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A Lost Marble Crater from Former Karol Lanckoroński's Collection in Vienna An Attempt at the Interpretation of the Scene

The search for the Polish collections of antiquities conducted by the archaeologists from Cracow during the past decades helped to clarify numerous problems concerning the history of Polish archaeology and brought back to memory the names of many long forgotten researchers and collection owners.

The culminating point of this search was an international Symposium, which took place on 21-23 October 1997 – exactly a century after the creation of the first Chair of Classical Archaeology in Poland¹. Among numerous presentations, all of them of great interest, there was one read by doctor Werner Oenbrink from the University in Köln who spoke about the attempts to reconstruct the antiquities, now scattered in many places, which once made a part of the immense collection owned by Karol Lanckoroński².

This eminent Polish collector, art lover and protector of culture, who lived in Vienna in the years 1848-1933, has been mentioned several times in recent years. In particular his name appeared in the literature of the subject on the occasion of the gift made by his daughter, Professor Karolina Lanckorońska, the collection of paintings once in her father's possession which she presented to the Wawel Castle in Cracow and the Royal Castle in Warsaw³.

While big part of paintings collection have been saved from the damages of II World War, the antiquities from the very collection have been scattered in many different places in the world. Werner Oenbrink, as well as myself⁴, have succeeded in finding in various

¹ *Archeologia Śródziemnomorska w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim. 1897-1997. Materiały Sympozjum Naukowego Kraków, 21-23 października 1997 pod red. Joachima Śliwy, Kraków 1998.*

² W. Oenbrink, *Die ehemalige Skulpturensammlung des Grafen Karol Lanckoroński (1848-1933) in Wien*, [in:] *Archeologia Śródziemnomorska w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim, 1897-1997, Materiały Sympozjum Naukowego Kraków, 21-23 października 1997 pod red. Joachima Śliwy, Kraków 1998*, pp. 159-181.

³ A special volume of *Folia Historiae Artium* was edited to commemorate the 100th birthday of Professor Karolina Lanckorońska who lives permanently in Rome. This volume contains, among others, the Polish version (translated by Joachim Śliwa) of his article quoted above. See W. Oenbrink, *Rzeźby antyczne ze zbioru Karola Lanckorońskiego w Wiedniu. W 150 rocznicę urodzin wybitnego opiekuna sztuki i kultury Polski i Austrii*, [in:] *Folia Historiae Artium, Seria Nowa, t. 4, 1998*, pp. 91-102.

⁴ J. A. Ostrowski, *Karol Lanckoroński (1848-1933) – Archäologe, Kunsthistoriker und Sammler*, [in:] *Zur Geschichte der klassischen Archäologie Jena – Kraków. Wissenschaftliche Beiträge der Friedrich-Schiller-*

museums in Europe and in America, several unique objects which made up once the Vienna collection. This collection has never been researched nor listed in catalogues. A short guide entitled *The Lanckoroński Palace*, written by Karol Lanckoroński himself and edited in Vienna in 1903, is the only source to refer to while trying to reconstruct the information about this collection.

On page 10 of the above mentioned guide, in the description of the “Freskensaal” there is a piece of information which proves that the item called “Grosses Marmorvasenfragment, mit Relieffiguren, alexandrinische Epoche” has once belonged to it. Fortunately enough this object had been previously recorded, along with the description sketch of its decoration scene. It was included in the vast publication entitled *Das Monument von Adamklissi. Tropaeum Traiani*, edited in Vienna in 1895 by Gr. G. Tocilescu in cooperation with Otton Bendorf and George Niemann, friends of Karol Lanckoroński⁵ (il. 1).

Earlier this crater was in Rome, and it was described in the third volume of *Antike Bildwerke in Rom* edited by F. Matz and F. Duhn⁶.

Universität Jena, Jena 1985, pp. 100-120; id., *Karol Lanckoroński (1848-1933) – Polish Connoisseur and Friend of Art*, [in:] *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* 6, *Prace Archeologiczne* 56, *Studia z Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej* 17, ZNUJ 1111, Kraków 1993, pp. 53-79; id., *Archeologiczna wyprawa Karola Lanckorońskiego do Pamfilii i Pizydii*, [in:] *Folia Historiae Artium*, t. 4, 1998, pp. 67-73; id., *Karola Lanckorońskiego uwagi o muzeach kanadyjskich i amerykańskich*, [in:] *Folia Historiae Artium*, *Seria Nova*, t. 4, 1998, 85-90.

