Piotr Ł. Grotowski

The Lost Cameo, the Vanished Statue of the Emperor and Constantine as a New Alexander

A work of art belongs to the realm of the inanimate, and yet it is notable for its magical power to recall to human memory the world of bygone times, its crowded streets, heroic victories, triumphal entrances and splendid deeds of now long-deceased rulers and military commanders. Therefore, its loss – although it is merely the loss of an inanimate object – is always painful for us. Nonetheless, the disappearance of an artefact does not necessarily lead to oblivion about it and about the memories it had evoked. The art historian’s duty is to make every effort to reconstruct – using all available measures and relying on all relevant premises – the missing work of art and the ideas it conveyed. The correctness of the attitude chosen for such reconstruction is attested by the coherence of conclusions and by a convincing interpretation of the lost work of art.

1. The lost cameo

Among the valuables once stored in the treasury of the cathedral in Cammin (Polish: Kamień Pomorski), there was an oval sardonyx gem with a full-figure representation of a youth in an aegis, set between the arms of a mid-fourteenth-century gilded silver cross-shaped pax (fig. 1). The frontally shown figure was carved in the lighter layer of the gemstone, thus contrasting with the darker background. Only the aforementioned goatskin...
plastron, in the form of an asymmetrical, mid-thigh-long cloak, fastened at the left shoulder (i.e. a Macedonian chlamys), was modelled in the stone’s dark layer. The warrior’s attire was complemented with cuffed boots, mid-calf in height, and a radiate nimbus around his head. The young man’s right arm was raised and bent at a right angle, his right hand resting on the shaft of a spear; in his left hand, he carried the Palladion – whose form resembled that of a tropaeum – with a small oval shield, peplos, helmet and a short javelin pointed obliquely downwards in its raised right hand (fig. 2).

2. The history of the gem

We have no knowledge of when and under what circumstances this small object found its way to Cammin. The cross the gem adorned was first mentioned in the cathedral’s oldest inventory from 1499 (‘Item crucem de auro cum lapide precioso videlicet canisu’) and then it reappeared in a number of consecutive registers from the sixteenth century (at the beginning of the century: ‘Cruzifixus argentus et aureus suerius cum lapide precioso chanisu’; in Johann Block’s inventory: ‘Crux alta argentea inaurata cum lapidibus pretiosis [sic]’; in 1535: ‘Item ein sulverne Pacifical mit einem Vote’; in 1542: ‘Cruze golt mit edlen steinen’)\(^2\). We find no record of the cross in a later account of the cathedral’s treasury by Philipp Hainhofer (1578-1647), an antiquarian and a diplomat from Augsburg in the service of Philip II of Pomerania-Stettin (1573-1618), but this omission could have resulted from the nature of his assignment. In 1617, at the Duke’s command, Hainhofer visited Cammin with the aim of reviewing local valuables, which were supposed to be transferred to William V of Bavaria (1548-1626). In his account, the Duke’s envoy briefly mentions only St. Cordula’s head and a few minor relics of uncertain authenticity (‘alß in der kirchen zu Camin Sanctae Cordulae haupt, vnd in aim klainen tâfelin etliche klaine stücklen vnd bainlen, aber alles sine testimonijs authenticis’)\(^3\). Considering the fact that the humanist acted on behalf of the

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\(^2\) The State Archive in Szczecin, Repertory 40 I 9 e, see W. Borchers, Der Camminer Domschatz, Stettin 1933, p. 19, 21-23. See also J. Kochanowska, Skarby katedry w Kamieniu Pomorskim, Szczecin 2004, p. 21-22. Note that J.L. Jurkiewicz (Tajemnice skarbca katedry kamieńskiej, Stargard Szczeciński 2014, p. 15-19) falsely believes that the pax was first entered in the 1535 inventory.

\(^3\) Philipp Hainhofers, Reisetagebuch, enthaltend Schilderungen aus Franken, Sachsen, der Mark Brandenburg und Pommern im Jahr 1617, ed F.L. von Medem, Baltische Studien 2/2, Stettin 1834, p. 74.
Duke, who was reluctant to give away the valuables, we can assume that he intentionally underestimated the assets of the cathedral’s treasury. For that very reason, he might have omitted a number of objects, including the cross with the cameo.

In the absence of any written evidence for the origin of the gem, we can only put forward some uncertain hypotheses and unresolved questions. We do not know whether and when the pax was purchased for the cathedral by one of the bishops. It is possible that it only arrived at Cammin in the second half of the fifteenth century, along with the other treasures which Eric of Pomerania (1382-1459), expelled from Denmark, brought here in 1449. It is worth noting that they comprised not only the jewels brought from Scandinavia, but also the spoils which Eric had gained as a pirate operating from Visby on the island of Gotland in 1442-1449. The valuables were then inherited by Eric’s niece, Sophie of Pomerania (1435-1497). Since they were never found after the Duchess’s death – despite her son Bogislaw X’s efforts – it is likely that she had donated them to the cathedral in Cammin⁴.

On the other hand, we cannot rule out the possibility that the cameo with the emperor’s effigy had already been in the cathedral’s treasury in the early Middle Ages⁵ and then in the mid-fourteenth century, one of the bishops of Cammin – presumably Johann von Sachsen-Lauenburg (1318-1370) – handed it to a goldsmith and commissioned him to make a silver-gilt cross with the gem set in it⁶. From the inventory records cited above we also

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⁴ The hypothesis about Sophia of Pomerania-Stolp’s donation to the Cammin cathedral was put forward by J. Kochanowska, *Tajemnice Pomorza. Okolice, Tajemnice, Szlaki*, Szczecin 2004, p. 44. See also Jurkiewicz *Tajemnice skarby*, p. 29. In Book Nine of his *Pomerania*, Thomas Kantzow refers to Eric’s lost treasure and gives a general idea of its scope, see Des Thomas Kantzow, *Chronik von Pommern in Hochdeutscher Mundart*, v. 1, ed. G. Gaebel, Stettin 1897, p. 274.

⁵ The gem could have come to Cammin either via the German Empire as a gift from one of the local bishoprics (e.g. Bamberg or Cologne) or via Scandinavia, where it might have been brought by members of the Varangian Guard – who had remained in the service of the emperors in Constantinople since the ninth century – and whence it was possibly looted by the Pomeranians during one of their expeditions (e.g. the attack of the troops of Racibor I on Kungahälla on 9 August 1135). The above-mentioned hypotheses were proposed, in the context of the origin of the reliquary of Saint Cordula by Jurkiewicz, *Tajemnice skarby*, p. 28-30, 36.

⁶ Johann was a son of Eric I of Saxe-Lauenburg and Elisabeth of Pomerania. Intended for the clergy since his youth, he was appointed bishop of Cammin in 1343 and held the office until his death, see J. Petersohn, *Die Kamminer Bischöfe des Mittelalters*, Schwerin 2015, p. 52-56.
learn that in the late Middle Ages the cameo was no longer associated with the Roman Empire and the emperor’s unusual costume was perceived as oriental.

The gem found its way to scholarly literature through a publication about the cathedral in Cammin, written by a local historian Rudolf Spuhrmann in 1915. The author mentions a pax offered to the congregation to kiss during the Holy Communion and encloses a photograph in which the cross is standing among the reliquaries from the Cammin cathedral’s sacristy. More information on the cameo can be obtained from the pre-war catalogue of the cathedral’s treasury, composed by Walter Borchers (1906-1980). The art historian from Stettin was the first to note the presence of a gemstone with brown-red veining in the pax; in the engraved figure he recognized Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54), holding the Palladion of Rome – the statuette of Nike brought to Rome from Troy. Borchers did not specify the gem’s size but gave the overall dimensions of the cross (height: 25.5 cm; width of the base: 11.5 cm), which – compared with the surviving photographs of the pax – allow us to estimate the cameo’s height at approximately six and its width at three and a half centimetres. The accuracy of this calculation has been attested by the plaster cast of the artefact, kept at the Archaeological Institute of the University of Göttingen, which measures: 6.4 cm by 4.1 cm (including the rim) (fig. 3).

