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Tropaion – an Ancient Symbol of Victory

Maciej Marciniak
NATIONAL MUSEUM IN WARSAW
HTTPS://ORCID.ORG/0009-0008-4437-3577

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to summarize current knowledge on the *tropaion*. The *Warsaw Relief*, held in the Gallery of Ancient Art at the National Museum in Warsaw, depicts Emperor Caracalla being crowned with a wreath of victory by his mother, who is shown as Victory. Opposite to the ruler is the title *tropaion*: a wooden post on which the armour and weapons of defeated enemies were hung (the enemies, in turn, are portrayed at the bottom of the structure). This motif, popular in the Roman world, dates back to at least the fifth century BC. Born in Greece, it was originally linked to the custom of offering the weapons of vanquished foes to the gods. Over the centuries, this practice evolved until, in classical times, it took the form of a post 'dressed' in the captured weapons of an opponent, erected immediately after victory. During the era of the great Greek triumphs, a need arose for their lasting commemoration, leading to the creation of permanent stone monuments, also called *tropaea*. In Republican times, this tradition was adopted by the Romans, who also took over the iconography of the earlier *tropaion*. A post decorated with captured armaments became one of the most popular propaganda motifs in Roman art.

KEYWORDS

tropaion, trophy, votive offerings, armaments, panoplia, *skyla*, *spolia opima*, *Warsaw Relief*, National Museum in Warsaw, Caracalla, Victory, symbols of victory, Roman art, Roman iconography, wartime customs, victory monuments, propaganda in art

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The Gallery of Ancient Art at the National Museum in Warsaw holds a relief depicting Emperor Caracalla and his mother, Empress Julia Domna[1] (fig. 1). This item, dating from the early third century AD,[2] presents a scene commemorating one of Caracalla's victories. The emperor, identifiable by his characteristic hairstyle and beard, stands in the centre of the composition. His figure is crowned by the winged goddess of victory, Victoria, whose features resemble those of his mother. The representation leaves no interpretive doubts. However, the object situated on the opposite side of the scene may raise some questions: a pillar with a piece of armour and a helmet. This highly simplified symbol is a *tropaion*, carrying the same significance as the figure of Victoria.

The scene depicted on the relief is not unique. The Severan emperors, like their predecessors and successors, frequently employed well-known symbols of victory in their propaganda imagery. The *tropaion* was a widely used emblem of triumph among Roman rulers from the time of the Republic (fig. 2). It first appeared on Republican coinage in the late third century BC, a motif borrowed from coins minted by the cities of Magna Graecia.[3] Later, it featured on monumental commemorative structures, sarcophagi, engraved gemstones, vessels and mosaics. A few examples of this symbol have also survived in wall paintings. But what exactly is this victory sign, so beloved by the Romans, and where does it originate? This paper aims to synthesize our knowledge of the origins and meaning of the *tropaion* in antiquity.[4]

In its classical form, the *tropaion* consists of a panoply (πανοπλία)[5] mounted on a tree standing on the battlefield.[6] Other variations existed, but this specific form (derived from the Greek world) was incorporated into Roman iconography.

The word *tropaion* originates from the Greek τροπή, meaning 'turn round' or 'retreat' in military terminology. It is important to note that this refers to the retreat of enemy forces from the battlefield.[7] At the site where the enemy's withdrawal began, the Greeks (during the Classical and Hellenistic periods) would dedicate offerings to the gods after a victorious battle. Armour, helmets and shields stripped from the defeated were affixed to a branchless tree or a pole planted in the ground. This act is illustrated on a much later artefact, the *Gemma Augustea* (AD 10–20) (fig. 3). Over time, such offerings came to be referred to as a 'retreat sign' (τροπαῖον σῆμα) or, in military jargon, simply as a 'retreat' (τροπαῖον).[8] Both the form of the offering (a panoply) and the fact that it was

placed at the site of the enemy's retreat[9] suggest that the tradition of *tropaions* was linked to the development of a new style of warfare: clashes between hoplite phalanxes.[10] However, not all scholars agree with this theory due to a lack of conclusive evidence.[11]

The practice may have originated with the Dorians, more specifically the Lacedaemonians (Spartans), who introduced this new method of fighting battles. Many early scholars support this hypothesis.[12] Pausanias also attributes the custom to the Spartans,[13] who, after their victory over the Amyclaeans in the eighth century BC, founded a temple in Sparta dedicated to Zeus Tropaios.[14] However, Zofia Gansiniec argues that the practice developed in Attica and was unrelated to Dorian culture.[15] She supports her position by noting that the word τροπαῖον first appeared in Aeschylus's tragedy *Seven Against Thebes* (line 956), dating from 467 BC. Another early source is the *Batrachomyoachia* (line 159),[16] though its origins are uncertain, and most scholars now tend to date it to a later, Hellenistic period.[17] According to a passage from *Histories* by Herodotus,[18] after a battle between the Spartans and the people of Argos over the city of Thyrea (before 547 BC), a single surviving Spartan warrior named Othryades remained on the battlefield.

fig. 1 Relief showing Emperor Caracalla with his mother, Empress Julia Domna, early 3rd c. AD, Roman Empire, marble bas-relief, National Museum in Warsaw
photo National Museum in Warsaw

fig. 2 Denarius (reverse), Furius Philus, M., Roman Republic, 119 BC, silver, National Museum in Warsaw
photo National Museum in Warsaw

fig. 3 *Gemma Augustea*, cameo, AD 9–12, relief, Arabian onyx, Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna
photo © James Steakley

He collected the armour of the fallen (known as *skyla*)[19] and carried it back to his own camp. Although the account does not explicitly mention the erection of a *tropaion*, Othryades's action was interpreted as a sign of taking control over the battlefield and the bodies of the fallen – hence, a symbol of victory. In later times, the act of erecting a trophy became a visible demonstration of such dominance.

The described custom may be significantly older than Attic sources suggest. Some scholars trace the origins of the *tropaion* back to the Archaic period, linking it to tree worship (it may have originally been perceived as a deity clad in armour taken from the enemy).[20] Others argue that it symbolized the defeated opponent,[21] drawing a parallel with the ancient belief that displaying a severed enemy head (and later, their armour) on a stake demonstrated their powerlessness and served as a warning to adversaries. Initially, the *tropaion* likely had an apotropaic function (*apotropaion*),[22] before gradually evolving into a votive offering for a deity – or even a representation of the deity itself.[23] However, I am inclined to believe that in the Greek world, the *tropaion* was primarily a thanksgiving offering dedicated to the deity that had protected the victorious army or was believed to have contributed to the triumph.[24] Such an offering may have been rooted in early hunting practices, in which hunters presented a portion of their prey to the gods – such as hanging antlers on a tree.[25] A passage from Homer's *Iliad* supports this interpretation, describing the killing of Dolon and what seems to suggest a 'prototype' of the *tropaion*:[26] 'But Diomedes sprang at him with his sword striking him square on the neck. The blade sheared through the sinews, and Dolon's head fell in the dust even as he tried to speak. Then they took his wolf's hide and ferret-skin cap, curving bow and long spear. And noble Odysseus lifted them high in his hands for Athene, the goddess of spoils, to see, and prayed: "Take pleasure in these, goddess, you whom we call on first of all the immortals, and help us again as we raid the Thracian camp and take their horses". With this, he pushed the spoils into a tamarisk bush [...]'.[27]