⁵ The drawing (fig. 48) is on p. 42 in the book, the description on pp. 101-102: “Dargestellt ist die Ermordung vor dem Tropaeum in einem Schlachtfriese des Heroons von Gjölbaschi, breiter noch und in höchst lebendiger Gruppierung auf einem grossen, wohl noch aus republikanischer Zeit stammenden Marmorkrater, der aus Rom in den Besitz des Grafen Carl Lanckoroński in Wien gekommen ist (Fig. 48, Seite 42). Das Gefäss hatte kelchformige Gestalt und eine Höhe von etwa zwei Metern. Erhalten ist nur ein Theil des Kelches, indessen so weit, um die Disposition, seiner Reliefs noch zu erkennen. An seinem Beginne unten sieht man die beiden Ansätze eines geschlungenen Henkels, oben am Rande ein Ornament von Blätterzweigen, deren Stile sich über den Henkeln, deren Spitzen sich beiderseits über der Darstellungsmittelpunkte kreuzten. Die Darstellungen der beiden Seiten waren sich offenbar ähnlich oder gleich. Auf einer Bodenerhöhung in der Mitte ein Tropaeum halb im Profile nach rechts, mit einem korinthischen Helme, einem Laschenpanzer, einem umgehängten Schwerte und einem Paare dem Baumstamme angefügter Beinschienen; ein Schild scheint am Boden zu lehnen. Rechterhand in erregter Haltung auf der Erde sitzend eine weibliche Gestalt, deren fliegendes Haar und aufbegehrende Hand höchste Verzweiflung ausdrückt. Linkerhand eine Gruppe, die Tödtung eines Gefangenen darstellend. Der Sieger hat ihn beim Kopfe gepackt, mit dem Fusse zu Boden gedrückt, und holt, während er sich kläglich wehrt, mit dem gezückten Schwerte gegen ihn aus; ein vom Beine des Siegers herabgleitendes Gewand steigert den Eindruck der Scene. Eingerahmt wird die Darstellung an beiden Enden durch eine Nike von zierlich alterthümlicher Form, die mit einem Palmzweig herzukommt und einen Kranz gegen das Tropaeum hinhält. Den Platz über dem Henkel füllen zwei nackte Gefangene, die der Richtstätte zuschreiten”.

⁶ Nr. 3686. Casa Steinhäuser. Grosse Vase. Durchm. 1,30; H. 0,85. Die Hälfte fehlt. Pentel. M. Von l. n. R. Auf eine nicht mehr erhaltene Gruppe zu schreitet n. l. Nike in gegürteten Chiton mit Überschlag, den r. Arm ausgestreckt, im. l. eine Palme. In kleinerem Masstabe, n. r. schreitend, zwei nackte bärtige Gefangene, die Hände auf den Rücken gebunden; ein Puntello zwischen beiden zeigt den Ort an, wo der Henkel des Gefässes Einsetzte. Folg, n. R. gewandt, eine zweite Nike, der vorher beschriebenen gleichartig, mit grossen Schulterflügeln, über der l. Schulter ein Tropaion, in. der. R. Hand zierlich einen Kranz mit langen Täniern schwingend. Die Vorstellung, der sie sich zuwendet, hat wider kleinere Figuren: An einem Tropaion werden zwei Gefangene niedergemacht. L. von demselben ist ein nackter Mann in's l. Knie gesunken; ein anderer, von hinten herantretend, setzt den l. Fuss auf seinen Schenkel und zerrt, in der R. das Schwert schwingend, mit der L. den Kopf des Gefangenen hintenüber. R. neben dem Tropaion ist ein Weib niedergestürzt, das gleichfalls von einer Hand am Schopfe gepackt wird. Darüber wird noch eine



Il. 1. The Lanckoroński's Crater. Drawing published in *Das Monument von Adamklissi. Tropaeum Traiani. Wien 1895, Fig. 48*

The crater was also mentioned in the work of K. Woelcke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Tropaions*, published in 1911 (p. 23.) and in the book by G. Ch. Picard entitled *Les Trophées Romains* and edited in Paris in 1957 (p. 23, note 7).

The sketch drawing of the crater included in the work on Adamklissi has been recently published by Werner Oenbrink in his articles. Since I have been for long attracted by the personality of Karol Lanckoroński, I found myself an old photograph of this object. The photo is in a big collection of photos belonging once to the founder of the Chair of Classical Archaeology, Professor Piotr Bieńkowski (now belonging to the Chair of Mediterranean Archaeology at Jagiellonian University). This photograph, taken by M. Franckenstein & Co. in Vienna (fig. 2), may be the only one that exists now in the world. On the back side of the photo there is a handwritten inscription by Professor Bieńkowski himself, indicating the dimensions of the vase⁷ (fig. 3).

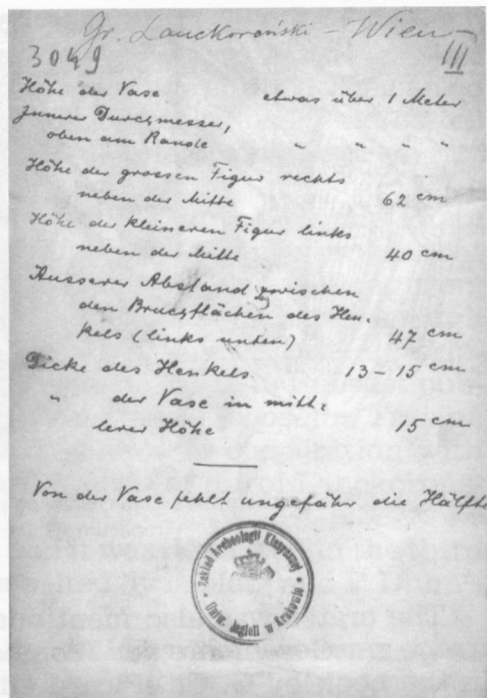
The represented scene is quite enigmatic: there are two Nikai, one of them holding a palm tree branch, the other a wreath; between them there are two naked war prisoners, their hands tied up behind. To the right from the Nike with the wreath there is a naked man with a sword pointed at another man who is lying down and whom he holds by the hair. To the right from this group there is a tropaion and a sitting naked woman with a loose hair.

