

# FIGURINES IN THE PRZEWORSK CULTURE FROM THE EARLY ROMAN PERIOD FROM THE TERRITORY OF POLAND

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The figural relics do not constitute frequent findings in the area of the Przeworsk culture. It may be the reason why they have not been comprehensively researched. Although they were sometimes taken into consideration, they were usually treated as a thing of minor importance in the studies devoted to other subjects (Florkiewicz 2006). Many researchers emphasise that the figural relics are not typical for the Przeworsk culture; therefore, as they suggest, such objects are imports or borrowings from the other culture circles.

So far, within the area of the Przeworsk culture from the early Roman period 10 single figurines and 2 vessels decorated with figural ornamentations which can be dated to the early Roman period, have been discovered. Additionally, these relics can be divided into two categories: anthropomorphic figurines and zoomorphic figurines (including ornitomorphic).

The findings from the burial ground in Chmielów Piaskowy and from the settlement in Wietrzno belong to the anthropomorphic figurines category. The object from Chmielów Piaskowy represents essentially the upper part of a very strongly burnt and deformed vessel in the form of a woman's figurine (**Fig. 1:1**). The head is leaning sideways as the result of the fire influence. On the „top” part of the head is the groove running around the head, which presumably is a trace of a head band or a cap. On the left side and on the back of the head the sophisticated, now very deformed hairstyle is recognizable. On the neck there is an artistic representation of the neck ring. The breasts or their remains have been preserved. The right hand, bent at the elbow, survived almost completely. There is only a trace of the left arm up to the hand. The figurine holds the pot with the two-cone belly and a curved rim with both hands. The rim served also as the outlet leading inside the anthropomorphic pot (Godłowski, Wichman 1998, p. 23, 72).

The head with the piece of the torso is almost all what has been left out of the figurine from Wietrzno. The low forehead is decorated with the row of small hollows limited by two shallow grooves, meeting on the temples (**Fig. 1:2**). The arched row of hollows is situated on the occiput and around the thick carelessly executed neck. On the occiput there are two well-marked conical bumps. Below the temple, at the handle level, the slightly protruding bump with the round hollow inside (preserved on one side only) can be seen. The similar bump was located on the other side of the figurine's head. Such a bump was broken off before the object was unearthed. On the front of the torso, below the unmarked arms there are two shallow hollows (Janowski 1959, p. 394).

The other relics are the zoomorphic representations. From among the isolated zoomorphic figurines, eight bear traces of breaking off, which may suggest that they did not represent the separate artworks, yet they might constitute a part of, for example, a vessel. The remaining figurines were undoubtedly separate artworks. The findings from the burial ground in

Jakuszowice and the burial ground in Sobocisko can be included in the same group. They are birds' representations. The figurine from Jakuszowice is not a very realistic representation (**Fig. 2:1**). However, the relic from Sobocisko was made quite carefully (**Fig. 2:2**). The figurine has the opening on the back, which probably was connected by the little channel with the second outlet on the forehead of the bird. Unfortunately, the figurine was badly damaged in the time of discovery, so its original appearance remains uncertain.

In case of the remaining relics discovered within the Przeworsk culture area, it is very probable that they were a part of the other objects. As it was mentioned above, the traces of breaking off suggest such a possibility. Some of these figurines might be a decoration of, for example, a pot, such as in the case of the artefact from Wymysłowo (**Fig. 3**). It also applies to the relics from Igołomia (**Fig. 4:1**), Opatów (**Fig. 4:2-3**) or Strobin (**Fig. 4:4**). They represent mostly unspecified four-leg animals, as well as birds. A few of these figurines could be the fragments of the lids, as in case of the relics from Chmielów Piaskowy (**Fig. 1:1**), Igołomia (**Fig. 4:1**), Opatów (**Fig. 4:2-3**), Strobin (**Fig. 4:4**) or Wietrzno (**Fig. 1:2**). R. Madyda-Legutko (1996) was the first researcher who paid attention to such possibility, and also K. Godłowski and T. Wichman (1998) took it into consideration in the monograph devoted to the burial ground in Chmielów Piaskowy. The analogies to the lids decorated with the figurines were found by the researchers in the Geto-Dacian materials (Madyda-Legutko 1996, p. 54; Godłowski, Wichman 1998, p. 72). Within the range of this culture, the artistic representation of riders as well as animals appeared (Bichir 1973, p. 154-156). For example, on the lid from Cârlomanești the wolf figurine was placed (Sîrbu 1987, fig. 9:7). The interesting fact is that zoomorphic representations in the artistic form were also noticed in case of pottery, serving as handles (Bichir 1973, pl. CXXXIX:1-2, CXL:1-9; Berciu 1981, pl. 18:3, 7; 27:2).

