aetiologies are likely possible without detailed information about the man in the relief.

We are aware that a single image alone cannot provide ultimate proof of a pectus deformity; however, we believe our study will open up debate on the occurrence of this deformity in ancient times.

We also believe that the analysed relief opens new fields of research—e.g., it provides the basis for the search of any attempted treatment of the deformity in Ancient Egypt. This will be the next step in our research.

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**REFERENCES**


**eComment. Could this be a first depiction of Poland syndrome?**

Author: Aristotle D. Protopapas

Imperial College London, London, UK
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The scrutiny (by Dr. Bialas and the team from Lodz) of 621 archaeological artefacts for thoracic deformities is commendable, and their detection of apparent asymmetry in one of them clearly astute [1]. In the spirit of the esteemed authors’ wish to fuel the debate on the history of the thoracic deformities, could this relief be a first depiction of the much later established Poland syndrome [2], preceding Alfred Poland by 4 millennia?

The authors explain that it is most likely that the depicted (in Figure 1) Egyptian boatman is pictured from the front. His/her garments are of a tight fit, this been the artistic norm at the time, as Dr. Bialas explains. We cannot assess the sternum or the sternochondral junctions at this position, even less so with the individual partially clothed. The asymmetry appears to us more as a defect at the left side of the thoracic cage, not the pre-sternal area. This raises the suspicion of a left-sided Poland syndrome, a constellation of (usually unilateral) anomalies including aplasia of the pectoralis major and/or a number of ribs.

**Conflict of interest:** none declared.

**References**
