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like steatite of an ochre-greenish colour with "cloudy" black and brown bands. All the surfaces are smooth and bear a greasy gloss, which is characteristic for the raw material but is possibly also the result of rubbing wear ("Taschenglanz", or "pocket polish"). The direction of the stone grain follows the longitudinal axis of the artefact.

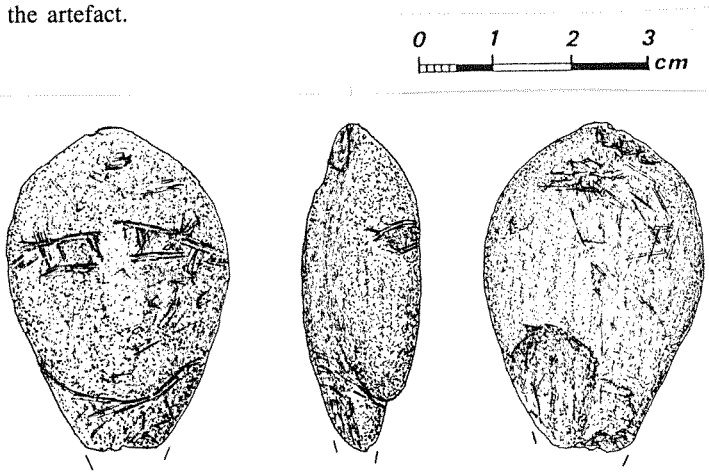

Fig. 1. The new head from Basta (steatite, preserved length: 44.3mm, max. width: 29.4mm, max. thickness: 15.3mm; drawing by H.G.K. Gebel).

The state of preservation is unclear: obvious damage in the neck area indicates that at least the neck was longer than preserved. If the completely preserved Green Head from Basta represents a common figurine type (amulet), we may not reconstruct more than the stump of a neck here. If it represents part of a human figurine with a body, we would not be able to quote parallels with such a head style. However, the neck of such a piece would have been the weakest part and vulnerable to breakage.

Fig. 2. Enlargement of the new Basta head (view of face).

It also is not certain whether the modeling of the head's details was finished. While the general shape of the head looks finished and possibly results from a combined carving/ grinding process (there are no traces of carving, except for below the chin), only the squarish-rectangular eyes were marked by linear cut marks that meet in approximately rectangular angles (as deep as 1.2mm). No mouth or nose is indicated, but the presumed nose area is the most prominent elevation in the section. Some cut marks in other parts of the face may represent earlier attempts to shape the head (it would be going too far to interpret these as representations of tattoos).

The new head has a common style of shape with the two other heads (Hermansen 1997), which would allow us to speak of a distinctive LPPNB type:

1) an inverted drop-shaped face with a somewhat pointed head,
2) similar dimensions ("micro-heads")
3) flattish, plano-convex longitudinal section (between the back of the head and the face), and
4) massive, plano-convex transverse section (between the head and the face)

To our knowledge, this type of artefact is so far known only from Basta. Their original meaning remains insecure, but some context of their finding might be related to reciprocal practices between living and dead (*cf.* Hermansen 1997). As for their original meaning (use), we think that they may be fetishes that are unconnected with gender representation. Subrecent and elsewhere, similar small miniature masks (pendants, called *ikhokho*) are reported from the Middle Pende groups on the Kwilu in southwestern Zaire. Here they are reported to occur in two contexts: as made by relatives to represent an ill person in a healing ceremony, or pieces manufactured by specialists as ornaments (pendants) in order to testify to the good taste of the bearer (Biebuyck and Herreman 1995/96: 262 *f*).

