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“...*ex succino flavo artificiose excupita...*”<sup>1</sup>  
*Schatzkammer* Ambers in the Museum  
of Applied Arts, Budapest

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**Słowa kluczowe:** bursztynowe artefakty, Jacob Heise, Skarb Esterházy, kolekcjoner Miklós Jankovics, Muzeum Sztuk Użytkowych w Budapeszcie

„...*ex succino flavo artificiose excupita...*” Siedemnastowieczne skarby  
z bursztynu w zbiorach Muzeum Sztuk Użytkowych w Budapeszcie

W artykule są zaprezentowane siedemnastowieczne dzieła z bursztynu pochodzące z dawnych arystokratycznych kolekcji, obecnie przechowywane w Muzeum Sztuk Użytkowych w Budapeszcie.

Ta niewielka, lecz znacząca grupa prac – do tej pory w dużej mierze niepublikowana – składa się z pięciu obiektów. Jeden z nich związany jest z Mikłosem Jankovichem, być może najbardziej znaną postacią węgierskiego kolekcjonerstwa sztuki XIX wieku. Fragmenty bursztynowego pucharu z pokrywą z muzeum w Budapeszcie zidentyfikowano niedawno jako przedmioty pochodzące z tej bogatej i zróżnicowanej kolekcji, która na przestrzeni lat uległa rozproszeniu. Ekspонатem najbardziej podobnym pod względem formy do tego uszkodzonego

<sup>1</sup> Eng.: “Artistically carved from yellow amber” quote taken from the 1696 inventory of the Fraknó (Forchtenstein) Esterházy Treasury. Almarium sub Nro. 43. et 44, Nr. 17. Fiala..., INVENTARIUM: THESAURI: CELS: S: R: I: PRINC: PAULI: ESTERAS: R: HUNGAR: PALATINI: IN: ARCE: SVA: FRAKNO: EXISTENTIS: ANNO: DOM: M: DC: XCVI: [in:] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, az Esterházy család hercegi ágának levéltára [National Archives of Hungary, the archives of the Princely branch of the Esterházy family], MNL O P 108 Rep. 8, fasc. C. Nr. 38+NB/1.

działa jest puchar przypisywany warsztatowi Jacoba Heise z Królewca, przechowywany w Muzeum Brytyjskim.

Pozostałe cztery bursztynowe dzieła pochodzą ze skarbca książąt Esterházy we Forchtenstein (Fraknó). Wybrane z niego zabytki z końca XVII wieku zostały przetransportowane z zamku Forchtenstein do Muzeum Sztuki Użytkowej w Budapeszcie w 1919 roku, gdzie były wystawiane w oddzielnych pomieszczeniach jako depozyty między dwiema wojnami światowymi. Były to: ołtarzyk z krucyfiksem, kufel z pokrywą i dwa eksponaty związane z warsztatem mistrzów z Królewca. *Tazza* na nóżce wiązana była z Johannesem Kohnem. Wyjątkową rzadkością natomiast była rzeźbiona czarka nosząca sygnaturę Jacoba Heise i datowana na 1663 rok.

Podczas oblężenia Budapesztu w czasie II wojny światowej skarbiec doznał poważnych uszkodzeń na skutek bombardowań. Krucyfiks został całkowicie zniszczony i można go podziwiać jedynie na archiwalnych fotografiach. Pozostałe przedmioty zostały rozbite na wiele kawałków, z których niektóre zaginęły. Współautorem tego artykułu jest Gábor Juhász, główny konserwator Muzeum Sztuki Użytkowej, od długiego czasu uczestniczący w renowacji, która rozpoczęła się ponad 70 lat temu. Podjął się on szczególnie trudnego zadania, jakim jest uporządkowanie i odnowienie tych delikatnych fragmentów bursztynu przy użyciu nowoczesnych, nowatorskich metod (3D).

#### Abstract

This article presents worked ambers from the 17<sup>th</sup> century originating in princely collections now preserved in the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest. This small but significant group of mostly unpublished artworks consists of five pieces. One can be linked to Miklós Jankovich, perhaps the best known figure in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian art collecting. The amber tankard in the Budapest Museum was recently identified as once being part of his rich and diverse collection, which had become scattered to the winds over time. The closest analogy to this unfortunately damaged and fragmented work, which may be attributed to the Königsberg workshop of Jacob Heise, is found in the British Museum.