These verses describe the earliest actions that may have later evolved into the ritual of

fig. 4 *Pelike* depicting Nike attaching a Corinthian helmet to a *tropaion*, 450–440 BC red-figure ceramics, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston
photo © Museum of Fine Arts in Boston

erecting a *tropaion*.[28] In this case, the armour taken from the enemy served as a gift to the deity credited with granting victory. Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, we learn that Odysseus, after seizing further spoils from the Thracians, carries Dolon's weapons back to his ship, intending to later dedicate them to Athene.[29] This implies that hanging the spoils on the tamarisk bush was a temporary measure. Another passage, in which Hector addresses the Achaeans, confirms that stripping armour from the fallen and offering it to a deity in a temple was already a common practice in Homeric times and later.[30]

The *tropaion* erected on the battlefield after a victory could take two primary forms. The first one, attributed to the Spartans, was a tumulus made of loose stones.[31] The second form, later adopted by the Romans, had an anthropomorphic shape.[32] It is this latter form that

fig. 5 Onatas, gem showing Nike decorating a trophy, 4th c. BC, chalcedony relief, British Museum, London
photo © The Trustees of the British Museum

appears most frequently in surviving, paintings and sculptures, both Greek and Roman. The language used to describe the erection of a *tropaion* also suggests a human-like appearance. Additionally, we know that it was set upright, fixed into the ground and inscribed.[33] The oldest known depiction of such a trophy comes from a scene painted on a fragment of a vase discovered in the sanctuary of the Cabeiri near Thebes. This artefact is generally dated to the first half of the fifth century BC,[34] although Britta Rabe places it in the first half of the fourth century BC[35] and identifies the earliest example as a *pelike* from the mid-fifth century BC (fig. 4).[36]

In his book, William Kendrick Pritchett outlines several important facts regarding Greek trophies:

1. They were erected at the precise spot where the enemy forces began their retreat.[37]
2. They were inviolable and protected by religious sanctions. There is no known case of the ancients daring to remove a *tropaion*. Instead, they attempted to erase the memory of their defeat in other ways. For instance, the Rhodians built a high wall around a *tropaion* that reminded them of their disgrace and forbade anyone from approaching it.[38] Today, this is often explained by the belief that battlefield trophies, as votive offerings, belonged to the deity and were therefore 'untouchable'.[39]
3. The right to erect a *tropaion* was dependent on control of the battlefield. One documented case records the destruction of an Athenian trophy because, at the time of its erection, the Athenians did not actually control the land on which it stood.[40] Control over the battlefield was also linked to the Greek duty of burying the dead – since the fallen, in the event of defeat, were at the mercy of the victor. A request to recover the bodies of fallen comrades was, in itself, an acknowledgment of defeat and granted the victor the right to erect a *tropaion*.[41]
4. They were never restored or repaired.[42]

The last point continues to generate debate. We know that permanent monuments[43] were later constructed on the sites of major victories over the Persians instead of *tropaions* – such as at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea[44] – and that these were referred to using the same term, τροπαῖον.[45] It appears, therefore, that the prohibition on restoring trophies applied only to those erected after victories over other Greeks.[46] However, there were numerous exceptions[47] to this rule, particularly during the *Pentecontaetia*.[48] It is possible that the ban applied only to the original battlefield *tropaions*, while permanent commemorative monuments were constructed alongside them, without violating the prohibition on restoring the originals.[49] Pausanias's accounts indirectly support this theory, as he mentions seeing *tropaions* that had stood for decades or even centuries after the battles they commemorated.[50] In such cases, these could not have been the wooden, fabric, leather or metal constructions that would have decayed or corroded over time.[51] Karl Woelcke suggests that the term τροπαῖον was used to describe two distinct types of monuments: battlefield ones erected immediately after the battle and permanent monuments built later, either in the victorious city,

fig. 6 Sarcophagus with a battle scene (Amazonomachy), 1st half of the 2nd c. AD, Roman Empire, marble bas-relief, Capitoline Museum, Palazzo Nuovo, Galleria photo Maciej Marciniak

in Panhellenic sanctuaries, or on the battlefield itself. According to the historian, this distinction resolves inconsistencies and contradictions found in ancient sources.[52] In his paper, William West confirms Woelcke's thesis,[53] arguing that the construction of permanent battlefield monuments to commemorate victories over the Persians was a precedent. This practice later led to the widespread erection of trophies made of bronze and marble during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[54] West's arguments align to some extent with those of Gansiniec,[55] though with one key difference: the Polish researcher traces the origin of both battlefield and permanent trophies back to the Battle of Marathon.[56] An intriguing historical detail is that the Macedonians, during the reigns of Philip II[57] and Alexander the Great, did not erect *tropaions* at all.[58] They only adopted this custom – already widespread in the Hellenistic world – during the reign of the Diadochi.[59]

Our understanding of what these monumental commemorative trophies looked like is partly informed by depictions on coins from later periods. In the cases of the trophies from Leuctra and Marathon, we also have archaeological evidence.[60] At Leuctra, the remains of a cylindrical pedestal have been preserved, likely serving as the base for a *tropaion* in sculptural form. The remnants at Marathon, on the other hand, suggest a column in the Ionic order, at the top of which stood a figure of the goddess Nike, holding a *tropaion*.[61] From the late fifth century BC onwards, this personification of victory (including military triumph) became an integral part of compositions featuring the *tropaion*. Nike was often depicted setting up the trophy (figs 3, 5), crowning it or carrying it (fig. 6). This 'symbiosis' continued into Roman times, as seen in the *Warsaw Relief* described earlier. Occasionally, Nike (or Victoria), the personification of victory, replaced the *tropaion* entirely.[62]

Some scholars argue that the *tropaion* should be interpreted as a visible testament to the power of the victor – a monument commemorating a glorious event and the warriors who fought in it. In this interpretation, the act of erecting a *tropaion* was itself a measure of success, a symbolic completion of the triumph.[63] If this perspective is accepted, it follows that *tropaions* also served purposes of propaganda and prestige. Although I do not believe this was the original function of the *tropaion*, this definition perfectly fits its subsequent role as a 'sign of victory'.[64] In later times, approximately since the Second Peloponnesian War, the *tropaion* had largely lost its significance as a votive offering to a deity or as a statue of a god (Zeus Tropaios). Instead, it had become merely a symbol of military triumph[65] and even a propaganda tool, sometimes erected in situations where the army had not truly earned it.[66] As its religious significance

fig. 7 Romulus *tropaeophoros*, 1st c. AD, Pompeii, Roman Empire, copy of a wall painting, as reproduced in Vittorio Spinazzola, *Pompei alla luce die scavi nuovi di Via dell'Abbondanza* (Rome, 1953), Plate XVII A

declined, the practice of restoring *tropaions* became increasingly common in Hellenistic times.[67]

