The first two seasons of excavations at the Bahra 1 settlement site yielded quite a sizeable number of small objects made of locally available materials. However, the range of the types of these objects is rather narrow. Clay objects are most numerous, followed by shell beads and pendants, stone tools and chipped stone weapons. All these finds are characteristic of the material culture of the Ubaid period and have been encountered at sites from this period both in Mesopotamia and in the vicinity of Bahra 1, at H3. Despite the objects' popularity, the function of some is either completely unknown or very dubious.

Clay objects: personal ornaments or articles of daily use?

An interesting group of small finds consists of small clay objects, such as conical "pegs" and "flanged discs", either formed as flat cylinders or round shields with a short, cylindrical pivot, resembling small lids with handles. Some of them are made of the local Red Coarse Ware, but there are also pieces made of buff, finely levigated clay, neatly smoothed and well fired. This latter kind may have been imported from Mesopotamia. The question of these objects' function still remains unanswered. According to one interpretation, they are supposed to have been used as grinders, according to another – perhaps more plausible – they were body ornaments, used as so-called labrets, known from ethnographic observations, for the decoration of lips, ears, nostrils or cheeks.

Collection of conical "pegs" and "flanged discs"

The most numerous group, which includes 26 complete and 69 fragmentarily preserved objects, contains small rings shaped as truncated cones. They vary greatly in size, with diameters ranging from 0.80 to 4 cm and heights from 0.40 to 1.20 cm. A vast majority of the rings is made of local Red Coarse Ware, with its characteristic, poorly fired, reddish clay. The interpretation of these objects is also uncertain. Similar small, conical rings, abundant at other Ubaid sites, are identified as spindle whorls for weighing down a wooden spindle used in weaving. Spindle whorls act as fly-wheels adding momentum to a spinning spindle and at the same time they prevent the yarn from slipping off it. Yet, in the case of most of the truncated cone rings from Bahra 1 such an interpretation seems doubtful, for instance because of the perforations' conical, rather than cylindrical, sections and the wide differences in their diameters, as well as the small weight of most of the rings. Perhaps they should rather be considered ornaments of some kind, for example sewn onto garments or braided in the hair.

Collection of conical pottery rings

Pottery discs with a hole drilled in the middle are yet another type of small finds. They were made by chipping potsherds of well-fired ceramics of Mesopotamian origin. The uneven edges resulting from the chipping are clearly visible in some of them, yet in others they were carefully smoothed. What these discs were used for, is yet another mystery. They may have had a decorative function, like beads, but it is also possible that the larger discs with smoothed edges were used as spindle whorls. A single clay spindle whorl, shaped as a mushroom cap and decorated with narrow, rectangular impressions of a flat stick, was found over a stone pavement in one of the rooms of House 1. The green hue of its well-fired clay indicates that it may have been imported from Mesopotamia. Spindle whorls attest to weaving – a women's craft, as demonstrated by the finds of spindle whorls in women's graves across many cultures.

Collection of drilled ceramic discs

Ceramic "ice cream cone"

An interesting object – a small cup on a solid, conical stem, resembling an ice cream cone (also dubbed a "golf-tee") – was found in one of the rooms of House 1. It was made of Red Coarse Ware, which indicates its local manufacture. This type of artefact (sometimes decorated with painted stripes) is typical for Ubaid-period sites and has been found in Mesopotamia, e.g. in Ur in the south and Abada in the Hamrin region, as well as in the Gulf region, e.g. at the H3 site. The function of such objects is still a riddle.

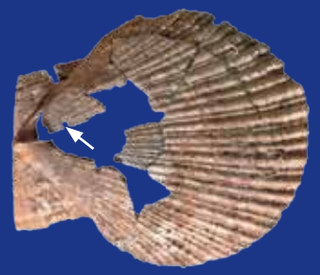
A decorated clay spindle whorl

Shell and stone artefacts

Collection of shell beads and sequins

Shells of sea mollusks, that were, for the greater part, collected for food, provided also a raw material for the production of various ornaments. Shells of such species as *Conomurex persicus* and bi-colored *Spondylus marisrubri* (spiny oyster) was most often used for this purpose along with the mother-of-pearl from *Pinctada margaritifera* inner shell layer. The shells were chipped, cut, polished and drilled through to obtain small and large ring beads, disc beads pierced with one hole, elongated barrel-shaped plaques with two holes or tubular beads. Also whole shells could be adapted as beads: they were perforated by rubbing, so that they could be strung and worn as a pendant or a bracelet.

Unfinished, or rather failed, tubular beads made up quite a numerous group (82 examples of different stages of production) which shows how difficult they were to make. They were made of trimmed sections of apex slices of *Conomurex persicus* shells. By analysing these waste products, we can recreate the different stages of these attractive beads' production: straightening the sides of shell fragments by grinding their surface (1); making the shorter sides of the bead smooth (2); drilling a hole through the long axis of the bead (3); further grinding of the bead to achieve a cylindrical shape (4); smoothing and polishing the final surface (5).



This eye-catching shell of the Pectinidae *family served as a pendant, as attested by a small hole drilled in its upper part*

Collection of ground stone tools

Among the stone objects from the Bahra 1 site, there is a large collection of natural stones, usually flat pebbles, with traces of usage, such as abraded or polished edges. They were used for grinding and polishing surfaces of, for instance, shell beads. Also larger stones, mainly of white quartz, were used as tools. They have chipped edges, which shows they must have served as hammers. Two small stones, naturally shaped as spheres, with diameters of 3.40 and 5.50 cm respectively were also picked up. Their function remains uncertain, yet they may have been bolas balls used for hunting. Similar natural stone balls of much smaller size (1.45 to 1.70 cm in diameter) found at the H3 site were tentatively interpreted as tokens by their discoverers.

Although many flakes and other flint and chert debitage were found in the fill of rooms of House 1 and on their floors, there is a surprising lack of discarded cores and a real paucity of chipped stone tools (despite all spoil being sieved). Among the rare finds was a quartz blade with very fine retouche along one side and two flint or chert bifacial arrow points retouched on both surfaces, one only tanged the other one barbed and tanged. These artefacts may have been of local production and their manner of execution would explain the large number of minute flakes among the finds. A beautiful c. 10 cm long, retouched blade is a different matter. As neither large flakes nor chips have been found so far at the site, this tool seems to have been imported, perhaps – as the luxury painted vessels – from Mesopotamia. A non-local origin is certain in the case of a small, just c. 2 cm long, obsidian chip.

Collection of chipped stone tools and weapons