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THE *HORUS CIPPUS* FROM NATIONAL MUSEUM IN POZNAŃ

The *Horus cippi* or Horus on crocodiles stelae belong to this category of Late Egyptian religious objects which appear to be well known and understood. However, despite the existence of a number of publications and some preliminary interpretation, there are still a lot of uncertainties related to them. These uncertainties result from the iconographical differentiations and detailed distinctions of the seemingly homogenous cippi. Both iconographical and identification aspects are open to research especially in the context of new objects being published as well as emerging multidisciplinary and comparative studies¹. In addition to that, the not-so-broadly known objects from the Polish collections can contribute to the gaining of complete image of the Horus cippi phenomenon².

¹ The broadest study devoted to the Horus cippi was undertaken by H. Sternberg el-Hotabi: H. Sternberg el-Hotabi, *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Horusstelen: ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte Ägyptens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wiesbaden 1999, B. I, II. The interpretation approach – cf. R. K. Ritner, *Horus on the crocodiles: A juncture of religion and magic in Late Dynastic Egypt*, Yale Egyptological Studies 3 (1989), pp. 103-116; L. Kákosy, *A late Horus cippus*, [in:] H. Győry (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Edith Varga: "le lotus qui sort de terre"*, Budapest 2002, pp. 217-220.

² Apart from the discussed here Poznań cippus, there are two not-so-broadly published objects in the Polish collection: 1. National Museum in Warsaw Inv. No 143.196, wood, without inscription, with Horus the child in a profile and Bes mask in proportion 1:1 mentioned in H. Sternberg el-Hotabi, *Untersuchungen ...*, B. I p. 96 and B. II p. 91 – type Ie dated in the *Mittelphase* 26th – 29th Dynasties; 2. The Czartoryski Foundation Collection in Kraków (National Museum) Inv. No MNK XI-663, stone, from Dendera, mentioned in K. Moczulska, J. Śliwa, *Identyfikacja zabytków egipskich ze zbiorów Czartoryskich z wykazami zakupów z lat 1884-1885*, ZNUJ Prace Archeologiczne, CCLXXXII vol. 14 (1972), p. 95 no 14.

The National Museum in Poznań owns one specimen of these cippi that, so far, has not been described in any publication³. This partially destroyed object, a small-sized stone stela, is a good example of a popular version of Ptolemaic cippi. The top of the stela used to be oval; now its left side is destroyed. The base is rectangular. The central and unique iconographical motif is located on the front side (recto) of the cippus and includes a depiction of young Horus – Harpocrates with magical insignia, Bes mask and two standards. The rest of the surface is covered with five columns of inscriptions strictly encircling the depiction of Horus. The backside of the cippus (verso) contains no iconography, but only partly preserved ten columns of inscriptions which are unreadable, especially in the upper part of the object. The two additional columns with inscriptions are on the both sides of the stela. The base is without any inscription or depiction, excluding contemporary scratches.

The common and eponymous element of all cippi is the motif of young Horus with its attributes. The Horus on the Poznań specimen has a threadbare face with protruding ears and characteristic curl from its right side falling on its shoulder. The most interesting feature of this object is the threadbare surface of face, breasts and partly stomach, that is caused not by the state of its preservation but by the function of the object, that was used in the process of healing/rubbing an injury. The subtle plaited curl may suggest that the face carved out with a lot of attention to detail. Currently these details are not visible due to the way the object was used (as described above). The only visible elements of the face are the eyes and the outline of the nose and cheeks. Horus, as usually, is naked and has a waistline, omphalos, outlined sexual organs and simple legs without feet. The proportions are typical for a child; the child-like features are also prominent on the stomach and breasts. The arms are open – in its right fist Horus holds the symbols of deity – two snakes, a scorpion and an oryx antelope. In its left fist Horus holds another pair of snakes, a scorpion and a lion. The snakes are held half way through their lengths and the scorpion, oryx and lion are held by their tails. The depiction of Horus is crowned by Bes, a mask located on the head of the deity. The mask is partly destroyed but typical features are visible: a broad nose, protruding lips and beard. The proportion ratio between the length of the mask and the length of the figure of the deity, which is one of the dating factors, is in Poznań object as 1:4. The iconographical supplement is a pair of standards located on both sides of Horus. The left one (as from the deity's perspective) is well preserved and represents the head of a Nefertem lotus flower with a menat (*mnj.t*) below it. The right standard is destroyed in its upper part but one may

³ Inv. No MNP A886, height 10,5 cm, width 8-8,2 cm, depth 2,2 cm. This was purchased from a private collection in 1996. I would like to thank the Director of the National Museum in Poznań for granting me permission on publishing the object and Dr I. Głuszek for help in a search query.

infer that the depiction represents Horus on a papyrus scroll (*Hrw hrj w3d.t*). Only the remaining part of the bird is preserved.

