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STUDIA

JAN ALBERT BAKKER

THE MINIATURE TRB CUP FOUND IN A PEATY LAYER AT CHODLIK

In 1966, when I had the pleasure of being a guest of the Department of Archaeology at UMCS in Lublin to study the TRB culture (KPL, kultura pucharów lejkowatych) in Poland, A. Gardawski, J. Gurba and S. Hoczyk showed me a miniature tureen of the South-East Group of the TRB culture (fig. 1) which had recently been found in a peaty place at Chodlik, where the Department investigated the large early medieval earthen ringfort. This find seemed of great importance, because it represented the first known bog find of a pot of the TRB S.E. Group.

K. Jażdżewski (1932), C. J. Becker (1947) and several others have pointed out that votive deposits of pottery in and along sources, wells, ponds, lakes, peatbogs, rivers and the sea are a feature specific to the TRB culture (cf. M. S. Midgley 1992). They are well known from northern Poland, where in the area of the Vistula (Wisła) glaciation there are innumerable peatbogs, lakes and other wet places, but from southern Poland where such wetlands are scarce, only four such finds are documented: apart from the find from Chodlik there are the eight or ten early TRB pots found in or before 1916 at Wrocław-Pracze at the bottom of a well shaft dug into the filling of a former Odra course (H. Seger 1916), a Baalberge jug and a collared flask dredged or dug up in 1940-1994 from the Odra bank and river at Wrocław-Osobowice, and finally a 2-lugged and a 4-lugged amphora, related to Baalberge forms, dredged up together from a depth of 3 m in a former Odra course at Gajków, gm. Czernica,

woj. Wrocław in 1995 (W. Wojciechowski 1966)¹. This tiny collection from so large a territory illustrates a few principles:

(1) Such finds become known only where a museum or any other archaeological institution is active and has built up a network of informers and collectors in the course of years. Where such archaeological activities and networks do not occur, finds like this usually remain unnoticed, even in areas that were densely inhabited in prehistory. Active local museums and one or two amateur archaeologists could radically change this state of things however!

(2) Only if such a network exists, digging and dredging for town expansion, construction works and so on in river plains as around Wrocław may lead to the discovery of such finds.

(3) Finds dredged or excavated from rivers are difficult to interpret: flat graves on formerly dry ridges may be concerned, for instance. Also the votive character of peatbog finds is almost impossible to prove in most cases where no scientific investigation of the findspot has been undertaken. For instance, Jażdżewski (1932) initially supposed that two intact pots found ca. 1911 in a peatbog at Szlachcin 3, gm. Środa Wielkopolska, woj. Poznań, represented bog offerings, but the 1934-35 exca-

¹ I am much obliged to profesor W. Wojciechowski (Wrocław) for detailed information about these finds from Lower Silesia.

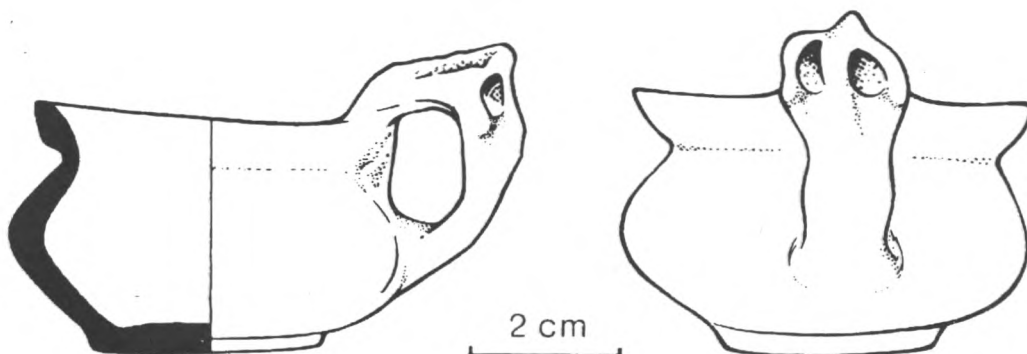


Fig. 1. The miniature cup found from Chodlik.
Ryc. 1. Miniaturowe naczynie z Chodlika.

