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## AN EGYPTIAN AMULET FROM CIESZKÓW (LOWER SILESIA)

Discussions on the infrequent finds of Egyptian origin discovered in present-day Poland and her close neighbourhood or those preserved in Polish collections (Kolendo 1976; 1981; Śliwa 1976a; 1976b) have increased in recent years. In 1981, a new find was added to the insignificant number of Egyptian (or Egyptian-type) relics discovered in Poland or near by. It is a small figure found in a grave of a Lusatian culture cemetery at the township of Cieszków on the border of Silesia and Wielkopolska (voiv. Wrocław) This article is a contribution to these discussions.

The cemetery on which the figure was discovered, known since the 19th century, was gradually swallowed up by the spreading town. It was irregularly investigated (20 graves were dug up in 1928, 4 in 1955 and 1972). More extensive salvage works undertaken in 1973–1975 by the Wrocław Museum of Archaeology resulted in the discovery of 120 graves (Fig. 1). Research results have been published (Domańska 1973; Domańska, Gołubkow 1975; 1976; 1977; 1978; 1979). Further two graves were discovered in 1981, during farming works, in incidental pits by labourers employed at systematic excavation works. They prepared a sketch and handed over the contents of graves to D.Kosiński, an archaeologist, who made an inspection of the site. The graves, marked A and B, were 2 m apart.

Grave A was about 0.5 m below the surface. It was covered by a conical pavement-like formation of small stones. The diameter of the pavement was 0.6 to 0.7 m and the depth of the bottom of the grave about 0.9 metres from the surface. A layer of sand 0.15 to 0.20 m thick spread below the stones. After its removal, workers discovered four vessels (Fig. 2:1–4) and an assemblage of small sherds. There were two crushed vessels in a bowl (Fig. 2:1). The amulet (Fig. 3:1) and a melted bronze object (Fig. 3:2) — probably remains of a pin with a sectional head — were discovered among these sherds. The vessel (Fig. 2:4) contained burned bones of a 3–4

year old child (specification by Doctor J. Strzałko from A. Mickiewicz University, Poznań).

Grave B was also covered by a stone pavement. Burned bones of an 18–25 year old individual, probably female (after J.Strzałko), were found in a red painted vessel ornamented with notches (Fig. 4:2). The grave contained, moreover, sherds of seven pots (Fig. 4:1, 6, 9), a fragment of a clay plate (Fig. 4:8) and parts of a probably iron necklace (Fig. 4:7).

The cemetery can be dated from the Bronze Age V period (ca. 800–650 B.C.) to the Hallstatt D period (ca. 500–400 B.C.; after J. Kostrzewski's chronology; Domańska, Gołubkow 1979, 64).

Ceramics from grave A show a greater similarity to pottery discovered in graves of the Bronze Age V period (vessel morphology, a careless treatment of surfaces, medium and coarse admixture in clay). Grave B indicated a closer connection with the Hallstatt C period (ca. 650–500 B.C.).

The cemetery yielded, in addition to relics of a local character also objects of foreign origin or produced under foreign influence. They included a clay scoop, its ear tipped with a bird's head, acknowledged by researchers as an imitation of Etruscan bronze scoops. Beads from blue glass considered as imports from eastern Mediterranean regions have also been found there. There were amber beads, presumably brought from the North (Domańska, Gołubkow 1979, 53). We shall not discuss these relics here and devote our attention to the Egyptian amulet from grave A. It has been, so far, the only known in Poland Egyptian object of a defined origin and chronology, preceding finds made in this area, dated but to the Roman period.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The group of finds exhibiting Egyptian iconographic and stylistic features, discovered in Poland, included, besides deities such as Isis, Osiris, Horus, also 3 scarabs and 2 *ushebtī*. In most cases, the provenance of these relics is not quite certain, circumstan-

