

Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin 

Kraków, Poland

A NEWLY DISCOVERED “BULL HEAD AMULET” FROM TELL EL-FARKHA, EGYPT

ABSTRACT: In 2022, a new object fitting the so-called “bull head amulets” category was discovered at Tell el-Farkha in layers related to the late Predynastic period (Naqada IID2-III A, hereafter abbreviated as NIID2-NIIIA). Although the object displays all the typical features of the “amulets”, it also possesses some unique characteristics, such as its unusual size and lack of perforation, suggesting its use as a figurine rather than a pendant. Furthermore, the Tell el-Farkha item was discovered in a well-recorded settlement context, proving that such “amulets” do not necessarily belong to burial activities. Apart from the presentation of the find and its place of origin, a more general discussion on this interesting type of early Egyptian item raises various questions about their actual function, significance or interpretation.

KEYWORDS: predynastic, early dynastic, jewellery, pendants, elephant head amulets

Introduction to the site of discovery

The site of Tell el-Farkha (Pl. 1: 1-2), located in the Nile Delta approximately 120 km north of present-day Cairo, has been the focus of an excavation project by the Polish Archaeological Mission to the Eastern Nile Delta for over 25 years. Numerous seasons of fieldwork have led to significant discoveries spanning from around 3700 to 2600 BC, establishing the site as crucial for un-

derstanding the long processes that contributed to the foundation of Egyptian culture, art, architecture and statehood. Among the noteworthy finds are those connected to the Lower Egyptian Culture, which was introduced by Ciałowicz (2001, 66-71), including a Lower Egyptian residence and the oldest breweries. There are also artefacts documenting the transition between the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods, such as the Naqadian residence, a monumental mastaba, Early Dynastic shrines, golden figurines of an early Egyptian ruler and a votive deposit containing over 60 miniature objects of exquisite Early Dynastic art. Additionally, the site features remnants that reflect the final days of the settlement and the onset of pharaonic supremacy, such as a tower silo. Unique to the site are the Protodynastic, Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom cemeteries directly associated with the nearby settlement (see: Chłodnicki *et al.* 2012; Ciałowicz *et al.* 2018; Dębowska-Ludwin 2023).

In addition to those findings, excavations at the site also uncovered smaller but equally interesting objects. One of these is the subject of the paper, namely a small item in the form of the well-grounded in Early Egyptian art so-called “bull head amulets” (Hendrickx 2002).

The recent discovery scene

In 2022, fieldwork in the Tell el-Farkha area ES was conducted on the great mastaba no. 10 (Ciałowicz and Dębowska-Ludwin 2013) and in the strip of four sections labelled as areas 56A/B and 55B, with a small part of 55A (Pl. 1: 2). Fieldwork there was planned as a continuation of works from previous seasons, and the chapter only focuses on the part directly related to the discussed discovery.

In the strip of area 50s, the works were resumed at a level around 3.80 m above sea level, labelled as nivelation level 46 (N46), and reached level N52 – which is about 3.20 m above sea level. Pottery collected from the layers enables their general dating to the third occupational phase of the site, which is dated to about 3450-3350 BC and NIID2/NIIA in the relative early Egyptian chronology. Due to the long exposure to drying, no visible structures were recorded at the upper levels of the area, except for four overlying layers of mineralised organic substances interpreted as the ancient floor levels. From below appeared the first muddy circles and the upper parts of the brick walls. Eventually (Pl. 2: 1), they formed a fairly regular arrangement of rather thin (about 50 cm thick) walls separating four rooms (features 195, 196, 197 and 200) and a wider space, which,

lastly, at the N51 level was divided into two other features (201 and 202). The structure was closed from the west by another wall made entirely of dark mud bricks running at right angles to it from north to south, with a characteristic eastern declination for the site. The presence of two hearths (features 198 and 199) located between the walls, many pottery fragments, some complete or almost complete small jars, flints, stones and animal bones suggest that the building was used as a typical household. Among the small objects, a stone item in the shape of a "bull head amulet" is certainly the most notable example recovered from the construction.

