

Małgorzata Byrska-Fudali<sup>1</sup>, Paulina Kowalczyk-Matys<sup>2</sup>

## A horn-shaped clay vessel from the Lusatian culture cemetery in Kryspinów, commune Liszki, site no. 2

**Abstract:** Site no. 2 in Kryspinów, located north-west of Cracow, is situated on the right bank of the Sanka River, namely in the area where the Sanka Valley joins the floodplain of the Vistula River. In 2015 and 2016, archaeological investigations preceding the construction of a housing estate were carried out at this site, taking up an area of approx. 18 ares. As a result of the research the northern zone of the cemetery, dated to the turn of the Bronze and Iron Ages, was identified and explored. During the excavations, 48 archaeological features were uncovered, including 33 cremation graves of the Lusatian culture. The excavations delivered mostly ceramic artefacts and few bronze objects (chains and wire rings). The cemetery was used at the turn of Period V and HaC, namely within the Prokocim-Skotniki phase according to the chronological system developed for this region by M. Gedl. Among the most interesting finds one should mention a horn-shaped vessel discovered in a cremation burial in pit no. 9. According to the division proposed by B. Gediga for specimens of that type, the artefact in question should be included into type I, subtype 1. Chronological frames for the clay horn from Kryspinów can be determined only in general, based on the dating of other materials obtained from the cemetery, i.e. to Bronze Age Period V–HaC.

**Keywords:** Poland, Lusatian culture, Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, cemetery, horn-shaped vessel

The archaeological site in Kryspinów is located to the north-west of Cracow, within the southern boundaries of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland. At the site a prehistoric complex was discovered, consisting of a cemetery (site no. 2) and a settlement (site no. 3) of the Przeworsk culture (Fig. 1). These sites are situated on the right bank of the Sanka River, namely in the area where the Sanka Valley conjoins with the floodplain of the Vistula River (Godłowski 1969, 31). Site no. 2 in Kryspinów is known from the literature thanks to investigations conducted in 1968–1994 by Prof. Kazimierz Godłowski from the Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University in Cracow. During his research a prehistoric cemetery was revealed, dated to the La Tène and Roman periods (Godłowski 1969, 31–36; 1970, 32–39; 1971, 37–44; 1972, 31–37; 1973, 40–48; 1974, 27–35; 1976, 32–43; 1977, 22–23; 1980, 19–21; 1986, 34–35;

<sup>1</sup> Archaeological Museum in Kraków, Branch in Nowa Huta; 2A Sasanek Str., 31-985 Kraków, Poland; malgorzata.fudali@ma.krakow.pl

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University; 11 Gołębia Str., 31-007 Kraków, Poland; paulinab.kowalczyk@interia.pl

