



1. J.-L. Gérôme, *Painting Breathes Life into Sculpture*, 1893, oil on canvas, 64.4 × 91.1 cm; Private collection. Photo from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:G%C3%A9r%C3%B4me_-_Painting_Breathes_Life_into_Sculpture.jpg (access date: 16.03.2022)

False inspirations

Antique terracotta in 19th c. forms from the collection of Princes Czartoryski Museum

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In 1878, an exhibition of Greek art was held at the Trocadéro Palace in Paris, where terracotta figurines from Tanagra¹ were shown to the public for the first time. William Wetmore Story (1819–1895), an American sculptor living in Rome, wrote in his description of the exhibition:

But I only stop to note here the small terra-cotta figures found at Tanagra, of which the collection is not only very large, but the important and interesting which has ever been seen together. These are but trifles in one sense. They are the free genre work of the Greeks, not aiming at finish or completeness, but slight and sketchy figures, adorned with color, evidently cheap, carelessly executed, and often mere squeezes from a mould, made for the people, and representing the life, costume, character, history, and religion of Greeks. But what life, what feeling, what dignity, what grace and refinement, are here to be seen. [...] Here is a school in which modern sculptors may well take a lesson, and catch an inspiration for grace and beauty².

Ancient art was an undoubted inspiration for Story, who chiselled statues of numerous Greek historical and mythological figures. A painter and sculptor Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904), however, was even more impressed by the Tanagra figurines. His painting *The Artist and Sculpting Tanagra (The artist's model, 1895)*³, which shows the process of shaping the silhouette of a naked model sitting in a rigid pose, is a reference to ancient forms of terracotta figurines. This marble sculpture, defined as Tanagra⁴, was made in 1890. It was mod-



¹ See R. A. Higgins, *Tanagra and the Figurines*, London 1987, p. 163.

² W. W. Story, *Fine Arts*, [in:] *idem [et al.] Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1878*, Vol. 2, Washington 1880, p. 149–150.

³ See G. M. Ackerman, *La vie et l'œuvre de Jean-Léon Gérôme*, Paris 1986, p. 338, Cat. No. P 419; Ph. Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge 2002, p. 217.

⁴ See G. M. Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 151, 386, Cat. No. S. 17. See also the painting *Le Travail du marbre* (1892, 1895; *ibidem*, p. 338, Cat. No. 419, 419.3.) and *Gérôme et Tanagra* (1892): *ibidem*, p. 338, Cat. No. 419.5.

2. Statuette of a woman, third/fourth quarter of the 19th c., polychrome terracotta; Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Kraków. Photo: MNK Archive (public domain)

3. Statuette of a crouched woman playing dice, third/fourth quarter of the 19th c., polychrome terracotta; Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Kraków. Photo: A. Olchawska, MNK Archive (public domain)



⁵ See S. Mollard-Besques, *Catalogue raisonné des figurines et reliefs en terre-cuite grecs et romains*, Vol. 2: Myrina, Paris 1963, p. 11-13 (LY1571, MYR9); U. Mrogenda, *Die Terrakottafiguren von Myrina. Eine Untersuchung ihrer möglichen Bedeutung und Funktion im Grabzusammenhang*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, p. 141-144.

⁶ See H. Herdejürgen, *Die tarentinischen Terrakotten des 6. bis 4. Jahrhunderts v. Ch. im Antikenmuseum Basel*, Basel 1971, p. 53-54.

⁷ See G. M. Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 388, Cat. No. S 21; Ph. Hardie, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁸ See S. Mollard-Besques, *op. cit.*, p. 110, pl. 131, 6 (MYR 660).

⁹ See G. M. Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 336, Cat. No. 411, 412; D. Graepler, *Kunstgenuß im Jenseits, [in:] Bürgerwelten. Hellenistische Tonfiguren und Nachschöpfungen im 19. Jh. [Ausstellungskat.]*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Hrsg. I. Kriseleit, G. Zimmer, Mainz am Rhein 1994, p. 44; Ph. Hardie, *op. cit.*, p. 219-221;

elled on terracotta representations from the 2nd-1st c. BC depicting the so-called oriental Aphrodite, which being a symbol of fertility and happiness were found among the burial relics in Myrina⁵. Similar figurines are also interpreted as *hierodoule* or nymphs and are found in southern Italy⁶. The painting also shows a bronze figurine of Hoop dancer⁷, made in 1891, fictitiously referring to the Tanagra women. None of the elements of this composition has its source in ancient forms, although there were instances of images of dancing women⁸. A hairstyle with a knot of hair on top of the head is characteristic of sculptures from the 4th c. BC, but it does not occur among Tanagras, and neither does the loosely rendered chiton or an attribute in the form of a circle. The production process of fake terracotta figurines was already seriously advanced at the time of the creation of the paintings *Sculpturae vitam insufflat pictura* [Fig. 1] and *Atelier de Tanagra* (1893)⁹.





