

BONE ARTEFACTS FROM THE EXPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESERVE “OLBIA” MUSEUM

In the article, a collection of bone and antler artefacts that had been displayed at the National Historical and Archaeological Reserve “Olbia” Museum until 2022 are discussed¹. The collection includes materials excavated from the territory of Olbia starting from 1946 and encompasses a diverse range of artefacts categories, such as spindle whorls, handles for metal tools, musical instruments, jewellery and components of horse harness, etc.

Key words: Olbia Pontica, National Historical and Archaeological Reserve “Olbia”, bone craft, antler craft.

Introduction

The National Historical and Archaeological Reserve “Olbia” stands as the custodian of the largest collection of artefacts discovered during archaeological excavations in Olbia and its vicinity. The majority of these items are safely stored within the reserve’s repository, while a few are exhibited in two small museums. The first museum primarily showcases a lapidarium collection, while the second encompasses all other categories of discoveries, including artefacts crafted from bone, horn, and antler. In total, there were 18 bone and antler artefacts on permanent exhibition, with an additional 16 featured in temporary displays. Currently, both exhibitions have been disassembled and relocated to a secure site due to the full-scale military invasion by the Russian Federation, mak-

ing their publication more pertinent than ever. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that this collection will not suffer from the war.

The formation of the described collection likely took place after the end of World War II, with the earliest and most numerous artefacts in the permanent exhibition dating back to the years immediately after the war. Out of the 18 units, 9 are related to excavations from 1946—1947, while 7 only have museum catalogue numbers or lack provenance at all.

Over the course of many years of research, a significant number of artefacts, primarily of exhibition value, were transferred to larger museums. Initially, this was due to the absence of storage facilities, and later due to the limited exhibition space of the museum (Шевченко 2017, с. 266-267). Nevertheless, the museum’s collection includes a wide variety of items, encompassing the principal categories of bone artefacts found in Olbia. Some of the artefacts, originating from specific sites, are dated contextually. Analogies from contemporaneous sites were used to determine the age of others. The latter dating method often presents challenges, because some artefacts did not undergo significant changes in form over an extended period.

Artefact description

Amulets are artefacts with a rich history and widespread use across various cultures. Traditionally, amulets were believed to bring good fortune and protect against potential negative influences, such as the “evil eye” and misfortune (MacGregor 1985, p. 105). The earliest amulets were crafted from natural materials like shells, animal claws, and bird talons, and typically underwent minimal modification, usually involving the addition of a suspension hole. The practice of creating and us-

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ing such amulets dates to the Palaeolithic era and continued to be relevant during later periods, including the Greek-Roman era.

Within the museum's collection, two such artefacts are preserved, but unfortunately, the origins of both remain unknown. The first one (fig. 1: 1) is a 5.5×1.0 cm canine with a 0.4 cm diameter hole, identified by Yevheniia Yanish² as the canine of a young leopard. According to her assessment, the second amulet (fig. 1: 2) was crafted from the talon of a raptor, possibly a golden eagle or a white-tailed eagle. It also features a circular hole with a diameter of 0.3 cm, and the talon itself measures 4.0×1.1 cm.

In addition, bone-carved **pendants** were used as amulets, including the ribbed artefact (fig. 1:3) from the museum's collection. The item is a 6.2 cm long cylindrical rod with a diameter of 1 cm. On one side, it has a 0.4 cm diameter suspension hole, and on the opposite side, three bands of molding. The surface near the hole is damaged and there are signs of being worn-out, likely from the attachment of a cord. This artefact was discovered in sector "A", unit no. 125. While we have not identified direct parallels, we posit that the item can be categorised as a rod pendant, or so-called 'truncheon pendants' discovered at archaeological sites in Greece, such as the Heraion sanctuary on the Perachora Peninsula (Stubbings 1940, p. 443), which is dated to the 7th—6th centuries BC. Or significantly later in time, but similar in morphology, such pendants are known as the "Hercules club" (Bíró et al. 2012, p. 78) common during Roman times. These artefacts typically featured ribbed sections near the hole, although variations exist. For instance, a ribbed pendant preserved in the British Museum (no.1864,1007.627)³ can be traced back to the 6th century BC and originates from the acropolis of Kamiros on Rhodes. Like the Olbian example, these artefacts can be grouped as rod pendants due to their similar form and functional purpose.