Thus, trophies became an almost permanent feature of battlefields in the Greek world during the fourth and third centuries BC. It was during this period that the Romans, after their war with Pyrrhus, adopted the Greek term τροπαῖον, first in the plural form τρόπαια, which they transcribed into Latin as *tropaea*.[68] However, it remains unclear whether Republican Roman generals also adopted the custom of erecting them. The absence of any historical accounts or material evidence[69] suggests that, at this stage, Romans knew of the practice but did not yet adopt it. The use of the plural form may stem from the popularity of the Latin term *spolia opima*. Before discussing the Roman *tropaeum* in detail, it is important to define what these 'rich spoils' were.[70] This phrase referred to the armour of an enemy commander, taken by his Roman counterpart as a result of a duel during a battle. According to Livy, the Romans were familiar with the custom of dedicating captured enemy weapons to the gods from their very beginnings. The first such act is attributed to Romulus, who, after defeating King Acron of Caenina, took the fallen ruler's spoils and carried them to the oak tree on the Capitoline Hill, vowing to build a temple there in honour of Jupiter Feretrius:[71] 'He then led his victorious army back, and being not more splendid in his deeds than willing to display them, he arranged the spoils of the enemy's dead commander upon a fame, suitably fashioned for the purpose, and, carrying it himself, mounted the Capitol. Having there deposited his burden, by an oak which the shepherds held sacred, at the same time as he made his offering he marked out the limits of a temple to Jupiter, and bestowed a title upon him. "Jupiter Feretrius", he said, "to thee I, victorious Romulus, myself a king, bring the panoply of a king, and dedicate a sacred precinct within the bounds which I have even now marked off in my mind, to be a seat for the spoils of honour which men shall bear hither in time to come, following my example, when they have slain kings and commanders of the enemy". This was the origin of the first temple that was consecrated in Rome'.[72]

The first fundamental difference between the *tropaion* and the offering described above is that the latter was placed under an oak tree, rather than being hung on it. In this case, therefore, we cannot speak of a *tropaion*, but only of votive offerings. In his account of the same event, Plutarch describes Romulus carrying Acron's armour on his shoulder, attached to a felled oak tree. This is probably the version depicted by an anonymous painter from Pompeii (fig. 7).

The dedication of the *spolia opima* was a rare event in Roman history, as it was uncommon for a Roman general to personally slay the enemy commander in battle. The second recorded instance occurred when Aulus Cornelius Cossus[73] defeated Lars Tolumnius, king of Veii. During his triumphal procession, Cossus carried Tolumnius's linen breastplate to the temple on the Capitoline Hill as an offering. The third and final recorded case was the dedication made to Jupiter Feretrius by Consul Marcus Claudius Marcellus after defeating Viridomarus (Βριτόμαρτος), leader of the Insubres, in 222 BC. The only person to come close to repeating this feat – by then increasingly difficult due to the evolution of warfare – was Marcus Licinius Crassus,[74] who defeated Deldo, king of the Bastarnae, in a duel in 29 BC. However, it

remains unclear why Crassus did not petition the Senate for permission to dedicate the *spolia opima*. Until the discovery of an inscription in Athens, which confirmed that Crassus had held imperium, scholars believed that formal restrictions had prevented him from doing so – since he had fought under the command of another general.[75] Some researchers, however, speculated that the real reason was Crassus's political position, arguing that he had already posed a threat to Augustus's authority, even without the added prestige of dedicating an enemy commander's armour in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius.[76] Now, with the epigraphic evidence in hand, the hypothesis proposed by John W. Rich appears more credible, namely that Crassus – fully aware of the political climate – either consulted Augustus or chose of his own accord not to pursue an honour that would have been awkward for Rome's 'first citizen'.[77]

This discussion is crucial for understanding an iconographic motif depicting the *spolia opima* being carried in a triumphal procession. One of the most striking examples is the previously mentioned painting (fig. 7). It clearly shows a figure carrying a staff over their shoulder, from which a cuirass and other pieces of armour are suspended. This is nothing other than a 'portable' version of the battlefield *tropaion*,[78] known from Greek representations. Plutarch[79] also mentions that statues of Romulus carrying the spoils stood in Rome, suggesting that in Roman iconography, the battlefield *tropaion* was essentially equivalent to the *spolia opima*.[80] Iconographic sources (fig. 8) indicate that Romans carried *tropaions* on litters during triumphal processions, alongside other war trophies and even prisoners. In this context, the *tropaion* could serve as a substitute for the 'rich spoils'. In later times, Romans came to view this motif solely as a symbol of victory, interchangeable with other related imagery. On an early battle sarcophagus, dating to the mid-second century AD, for example, two figures of Victoria appear – one carrying a *tropaion*, the other a garland (fig. 6).

Despite the creation of the 'mobile' *tropaion*, most often carried by Victoria, the Romans were well aware of what a Hellenistic battlefield victory monument looked like. This is confirmed by the depiction on the *Gemma Augustea*, which shows Roman soldiers erecting such a *tropaeum*.[81] Another example comes from the reliefs on the Arch of Carpentras (fig. 8), built during the reign of Augustus.[82] On the preserved eastern and western walls of the arch, two trophies are depicted as trees with trimmed branches, from which spoils are hung. The well-known Greek motif of a column adorned with a panoply has been expanded in this case to include bundles of spears, quivers full of arrows, horns, swords and various shields, symmetrically arranged in pairs on either side of the cuirass. This elaborate form of the *tropaeum*, characteristic of Roman iconography, features an additional element beneath each tree: two prisoners chained to its trunk. This is a distinctly Roman motif, previously unknown in Greek art. It was inspired by triumphal processions, where captured prisoners were paraded in chains, either naked or in their native attire. This practice was first introduced during Marius's triumph over the Cimbri in 101 BC and from that point, it was a permanent feature of every Roman triumph, later finding its place in war and commemorative