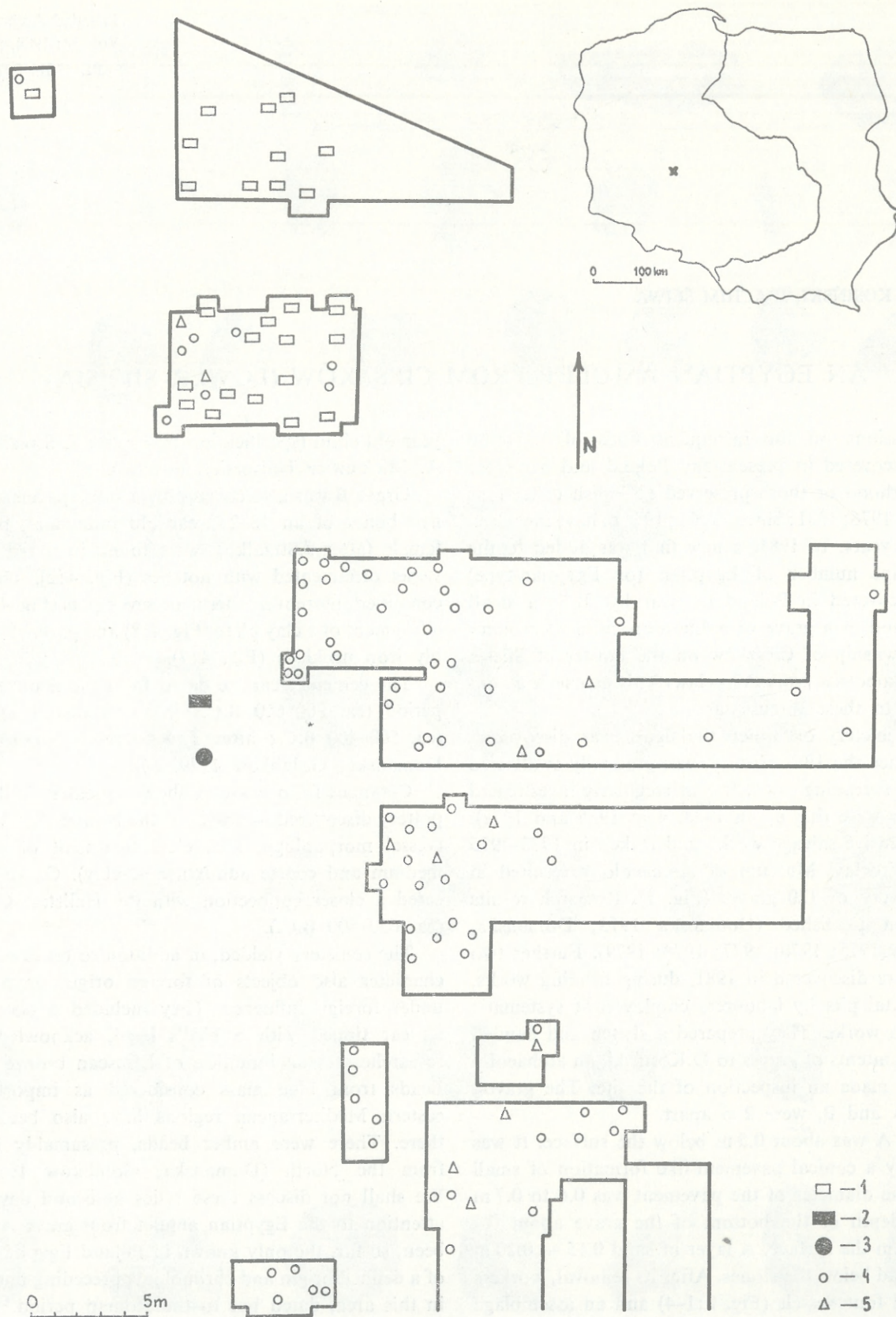


Fig. 1. Cieszków, voiv. Wrocław. Plan of the Lusatian culture cemetery

1 — graves from the V period of the Bronze Age, 2 — grave A, 3 — grave B, 4 — graves from the Hallstatt period, 5 — undetermined graves



