3.0 cm; flat top 1.8 x 2.1 cm. The upper part of the weight is traversed by an oval hole 0.3 cm in diameter.

M 15. U6 room 13. Find list 8/52. 1971. Pl. 175.

Ceramic pyramidal weight made of non-homogeneous friable paste tempered with pounded limestone, sea-shells, and sand; irregularly fired; greyish black in colour. Dimensions: H. 7.0 cm; base 4.7 x 4.7 cm; flat top 3.5 x 3.5 cm. The upper part of the weight is traversed by an oval hole 0.5 cm in diameter.

M 16. U6 room 13. Find list 8/52. 1971. Pl. 175.

Pyramid weight made of friable clay tempered with pounded limestone, sea-shells, and sand; inadequately fired; greyish black in colour. Dimensions: H. 6.9 cm; base 4.0 x 4.4 cm; flat top 3.5 x 3.5 cm. The upper part of the weight is traversed by a hole 0.8 cm in diameter.

M 17. U6. 1971. Pl. 175.

Fragmented pyramidal weight made of dense greyish brown clay tempered with pounded limestone and sand; regularly and finely fired. Only the lower part of the weight is preserved. Dimensions: preserved H. 5.0 cm; base 5.1 x 5.2 cm.

The spindle whorls found during the excavation point to the existence of home industry, in particular wool-working and the weaving of cloth, by the inhabitants of the settlement. Another series of objects forming part of our collection indicates that there was also a fishery here, for the flat ceramic discs with holes near their edges could only have been used as sinkers for fishing nets. The use of stones and fragments of amphora walls for making the bottoms of nets heavier (and therefore easier to set) was quite common; however, during the excavation of the farmhouse only one such improvised sinker was discovered (**M 18**), while of the specially made disc-shaped weights with holes near the edge for fixing them to the net there were three examples found. All three (two complete and one fragmented) were made of dense, well-kneaded paste tempered with fine admixtures, and had been well and uniformly fired. The holes for fixing the weights to the net were not drilled after firing but made in the raw clay.

M 18. U6 room 12. Find list 6/43. 1971. Pl. 175.

Fishing-net sinker made from an amphora wall from some unidentified centre in the Mediterranean area. The clay is brownish red with inclusions of mica. The broken edges of the fragment were shaped to form a disc and smoothed with an abradant; a hole 0.5 cm in diameter was drilled near the edge. D. of sinker 5.8 cm.

M 19. U6 courtyard, E-6. Find list 17/111. 1972. Pl. 175.

Disc-shaped ceramic net-weight made of dense red-orange clay with fine lime inclusions, very similar to certain Chersonesean types in its composition. Near the edge there is a hole 0.3 cm in diameter. D. of weight 6.7 cm; thickness 1.5 cm.

M 20. U6 room 7. 1969. Pl. 175.

Disc-shaped ceramic net-weight made of dense red-orange clay with fine lime inclusions, similar to certain Chersonesean types in its composition. Near the edge there is a hole 0.6 cm in diameter. D. of disc 5.3 cm; thickness 1.4 cm.

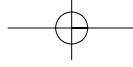
M 21. U6 courtyard, E-6. 1972. Pl. 175.

Disc-shaped ceramic net-weight of dense brown clay with fine inclusions of sand and pounded sea-shells. The surface of the weight is neatly smoothed. D. of weight 6.5 cm; thickness 1.7 cm; D. of hole 0.7 cm.

M 22. U6 room 13. Find list 8/51. 1971. Pls. 149 and 175.

Ceramic imitation of a hen's egg; hand-modelled from brick-red clay. The surface is neatly smoothed. L. 4.5 cm; maximum D. 3.3 cm. Cf. also **G 20**.

Judging by the fact that both the imitation hen's egg and one of the weights were found in rooms 13 and 12, respectively *i.e.* the sanctuary and a room directly connected with it, it is quite possible that both objects (**M 18** and **M 22**) were actually votives.



NOTES

1. On the dating of the kantharoi, see section II B.
2. The original amphora was of the Chian straight-necked type. *Cf.* Brašinskij 1984, pl. X, 3-5.
3. Onajko 1956, 155.
4. For details, *cf.* Gajdukevič 1952, 397-98.
5. Gajdukevič 1952a, 410.
6. Gajdukevič 1952a, 401.
7. Solomonik 1994, 144.