vations by Kostrzewski and himself (K. Jażdżewski 1936; W. Tetzlaff 1966) showed that a large fishing and hunting site was concerned instead, and that many pots were so well preserved because they had been protected by the soft subsoil (gyttja). He therefore changed his views diametrically: most pottery found in bogs should derive from settlements in or along lakes or bogs (K. Jażdżewski 1936). Becker's monograph (1947) devoted to TRB bog pottery finds in Denmark and later finds in Poland (e.g., L. Gabałówna 1964) made him return to his original general views (K. Jażdżewski 1984, s. 149). Later Danish research showed that apparent pot offerings can also occur quite close to wetland settlements (E. Koch 1990), so that part of the Szlachcin pots might even belong to that category.

(4) Apart from Chodlik, peatbog or lake TRB pottery finds are still absent from southern Poland, no doubt due to the relative scarcity of lakes and bogs here. A lakeside offering of a jug on or in front of the peaty margin of Lake Komořany, at Dřinov, okr. Chomutov in NW Bohemia (E. F. Neustupný 1985, find WS1), suggests, however, that the TRB culture practiced such offerings where ever lakes were available.

(5) Offerings in wells will have been a normal feature in southern Poland, as the Wrocław-Pracze find shows. In Moravia, a jug containing *Allium* found 7 m deep in wet clay at Kyjov (J. Neustupný 1952) will also represent a well offering.

(6) TRB well shafts were usually 2-3.5 m deep and the extreme depth of the Kyjov find illustrates the fact that the TRB land surface in Central European river valleys is often buried below thick loamy deposits eroded from the interfluvial terraces due to agriculture, from the TRB period onwards (studies by J. Kruk). This may also partly explain the scarcity of wet TRB offerings in southern Poland.

(7) That most TRB excavations in southern Poland took place on the interfluvial loess terraces and hills above the river plains and perhaps never in the rare boggy places may also be partly responsible for this scarcity. Systematic surveys by Gurba (1961) and others (AZP) led to the discovery of TRB occupation of river plains and other low and sandy areas, for instance at Chodlik - but none of these lower sites have been excavated yet (B. Burchard et al 1991). And no wet TRB offering sites were noted during the surveys of the lower regions.

One and half century after the first TRB pottery was salvaged from a bog, at Kofodsgaard on Bornholm in 1827, and fifty years after Becker's fundamental book on peat bog offerings in Denmark (1947), no inventory of the finds of this kind has appeared yet for the whole TRB culture. The number of such finds in Denmark has risen to more than 310. Outside Denmark the numbers are much lower, because archaeologists paid much less attention to peat finds when turf exploitation was still normal practice. A corpus of the possible water offerings

of TRB pottery in the countries around Denmark, which I am compiling, contains some 80 finds from the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Bohemia and Sweden (including river finds).

The data concerning the Chodlik cup were once more summarized² for this corpus:

Chodlik 3, gm. Karczmiska Pierwsze (formerly pow. Opole Lubelskie), woj. Lublin (S. Hoczyk 1967, with fig.; J. A. Bakker, J. C. Vogel & T. Wiślański 1969, s. 219, fig. 14).

An elegant miniature tureen (3.5 cm high, 5 cm wide) with a handle drawn up 1 cm above its rim, in which a rudimentary ramshead is squeezed out (fig. 1), was found in 1965 by a worker J. Gaza while digging a drainage ditch. The almost undamaged mini-vessel appeared at a depth of 1 m in peat layer of unknown thickness, at some 200 m NW from the large medieval ring fort of Chodlik. Regrettably the vertical section of the findspot was not studied and the type of peat in which the pot was found is unknown. No other artefacts, bones, wood or charcoal were noticed by the finder.

The findspot lies in a wide ill-drained valley plain of the Chodelka river, with relics of irregularly undulating channels of a river braiding system (Prachodelka, see fig. 2). When these channels were replaced by the present Chodelka is unknown - probably long before the TRB period, early in the Holocene. In these channels and at other low places in the plain, several decimetres of peat of unknown age occur (J. Miszański 1966).

