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A HELLENISTIC BRAZIER FROM  
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**Abstract:** *In antiquity, a wide range of different types of heat sources were used. The most common were cooking stoves, portable braziers, cooking stands, and grills. In the collection of ancient artefacts of the Jagiellonian University (JU) Institute of Archaeology, there is a small group of objects dated to the Hellenistic period, among which a small brazier fragment can be found. The object was donated to the JU collection of antiquities gathered in the Archaeological Cabinet by Prince Władysław Czartoryski. Braziers are uncommon in Polish collections and the brazier fragment described in this article is the sole example from the JU IA assemblage. It will be described and analysed in full for the first time, and its possible production centre and a dating will be determined.*

**Keywords:** *Jagiellonian University Institute of Archaeology collection of antiquities; Hellenistic period; brazier; Knidos; Papposilenos type*

## Introduction

The JU Institute of Archaeology collection of antiquities holds a large quantity of objects dating back to the Hellenistic period, a few of which were donated by Prince Władysław Czartoryski (Ostrowski 2007, 93; Papuci-Władyka 2007, 218). In 1872, at the explicit request of professor Józef Łebkowski, the Head of the JU Archaeological Cabinet, the prince bestowed a set of Greek and Cypriot vases, as well as oil lamps, small bronze

and terracotta objects, and others. The brazier fragment was part of a group of 20 terracottas donated during that time (Moczulska 1998, 96 with further literature; Ostrowski 2007, 93). Czartoryski's donation formed the basis of the JU Institute of Archaeology collection of antiquities (on the collection see Bernhard 1976; Śliwa 2007).

### Braziers in the Hellenistic world

In antiquity, a wide range of different types of heat sources were used. The most common were cooking stoves, portable braziers, cooking stands and grills. Le Roy (1961, 476–477) and Siebert (1970, 267–276) distinguished three main types of Hellenistic braziers: low (*réchaud bas*), on the higher stand (*réchaud à pied élevé*), and a brazier with a shelf in the front and a chimney behind a fire bowl (*réchaud à sole*). The most frequent are the first two types, with a characteristic hemispherical bowl with a pierced bottom and three attachments – plain or mould-made (Pl. 1). The morphological variations of mould-made supports are more significant in terms of classification: 1. a portable stove with a representation of a theatre mask of a bearded head (wearing a conical cap, ivy-wreathed or with *onkos*); 2. an animal head: bull, ox, goat, lion, or others; 3. a rosette or amphorae (very rare).<sup>1</sup> The popularity of the bearded head can be explained by its function as a prop to hold up a cooking pot (Şahin 2001, 92; Rotroff 2006, 204). The bowl was located on a tall, cylindrical, upwardly tapered stand with a large vent (or vents) in the lower part. Two horizontal handles were attached under the bowl on the opposite side. The stand passes to a base with a deep surrounding groove. The bowl and stand were made separately and joined before firing. The stand was made from coarse and gritty clay, and was usually undecorated, although exceptions are known (Le Roy 1961, 490; Şahin 2001, 92; Şahin 2003, 2–3; Rotroff 2006, 204). These light, cheap (in the Classical period the maximum price was two obols – Amyx 1958, 279) and portable stoves were a source of warmth and heating. Charcoal was placed in the bowl as the main source of fuel (Didelot 2000, 141–142; Şahin 2001, 91; Tsakirgis 2007, 228–229; Scheffer 2014, 178). The production of portable ovens began at the beginning of the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century BC. They became increasingly popular, and production continued until the end of the 1st century BC (Didelot 1997, 376; Şahin 2003, 4; Şahin 2004, 294; Rotroff 2006, 203).

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<sup>1</sup> More about the meaning of decorative motives see Şahin 2001, 126 and Rotroff 2006, 204 with further citations.

