

## **“Sicilian Textile Tools from the Bronze Age: Comparative Studies and Technological Approach to Their Functionality”**

The aim of the project entitled "Sicilian weaving tools from the Bronze Age: Technological research and comparative studies Their functionality" is to gain knowledge about the tools and technology used in textile production in prehistoric Sicily of the Bronze Age, i.e. in the period from ca. 2 500 years BC to year ca. 900 BC. Its aim is also to trace changes that have occurred within this craft, especially in the time of intensified contacts with the people arriving on the island from the Aegean region (the areas of modern Greece and Greek Islands in the Aegean Sea) as a result of long-distance maritime trade exchange, which origins date back to the end of the 18th century BC and which ended with the decline of the Mycenaean civilization (ca. the year 1250 BC). The goals of the project will be achieved through the complete study of the (still unpublished and never studied before) archaeological materials stored in local museums on the Italian island. These artifacts, made mainly of clay, are the textile tools which were used in prehistoric Sicily to weave fabrics (loom-weights) or spin threads (spindle whorls). The proposed study will evaluate (e.g. by comparison with similar artifacts from the Aegean) if Sicilian textile technology differed from contemporary technologies known from the eastern Mediterranean, and if the contacts between these civilizations had any impact on the changes in technology and changes in the types of Sicilian textiles tools.

During the research, the Sicilian textile tools coming from early, middle and late Bronze Age will be thoroughly examined, documented and described in order to create a catalogue of this type of artifacts. All the gathered information will be stored in a special database that will be used to undertake further analyses on the prehistoric material (statistical, comparative, spatial, etc.) and classify the tools according to types. Clay copies of selected artifacts will be made, basing on the collected data, and with their help tests and weaving experiments will be conducted (threads and pieces of fabric will be manufactured).

Examination of clay textile tools (loom weights and spindle whorls) is, for now, the only way to obtain information about textile technology and the development in this craft in Bronze Age Sicily. It allows to acquire information about how the fabrics were manufactured and what were the subsequent stages of the process (from the preparation of threads to the parameters of obtained fabrics), about the loom types used in workshops, about the organization of work, etc. Although the findings of textile tools in Sicily are not rare, yet they have been never investigated before, while this category of artifacts coming from the Bronze Age Aegean is well known. Aegean influences in prehistoric Sicily have already been identified in architecture (both residential and funerary), as well as in pottery and small figural plastic (though fewer in number and less obvious). Research on textile tools will determine whether foreign influences had any impact on local textile technology and the basic set of tools.

The outcome of the project will fill the information gap and broaden the range of our knowledge by providing new information about the textile production within the Mediterranean Bronze Age and new data important for the Archeology of prehistoric Sicily, Aegean Archeology and Archeology of Ancient Textiles. It can also be ascribed to the trend of innovative research on textile tools, current in Poland and abroad, that includes methods of experimental archeology and of textile archeology.