4. Statuette of Leda and Zeus, third/fourth quarter of the 19th c., polychrome terracotta; Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow. Photo: J. Świdorski, MNK Archive (public domain)

In two versions of the interior of the coroplastic studio, we can see clients dressed like Tanagra women. They are looking both at objects modelled (not very strictly) on the original figurines, such as the figure of a woman in a tholia hat¹⁰, two standing next to her with their heads covered with himation¹¹, another one dancing in a blue himation¹², a woman with a fan standing on a corbel-shelf on the wall¹³, or a plastic oinochoe from Canosa from the fourth quarter of the 4th c. BC¹⁴ on the second corbel, but also at compositions loosely addressing the Tanagra statuettes. Figurines made in series from ancient moulds or new compositions inspired by various Greek and Roman monuments were introduced to the antiquities market along with the originals. Both groups were offered by the same merchants who brokered the sale of original figurines discovered since the 1870s in the village of Schimatari near ancient Tanagra and later also in Myrina in Lesser Asia¹⁵. The growing popularity of these elegant and decorative depictions of Greek women, which were eagerly acquired by private collectors and museums, boosted the production of counterfeit carried out by Greek art dealers¹⁶. Important contributing factors were also the ease of obtaining clay from the vicinity of ancient workshops and the possibility of making a matrix from discovered monuments and polychromes made from natural ingredients¹⁷.

Among the counterfeit terracotta monuments, which were acquired for the collection of Prince Władysław Czartoryski and the National Museum in Krakow, there are figurines made of matrices from original artifacts and transformed compositions following Greek standards. An example of the first type is a figurine of a standing woman¹⁸ [Fig. 2] dressed in chiton and himation, in a type derived from the statue standard of the late 4th c. BC, the so-called Kleine Herkulanerin¹⁹ and occurring among the finds from Myrina dating from the late 3rd c. BC²⁰. The way the base is shaped, technological details such as poor clay burning, the use of strong adhesives, the method of applying polychrome clearly indicate its origins in the 1880s.

A copy of a much rarer type of composition is the figurine of a crouched woman playing dice – *astragaloi* [Fig. 3]²¹. This game was a typical pastime of women and children. Terracotta representations of this type occurred in the early Hellenistic period, when three-dimensional compositions, images of crouching figures, contrasting arrangements of the folds of robes became popular in sculpture²². The figurine was made of glued fragments, there are no traces of a double matrix, which is also characteristic of the other statuettes discussed. In places, a primer and paints are applied: pink in the lower folds of the robes, orange on the torso. The woman is dressed in a chiton sliding off her right arm and a himation thrown over her left hip. The small folds of the robes are made with a groove in a careless attempt to imitate the correct position in relation to the body posture. Wavy hair resembles a melon hairdo, but it is tied in the back of the head



¹⁰ Louvre MNB 572; see **S. Besques**, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3: *Epoques hellénistique et romaine, Grèce et Asie Mineure*, Paris 1972, p. 24, pl. 26A, D117; **R. A. Higgins**, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹¹ Louvre MNB 581; see **S. Besques**, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 20, pl. 20A, D86; Louvre MNB 592; *ibidem*, p. 32, pl. 39A, D170.

¹² Figurine of a dancing girl lifting her himation garment above her head, 3rd c. BC, Nafplion Archaeological Museum, <https://ancient-greece.org/museum/nafplion.html> (access date: 22.03.2022). See also the figurines of Aphrodite holding her himation in the form of a nimbus, 1st c. BC: **S. Mollard-Besques**, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 29, LY1557, 937.

¹³ Louvre MNB 907; **S. Besques**, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 16, pl. 14B, D60.

¹⁴ Louvre Cp 5207, Cp 5209, Cp 5214; see **S. Besques**, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4.1: *Epoques hellénistique et romaine, Italie méridionale, Sicile, Sardaigne*, Paris 1986, p. 141-142, pl. 151 E-H, D 4105=H 490; p. 141, pl. 151 A-D, D 4104; p. 141, pl. 15 C-F, D 4103.

¹⁵ See **G. Zimmer**, *Tanagra und Myrina*, [in:] *Bürgerwelten...*, p. 11-14.