Braziers were widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean, but it seems that portable ovens were especially common in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean. Many of the examples were unearthed in Hellenistic houses or from household debris in Athens (Vogeikoff 1994, 45; Vogeikoff-Brogan 2000, 307–308; Rotroff 2006, 219), on Delos (close to 3000 examples) and in Alexandria (Didelot 1997, 377). They were also used in sanctuaries, probably functioning as movable altars and used for preparing religious meals (Şahin 2003, 103–113; Scheffer 2014, 178–180). A large number of brazier fragments were found within the Sanctuary of Apollo Karneios in Knidos (Şahin 2001, 103–113) and in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Corinth (Bookidis *et al.* 1999, 26, 50). Similar artefacts have also been found in Cyprus (Nea Paphos<sup>2</sup> – Hayes 1991, 75, pls. 17–18; Papuci-Władyka 1995, 124–125, nr kat. 135, tabl. 22; Papuci-Władyka 2000, 735, il. 7: 5; Panayia Ematousa – Winther Jacobsen 2006, 243, fig. 130), Lebanon (Jiyeh – Wicenciak 2014, 121, fig. 15), Israel (Akko, Dor, Caesarea, Gaza, Samaria and other sites – Rahmani 1984, 225–230) and Egypt (Naukratis – Thomas 2015, 3).

In the past, many sites were believed to be production centres of Hellenistic portable ovens. Israel was excluded as a production centre after neutron activation analysis showed distinguishable differences in clay composition in comparison to the local wares (Gunnweg and Perlman 1984, 234–236). Leonard (1973, 21–22) and Didelot (1997, 380–382, 387) argued that braziers could have been manufactured in the Aegean region, with the Kos-Mykonos-Knidos area as most probable, including Knidian amphorae workshops. However, some braziers in other local wares have been recognised, such as ‘Schist cooking fabric’ from Athens (Rotroff 2006, 40–41). According to Didelot (1997, 380–382) and Şahin (2001, 128–129) three levels of production could have existed: main centres, branches and local workshops. Alexandria was ascertained as one site of manufacture but on a much smaller scale (Didelot 1998, 275–276). Nea Paphos could have played the same role (Hayes 1991, 75–77), or Naukratis (Thomas 2015, 4). Şahin (2001, 130; 2003, 4) in his studies of braziers from different collections, concluded that the area of Knidos is the most probable place as a main production centre.

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<sup>2</sup> A few brazier fragments have been recently unearthed during the excavation on the Agora in Nea Paphos by an archaeological expedition of the Jagiellonian University directed by E. Papuci-Władyka (more about the project: [www.paphos-agora.uj.edu.pl](http://www.paphos-agora.uj.edu.pl)); this material will be published by the present author.

Currently, braziers are studied not only in terms of iconography or technology but also in the context of changes in diet and methods of food preparation and their location within the architecture of the household (to determine the place of domestic cult or place of food preparation) or sanctuary (Foxhall 2007, 235–236, 240; Tsakirgis 2007, 225, 228; Banducci 2015, 157).

### **The brazier fragment from JU IA collection**

*Methodology:* The characteristic of the fabric is based on a system of macroscopic descriptions (Orton *et al.* 2013, 275–285). The colour of clay is given according to Munsell Soil-Color charts (Munsell 2013).

*Inventory number:* 541 (1305),<sup>3</sup> (Pl. 2).

*Dimensions and conditions:* Ht. 10.2cm, rim diam. 32cm, thickness 0.7cm, width of field 7.2cm. Preserved fragment of the upper part of bowl of brazier with a mould-made attachment (one of three), added after the bowl was made. Surface is damaged in a few places, as well as a small part of the beard. Decoration well preserved. Wash on the external part of the attachment. Smoke-blackened on the interior (could be in use).

*Technical features:* The clay is characterized by the presence of ill-sorted inclusions: abundant very coarse dark red and white with sub angular edges and low sphericity; abundant coarse black and white/gray (quartz) with sub angular and sub rounded edges with low sphericity; abundant medium and fine silver mica with rounded edges and high sphericity. Colour of clay is between yellowish red (5YR 5/6) and red (2.5YR 4/8) and the external and internal surface is wet smoothed. On the external surface of the support a few elongated and rounded voids are present, although the fabric is generally compact. Clay is very hard (cannot be scratched by fingernail), well fired. Texture of fresh break is hackly, with large and angular irregularities. Rough feel. Oxidized firing core (organic admixtures may or may not have been originally presented, no core).

*Description:* fragmentarily preserved upper part of the hemispherical fire bowl (with small part of the plain rim) and one mould-made pot support. On the exterior, a wide projecting horizontal ridge with a shallow groove by the downturned rim. On the interior, mould-made decoration in a nearly rectangular panel (side edges slightly concave) separated by a double-ridged frame. Inside the panel, a head of a bearded satyr with a four-leaved (fourth

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<sup>3</sup> The brazier fragment is currently kept under inv. no. 541; in the oldest inventory it was listed as no. 1305.

hardly visible) ivy-wreath in low relief. No bunches of berries visible. Broadly open eyes with marked eyelids and prominent eyebrows. Above visible brow. Below in deep relief, strongly pointed, upturned nose and small triangular checks. No mouth is visible. Under the cheeks is a wooly, arched moustache surrounding and reaching the length of the nearly horizontal beard with three central ridges arranged in a triangle. No inscription above the ivy-wreath.