Among the exhibits, there are various **inlay fragments and decorative plaques**, which likely adorned furniture such as beds or chairs, as well as chests and boxes. This includes a fragment of a figured plaque, broken on both sides, with inv. no. 97 (fig. 1: 4), in the form of a repetitive wave pat-

tern. The preserved length of the artefact is 3 cm, the height is 1.4 cm, and the thickness is 0.3 cm. Its surface is polished on one side, and there are numerous small scratches visible on it. A similar inlay fragment from Olbia is stored in the National Museum of the History of Ukraine (Мезенцева 2001, с. 87), and analogies to it are known at other sites in the Northern Black Sea region, such as Nikonion (Секерська, Шевченко 2021, с. 31), as well as at the territory of Greece, for example, in Delos (Bruneau 1970, p. 232).

Here, we can include a heavily damaged flat plaque (fig.1: 5) made of horn, measuring 4.6×3.5 cm, with the greatest thickness of 0.5 cm. Its surface is porous and unpolished, possibly indicating that it was broken during the semi-finished stage. The discovery location is section "E", premise "E." While exact analogies are unknown to us, similar plaques of various shapes have been found on the territory of Olbia, both in the city with dated to the 4th—3rd centuries BC (Наливкина 1940, с. 189) and on the necropolis (Папанова 2006, с. 177).

Resembling these artefacts in appearance, there is also a flat spiral plaque with a perforation (fig. 1:6). It measures 3.7×3.1 cm with a thickness of 0.4 cm. Its surface is smoothed, though not meticulously polished, exhibiting a somewhat porous texture. Notably, no distinct abrasions are observable on the surface, prompting speculation that this plaque may have functioned as a pendant rather than an inlay fragment. The artefact was recovered from sector "A", precisely within units nos. 122—123, located inside the premises.

A fragment of a semi-cylindrical artefact adorned with a meander-like motif (fig. 1: 7) measures 2.2 cm in length, 1.4 cm in width, and 1.1 cm in height. This fragment originates from sector "E", unit no. 80, situated within the confines of premise "D." Analogous specimens have been discovered in a Scythian burial mound known as Blyzniuk 2, dated to the 5th century BC (Ромашко, Скорий 2009, с. 58).

Within this group, we can also include an ornamented plaque of antler (fig.1: 8) originating from sector R-25 during the excavation of floor level no. 925 in a building dated from the end of the 5th to the end of the 4th centuries BC (Крапивина, Буйських 1999, с. 65). This is a slightly curved rectangular plaque, broken on one side, with dimensions of 10.2 cm in length, 1.8 cm in width and 0.3 cm in thickness. There is a slightly damaged hole, approximately 0.5 cm in diam-

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³ https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1864-1007-627 Date of access: November 9, 2023.



Fig. 1. Bone products. 1–2 — amulets; 3 — pendant-rod (inv. no. O-47/1255); 4 — inlays and decorative plaques (inv. no. 97); 5 — inv. no. O-99/T-3/307; 6 — inv. no. O-47/5329; 7 — inv. no. O-47/3560; 8 — inv. no. O-47/874; 9 — inv. no. O-98/R-25/1956



Fig. 2. Bone products. 1—2 — spindles; bobbins: 3—4 (inv. no. O-93/R-25/1872 and inv. no. O-2004/R-25/1020); 5 — processed epiphysis (inv. no. O-49/46)

eter, presented at the preserved end, possibly for attachment purposes. The front side of the plaque has a polished surface adorned with a meander pattern, whereas the reverse side remains unpolished, but one can discern a few incised lines. Similar lines are often found on one side of inlaid plaques, suggesting that they were likely applied to the reverse side of the artefact to enhance its adhesion to the surface, possibly using some adhesive substance. Another plausible functional purpose for this plaque could have been personal adornment, like a bracelet, as implied by its curved shape, with the round hole at the end possibly serving to fasten both ends of the ornament. Undoubtedly, such an artefact

would have been an elegant yet delicate piece of adornment. However, its use as an inlay for furniture seems more likely. Nevertheless, until compelling evidence is found, making any definitive claims regarding its purpose remains uncertain.