In addition to that, the findings from Gać and Wymysłów are exceptionally interesting. In the burial ground in Gać the decorative vessel was unearthened, which probably had the shape of a standing ox with the cylindrical hole on its back (**Fig. 5:1**). Only a hole and an schematically executed ox head were preserved. The horns were damaged; the eyes were marked with two pressed points, and the muzzle is perforated in order to pour a small trickle of fluid. The clay ox head, which most probably was a part of a zoomorphic vessel, comes from the burial place in Wymysłowo (**Fig. 5:2**). The head is empty inside, with the outlet at the cylindrically shaped muzzle. Two small hollows mark the eyes. The horns (one broken off) grow on the line constituting prolongation of the nape of the neck. The head is decorated with incised lines: two lines are running from the bottom of the horns through the forehead; similarly, two lines from the middle of the forehead are running to the bottom of the muzzle, on the upper part and the other two – from the horns to the muzzle on the sides. The groove is running around the bottom of the muzzle. The head is broken off at the end of the neck, in the place where probably the lower part of the vessel once was. Due to the fact that these figurines have the opening in the muzzle, it seems that they may be a part of vessels serving for drinking or pouring fluids. The heads may form the rim of the vessels. The similar vessels are known from the Geto-Dacian sites, for example in Răcățau and Poiana (Sîrbu 2003, fig. 5:1, 2). They belong to the „kernos” type pottery, in the cubical form with the channel serving for pouring (Sîrbu 2003, p. 90). Although animal figurines such as those on these vessels have no outlets through which fluid could be poured, the cylindrical outlet discovered in Gać suggests the similar solutions.

The relics of the Przeworsk culture occurred also in the settlements and in the burial grounds. However, much more artefacts were discovered in the burial sites. The apparent disproportion regarding the types of figurines can be observed. Only two from ten similar relics

are anthropomorphic; the remaining eight constitutes zoomorphic representations (cattle and birds), predominantly oxen representations. There is no precise distinction between them either. In burial grounds, as well as in settlements, both types of representations are met. However, more zoomorphic figurines are found in grave complexes. Considering this fact, it is thought that the figural images were made in connection with beliefs or magical rites. It is still unclear whether it relates in any way to the degree of the figurines destruction. They might be damaged intentionally, or maybe the damages occurred as the result of the actions after their deposition.

The purpose of these objects is unknown. They are sometimes interpreted as children toys. Some of them may be the tools designed for making sound or musical instruments. The oritomorphic figurine from the burial ground in Sobocisko (**Fig. 2:2**) may serve as an instrument – it originally could be a rattle or even a whistle. The similar assumptions could be supported by the fragmentarily preserved clay oritomorphic figurine from Igołomia (**Fig. 4:1**). It is empty inside, with the hole situated in the tail. Its discoverer suggested that it could be a „musical instrument”. The Polish archaeologist, prof. T. Malinowski expresses the analogical assumptions regarding the ox head from the burial ground in Wymysłowo (Malinowski 1999, p. 55). However, the previous conclusions on the subject of the relic from this site now seem to be more rational.