The Tell el-Farkha object

The object measures 5.8 cm in width, 6.1 cm in height and is 3.3 cm thick at its maximum dimensions (Pl. 3: 1-2). It was probably made from a variety of brownish-red chalcedony with purple and white inclusions. The surface of the stone is porous with some residual cortex, which affects the appearance of the figurine. However, the voids may result from the dissolution of the host material that the chosen stone initially impregnated – most probably limestone – which could have occurred during the long period of deposition of the artefact. Apart from the non-obvious choice of a presently rather unattractive material, the item was made with visible care, as the surface was generally well smoothed and details were carved with clear but shallow lines. The observation that the carvings "skip" the voids without discontinuity may support the idea that the multiple cracks are younger than the item itself.

In its complete form, the object fits very well with the general description of the so-called "bull head amulets". It is shaped like a disc combined with a cylinder that grows from the convex side of the disc (Pl. 3: 1). When viewed from the side (Pl. 3: 1), the observer gets the impression of facing the head of a massive animal, with two eyes (two separate holes that do not meet) located on both sides of a large nose (the cylinder) that protrudes beyond the outline of the head and ends in a slight thickening. The other side (Pl. 3: 1) is executed with much less detail; here, there are also two shallow holes and two very sketchy features modelled on both lower edges of the disc, with their ends folded up towards the holes. Again, it is difficult to judge what is depicted here; however, following the most frequent descriptions, this would be another head of an animal shown frontally with two eyes (the holes) and two horns curved upward (the features

at the edges). This side is very flat, the engravings are superficial and the quality of the stone is much lower, with many natural cracks, which altogether gives the impression that this is actually the reverse of the object.

So, it seems that the object represents a very stylised animal typical of “bull head amulets”. As many items of this type are only known from pictures of various quality, when looking for comparisons, we are forced to base our analysis on their general appearance. The closest counterparts are seen in an amethyst piece, 3.4 x 3.7 x 2.6 cm in size, from the Cleveland Museum of Art, cat. no. 1998.26 (Berman *et al.* 1999, 511-512), which is made of a porous material; an anhydrite item, 3.7 x 3.5 x 2 cm in size, from the *Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* of Brussels, cat. no. E.2335 (De Putter and Karlshausen 2022, 46-47, Fig. 18c), which has a similar shape but is executed with more details; or the only object larger and with known provenance from the Main Deposit in Hierakonpolis, made of limestone, 6.4 x 6.3 x 3.2 cm in size, currently at the Petrie Museum in London, cat. no. UC 15002 (Adams 1974, 22, no. 110, pl. 15, 17), which is called the “ceremonial amulet”, underlining its non-practical form as a personal amulet. Two more examples, one from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, cat. no. JE 66635 (Hendrickx 2023c), and the second only known from a picture (Schlögl and Winzen 2009, 62 no. 4; Hendrickx 2023d), 3.4 x 3.2 cm in size, described as made of calcite alabaster, might constitute even better comparisons to the Tell el-Farkha artefact, as they look similarly sketchily made of a porous material. Unfortunately, both were never properly published, so there is no information on their place of origin, date or even the appearance of the side with the so-called “horns”. Unfortunately, in October 2024, the Cairo “amulet” was still on display at the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir, presented in a way that does not provide more information, while the second example has disappeared into an unknown – probably private – collection. The above-quoted examples demonstrate that the Tell el-Farkha item is not unique in the details of its manufacture or the choice of a porous material (whether a deliberate practice or simply a result of post-depositional degradative processes) and support the idea that the object belongs to a wider group.

“Bull head amulets”

Petrie has already identified the characteristic objects as the oldest form of Egyptian amulets (Petrie and Mace 1901, 26), and they are presently associated with

the general period of NIIC-NIIC2 (Hendrickx 2002, 285). Their appearance is quite easily recognisable, as they are three-dimensional objects composed of a disc and a cylinder creating the basic shape. The second typical feature is the differentiation into two sides of the objects. On one side, two small engraved circles are usually located on the disc, sometimes inlaid with other coloured materials, along with two variously engraved elongated, rounded and usually symmetrical features emerging from the edges of the disc. The other side is usually more convex; in the central part, it has a vertical thickening pierced horizontally. Furthermore, there is no conclusion as to which of the sides should be treated as the front. In most cases, the front is seen on the flat side, where the small circles are interpreted as eyes; however, in some less detailed objects of this kind, the circles are missing, and the convex side with holes is presented as the obverse.