The attention is also drawn to a fragment, turned on a lathe and fashioned from tubular bone material (fig. 1: 9). Presumably, it constituted a part of the decorative ensemble. This piece is distinguished by its remarkable craftsmanship in the execution of the ornamentation, which is decorated with repeating facets and moulding decorated with parallel incised lines. This artefact was unearthed on the sector T-4, basement no. 4 of a Hellenis-

tic-era structure, albeit the material found in this context had undergone partial mixing (Назарчук 1999).

In the museum's collection, there are also two **spindles**, unfortunately lacking provenance. The first one (fig. 2: 1) is a broken spindle stem measuring 12 cm in length with a maximum diameter of 0.5 cm. At the surviving end, there is a flattened hemisphere that is affixed to a baluster, and below this point, there is a cylindrical shaft with a slight widening towards the broken edge. Near the beginning of the shaft, two parallel incised lines serve as ornamentation, although they do not encircle it completely. The entire artefact's surface has been polished to a high sheen. This spindle closely resembles the upper portion of a complex of whorls from Olbia, dated to the 4th century BC (Петреп 1986, с. 58). Nevertheless, similar items are also found in Roman contexts, where they are attributed to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Béal, 1983, p. 152).

The second specimen also belongs to a composite spindle, preserving two probable structural elements (fig. 2: 2), although they currently appear as a monolithic object, likely a result of restoration. It measures a total length of 15 cm. The artefact consists of a damaged and partially broken spindle shaft on one end, which connects to a larger, convex shaft with a diameter of 1.1 cm. The surface of the latter is adorned with three groups of incised lines: one on each side of the shaft and one down the centre. Each group comprises six double lines. At the end opposite to the broken part, the shaft terminates in a drop-shaped finial, also damaged. Overall, the entire surface of the artefact shows significant damage.

Within the territory of Olbia and its chora, various plaques of diverse configurations have been found, which are commonly regarded as **bobbins** used for winding threads. The first bobbin (fig. 2: 3) is a trapezoid-shaped plaque, measuring 4.0 × 3.2 cm, with a thickness of 0.4 cm. Its two opposite edges are crafted with a smooth curve featuring a central indentation. Its surface has been polished, though not entirely, leaving traces of bone structure on one side, confirming it was crafted from tubular bone material. The surface also displays numerous scratches. It was discovered on sector R-25, within a pit no. 707 dating to the last quarter of the 5th century BC (Крапивина, Буйських 1994, с. 72).

The second bobbin (fig. 2: 4) resembles the previous one, but has a simpler trapezoid shape, mea-

suring 4.0 × 3.6 cm with a thickness of 0.5 cm. The edges of the plaque are rounded, and there is a recess in the centre between two opposite edges made with triangular incisions. The circumstances of its discovery (sector R-25, pit no. 1294) do not provide sufficient context for dating based on associated materials. However, its resemblance to the previously described object and other similar finds (Козыб 1974, с. 115) allow the dating within the 5th—4th centuries BC.

Processed head of a cow's femur (epiphysis) (fig. 2: 5) with a diameter of 4.1 cm and a height of 1.6 cm, with a drilled hole in the centre with a diameter of 0.5 cm. The surface of the head is decorated with an incised ring and dot motif, totaling 19 circles with a diameter of 0.4 cm. Some of them are executed carelessly, so the outer circle is barely outlined. This is a random find. Its purpose is not entirely clear, perhaps it is a spindle whorl, similar to the interpretation of an artefact from Nikonion dated to the last quarter of the 5th century BC (Секерська, Шевченко 2021, с. 19).

Handles. In the museum's exhibition, handles constitute the largest group of bone artefacts. Most often, they are identified as knife handles, but in most cases, the blades are not preserved, so this cannot be stated definitively. The handles themselves vary in terms of craftsmanship, size, the method of attaching the working tool, and construction. Based on the last criterion, two types are distinguished: solid handles, made from a single piece of material, and complex handles, constructed from two parts.