It cannot be excluded that the vessel was deposited in the open water of a local pond. The pot (Lublin Museum 340/A/ML) has a peaty patina. A sample of peaty sand adhering to the pot contained too few pollen grains for a pollenspectrum (A. Voorrips, Amsterdam, personal communication 1967).

Ramshead decoration of pot handles is typical for the Southeastern TRB Group. Sherds found in and around the ring fort and elsewhere in the fossil river plain indicate a TRB occupation on slightly elevated sites.

From the normative culture concept I adhere to, there is little doubt that the Chodlik pot actually represents a votive deposit and that water offerings may therefore be considered as an essential feature of the TRB South-East Group in Poland and the Ukraine. Yet there is a snag - as almost always when one begins asking questions about finds of this category: miniature vessels are quite exceptional in wet TRB offerings. The only other known instance is a „miniature service” of five 4-9 cm high TRB pots from Świątosław near Włocławek (L. Gabałówna 1964). They were dredged up when a pond was cleaned, years before 1938, together with a ceramic spindle whorl, fragments of other nor-

² Dr S. Hoczyk-Siwkowska kindly (Lublin) provided me with the necessary additional information

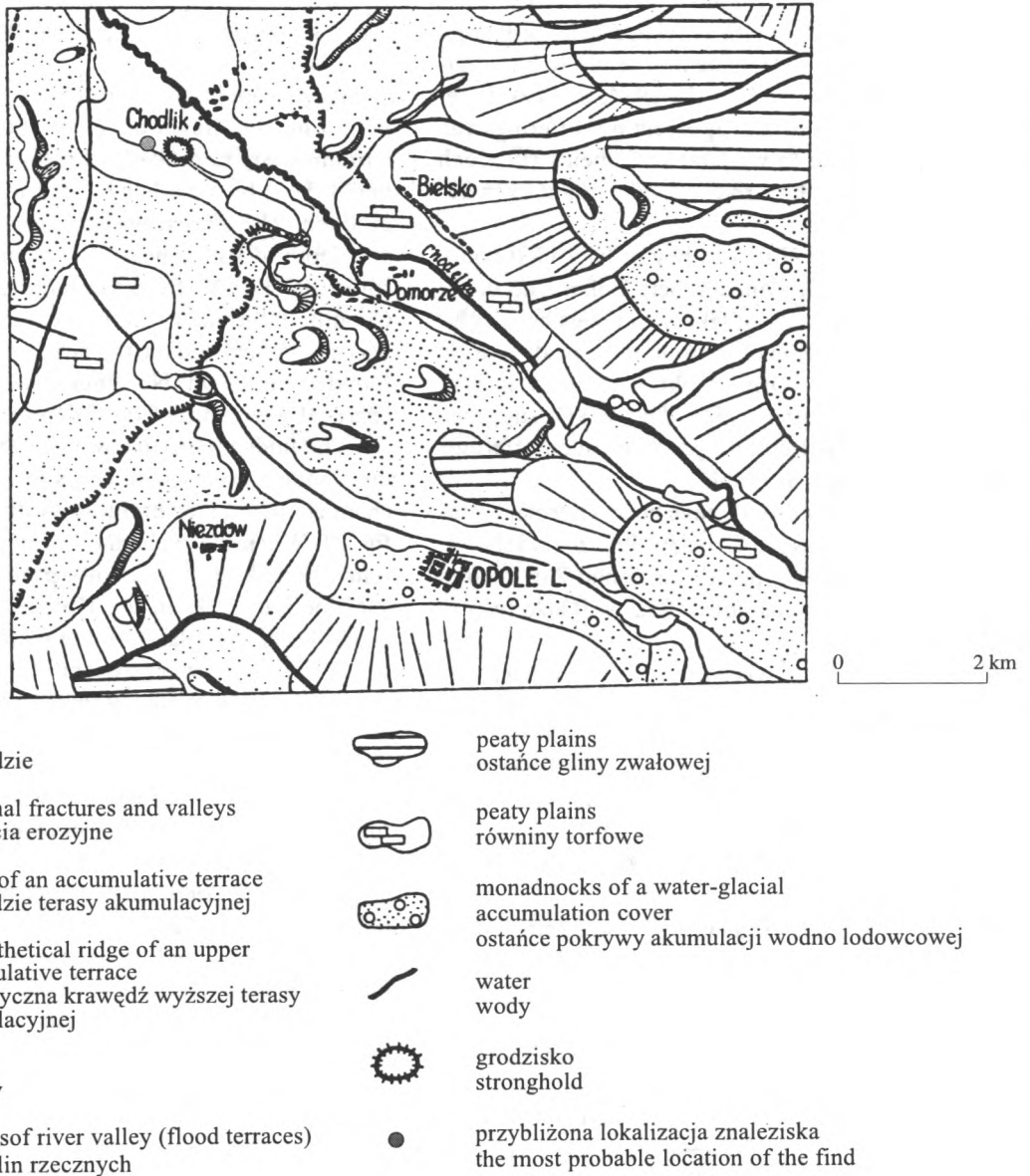


Fig. 2. Geomorphological sketch of a fragment of the Chodelka Basin (after J. Miszański 1966).

Ryc. 2. Szkic geomorfologiczny fragmentu Kotliny Chodelskiej (wg J. Miszańskiego 1966).

mal sized TRB pots, and animal bones. Gabałówna convincingly argued that (the miniature pottery at least) represented a ritual deposit, and when Wiślański (1967, s. 104) surveyed the different categories of peat and water finds, he agreed with her interpretation.

That the two published drawings of the cup from Chodlik are slightly different is a minor problem, but, on reconsideration, it is quite regrettable that J. Gaza's find-spot was not studied in detail in 1965-66 and that no pollen diagram was made of the peaty layers in which it was found. Scandinavian research has shown that most of the peatbog finds have in fact been deposited in or on the edge of open water; the archaeologist's „peat” often turns out to be the palynologist's „gyttja” (which was formed at the bottom of open water). In view of its extreme importance