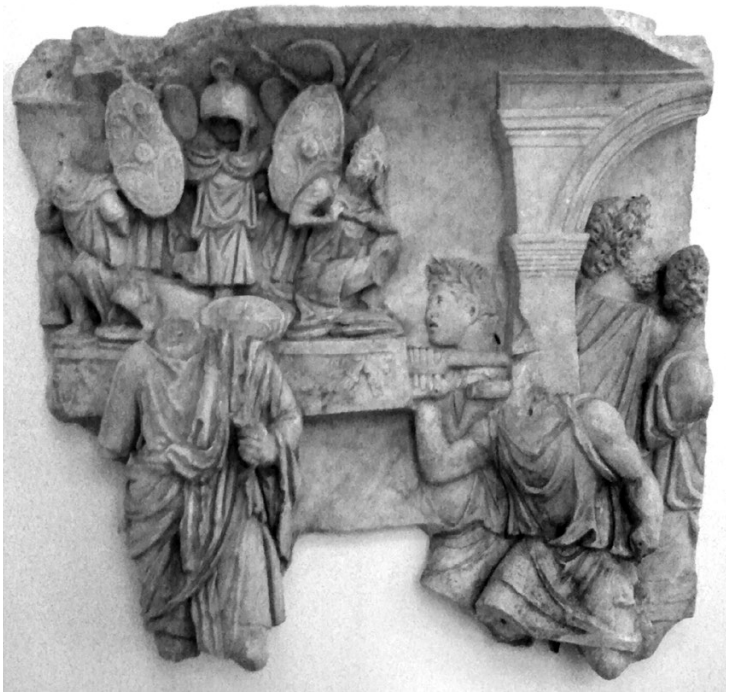

fig. 8 Relief showing a triumphal scene, 2nd half of the 2nd c. AD, marble, Palazzo Altemps in Rome (Boncompagni Ludovisi collection) photo Maciej Marciniak

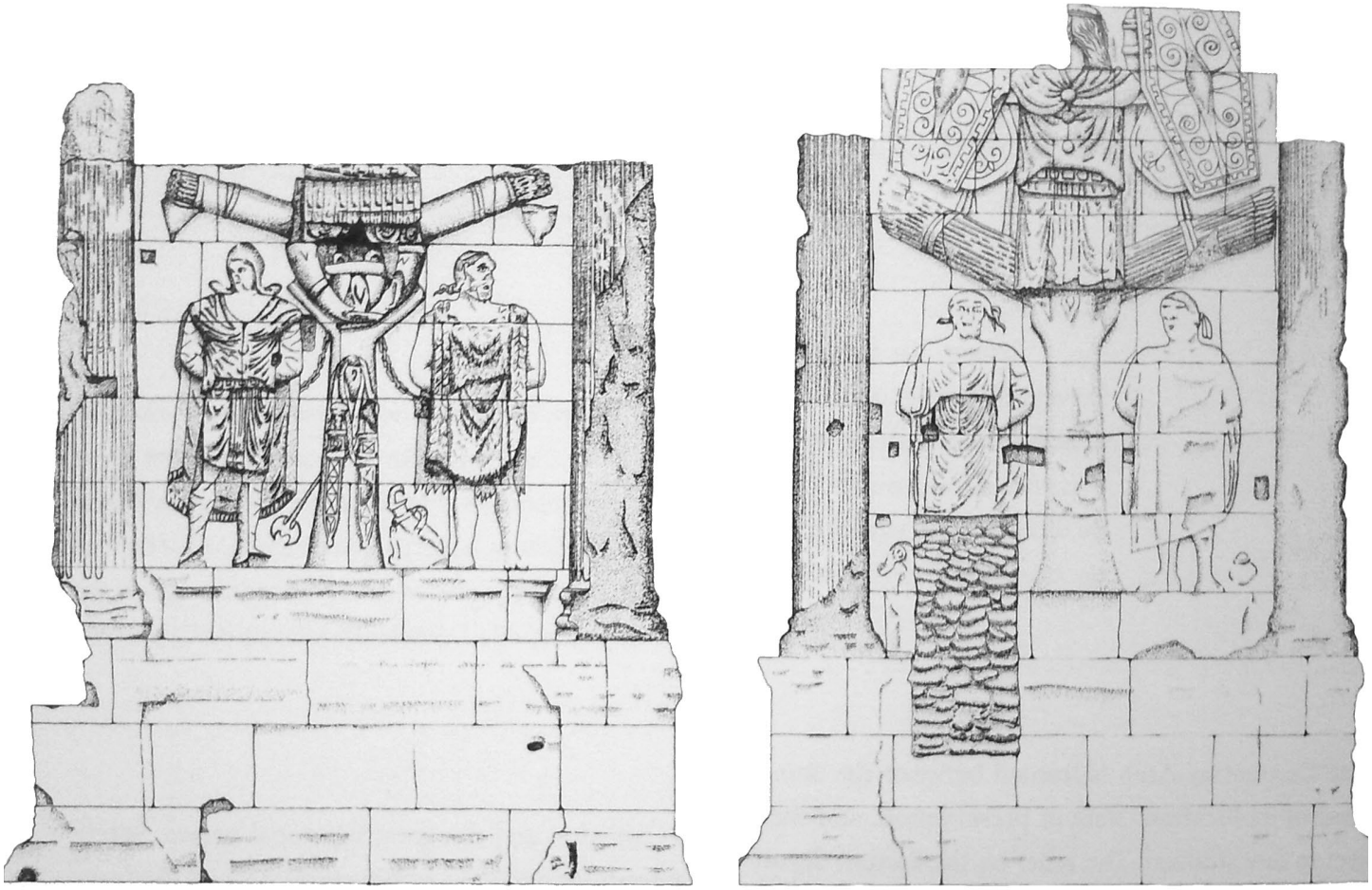

fig. 9 Reliefs from the Arch of Carpentras (a. E wall, b. W wall), 1st c. AD, Roman Empire, bas-relief, as reproduced in Marc Lamuà Estañol, 'The Relief of the Roman Arch at Carpentras', in *Les ateliers de sculpture régionaux: techniques, styles et iconographie* (Arles, 2007 (2009)), pp. 49–57, p. 50: fig. 1 and fig. 2

iconography.[83] In her paper, Lauren Kinnee refers to depictions of *tropaions* with prisoners beneath them as the 'Trophy Tableau'.[84]

This complex iconography served a clear purpose. The Arch of Carpentras commemorates Augustus's territorial conquests, both in the East and West (or rather, the North), and his control over these regions. This is evident from the variety of clothing worn by the prisoners and the weapons displayed on the reliefs.[85] In this more developed form, the *tropaion* may not have symbolized victory in general but rather indicated who had been defeated. Additionally, the Carpentras monument is an excellent example of how *tropaions* became an essential part of triumphal monument iconography, which included triumphal arches, commemorative columns and monuments erected in conquered territories. This last category, which originated directly from Hellenistic permanent victory monuments, retained a form similar to battlefield trophies. What did they look like? To answer this question, we must turn to historical sources, as very few such structures have survived to the present day.

The earliest Roman *tropaea* taken from defeated enemies are mentioned in Florus's account (1.20.4). In 223 BC, Consul Gaius Flaminius erected a pile of weapons captured from the defeated Gauls (Insubres) in front of the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, after first displaying them in a triumphal procession. This pile was crowned with a *tropaion* made of golden necklaces, likely torques. This may have been the first Roman victory 'monument' of this type, directly inspired by Greek traditions. It is possible that the absence of battlefield *tropaions* in Rome was due to the custom of dedicating captured weapons as votive offerings in temples.[86] However, this practice was

fig. 10 Relief from the base of *Tropaeum Alpium* in La Turbie, 1st c. AD, Roman Empire, bas-relief photo public domain

also widespread in the Greek world, alongside the tradition of erecting *tropaions*.[87] Another possible explanation is the custom of burning war spoils immediately after battle, a practice common during the Republican period and occasionally observed later.[88] Additionally, Roman generals adorned their homes with *spolia*,[89] which may have had an apotropaic[90] function, or served as a reminder of their family's military achievements.