The relief is convex, and the details of the curl and scorpion are very precisely defined. The mask is also precisely defined, so are the oryx and lion. On the contrary, the hands and fists are simply schematic. Also hieroglyphic inscriptions are precisely chiselled. The Bes – mask is also sculptured in the top of the stela; it can be pointed out that the iconography adapted to the shape of stone.

As mentioned, Horus with its attributes forms only the iconography of the object. The verso is covered by the columns with inscriptions but the upper part is destroyed by a horizontal crack in the stone. Both recto and verso of the stela bear no traces of polychrome.

Apart from the iconography, the text, unfortunately poorly preserved, is the best source for any interpretations. The fragments of the hieroglyphic inscriptions are also negligent which makes it difficult to focus on the language aspects.

The text begins on the right side (column R), continues on the further ten columns of the verso (columns A-J), follows on to the left side (column L) and ends in five columns of the recto (columns A-E). The text represents the fragments of the so-called hymn “Old man who renews his youth”, whose the canonical full version was put on the famous Metternich stela (incantation 5 = text B according to G. Daressy)⁴.

The translation and correspondence with the lines from the Metternich stela (lines 38 – 48) are as follows (///// – illegible):

Right side

R ///// youth, make Thot come to me (=38)

Verso

A //// with him (= end 38) B //// C //// D //// divide (=39/40) E //// Osiris (=41) F //// if the *neha-her* /crocodile/ leaves (=end 41/43) G //// that is in the water, fish (=42) H //// your gullet is /being blocked/, tongues (=42) I //// all people, all animals that are /in the water/ (=end 43) J //// the protection that is in the water (=beginning 44)

Left side

L //// fish *abed*⁵, arisen (=half 45)

⁴ Lines 38 – 48. Translation: C. E. Sander – Hansen, *Die Texte der Metternichstele*, København, Ejnar Munksgaard, 1956, W. Gutekunst, *Textgeschichtliche Studien zum Verjüngungsspruch aus Horustelen und Heilstatuen*, Göttingen Trier 1995, H. Sternberg el-Hotabi, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-46, S. Hodjash, O. Berlev, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts*, Moscow 1982, cat. 181-184; copy of hieroglyphic inscriptions: N. E. Scott, *The Metternich stela*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin (new series) 9 (8), 1950-1951, p. 208 and G. Daressy, *Textes et dessins magiques*, Le Caire, 1903, p. 8.

⁵ Fragment should be after recto A.

Recto

A in front of /// (=46?) B I am god, oh, I speak, you cannot hear me (=end 46) C ? D //// cry amongst violence (=47) E //// the evil that you inflicted (=end 47)

The hieroglyphic text is of a popular nature and has a lot of mistakes, gaps and shortenings. This is characteristic for this kind of writing in the Ptolemaic times and it can be a result of copying the text by a person who did not understand it⁶. There is also an interpretation of this handwriting as a “metascript” (or “metawriting”) which comprises of hieroglyphic signs carrying a magical message based on the language and symbols, and leads to the pseudo-hieroglyphs. Another characteristic feature is the so-called catch-words indicating the context of the text graphically and through the abbreviations⁷.

The relation to the mentioned Metternich stela is the key to the interpretation of the cippus. The large stone stela, exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, with a base that is densely covered with hieroglyphical inscriptions and strips with compositions consisting of deities and different figures (humans and animals), dates back to the times of the last native pharaoh Nectanebo II of 30th Dynasty (the reign between 360 and 343 BC)⁸. The central figure in the stela is one of the forms of Horus, the so-called Horus the child (Egyptian Horpa-chered) whose Greek equivalent was Harpocrates. The naked child with a characteristic youthful ponytail and a Bes mask above it stands on the top of two crocodiles. The deity holds a snake, a scorpion, an oryx and a lion in each hand. Horus is worshipped by three deities standing on the top of the snakes. The presence of Horus the child is not a coincidence. It is related to an Egyptian legend carved on the Metternich stela. According to the legend, Isis, Horus' mother, walks through the marsh of Delta accompanied by seven scorpions⁹. During their walk Isis and her company are refused shelter by a rich woman. In revenge the scorpions bite the woman's son. Isis, who is offered shelter by a poor woman living in Delta, is then moved by the faith of the rich woman,