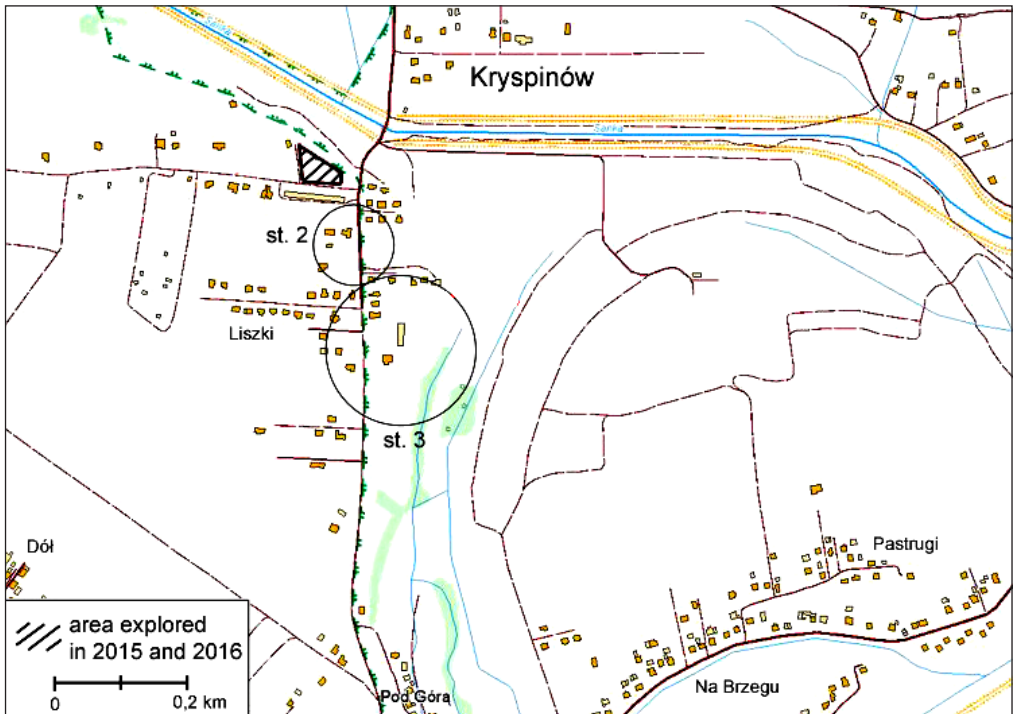


Fig. 1. Location of the area explored in 2015 and 2016

Godłowski, Madyda 1976, 27–33). In 2015 and 2016, rescue excavations were carried out in Kryspinów to the north of the explored part of site no. 2, in connection with the planned construction of housing estate. The archaeological investigations covered the entire area planned for development, including entrance and connecting roads, which made a total area of 18 ares. The research was financed by private investor ULTEGRA Spółka z o. o., and directed by M. Byrska-Fudali.

As a result of archaeological works performed in 2015 and 2016 the northern part of the cemetery was recognised and explored. The site has been dated to the turn of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. In the course of the investigations 48 archaeological features were uncovered, including 33 cremation burials attributed to the Lusatian culture (Fig. 2). These features were located at the edge of the floodplain. Below the floodplain edge no prehistoric features were recorded. Judging by the distribution of graves, the remaining part of the cemetery may have been situated higher, to the south-east. Today this area is covered by dense housing and infrastructural objects. The research carried out by Prof. Godłowski embraced an area starting approx. 40 m above the boundary of the recently investigated region.

The excavations conducted at the site under scrutiny delivered mostly ceramic artefacts and few objects made of bronze, namely chains and wire rings; the latter were used to play the role of pendants. The materials discovered in 2015 and 2016 could only be dated based on the analysis of pottery forms, mainly vase-shaped vessels, i.e. specimens with proportions typical of vases, with the lower parts of their bellies roughened. The cemetery was used at the turn of the Period V and HaC periods, during the Prokocim-Skotniki phase according to the



**Fig. 2.** Plan of the Lusatian culture cemetery (boundaries of the investigated area are marked with red colour)

chronological system developed for this region by Prof. M. Gedl (1982, 24–26). At the close of the Bronze Age and in the beginning of the Early Iron Age this region was occupied by communities of the Cracow subgroup of the Upper Silesia-Little Poland group of the Lusatian culture, distinguished by Z. Durczewski (1946, 140). It is most likely with this cultural unit that the cemetery under study should be linked.

Amongst the most interesting findings one can mention feature no. 9, a relic of a cremation burial in pit. It was recorded as an accumulation of charred bones and artefacts. The outline of the pit was not visible (Fig. 3). Approx. 40 cm to the west of the accumulation of bones, traces of a hearth or remains of a funeral pyre were identified (feature no. 15). Grave offerings comprised a semi-circular cup, fragments of other vessels (two rims and a fragment of a ribbon handle), a flint flake, and an extremely interesting vessel in the shape of a horn (Fig. 4). The last lay under the charred bones, at the bottom of the pit.

This clay vessel retrieved from feature no. 9 is the main subject of this paper (Figs 4a, 5). It has the shape of a horn, with its tip curving like a semi-crescent. The vessel was made from clay with chamotte temper, and its surfaces are plain, partially smoothed. Despite being partially smoothed, the internal surface of the vessel gives an impression of rather careless execution. Traces of a handle can be seen by the rim. Regarding the general dimensions of the vessel, its walls are quite thick (9 mm). It has a length of approx. 10.7 cm, and its rim diameter is 4.2 cm.