The other four amber artworks all originate in the Esterházy princely treasury in Fraknó. This *Schatzkammer*, formed by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, contained selected treasures that were transported from Burg Forchtenstein to the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest in 1919, where the public could view them in separate rooms as part of a deposit between the two World Wars. Among them was an amber crucifix, a tankard, and two objects connected to Königsberg masters (Johann Kohn and Jacob Heise). In addition to the *tazza* attributed to Kohn, a particularly significant rarity is the carved bowl bearing the inscription Jacob Heise and the date 1663.

During the siege of Budapest in World War II, the treasury suffered severe damage due to a bomb hit. Of the sensitive amber works, the crucifix was destroyed and is now only known from archival photos. The rest shattered into small pieces and is incomplete. One of the authors of the article is Gábor Juhász, the senior metalwork conservator of the Museum of Applied Arts. Gábor has been a long time participant in the restoration process which started over

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seventy years ago. He recently began the challenging restoration of these delicate amber (and other mineral) fragments using modern, new (3D) methods.

The Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest<sup>2</sup> was established by a law passed in 1872. It has arranged its holdings according to a little changed system of material-based classification ever since. Categories include furniture, ceramics and glass, textiles, and metalwork. The latter encompasses a selection of five 17<sup>th</sup>-century pieces carved from Baltic amber, included therein on account of their metal mounts. Once belonging to the *Schatzkammer* (treasury) of the princely Esterházy family, one of the most important private collections in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Hungary, these form a small but highly significant group.

This study presents these five artifacts. All have been damaged, and their prior state can now only be reconstructed from archival photographs. Their restoration, undertaken by chief conservator Gábor Juhász, poses a major challenge, requiring careful consideration, experimental methods, and international expertise. This not only due to the extremely delicate and unique material used in their facture but also to the presence of exceptionally important and incredibly rare pieces in the collection, such as one of the few well-provenanced works bearing the name of the Königsberg craftsman Jacob Heise (on whom see Rachel King's contribution to this volume). These artistically accomplished ambers were presented in publications in the first half of the twentieth century by such authors as Otto Pelka (1875–1943)<sup>3</sup> and Alfred Rohde (1892–1945).<sup>4</sup> They have since been roundly forgotten, often incorrectly mourned as destroyed. Among other things, this has led to the problematic perpetuation of errors in Rohde's catalogue. This contribution resurrects these artifacts for modern scholarship and outlines the efforts being made to conserve them for a new generation of viewers and researchers.

Of the five carved masterpieces discussed in this paper, a tankard<sup>5</sup> (fig. 1) is the only example not to have belonged to the Esterházy treasury, and it is this with which we will start. Neither Pelka nor Rohde appears to have been familiar with it for it is not included among similar amber tankards in Rohde's 1937 corpus. Rohde assembled a small group of objects, made between 1640 and 1660, all of which share certain features: stocky bodies, shallow domed covers without finials, tall thumb rests and strongly curved handles. The vessels' bodies are composed of carved panels, each adorned with allegorical standing figures. Between these figures, as well as on the bases and covers, carved floral motifs, birds, and other animals can be seen.

<sup>2</sup> Since July 1, 2024, the Museum of Applied Arts has been a member institution of the Public Collection Centre of the Hungarian National Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Otto Pelka, *Bernstein*, Bibliothek für Kunst-und Antiquitätensammler, Bd. 18, Berlin 1920.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Rohde, *Bernstein. Ein Deutscher Werkstoff. Seine künstlerische Verarbeitung vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin: Deutsche Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1937.

<sup>5</sup> Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Inv. Nr. 18914 and 2008.189.1-9.

Examples from what appears to be the same workshop are held in prestigious collections such as the British Museum and the Grünes Gewölbe in Dresden. Another example, which surfaced in a private collection, was displayed at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna during its 2005 amber exhibition.<sup>6</sup> The Dresden tankard is decorated with allegories of the Seven Liberal Arts,<sup>7</sup> while the two in London feature Christian Virtues<sup>8</sup> and Vices.<sup>9</sup> Though damaged and listed as two separate fragments for decades, the piece in the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts depicts Christian Virtues<sup>10</sup> and should be added to this group.

The Budapest tankard was originally in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum. Restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was presented at major exhibitions in 1884 and 1896,<sup>11</sup> (fig. 2) and was still part of the

<sup>6</sup> Sotheby's *Catalogue of European Sculpture & Works of Art* (London, 8 December 2006), Cat. no. 80. See: Bernstein für Thron und Altar. *Das Gold des Meeres in fürstlichen Kunst- und Schatzkammern* [Exhibition at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Alte Geistliche Schatzkammer, 5 October 2005 – 29 January 2006], ed. Wilfred Seipel, Vienna 2005: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Exhibition catalogue, nr. 20, pp. 50–51; Alexis Kugel, Rahul Kulka, *Amber: Treasures from the Baltic Sea, 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century/ Ambre: trésors de la mer Baltique du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle* [exhibition catalogue], ed. Monelle Hayot, Paris 2023: Galerie Kugel Paris, p. 212, n. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden. Access. Nr.: III 77.