The corpus composed of Egyptian “bull head amulets” has recently counted 129 items (for more details, see Hendrickx 2023a; however, amendments are in preparation, as two Tell el-Farkha pieces are not yet in the database) which largely belong to various museums, while some are probably kept and, unfortunately, hidden in private collections, as their acquisition history is often unclear. The corpus is constantly growing, as every few years excavations bring new specimens; although the greatest number appears nowadays at art auctions. As typical Egyptian products, “amulets” come from early sites located within the territory of modern Egypt; however, some have been discovered further south in Nubia or east in the southern Levant. For nearly half of the objects, their discovery context remains completely unknown; 42 were found in graves, five came from settlement layers, nine from temple or general cultic deposits, while in the case of three others, only the site of provenance is known but not the context – which means we know very little about the way the objects were used and circulated in ancient Egyptian society.

“Bull head amulets” are known primarily as fairly small independent objects, varying in size from 0.9 to 6.4 cm, often found in contexts suggesting their use as parts of composed jewellery pieces; however, some notable examples diverge from this pattern. One such object, deposited in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, cat. no. AM.1948.18 (Payne 1993, 144, Fig. 57, no. 1201), is – in fact – an atypical stone vase. Another example of a fragmentarily preserved stone vase comes from the Main Deposit in Hierakonpolis, presently in the Petrie Museum in London, cat. no. UC15010 (Quibell and Green 1902, pl. XLVIIIa), which has a handle modelled in a shape similar to the amulets. Furthermore, there are two maceheads that were decorated with finely engraved representations of un-

questionably “bull head amulets”. Both objects are unprovenanced; one belongs to the collection of the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin, cat. no. AMP 15142 (Scharff 1926, 49, pl. 30), while the second is only known from a single picture published when the macehead was put up for auction and sold to an unknown collector by Christie’s (An Egyptian Limestone Bull-Headed Cermonial Mace-Head). Furthermore, some independent items are seemingly larger, and some of them are even unpierced – suggesting that they were figurines rather than personal pendants. The choice of materials for their production is also diversified, as they were made of bone, including elephant and hippopotamus ivory, and many kinds of coloured stones such as serpentine, calcite, limestone, carnelian, rock crystal, greywacke, steatite, quartz, amethyst, basalt, malachite, diorite and others. One object is even identified as being made of clay (Hendrickx 2023b). The form of the objects suggests they were meant to be eye-catching little beauties or that their representation was made for a special use.

Interpretation of “bull head amulets”

Although the appearance of the objects is quite similar, characteristic and easily recognisable, the interpretation of what they actually represent is much more obscure. Even Petrie, who first wrote about the “amulets”, had different opinions on their interpretation, as he initially identified them as the *bull’s head* (Petrie and Mace 1901, 26) but later published them as representations of the *ram’s head* (Petrie 1914, 44, pl. XXXVIII, 212a-m). Since then, many other scholars have joined the discussion. According to Baumgartel (1960, 73-74), the “amulets” depicted the mother goddess, while Needler (1984, 317-318) preferred to explain them as relevant to a bull god or a cow goddess. Otto (1986, 140) viewed them as rams, Hoffman (1989, 321) as bucrania or elephants, whereas Adams (1995) and Vassilika (1995) regarded them as symbols of bulls or bovines in general. It seems that in the late 1990s, the interpretation of the objects discussed stabilised as bovine-related and, since then, the term “bull head amulet” has become almost automatically associated with the characteristic shape. One of the main studies on this particular type of “amulets” remains the paper by Hendrickx (2002), which deals with bovine iconography in general; however, it also focuses on the objects. There, they are integrated into a wider discussion, but a final proof is provided for their bull-related explanation, specifically the bucrania found around mastaba S 3504 at Saqqara (Emery 1954, 8-9, pls I, VI-VII; Hen-

drickx 2002, 286-287). In the following years, Hendrickx remained faithful to the theory he formulated, as seen in his later works (Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012, 38-39; Hendrickx *et al.* 2014, 137-139; Hendrickx 2023a), although alternative explanations emerged.