⁶ H. Sternberg-el-Hotabi, *Der Untergang der Hieroglyphenschrift*, Chronique d'Égypte 69 (1994), pp. 218-248; N. E. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁷ H. Sternberg-el-Hotabi, *Untersuchungen...*, pp. 128, 137.

⁸ N. E. Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-217; W. S. Golénischeff, *Die Metternichstela*, Leipzig, 1877.

⁹ N. E. Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-216 – beginning from line 48. Polish translation – I. Pomorska, *Izyda i siedem skorpionów*, Przegląd Orientalistyczny, Warszawa 1 (41), 1962, pp. 47-49, see also E. Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptische Märchen, Mythen und andere volkstümliche Erzählungen*, München, 1989, pp. 141-143, 310-312.

who is also bothered by other disasters, and cures the rich woman's son using magic formulae. The text finishes with a prescription to cure bites. The whole text is a combination of a story of a mythical nature with a practical magic spell combined with a useful instruction.

Providing a full detailed description of the iconography of the Metternich stela would prove to be impossible in this paper due to the fact that the iconography includes a large number of deities with multiple attributes and symbolic references. A so-called polymorphic deity, Bes Pantheos is visible in the upper register. The deity is represented in a combined form: a dwarf with additional animal heads, a crown, a double pair of wings, a bird's tail and sceptres stands on so-called ouroboros. The magical symbol of ouroboros is a snake eating its own tail surrounding a representation of an animal, most commonly a lion, a hippopotamus, a crocodile, a snake, a dog, a scorpion or a tortoise. The exact meaning of the animals represented as a part of ouroboros is debatable, despite the expressiveness of the whole motif. On one hand they may be treated as the deity's enemies. On the other hand they may be its assistants, companions, or, which is an attempt to combine both explanations, its former enemies that now serve as its assistants¹⁰. The whole polymorphic figure is difficult to be interpreted. It may be linked to the solar cult, manifestation of the deity's soul or a strong magical transfer, which provides power and divine potential in the everyday life¹¹.

Iconographic motives, mainly the inscriptions known from the Metternich stela are repeated on many other stelae called Horus on the crocodiles or simply Horus' stelae, cippi¹². These stelae ideologically refer to the legend mentioned above and to the other story where Horus himself is a healed victim of dangerous animal. They include a depiction of Horus on the crocodiles, a depiction of other deities and inscriptions with magical formulae and spells. Usually they are of a small size and hence, it is commonly believed that they were either kept at home or carried around. Water was poured on larger items and then, together

¹⁰ L. Kákosy, *Ouroboros on magical healing statues*, [in:] T. DuQuesne (ed.), *Hermes Aegyptiacus. Egyptological studies for B. H. Stricker on his 85th birthday*, Oxford 1995, pp. 123-129; J. Quaegebeur, *Divinités égyptiennes sur des animaux dangereux*, [in:] *L'animal, l'homme, le dieu dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Actes du Colloque de Cartigny, 1981, (Les Cahiers du Centre d'Etude du Proche-Orient Ancien, Université de Genève 2), Leuven 1985, pp. 131-143.

¹¹ G. First, *Polymorphic or pantheistic deities? – some problems with identification and interpretation. Contribution to the manifestation of God in Late Egyptian religion and magic*, [in:] J. Popielska – Grzybowska, B. Józefów (ed.), *Studies on Religion. Seeking Origins and Manifestations of Religion*, Acta Archaeologica Pultuskiensia Vol. III, Pułtusk 2011, pp. 53-63.