<sup>8</sup> The Jarvis-Mymms Tankard. British Museum, London. Long term loan from the Church of St Mary, North Mymms (see the article by Rachel King in this volume.)

<sup>9</sup> The Rothschild Waddesdon Tankard. British Museum, London. Museum Number WB.229 (see again the Rachel King in this volume.)

<sup>10</sup> Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. Access. Nr. 18914 and 2008.189.1-9. See: Gábor Juhász, "Collapsed, though we have all the parts." A previously unknown 17<sup>th</sup>-century amber tankard from the collection of Miklós Jankovich in the Museum of Applied Arts, "Ars Decorativa" 2022,pno. 36, pp. 23–43.

<sup>11</sup> The Hungarian Historical Goldsmith's Art Exhibition, Budapest 1884; National Millennium Exhibition, Budapest 1896.



Fig. 1. Detail (the mount: base, lid and handle) of the Jankovich tankard, Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Inv. Nr. 18914, © MAA Budapest, photo: Gellért Ámen, 2015



Fig. 2. The Jankovich tankard (above, centre) at the exhibition of 1884, © Budapest City Archives, Accession Nr. HU\_BFL\_XV\_19\_d\_1\_02\_198, photo: György Klösz

National Museum's permanent displays in 1912.<sup>12</sup> In 1934, the large-scale institutional reorganization of cultural institutions underway at that time brought the Museum of Applied Arts under the management of the Historical Museum, which also included the National Museum. This restructuring led to a redistribution of artifacts based on their respective institutional foci. As a result, the amber tankard – already in a disassembled state – was transferred, along with several other internationally significant metalworks, to the Museum of Applied Arts' collection in 1936.

The body of the amber tankard, still in pieces today, comprises three registers, featuring marine creatures at the top, allegorical figures in the middle, and land animals at the bottom. (Fig. 3) The cover contains a small, transparent amber medallion, beneath which is a carved bone-amber relief: on the exterior, a drinking man (Bacchus?) under a leafy tree, and on the interior, a woman (Temperantia?) pouring a drink from a jug. A notable feature of the tankard's gilded silver mount is the preserved black ink-painted decoration (a cold enamel imitation of niello) adorning the rim of the base and mouth, as well as the connecting elements and handle band. This decorative element is perhaps best preserved on the Budapest tankard among all amber works, and cold painted mounts have not been extensively discussed by scholars of amber artifacts.



Fig. 3. Carved panels of the Jankovich tankard, decorated with allegories of Christian Virtues and animals, Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Inv. Nr. 2008.189.1-9, © MAA Budapest, photo: Gellért Ámen, 2015

This tankard came into the National Museum from the collection of Miklós Jankovich. In 1852, following his death, the museum acquired it – already in fragments – along with 162 other antiquities.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Kalauz a régiségtárban* [Guide to the Antiques Collection], ed. Elemér Varju, Budapest 1912: Hungarian National Museum, 15. [Expanded edition], p. 234, Nr. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Inventory of the Hungarian National Museum 1846–1856, 15 January 1852, no. 56, p. 123.



Miklós Jankovich (1772–1846) came from a noble family and was a historian, archaeologist, and the most renowned Hungarian art collector of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. After studying law and history, he initially held a number of positions of public authority before dedicating himself entirely to historical and archaeological research and the expansion of his vast collection, which included tens of thousands of books, antiquities, prints, medals, paintings and *Kunstkammer* pieces.<sup>14</sup> He was a member of several foreign academies and the Hungarian Learned Society. After moving to Pest, he joined an intellectual circle of enlightened nobles who sought to promote Hungarian culture and science as a means of advancing national independence and civic transformation under Habsburg rule.

Jankovich deliberately amassed his diverse and outstanding collection for the benefit of the public, ultimately aiming to enrich the National Museum. However, needing the funds to pay off the substantial debts he had accrued in building the collection, he sold it to the National Museum in 1832 for a fraction of its true value. He would return to his passion before long, but the new collection he amassed would later be auctioned off and dispersed worldwide.