The discussed figure, representing Ptah-*pataikos* and attending deities (Figs. 3 and 5), is modelled in so-called Egyptian faience.<sup>2</sup> Despite the broken off lower part, it is well preserved, essential elements and iconographic details are legible. The edge and surface of the fracture are well worn off, the frontal part is also effaced (the face of the god is almost obliterated); considerable losses and abrasions of the glazing occurred on the backside of the object. Remains of light-blue glazing are perceptible on the object's lateral edges and in depressions. The height of the preserved part of the amulet is 48.2 mm, it is 36 mm wide and 19.6 mm thick; the height of the missing part can be estimated at ca. 20–25 mm. The whole figure was, therefore, about 70–75 mm high.

The front part of the amulet shows a naked dwarf with a large head, a prominent belly and disproportionately short bow legs (broken off at the knees). The hands across the chest hold objects difficult to define, probably knives or snakes. The modelling of the face is obliterated, only the outline of the mouth and large

ces involving the discovery are sometimes known only from oral traditions. The lack of comprehensive data necessitates great caution as there may be so-called supposed imports (as was indicated by KOLENDO in relation to an assemblage of 7 bronze figures of Egyptian deities, 1976, 283–297; 1981, 63–80). Also the dating of objects lacking archaeological context represents most often an open, difficult to solve, problem. In principle, this may include only objects linked with the influence of the Roman Empire beyond the boundaries of limes. The subject of Egyptian figurines in Poland was also discussed by G. GRIMM (1969, cat. nos 164–170). A figure of Osiris (previously from T. Wolanski's collection, supposedly found on the Baltic coast (at present in Jagiellonian University collections ŚLIWA 1976 b, cat. no 18), should also be included in the category of supposed finds (cf. KOLENDO 1981, 77f.). The scarabs: from Zadowice, western Wielkopolska, voiv. Kalisz (ABRAMOWICZ 1957, 260–262; GRIMM 1969, cat. no. 171); from Sadzarzewice, Lower Silesia, voiv. Zielona Góra (JENTSCH 1897, 169f.); from Głbice, Lower Silesia, voiv. Zielona Góra. The *ushebt* from Solec, near Busko, Małopolska, voiv. Kielce (KONIK 1959), was supposedly found by F. Grodzki, an apothecary from Turobin, in a clay vessel filled with ashes. Another *ushebt* was found on the Warta river between Żerków and Nowe Miasto, Wielkopolska (formerly stored in the Regional Museum in Jarocin, now lost). An interesting object from Weklice, voiv. Elbląg (EBERT 1926, 85f., Pl. 40), should also be mentioned here; it is the neck of a bronze jug, very closely resembling the famous hydria from Egyed, Hungary (cf. WESSETZKY 1961, 42–45, Pl. VI–VIII) decorated with Egyptian scenes. For the kind information concerning the Weklice (Wöklitz) object we are very indebted to Prof. J. Kolendo, Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> The core of the so-called Egyptian faience was of a pure, pulverized quartz covered with thin variously coloured glazing. The moist, plastic quartz pulp was modelled in moulds and — following the covering with a glazing solution — baked in kilns. Depending on the chemical composition of the solution, which became hard glazing after baking, producers obtained red, black or yellow-brown "faience", but the most popular were blue and green objects of various hues and intensity. On the production of "Egyptian faience" see LUCAS 1962, 155–178; KÜHNE 1969, 11–26; RIEDERER 1978, 32f.

protruding ears remained legible. The head of the deity is covered by a flat, well preserved scarab with marked lines separating *prothorax*, a perceptible head and *clypeus*, *elytra* divided by a single line with two triangles impressed on their surfaces. Two falcons, close to the dwarf's head, rest on his left and right shoulders. A horizontal opening, to make a suspension of the amulet possible, was drilled through the back of his head.