Horn-shaped vessels have raised considerable interest amongst archaeologists. B. Gediga divided these vessels into five types, with type I additionally subdivided into three subtypes. Type

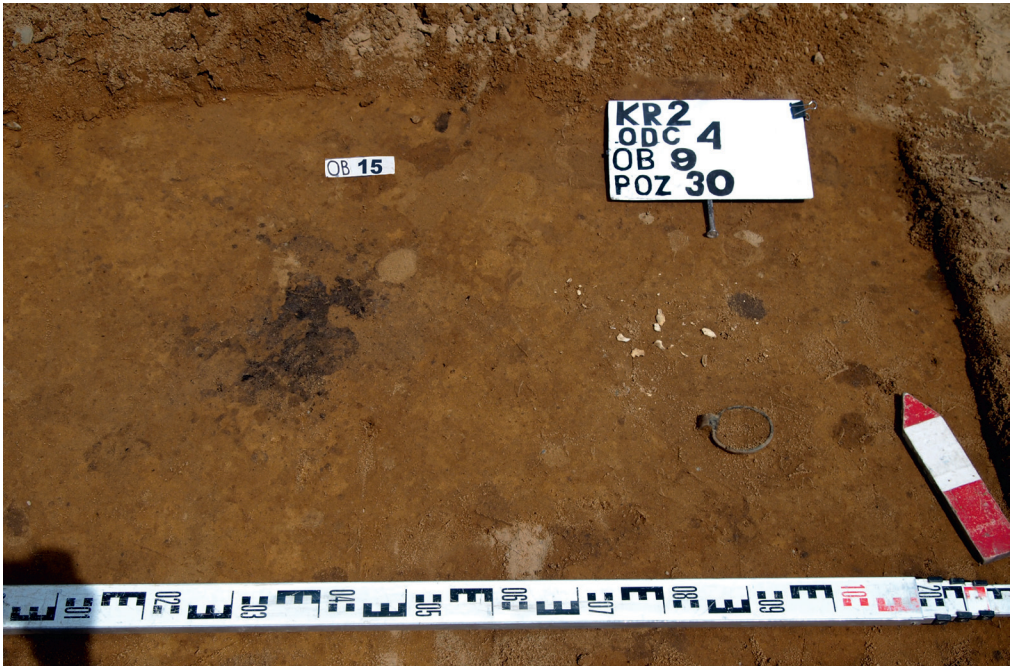


Fig. 3. Feature no. 9 – horizontal view

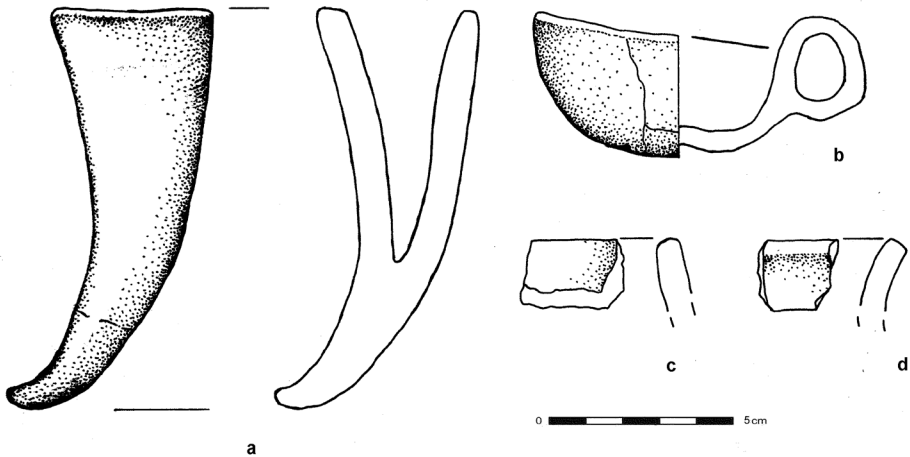


Fig. 4. Artefacts obtained from feature no. 9 (a – d clay, drawn by M. Byrska-Fudali).

I comprises specimens in the shape of a more or less elongated horn provided with one handle; subtype 1 covers slender, long vessels curved along their entire length, subtype 2 is represented by short and stumpy specimens, only partially horn-shaped, and subtype 3 comprises vessels with a distinguished, profiled neck. Type II covers horns with blunt tips, type III embraces horns with thickened tips, type IV represents specimens considered hybrids of a regular vessel and a horn, and finally, type V groups twin vessels formed in the shape of a horn. Vessels of types