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Flint "Bowlets" from the LPPNB of Southern Jordan

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We report here a distinctive but rare flint item that so far -according to our knowledge- has only been recorded in southern Jordan, from Basta (Nissen, Muheisen and Gebel *et al.* 1991: 25*f*, Pl. III: upper left) and now from Ba'ja. In both sites these naturally concave flint "bowlets" occur in very small numbers (from each site there are only 3 specimens). With their shallow concavities, which are mostly natural depressions in the raw material, they appear bowl-like after having been flaked to have a rounded shape. Their general characteristics are:

- -round shapes (diameter 5-10 cm) cvreated around a natural depression
- -concave-convex sections
- -concave natural surfaces that result from thermal impacts (hea ting or freezing, so-called "weather pops") or represent a cortical depression (e.g. the above quoted example from Basta)
- -convex bottoms which either represent the spherical/ rounded parts of a nodule (bearing either cortex or wadi battering) or which were flaked in the manner of a one-sided discoidal core
- -lateral flaking and chipping along (parts of) the perpendicular obverse in order to create a more round shape and smooth edges.

The three pieces presented here (Fig. 1: a-c) all were found in the 1999 season of Ba'ja excavations (*cf.* report to come in *Neo-Lithics* 3/99), and are described here in detail in order to draw attention to these items among the flint specialists and excavators.

Ba'ja 12026 (Fig. 1:a). The basic form is one half (a natural fragment) of a small flat nodule with preserved cortex. Over most of the (upper) surface of the break, natural heat spalls (flakes) created a depression. The bottom surface is abraded cortex (with

reddish pigments?). Flaking and lateral chipping towards the depression's center were carried out along parts of the perimeter to produce a more perfectly rounded shape.