The above-mentioned pot decorated with the figurative ornamentation originating from the burial ground in Opatów is a completely different relic. Its hand is made of clay, strongly burnt and partly deformed in the fire of funeral pyre, which makes its reconstruction considerably difficult (**Fig. 6**). Its upper part with the marked curved outside rim and the zoomorphic shaped handle has been preserved; the lower bottom of the handle was probably running to the maximum bulge of the belly, decorated with the belt of ornamentation made of the oblique grooves. The other sherd of this vessel constitutes a part of the round belly with the ribbon-like, fluted handle. In the upper part of the handle is the next area of the fragmentarily preserved ornamentation in the form of the regular circular hollows 11 mm in diameter, surrounded by incised arches (Madyda-Lcgutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003, p. 210).

The artistic relics were also found in the late Roman sites of the Przeworsk culture. In the settlement in Różyce-Stara Wieś (**Fig. 7:1**) the animal figurine – a mole or a piglet – was discovered (Wiklak 1995, p. 168). In the settlement in Jakuszowice the artistic representation of a rooster (**Fig. 7:2**), probably constituting an element of the zoomorphic pitcher, wheel made, was unearthen (Rodzińska-Nowak 2003, p. 335). A very similar object (**Fig. 7:3**) comes from the burial ground in Opatów (Rodzińska-Nowak 2003, p. 336). Moreover, in the burial ground in Spicymierz (Kietlińska, Dąbrowska 1963, p. 183) the piece of the ox figurine was discovered (**Fig. 8:1**). The clay head of an ox (**Fig. 8:2**) were found in the settlement in Zofipole (Dobrzańska 2000, p. 48) and a head of horse (**Fig. 8:3**) were found in the settlement in Igołomia (Buratyński 1976, p. 105-107, fig. 16; Dobrzańska 1990<sup>1</sup>, p. 43, pl. XXXVIII:8; 1990<sup>2</sup>, p. 60, 81). The attention could be paid also to the figurine from Aleksandrowice, site 2 (**Fig. 9**), discovered in the upper part of the fill of the late Roman (Naglik 2000, p. 49; 2001, p. 321). Only the upper part of the figurine was preserved; the legs were broken off at thighs level. Its trunk and head were modelled from one piece of clay, whereas the hollows made with fingers marked the eyes, the mouth and the navel. Additionally, the navel was filled with the lump of clay. The hands were glued, and fingers and hair were schematically incised with a comb. From the area of the Przeworsk culture the handmade pottery decorated with the engraved figural motifs, both zoo- and anthropomorphic, are known (Bugaj, Makiewicz 1995). All these above-mentioned relics originate from the burial grounds. Thus, on the basis of such evidence, it is

assumed that these figural representations were probably connected with the beliefs or magical rites (Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003, p. 213; Rodzińska-Nowak 2003, p. 337). Additionally, the similar figurative motifs, also in artistic forms, were shown on the pottery from the territory of the Elbian culture circle as well as from the southern part of Scandinavia (Bugaj, Makiewicz 1995, p. 117-118; Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003, p. 213).

The representations of human figurines from the Roman times are hardly ever found in the territory of Barbaricum. Thus, searching for analogies in Geto-Dacian world, inter alia, seems to be logical. Analogies for the presented findings can be found in many sites belonging to the Geto-Dacian cultural circle. The separate artistic figurines, in addition to birds representations, show other animals, as well as more or less realistic human figurines (Vulpe 1927-1929, fig. 120:2-4; Babeş 1977, p. 336-340, fig. 11, 12; Sîrbu 1987, fig. 8, 9:4).

The anthropomorphic relics from the territory of Romania (Geto-Dacian) are made of clay more carelessly. Cuts, pressings and hollows mark the details of a human body (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 87, fig. 105; 109). In principle, the sex of the figurine was not marked. According to the Romanian researchers, all kinds of punctures and perforations on the figurines suggest the "black magic" practices (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 87).

As far as zoomorphic representations are concerned, in most cases they are difficult to identify. Although they were made more carefully, they rarely have features suggesting their genus (species), such as, for example, ox horns (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 87, fig. 106; 110).