Among the solid handles, there is a fragment of a rectangular-shaped handle made of tubular bone (fig. 3: 1). The knife blade or other working tool is entirely lost, and the point of attachment to the handle is partially damaged. However, from the preserved fragment, we can understand that the working tool was attached to the handle using a groove cut into the handle, and the partially preserved round hole indicates additional attachment with metal rivets. The handle's length is 12.6 cm, width 1.7 cm, thickness 0.8 cm; the surface is polished. It was found on sector "И", unit no. 321.

Another fragment of a handle (fig. 3: 2) with a rectangular shape and remnants of iron at the side where the working tool was attached is present in the collection. The blade was likely attached to the handle using a groove. The preserved length of the handle is 7 cm, width 1.5 cm and thickness 1.3 cm. The surface of the artefact is polished and covered

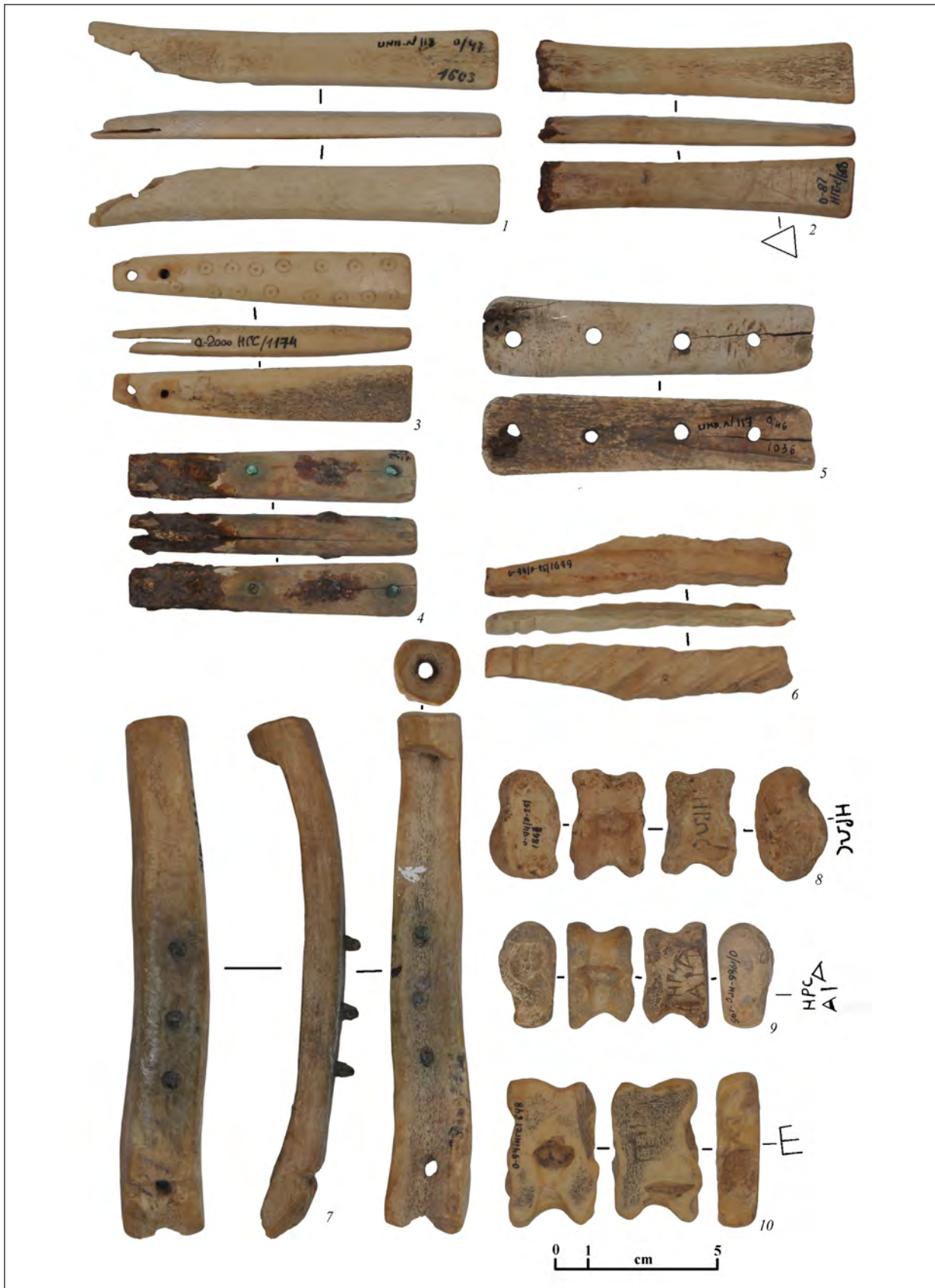


Fig. 3. Bone and antler products. Handles: 1–6 (inv. no. O-1947/1603, inv. no. O-87/NGS-S/688, inv. no. O-2000/NGS/1174, inv. no. O-57/2417, inv. no. O-46/1036 and inv. no. O-94/R-25/1699); antler item: 7 (inv. no. O-46/3368); astragali: 8–10 (inv. no. O-94/R-25/1861, inv. no. O-86/NGS/195 and inv. no. O-94/NGS/648)



Fig. 4. Bone and antler products. Bridle buckle: 1–2 (inv. no. O-1956/64 and inv. no. O/1954/1); bone ring: 3 (inv. no. O-46/1478); bone disc: 4 (inv. no. 107); aulos: 5 (inv. no. O-99/T-3/19); pin: 6 (inv. no. 120); pyxis body: 7 (inv. no. 98); pyxis lid: 8 (inv. no. O-61/?); spoon: 9 (inv. no. O-2011/R-25/349); production defect: 10 (inv. no. O-47/42)

with scratches, and on one of the sides, closer to the end, there is a scratched triangle. It was found on sector “HГC-C”, unit no. 379, premise no. 119.

Handles like these are often further adorned with the circle and dot motif. For example, a solid and partially damaged trapezoidal-shaped handle (fig. 3: 3) with a length of 9.8 cm, a maximum width of 1.8 cm and a maximum thickness of 0.9 cm. The handle’s surface is well-polished and decorated on one side with two rows of 16 circles, each with a diameter ranging from 0.4 to 0.5 cm. On the side where there is no decoration, the internal bone structure is visible. The working tool was likely attached using a groove and two round holes with a diameter of 0.3 cm. It was found on “HГC” sector, unit no. 262.