¹² H. Sternberg el-Hotabi, *Die Götterdarstellungen der Metternichstele: ein Neuansatz zu ihrer Interpretation als Elemente eines Kontinuitätsmodells*, Göttinger Miszellen 97 (1987), pp. 25-70.

with magical formulae, was used to cure the sick bitten by a snake, a scorpion or another predator. This enhanced water could also be used for prophylactic. In such case the water was enhanced by touching the stone and the magical formulae and was used as prophylactic for bites. It is possible that in the case when someone was bitten, the wound was washed with the water but it is more likely that the water was drank by the person that was bitten¹³. Some smaller stelae, just like the Poznań specimen, reveal signs of rubbing, particularly around the depiction of Horus' head. It is possible that the head was rubbed against the wound¹⁴. In the case of larger stelae which were probably placed on temples' yards, the water was taken to households and used there. In each case there were three aspects of the way the water had an effect on the illness. The first aspect included reciting a selection of formulae and spells from those listed on the stela. The second aspect was the direct contact with the holy water which having interacted with the stela, the spells, and, most importantly, the depictions of the deity gained special powers. The third aspect, potential but most practical, was an application of different medications as well as possibly sucking out a sting, venom and wound wrapping. There is no doubt that even this strictly medical process could not do without the water. Therefore the water, apart from its magical function, was an important component of the medical process.

What kind of medications could be accompanied by the water? We can only speculate about it but it is worth to look at the final spell quoted below from the story about Isis and the 7 scorpions carved out on the Metternich stela:

„Call: Let the child live and the venom die! As Horus will be cured for his mother Isis, so will those who suffer! This is a (compress/bandage) made of spelt bread which effectively exorcises the venom. This is natron and burning garlic extract that exorcise flames from limbs.”¹⁵

The listed “medications” can be interpreted verbatim but it should also be noted that the magical context of its applications might suggest symbolical meaning of each item. Garlic, as well as onion, was one of the basic elements of the ancient Egyptian diet and was widely known to be a strong antiseptic agent. Natron is a popular agent used by Egyptians for mummification and so in the symbolical dimension it was an extension of life beyond death. The bread symbol is also widely recognizable. Listing all these items could not only be a medical

¹³ R. K. Ritner, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁴ S. Hodjash, O. Berlev, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245; L. Kákósy *Les stèles d'“Horus sur les crocodiles” du Musée des Beaux-Arts*, Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts, Budapest 34-35 (1970), p. 19.

¹⁵ N. E. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

instruction but rather a way of symbolically calling for the forces of nature to cure those bitten by different creatures.

Clearly in this case the stelae and the water were used for a particular health-related goal to counteract and prevent bites or cure their results. It may seem that this was a marginal issue in comparison with other threats and illnesses. But such approach could be wrong. Scorpion's bites were a common and serious threat and its effects were very severe¹⁶. According to the literature, the population of the scorpions on the areas similar to the Egyptian desert areas during the summer months could be about five to ten thousand scorpions per hectare¹⁷. Similar approximations may be applied to the snakes as well.

Archaeological collections include large numbers of Horus stelae of different quality, size and craftsmanship. They became particularly popular during the end of Late Period and the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Usually they were used as "mobile" amulets. However, it is worthwhile to look in detail at those Horus stelae that may reveal their actual used. The stela from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo has a base in a shape of an oval water container¹⁸. It is quite large being 64 cm high. The specimen from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo comes from Memphis and dates back to the Ptolemaic period. In the central area of the stela there is a depiction of Horus the child on two crocodiles, holding a pair of snakes in each hand, a scorpion, an antelope and a lion.

However, this depiction is not the only important element in this case, especially that, as noted, it is not much different from other similar amulets. What is interesting is that the stela is set on a deep base with a carved-out oval water container with narrow ducts surrounding the fixing of the stela on the top surface of the base. The oval narrow duct was used for collecting water that was most likely poured over the stela and then the collected water was accumulated in the water container. After the ablution of the stela the water in the container gained healing qualities and could be used for treatment. It could be used externally (for washing the wounds) as well as, most probably, as mentioned above, internally, to be drank by the ill person¹⁹.

¹⁶ W. M. A. Farghly, F. A. Ali, *A clinical and neurophysiological study of scorpion envenomation in Assiut, Upper Egypt*, *Acta Paediatrica* 88/3 (1999), pp. 290-294.

¹⁷ H. W. Fischer – Elfert, *Altägyptische Zaubersprüche*, Stuttgart 2005, p. 21; M. Stoof, *Skorpion und Skorpiongöttin im alten Ägypten*, Hamburg, 2002.

¹⁸ Inv. No CG 9402 – G. Daressy, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-11. See also H. Sternberg el-Hotabi, *Untersuchungen ...*, B. I p. 12 oraz P. Lacau, *Les statues "guérisseuses" dans l'ancienne Égypte*, *Monuments et mémoires. Fondation E. Piot*, 25 (1921-1922), pp. 189-209.