Jankovich was strongly motivated by artifacts with legendary origins, real or presumed historical connections, or exceptional provenance. It is possible that he acquired the amber tankard for reasons of this type, although no records have been found to confirm this. The closest known comparator – the London tankard depicting the Vices – has a provenance going back certainly to the 1880s, and possibly beyond. It was once part of Baron Ferdinand Rothschild’s private collection and later entered public ownership as part of the Waddesdon Bequest.<sup>15</sup> Before that, it belonged to the collection of Count Nostitz in Prague. The white amber-engraved coat of arms on its lid, identified in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, links it to the Swedish royal Vasa dynasty (1521–1654). For years it was assumed that it may relate to Queen Christina of Sweden (ruled 1632–1654), whose art collection included items looted by the Swedish army in 1648 during the sack of Prague, and was dispersed after her death in 1689. In this volume, Rachel King suggests a new connection with Marie Eleonora of Brandenburg. Significantly, perhaps, the London and Budapest amber tankards can both be connected to East and Central Europe. Therefore, investigating links

<sup>14</sup> Árpád Mikó et al., *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) gyűjteményei*, ed. Árpád Mikó, Budapest 2002: Hungarian National Gallery. Numerous Hungarian publications have since been published about this highly significant collection. For example: Erika Kiss, *Jankovich Miklós gyűjteményeinek leltárkönyvei a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeumban. 1. Kora újkori ezüstművek*, “Folia Historica, a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Történeti Évkönyve” 2010–2011 [2011], no. 27, pp. 5–38; Árpád Mikó, *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) és gyűjteményei. Variációk egy nagy témára*, “Ars Hungarica” 2017, no. 45, pp. 33–44; *Enyészetnek örvényéből ki ragadtam. Jankovich Miklós és kora*, ed. István Csörsz Rumen, Budapest 2023.

<sup>15</sup> See Rachel King in this volume.

between the Czech aristocratic Nostitz family and the Hungarian collector Miklós Jankovich has potential for future insights.

The provenance of the four remaining 17<sup>th</sup>-century amber carvings in the Museum of Applied Arts is undisputedly clear: all were once in the Esterházy family treasury.<sup>16</sup> This collection of art treasures is unique, not only in Hungary but also internationally, for there are extremely few examples of 17<sup>th</sup>-century *Schatzkammer* collections which retain their integrity, albeit here in sometimes fragmentary condition.

Forchtenstein Castle (formerly known as Fraknó Castle, now in Austria) and its estates came into the possession of the Esterházy family in 1622. The renovated castle became the site of the treasury in 1644. Prior to this, precious family possessions had been kept in Kismarton (now Eisenstadt, Austria). The treasury room in Forchtenstein Castle, which can still be visited today, was completed in 1696. Decorative paintings and furniture, consisting of numbered cabinets, remain *in situ*.

Our knowledge of the treasury's formation and composition is based not only on surviving artifacts but also on dowry and inheritance records, wills, invoices, and inventories written in Latin, German, and Hungarian. Amber objects in these records are referred to with the terms *succinum* and/or *janta*, *gyánta* (a historical term for resin or amber).

The contours and composition of the Esterházy *Schatzkammer* at Forchtenstein, as they have come down to us today, were established in second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with minimal additions after the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To be thanked for this are two outstanding and influential family members: Miklós Esterházy and his son Pál, the first to become a prince. The history of the *Schatzkammer* can neither be separated from their lives nor from the complex events of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian history, which were marked by the Ottoman Wars and Counter-Reformation.

Miklós Esterházy (1582–1645) was born into a Protestant family from the lower nobility in Galánta (now Galanta, Slovakia). His conversion to Catholicism led him to leave his family home at a young age. He went on to experience a meteoric rise. Hungary was, at that time, divided into three parts: southern and southeastern regions were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire; northern and western regions – including parts of present-day Slovakia – formed Royal Hungary, ruled by the Habsburg dynasty; and eastern and southeastern Hungary (in what is now Romania) was the Principality of Transylvania, a vassal of

<sup>16</sup> *Thesaurus Domus Esterhazyanae I – Műtárgyak a fraknói Esterházy-kincstárból az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményében* [Works of art from the Esterházy treasury, Burg Forchtenstein in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest], ed. András Szilágyi, Budapest 2014: Iparművészeti Múzeum; *Thesaurus Domus Esterhazyanae II – Az Esterházy-kincstár textíliái az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményében* [Textiles from the Esterházy Treasury in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest], ed. Emese Pásztor, Budapest 2010: Iparművészeti Múzeum.

the Ottoman state. Nobles in Hungary faced the dilemma of assessing which threat – that of the Habsburgs or that of the Ottomans – was greater. A devout Catholic, Esterházy remained a staunch supporter of the Counter-Reformation and the Habsburg rulers until his death. He was a persuasive politician, a charismatic speaker, and a courageous soldier who personally fought against the Ottomans on the battlefield.