The meaning of the term canisu, used by the author of the 1499 inventory, remains unclear to us. In the next entry, however, the word was corrected to chanisu, which may indicate that in the Middle Ages the image on the cameo was interpreted as the image of a khan (Latin: chanis).

R. Spuhrmann, Der Camminer Dom, Cammin in Pom. 1915, p. 36, fig. 12.

Borchers, Der Camminer Domschatz, p. 43-44, fig. 21-23 and n. 88, where Borchers expresses his gratefulness to Prof. Zahn from Berlin (certainly identical with archaeologist Robert Zahn, who was an honorary professor at Berlin University in 1928-1936) for helping him to identify the figure. Borchers’s own contribution is the dating of the pax and the reading of the inscription on its reverse: ‘De lingo Dni (Domini) de spinea corona monemento et tunica Dni de lacte et vestibus beate Marie de sancto Petro apostolo et Paulo Andrea Johanno Jacobo Thoma Marco Bartholomea Matheo Luca Barnaba apostolis de sto (sancto) Stephano Laurentio Vincencio Olavo magno martyribus de hundred Martino Nicholao Dominico Franzisco sancta Maria mag. Caterina K.’

Borchers is also credited with organizing in 1938 an exhibition in the Pommersches Landesmuseum in Stettin, entitled *Kammin: Domschatz, Urkunden, Drucke*, where the contents of Cammin’s treasury were shown. After the closure of the exhibition, the objects were returned to the cathedral, where they were displayed in the specially adapted scriptorium and archive in the eastern wing of the chapterhouse. The situation did not change significantly after the outbreak of World War II. Only after the Allied carpet bombing of Lübeck on the night of 28/29 March 1942, which inflicted much damage, was an assembly of provincial conservators summoned at the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture in Berlin. At the meeting, a directive was issued to dislocate the most valuable objects from museums and cathedral treasuries. It was decided that the cathedral treasures would be hidden in rural brick or stone churches within a radius of fifteen kilometres from the seat of the diocese.

According to the list of the objects, drawn up on 8 May 1942 and signed by superintendent Johann Scheel, Cammin’s treasury was packed into two wooden crates in the presence of the local conservator Gerhard Bronisch (1905-1945). Thirty smaller items, including the reliquary of St. Cordula and the pax, listed under number twelve in the register as *Pacificalkreus*, were placed in one box, while bishop’s vestments with some sculptures from the main altar were contained in the other, bigger box. The valuables secured in this manner were relocated to the Flemming family’s estate in Benz (Polish: *Benice*), fifteen kilometres south-east of Cammin, and deposited in the palace. As we can learn from the list, the items of relatively big size – the main altar, gothic crucifix, wooden sacramentary and oil...
paintings – were taken to the new brick church in the village of Benz. Only two chalices, a paten and other utensils necessary for the celebration of the liturgy had been left in the cathedral. Klara Scheel, the superintendent’s wife, moved to the Flemming’s palace too, presumably entrusted with the task of supervising the deposited objects.

The contents of the cathedral’s treasury remained in Benz until 5 March 1945. On the previous evening, Count Hasso von Flemming, faced with an imminent threat from advancing troops of the First Belorussian Front, held a telephone conversation with the district authorities during which he obtained authorization to evacuate the village. At 5 a.m. a convoy formed of the residents of Benz set off in the direction of Cammin. The smaller case with Cammin valuables, including the pax with the cameo, was carried on a wagon drawn by a Bulldog tractor whose driver was a Serbian prisoner of war, formerly employed at the estate. At the crossroads in Rzewnow (Polish: Rzewnow), the column turned south, heading for the bridge over the Strait of Dievenow (Polish: Dziwna) in the town of Wollin. The decision to take the longer southern evacuation route, in addition leading towards the approaching Soviet troops, turned out to be disastrous. Having arrived at Parlowkrug (Polish: Parlówko) around noon on the same day, Hasso Fleming left the convoy and went on horseback to the local police station to obtain permission for the wagons to move on in two columns. Meanwhile the evacuees reached the Greifenhagen-Wollin road and headed...
west. After they had passed through the village of Tessin (Polish: Troszyn) and got to the isthmus between the lakes Martenthiner (Polish: Ostrowo) and Paatziger (Polish: Piaski), they were shelled by Soviet tanks from the battalion under the command of Captain Sanachev. The convoy was scattered and only those refugees who had crossed the bridge over a local brook before it was detonated by German troops managed to reach Wollin.

It is not known what happened to the crate and its content after that. Did it arrive at Wollin with the remainder of the convoy or did it fall a spoil to the Red Army on the road near Tessin? Of the Cammin treasure only

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16 Holtz, *Ist der Cordula-Schrein*, p. 135-136 cites the account by Irena Haufschild, recorded on 20 April 1965. The woman was travelling on a wagon on which there was a box (the size of which she estimated at no more than fifty centimetres by sixty-five centimetres by forty centimetres). When the bridge was destroyed, her wagon was still on the eastern side of the brook, probably the fourth in the column. During the shelling, she abandoned the vehicle and hid behind the embankment. After the Soviet tanks ceased fire, she returned to the undamaged wagon, took a pram and set off on foot towards Wollin. This testimony was confirmed by her aunt Barbara Vierks, who saw – while returning to Benz the next morning (6 March 1945) – an undamaged wagon lying by the road. She could not however say whether the crate was or was not there. See also Jurkiewicz, *Tajemnice skarbcia*, p. 59-66, 71; Łuczak, *Ewakuacja skarbcia*, p. 35, 38-39.

17 A rather obvious assumption that the crate with a part of the Cammin treasure was looted by the Soviet army was proposed by K. Harms, *Wo blieb der Cordula-Schrein? Ein kostbares Stück des Camminer Domschatzes – Im Treck 1945 verloren*, “Pommerschen Heimatkirche” 6 (1955) p. 4. Nonetheless, if we assume that its size, as Irena Haufschild had observed, was relatively small, we cannot rule out that valuables were transferred to another means of transport and carried to Wollin and further into Germany. The testimony of a witness who saw Hasso von Flemming in the town of Misdroy (Polish: Międzyzdroje) with an oval package whose shape resembled that of the reliquary of St. Cordula makes this version quite plausible. The count himself admitted in an interview with the parish priest of the Cammin cathedral, Rev. Roman Kostynowicz, that during the evacuation, he had had with him a bag which had contained the most valuable items. On the other hand, the small size of the crate loaded on the wagon in Benz may indicate that the remaining valuables were transported in a separate convoy, along with the Flemmings’ belongings, which, according to a forced labourer employed in their estate, were taken from Benz by a Serbian prisoner of war in two trailers hauled by a tractor, see Kochanowska, *Tajemnice Pomorza*, p. 45-47; Jurkiewicz, *Tajemnice skarbcia*, p. 67-69, 93, 95-96 (the author does not rule out that despite his own declarations, Hasso von Flemming had opened the crates deposited in the palace, selected the most valuable items and had taken them over time further into Germany). Recently Łuczak, *The Lost Kamień Treasury*, p. 162-164 has published an additional piece of evidence – the letter of Hildegard Kobi from Lübeck in which she informs the Flemming family that the reliquary of St. Cordula was found by a French prisoner of war in a roadside ditch near Cammin. He took it to France and deposited in
a few objects have survived: those left behind in the cathedral and hidden by superintendent Scheel in the old rectory, the Gothic crucifix and the altar with the sculptures deposited in the bigger case, which under vague circumstances found its way to the church in Benz.

3. The Cammin cameo in modern scholarship

The history of the Cammin cameo did not end with its disappearance during the war. Despite the absence of the object proper, the gem has entered academic debate and has gradually aroused interest of scholars thanks to the pre-war photographic documentation and the plaster cast preserved in Göttingen. Borchers’ identification of the figure carved in the gemstone as Claudius, though still present in publications for the general public (as well as in the caption under the photograph of the pax exhibited in the Cathedral Museum in Kamień Pomorski, reopened after the war in the gallery of the chapterhouse), has not found acceptance among the subsequent generations of scholars of antiquity.