From the time of Flaminius[91] onward, votive offerings made from captured enemy weapons became a regular feature of triumphal processions and may have taken the form of a *tropaion* carried on a specially constructed frame (fig. 9). Marius erected *tropaea* on the Capitoline Hill following his triumphs over Jugurtha in 104 BC and the Cimbri in 101 BC.[92] These likely resembled Flaminius's *tropaeum* in form, consisting of poles adorned with *spolia* rising from a pile of weapons stacked beneath them. The only recorded instances of battlefield *tropaions* – those erected at the site of a battle – concern Drusus (though in his case, it was on the banks of the Elbe), his son Germanicus and his grandson Caligula.[93] Tacitus describes how Germanicus's soldiers may have constructed such a battlefield *tropaeum*: 'After proclaiming Tiberius Imperator on the field of battle, the troops raised a mound, and decked it with arms in the fashion of a trophy, inscribing at the foot the names of the defeated clans'.[94]

fig. 11 Contemporary reconstruction of *Tropaeum Traiani* from Adamclisi, after AD 109, Roman Empire
photo public domain

Florus provides another reason why the Romans did not generally erect battlefield *tropaea*. He writes: 'The great joy caused by both these victories may be judged from the fact that both Domitius Ahenobarbus and Fabius Maximus set up towers of stone on the actual sites of the battles which they had fought, and fixed on the top of them trophies adorned with the enemy's arms. This practice was unusual with our generals; for the Roman people never cast their defeats in the teeth of their conquered enemies'.[95] This passage suggests that the Romans did adopt the custom of constructing permanent monumental commemorative *tropaions* at the battle site. They were likely inspired by monuments placed where battlefield trophies had once stood, such as those erected at Marathon, Salamis and Leuctra. The later development of these structures may also owe much to the ones set up by Flaminius and Marius in front of Roman temples or by the soldiers of Germanicus.[96]

The first known *tropaeum* of this type, likely influenced by Hellenistic tradition, is mentioned by Florus. It was erected by Consul Quintus Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus in 121 BC after his victory over the Allobroges and the Arverni at the confluence of the Isère and Rhône rivers, on Mount Kemmenon.[97] This stone tower was crowned with a *tropaion*, and alongside it, two temples were built – one dedicated to Mars and the other to Hercules – forming an architectural complex that commemorated the triumph. Roman generals continued this practice in the following decades.[98] Sulla, for example, erected monuments after his victories over Mithridates

fig. 12 Relief from Trajan's Column (detail), scene with Victory placed between scenes with two Dacian Wars (scene LXXVIII, after Conrad Cichorius, 1896 and 1900), AD 109–113, Roman Empire
photo public domain

VI Eupator at Chaeronea[99] (likely modelled after the one in Leuctra)[100] and Orchomenus in Boeotia, of which fragments of its stone pedestal, reliefs, inscriptions and the armour that crowned the monument have survived to this day.[101]

Pompey's Iberian *tropaion* at the Panissars Pass in the Pyrenees, marking the border between Hispania and Gaul, was erected in 71 BC following his victories over Sertorius and Perpenna.[102] Although the inscription does not mention Sertorius or Perpenna, local people resented him for erecting a monument of victory over their 'countrymen'. The structure stood at the junction of the Via Domitia and Via Augusta and was likely built in an 'oriental-dynastic'[103] Hellenistic style. The authors of 'Le Trophée de Pompée dans les Pyrénées (71 avant J.-C.)' propose three possible reconstructions of Pompey's *tropaion*. According to one theory, the monument was modelled on mausolea Pompey had seen on the coasts of Asia Minor, such as Halicarnassus and Belevi. If so, it may have served as a prototype for the later *tropaion* in La Turbie and even the Mausoleum of Augustus.[104] Pompey also erected another monument in the western Pyrenees. At Urkulu, on the border between Hispania and Aquitania, stone remains of a circular structure survive, measuring approximately 19.5 metres in diameter and up to 3.6 metres in height. The original structure may have reached ten metres and resembled the *tropaions* of Drusus, consisting of a mound crowned with a pile of captured weapons.[105] Positioned on a cliffside, this *tropaion* was highly visible and undoubtedly served as a clear symbol of Roman dominance over the region. In 67 BC, Mithridates the Great defeated Lucullus's legate Triarius at Zela and erected a trophy that the Romans considered a monument to their disgrace. In 47 BC, Caesar defeated Mithridates's successor Pharnaces on the same battlefield. He respected the religious inviolability of Mithridates's trophy,[106] but placed his own, larger one beside it, thereby erasing the humiliation of the earlier Roman defeat.[107] The exact appearance of Caesar's *tropaeum* remains unknown, but it may have resembled the monuments erected by Pompey and Sulla. We also know that Caesar restored

Marius's trophy, which had previously been cast down by Sulla.[108] Another *tropaion*, belonging to Augustus and possibly inspired by Pompey's monument at Panissars, was built at La Turbie, in the Maritime Alps on the border between Gaul and Italy. Known as the *Tropaeum Alpium*, it was erected following Augustus's final victory over 45 Alpine tribes between 7 and 6 BC.[109] Reliefs depicting the *tropaions* that decorated the monument's pedestal have survived to this day (fig. 10). The structure itself may have even been 49 metres high. It is likely that the design of Augustus's *tropaeum* later influenced the construction of *Tropaeum Traiani* at Adamclisi,[110] known today from reconstructions (fig. 11).

The exact appearance of these monuments can only be speculated upon. Both La Turbie and Adamclisi may have been modelled after Roman battlefield *tropaea*, resembling the earth mounds topped with trophies, like the ones erected by the soldiers of Drusus and Germanicus.

By the time the first monuments commemorating Roman military victories were being built, the *tropaion* motif had become widespread in Roman art. By the late Republic, it appeared on almost every monument celebrating Roman military triumphs, as well as on numerous coins from the first century BC.[111] During the early Empire, the *tropaion* became a widely recognized symbol, easily understood by every inhabitant of the Roman world. Since it had by then evolved into a pure symbol of victory and a decorative element, Romans freely modified its scale and composition. One example are the surviving fragments of the monumental *tropaion* that once crowned the aforementioned *Tropaeum Traiani*, erected around AD 109 after the Dacian Wars. On their basis, the sculpture is estimated to have been around ten metres high.[112] In Roman literature, writers began using the word *tropaeum* as a synonym for a victory monument,[113] or more often, for the concept of victory itself.[114]

Beyond commemorative structures,[115] the *tropaion* motif frequently appears on everyday objects. It can be seen on coins, engraved gemstones (figs. 3, 5), bas-reliefs, tombstones, battle sarcophagi[116] (fig. 6), ceramics, terracotta, mosaics and wall paintings (fig. 7). This motif was just as common in the art of Rome, Italy and the Romanized provinces as it was in more distant regions of the empire, as demonstrated by the relief of Emperor Caracalla, mentioned in the introduction to this text.