The first of such studies is a paper well-grounded in comparative early Egyptian materials by van Lepp (1999), which boldly rejects the bovine interpretation by proposing an elephant alternative, with which the term “elephant head amulets” came into use. Other, more recent works show that the discussion is still wide open. In Brandl’s (2016, 219-223) opinion, the objects discussed depict two fronts of an elephant seen from the profile and shown together. The shape and its similarity to the sign dw^3-wr , identified by him with “Morning God”, support Brandl’s explanation of the type of object as amulets related to the quoted deity. Interestingly, Hendrickx and colleagues (2014, 138) also observed the similarity of the “bull head amulets” with the sign dw^3-wr (this time read “The Great Mourning One”). However, it led them to a completely different conclusion, which linked the amulets with the representation of a royal false beard. Finally, the latest attempt is the article by Büma (2021), which revisits the topic of the identification of “bull head amulets”, discussing three options: bull, elephant and woman. It is enough to state that the interpretation battle is still raging and that all involved parties are constantly bringing out new arguments. In the following text, the author will refrain from taking any side of the conflict, treating the dispute as still unresolved. However, the term “bull head amulets” will be commonly used, since, to our knowledge, no other term is better associated with the objects in question.

Discussion and conclusion

The newly discovered artefact presented above is certainly a new example of the well-known early Egyptian “bull head amulets”. It bears all the characteristic features used for their description, and with numerous comparisons among the already published materials, it leaves no doubt as to which category it should be associated with. However, as with every handmade item, it also possesses its own unique characteristics. Thus, the Tell el-Farkha item is not fully pierced like most of its counterparts and also belongs to the largest examples (Pl. 3: 2). If we accept the hypothesis that the cracked surface is the result of the post-depositional history of the artefact, it also appears to be a finished object; the carvings

are shallow but complete, and – thus – the lack of a functional suspension hole was accepted by its maker. For clearly practical reasons, it is difficult to interpret the item as a pendant forming part of a necklace that would accompany its owner on a daily basis. Such an observation does not deprive the object of its possible amuletic meaning, but it raises the question of how it was used. Considering the relatively large size of the stone artefact, its regular use must have been a challenge, which also complicates its interpretation as a personal amulet.

The definition of an amulet is stable in the literature on this subject. In the first general study of small ancient Egyptian objects identified as amulets, Petrie (1914, 1) defines them as “something carried about by the wearer”, but also as “put upon the dead” or “set up stationary in the house”, all for their supposed beneficial (magical and/or medicinal) influence. Years later, Andrews (1994, 6) uses the term “amulet” interchangeably with “charm” and “talisman”, underlining that it was worn by a living owner or deposited on the dead body, usually between mummy wrappings. Quite recently, Kalloniatis (2019, 114) points out that after over one hundred years of discussion, the general and very broad definition is impossible to narrow, as it describes a large body of objects connected mainly by their protective function. This means that an object like the one discussed, which has no suspension holes and is larger than most of the other examples, may still retain its amuletic function, being in fact a small figurine.

A large variety of figurines, understood as independent three-dimensional figures meant to be displayed but not worn, were also discovered in Tell el-Farkha (Ciałowicz 2012). They represent people, other living creatures (including those fantastic ones) and miniatures of regular daily use objects. Those found in cultic contexts, which were deposited in sets and served the role of *ex-votum*, were made of ivory and semiprecious stones and represent the best examples of art from the Early Dynastic period, while those discovered in regular settlement layers were often simple and less perfectly shaped. Explaining their meaning without contemporaneous written sources is impossible; however, they were obviously important to their creators and owners. If they were involved in a wide range of social “transactions”, as proposed by Di Pietro (2017, 152-154), an object that mimics a “bull head amulet” could have retained the significance of the original in the physically changed form of a figurine.

And the distinction between a personal amulet and a figurine may not be easy, as shown by the example of so-called “twinned hippopotamus figurines” (Droux 2011). These characteristic objects are schematic but three-dimensional representations of hippopotami made of stone, most often between 6 and 8 cm

in length, and are mounted with what appear to be suspension holes. Since they are rather large and independent artefacts, they are called "figurines"; their regular use as personal amulets would be difficult and uncomfortable, but certainly possible. The key to their identification lies in their function, which unfortunately remains unsatisfactorily explained.

Being fairly large, the object discussed does not seem to be a typical amulet worn by its owner as an element of personal adornment. Furthermore, because it is not pierced, it could not simply be included in a necklace or bracelet typically associated with "bull head amulets". On the other hand, the wide definition of amulets can easily cover both charms in the sense of a personal amulet worn as part of body adornment and independent figurines that were displayed rather than worn. That is why, in the author's opinion, the find from Tell el-Farkha should be seen as a figurine, and the fact that it was discovered in a regular settlement context favours such an explanation.