The curator of the Hermitage’s collection of glyptics, Oleg Neverov, stated that the Cammin cameo depicted Emperor Nero, but this was not an unspecified chapel on the coast of Normandy or Bretagne. Although the actual place, where, according to the author, the reliquary is housed, remains unknown, the testimony confirms that the crate with the cathedral deposit was abandoned on the road to Wollin. So far, the attempts to find Cammin’s treasures have been to no avail.

According to her own testimony, Klara Scheel, having returned to Benz on 17 March 1945, found the items from the second crate – i.e. the liturgical vestments and the sculptures from the main altar – scattered on the floor of the new church. Some of its contents had been stolen by the local population, but the presence of the bigger box in the church was confirmed in 1968, when a fragment of a painted case for bishop’s mitre, funded by Martin Karith (1510) and listed in the 1942 register under number 34, was discovered in the sacristy; see Holtz, *Ist der Cordula-Schrein*, p. 137 (who explains that the discrepancy between the actual location of the crate with bishop’s robes and the place of destination recorded in the list from 1942 can be accounted for by its later transfer to the church or by a mistake); Jurkiewicz, *Tajemnice skarbu*, p. 86-89, 94-95 (who notes that among the objects described by the superintendent’s wife there were liturgical books, which according to the list – item no. 30 – had been placed in the first box); Łuczak, *Ewakuacja skarbu*, p. 42-44.

The identification of the figure on the cameo as Claudius, proposed by the German scholar, has been repeated by some authors interested in the history of the Cammin treasury, see for example Kochanowska, *Skarby katedry*, 25; Jurkiewicz, *Tajemnice skarbu*, 16, 19.
without reservation, as the attributes accompanying the figure were unusual for the representation of this emperor and had never been attested by written sources\textsuperscript{20}. At the same time, a similar attribution was adopted on the basis of the stylistic features by Wolf Rüdiger Megow, who in the carved figure recognized young Nero, although he did not exclude the possibility that it was young Claudius who had been depicted on the jewel\textsuperscript{21}. Subsequently, Andrew Steward saw in the relief an image of Caracalla intentionally imitating Alexander the Great, the founder (κτίστης) of Alexandria\textsuperscript{22}. Marianne Bergmann approaches the question more cautiously: while she agrees that the figure on the lost artefact follows the iconographic type of Alexander-ktistes popular in the Alexandrian circle, she also notes that the traces of modifications done to the model’s face and hair, still visible on the plaster cast, make it difficult to date the object with absolute certainty, and thus to connect it with a particular ruler\textsuperscript{23}.

Although the opinion that the Cammin cameo was created during the Principate prevails in the scholarly discussion on the object’s origin, soon after World War II some attempts were made to associate it with the later Roman Empire. The first hypothesis that the emperor depicted in the gem was Constantine the Great was put forward in 1948 by Gerda Bruns. The Berlin archaeologist pointed to the statue portraying the emperor as Apollo,


\textsuperscript{23} Bergmann, \textit{Die Strahlen der Herrscher}, p. 67, 75, tab. 1,4 (her opinions were repeated by Amedick, \textit{Iesus Nazarenus}, p. 56). A. Lichtenberger, \textit{Severus Pius Augustus: Studien zur sakralen Repräsentation und Rezeption der Herrschaft des Septimius Severus und seiner Familie (193-211 n. Chr.)}, Impact of Empire 14, Leiden – Boston 2011, p. 249-250, fig. 209 has recently taken a similar stance towards the attempts, unsupported by literary sources, to link the Cammin gem with Caracalla. Neutral in regard to the question of attribution remain authors of the catalogue \textit{Aurea Roma: dalla città pagana alla città cristiana} (Roma, Palazzo delle esposizioni, 22 dicembre 2000 – 20 aprile 2001), ed. S. Ensoli – E. La Rocca, Roma 2000, p. 68, fig. 7 (‘a ruler with the features of Jupiter and Romulus’).
erected in 328 on top of a porphyry column in the middle of the emperor’s eponymous forum in Constantinople, as a model possibly used by the Cammin cameo’s engraver and linked the object with a group of gems which she considered to be official products of Constantine’s time. Admittedly, her work faced severe criticism from the academic community, but her study of the stylistic resemblance between the Cammin cameo and the Hague Cameo (the so-called gemma Constantiniana; now at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden) has been acknowledged by scholars of antiquity.

Bruns’s stance on the Constantinian origin of the gem won Raissa Calza’s approval, and in the recent years, the number of its supporters has begun to grow. Sarah Bassett referred to it in the context of her attempts to reconstruct the appearance of the statue of Constantine standing on top of the porphyry column. In turn, Ignazio Tantillo drew attention to a wooden, gilded statuette of the emperor, which was made to commemorate the dedication of Constantinople on 11 May 330 and paraded in annual proces-

26 The first to critically comment on Bruns’ findings was H. Möbius, Römischer Kameo in Kassel, “Archäologischer Anzeiger” 63/64 (1948/1949) p. 110, who classified the Cammin cameo on the basis of stylistic features among those made in the third century and linked it with Gordian III (225-244). In his later article, the scholar reverted to the traditional attribution proposed by Borchers, identifying the emperor on the gem as Claudius, H. Möbius, Der Grosse Stuttgarter Kameo (zuseiner Veröffentlichung durch Marie-Louise Vollenweider), “Schweizer Münzblätter” 13-17 (1963-1967) p. 123. See also the review of Bruns’ paper by J.-J. Hatt, Review: ‘Staatskameen des 4. Jahrhundertsnach Christi Geburt’, “Latomus” 10 (1951) p. 271-272, who argues that the Licinius cameo from the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris (inv. no. D 2566), considered by Bruns to be the key item for the whole group, is a Renaissance forgery and was in fact made in a workshop in Milan in the late sixteenth century; therefore, he proposes to link the Pomeranian cameo with the Great Cameo of The Hague and the image of Constantinople’s Tyche in the Vienna collection. Also J.H. Jongkees, De “apotheose Van Claudius” in Het Haagsche Penningkabinet, “Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek” 4 (1952) p. 31-32 accepts late dating of the gems from The Hague and Vienna (but he makes no direct reference to the Cammin cameo).
28 See, for example, G. Fowden, Constantine’s porphyry column: the earliest literary allusion, JRS 81 (1991) p. 126, n. 73.
sions on the anniversaries of that event\textsuperscript{30}. It should, however, be noted that in referring to the dedication of Constantinople, both Malalas and the anonymous author of the \textit{Chronicon Paschale} mention only a figurine of the city’s Tyche (called Anthousa), carried by Constantine in his right hand\textsuperscript{31}, while on the lost jewel the emperor held the Palladion in his left hand and resting the right one on the spear.

4. The cameo’s Constantinian origin

Judged solely on the basis of the photographs and the plaster cast, the style and costume details of the Cammin cameo at first sight give the impression that the carving was made in accordance with the principles of classical aesthetics. The well-proportioned beardless face of an ephebe, encircled by evenly trimmed hair; the slight counter-posture with some body weight clearly transferred to the spear; the soft modelling of the limbs – all seems to reinforce this impression. Nevertheless, a closer look at this work of art reveals elements typical of the imperial portrait of the late Roman Empire, too: the rigidity of the pose; unnatural proportions; summarily shaped features indicative of a lack of care in carving details\textsuperscript{32}. Most notably, the emperor’s massive neck and legs add a hieratic flavour to the figure, giving the impression that we are viewing a monumental statue from below.

Divergences from the style of depicting rulers in Hellenistic art can also be observed in the details of clothing. Although on the whole the image on the gem emulates the iconographic type of Alexander-ktistes in an aegis (fig. 4)\textsuperscript{33}, tall boots covering calves – as Steward notes – were not part of

\textsuperscript{30} I. Tantillo, \textit{L’impero della luce. Riflessioni su Costantino e il sole}, “Mélanges de l’école française de Rome” 115 (2003) p. 1043-1045 and n. 159, fig. 11. This hypothesis was accepted by J. Bardill, \textit{Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age}, New York 2012, p. 157, n 3 (with summarised state of research on this subject).