*Bibliography:* The object was published by K. Moczulska (Moczulska and Szymańska 1976, no. 264).

*Provenance and dating:* Knidos (?), late Hellenistic period, late 2nd to early 1st century BC.

*Comments:* The brazier fragment under consideration was published by K. Moczulska (above), who described the object as a typical product of the Hellenistic and Roman times, and cited the brazier from the Archaeological Institute in Leipzig (Paul 1959) and the braziers from the National Museum in Warsaw as analogies (Martens 1971). Neither photographs nor drawings were provided in the first publication. Nevertheless, 40 years after the first publication and after actual studies of braziers from the Mediterranean, it is necessary to re-examine the unique Krakow brazier.

In the opinion of the present author, the object under analysis belongs to braziers of the above-mentioned type 2: with a higher stand. The iconography of the attachment represents the Papposilenos category, interpreted as a theatrical satyr mask (Rotroff 2006, 204). It belongs to Conze's type II.A – *Silenkopf* (Conze 1890, 122–125) and Mayence's type IV.C – *têtes couronnées de lierre* (Mayence 1905, 388–390) but in both cases with no direct parallels. The detailed classification of brazier attachments was proposed by Rotroff (2006, 205–212). The iconography of the Krakow brazier fragment is related to the wreathed Papposilenos type Agora II.1. from the Athenian Agora. The closest similarities are to be found among examples nos. 754, 755, and 778, with no. 778 as the most suitable, made in Quartz Fabric with Aegean origin. Unfortunately, cited examples from the Athenian Agora come from imprecisely dated contexts, with broad chronology from Hellenistic or even Early Roman periods (Rotroff 2006, 324, 327, pls. 75, 80). The braziers with ivy-wreathed head supports were very popular and circulated widely in the Mediterranean. A very similar type was found in Maison de Comédiens on Delos (Siebert 1970, 272, no. D 393, pl. 51). Iconography details also correspond to Didelot's type I from Alexandria, with closest similarities to locally made type I.3 dated to the first half of the 2nd century BC (Didelot 1998, 285–287, fig. 3). Close analogies

are to be found in Caesarea (Rahmani 1984, 226, no. 7, pl. 30) and in Kyme (Ondrejova 1974, 85, pl. 20: 3). The Krakow brazier fragment represents Variant 1 *Hermophantos* from Knidos (Şahin 2001, 8–13, Taf. 2–5). There are also very good analogies in examples from the British Museum: nos. Ha8-Ha25 (Şahin 2001, 94–97, figs. 13–32). At least two parallels can be cited from the Bodrum Museum, with type IV.1 and IV.2. as most relevant. Both are dated to the Hellenistic period, but IV.2 is limited to the late 2nd – early 1st century BC (Şahin 1999, 62, 83, resim 9: 10).

Based on the macroscopical analyses of the Krakow brazier fabric, we can conclude that the clay, in terms of its colour, fabric and texture, is most similar to the clay of braziers produced in Asia Minor. Ephesus can be excluded despite the iconographical relation. Examples from Ephesus were made from clay containing gold mica and are dated to the third quarter of 2nd century BC (Gassner 1997, 229–230, Taf. 70: 956). The fabric of the brazier fragment from Caesarea belongs to the chemical group Ia, which probably has Aegean origins (Gunneweg and Perlman 1984, 234–236). The published brazier fragments from Maussolleion at Halikarnassos also mostly contain golden mica and in major proportion belong to the local Red Burnished Ware (Vaag *et al.* 2003, 45–46, 129). In our case, the most characteristic identification feature is the silver mica. Clay containing silver mica was a characteristic production feature of cooking, fine and plain wares in Knidian workshops during the Hellenistic and Roman times (Doksanalti and Tekocak 2014, 281). Also, other components of the clay like lime and sifted silt indicate a volcanic source, maybe the Datça peninsula (Şahin 2001, 130). Good analogies of brazier fragments with such clay components come from the region of Halikarnassos and Knidos (Şahin 1999, 62, type IV.1 is from Theangela, type IV.2 – from unknown place; Şahin 2001, 94–97; Şahin 2003, 8–12). Although, all the above-described analogies point to Knidos as the most probable production centre for the Krakow brazier. Because of the lack of an inscription, we can suggest with caution that our brazier fragment may have been manufactured in one of the Knidos producers workshops: Hekataios or Athenaios, who were active in the late 2nd and 1st centuries BC. Our suggestion is based on the iconographic analogies as well as macroscopical clay analysis. Nevertheless, to solve the question of production place of our object, petrographic analysis of the clay should be done.