The decline in the popularity of the *tropaion* motif began during the reign of Constantine the Great. After his victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on 28 October AD 312, the emperor introduced a new symbol of victory: the labarum.[117] From this point onwards, the *tropaion* was gradually replaced by new symbols.[118] Christian writers frequently compared the *tropaion* to the cross,[119] and the term *tropaeum crucis*[120] became common in later texts. Despite the shift in religion, the pagan symbol of the *tropaion* remained a significant element in Roman iconography for quite some time – until the fall of the Western Empire.

To summarize, it is worth reiterating what exactly the *tropaion* was and how it evolved in form. Originally, it consisted of armour taken from a defeated enemy, hung on a nearby tree as an offering to the gods. As such, it was subject to various religious prohibitions and regulations. With the development of military traditions, the trophies took on different forms. These included an anthropomorphic representation, sometimes placed above a pile of captured weapons; an earth or stone mound, decorated with *spolia*; or simply stacks of enemy weapons, left on the battlefield as a display of victory. During the period of great Greek military triumphs, there arose a need for permanent victory monuments. As a result, after the battles of Marathon, Salamis[121] and Plataea, commemorative structures were erected and periodically restored. However, these did not resemble the 'field' trophies, which were set up immediately after battle.

It is likely that the Romans adopted the motif of the 'field' trophy as such, but not the custom of physically erecting it on the battlefield, with a few exceptions. Weapons captured from the enemy were dedicated before temples, particularly at the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. From 121 BC, Roman generals began erecting permanent monuments, following Greek models. These structures likely resembled Hellenistic prototypes, such as Sulla's *tropaeum*

at Orchomenos. By this time, the 'field' trophy had become a purely iconographic element, commonly used in the decoration of commemorative structures. The later trophy erected by Augustus at La Turbie and Trajan at Adamclisi followed a similar design: a mound from which an anthropomorphic *tropaion* emerged. This recalls the first known Roman *tropaeum*, described by Livy and erected by Flaminius on the Capitoline Hill, as well as two of the three known 'field' trophies, those of Drusus and Germanicus. Their architecture may have been influenced by Pompey's earlier Pyrenean monuments, now severely damaged, unfortunately. In Roman iconography, the *tropaion* often took on a more elaborate form, incorporating figures of prisoners, Victoria and piles of weapons characteristic of the defeated enemy, as seen on the Arch of Carpentras and Trajan's Column (fig. 12). The motif of the 'field' *tropaeum* was so widespread that it also appeared in Roman decorative art. During the Christian era, it became synonymous with the cross, sharing the same symbolic meaning: both represented victory.

Translated by Aleksandra Szkudłapska

NOTES

1 Unknown provincial-Roman workshop, 214–217 CE, 75.7 × 71.2 × 12 cm, marble, National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 139678 MNW. This object is sometimes referred to as *Warsaw Relief*.

2 Caracalla ruled alone between 212–217 CE. The relief most likely commemorates victories in Armenia in 216 CE.

3 The *tropaion* motifs in coinage is discussed in depth in Karl Woelcke, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte des Tropaions', *Bonner Jahrbücher*, vol. 120 (1911), pp. 127–235; Britta Rabe, *Tropaia. τροπή und σκῦλα. Entstehung, Funktion und Bedeutung des griechischen Tropaions* (Rahden, 2008), pp. 154–162; Adam Jakub Jarych, 'Tropajony na rzymskich monetach w okresie republiki i wczesnego cesarstwa. Kontekst historyczno-typologiczny', *Acta Archaeologica Lodziensia*, no. 67 (2021), pp. 57–68.

4 For a detailed discussion of the subject, see Woelcke, 'Beiträge...'; Zofia Gansiniec, 'Geneza tropajonu', in *Biblioteka Archeologiczna*, vol. 5 (Warsaw, 1955); Andreas Jozef Janssen, *Het Antieke Tropaion* (Ghent, 1957); Gilbert Charles Picard, *Les trophées romains. Contribution à l'histoire de la religion et de l'art triomphal de Rome* (Paris, 1957); Rabe, *Tropaia*...; Lauren Kinnee, *The Greek and Roman Trophy. From Battlefield Marker to Icon of Power* (London, 2018).

5 This is a full hoplite armour, consisting of a shield (*hoplon*), helmet, breastplate, chiton, sword, spear, and greaves. However, the terms *tropaion* and panoplia should not be treated as synonyms. For a detailed discussion of the distinction, see Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 265–288.

6 In the Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich, there is an artefact identified as a *tropaion*. It consists of a wooden post, approximately 2.5 metres high, to which a breastplate and helmet have been affixed. Traces indicate that other pieces of armour, likely greaves, were also attached beneath the breastplate. In the upper part of the post, below the helmet, a nose, eyes, beard, and the outline of shoulders have been carved. The artefact likely originates from southern Italy. Based on typological analysis of the armour, which shows signs of use, it is dated to the 4th century BC, a conclusion confirmed by radiocarbon dating. See Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 75–77.

7 William Kendrick Pritchett, The Greek State at War. *Part II* (Berkeley, 1974), pp. 252–253; Diod. Sic. 13.51.7; Cass. Dio 42.40.5; Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 572; Aristophanes, *Plutus* 453; Thuc. 2.92.5, 7.54. In this text, references to ancient sources follow the abbreviation system used in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th Edition* (https://oxfordre.com/classics/page/ocdabbreviations/abbreviations). Original Greek and Latin texts, along with various English translations, can be found on the Perseus Digital Library (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/) and LacusCurtius (https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/home.html). Digitized original editions are available at Project Gutenberg (https://gutenberg.org/) [retrieved: 15 Jan. 2025].

8 Woelcke, 'Beiträge...', pp. 128–129; Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 49–50; Janssen, *Het Antieke*..., pp. 6–8; Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 29–30.

9 Janssen, *Het Antieke*..., pp. 39–40, 243; Pritchett, *The Greek*..., pp. 252–253.

10 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 46, 56–58.

11 Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 41–47.

12 Grigore George Tocilescu, Otto Benndorf, George Niemann, *Das Monument von Adamklissi Tropaeum Traiani* (Vienna, 1895), p. 130, and – following these authors – Adolphe Joseph Reinach, 'Tropaeum', in *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, eds Charles Victor Daremberg, Edmond Saglio, vol. 9 (Paris, 1912), pp. 497–518; Friedrich Lammert, 'Τρόπαιου [Tropaion]', in *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, eds August Friedrich von Pauly, Georg Wissowa, vol. 7A, 13 (Stuttgart, 1939), pp. 665–666 and Janssen, *Het Antieke*..., p. 27. In turn, Woelcke ('Beiträge...', pp. 136, 138–142) and Gansiniec ('Geneza...', pp. 57–59, 60) argue against the hypothesis of the Spartan origins of the

tropaion. Zofia Gansiniec presents her own idea on the subject in 'Geneza…', pp. 60–69.