Non-less obscure remains the interpretation of the object's appearance. The main arguments used in the general discussion of "bull head amulets" do not, as quoted above, lead to satisfactory conclusions, and the particular object in question was executed rather sketchily – which adds very little to the topic. In the author's opinion, we are dealing here with a highly stylised representation of a mighty animal; however, it cannot be determined which one. Either a bull or an elephant is possible, as both accompanied the ancient Egyptians in their natural environment and are present in early Egyptian art. Furthermore, various scholars have most often indicated both animal species as depicted in the "amulets", and both choices are well-supported by iconographic, epigraphic and logical evidence. Thus, to decide how we should proceed with the interpretation of this kind of object, a more general study than just this article is necessary.

Last but not least, the discovery context of the Tell el-Farkha piece also needs closer consideration. As mentioned above, for nearly half of all-known "bull head amulets", their original location was not recorded, and from the remaining portion, 14 come from settlement or temple layers (Hendrickx 2023a) of only four localities: Abydos, Hierakonpolis, Tell el-Farkha (prominent early Egyptian sites) and En Besor (an Egyptian trading post in the Levant). Among these, as many as four items were found in Tell el-Farkha, two published by Hendricks and colleagues (2014, 138-139, Figs. 13-14), one in this paper, and the publication of the last item is in preparation by the author. This means that we should either regard Tell el-Farkha as a unique site, at least when discussing the objects in question, or we should reconsider our popular idea about their typically

burial context, as expressed by Hendrickx (2002, 285). The fact that most “amulets” come from completely unknown places and that the recently discovered pieces were registered, if smaller, as six examples from Adaiima (Minotti 2021, 160-161, 168-169, 197), in graves but, if larger, as in Tell el-Farkha, in settlement and cultic areas, could suggest a kind of diversification in their use. Thus, their function might be symbolic, but not necessarily limited to amuletic adornments and absolutely not restricted to burials.

As already stated, the so-called “bull head amulets” consist of a very interesting type of early Egyptian object. They surely represent the beginnings of Egyptian art and probably participated in early beliefs practised along the Nile; however, their exact function remains obscure. Similarly, the interpretation of their characteristic form is unclear, which continues to spark scholarly debate. Since new items are constantly coming to light, including both recently excavated items and those of unknown provenance circulating on the art market, the corpus is also growing. The more comparative material we have, the more in-depth studies can be conducted. The small discovery made in Tell el-Farkha ignited a deeper interest in “bull head amulets” in the author of this text, who will continue with the subject in the near future.

Acknowledgments

The completion of the text would not have been possible without the implementation of a research project during the stay on the PCMA Scholarship awarded to the author by the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Warsaw, financed by the National Agency for Academic Exchange and cooperating in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The author also wishes to express her gratitude to the reviewers of the text for sharing their very interesting opinions, particularly regarding the voids on the surface of the discussed object.

References

- Adams B. 1974.** *Ancient Hierakonpolis*. Warminster.
- Adams B. 1995.** Bull's Head. In T. Phillips (ed.), *Africa: The Art of a Continent*, 63. London.
- An Egyptian Limestone Bull-Headed Cermonial Mace-Head.** *Christie's*. <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4364769> (30.09.2024).
- Andrews C. 1994.** *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*. London.
- Baumgartel E. J. 1960.** *The Cultures of Prehistoric Egypt*. Volume 2. London.
- Berman L. M., Boháč K. J., Griffin P. S. and Kozloff A. P. 1999.** *Catalogue of Egyptian Art: The Cleveland Museum of Art*. New York.
- Brandl B. 2016.** The Sealings and the *pr-wr* Labels from Tomb U-J at Umm el-Qa'ab, Abydos Reconsidered. In M. D. Adams, B. Midant-Reynes, E. M. Ryan and Y. Tristant (eds), *Egypt at Its Origins 4: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, New York, 26th-30th July 2011, 207-225. Leuven.
- Büma B. 2021.** Stier, Elefant oder Frau? Überlegungen zur Deutung der frühägyptischen "Bull's Head"-Amulette. *Göttinger Miszellen* 265, 51-66.
- Chłodnicki M., Ciałowicz K. M. and Mączyńska A. (eds) 2012.** *Tell el-Farkha I: Excavations 1998-2011*. Poznań–Kraków.
- Ciałowicz K. M. 2001.** *La naissance d'un royaume. L'Égypte dès la période prédynastique à la fin de la Ière dynastie*. Kraków.
- Ciałowicz K. M. 2012.** Votive Figurines from Tell el-Farkha and Their Counterparts. *ArchéoNil* 22/1, 73-93. <https://doi.org/10.3406/arnil.2012.1044>.
- Ciałowicz K. M. and Dębowska-Ludwin J. 2013.** The Origin of Egyptian Mastabas in the Light of Research at Tell el-Farkha. *Études et Travaux* 26, 153-162.
- Ciałowicz K. M., Czarnowicz M. and Chłodnicki M. (eds) 2018.** *Eastern Nile Delta in the 4th Millennium BC*. Kraków–Poznań.
- De Putter T. and Karlshausen Ch. 2022.** *Pierres de l'Égypte ancienne: guide des matériaux de l'architecture, de la sculpture et de la joaillerie*. Brussels.
- Dębowska-Ludwin J. 2023.** *Tell el-Farkha III: The Cemeteries of the Eastern Kom*. Kraków–Pękowoce.
- Di Pietro G. A. 2017.** Beyond the Bounds of Domestic Life? Naqada: Aspects of the Settlement in the Middle-Late 4th Millennium BC. In B. Midant-Reynes, Y. Tristant and E. M. Ryan (eds), *Egypt at Its Origins 5: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt"*, Cairo, 13th-18th April 2014, 145-163. Leuven–Paris–Bristol.
- Droux X. 2011.** Twinned Hippopotamus Figurines of the Predynastic Period. In R. Friedman and P. N. Fiske (eds), *Egypt at Its Origins 3: Proceedings of the Third International Con-*