\textsuperscript{33} The Roman statue made in Alexandria (first century A.D.), from D. M. Foquet’s collection, currently at the British Museum (inv. no. 1922.0711.1), seems to be particularly close to the Cammin cameo, see Stewart, \textit{Faces of power}, p. 230, fig. 83 and n. 63, where the iconographic patterns of the lost gem are discussed minutely.
the original representation of the Macedonian king and must have been the Roman artist’s addition\textsuperscript{34}. Similarly, the motif of a radiate nimbus around the head of the founder of Alexandria did not appear in art before the late Hellenistic period\textsuperscript{35}. Moreover, on the Cammin gem, the nimbus takes an unusual form of a wide wreath with eleven pointed rays. The above-mentioned observations allow us to rule out the Hellenistic origin of the object, pointing at the same time to the fact that the stylistic features reveal its affiliation with late Roman art. Stewart’s proposal to identify the emperor as Caracalla should also be rejected, for the figure on the gem was shown without the beard and moustache characteristic of the representations of this emperor. The physiognomic type, which will be discussed later, corresponds to the portraits of Constantine executed during his lifetime. We can therefore consider the hypothesis of the lost cameo’s Constantinian origin as plausible.

5. The cameo and the emperor’s statue on the column

In searching for iconographic and ideological patterns for the representation of the emperor on the gem, one should return to the identification proposed by Gerda Bruns. Here, however, another problem arises. While the hundred-\textit{palmipes} tall (37 m) porphyry column\textsuperscript{36}, erected by Constantine.

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\textsuperscript{34} Stewart, \textit{Faces of power}, p. 246-247 and Amedick, \textit{Iesus Nazarenus}, p. 56 describe the figure’s shoes as Macedonian high \textit{krerides}. However, the rhomboidal cuts, clearly visible in the photographs, suggest a kind of legwraps tied round with a strap, which in turn allow us to recognise the emperor’s shoes as \textit{servoula} (also called \textit{muzakia}). On the other hand, the lack of visible toes and bindings in the forepart prompts the exclusion of \textit{endromides}, popular in the iconography of ancient rulers, see P.L. Grotowski, \textit{Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints: Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography (843-1261)}, The Medieval Mediterranean 87, Leiden – Boston 2010, p. 198-201, figs. 19a-b, 25c-d, 27, 29, 46a, 46c, 61.

\textsuperscript{35} The first ruler to be depicted with a radiate crown was Ptolemy III Euergetes, as portrayed on the coins minted by his son Ptolemy IV (222-205 B.C.). Subsequent Hellenistic kings, up to Hermaios Soter of Bactria (ca. 90-70 B.C.), acquired the motif, sometimes together with cognomen Epiphanes (derived from \varphi\alpha\omega, to shine). In Rome, the motif of a radiate crown was adopted in the time of Tiberius, who had portrayed Octavian in this style since A.D. 15, cf. Stewart, \textit{Faces of power}, p. 246; J. Bardill, \textit{Constantine}, p. 36-57, fig. 28, 34-36, 38-45, 50.

\textsuperscript{36} The height of the column corresponds precisely to the measure of a hundred Roman feet increased by the width of a palm (\textit{palmipes}, 37 cm), while the height of the
The Lost Cameo, the Vanished Statue of the Emperor and Constantine in 328 in the centre of his forum linking Septimius Severus’ Byzantium with his own city\textsuperscript{37}, still stands in Divan Yolu Street in Istanbul, in the district of Çemberlitaş (the name derived from the Turkish term for the column, literally: a stone in metal hoops), the bronze statue which once crowned it, collapsed during a windstorm in the spring of 1106\textsuperscript{38} and its detailed description has not been preserved in medieval sources.

All we know is that the figure was holding a spear (\(\lambda\ell\omega\gamma\gamma\eta\)) in its right hand. The spear fell down as a result of an earthquake on 16 August 554, digging three cubits deep into the ground, and was replaced with a sceptre seven-drum porphyry shaft (23.4 m) equals eighty Roman feet (29.6 cm) and the diameter of the lowest drum (2.9 m) equals around ten feet, cf. J. Neal, *The structure and function of ancient metrology*, in: *Wonders Lost and Found: A Celebration of the Archaeological Work of Professor Michael Vickers*, ed. N. Sekunda, Oxford 2020, p. 34-35.


or a staff (σκῆπτρον). In the statue’s left hand, a sphere (σφαῖρα) rested, which fell to the ground twice in the time of Emperor Zeno, and again in 869, also due to seismic activity. Since the earliest account of the first of these incidents comes from the so-called Great Chronographer, active in the mid-eighth century, who admittedly relied on an earlier source, yet not earlier than the late sixth century, we do not know what the imperial orb originally looked like. Cyril Mango (1928-2021) put forward the hypothesis that in Constantine’s time it was topped with a statue of Victory and only the second or even the third orb took the form of globus cruciger. We can assume then

39 Malalas, Chronographia XVIII 118, p. 416; Theophanes, Chronographia, v. 1, p. 222 (dated A. M. 6034, i.e. 541/2); Georgius Cedrenus, Compendium Historiarum, v. 1, ed. I. Bekker, Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae 8, Bonn 1838, p. 656. The information about the sceptre in the statue’s right hand comes from Anna Comnena, who could have seen the statue and its remains at the age of 23, but the fact that she compiled her description only four decades after the accident might have affected the accuracy of her testimony. Karayannopoulos, Konstantin der Große, p. 351 advocates credibility of her account.


41 Symeon, Logothete, Chronicon CXXXII 4, p. 261.

42 The text with an annotation about the Great Chronographer’s authorship was inserted in the Parisian manuscript of the Paschal Chronicle on pages 241v-243r. The passage containing information about the damage caused by the earthquake is at the very beginning of this insertion, see L.M. Whitby, The Great Chronographer and Theophanes, “Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies” 8 (1982) p. 17.

43 C. Mango, Constantine’s Column, in: C. Mango, Studies on Constantinople, Aldershot 1993, text III, p. 3. One could agree in principle with Mango’s thesis, nevertheless, it should be corrected in detail. Globus cruciger must have replaced the original orb already after the first incident, because it is mentioned (οὕτινος ἐν τῷ μήλῳ τῆς [δεξιάς] χειρὸς πήξας τὸν τίμιον σταυρὸν ἐπέγραψεν [ἔγραψεν] ἐν αὐτῷ ταῦτα · “σοὶ Χριστὲ ὁ θεὸς παρατίθημι τὴν πόλιν [μου] ταύτην) in the anonymous Vita Constanini III, preserved in epitomized form in menologia from the eighth and ninth centuries, but with all probability drawing on the text written not later than the beginning of the sixth century, see F. Winkelmann, Die ältesteerhaltene gr: hagiographische Vita Konstantins und Helenas (BHG 365Z, 366, 366a), in: Texte und Textkritik. Eine Aufsatzsammlung, ed. J. Dummer, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 133, Berlin 1987, p. 634. The description is repeated in another Life of Constantine [BHG 364, § 24], dating from the second half of the ninth century, and then again in Nicephorus Callistus’ Ecclesiastic History (ca. 1320), which however wrongly states that the orb rested in the emperor’s right hand, see Un biòs di Costantino, ed. M. Guidi, “Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, Serie quinta” 16 (1907) p. 337;
that the attributes presented by the ruler on the Cammin cameo match those, which originally accompanied Constantine on his column.

Besides, the sources consistently report about the radiate crown on the statue’s head; John Malalas mentions – and George Hamartolos repeats after him – the exact number of seven rays\textsuperscript{44}. In this detail, the statue varied the most from the image on the Cammin cameo, where – as already mentioned – the emperor is portrayed in a crown with eleven broad spikes. This difference does not necessarily rule out the emperor’s figure on the Constantinople column as a model used by the Cammin gem’s engraver, whose intention might only have been to roughly render the iconographic details of the statue, as seen from the forum’s ground level.