Another type of handle (see fig. 3: 4) features a different construction compared to the previous ones. It consists of two parts that clamp the working tool between them, fastened to it with five rivets. Two of these rivets have a green colour, while three have a brown colour, indicating oxidised iron, and the handle itself is heavily soiled with these oxides. Its length is 8.5 cm, width 1.5 cm and thickness 1.2 cm.

Within this group, there is also a component of a complex handle (fig. 3: 5) made of tubular bone. It has a length of 10.1 cm and a width of 2.3 cm. This piece is significantly wider and thicker than other specimens in the collection, and it is coarser in craftsmanship. It is secured with four holes with a diameter of 0.5 cm, and the external surface is polished, but shows numerous scratches. It was found on “HГ” sector, unit no. 64-east.

The interpretation of the handle (fig. 3: 6) can also be extended to a fragment from sector R-25. It is made of tubular bone, as indicated by the remnants of the medullary canal. Unfortunately, the preserved fragment, measuring 9.5 cm in length, with a maximum width of 1.6 cm and a thickness of 0.5 cm, does not allow the reconstruction of the artefact’s shape and construction. Most of the piece is covered with spiralling grooves, and part of the edge of the piece is partially preserved and decorated with two rollers.

Antler artefact (fig. 2: 7) is an elongated, slightly curved object, measuring 15.4 cm in length and a maximum width of 2.3 cm. One side of it is polished, likely the exterior, while the other side remains unprocessed. One end is decorated as a sleeve with a thickness of 2 cm, and the other part of the object is flattened and has a maximum thickness of 1.4 cm. There is a small trans-

verse depression of 2 cm from the opposite end, at the centre of which there is a hole. At a distance of 2.7 cm, another hole is located, with a preserved metal rivet (?) extending 5 mm beyond the surface of the item. Another hole with a rivet is located 2 cm further, and the third — at the same interval. There is no exact answer to what this object is, but it is likely a tool, with the working part attached on the sleeve. It was found on sector “HГ”, unit no. 65-east.