¹⁹ With Horus stelae coexisted group of objects called healing statues. These objects were related to the therapeutic properties of water as a carrier of health and propitiousness and their element were small Horus stelae – cf. L. Kákósy, *Egyptian Healing Statues in three museums in Italy*, Torino 1999, pp. 15-17; D. Kessler, *Zur Funktion der Horusstelen und Heilstatuen vor den Sanktuaren und Kapellen*, [in:] *Studies in honor of Ali Radwan* 2, Le Caire 2005, pp. 81-94.

The small size, approximately a few centimetres, of the other stelae suggest that they could be completely submerged in the „healing” water in a large, collective water pool in the temple and from there the stelae were taken home as amulets²⁰. It is probable that a preserved stone bowl with a depiction of cippus and other deities along with an inscription is a reminiscent of this “water” ritual²¹. The vessel from the Cairo collection comes from the temple in Karnak and was probably used for carrying the water that after touching the stela gained healing properties. There is a similar stone vessel with the inscriptions similar to those on the Horus stela in the British Museum collection²². This vessel is unfortunately damaged. This bowl was probably used for storing the water that gained healing properties most probably due the sole fact of being close to the magical text carved on the surface of the vessel.

With regards to iconography as well as ideology cippi had their predecessors in a form of so-called Shed stelae²³. Shed is a deity of salvation („the saviour”) identified with Horus. Deity is depicted as a male holding dangerous animals in his hands on the stelae dated from the 18th Dynasty to the Third Intermediate Period. The stelae with Shed’s depiction were treated as an expression of individual piety and seeking one’s own personal relationship with the deity.

Looking towards the development of this depiction, there is necessary to mention, that the motif of a person taming animals did not disappear together with the downfall of the indigenous Egyptian cults. An iconographically similar depiction can be seen also on the so-called pilgrim’s ampoules of an early Christian martyr, Saint Menas. These ampoules date back between 4th and 7th AD and were used as water and holy oils containers²⁴. The saint is depicted in a Roman attire with his arms wide stretched and he is surrounded by pairs of animals and crosses which may be a reflection of standards known from cippi.

²⁰ R. K. Ritner, *op. cit.*, p. 106 oraz H Sternberg el-Hotabi, *Die Götterdarstellungen ...*, p. 28.

²¹ Inv. No CG 18490 – F. W. von Bissing, *Steingefässe (CG 18065-18793)*, Vienne 1904-1907, pp. 97-98. Cf. also R. K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, Chicago 1997, p. 107.

²² Inv. No EA 37256 – C. Andrews, *A stone vessel with magical scenes and texts*, [in:] W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, H. Willems (ed.), *Egyptian religion: the last thousand years. Studies dedicated to the memory of Jan Quaegebeur. Pt. 1: archaeologica, texts, gods*, Leuven 1998, pp. 297-310.

²³ A. Forgeau, *Horus enfant, quel nom, quel champ d’action?*, Bulletin de la Société Française d’Égyptologie 153, 2002, pp. 6-23.

²⁴ D. Saura Zorrilla, *Los eulogia de San Menas y las representaciones de Horus en las estelas mágicas: coincidencias y disidencias iconográficas Puesta a punto de un viejo debate*, Collectanea Christiana Orientalia 8 (2011), pp. 165-185, Z. Kiss, *Les Ampoules De Saint Ménas Découvertes A Kôm El-Dikka (1961-1981)*, Warsaw 1988. Similiar object from collection of National Museum in Szczecin is also exhibited in the National Museum in Poznań.

The Poznań specimen as mentioned above, represents private – maybe even personal, popular variant of the great “Horus on the crocodiles” stela. This ordinary version is not a symptom of decline of the workshops producing the cippi but a manifestation of their popularity. It can be defined as a result of supply driven by the worshippers’ demand. What is interesting in this object is that the most important symbolic elements of iconography are kept but there are no crocodiles below Horus, the child. Of course, the simple rectangular base can be treated as unfinished, with traits of treatment for some final finishing. The lack of iconographical element in the form of crocodiles is present in some of the mentioned Shed stelae dating back to Post-Amarna Period. These stelae were not only an iconographic but also ideological “predecessor” of Horus stelae²⁵.