It is interesting that in the territory of Romania figurines were discovered inside houses, close to the clay altars or hearths (fireplaces), quite often in the inventories together with the other artefacts, such as for example miniature pottery, rattles, exotic shells or tortoise carapaces (Sîrbu 1993, p. 129-175; Sîrbu 2006, p. 67, fig. 43-44). They were also found as "deposits" in clay pots and household objects. They were very rarely discovered in graves, and no figurines were registered "in situ" in the Geto-Dacian temples (Sîrbu 2006, p. 69).

In the process of dating the figurines from the territory of Romania two time horizons are taken into account. The first is the period between 13<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.; currently over 300 anthropomorphic figurines and over 250 zoomorphic figurines are known. The second horizon corresponds to the period between 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.; more than 380 anthropomorphic and over 100 zoomorphic figurines are known from this period (Sîrbu 1993, p. 58-70; Sîrbu 2006, p. 68-69).

The figurative art was also renowned in the Sarmatian environment. During the first centuries A.D. the vessels with the zoomorphic handles appeared in the region stretching from the northern coast of the Black Sea to Central Asia (Abramova 1969; Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003, p. 214). It should be emphasised that the animal ornamentation is typical for nomadic tribes living in the Bronze Age and thereafter. Zoomorphic decoration of the Sarmatian pottery, known from 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., probably derives from the decorative style which was originally used in ornamentation of the silver and gold products (Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003, p. 214). Thus, the round hollows surrounded by engraved arches, such as those on the pot from Opatów (**Fig. 6**), seems to be, in the opinion of the authors, the distant reference to decorations of the metal vessels known in the Caucasian and Pontic zones in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. and in the first centuries A.D. (Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003, p. 214).

As it was mentioned above, the figurative relics are not typical for the Przeworsk culture. For that reason it is interesting to consider how the findings typical for the Geto-Dacian culture – since there are most analogies – got to the inventories of the Przeworsk culture communities.

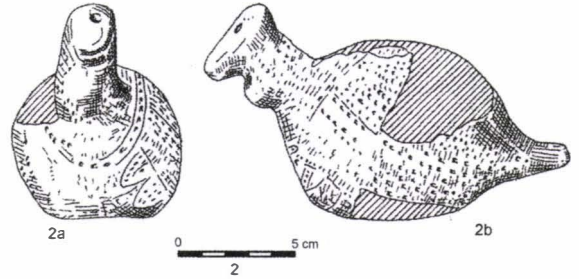
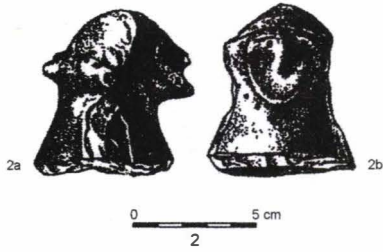
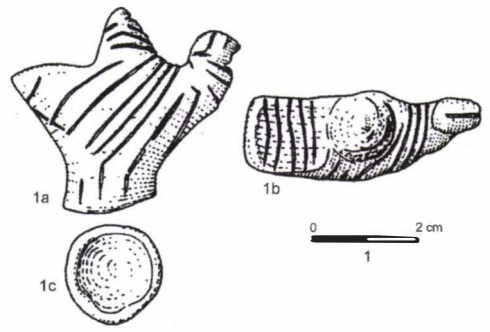
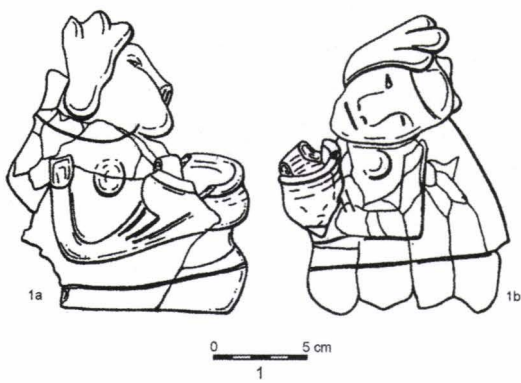
Thus, the possibility that they were imported should be taken into consideration. The attention could be paid to the fact that although such findings were present in the Dacian culture circles, they are completely unknown in the area of the Lipice culture. So far, the similar relics have not been found in the mixed Celtic-Dacian horizon in Slovakia or within the Puchowska culture area, which also possesses Dacian substratum. However, they were discovered in the stronghold in Malaja Kopanja in the Transcarpathian Ukraine (Kotigoroško 1995, p. 102, fig. 51:1), but they are mainly known from the territory of the present Romania, among others from the site in Răcățău (Sirbu 2003, fig. 7:2). A small number of zoo- and anthropomorphic figurines found in the area of the Przeworsk culture presence may attest that they were transported from the other regions as a result of trade exchange or as loots or gifts. The local imitation of the objects, which must have been known by the population of the Przeworsk culture cannot be excluded either. Due to lack of the similar findings within the Lipice culture area, it seems that this territory should be excluded as an area serving as the intermediary in transferring the similar impulses. On the map of the distribution of this kind of findings, no area can be distinguished where an accumulation of the similar relics can be noticed (**Fig. 10**). Such figurines are found in the southeastern Poland, as well as in Greater Poland and Silesia. It appears that the lack of the similar relics on the area of the Lipice culture and in the territory of Slovakia may indicate that the analogical elements were transferred into the circle of the Przeworsk culture directly, without their distinctive intermediation. Thus, the direct transfer of the similar relics from the area for which they were typical could be considered. Now, the question arises: are those figurines the evidence of the physical presence of Dacians in the Przeworsk culture area or are they only the evidence of the wide-spread influence of the Geto-Dacian culture?