At the higher edges of the object, below the falcons, are silhouettes of two standing goddesses (legs missing) with arms hanging downward. Considering the preserved elements of the head dress, the goddess on the left can be identified as Isis (the sun disk between cow-horns) and — on the right — Hathor (a characteristic capital-shaped element is recognizable on her head). A very flat relief of the standing Isis, as a guardian deity (preserved up to her knees) with arms downwards, joined with wings, is represented at the back of the amulet on its rectangled face narrowed in its upper part with deep indentations (facilitating the perforation of an opening for suspension). The goddess holds *m3't* feathers in her hands, the sun disk between horns adorns her head.

It is easy to reconstruct the missing parts of the Cieszków find on the basis of analogous amulets: the figure of a dwarfish deity resting on two crocodiles lying on a relatively low, rectangular base. The lower surface of

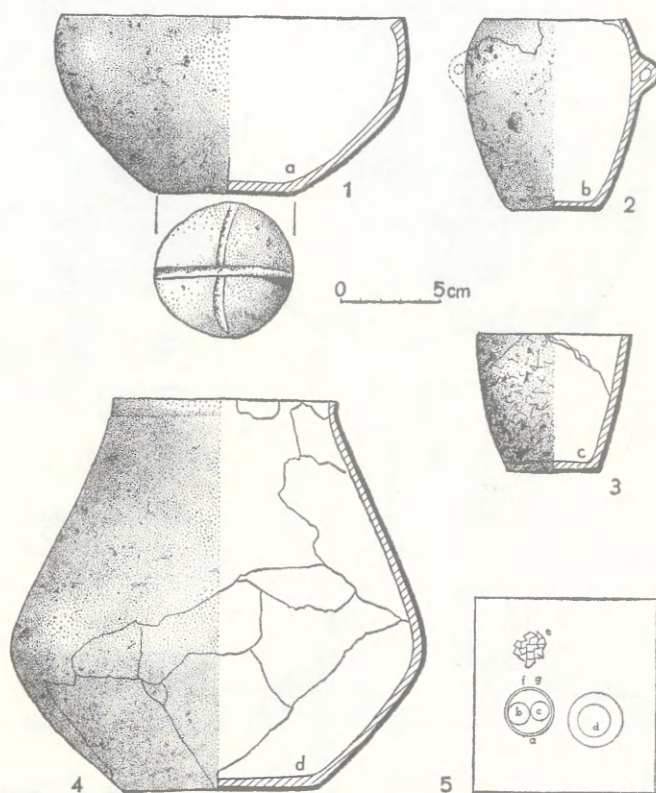