13 Paus. 3.2.6. However, it is important to remember that this is a later source.

14 Paus. 3.12.9. For more detailed information on Zeus Tropaios, see Gansiniec, 'Geneza…', pp. 92–97; Picard, *Les trophées…*, pp. 32–36; William C. West III, 'The Trophies of the Persian Wars', *Classical Philology*, vol. 64, no. 1 (1969), p. 8, n. 8; Rabe, *Tropaia…*, pp. 50–53.

15 Gansiniec, 'Geneza…', pp. 49–50, 59. This hypothesis had been offered earlier by Woelcke, 'Beiträge…', p. 136.

16 Woelcke, 'Beiträge…', p. 131; Janssen, *Het Antieke…*, p. 30; Gilbert Charles Picard, *Les trophées romains: Contribution à l'histoire de la religion et de l'art triomphal de Rome* (Paris, 1957), p. 22.

17 Matthew Hosty, *Batrachomyomachia (Battle of the Frogs and Mice): introduction, text, translation and commentary* (Oxford, 2020); Joel Christensen, Erik Robinson, *The Homeric Battle of the Frogs and Mice* (London, 2018).

18 Herodotus, *Histories*, tr. A.D. Godley (Cambridge, 1920), 1.82.

19 *Skyla* (σκῦλα) refers to weapons taken from a slain enemy and dedicated in a temple as an offering to a deity. Over time, they could decay, and they were not allowed to be repaired. See William Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War. Part I* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 55–56, 94, n. 9; Rabe, *Tropaia…*, pp. 19–22. Herodotus does not use the word τροπαῖον. It appears in later works describing this event, such as Val. Max. *ext*. III 4. *Ps*.; Plut. *Parall. min*. 3. This event is known in historiography as the 'Battle of 300 Champions'.

20 Karl Bötticher, *Der Baumkultus der Hellenen, nach den gottesdienstlichen Gebräuchen und den überlieferten Bildwerken dargestellt* (Berlin, 1856), pp. 71–75; Arthur Bernard Cook, *Zeus. A Study in Ancient Religion* (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 108–113.

21 Janssen, *Het Antieke…*, pp. 40–50, 243.

22 It is said that before the Battle of Leuctra, the Thebans, following the advice of Trophonios, erected a trophy to secure victory. This explains depictions in which the *tropaion* stands among troops still engaged in battle.

23 Tocilescu, Benndorf, Niemann, *Das Monument…*, p. 132. Euripides, *Heracleidae* 936; *The Suppliants* 647; *Phoenician Women* 1250, 1473; Gorgias, *Epitaphios* 6.

24 Paus. 8.10.8.

25 William Henry Denham Rouse, 'Greek Votive Offerings', in *History of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1902), pp. 51 and 99–100.

26 Gansiniec, 'Geneza…', pp. 44–45, 89; Pritchett, *The Greek…*, p. 249. [retrieved: 4 Feb. 2025]

27 Homer, *Iliad*, tr. A.S. Kline (2009), 10.465–467 https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Iliad10.php#anchor_Toc239245796 [retrieved: 4 Feb. 2025].

28 Gansiniec, 'Geneza…', p. 89.

29 Hom. *Iliad*, 10.571–572.

30 Hom. *Iliad*, 7.76–83. Romans were also familiar with this custom. They referred to such offerings as *spolia optima*, a term Gansiniec identifies with votive panoplia; see Gansiniec, 'Geneza…', p. 111.

31 Xen. *An*. 4.7.25; Paus. 3.2.6.; Diod. Sic. 14.29.4.

32 Reinach, 'Tropaeum…', p. 502 and pp. 497–518; Pritchett, *The Greek…*, pp. 250–251; Adolphe Joseph Reinach, 'Les trophées et les origines religieuses de la guerre', *Revue internationale d'ethnographie et de sociologie*, vol. 4 (1913), pp. 230–231 – the author believed that tumuli should be associated with large battles, whereas anthropomorphic *tropaions* were linked to single combat duels.

33 Janssen, 'Het Antieke…', pp. 9–14.

34 Woelcke, 'Beiträge…', p. 149; Janssen, *Het Antieke…*, p. 30; Pritchett, *The Greek…*, p. 246. For a list of *tropaions* depicted on Greek vases, see Lacey Davis Caskey, John Davidson Beazley, *Attic Vase Painting in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston, 1963), pp. 66–67.

35 Rabe, *Tropaia…*, p. 172.

36 Ibid., p. 169.

37 Pritchett, *The Greek…*, pp. 252–253.

38 Vitr. 2.8.15. For similar examples, see Cass. Dio 42.48.2; Xen. *Hell*. 4.5.10.

39 Gansiniec, 'Geneza…', pp. 97–98; Pritchett, *The Greek…*, pp. 258–259.

40 Thuc. 8.24.1.

41 Plut., *Vit. Nic.* 6 and *Mor.* 193b; Thuc. 4.72; Xen. *Hell*. 7.1.19, 4.5 and *Ages*. 2.15; Diod. Sic. 17.68.4; Paus. 9.13.10–12.

42 Reinach, 'Tropaeum...', pp. 497–518; Lammert, 'Τρόπαιου...', pp. 666–667; Picard, *Les trophées*..., pp. 16–17, 35; West, 'The Trophies...', pp. 9–10; Pritchett, *The Greek*..., p. 253–258. Cic., *Inv. rhet.* 2.23.69–70; Diod. Sic. 13.24.5; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 37 (*Mor.* 273 c–d). Whereby Plutarch uses the word *skyla* (σκῦλα).

43 Gansiniec calls them 'Tropaion – Tholos', 'Geneza...', p. 76.

44 Remains of such monuments have been discovered. See Eugene Vanderpool, 'A Monument to the Battle of Marathon', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, vol. 35 (Princeton, 1966), pp. 93–106; Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 101–148.

45 West, 'The Trophies...', pp. 9, 12–13 and 18–19.

46 Ibid., pp. 11–12; Pritchett, *The Greek*..., p. 257.

47 See Thuc. 1.54.1, 1.105.6; Plut., *Vit. Per.* 19.3, 38.3; Paus. 1.15.1.

48 The period between the end of the Persian Wars (479 BC) and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 66–68, n. 69, p. 68.

49 Pritchett, *The Greek*..., p. 257.

50 Paus. 3.2.6, 3.12.7, 3.24.6, indirectly through a mention in 9.2.5–6.

51 Pritchett, *The Greek*..., n. 18, pp. 250, 256.

52 Woelcke, 'Beiträge...', p. 143.

53 West, 'The Trophies...', pp. 7–19.

54 Ibid., pp. 14, 19.

55 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 60–61.