The figure of Horus is obvious to interpret. His connection with a myth as a victim of a bite must guarantee healing or protection against bites. The animals employed in the depiction strengthen the power of the magical message and link it with a deeply religious context. As it is known each emblem can have a positive and negative message; the animals are divine beings but also symbolize malevolent powers and forces. The lion, an animal of rich symbolism in the Egyptian religiousness, subjected to many gods and goddesses, symbolizes power and strength but also danger²⁶. However, in the context of the discussed object the more important aspect of the lion’s role is the solar power of regeneration²⁷. A similar antithesis can be noticed in the symbolism of a scorpion-arachnid that represented danger in the human context but also the divine care. Another animal held by Hours is a snake or rather a pair of snakes. The presence of the snake as a symbol of, on one hand, chaos and evil and, on the other hand, rebirth and continuity visible in the symbol of ouroboros does not exhaust the rich message of this depiction. From the point of view of a common inhabitant of the Nile Valley, the snake was a severe threat and hence the protection against a snake was an important driving factor and an element of magic. And the last animal held by Hours, an antelope, living on the inhospitable desert, not yielding to domestication had a unequivocally negative ideological meaning due to being a threat to the sun and at the same time, to the life cycle and *maat*, the order²⁸.

²⁵ H Sternberg el-Hotabi, *Untersuchungen* ..., p. 58.

²⁶ See for example J. Malek, *A lioness at peace: two aspects of the goddess Bastet*, Boletín de la Asociación Española de Egiptología 11 2001, pp. 141-148.

²⁷ H Sternberg el-Hotabi, *op. cit.*, p. 16; S. Blétry, *Pour une nouvelle approche de la symbolique du lion: Grèce, Orient, Égypte*, [in:] S. H. Aufrère (ed.), *La vallée du Nil et la Méditerranée: voies de communication et vecteurs culturels. Actes du colloque des 5 et 6 juin 1998*, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier 2001, pp. 35-50.

²⁸ Ph. Germond, *L’oryx, un mal-aimé du bestiaire égyptien*, Bulletin de la Société d’Égyptologie de Genève 13 (1989), pp. 51-55.

The standards visible nearby, with the symbols of Horus and Nefertem on the top, are also related to the solar and life cycles²⁹. The mask/face of Bes is an interesting motif. Bes, a deity mentioned earlier, in whose context next to apotropaic function, what is really important is comparing his „old” face with Horus’ youth. This bimorphism is not often noted in the interpretation of cippi and symbolizes the rebirth cycle of the solar god that travels and revives cyclically through time³⁰.

The text carved out, or rather indicated, on the surface of the Poznań specimen is another evidence for this ideological program. As mentioned, the text is an excerpt from a hymn called “Old man who renews his youth”. The sacred text carries a meaning full of mythological references, connotations and quotes from other religious texts. Reciting the text was supposed to ensure rebirth guaranteed by the gods that were called, their manifestation in a shape of animals and water. Most probably the religious layer contributed to the practical activities focused on protection against dangerous animals. The Poznań cippus was also used for this purpose.

Just like in the case of other stelae, it is extremely difficult to date and locate geographically the discussed stela³¹. The distinctive features of the Poznań specimen which may indicate the chronological context are: the nature of the inscription, the dominating figure of Harpocrates with classically depicted attributes, proportion between Bes mask and the central figure, the lack of iconography at the back of the stela, the lack of depiction of the crocodiles at the feet of the deity and the lack of additional symbols on the recto side. With regards to the penultimate features, if we assume that the stela had been finished, there is a similar iconographical setting of the deity’s legs “leading” into the base represented on the stela from the Walters Art Gallery³². However, in this case the crocodiles are vividly depicted on the upper layer of the base. Thanks to its features the Poznań specimen can be dated to the Ptolemaic Period when the development of the stelae was very dynamic. This period is defined as *Hochphase*³³ in the taxonomy by H. Sternberg el-Hotabi. The inscription features

²⁹ H Sternberg el-Hotabi, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁰ Y. Koenig, *La polymorphie divine en Égypte*, [in:] W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, H. Willems (ed.), *Egyptian religion: the last thousand years. Studies dedicated to the memory of Jan Quaegebeur, Pt. 1: Archaeologica, texts, gods*, Leuven 1998, pp. 661-664 and E. Junod, *Polymorphie du dieu sauveur*, [in:] J. Ries, Y. Janssens, J. M. Sevrin (ed.), *Gnosticisme et monde hellénistique, Actes du Colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve (11-14 mars 1980)*, Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, 1982, pp. 38-46.