it would have been instructive to know the original situation at the Chodlik site better and to see if no other objects occurred there. Could the exact find-spot perhaps still be located to study its stratigraphy and immediate surroundings, and would the peat not be too desiccated now to allow a new palynological or macroscopical investigation to identify its character?

The main reason to write this article was to point out the importance of the systematic observation of digging or dredging operations in wet places in S.E. Poland by laymen, amateurs and professionals. I mentioned already that most TRB research has taken place here on the loess uplands which were densely populated. But the sparse occupation of the Prachodelka plain at Chodlik, the fact that rivers and streams traverse the uplands, and the fact that drinking water had to be procured from natural waters or dug wells, argue that wet pottery offerings are actually to be expected in this region, as a regular feature. Moreover there are many small lakes in Volhynia and Podlesia about the archaeology of which little is known.

After turf digging stopped about 1965 almost everywhere in northern Europe because fossil fuel became more easily available, and legal environmental protection prevents now much further archaeological research of swamps, „new” peat bog finds begin to appear at carefully planned archaeological rescue excavations in the zones of future road or railway tracts and town building plants. Two „offering swamps” were systematically investigated in this way in Sweden, at Hindby at a town expansion site at the perimeter of Malmö (P. Karsten 1994) and at Skogsmossen near örebro in Middle Sweden (F. Hallgren et al. 1997; F. Hallgren & O. Possnert 1997). At the latter place a few house sites and activity areas of the TRB culture were excavated in a forest to be traversed by a railway line. A small fen next to the houses was completely excavated according to plan. At once several observations toilsomely made at former peat cuttings for fuel were confirmed and expanded here: the postholes of a stage leading to the middle of the fen were discovered and they were surrounded by the remains of numerous axes, querns, and TRB pots (in which grain seems to have been offered to the Gods of fertility). Would this once also happen in S.E. Poland?