Astragali are common finds at Classical archaeological sites, often used for games and possibly associated with magical significance. In the museum’s collection, there are several specimens with inscriptions on them. The first one (fig. 2: 8) is a processed talus bone of a sheep, where the processing involved minimal trimming of two anatomical sides and a scratched inscription of six Greek letters: “HPC AIA.” It was found on sector “HГC”, unit no. 78. The second astragalus (fig. 2: 9) is also made of a sheep’s talus bone, with slight processing on one side, and an inscription of four Greek letters: “HPQC.” It was found on the R-25 sector area. The third astragalus (fig. 2: 10) has been processed on both sides to a flat state and is made of the talus bone of a cow. On one side, there is a scratched drawing on which the Greek letter “E” can be identified. It was found on the “HГC” sector area, premise no. 410, and is dated by the Hellenistic period, no later than the 2nd century BC (Лейпунская, Самойлова 1995).

Among the exhibits, there is a typical detail of horse equipment typical for the Scythian culture, which is a **bridle buckle** (see fig. 4: 1) from the sector “E-3”, pit no. 70. This is a small object, measuring 2 cm in height, in the shape of a cube with two perpendicular holes and a round shield with a diameter of 3.6 cm. One of the holes is partially damaged, possibly from usage, as similar artefacts were used to secure the intersection of reins. Findings of such items have already been recorded in Olbia, including a late Archaic buckle-pin from the sector “E” (Капошина 1958, с. 111, табл. IV); more analogies are known from Scythian sites where they are dated to the late Scythian period (Могилов 2008, с. 71).

Clearly, the next artefact (fig. 4: 2) also belongs to this functional group, as indicated by the presence of two perpendicular holes and a relatively similar shape and size, with the height of 2.5 cm and a diameter of 3.3 cm. However, compared to the roughly made previous item, this one was crafted using a lathe, and the shield is adorned with

raised and incised concentric circles. In the centre, there is a prominent protrusion in the shape of a truncated cone with a central depression. This method of execution visually resembles the decoration of pyxides' lids. Unfortunately, being a chance find and lacking analogies, it does not allow even approximate dating.

The **bone ring** (fig. 4: 3) is a circular object with a diameter of 2.5 cm and a large hole with a diameter of 1.2 cm. One side is flattened and polished, while the other is slightly rounded and has traces of shaping on the surface that were not smoothed out. The artefact itself was also somewhat roughly made, with uneven edges and an irregular shape. Similar objects are quite common in Olbia, primarily known from inventory records and some separate publications (Наливкина 1940, с. 196; Кузьмищев 2014, с. 541). Similar artefacts have been found at other sites as well, for example, in Nikonion, dated from the late 5th to the early 4th centuries BC (Секерська, Шевченко 2021, с. 31). They are also known from materials in other Greek cities and sanctuaries, including the Heraion on the Perachora peninsula (Stubbings, 1940, p. 441), in Corinth, dated from the 5th to the 2nd centuries BC (Davidson, 1952, p. 296), in the Athenian Agora, dated to the 5th century BC (Thompson 1960, p. 237) and to the 6th—3rd centuries BC (Rotroff 2013, p. 137). Regarding their purpose, there are several opinions. Some have suggested that they might be spindle whorls (Наливкина 1940, с. 196), buttons for clothing (Davidson 1952, p. 296), or eyelets for footwear (Thompson 1960, p. 237).

In the collection, there is also a flat **bone disc** (fig. 4: 4) with a diameter of 3 cm and a hole in the centre measuring 0.6 cm in diameter and a width of 0.3 cm. The surface is smooth and undamaged. Its functional purpose has not been determined so far.