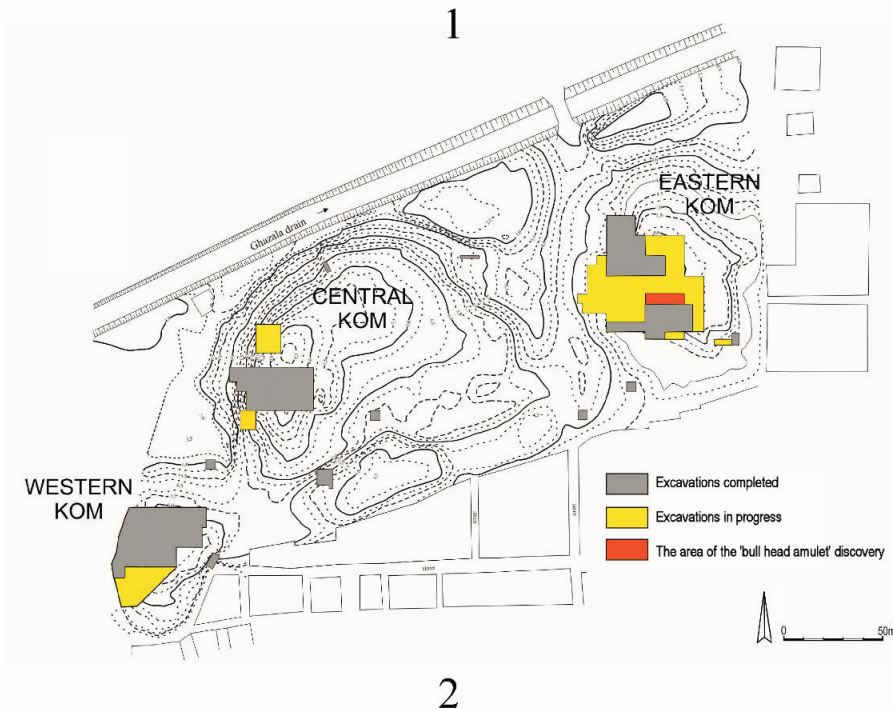
ference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt", London, 27th July-1st August 2008, 349-377. Leuven–Paris–Walpole.