\textsuperscript{44} Malalas, \textit{Chronographia} XIII 7, p. 245-246: ἔχοντα ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ αὐτοῦ ἀκτῖνας ἐπτά; Georgios Monachos, \textit{Chronicon}, v. 2, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1904, p. 500: ἔχοντα ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀκτῖνας ζ. \textit{Chronicon Paschale}, v. 1, p. 528 makes a mention of rays of light around the head of the figure, while Symeon, Logothete, \textit{Chronicon} LXXXVIII, 7, p. 109 recalls an inscription indicating that the sculpture had a radiate nimbus: διὰ τὰς ἐν αὐτῷ ἀκτῖνας Κωνσταντίνῳ λάμποντι ἡλίοθ δίκην. \textit{Scriptores originum}, II 45, p. 174 and Zonaras, \textit{Compendium Historiarum} XIII 3/26, v. 3, p. 18 claim that among the rays on the head of the statue, Constantine fixed also the nails with which Christ was crucified. Also Nicephorus, presbyter at Hagia Sophia, refers in \textit{Vita Sancti Andreae Sali} [BHG 115z] to the legend of the nails from the Holy Cross hidden in the column, cf. \textit{The Life of St. Andrew the Fool}, v. 2, tr. et ed. L. Rydéen, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 4/2, Uppsala 1995, p. 276. Considering the presence of a vertically arranged crown on Constantine’s coins minted between 310 and 326, Bardill, \textit{Constantine}, p. 30, 34, 42, fig. 23, 46-47 assumes that the corona radiata on the statue might have had such a shape too, which would have made it very close to the crown carved in the cameo.
None of the texts of the period provides information about the clothes in which the emperor shown on the column was clad. Indirect and ambiguous clues on this matter can only be found in a few pictures of the column, executed hundreds of years after the statue’s collapse and based on older representations. In reconstructing the original form of the statue, scholars most often refer to a vignette on the medieval copy of an ancient map (the so-called *Tabula Peutingeriana; Codex Vindobonensis* 324, segment VIII B1) schematically depicting the network of public roads (*cursus publicus*) of the late Roman Empire (ca. 375). The vignette shows the personification of Constantinople, seated on a throne and pointing at a pillar with a double shaft of three segments, sketched in black ink next to her. Standing on top of the pillar is a naked figure with its arms spread wide, holding an orb and a spear (fig. 5). This image gave rise to an opinion, widespread among scholars, that Constantine had been shown on the column as a naked Helios, thus referring in form to the colossal statue of Nero, visually

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45 The map, originally in the form of a parchment scroll 34 cm × 674 cm (divided in 1875 into twelve sheets), was discovered in 1507 by the Viennese humanist Konrad Celtis, who handed it over to Konrad Peutinger. Purchased in 1717 by Prince Eugene of Savoy, it was transferred after his death (1736) to the Habsburgs’ private library in the Hofburg, which was incorporated into the Austrian National Library in Vienna in 1920, see R.J.A. Talbert, *Rome’s World: the Peutinger map reconsidered*, Cambridge 2010, p. 10-30, 73-76 (see also Martin Steinmann’s comments on the palaeography and dating of the map, Talbert, *Rome’s World: the Peutinger map reconsidered*, p. 76-84). The *terminus post quem* for the Roman archetype is determined by the presence of Constantinople (described as *Constantinopolis*) on the map, although Pompeii and Stabia (destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79) have also been marked and Jerusalem bears the name Aelia Capitolina (‘antea dicta Hervsalem mo[do] Helya Capitolina’), referring to the Roman colony built by Hadrian after A.D. 132 on the site of the capital city of Judea, demolished in A.D. 70. These discrepancies can be explained by the hypothesis that the Viennese map, made between 1175 and 1225 – as one can deduce from the typeface of the early Gothic script – was modelled not directly on the ancient original but on a Carolingian copy, which in turn undermines the veracity of the vignette with the image of Constantinople, see B. Salway, *The Nature and Genesis of the Peutinger Map*, “*Imago Mundi*” 57 (2005) p. 120, 123-129; E. Albu, *Imperial Geography and the Medieval Peutinger Map*, “*Imago Mundi*” 57 (2005) p. 143; E. Albu, *The Medieval Peutinger Map. Imperial Roman Revival in a German Empire*, Cambridge 2014, p. 13-17, 48-58, 76-78, 95-103; Talbert, *Rome’s World*, p. 124 (on the Constantinople vignette being added by the copyist). The state of research of the monument and the analysis of the image of Constantinople are discussed in detail by P. Kochanek, *Vignette of Constantinople on the Tabula Peutingeriana. The Column of Constantine or the Lighthouse*, “*Studia Ceranea*” 9 (2019) p. 475-521.
closing the axis of the arch erected in Rome (312-315) to commemorate the victory over Maxentius. However, the image on the map, probably dating from the first quarter of the thirteenth century, differs considerably from the known descriptions of the statue on the porphyry column. Apart from the lack of the radiate crown, usually accounted for by the small size of the drawing, and the absence of a cross on the orb, the image of which could be expected on a medieval copy of the vignette, another fact – so far unnoticed – is worth highlighting: the naked figure on the map holds the attributes in the reverse manner to that in Anna Comnena’s description: the orb in the outstretched right hand and the spear in the left. All these differences imply that the author of the vignette (or its archetype) – if his intention was to show the Constantine column (as the structure of the double shaft divided into segments seems to suggest) – had a rather vague idea of the monument’s appearance. Therefore, without rejecting the interpretation of the column’s image on the map as a symbolic representation of the statue from the Constantine Forum, it should be concluded that the picture differs significantly from the model and cannot be used as a reliable source for visual reconstruction of the statue.

The question of the costume in which Constantine was portrayed on the porphyry column becomes even more complicated when we take into account another image of the monument, not preserved in its original form and known only from an Early Modern sketch. On the spiral frieze

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47 In the context of this error, worth noting is the coincidence between the mirror image of the statue (in addition to the switched hands, the figure in the vignette is facing west, while the figure in the Constantine Forum looked to the east) and the late account by Nicephorus Callistus (cf. footnote 43 above), who described the globus cruciger as resting in the emperor’s right hand.
covering the shaft of the column of Arcadius (erected in 401-421), depicted in a convex relief were the emperor’s campaigns (399-401) against revolted Gothic mercenaries under the leadership of Gainas, a newly appointed *magister militium*. Although the whole column down to the base of its shaft was dismantled after the 1715 earthquake had undermined the stability of its structure and put the monument at risk of collapse⁴⁸, we know the scenes carved on the frieze from three detailed drawings made by a German-speaking artist — probably the Flemish draughtsman Lambert de Vos — who in 1574 was a member of a diplomatic mission sent by Maximilian II Habsburg to Selim II⁴⁹. In one of de Vos’ sketches, in the lower part of the frieze on the eastern side of the column, i.e. at the place where the expulsion of the Goths from Constantinople in 400 was depicted (fol. 11), one can see an image of the Constantine Forum in the form of a circle surrounded by a schematically rendered colonnade (fig. 6). Inside it, a column on a rectangular pedestal is shown, topped with a figure dressed in a toga clinging tightly to the body (*statua togata*)⁵⁰. Because of the small size of the drawing, its conventional and derivative character and the fact that the artist sketched also the crack in the shaft of the column, running through the head and shoulders of the figure, it cannot be determined on the basis of this watercolour whether the statue had a radiate crown on its head and whether it held any attributes in its hands.

This reconstruction of the image on the column showing Constantine in a long tunic has found support in a hypothesis formed by Hans Peter L’Orange, who pointed to a small bronze statuette with a radiate crown, long robe and a cloak pinned with a fibula, kept at the National Museum

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⁴⁹ Twenty-one watercolors documenting the monuments of Constantinople have been preserved in the so-called *Freshfield Album*, dated 1574, held at Cambridge (Trinity College Library, Ms. O. 17.2). On folios 11-13, the column of Arcadius is shown from the eastern, southern and western sides. On the significance of the manuscript for studies on Constantinople, see Mango, *Constantinopolitana*, p. 305-315.

in Copenhagen (inv. No. 8040), as a possible iconographic formula of the Constantinople colossus. This type of costume, however, seems unusual in the official imperial images in the time of the Tetrarchy; and above all, due to its schematic character, this small fragment of the sketch offers no grounds for a certain and unambiguous interpretation of the original statue or even its representation on the frieze of the column of Arcadius.