Hand, die einen Pfeil zückt, sichtbar. Den oberen Rand umgiebt ein breiter Lorbeerkranz. Frische, wenn auch nicht gerade sorgfältige Arbeit.

⁷ "Höhe der Vase etwas über 1 Meter; Innerer Durchmesser, oben am Rande etwas über 1 Meter; Höhe der grossen Figur rechts neben der Mitte 62 cm; Höhe der kleineren Figur links neben der Mitte 40 cm; Ausserer Abstand zwischen den Bruchflächen des Henkels (links unten) 47 cm; Dicke des Henkels 13 - 15 cm; Dicke der Vase in mittlerer Höhe 15 cm; Von der Vase fehlt ungefähr die Hälfte".



Il. 2. Lanckoroński's Crater
Photo M. Frankestein & Co., Vienna



Il. 3. Informations about dimensions of the Lanckoroński's Crater written by Prof. Piotr Bieńkowski on the reverse of photo.

Werner Oenbrink interprets this scene as a ritual of killing a war prisoner and he makes a comment on the uniqueness of such a representation in the neo-attic relief art⁸.

It should be mentioned here that a scene like this one is not to be found in the whole of Roman art which so frequently represented war prisoners with their hands tied, sitting or kneeling next to a trophaion. When we take into account the fact that the personages represented here are naked we have to exclude any interpretation of the scene in historical terms. The huge marble craters were decorated mostly with mythological scenes and it is my opinion that we should move in this direction in order to explain the scene.

It seems likely that the scene is a Hellenistic transformation of the motif well known before, that of Achilles killing the Trojan Prisoners in sacrifice to Patrokles (II., XVIII, 324 pp.). Apart from other researchers this scene was also studied by a Polish scientist, Kazimierz Bulas, who listed nine other objects containing the same

⁸ "Tematyka składania ofiary ludzkiej u podnóża trophaionu jest jedynym znanym do tej pory przykładem w neoattycznej sztuce reliefowej" (in: *Folia Historiae Artium*, p. 101; "This is a unique representation of human sacrifice under a trophaion in the neoattic relief"); "Diese Bildthematik des Menschenopfers am Trophaion erweist sich als bisher in der neuattischen Reliefkunst singuläres Dekorationsmotiv" (in: *Archeologia Śródziemnomorska...*, p. 177).

decoration: two Etruscan cistas, an amphora from Apulia (in reality a volute crater dating from 330 B. C. decorated by a Dareios Painter), a faliscan stamnos, two Etruscan sarcophagi, an alabaster Etruscan urn, an Etruscan vase from Vulci and a famous Etruscan painting from the François Tomb in Vulci⁹.

All the hypotheses concerning the origin of this representation were presented and discussed in the Polish literature by Witold Dobrowolski in his book concerned Etruscan painting¹⁰.

The scenes on these objects are much more developed, they contain a larger number of personages or details helpful for the interpretation.

In two cases: on the "Napoleon Cista" from the Louvre and in the painting from Vulci there is a presentation of a winged woman – the goddess Vanth, who gets changed into Nike in case of the Lanckoroński's crater.

In the majority of cases the Trojan prisoners are naked, the only exception being a Greek vase, where they are dressed in oriental clothes. On the faliscan stamnos in Berlin, Achilles cutting the throat of a sitting prisoner, stands next to a column from which there is a ribbon hanging. On Lanckoroński's crater this column has been changed into a tropaion.

Apart from one scene dated to the 3rd century all the remaining ones are from the 4th century B. C. It is possible though that they all fit a common composition theme¹¹ which might have appeared before, or during, the 4th century B. C.

It seems however, that this scene must have been represented far more frequently. It is difficult, of course, to get into more details and express opinions about it, as it is hard to tell what it might have been really like in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It is however likely to suppose that the character of the winged Etruscan Vanth could have been difficult to understand for the artists executing at the time, therefore they changed it into Nike. This was the first step towards the changes of other elements (such as the tropaion in place of the column), which in turn leads to a completely different interpretation of the scene.

⁹ K. Bulas, *Les illustrations antiques de l'Iliade*, Lwów 1933, pp. 57-64.

¹⁰ W. Dobrowolski, *Malarstwo etruskie*, Warszawa 1979, pp. 192-193.

¹¹ J. D. Beazley, *EVP*, p. 91.