The next artefact is a wind musical instrument that consisted of several bone tubes called **aulos**. These instruments were incredibly popular in ancient Greece, as demonstrated by numerous depictions in vase painting (Backe-Dahmen 2010, p. 60) and archaeological findings (Stubbings 1940, p. 448). They also gained popularity in Roman times (Bíró 1994, p. 60). Our item (fig. 4:5) comes from the sector T-3, premise no. 4 of the Hellenistic period (Назарчук 1999). It has survived partially and was assembled from several fragments. It consists of two structural elements joined together. The first is the mouthpiece, which looks like a

tube with varying diameters. The narrowest part has a diameter of 1.2 cm and gradually widens to a maximum diameter of 1.9 cm, then tapers again towards the broken end. A small hole with a diameter of 0.3 cm is located on this part. The other side of the mouthpiece also slightly widens towards the end, and it is connected to another segment — a tube with a diameter of 1.4 cm, which connected the mouthpiece to the other parts of the aulos that have not survived.

The hairpin. The simplest bone pin without any decoration, with no preserved origin, is a smooth, well-polished object that gradually tapers to a sharp end (fig. 4: 6). It is 10.7 cm in length with a maximum diameter of 5 mm. Similar pins were very popular in Roman times (Bíró 1994, p. 30).

In the Greek-Roman world, various containers for storage were quite popular, including a specific type known as **pyxides**. These are round vessels with a removable lid made of various materials. In the 1st—2nd centuries AD, small bone pyxides made of tubular bones of large domestic animals became widespread. In the museum's exhibition, this category of artefacts is represented by the pyxis body fragment (fig. 4: 7), and we were unable to find any information about its origin. Its height is 6.7 cm; it is composed of three fragments, part of which is lost. The body itself has the shape of a truncated cone, with the bottom diameter measuring 3.6 cm and the top diameter — 2.8 cm. On the outer surface, at the upper edge of its base, there is a special protrusion or step for lid fixation, and on the inner side, at the lower edge, there is a notch for base fixation. The surface of the body is polished and decorated with three small ridges at the bottom edge. Furthermore, the surface had been damaged during the time spent in the ground. Such artefacts are examples of standardised Roman production and were commonly found wherever Roman cultural influence reached. On the territory of Ukraine, bone pyxides have been found not only in Olbia and other cities of the Northern Black Sea region (Пітерс 1986, с. 68-70), but also at sites of barbarian populations who eagerly imported Roman goods (Bârcă 2020).

This round lid is likely from a pyxis (fig. 4: 8). It is crafted using a lathe method from bone or antler. Currently, it is difficult to determine its because the lid itself is in poor condition: it is assembled from several fragments, part of them are lost, and its surface is damaged and dirty. The lid has a diameter of 4.5 cm, with a handle and a step

measuring 1.2 cm in thickness. The handle's height is 0.3 cm, and the step or protrusion's thickness is 0.3 cm. The step is a round projection on the back of the lid with a diameter of 3 cm, which was used to secure the lid to the pyxis. This artefact illustrates a different method of attachment from the previous type, where the step was only on the body of the pyxis. On the external side, the lid is decorated with incised circular depressions, and in the centre, there is a broken remnant of a decorative (?) handle.

Another example of standardised production were spoons, among which artefacts commonly identified in scientific literature as “cochlearia” are known from written ancient Roman sources (Marquardt 1879, с. 306). One such item is represented by a **spoon** (fig. 4: 9) found *in situ* on the sector R-25 during the excavation of the floor levels of a building of the 1st–2nd centuries AD (Крапивина, Буйських 2012, с. 39). This spoon is 12.2 cm long with a round bowl having a diameter of 2.6 cm, which is decorated on the inner side with two irregularly incised circles around a slightly recessed point in the centre. The upper edge is flattened, forming a distinct ridge. On the back of the bowl, a V-shaped projection connects the bowl to the handle. The handle is round in cross-section with pronounced edges, tapering and sharpening towards the end. Traces of shaping with a tool, such as a file, are noticeable on the surface. The condition is good, but the surface is somewhat damaged due to the time spent in the ground. This shape was quite common in Olbia (Наливкина 1940, с. 194-195).