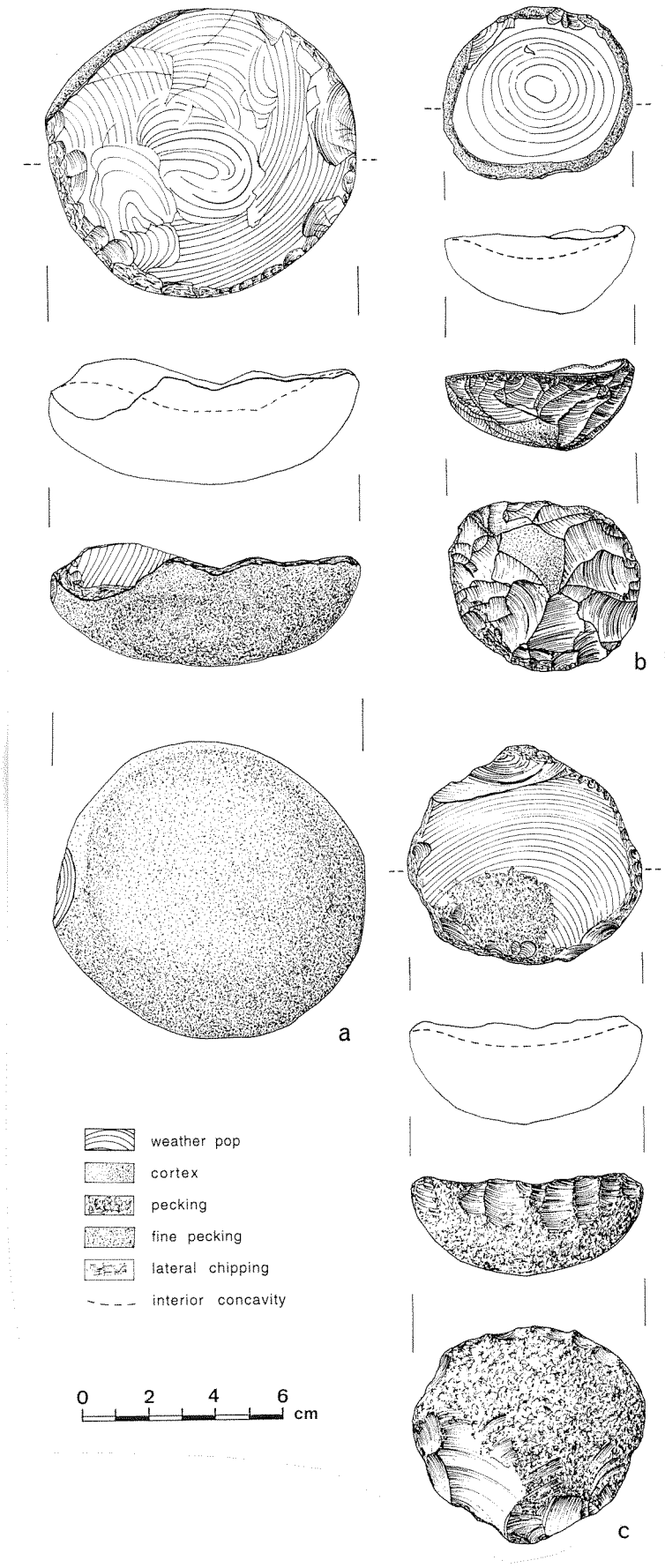

Fig. 1a-c: Flint "bowlets" from LPPNB Ba'ja (1999 finds) <drawings by H.G.K. Gebel>.

Ba'ja 12070 (Fig. 1:b). The basic form is a chunk of flint with a round and shallow negative created by a weather pop in its cortex surface. (The "negative" shows a slight desert varnish). The cortical surface served as a platform to remove flakes around the edges of this negative, leaving a "ring" of cortex around it (obverse surface). These flakes were directed towards the center of the bottom side, in the manner of a discoidal core, from all around the irregular rounded perimeter, leaving here an "island" of the chunk's desert varnish bearing surface.

Ba'ja 12033 (Fig. 1:c). The basic form is a chunk of flint with a natural, very shallow patinated depression that resulted from a „weather pop". The bottom surface and some of the sides were at least partly shaped to a round, convex contour by flaking from the surface of the depression. Later, fine pecking finished the shaping of the bottom, obscuring completely the flake scars on the bottom and continuing onto the negative scars on the sides. On the obverse (the shallow patinated depression), a circular area of even finer pecking exists, although this feature may have resulted from a pecking use of the piece. Here a rough surface could have been created for rubbing pigments that were processed further on the other parts of te surface. Small lateral flakes and chipping along the obverse perimeter indicate the interest to produce a more round and smooth shape before the pecking was carried out.

So far the function of the pieces remains obscure. They look like hand-held palettes to process unknown materials. Only in two cases of all known six pieces were red pigments observed, both on the "obverse" depression.

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Announcements

Research Opportunity: Postgraduate Research Opportunity with the ZAD Project

Are you fascinated by stone tools, have a good First Hons degree/ MA/ or published papers, and love working in the Middle East? If this is you, then we are still entertaining options for a Ph.D. student to analyse the new Zahrat adh-Dhra' 2 (ZAD 2) Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA) site flaked stone tool assemblage (dating *ca.* 10,200 - 9,500 bp) from Jordan. The successful candidate will be enrolled at La Trobe University, be supported for a post-graduate scholarship application, be transported to the site, and maintained on the excavations at the ZAD Project's expense. Lithics may be exported and flown to LTU for analysis in the off-season.

The site will be dug, sieved, and the artefacts collected to the highest standards. The candidate will be expected to be responsible for the analysis of the assemblage, contribute to the ZAD project's publications, and attend conferences to report on the findings. If you think this is you, then please contact me:

Dr Phillip Edwards, Department of Archaeology, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Melbourne, Victoria 3083, Australia
Telephone: (03) 9479-1978, Email: p.edwards@latrobe.edu.au

The ZAD project is an Australian Research Council (ARC)-supported joint investigation conducted by La Trobe University and Arizona State University, directed by Phillip Edwards, Steven Falconer (archaeologists), Pat Fall (geographer and palaeobotanist) and Phillip Macumber (geomorphologist). The project aims to develop new understandings of the cultural and natural history of the Dead Sea Plain in Jordan by investigating ZAD 2 and the neighbouring site of ZAD 1, a large Middle Bronze Age (*ca.* 2,000-1,500 BC) town.

The proximity of the two sites provides a unique opportunity for investigating the ways in which human settlement and