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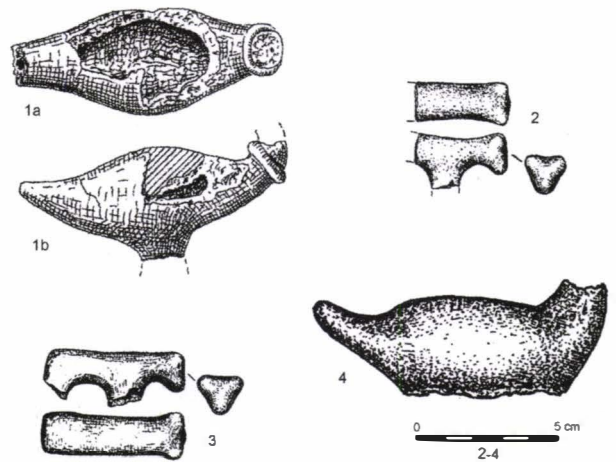
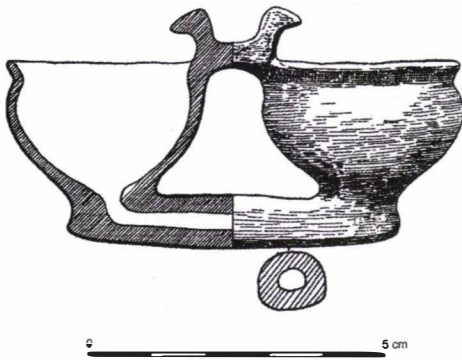
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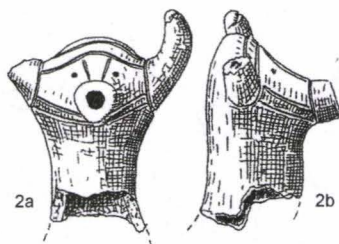
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Fig. 1. Anthropomorphic figurines: 1 Chmielów Piaskowy, Ostrowiecki district (after Godłowski, Wichman 1998); 2 - Wietrzno, Krosno district (after Madyda-Legutko 1996).  
 Fig. 2. Zoomorphic figurines: 1 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza district (after Godłowski 1992); 2 Sobocisko, Oława district (after Malinowski 1999).  
 Fig. 3. Vessel decorated with the figurative ornamentation: Wymysłowo, Gostyń district (after Jasnosz 1952).  
 Fig. 4. Zoomorphic figurines: 1 Igołomia, Kraków district, size unknown (after Malinowski 1999); 2-3 Opatów, Kłobuck district (after Godłowski 1966); 4 Strobin, Wieluń district (after Abramek 1982).