¹⁶ See **D. Gorzelany**, *The art of re-creation: terracotta statuettes and their copies. About one "Tanagra" from the Princes Czartoryski Museum*, "Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization" Vol. 16 (2012), p. 214-215.

¹⁷ **A. Muller**, *La technique des coroplasthes de Tanagra. De l'artisanat local à une industrie "mondialisée"*, [in:] *Tanagra. Mythe et archéologie*, Ed. **V. Jeammet**, Paris 2003; **A. Bouquillon [et al.]**, *Authenticité, matières et coluleurs. Etude en laboratoire des Tanagréennes du Louvre*, [in:] *Tanagra...*, p. 300; **D. Gorzelany**, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

¹⁸ Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow, Inv. MNK XI-1061; see **D. Gorzelany**, *op. cit.*, p. 216-217.

¹⁹ See **S. Mollard-Besques**, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 106, Pl. 125.b; **G. Kleiner**, *Tanagrafiguren. Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Kunst und Geschichte*, Berlin - New York 1984, p. 105-108; *Die Herkulanerinnen. Geschichte, Kontext und Wirkung der antiken Statuen in Dresden*, Hrsg. **J. Daehner**, Los Angeles - Dresden 2008.

²⁰ See **U. Mrogenda**, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9, 59-60, Pl. 1.97/4.

²¹ Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow, Inv. MNK XI-1294.

²² See **R. A. Higgins**, *op. cit.*, p. 143-145.

5. Statuette of a sitting woman with balls, third/fourth quarter of the 19th c., polychrome terracotta; Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Kraków. Photo: A. Olchawska, MNK Archive (public domain)

²³ British Museum, Londyn, 1909,0711.1, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collect/objects/G_1909-0711-1 (access date: 22.03.2022).

²⁴ John Hopkins Archaeological Museum, Baltimore, Inv. 42.67, <https://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/class-projects/archaeology-of-daily-life/tanagras/knucklebone-player> (access date: 22.03.2022).

²⁵ See R. A. Higgins, *op. cit.*, p. 170–176; I. Kriseleit, *Fälschungen in der Berliner Sammlung*, [in:] *Bürgerwelten...*, p. 59; N. Mathieux, *Les Tanagras du XIXe au XXe siècle*, [in:] *Tanagra...*, p. 294.

²⁶ Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow Inv. MNK XI-1271; D. Gorzelany, „Znajduję starożytności bardzo piękne”. *Antyk okiem kolekcjonera* [kat. wystawy], Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie – Muzeum Książąt Czartoryskich – Muzeum Niepołomickie, Niepołomice 2018, p. 33.

²⁷ E.g. an Apulian loutrophoros attributed to Painter of Louvre MNB 1148 (see A. D. Trendall, *The Red-figured Vases of South Italy and Sicily: A Handbook*, London – New York 1989, p. 85–86, Fig. 184), a sculpture *Leda and the Swan* by Timotheos (see N. Giustozzi, *The Capitoline Museums: Short Guide*, Milano 2006, p. 40; T. Shilong, A. Peng, X. Chen, “Being So Caught up”: *Exploring Religious Projection and Ethical Appeal in “Leda and the Swan”*, “Religions” Vol. 12 (2021), <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/2/107> [access date: 22.03.2022]); a fresco in a cubiculum in a house in Pompeii (see “Leda and the Swan”: *the fresco re-emerges in a room along Via del Vesuvio, during re-profiling interventions on the Regio V excavation fronts*, <http://pompeisites.org/en/comunicati/leda-and-the-swan-the-fresco-re-emerges-in-a-room-along-via-del-vesuvio-during-re-profiling-interventions-on-the-regio-v-excitation-fronts> [access date: 22.03.2022]).

²⁸ Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Kraków, Inv. MNK XI-1272.

²⁹ Louvre MNB 902, c.f. S. Besque, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 29, Cat. No. D 149.

³⁰ Uncertain authenticity according to the author: *Tanagra figurine* (300–200 BC), Goldendale, Maryhill Museum of Art, https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/tanagra-figurine-unknown/_gFOgt-mUu9gTCQ (access date: 22.03.2022).

in a ponytail loosely falling on the back and notched in a way that looks unnatural. Similar imitations, with slight differences in composition, can be found in the British Museum²³ as part of the collection of a politician and antiquarian Charles Isaac Elton (1839–1900) or in the Archaeological Museum in Baltimore²⁴, where the statuette exhibits details characteristic of Victorian style.