## Conclusion

The above-described fragment of a portable stove with a representation of a bearded head theatre mask belongs to the Papposilenos type. The production centre of this type was probably Asia Minor, most likely the area of Knidos and Halikarnassos. The best iconographical analogies for the Krakow brazier fragment can be found in objects of the same type from many museum collections (British Museum, Bodrum Archaeological Museum) and archaeological sites (Delos, Alexandria, Knidos and many others). The brazier from the JU Institute of Archaeology collection of antiquities may be added to the range of types manufactured somewhere around Knidos, and confirms the strength and importance of this region as a production centre in the Hellenistic period. It can be dated from the late 2nd to the early 1st century BC.

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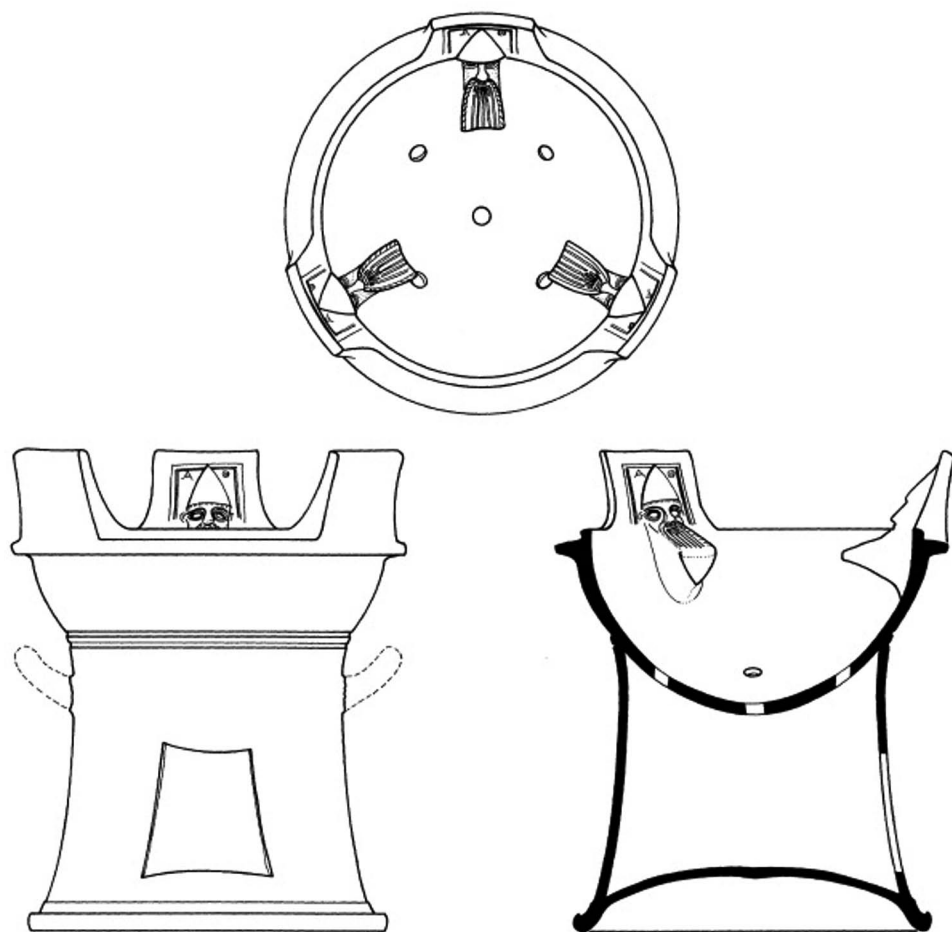
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Pl. 1. Brazier on stand with three mold-made supports.  
Reproduced from Rotroff 2006, fig. 95, 750



Pl. 2. The brazier fragment of Papposilenos type. JU IA collection of antiquities, no. 541. Photo and digitalization by the author