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Esterházy made fortunate matches. Twice marrying wealthy widows, he amassed great means and, thanks to his talents, ascended the ranks of power. He became a count, then a royal chief steward, and later a royal councilor. By 1625, he had reached the highest position possible, elected *Palatine* (the monarch's deputy) by the Hungarian Diet. Well-connected at court, he was knighted and joined the prestigious Order of the Golden Fleece in 1628, an honor recognizing his service to Christianity and the throne.

In Miklós' time, the contents of the *Schatzkammer* grew through dowries, war loot, nuptial gifts, and diplomatic presents. An inventory of his possessions, stored in the *Schatzkammer* of Forchtenstein Castle, was compiled after his death. The 1645 inventory is brief and allows for the identification of only a few objects. There is no amber. But, a slightly later inventory dated 1654 lists two types of amber objects. A group of four heart-shaped *succinum* pieces,<sup>17</sup> later absent from records, and a “yellow *succinum* rosary”, which might be linked to the “black amber” rosary mentioned in the 1696 inventory. (This, too, disappears from later inventories after 1696.)

Miklós Esterházy was succeeded by his eldest son, László (1626–1652), who would go on to be killed in the 1652 Battle of Vezekény against the Ottomans. Following his brother's heroic death, the 17-year-old Pál Esterházy (1635–1713) became the head of the family. He studied at the Jesuit College in Graz and later pursued philosophy, law, and military studies at the University of Nagyszombat. Like many Esterházys and Hungarian nobles, he took up arms against the Ottomans, sustaining injuries in the winter campaign of 1663–1664. He also fought in the sieges of Vienna (1683) and Buda (1686). Like his father, he was elected Palatine (1681) and made a member of the Order of the Golden Fleece (1682). Loyal to both the Habsburgs and Catholicism, he supported the former's absolutist policies and opposed the aspirations to independence of the Transylvanian princes. At the 1687 Diet in Pozsony (Bratislava), he secured the

<sup>17</sup> In Cista Prima continentur, ut sequitur. Az aranyművek száma: ... A 14. ezüst hosszas iskatulában. 1. Vagyon egy termés zafír, négy szív formára csinált sárga succinummal együtt [Eng.: The number of goldsmith works: ... The 14<sup>th</sup> silver piece in an elongated case. 1. There is a natural sapphire together with four heart-shaped yellow amber pieces]. Inventarium rerum omnium illustrissimi Domini Comitis Pauli Eszterházi in arce Fraknó existentium, anno 1654, die 16. Novembris juxta Cathalogum infra scriptum [in:] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, az Esterházy család hercegi ágának levéltára [National Archives of Hungary, the archives of the Princely branch of the Esterházy family], MNL OL P 108. rep. 8. Fasc. C. № 33NB. See: “Magyar Gazdaságtörténeti Szemle” [“Hungarian Economic History Review”] 1903, vol. 10, pp. 166–179.



acceptance of hereditary Habsburg rule in Hungary, replacing the former elected monarchy. In the same year, he was granted the title of prince for his services to Emperor Leopold I. His descendants in the “Forchtenstein” branch of the Esterházy inherited this title. The Diet in Pozsony also passed a law allowing noble families to establish *fideicommissa* (trusts) to protect their estates under primogeniture. In 1695, Prince Pál Esterházy committed his vast estates and *Schatzkammer* to a *fideicommissum*.

Prince Pál Esterházy was highly cultured and deeply passionate about the arts; poems and musical compositions from his hand survive. Like other *Schatzkammer* of the time, the Forchtenstein treasury housed a variety of rare artifacts ranging from ivories to gems and hardstones, to porcelains from the East and weapons from the Ottoman world, mirrors, timepieces, jewelry, ceremonial garments and numismatics. Under Pál’s patronage, the Forchtenstein *Schatzkammer* expanded significantly and systematically. A cultivated collector, he carefully curated and commissioned new additions. By his death in 1713, his *Schatzkammer* was largely complete.

Following the establishment of the *fideicommissum*, a detailed inventory was made in 1696. This lists seven amber objects. Three of the four amber artifacts now in Budapest – the crucifix (*crucifixus*), the tankard (*canna*), and the bowl (*fiala*) – are included in this document. Two other items, a statue of the Virgin Mary and a relief, are still in Forchtenstein today. A sixth item, a rosary, is noted as being used by the prince to pray for László Esterházy.<sup>18</sup> The final listed amber object, a gunpowder flask, has not survived.

The Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest has cared for four of the Forchtenstein treasury’s amber artifacts for nearly a century. They were initially brought to Budapest in 1919, along with over 300 treasures from the Esterházy collection, during the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic.<sup>19</sup> The director of the Museum attempted to protect and keep the treasures together in a reinforced vault made by partitioning his own living quarters. In recognition of this effort, Prince Miklós IV Esterházy (1869–1920) left the collection in the museum after the regime change and in 1923, his son signed a deposit agreement with the Budapest institution. From 1920 until the period between the two world wars, the collection was continuously accessible as part of the museum’s permanent exhibition, displayed in dedicated rooms. (Fig. 4) The Budapest Esterházy *Schatzkammer* comprised around thirty artifacts. One of the most delicate and

<sup>18</sup> In Ladula 4ta. ... Nr. 2. Rosarium ex succino nigro, cum granis majoribus, reliquiarys similiter praefati Principis olim Palatini Hungariae, pro quondam Comite Ladslao Esteras per decennium oravit. Inventarium Thesaurari Cels[issimi] S[acri] R[omani] Princ[ipis] Pauli Esteras ... in Arce sua Frakno exitentis, Anno 1696 [in:] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, az Esterházy család hercegi ágának levéltára [National Archives of Hungary, the archives of the Princely branch of the Esterházy family], MNL O P 108 Rep. 8, fasc. C. № 37NB.

<sup>19</sup> For the 20<sup>th</sup>-century history of the treasury, see: Horváth Hilda, *Nemzeti kincstárunk, az Esterházy hercegi kincstár 20. századi története*, Budapest 2014: Iparművészeti Múzeum.

vulnerable bodies of objects consisted of four amber artifacts, displayed at the center of a showcase featuring carvings of rock crystal, jasper, amethyst, and other precious stones.<sup>20</sup> During World War II, by order of Prince Paul Esterházy V the *Schatzkammer* was secretly moved to the Esterházy Palace in Buda Castle, where many objects were severely damaged in a bombing in 1945. Their remains lay buried for four years until being excavated in 1949 and returned to the Museum. The first assessment of the damage in 1949 classified all four amber artifacts as total losses. However, fragments were later identified through careful examination, archival photographs, and inventory descriptions, including the crucifix, which had already been repaired at least once before arriving in Budapest.

This inventory attached to the 1923 deposit contract<sup>21</sup> gives the crucifix the first place among the amber carvings. This crucifix is the only one of the four for which no identified fragments have been recovered. Its description is as follows: “Crucifix,<sup>22</sup> carved amber and ivory. It stands on a molded-edged pedestal with a truncated pyramidal shape, supported by four knobs. The slender-stemmed cross, partially twisted, has lace-like ends on its arms. Two broken volute ornaments are applied to both sides of the cross and the pedestal. The corpus (5 cm) is amber (with a broken arm), and the front of the pedestal features a recessed circular ivory medallion depicting Christ’s Flagellation. Some parts are glued. North German, 17<sup>th</sup> century. H[eight]: 26 cm.” (Fig. 5)

The next artifact is a small bowl. Its description reads: “Small bowl,<sup>23</sup> amber, octofoil shape, with carved decorations and two female herm figures as handles. It stands on four ball feet. The segments are adorned with relief decorations: cherubs riding on dolphins and other sea monsters, as well as mermaid figures. Between the segments are ribs in the shape of female herm figures. Inside the bottom, beneath an amber plate, is a circular ivory medallion depicting a seated female figure pouring a drink into a goblet (Temperance). The back of the medallion bears an inscription: I A C O B / H E I S / F E C I T / K Ö N I [G / S ]

<sup>20</sup> *Az Országos Magyar Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményeinek leíró lajstroma*, ed. Károly Layer, Budapest 1927: *Az Országos Magyar Iparművészeti Múzeum kiadása*, p. 49, V. Második Esterházy terem 113. szekrény. Hegyikristályból és egyéb ásványokból készült edények és dísz tárgyak [Eng.: Second Esterházy Room, Cabinet 113. Vessels and decorative objects made of rock crystal and other minerals].

<sup>21</sup> A fraknói vár kincstárának leltára és becsüje (Melléklete: Az Országos Magyar Iparművészeti Múzeumnak [...] herceg Esterházy Miklós [...] által megőrzés végett 1919. szeptember 30-án átadott műtárgyak jegyzéke) [Inventory and appraisal of the treasury of the Frakno castle (Annex: List of works of art handed over to the National Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts by Prince Miklós Esterházy for safekeeping on 30 September 1919)] [in:] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, az Esterházy család hercegi ágának levéltára, Leltárak [National Archives of Hungary, the archives of the Princely branch of the Esterházy family. Inventories], MNL O P 112 Rep. 8, fasc. C. № 118.) Later: Inventory of 1923.