Two more examples presented below were purchased in 1891 from Greek art dealers. At that time, the antiquities were traded in Paris by Alexandros Xakoustis and Evangelos Triantaphyllos²⁵. One of the figurines [Fig. 4]²⁶ illustrates a Greek myth popular since the 5th c. BC: Zeus in the form of a swan seduces Leda, the wife of Tyn-dareos the King of Sparta. Their children will be Helena, Clytemnestra, Polydeuces and Castor. Although this love scene was not one of the popular themes in Greek iconography, it can be found on all kinds of monuments, both in vase painting, in sculpture after Timotheus (ca. 370 BC), on mosaics, frescoes or everyday objects²⁷. It reflected the religious divine dominance over mortals as well as the male dominance over women, and showed the integration and harmony of the human and animal worlds characteristic of ancient cultures. Its popularity increased significantly during Roman times, when Jupiter’s romance was written into Ovid’s *Amores* (10.3–4) and continued growing ever since the Renaissance, which shows a kind of perversion of the recipients who, at that time, did not use to order images depicting sexual acts between a woman and a man. The figurine acquired by Czartoryski shows the initial stage of Zeus’ courtship and the favour of Leda lying on the rock. The way of presenting the clothes, hair, bird feathers, as well as anatomical details correspond to the style of 19th c. copies.

Together with Leda Czartoryski bought a figurine of a woman sitting on a rock²⁸ [Fig. 5]. Her body with unnatural proportions of the upper body in relation to the lower and ample, non-antique bosom is covered with chiton rolled up into a frill sliding off her left arm. The folds of the himation covering the knees are arranged inconsistently. In her left, raised hand, the woman holds a ball, while two others lie in her lap in the folds of the robe. The surface is covered with a layer of partly rubbed or chipped primer, while in the folds of garments and on the rock there is a delicate trace of blue paint. The hair was coated with brown paint, and traces of pink remained on the mouth and face. The figurine was made out of a single mould, in several places cracks and gluing are visible. Typologically, it refers to the depictions of women sitting on rocks²⁹ dating to the second half of the 3rd c. BC., but the theme and composition itself raise doubts, although the figurine of a woman on a throne juggling a ball from the collection of the Maryhill Museum of Art³⁰ is described as authentic. A similar concept featuring among the objects purchased in Greece is certified as inauthentic – a figurine from the collection of Izabella Gardner also shows a sitting woman with a ball in her hand and two





6. Relief with Electra and Orestes, third/fourth quarter of the 19th c., polychrome terracotta; Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow. Photo: A. Olchawska, MNK Archive (public domain)

lying in her lap, except that the hand is raised lower³¹, similarly to the one sold to the Antikensammlung collection in Berlin by the main antique dealer in the counterfeit terracotta, a Greek, Jean Lambros³².

In addition to copies, new compositions were created, deviating from the originals in terms of theme, quality and details of the workmanship. Among such objects in Czartoryski's collection there is a group shown against the background of a cavity resembling a rock structure [Fig. 6]³³. The woman sitting centrally on a klismos chair, dressed in chiton and himation, looks grief-stricken. Next to the chair there is a hydria, a vessel for water. The woman standing behind her is shown in a slightly inclined pose, also indicating sadness or mourning. The amphora she carries, as well as the hydria, may suggest that the scene represents making a sacrifice for the deceased. A man wearing a Phrygian cap approaches the women. This detail may indicate his strangeness and the gesture of the left hand – a story being told. The tall, profiled pedestal resembles a theatre stage. Therefore, when looking for a model for this terracotta group, one can turn to the iconography of the Greek tragedy. The arrangement and poses of the characters resemble the scene of the meeting of Electra and Orestes, which was usually set at the grave of their father, Agamemnon³⁴. The cushion that Electra sits on suggests a palace setting and also appears in the image on Apulian Bell Krater by Judgement Painter (375–350 BC)³⁵, which alluded to Sophocles' *Electra* – as it is only in this tragedy that her sister Chrysothemis appears. In the relief, the home setting is defined by klismos, which contradicts the natural background of the scene. The unusual background, the subject of the scene, as well as the way of its presentation – details of the hairstyles, the robes, the proportions, the way the cushion is depicted – also in this case indicate a product of 19th century. However, great care was taken to ensure that the relief looked antique by placing a trace of polychrome in the folds of the robes and on the cushion as well as giving it a layer of earthy coating. Czartoryski bought the relief in Paris, possibly from the antique dealer Henry Hoffmann, who also provided a unique relief tile originating from the second half of the 5th c. BC³⁶ and depicting Electra at the grave.