Fig. 2. Cieszków, grave A

1–4 — ceramics, 5 — plan



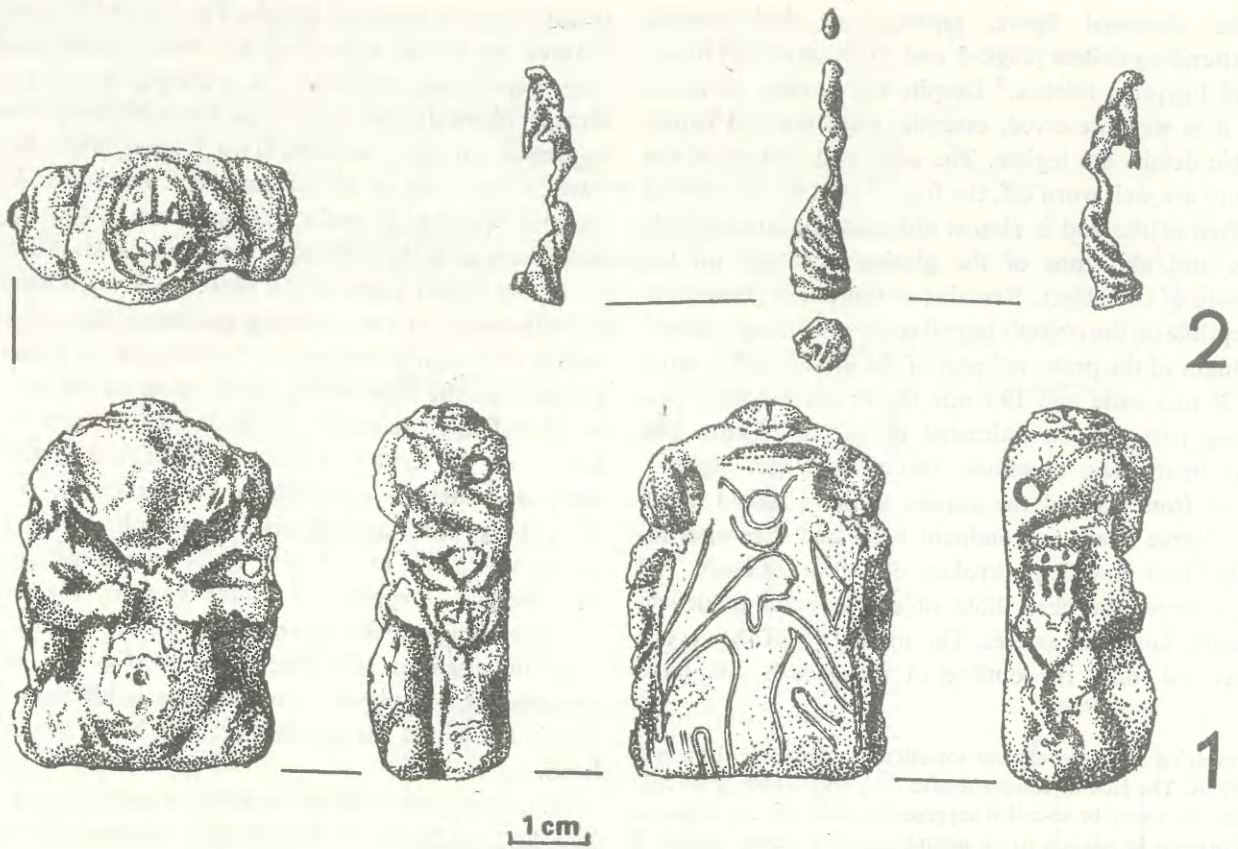


Fig. 3. Cieszków, grave A

1 — amulet, 2 — fragment of a bronze object

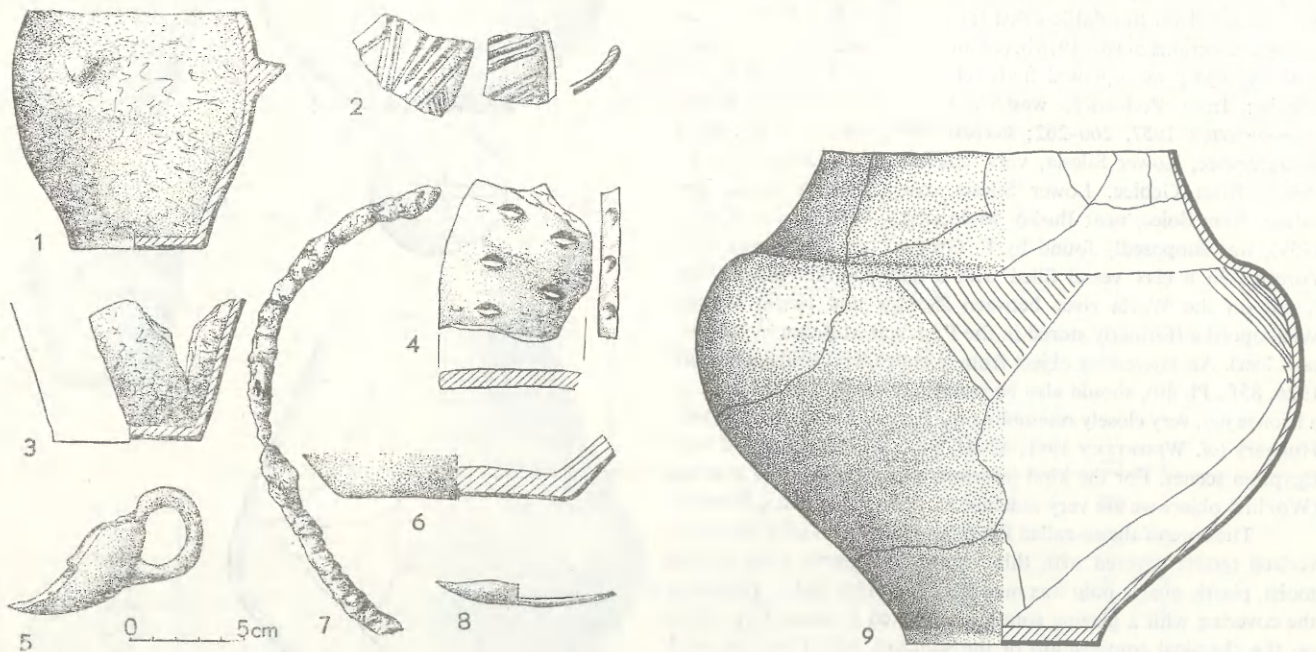


Fig. 4. Cieszków, grave B

1-6, 8, 9 — ceramics, 7 — fragment of an iron necklace

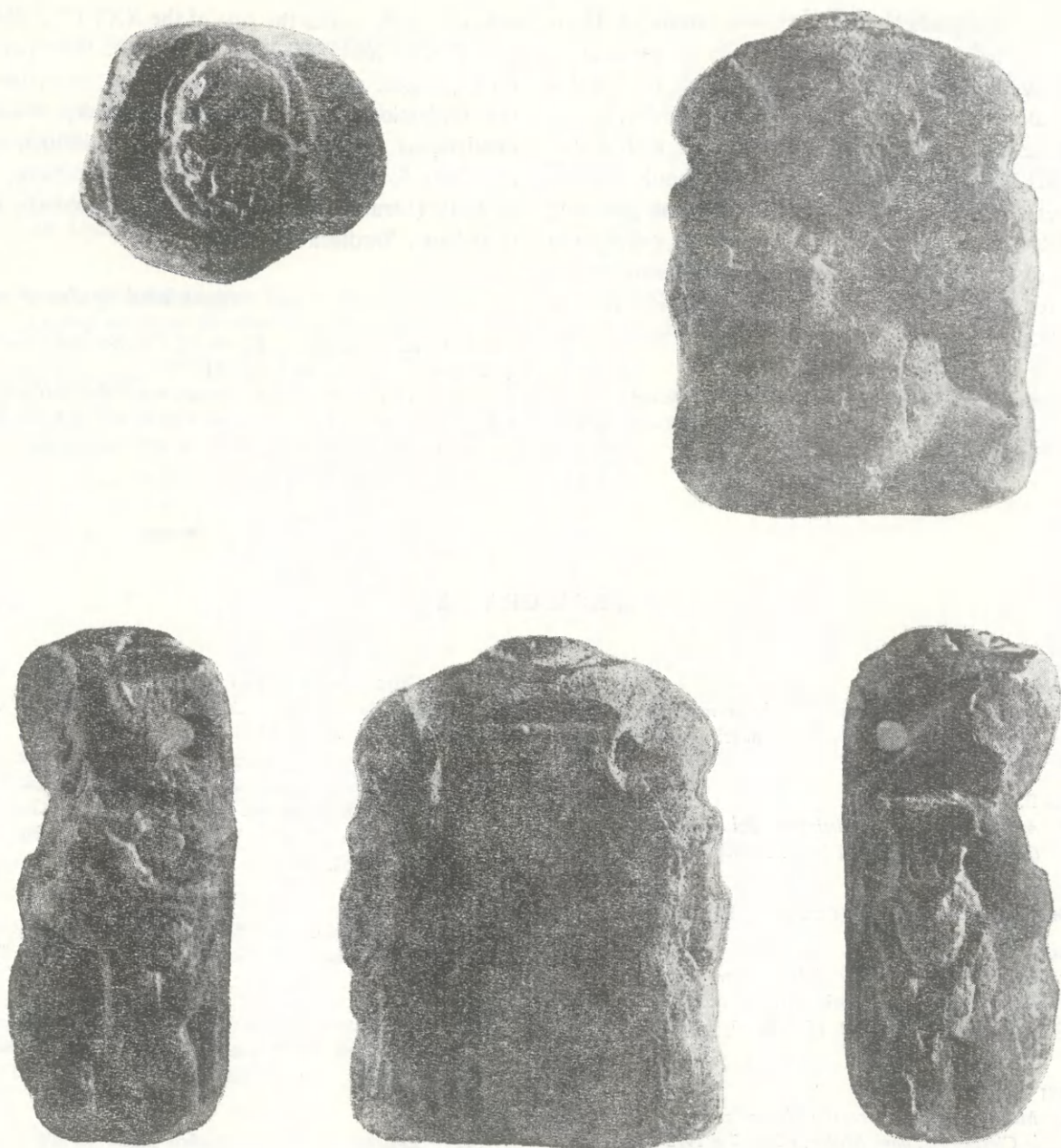


Fig. 5. Cieszków. Amulet from grave A

Phot. by Brunon Cynalewski

the base could have included a short hieroglyph inscription, probably an invocation to Ptah.<sup>3</sup>

Ptah-*pataikos* or *pataikos* representations belonged, according to Herodotus (III 37), to the group of popular guardian deities of a syncretic type. They were modelled as mis-shapen, dwarfish human figures. These deities were supposed to be descendants of Ptah, and were often

linked with his name and placed within the cricle of Memphitic cults as one of Ptah's embodiments. They enjoyed special popularity at the decline of the New Kingdom and the Late Period. Their images, worn as amulets, were to protect against many dangers, mainly the attack and bites of dangerous animals.<sup>4</sup> The type of the Ptah-*pataikos* amulet, as was found at Cieszków,