TRB life was permeated with ritual and religion. Offering in wet places of pots with food (but also of axes, and sometimes including human sacrifices) is a somewhat better known ritual besides TRB rituals on dry land, not only near to grave monuments, but also near to or in settlements. The variety of the latter is so bafflingly large that it still opposes classification. Examples from the South-East Group are: silo used to safeguard the sowing-seed in particularly nice, decorated pottery at Ćmielów, woj. Tarnobrzeg (Z. Podkowińska 1961), complicated ritual pits at Jakubowice Murowane at Lublin (B. Bargieł & J. Kącki 1988) and pit 1/93 in the cemetery of Karmanowice, woj. Lublin (J. Nogaj-Chachaj 1994).

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MINIATUROWY KUBECZEK KULTURY PUCZARÓW LEJKOWATYCH ZNALEZIONY W WARSTWIE TORFU W CHODLIKU

Miniaturowy kubeczek z Chodlika 3, gmina Karczmiska, woj. lubelskie (S. Hoczyk 1967; J. A. Bakker, J. C. Vogel, T. Wiślański 1969, s. 219, ryc. 14) jest jedynym tego rodzaju znaleziskiem torfowo-bagiennym z terenu południowo-wschodniej grupy kultury pucharów lejkowatych. Ucho naczynia jest prymitywnie ukształtowane w formie uproszczonej głowy barana (ryc. 1). To naczynie (Muzeum Lubelskie 340/A/ML) zostało znalezione w 1965 r. na głębokości 1 m w warstwie torfu o nieznanym miąższości podczas kopania rowu, około 200 m na północny-zachód od wczesnośredniowiecznego grodziska w Chodliku. Niestety nie przebadano profilu wykopu i typ torfu, w którym znalezione naczynie pozostaje nieznanym. Nie zarejestrowano również innych zabytków, węgla drzewnego lub innych pozostałości. Znaleźisko może pochodzić z wypełniska

torfowego jednego ze starożytnych koryt meandrującej plejstocenijskiej rzeki Prachodelki na równinie Chodlika (por. J. Miszalski 1965), ale niezbędne jest badanie stratygraficzne i paleobotaniczne miejsca znaleziska (ryc. 2).

Nie ma wątpliwości, że naczynie stanowiło depozyt wotywny i że ofiary składane w wodzie powinny również być uważane za istotną cechę południowo-wschodniej grupy kultury pucharów lejkowatych w Polsce i na Ukrainie. W tej kulturze miniaturowe naczynka rzadko występują jako dary składane w wodzie, jednakże odnotowuje się takie przypadki (np. L. Gabałówna 1964).

Wodne depozyty ceramiki są znane z obszarów prawie wszystkich grup kultury pucharów lejkowatych: Czech, Moraw, okolic Wrocławia, północnej Polski, północno-wschod-

nich i północnych Niemiec, Holandii, Szwecji oraz przede wszystkim Danii. Występują one wewnątrz i w pobliżu studni, źródeł, rzek, jezior i Bałtyku. Szereg takich miejsc jest obecnie wypełnionych gytą i torfem. Znajdźiska torfowobagiennic ograniczają się do terenu młodej moreny zlodowacenia Wisły z jej licznymi depresjami i jeziorami, lecz również występują gdzie indziej, na przykład nad Jeziorem Komorzańskim w północno-zachodnich Czechach oraz wzdłuż strumieni na bagnach Bourtanger Moor w Holandii. Tam gdzie znajdźiska na bagnach są rzadkie dominują te występujące w rzekach i studniach, tak jak w Czechach i okolicach Wrocławia.

Wodna i bagienna ofiara w postaci naczyń z jedzeniem (często także siekier, kości i ludzkich ofiar) jest przykładem zadziwiających rytuałów kultury pucharów lejkowatych na terenach mokrych i suchych.

Liczebność znajdźisk depozytów bagiennych zależy głównie od obserwacji archeologów a także ludzi nie związanych z tą dziedziną. Bez wątplenia przyszłe znajdźiska potwierdzą ten ogólny wzór także dla południowo-wschodniej grupy kultury pucharów lejkowatych, o ile więcej uwagi poświęci się tam badaniom jezior i dolin rzecznych gdzie tego rodzaju znajdźiska mogą znajdować się pod grubymi pokładami późniejszych nawarstwień.

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