All objects in the Czartoryski's collections were considered original at the time of purchase and often received recommendations from art historians cooperating with the collector.

The production of forgeries also took place in the Black Sea areas, where the objects obtained from illegal excavations in Greek cities went to local collectors. An example of those is the figurine³⁷ of a woman with a tablet [Fig. 7]. Her pose is a compilation of presentations of women sitting on rocks and playing dice. Chiton slides off her shoulders in a non-antique way, a writing slate is another unusual attribute. The artifact comes from a gift donated in 1960 to the National Museum in Kraków by Helena Żubieńska on behalf of her grandfather Kazimierz Dachowski (1822–1894). He was the owner of the vil-



7. Statuette of a woman with a tablet, third/fourth quarter of the 19th c., polychrome terracotta; National Museum in Kraków. Photo: A. Olchawska, MNK Archive (public domain)



³¹ Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, <https://www.gardnermuseum.org/experience/collection/11800> (access date: 22.03.2022).

³² See I. Kriseleit, *op. cit.*, Cat. No. 75.

³³ Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow, Inv. MNK XI-758.

³⁴ Cf. lucanian red-figure pelike, ca. 380–370 BC by Choephoroi Painter, Louvre Inv. K 544 (see A. D. Trendall, A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily*, Oxford 1967, p. 120, No. 599).

³⁵ London, British Museum Inv. 1772,03-20.554 (see A. D. Trendall, A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia*, Oxford 1978, p. 10, No. 34).

³⁶ Louvre Inv. MNB 906 (see S. Molard-Besques, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1: *Epoques préhellénique, géométrique, archaïque et classique*, Paris 1954, p. 8, C16).

³⁷ Princes Czartoryski Museum, National Museum in Krakow Inv. MNK XI-A-169.



³⁸ *Terracotta figurine of woman seated with writing tablet* (1890–1900), Ithaca, NY, Cornell Cast Collection Inv. CCC_0585, <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:173200> (access date: 22.03.2022).

³⁹ **A. Furtwängler**, *Die Sammlung Sabouroff: Kunstdenkmaler aus Griechenland*, Berlin 1883–1887, p. LXXXVI.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Figurine of a girl playing knucklebones* (Late 4th c. BC), Boston Museum of Art Inv. No. 01.7799, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/151769/figurine-of-a-girl-playing-knucklebones?ctx=c363c310-0f49-413d-b532-b8a5f647a530&idx=94> (access date: 22.03.2022).

⁴¹ See **I. Kriseleit**, *op. cit.*, p. 68, No. 17.

lage of Leskowa in the Cherkasy region and an art collector. The antiquities in his collection come from excavations in the Crimea, and the presence of a counterfeit among them is proof of local production of copies and fakes. The attribute in the form of a double slate, i.e. a diptych, appears in a Greek imitation from the collection of the University of Cornell³⁸. It's modelled on, or rather is a version of a figurine³⁹ from the collection of Peter Sabouroff (1835–1918), the Russian ambassador to Greece in 1870–1879, who obtained artifacts for his collection shortly after the first discoveries of terracotta monuments in ancient Tanagra. Although this was the initial period of the creation of a market for Tanagra figurines and counterfeits were not yet so common at that time, it seems that they ended up somehow in Sabouroff collection. Both presentations are examples of inventive creation of new compositional solutions.

In sum, among the fake terracotta figurines, it is possible to find partially falsified, glued, painted objects⁴⁰, so as to ensure a higher sale price as well as imitations made in workshops cooperating with antique dealers⁴¹. The way the hair is presented and its styling, very fine, sharply shaped folds of robes, body proportions, deliberate breaks and gluing were all to make their ancient origins credible.

Słowa kluczowe

Jean-Léon Gérôme, Muzeum Książąt Czartoryskich, Tanagra, terakotowe figurki, fałszerstwo

Keywords

Jean-Léon Gérôme, Princes Czartoryski Museum, Tanagra, terracotta figurines, forgery

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Summary

DOROTA GORZELANY-NOWAK (National Museum in Krakow) / False inspirations. Antique terracotta in 19th c. forms from the collection of Princes Czartoryski Museum

The article discusses the impact the discovery of terracotta figurines from Tanagra and other ancient towns had on the art world in the 1880s and 1890s. It presents counterfeit artifacts that appeared on the antiquities market at that time and consequently trickled into many collections of antiquities. The analysis of examples taken from the collection of Prince Wladyslaw Czartoryski shows the diversity of ancient inspirations.