<sup>3</sup> Cf. analogous amulets: VERCOUTTER 1945, cat. nos 817, 823; ACQUARO 1977, cat. no. 599, with an inscription: Pth di ʿnh, meaning "life-giving Ptah".

<sup>4</sup> As regards general remarks concerning Egyptian amulets with elucidations of most frequent examples and a compilation of basic literature on the subject, see: ŚLWA 1976a.



indicates — as regards iconography — a certain semblance with the so-called stelae with Horus on crocodiles, inscribed with magical texts, and also with representations of Bes — another popular guardian deity.

Faience amulets depicting Ptah-*pataikos* with a scarab on his head, falcons perching on his shoulders, two goddesses at his sides and a silhouette of the guarding deity at the back, have been quite common relics from the area of Egyptian civilization.<sup>5</sup> Although there are no criteria for their more precise dating, the period of their special popularity was, certainly, in the so-called Late

<sup>5</sup> DARESSY 1905, 1906, cat. nos 39.227–39.246 (chiefly objects cat. nos 39.243 and 39.244 from Mit-Rahine and Sakkara); STEINDORFF 1946, cat.no. 626.

Period, chiefly under the rule of the XXV (712–664 B.C.) and XXVI (664–525 B.C.) dynasties. The period of their greatest popularity tallies rather accurately with the utilization of the Cieszków cemetery. Analogous amulets, as an expression of Egyptian influence, have also been found in other Mediterranean regions, chiefly in Italy (Etruria)<sup>6</sup> and the area of Phoenician culture (Carthage, Sardinia etc.)<sup>7</sup>.

*Translated by Jan Rudzki*

<sup>6</sup> HÖLBL 1979, Bd. II, Pl. 49–54, and essential remarks with general observations Bd. I, pp. 112–118.

<sup>7</sup> VERCOUTTER 1945, 288–295, cat. nos 800–826 (the closest to the Cieszków object is no 825, dated VII–III B.C.); ACQUARO 1977, cat.nos 599–602, 605, 606 (chiefly no. 601) and p. 22.

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