I and II occur in decorated variants (with a stroke ornament or painting), or undecorated (Gediga 1970, 86–98). The specimen from Kryspinów can be included into type I, subtype 1 in Gediga's classification. Within the area occupied by the Lusatian culture, the vessels in question were recorded in their largest numbers in Silesia, Greater Poland, and Moravia. With respect to the Upper Silesia-Little Poland group these finds are concentrated within the Częstochowa-Gliwice subgroup. They were encountered at cemeteries in Częstochowa-Wyczerpy Dolne, Dist. Częstochowa – three specimens (Młodkowska-Przepiórska 2001, 265, tab. VI.4), Będzin-Łagisza, Dist. Będzin (Galasińska-Hrebendowa 1989, pl. XX), Przeczyce, Dist. Zawiercie (Szydłowska 1972, 97–98), Ligota Samborowa, Dist. Strzelce Opolskie (Gedl 1970, 173), Danków, Dist. Kłobuck (Gedl 1961, 95), Dąbrowa, Dist. Kłobuck (Gedl 1961, 95), Zbrojewsko, Dist. Kłobuck – five artefacts (Bąk 2006, fig. 8:1; Gedl 1987, fig. 26:b; 1991, pl. VI:a; 1999, pl. XIX:9, XXIX:17), and Truskolasy, Dist. Kłobuck (Opalińska *et al.* 1998, fig. 7).

Clay horns are less common in settlement materials. At site no. 2 in Modlniczka, dist. Cracow, situated within a distance of approx. 10 km to the north of Kryspinów, two specimens of this type were found, although they were undecorated and smaller than the artefact under scrutiny (Przybyła 2011, 60). One object interpreted as a fragment of a horn comes from the settlement in Zakrzów, dist. Krapkowice, site no. 41, and is dated to the close of the Bronze Age (Stanisławski, Wojnicki 2008, 82). Another specimen of this sort (dated to the turn of Bronze Age Periods III and IV) was discovered in Trzciniec, dist. Puławy (Gediga 1970, 255).

The vessel from Kryspinów finds many analogies amongst archaeological materials of the Lusatian culture. In terms of its shape and proportions it bears the strongest resemblance to an artefact obtained from grave no. 855 in Zbrojewsko (Gedl 1987, fig. 26:b). Similar vessels have also been encountered at cemeteries in Starkowo, Dist. Wolsztyn (Kaczmarek 2002, 81, fig. 31:1) and Modlniczka (Przybyła 2011, pl. 21:1; 651:6). It is interesting that from northern range of the Lusatian culture come a few horn-shaped vessels, but made of bronze. These artefacts were recorded in Pruska Karczma, Dist. Gdańsk i Przęsławice, Distr. Grudziądz (Gedl 1996).

The vessels discussed in this paper occur within very wide chronological frames. They have been found at sites dated from Period III until the HaC period. However, all such artefacts encountered at sites of the Częstochowa-Gliwice subgroup are chronologically comprised within the so-called classic phase of the Upper Silesia-Little Poland group, falling at the turn of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages (Period V–HaC). The chronology of the clay horn from site no. 2 in Kryspinów can be determined only generally, based on the dating of other materials collected at the cemetery, which refer to Period V–HaC. The above mentioned bronze horn-shaped vessels have similar chronology. Based on the style of their ornamental motifs they were dated to the decline of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age (Gedl 1996, 380–381).



Fig. 5. Kryspinów, site no. 2. Horn-shaped vessel (photo by P. Kowalczyk-Matys)

The analysis of the relationship between burial rites (inhumation or cremation)<sup>3</sup> and the occurrence of clay horns in graves of the Częstochowa-Gliwice subgroup have shown no legible or certain connection. The artefacts in question were obtained from five inhumation and three cremation graves (including grave no. 9 in Kryspinów). Some of them were discovered outside burial pits, which prompted the investigators to consider them stray finds that could not be undoubtedly associated with any particular grave. Nevertheless, it seems that vessels of this type were more frequently placed into graves of children. Such a situation was recorded, among other places, in Zbrojewsko, where almost all of the horn-shaped vessels were found in child burials (Bąk 2004, fig. 3:4; Bąk 2006, 95; Gedl 1999, 97, 115; Gedl 2004, figs 6, 9). A horn in a grave of – most likely – a child was also found in Przeczyce (Szydłowska 1968, 130). This observation is consistent with conclusions drawn by L. Nebelsick, who stated that within the Lusatian culture range, objects of figurative art were mainly put into child graves (Nebelsick 1992, 408). On the other hand, horn-shaped vessels have not been encountered in graves traditionally considered to be burials of the richest, i.e. furnished with a few categories of bronze or/and iron objects, and at least three ceramic vessels. A typical inventory of a burial with a horn was rather modest, consisting of few bronze rings, and from one to a maximum of five clay vessels. A grave from Będzin-Łągisza which contained two bronze rings, a bronze bead, and eight vessels is exceptional in this respect (Galasińska-Hrebendowa 1989, 33–34), as also is grave no. 312 in Zbrojewsko, furnished with eight well preserved vessels, fragments of at least three others, and two bronze rings (Gedl 1991, 200, 205).