³¹ H Sternberg el-Hotabi, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Apart from the collections, stelae are quite exceptionally found in situ: for example E. Laskowska-Kusztal, *La stèle d’Horus sur les crocodiles d’Athribis*, *Études et Travaux*, Varsovie 17 (1995), pp. 85-93.

³² Inv. No 22212, <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/2643/cippus-of-horus/>. The specimen is dated back to the Later Period (664 – 342 BC).

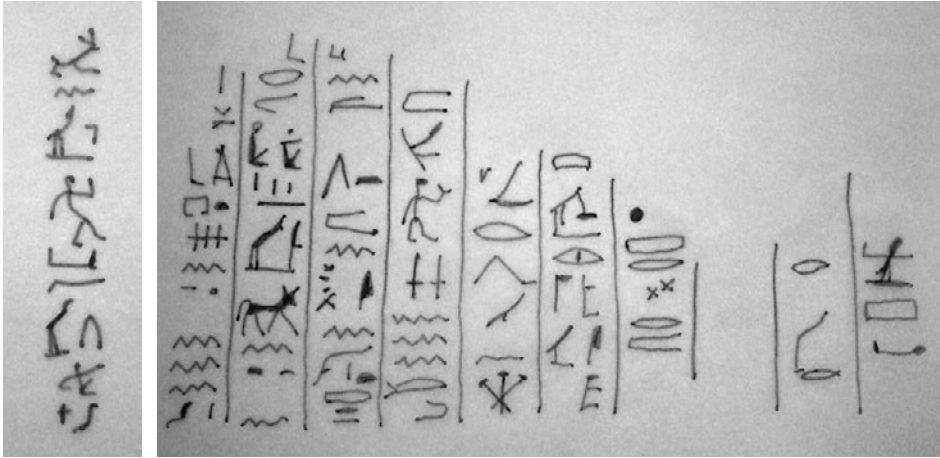
³³ H Sternberg el-Hotabi, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-124.

show an inclination towards metascript (*Metaschrift*), which suggests that the stela should be dated between *Mittleren* (280 – 180 BC) and *Späten Hochphase* (180 – 30 BC). If we accept the later date, the most similar features can be noted in the type IC objects³⁴. In any case, the Poznań specimen is a popular and common version of a cippus, which enhanced the most important symbolical ideological features of a stela so that it ensured effectiveness to its owner.



Fig. 1. Stela MNP A 886 (recto and verso), *courtesy of National Museum in Poznań*

³⁴ Ibid., p. 145. The so-called *workshop I* demonstrates similar features in terms of craftsmanship (for example, wiped face surface) – pp. 172-177.

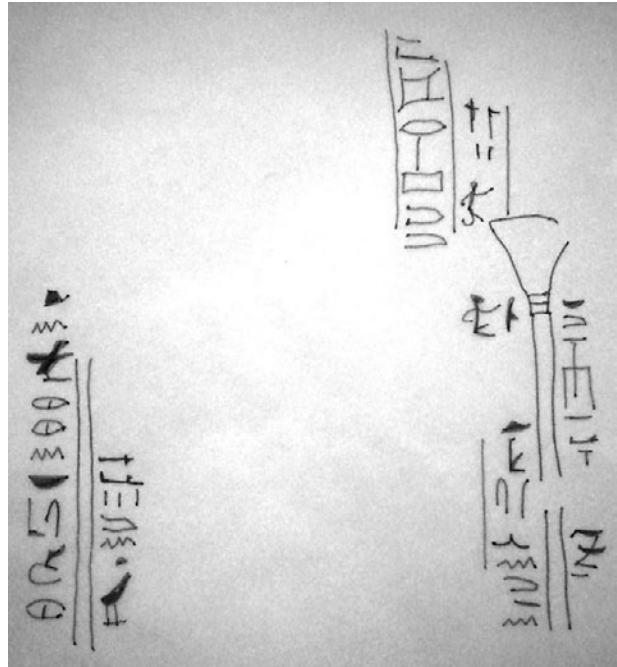


Right side (R)

Verso (J←A)



Left side (L)



Recto (E←A)

Fig. 2. Hieroglyphic inscriptions – sketch copies