In this situation, it seems reasonable to get back to the lost late Roman cameo. The bronze statue of Constantine set on top of the column in the middle of his forum had an official character; there is a consensus among scholars that for such representations of the emperor not only nudity and the form of \textit{statua togata} but also the form of \textit{statua loricata}, portraying the ruler in a military uniform, was acceptable and – what is more important – particularly popular in the late Roman art. Nonetheless, the aegis and radiate crown on the cameo are part of a specific costume and the assumption that Constantine was depicted in a similar way entails the necessity for the reinterpretation of the meaning of the statue on the Forum.

\section{6. Constantine-founder as a new Alexander}

The choice of the iconographic type of Alexander – the founder of the city which bears his name – can be fully understood in regard to a sculpture displayed on the summit of a column standing in the forum linking the old Byzantium of Septimius Severus’ time with the new city established upon Constantine’s initiative. If the account conveyed in \textit{The Brief Historical Notes} (Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικαί) from the eighth century is to be believed, the forum with the porphyry column was the main site for the forty-day-long celebrations to commemorate the dedication of Constantinople, which commenced on 11 May 330. During the festivities, in the

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ousterhout, \textit{The life and afterlife}, p. 312 considers L’Orange’s thesis not convincing due to the religious connotations of the Copenhagen figurine. Of less consequence for our study is the rejection of the documentary value of the watercolors, made solely on the basis of the non-nudity of the emperor’s image by Yoncaci-Arslan, \textit{Towards a new honorific column}, p. 135, fig. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Mango, \textit{Constantine’s Column}, p. 3; Ousterhout, \textit{The life and afterlife}, p. 311-312.
\end{itemize}
presence of the citizens gathered in great numbers in a solemn procession, the figure of the emperor was transported along the Mese from the Philadelphion and lifted to the top of the column\textsuperscript{54}.

During the games in the Hippodrome, Constantine appeared with a new imperial insignia: a diadem (διάδημα) decorated with precious stones and pearls, adopted from his great Macedonian predecessor\textsuperscript{55}. Following the emperor’s decree, celebrations commemorating the city’s ‘birthday’ (as was the case in Alexandria, officially founded on 7 April 331 B.C.) were repeated every year on the anniversary of the event, and at least until the sixth century the aforementioned smaller copy of the image of the ruler with a figurine of Tyche in his hand was paraded in a festive procession\textsuperscript{56}. The associations


\textsuperscript{55} Malalas, Chronographia XIII 8, p. 246-247: καὶ φορέσας τότε ἐν πρώτοις ἐν τῇ ἱδίᾳ αὐτοῦ κορυφῇ διάδημα διά μαργαρίτων καὶ λίθων τιμίων, βουλόμενος πληρώσαι τὴν προφητικὴν φωνὴν τὴν λέγουσαν∙ “ἔθηκας ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀυτοῦ στέφανον ἐκ λίθου τιμίου” [Ps 20:3] οὐδὲὶ γὰρ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ βασιλευσάντων τοιούτον τί ποτε ἔφορεσαν. On the diadem as an attribute adopted by Constantine from Alexander, see Bardill, Constantine, p. 13-19, 398, fig. 5-8, who suggests that contrary to the chronicler’s statement, Constantine had already been depicted in a headband on the coins minted in 324 (and he links this fact with the foundation of Constantinople on 8 November of that year); the imperial diadem, however, had not yet been decorated with jewels. L. Ramskold – N. Lenski, Constantinople’s dedication medallions and the maintenance traditions, “Numismatische Zeitschrift” 119 (2012) p. 41-43 come to similar conclusions. For the iconography of a diadem in the Hellenistic period, see R.R.R. Smith, Hellenistic Royal Portraits, Oxford 1988, p. 34-37. Amedick, Iesus Nazarenus, p. 54, 60-66 points out that in the imperial Rome the diadem was used solely as a poetic metaphor and iconographic convention, as it lost its insignia function due to official state doctrine, which avoided any associations with the kinghood.

\textsuperscript{56} Malalas, Chronographia XIII 8, 247; Narrationes breves chronographicae, § 5, 38, p. 60, 102. Theophanes, Chronographia, v. 1, p. 383 under the year 712/13 refers only to the games organized at the Hippodrome on the occasion of the city’s anniversary. For the Alexandrian models of the Constantinople procession, see Bardill, Constantine, p. 151-157.
between Constantinople and Alexandria were strengthened by the fact that the two cities bearing the names of their founders had not been founded in cruda radice, but at the places of older settlements – Byzantium and Rhacotis (Ῥακῶτις)\(^\text{57}\). Constantine’s decision to commemorate his own achievement as the founder of Constantinople by adopting the iconography known from the Alexandrian statue of the famous and still venerated founder of many Greek cities would thus have been fully justified and understandable\(^\text{58}\).

The significance of that reference to the great Greek predecessor might have had a local aspect too, as Alexander had been credited with founding the Strategion – a square located about 750 metres to the north-east of the Forum and adjacent to the walls of ancient Byzantium\(^\text{59}\). Also this place Constantine engaged in celebrating the dedication of the city by placing there his equestrian statue and a column with an inscribed edict which secured Constantinople’s status of the New Rome\(^\text{60}\). Moreover, according to


the *Patria*, the emperor had fetched from Chrysopolis an ancient statue of Alexander funded by his own soldiers and placed it on the Strategion⁶¹.

Although the patriographic texts written many centuries after the city’s foundation are not fully reliable⁶², we have tangible evidence of Constantine’s purposeful use of Hellenistic forms: rare tetradrachms with a profile portrait of the emperor in a diadem on the obverse and enthroned Tyche on the reverse. The coins issued in 330 to celebrate the dedication of Constantinople had no analogies in contemporary coinage but they evidently emulated (also in weight) the silver tetradrachms of the times of Alexander and his successors, who ascended Hellenistic thrones after the Diadochian wars⁶³. Modelled on the worshipped image of the founder of Alexandria, the statue of Constantine, towering above his forum, not only fitted perfectly into this Hellenistic narrative but also became its culmination, visible to

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⁶¹ *Scriptores originum* [II 59], p. 183. *Narrationes breves chronographicae*, § 69, p. 150 mentions a tripod with an image of Alexander displayed on the Strategion. Berger, *Untersuchungen*, 406-407 considers the legend implausible and suggests that the monument might have been identical with the equestrian statue of Constantine in the Strategion (cf. Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, v. 1, p. 563), although he is aware of the passage in *Short historical notes* referring to the inscription. Bardill, *Constantine*, p. 26, n. 64 believes that the story about the statue’s origin might have been invented to remind of Constantine’s warfare, for it was Chrysopolis where he routed Licinius’ army.


⁶³ Ramskold, Lenski, *Constantinople’s dedication*, p. 31-48, fig. 1-2, pl. 1-3; Lenski, *Constantine*, p. 330-338, fig. 16, 2-16, 3; 16, 5; 16, 7. Both scholars note that the imitation might have been intentional and point to the tetradrachms minted by Demetrius I Soter, who ruled Antioch in the years 162-150 B.C., as particularly similar to Constantine’s coins. D. Woods, *Constantine’s Tetradrachms*, “The Numismatic Chronicle” 176 (2016) p. 207-220 revises their findings, pointing out that the motif of Tyche on coins had no religious connotations, but was adopted from the Hellenistic era for the sake of political propaganda. At the same time, the scholar notes possible reasons for minting the tetradrachms other than the foundation of Constantinople: an antiquarian desire to preserve the imagery present on Hellenistic coins confiscated from temple treasuries and melted down on a massive scale, or an urge to refer to Alexander the Great in the emperor’s eastern policy. Neither of them, however, seems entirely convincing. On early references to Alexander’s coins in Constantine’s monetary policy of the Trier period, see Bardill, *Constantine*, p. 11, fig. 3-4.
everyone and confirmative of the status of the emperor as the new Alexander – the founder of the capital bearing his name.