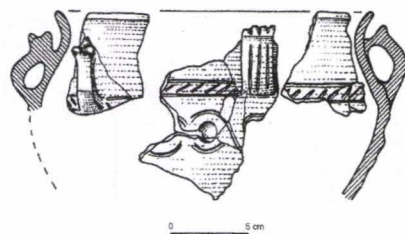




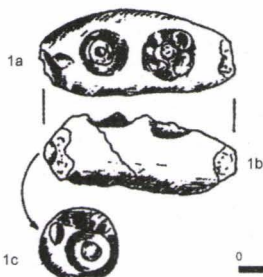
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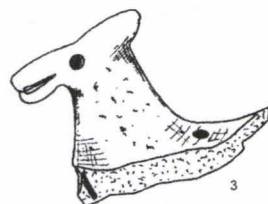
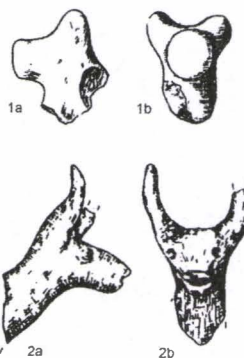
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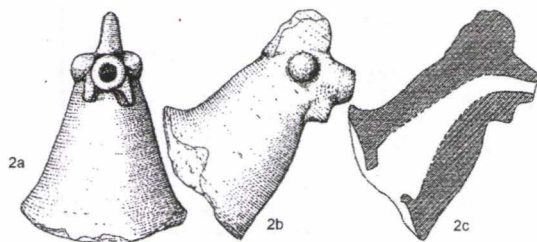


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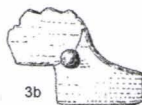


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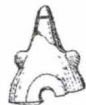
8



3a

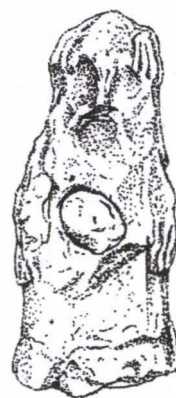


3b



3c

7



0 5 cm

9

Fig. 5. Zoomorphic figurines: 1 Gać, Przeworsk district, size unknown (after Hadaczek 1909?); 2 Wymysłowo, Gostyń district (after Malinowski 1999).

Fig. 6. Vessel decorated with the figurative ornamentation: Opatów, Kłobuck district (after Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak, Zagórska-Telega 2003).

Fig. 7. Zoomorphic figurines: 1 Różyce-Stara Wieś, Łowicz district (after Wiklak 1995); 2 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza district (after Rodzińska-Nowak 2003); 3 Opatów, Kłobuck district (after Rodzińska-Nowak 2003).

Fig. 8. Zoomorphic figurines: 1 Spicymierz, Turek district (after Kietlińska, Dąbrowska 1963); 2 Zofipole, Kraków district (after Dobrzańska 2000); 3 Igołomia, Kraków district (after Dobrzańska 1990).

Fig. 9. Anthropomorphic figurine: Aleksandrowice, Kraków district (after Naglik 2001).