The next exhibit, although not a finished product, is extremely interesting in the context of researching the development of bone processing in Olbia. It is essentially a production defect, specifically a bone blank that split during the turning process (fig. 4: 10). The size of the preserved fragment is 4.6 × 2.4 cm, with a width of 0.7 cm. Presumably, an ancient craftsman intended to carve a round disc, perhaps to make a lid for a pyxis, for example. Discoveries like this one allow for a more confident assertion about local production, not only of the simplest handmade tools, but also of

more complex specialised crafts. This is especially significant considering that, although a large number of products and manufacturing waste have been found on the territory of Olbia, the identification of a specialised workshop has not been successful so far. The only exception is a localised production area in the Western Temenos of Olbia, which clearly served the needs of the sanctuary (Semenova 2021).

Conclusion

The collection of bone and horn artefacts exhibited in the Museum of the National Historical and Archaeological Reserve “Olbia” of the NAS of Ukraine, despite its small size, serves as a significant source for studying various aspects of life among the population of Olbia during different periods of its existence. Among the exhibits are tools, accessories, musical instruments, jewellery, etc.

Analogies beyond the Northern Black Sea region indicate that despite the geographical distance, the population of Olbia had extensive connections with the Greek and later Roman worlds. This is particularly evident in the spread of mass-produced items typical for Roman craftsmanship, such as bone spoons, pyxides and pins. At the same time, it is worth noting the presence of a distinct local character in the collection, associated with interactions with non-Greek neighbours of Olbia.

Diverse in terms of both the level of craftsmanship and the techniques used, these artefacts demonstrate a range of professional skills. Some artefacts underwent minimal modification, preserving their natural morphology; for instance, pendants made of canine and talon. Some items did not require special skills, such as horn tools and handles for metal tools. The other part of the artefacts was crafted by artisans who possessed various advanced techniques. They employed more sophisticated tools in their work, such as a lathe.

Another noteworthy feature of the collection is the presence of a broken workpiece of a turned object, which was found in Olbia and may indirectly indicate the existence of a more complex specialised craft.

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КІСТЯНІ АРТЕФАКТИ З ЕКСПОЗИЦІЇ МУЗЕЮ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО ІСТОРИКО-АРХЕОЛОГІЧНОГО ЗАПОВІДНИКА «ОЛЬВІЯ»

У статті представлено аналіз збірки виробів з кістки та рогу, яка до 2022 року експонувалася в музеї Національного історико-археологічного заповідника «Ольвія». Загалом в постійній експозиції налічувалось 18 артефактів виготовлених з кістки та рогу, ще 16 експонувалися в межах тимчасової виставки. Зараз обидві ці експозиції розібрані та евакуйовані в безпечне місце у зв'язку з повномасштабним військовим вторгненням Російської Федерації, що робить їх публікацію як ніколи актуальною.

Формування аналізованої збірки відбувалось, ймовірно, по завершенню Другої світової війни; найбільш ранніми в експозиції і водночас найчисельнішими в постійній експозиції є артефакти віднайдені в роки перших повосенних сезонів (1946—1947 рр.) Постійна експозиція доповнювалася кілька разів, тому як і тимчасова виставка складається з матеріалів різних років розкопок.

Протягом багатолітніх досліджень велика кількість артефактів, пізніше переважно експозиційної цінності, передавалися в більші музеї. Спочатку це було пов'язано з відсутністю фондосховища, а згодом невеликою експозиційною площею музею. Незважаючи на це, колекція музею демонструє широкий асортимент, до якого входять основні категорії кістяних виробів, знайдених в Ольвії: веретена, накладки-інкрустації, прикраси, музичні інструменти, елементи спорядження коня тощо. Різноманітні вони також за рівнем професійності майстра і застосованими техніками. Є вироби, що майже не модифікувалися і зберігали свою природну морфологію: наприклад, підвіски з ікла та кігтя. Частина виробів не потребувала специфічних навичок, як то знаряддя з рогу та ручки для металевих знарядь, інша частина була виготовлена людьми, які майстерно володіли прийомами різьблення, використовували токарський верстат. У цьому контексті особливо важливою є заготовка точеного виробу, яка опосередковано свідчить про високий рівень майстрів, що працювали в Ольвії.

К л ю ч о в і с л о в а: Ольвія Понтійська, Національний історико-археологічний заповідник «Ольвія», обробка кістки, обробка рогу.

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