7. Conclusions

The identification of the figure on the Cammin cameo as the image of Constantine from his forum in Constantinople has some significant implications. Most of all, it changes our previous understanding of the imperial image as referring to pagan cults (Helios, Apollo) and allows us to interpret it mainly as a product of the political propaganda referring to the epitome of a perfect ruler which Alexander of Macedon was considered to be. Using the iconographic formula of Alexander-ktistes with a radiate nimbus around the head and other attributes – an aegis, a spear and perhaps the Palladion – adopted from an undoubtedly Hellenistic iconographic type, but

64 The choice of Alexander as a pattern on which Constantine modelled his image of the founder of a new city obviously accords with the emperor’s overall propaganda policy. Since a detailed discussion on this matter would go beyond the scope of this article, we will confine ourselves to presenting a few selected examples. In the military context, the two rulers were quite early compared to each other by an anonymous author of a panegyric speech delivered in Trier in 313 after the victory over Maxentius, see XII Panegyrici Latini XII 5, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, Oxford 1964, p. 274 (Constantine’s good looks, too, are compared – by the author of a Panegyric from 310 – to those of a great king and Thessalian hero, undoubtedly Alexander, XII Panegyrici Latini, p. 198 [VI 17, 2]). Eusebius, Vita Constantini, I 7-8 compares the Constantine’s military victories to those of Cyrus and Alexander, cf. Eusebius, Über das Leben Constantins, ed. F. Winkelmann, in: Eusebius, Werke, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 7/1, Berlin – New York 1991, p. 17-18. See also Bardill, Constantine, p. 19, 87, 144, 293, 359-360, 371-372, 397.

65 The use of bronze, instead of marble or chryselephantine, which were typically applied to religious sculptures, indicates the honorific character of the statue, see Smith, Hellenistic Royal Portraits, p. 15-16, n. 6 and also p. 18, 25, 33, followed by Basset, The urban image, p. 203-204 and Yoncaci-Arslan, Towards a new honorific column, p. 125. Woods, Constantine’s Tetradrachms, p. 214 emphasizes the propagandist, not religious, aspect of the Hellenizing images on Constantine’s coins.

66 The statue on which the image on the cameo was modelled – the type of Alexander in an aegis (Aigiochos) associated with the sculpture at his grave in Alexandria – has been preserved to our times in sixteen ancient copies of Egyptian provenience (cf. among others: bronzes at the British Museum, inv. no. 1922,0711.1 and at the Walters Museum in Baltimore, inv. no. 54.1075; marble statues at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, inv. no. GR.69.1970; at the Louvre, inv. nos MND 947 and MND 1390; at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, inv. no. 1963.74 and at the Musee des Beaux-Arts
over time already faded into oblivion as a model for the imperial statue lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation\(^67\). Both the medieval Greeks who wrote about the figure of the emperor on the porphyry column and modern researchers consider the presence of a radiate crown to be proof of the religious nature of the monument showing the emperor as Helios.

Malalas, George the Monk and Zonaras mention that the figure had been brought from Troy (incorrectly located by them in Phrygia), whereas


Michael Glycas claims it had originated in Heliopolis in Phrygia. The information about transferring the sculpture from one of the ancient cities, particularly from Ilion, associated with Alexander, or Heliopolis, linked with the cult of the Sun, was probably intended to imply that an older, Hellenistic sculpture had been reused, and as such it is interpreted by some modern scholars. However, the emperor on the cameo was depicted with his hair cropped short above his brow, with smoothly shaven cheeks and with a protruding jaw – the physiognomic features known from the portraits of Constantine on his arch in Rome, from the colossal statue from the Basilica of Maxentius (now in the Capitoline Museum; inv. no. MC0757), from a bronze head which is probably part of the colossus from the House of Fausta, funded to commemorate the emperor’s vicennalia (Capitoline Museum, inv. no. MC1072), as well as from the bronze head from Niš (National Museum in Belgrade, inv. no. NMB 79 / IV) and from the depictions on coins. Assuming that the gem cutter faithfully rendered the emperor’s features observed in the statue in Constantinople, one should reject the hypothesis that Constantine had reused an older spolium for his monument: a statue of long-haired Alexander the Great in particular.

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68 Malalas, Chronographia XII 7, p. 246; Georgios Monachos, Chronicon, v. 2, p. 500; Zonaras, Compendium Historiarum XIII 3/25, v. 3, p. 18 (who also notes that it was a figure of Apollo); Michaelis Glycae, Annales IV, ed. I. Bekker, Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae 24, Bonn 1836, p. 464. Chronicon Paschale, v. 1, p. 528 mentions only that the bronze statue was brought from Phrygia, but does not name the exact place of its origin.

69 Among those who support the hypothesis that Constantine used a spolium can be numbered Bergmann, Der römische Sonnenkoloss, p. 125; Bardill, Constantine, p. 112; Yoncaci-Arslan, Registrars of Urban Movement, p. 18 and Berger, The Statues, p. 9 (who however denies the credibility of Malalas’ statement that the statue had been brought from Troy). T.D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, Harvard 1981, p. 222 represents a more balanced approach in stating that Constantine had had a statue of Apollo reshaped into his image.


71 As observed by Bardill, Constantine, p. 19, Constantine did not in every respect emulate Alexander: one of the examples is the emperor’s different short-cut hairstyle.
Attempts to explain more literally the unusual form of the statue appear in Middle Byzantine sources. Symeon Logothete attributes the authorship of the sculpture to Phidias, whereas the *Patria* mention a figure of Apollo – called Helios – which Constantine set on a column as an image of himself. Finally, Anna Comnena writes that although the statue actually represented Apollo, the citizens of the capital called it Anthelios (ὑπερήλιος – facing the sun or reflecting the sunshine) and even after the emperor renamed it after himself, the name Anelios or Anthelios was still in general use. Pierre Gilles, a French envoy sent to Constantinople by King Francis I, combines both traditions when he speaks of an ancient statue of Apollo brought from Troy.

On the other hand, the iconographic form chosen by Constantine, misunderstood by posterity and misinterpreted as an image of the Christian emperor in the costume of a pagan deity, could have conduced to the invention of stories in which the column became an object of half Christian, half magical nature. The legend about the nails of the Holy Cross, which were reportedly set among the rays of the crown, seems to derive from the fifth-century account by Socrates Scholasticus, who makes mention of the relics of the Cross, sent from Jerusalem to Constantine by Helena and then placed inside the statue. Cedrenus and Rodius, in turn, inform us of twelve baskets hidden under the column, filled with the bread multiplied by Jesus in the desert. The *Patria* add to them the crosses on which the

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73 See n. 38 above. For the etymology of the term ‘Anthelios’, see Berger, *Untersuchungen*, p. 299.

74 Petrus Gyllius, *De Constantinopolitana topographia* III 3, p. 132.

75 Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastica historia* I 17, 8-9, p. 178-180. On the relics of the Holy Nails, used in Constantine’s radiate crown, see n. 43 above. Further in his narrative, Socrates mentions the nails from the Holy Cross, which – as he claims – Constantine used to make a horse’s bit and fixed to his helmet. This mention may have inspired later authors to create a story about the Holy Nails placed in the radiate crown.

76 Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum* v. 1, p. 564; Constantinus Rhodius, *Descriptio Urbis Constantinopolitanae* [v. 75-82], p. 22-24.
two thieves were crucified and a flacon with the oil which was used to anoint the body of Christ, and Nicephorus Callistus, active in the times of the Palaiologoi, adds the axe which Noah used to build his ark. In the accounts about the relics hidden under the monument’s base, another legend seems to resound – the one about the Palladion stolen by Constantine from Rome and placed under the column.

The question of the statue’s pagan connotations, raised by Byzantine authors, forces modern scholars to confront the task of explaining the reasons why Constantine, who had publicly been showing his devotion to Christianity since at least the year 326, would have had himself portrayed as Helios in such an exposed point of his new capital. Apart from attempts to justify the adoption of the form of a pagan deity in the image of the ruler by stressing the emperor’s syncretic approach to religious issues, efforts have been made to Christianize the image itself by denying the presence of the solar attribute – the radiate nimbus. Reconstruction based on the presumption that the statue on the column standing in the middle of the

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78 The first to mention the Palladion hidden under the porphyry column in the Forum are Malalas, *Chronographia* XIII 7 and Procopius of Caesarea, *De bellis* VI 15, see Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 246; Procopii Caesariensis, *Opera omnia*, v. 2, ed. J. Haury – G. Wirth, Leipzig 1963 p. 82. The information about the statuette hidden under the column is then repeated by *Chronicon Paschale*, v. 1, p. 528; *Scriptores originum* II 45, p. 174 (according to Kulumus manuscript it was brought from Troada) and Zonaras, *Compendium Historiarum* XIII 3/28, v. 3, p. 18, see also Basset, *The urban image*, p. 205-206 (with references to ancient sources on the statuette and with its reconstructed iconography). It cannot be ruled out that the legend was inspired by the figurine of Nike standing on the orb held by the statue of Constantine; its early replacement with *globus cruciger*, however, would make this hypothesis questionable.