- Emery W. B. 1954.** *Excavations at Sakkara: Great Tombs of the First Dynasty*. Volume 2. London.
- Hendrickx S. 2002.** Bovines in Egyptian Predynastic and Early Dynastic Iconography. In F. A. Hassan (ed.), *Droughts, Food and Culture*, 275-318. Boston.
- Hendrickx S. 2023a.** Bull Head Pendants. *Ponda Predynastic Online Database*. <https://ponda.org/databases/objects/pen/bullhead> (26.09.2024).
- Hendrickx S. 2023b.** PEN-0108. *Ponda Predynastic Online Database*. www.ponda.org/object/PEN-0108 (25.09.2024).
- Hendrickx S. 2023c.** PEN-0117. *Ponda Predynastic Online Database*. www.ponda.org/object/PEN-0117 (29.06.2024).
- Hendrickx S. 2023d.** PEN-0120. *Ponda Predynastic Online Database*. www.ponda.org/object/PEN-0120 (29.06.2024).
- Hendrickx S. and Eyckerman M. 2012.** Visual Representation and State Development in Egypt. *ArchéoNil* 22/1, 23-72. <https://doi.org/10.3406/arnil.2012.1043>.
- Hendrickx S., De Meyer M. and Eyckerman M. 2014.** On the Origin of the Royal False Beard and Its Bovine Symbolism. In M. A. Jucha, J. Dębowska-Ludwin and P. Kołodziejczyk (eds), *Aegyptus Est Imago Caeli: Studies Presented to Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz on His 60th Birthday*, 129-143. Kraków.
- Hoffman M. A. 1989.** A Stratified Predynastic Sequence from Hierakonpolis (Upper Egypt). In L. Krzyżaniak and M. Kobusiewicz (eds), *Late Prehistory of the Nile Basin and the Sahara*, 317-323. Poznań.
- Kalloniatis F. 2019.** *The Egyptian Collection at Norwich Castle Museum: Catalogue and Essays*. Oxford–Philadelphia.
- Minotti M. 2021.** *Adaïma: Volume 4: La parure en contexte funéraire: technique, esthétique et fonction. Catalogue d'étude*. Caire.
- Needler W. 1984.** *Predynastic and Archaic Egypt in The Brooklyn Museum*. Brooklyn.
- Otto B. 1986.** Der narrative und der hierographische stil im frühen Ägypten und im Zweistromenland. In *Actes du Congrès 'Symmetrie'*, 131-149. Darmstadt.
- Payne J. C. 1993.** *Catalogue of the Predynastic Egyptian Collection in the Ashmolean Museum*. Oxford.
- Petrie W. M. F. 1914.** *Amulets*. London.
- Petrie W. M. F. and Mace A. C. 1901.** *Diospolis Parva: The Cemeteries of Abadiyeh and Hu: 1898-1899*. London.
- Quibell J. E. and Green F. W. 1902.** *Hierakonpolis*. Part 2. London.

- Scharff A. 1926.** *Die archäologischen Ergebnisse des vorgeschichtlichen Gräberfeldes von Abusir el-Meleq.* Leipzig.
- Schlögl H. A. and Winzen M. (eds) 2009.** *Die Pyramide von innen. Die Entdeckung des Alten Ägypten im 19. Jahrhundert.* Köln.
- van Lepp J. 1999.** The Misidentification of the Predynastic Egyptian Bull's Head Amulet. *Göttinger Miszellen* 168, 101-111.
- Vassilika E. 1995.** Bull's Head. In T. Phillips (ed.), *Africa: The Art of a Continent*, 63. London.

Joanna Dębowska-Ludwin
Institute of Archaeology
Jagiellonian University in Kraków
joanna.debowska-ludwin@uj.edu.pl