<sup>22</sup> Inventory of 1923, Nr. 179.

<sup>23</sup> Inventory of 1923, Nr. 180.



Fig. 4. The display of carved gemstone vessels of the Esterházy Treasury, exhibited permanently in the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest (1920s), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Archive Accession Nr. K010\_b

B E R G. I. P. A N O 1 6 6 3. [The date is mirror-reversed.] German (Königsberg), 1663. D[iameter]: 14 cm, H[eight]: 6 cm.” (Figs. 6–10)

This artifact is nearly unique in its category due to its inscription. (Figs. 11–13) A photograph of it can be found in Rohde’s 1937 book, albeit with the wrong caption.<sup>24</sup> Among the two Budapest-marked images on page 58 (nos. 137 and 138), no. 138 does not depict this particular bowl. However, the image on page 59 (no. 139), mistakenly localized to Rome, does. This is an important error which, given the bowl was long thought lost, has affected amber studies since.

The third item on the list is a footed dish (*tazza*), described as a “*tazza*,<sup>25</sup> amber, in a gilded brass setting. The round, molded base features a decorative border with enamel and relief scroll motifs, depicting a dog chasing a hare and a deer. The stem is baluster-shaped and segmented, while the round plate displays an array of oval shapes radiating outward. The rim features figures riding on dolphins. The base’s edge is enameled. North German, 17<sup>th</sup> century. H[eight]: 15.5 cm, D[iameter]: 18 cm.” (Figs. 14, 15)

<sup>24</sup> Rohde, *Bernstein...*, pp. 58–59 (Ill. 137, 139.) Its earlier publication: Alfred Rohde, *Königsberger Bernsteinarbeiten der 16. u. 17. Jahrh.*, “*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft*” 1934, Bd. 1, H. 4, pp. 205–224, p. 223.

<sup>25</sup> Inventory of 1923, Nr. 181.



Fig. 6. Bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Archive Accession Nr. FLT 21141



Fig. 7. Bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Archive Accession Nr. FLT 21142

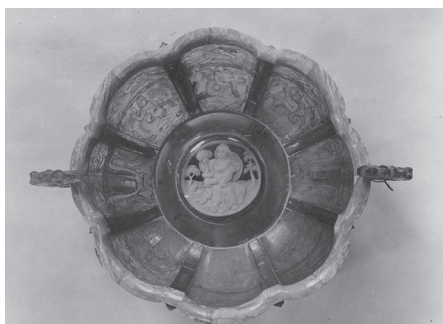


Fig. 8. View of the well of the bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Archive Accession Nr. NLT 4930



Fig. 9. Fragments of bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, photo: Gellért Áment, 2014

Fig. 10. Fragment of the ivory medallion of the bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, photo: Ágnes Soltész Haranghy, 2025







Fig. 11. Fragment of the inscription of the bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, photo: Ágnes Soltészné Haranghy, 2024



Fig. 12. Fragment of the inscription (reversed) of the small bowl from the Esterházy Treasury, Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1663 (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, photo: Ágnes Soltészné Haranghy, 2025



Fig. 13. Signature of Jacob Heise, Königsberg, 1654 [in:] Alfred Rohde, *Bernstein. Ein Deutscher Werkstoff. Seine künstlerische Verarbeitung vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Deutsche Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, Berlin 1937, p. 39