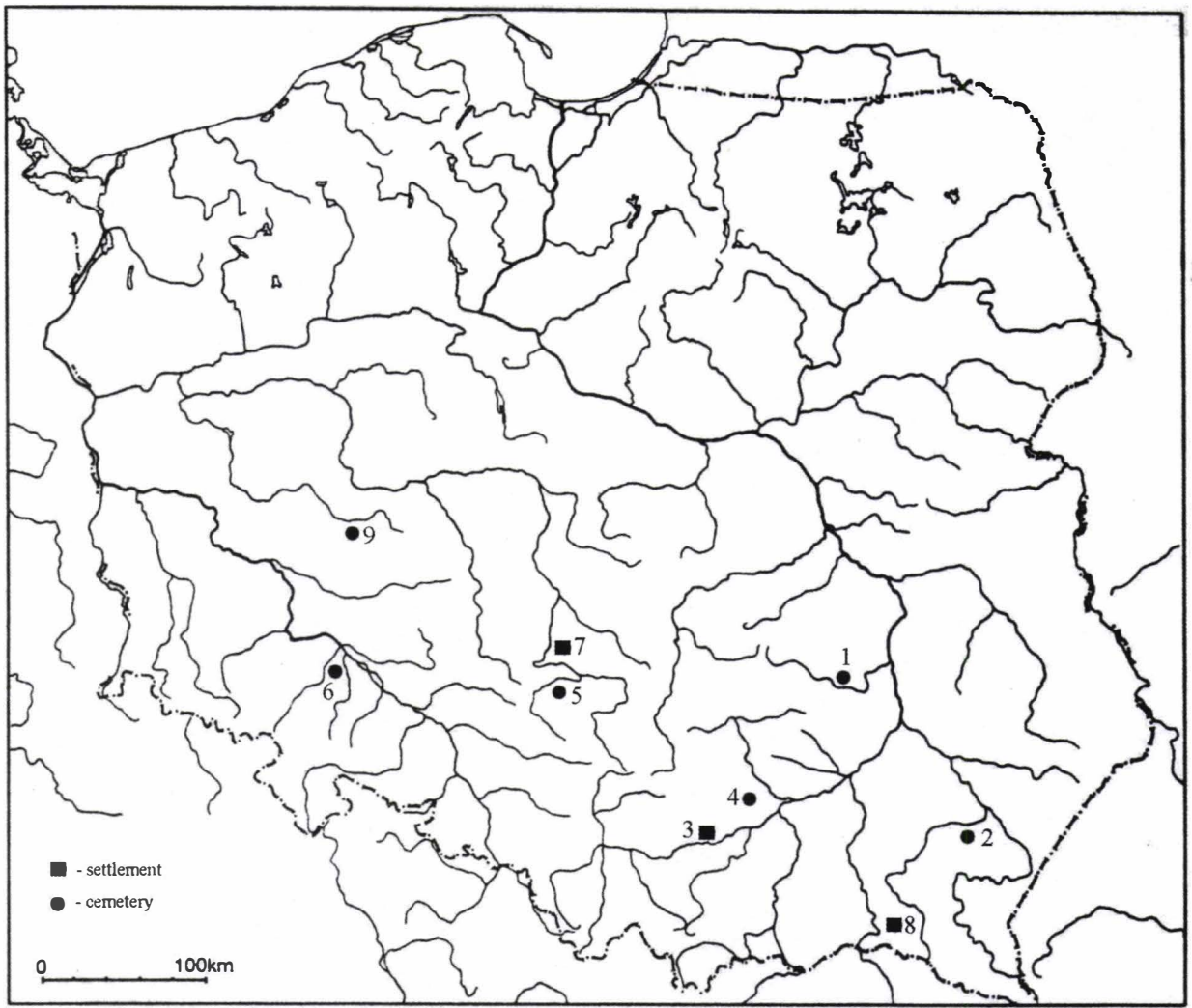


Fig. 10. Sites of the Przeworsk culture with figural relics from the early Roman period from territory of Poland: 1 Chmielów Piaskowy, Ostrowiecki district, Świętokrzyskie voivodeship; 2 Gać, Przeworsk district, Podkarpackie voivodeship; 3 Igołomia, Kraków district, Małopolskie voivodeship; 4 Jakuszowice, Kazimierza district, Świętokrzyskie voivodeship; 5 Opatów, Kłobuck district, Śląskie voivodeship; 6 Sobocisko, Oława district, Dolnośląskie voivodeship; 7 Strobin, Wieluń district, Łódzkie voivodeship; 8 Wietrzno, Krosno district, Podkarpackie voivodeship; 9 Wymysłowo, Gostyń district, Wielkopolskie voivodeship.