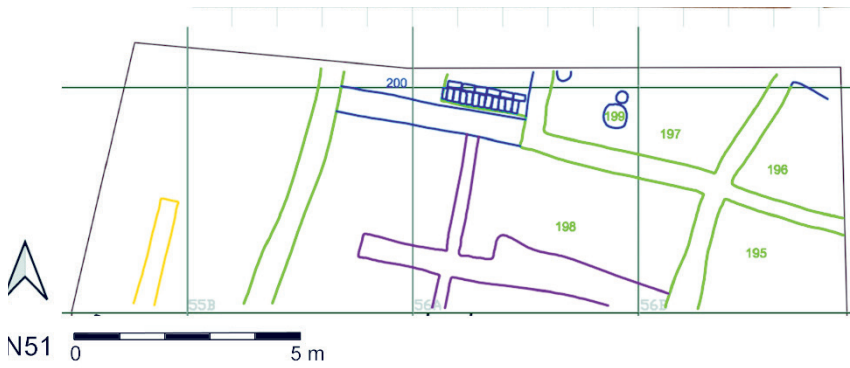
PLATE 1



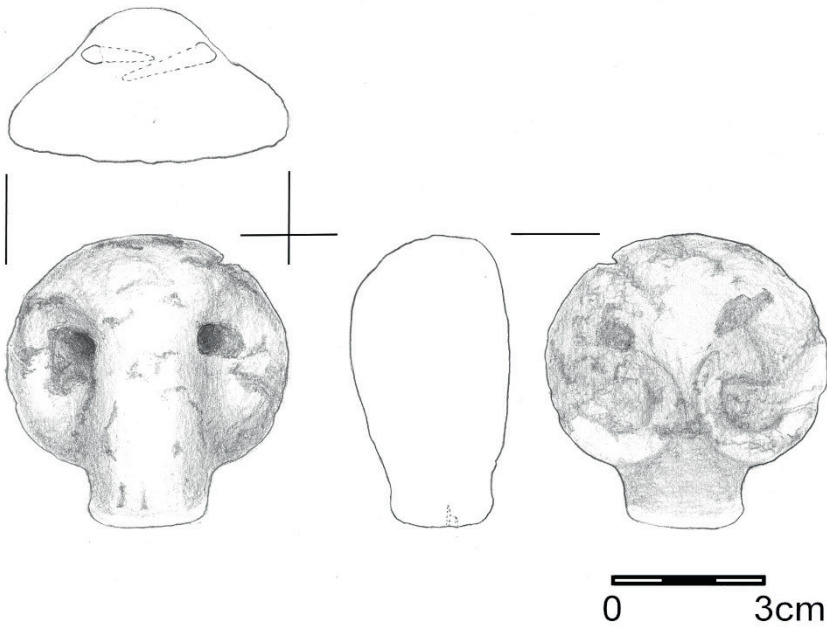
Pl. 1: 1 – Map with the location of all sites mentioned in the text (Author: Kamila Niziołek)

Pl. 1: 2 – Plan of the Tell el-Farkha site

PLATE 2



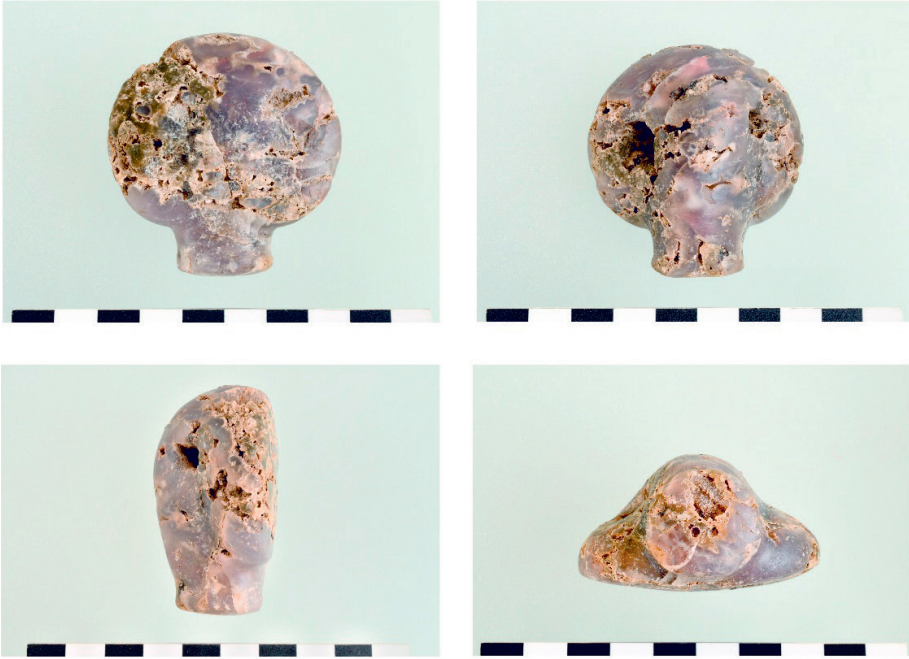
1



Pl. 2: 1 – Plan of the structure where the Tell-el-Farkha item was discovered. Drawing by K. Rosińska-Balik

Pl. 2: 2 – The "bull head amulet" of Tell el-Farkha. Views of different sides. Photos by J. Skłucki

PLATE 3



1



2

Pl. 3: 1 – The “bull head amulet” of Tell el-Farkha. Drawing by R. Pawlus

Pl. 3: 2 – The “bull head amulet” of Tell el-Farkha in relation to a human hand. Photo by K. Rosińska-Balik