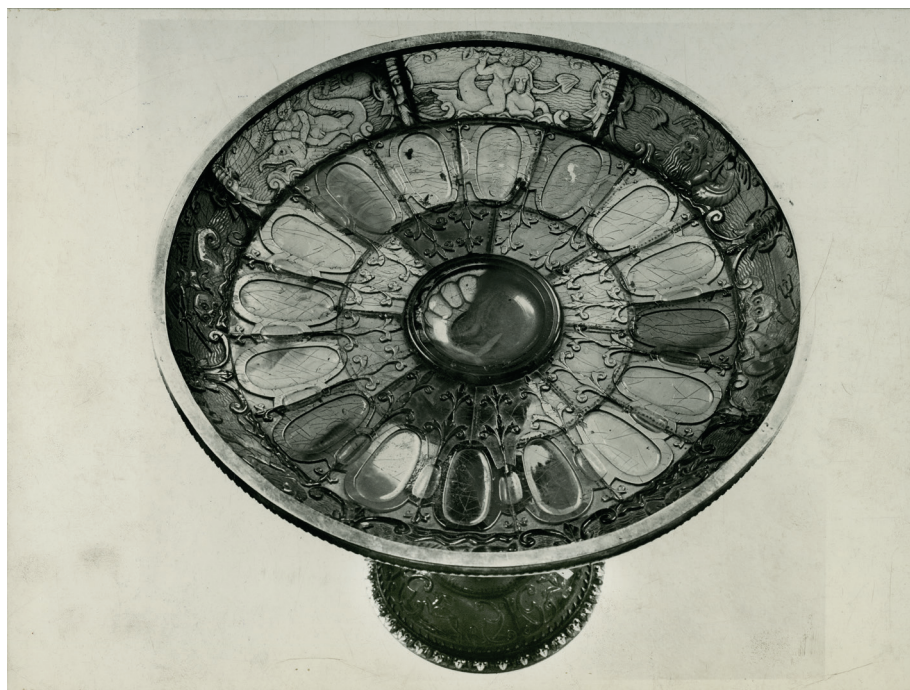
This piece was published by Otto Pelka in 1936,<sup>26</sup> who suggested its maker would be Johann Kohn, a master craftsman from Königsberg (see Rachel King in this volume).

The fourth amber artifact is a tankard. Its description: “Tankard,<sup>27</sup> amber, in a gilded brass setting, with engraved low-relief decorations. The base consists of curved, convex moldings, and the cylindrical body is adorned with two girdle bands. The upper and lower sections of the body contain recessed oval medallions framed by cartouches, while its sides feature alternating wide and narrow decorative bands, with a bird depicted in the wider sections. The slightly flared lid is ten-sided, with a conical top surmounted by a pinecone-shaped finial (partially missing). The curved copper handle is adorned with

<sup>26</sup> Otto Pelka, *Beiträge zum Werk der Königsberger Bernsteinmeister. II. Ein Beitrag zum Werk des Königsberger Bernsteinschnitzers Johann Kohn*, “Zeitschrift de Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft” 1936, Bd. 3, H. 4/5, pp. 338–341.

<sup>27</sup> Inventory of 1923, Nr. 183.





“...ex succino  
flavo artificio-  
se excupita...”

Fig. 14. *Tazza* from the Esterházy Treasury, Johann Kohn (?), Königsberg, 17<sup>th</sup> century (Damaged in 1945), photo: © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Archive Accession Nr. FLT 21190



Fig. 15. Fragments of the *tazza* from the Esterházy Treasury, Johann Kohn (?), Königsberg, 17<sup>th</sup> century (Damaged in 1945), © Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, photo: Gellért Áment, 2014

an amber herm figure. Inside the base, there is an ivory medallion depicting a kissing couple. North German, 17<sup>th</sup> century. H[eight]: 26.5 cm.” (Figs. 16–18)

The craftsmanship of the tankard exhibits a flatter, less sculptural style compared to the carved decorations associated with Jacob Heise. Furthermore, it lacks the characteristic figurative ornamentation found on Königsberg tankards. Its ornamentation and engraved technique suggest an earlier production date and a different – possibly Gdańsk (?) – workshop. Among analogous pieces, Rohde's book lists candleholders and a bowl attributed to this region.

The restoration of the remnants of the Esterházy *Schatzkammer* at the Museum of Applied Arts has been ongoing for more than seventy years and has now reached the most severely damaged artifacts.<sup>28</sup> However, as the science of restoration continues to advance, we hope that, in addition to traditional methods, modern 3D technology can also be utilized in the restoration and reconstruction of these amber artifacts.

The goal for Juhász is not a full reconstruction. The surviving photographs of the *tazza* – although fortunately taken from multiple angles – do not provide a complete overview of its historical appearance, making it impossible to return it to completeness. Additionally, fragments are missing and many are heavily worn. Instead, the result of Juhász's work is perhaps best described as a partial reconstruction. His process integrates traditional conservation techniques and modern technology, and the original fragments will be mounted onto a precisely sized 3D-printed support structure following the object's original shape. The end result is a hybrid artwork that is both restored and reconstructed and which allows audiences to understand both the historical object and the considered practice underlying their conservation.

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<sup>28</sup> For the history of the treasury restoration, see: Ildikó Pandur, *Restoration of Metalwork from the Esterházy Treasury in the Museum of Applied Arts: Past, Present and Future*, "Ars Decorativa" 2017, no. 31 2017, pp. 69–92.

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“...ex succino  
flavo artificio-  
se excupita...”

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