Horn-shaped vessels are considered to be symbols associated with solar (symbol of fertility, horn of plenty) and lunar cults (crescent moon). Such objects are believed to be connected with a bull cult. They could have been used in rituals during ceremonial feasts (Górka 2000, p. 249; Gediga 1970, 203–204). M. Gedl connected the appearance of the horn-shaped vessels, both of those made from clay and bronze, with some cult customs. He emphasized the most common occurrence of these forms on cemeteries (Gedl 1996, 382).

It is difficult to establish whether the idea of creating horn-shaped vessels was influenced by external impulses or it emerged independently. Vessels decorated with stylised heads of bulls were used in the Eastern Hallstatt culture (Przybyła, Przybyła 2010, fig. 16). With regard to the Western Hallstatt zone, a richly decorated vessel in the shape of a horn was found in a grave in Hochdorf (Birkhan 1999, fig. 572). As noticed by B. Gediga, the distribution of horn-shaped vessels in the milieu of the Lusatian culture overlaps with the distribution of other figurative art objects, such as bird figurines and shoe-shaped vessels (Gediga 1970, 94–95). Despite the fact that the regions of Moravia, Silesia, and Greater Poland were strongly affected by the Hallstatt culture influence, which is clearly confirmed by the archaeological material, this influence is still poorly detectable in the areas occupied by the Upper Silesia-Little Poland group, although the source base has recently been significantly broadened by finds from Modlniczka, among others. The assemblage collected at this site includes painted pottery imported from Silesia, a fragment of a vessel ascribed to the Basarabi culture, fragments of vessels executed in a manner typical of a “foreign”, Transcarpathian style, as well as a shoe-shaped vessel (Przybyła, Przybyła 2010, 556).

Together with the finds from Modlniczka, the artefact from site no. 2 in Kryspinów stands out as an exception among archaeological materials linked with the Cracow subgroup of the

<sup>3</sup> This analysis only concerns the Upper Silesia-Little Poland group. Lusatian culture communities in Lower Silesia, Moravia, and Greater Poland practised cremation as their only burial rite, while inhumation played a marginal role in this cultural environment.

Upper Silesia-Little Poland group of the Lusatian culture, since vessels of extraordinary shapes – and figurative art in general – are a great rarity in this milieu. The geographically closest horns are those from the above-mentioned cemeteries in Przeczyce and Będzin-Łagisza used by communities of the Częstochowa-Gliwice subgroup. The discovery of pottery of this type in the region of Cracow may be seen as evidence of contacts between those societies.

**Naczynie gliniane w kształcie rogu z cmentarzyska kultury łużyckiej w Kryspinowie, st. 2,  
gm. Liszki**

Stanowisko 2 w Kryspinowie, gm. Liszki położone jest na prawym brzegu rzeczki Sanki, dopływu Wisły, na północny-zachód od Krakowa. W roku 2015 i 2016 na terenie stanowiska prowadzono badania archeologiczne o powierzchni około 18 arów, związane z budową osiedla mieszkaniowego. Dzięki badaniom rozpoznano i przebadano północną strefę cmentarzyska z przełomu epoki brązu i wczesnej epoki żelaza. W trakcie badań odkryto 48 obiektów archeologicznych, w tym 33 groby ciałopalne kultury łużyckiej. Badania wykopaliskowe dostarczyły głównie zabytków ceramicznych i nielicznych przedmiotów brązowych (łańcuszków i kółek z drutu). Cmentarzysko było użytkowane na przełomie V okresu epoki brązu i HaC – w fazie Prokocim-Skotniki według chronologii opracowanej dla tego regionu przez M. Gedla. Do najciekawszych zabytków należy naczynie w kształcie rożka, odkryte w grobie ciałopalnym jamowym nr 9. Według podziału B. Gedigi dla tego typu naczyń można je określić jako typ I, podtyp 1. Chronologię glinianego rożka z Kryspinowa można określić jedynie ogólnie na podstawie datowania materiałów z cmentarzyska, czyli na V OEB–HaC.

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