80 See, for example, Bergmann, *Der römische Sonnenkoloss*, p. 121-122, 127-129.

81 Karayannopulos, *Konstantin der Große*, p. 352, fig. 1, followed by Berger, *Untersuchungen*, p. 298, presumes that Constantine’s head was crowned with a diadem (similar to that depicted on the statue from Niš), misinterpreted by later authors as *corona radiata*. Besides, Karayannopulos notes that a spear in the statue’s right hand was never associated with the iconography of Helios. Mango, *Constantine’s Column*, p. 3-4 accepts the statue’s identification as Constantine and notes that the first attempts to link it with Apollo or Helios can only be found in relatively late sources.
imperial forum invokes the visual formula of a ruler who is also a founder of a new city and whose myth was willingly used by the Roman emperors\(^2\), makes all these efforts pointless and allows us to read in the figure of Constantine a logical, coherent message associated with the propaganda of power and thus free of any straightforward references to ancient solar cults.

8. Epilogue

The Cammin cameo has been lost for over seventy-five years. Nonetheless, thanks to the photographs taken by Spuhrmann and Borchers as well as the plaster cast held at the University of Göttingen, its visual form has been preserved and we have thereby been offered a chance to look from a different angle at the problem of reconstructing the appearance and meaning of another lost work of art – in this instance irretrievably – namely the statue of Constantine on the porphyry column. It should be stressed that the value and significance of the sardonyx gem, as well as of the other lost items from the cathedral treasury, do not lie in the material from which it was made, but in the documentary aspect of the object, which is in all probability the only contemporary iconographic testimony offering a representation of the statue, which at one time towered over the city named after her founder. One can therefore hope that its rediscovery, when it finally occurs, will allow to study its stylistic features minutely and, in result, positively verify the hypotheses presented above.

*Translation: Dariusz Wójtowicz*

**The Lost Cameo, the Vanished Statue of the Emperor and Constantine as a New Alexander**

(summary)

The aim of this paper is to propose a reinterpretation of the meaning of the lost colossus of Constantine the Great from the Forum of his name in Constantinople, in the light of the iconography of the emperor on the cameo from the cathedral in the Pomeranian town of Cammin. Although the gem was lost during the last war, it is known to us thanks to archi-

\(^2\) Bergmann as early as 1997 pointed out that the statue may have functioned as an image of a ktistes (in this case the ktistes of Constantinople), commonly worshiped in the ancient world, but she did not link this fact with a specific iconographic type, cf. Bergmann, *Der römische Sonnenkoloss*, p. 125.
val photographs and the plaster cast housed at Göttingen University. On this basis, Gerda Bruns associated the jewel with the statue of Constantine on the porphyry column in the New Rome, and her identification has since been widely accepted by the scholarly milieu. In recent years one has been able to observe growing popularity of this interpretation among researchers, who however refrain in their studies from pointing to the consequences of such a reconstruction of the statue’s form. The author of this paper points out that Constantine purposefully chose the iconographical type of Alexander-ktistes as a model for his own representation in order to allude to his great predecessor and the founder of a number of cities which bore his name. The iconography of the statue became then a part of the programme of the celebrations arranged on the occasion of the dedication of Constantinople, in which numerous references to Alexander played the key role. This new understanding of the colossus, placing its significance within the frames of political propaganda, better matches the actual historical circumstances and the ruler’s attitude towards Christendom than traditional interpretations which recognised the statue as Helios or Apollo, and thus introduced an incoherence – difficult to explain – in Constantine’s attitude towards the new religion. This cumbersome question, which baffled the inquisitive minds already in the Constantinople of the Byzantine era, will be considered unsubstantial if we correctly interpret the monument on the Forum solely in the political and propagandistic context.

**Keywords:** Cammin Cathedral; Constantine; Cameo; Constantinople; *Imitatio Alexandrii*

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**Zaginiona kamea, nieistniejący posąg cesarza i Konstantyn jako Nowy Aleksander**

(streszczenie)

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest reinterpretacja znaczenia bezpowrotnie utraconego posągu Konstantyna z noszącego jego imię Forum w Konstantynopolu w świetle ikonografii cesarza na kamei z katedry w Kamieniu Pomorskim. Choć gemma ta zaginęła podczas ostatniej wojny, jej wygląd jest nam znany dzięki archiwalnym fotografiom i gipsowemu odlewowi przechowywanemu na Uniwersytecie w Getyndze. Na ich podstawie Gerda Bruns podjęła próbę połączenia wyobrażenia na klejnocie z rzeźbą cesarza na porfirowej kolumnie w Nowym Rzymie, a zaproponowana przez nią identyfikacja spotkała się z życzliwym przyjęciem w środowisku naukowym. W ostatnich latach można zaobserwować wzrastającą popularność owej interpretacji wśród badaczy, którzy jednak powstrzymują się w swoich pracach przed określanie treści niesionych przez taką rekonstrukcję formy posągu. Autor artykułu stara się wykazać, że Konstantyn celowo sięgnął po ikonograficzny typ Aleksandra ktistesa jako wzór dla własnego przedstawienia, czyniąc tym samym aluzję do swojego wielkiego poprzednika, a zarazem fundatora wielu miast noszących jego własne imię. Ikonografia posągu wpisała się tym samym w szerszy program uroczystości z okazji dedykacji Konstantynopola, w trakcie których rozliczne odniesienia do Aleksandra odgrywały istotną rolę. Proponowane nowe odczytanie przekazu niesionego przez posąg, lokalizujące jego znaczenie w ramach propagandy politycznej, znacznie lepiej pasuje do realiów epoki, a w szczególności do stosunku władcy wobec chrześcijaństwa, niż tradycyjne interpretacje wyobrażenia jako Heliosa lub Apollina, wprowadzające trudną do wytłumaczenia niespójność w postawie Konstantyna wobec nowej religii. Owa kłopotliwa kwestia, z którą borykały się już dociekliwe umysły średniowiecznych miesz-
kańców Konstantynopola, staje się nieistotna w momencie, gdy poprawnie zinterpretujemy pomnik na Forum wyłącznie w jego politycznym i propagandowym kontekście.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Katedra w Kamieniu Pomorskim; Konstantyn; kamea; Konstantynopol; *Imitatio Alexandrii*

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Figures

Figure 1. Gothic cross-pax with the ancient cameo (lost) from the cathedral treasury in Cammin, photo taken 18.12.1934 (from the archive of the National Museum in Szczecin, acc. No. 6697A).

Figure 2. Emperor in an aegis, sardonyx cameo from the cathedral treasury in Cammin, photo taken in 1938 (from the archive of the National Museum in Szczecin, acc. No. 6386).
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Figure 3. Plaster cast of the Cammin cameo, the Archaeological Institute of the University of Göttingen, photo by Stephan Eckardt, © Archäologisches Institut der Universität Göttingen.

Figure 4. Alexander-ktistes, bronze statuette, Alexandria, first century A.D., the British Museum (formerly in D. M. Fouquet collection), © The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 5. Vignette of Constantinople on *Tabula Peutingeriana* (*Codex Vindobonensis 324*), first quarter of the thirteenth century (?), photo by the author.

Figure 6. Forum of Constantine depicted on the column of Arcadius, drawing by Lambert de Vos (?), ca. 1574, *Freshfield Album*, Cambridge, Trinity College Library, Ms. O. 17.2., photo: https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/O.17.2 (accessed: 15.07.2022).