56 For 'permanent' Greek trophies, see ibid., pp. 76–87; West, 'The Trophies...', pp. 7–19; Jutta Stroszeck, 'Greek trophy monuments', in *Myth and Symbol II. Symbolic phenomena in ancient Greek culture. Papers from the 2nd and 3rd international symposia on symbolism at The Norwegian Institute at Athens, September 19–22, 2002*, ed. S. des Bouvrie (Bergen, 2004), pp. 303–332; Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 101–148.

57 Although there are references in the sources (Diod. Sic. 16.4.7, 16.86.6) clearly stating that Philip of Macedon erected trophies, see Adolphe Joseph Reinach, 'Trophées macédoniens', *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol. 26, nos. 118–119 (1913), pp. 347–398.

58 Paus. 9.40.7–9.

59 Pritchett, *The Greek*..., pp. 262–263.

60 For rich illustrative material, see Stroszeck, 'Greek...'.

61 For the trophy at Marathon, see Vanderpool, 'A Monument...', pp. 93–106; West, 'The Trophies...', p. 7–8; Rabe, *Tropaia*..., pp. 101–104, tables 27–30.

62 Woelcke, 'Beiträge...', pp. 161–171; Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 76; Vanderpool, 'A Monument...', p. 103, n. 22 and 31, p. 106; West, 'The Trophies...', p. 8.

63 Moses Israel Finley, *World of Odysseus* (London, 1956), p. 132; Pritchett, *The Greek*..., pp. 249, 275.

64 Tonio Hölscher, 'The transformation of victory into power. From event to structure', in *Representations of war in ancient Rome*, eds Sheila Dillon, Katherine E. Welch (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 27–48.

65 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 69.

66 Examples: Thuc. 1.54, 2.92.4–5, 4.134.2, 7.34.7; Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.26.

67 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 98–102.

68 Ibid., p. 54; Janssen, *Het Antieke*..., pp. 7–8.

69 The *tropaion* first appears in Roman iconography on victoriati from the late 3rd century BC, which were inspired by coins from Magna Graecia. See R.H. Storch, 'The Trophy and the Cross: Pagan and Christian Symbolism in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', in *Byzantion*, vol. 40, pp. 105–118 (Brussels, 1970), p. 106; Jarych, 'Tropajony...', p. 59. However, this does not indicate a military practice, but rather the adoption of a popular propagandistic motif, which had already appeared in Greek coinage since the 4th century BC.

70 As cited in Plut., *Vit. Rom.* 16.7.

71 The title originates from the word feretrum, meaning litters, on which the *spolia* taken from the Sabine king were said to have been carried, as noted by Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 111. Another explanation is offered by Plutarch, *Vit., Rom.*, 16.6.

72 Livy, *The History of Rome. Book 1, C. <1-10>*, tr. B.O. Foster (Cambridge, MA, 1919) (Liv. 1.10.5–7), [online facsimile], https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0151%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D10 [retrieved: 4 Feb. 2025]. This event, and the story

of dedicating further *spolia opima*, are also described in: Liv. 4.19.5, 4.20, 4.32; Prop. 4.10.1–48; Val. Max. 3.2.3-5; Plut. *Vit. Rom.* 16.5–8 and *Marc.* 81–84, Sil., *Pun.* 1.133, 3.587, 12.280.

73 Consul of the year 428 BC and military tribune with consular power in 426 BC.

74 According to Cassius Dio (44.4.3), Julius Caesar was granted the right to dedicate the *spolia opima* during his fifth consulship (44 BC), despite not meeting the necessary conditions, as he had not defeated an enemy commander in direct combat.

75 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 111–114; Picard, *Les trophées*..., p. 245; Henrik Gerding, *The Tomb of Caecilia Metella. Tumulus, Tropaeum and Thymele* (Lund, 2002), pp. 118–119. The event was described by Cassius Dio (51.24.4).

76 Harriet I. Flower, 'The Tradition of the Spolia Opima: M. Claudius Marcellus and Augustus', *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2000), pp. 34–64.

77 For the state of research on the topic, see, e.g., John W. Rich, 'Augustus and the spolia opima', *Chiron*, no. 26 (1996), pp. 85–128; id., 'Drusus and the Spolia Opima', *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 2 (1999), pp. 544–555; Adam Jakub Jarych, '"Łup największy". *Spolia opima* i przypadek Marka Licyniusza Krassusa', *Mówią Wieki*, no. 7 (756) (2022), pp. 28–31.

78 Plutarch provides a detailed description of how a '*tropaion*', carried on the shoulder of a general during a triumphal procession, was prepared; see *Vit. Rom.* 16.5–6 and *Marc.* 8.2.

79 Plut., *Vit. Rom.* 16.8.

80 The motif of a figure carrying a '*tropaion*' appears already on the coins of Pyrrhus, dated to 278–276 BC. See Janssen, *Het Antieke*..., p. 245; Jarych, 'Tropajony...', pp. 58–59.

81 This may be one of the few pieces of evidence – albeit a doubtful one – suggesting that the Romans erected battlefield *tropaea*.

82 Marc Lamuà Estañol, 'The Relief of the Roman Arch at Carpentras', in *Les ateliers de sculpture régionaux: techniques, styles et iconographie*, ed. Vassiliki Gaggadis-Robin et al. (Arles, 2009), pp. 49–57.

83 Storch, 'The Trophy...', p. 107. The motif of a captive under a *tropaion* appears on *gens Fundania* coins from 101 BC. For more information on this motif, see Woelcke, 'Beiträge...', pp. 173–179.

84 Lauren Kinnee, 'The Trophy Tableau Monument in Rome: from Marius to Caecilia Metella', *Journal of Ancient History*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2016), pp. 191–239.

85 Picard, *Les trophées*..., pp. 283–284; Estañol, 'The Relief...', p. 51.

86 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 110, n. 118; Elizabeth Rawson, 'The Antiquarian Tradition: Spolia and Representations of Foreign Armour', in *Staat und Staatlichkeit in der frühen römischen Republik*, ed. Walter Eder (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 162. See examples: Liv. 10.2.14, 10.46.8, 22.57.10, 23.14.4, 24.21.9, 33.26.8.

87 Rouse, 'Greek Votive...', p. 100.

88 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 104–110; Rawson, 'The Antiquarian...', p. 161. See examples: Liv. 1.37.5, 8.1.6, 8.14.12, 10.29.14, 23.46.5, 30.6.9, 41.12.6, 45.33.1; App., *Pun.* 48, 133 and *Iber.* 57; Plut., *Vit. Mar.* 22; Verg., *Aen.* 11.193–199; Florus, *Epitome of Roman History*, tr. E.S. Forster (Cambridge, MA, 1929) 2.24.

89 Gerding, *The Tomb*..., p. 57. Examples: Polyb. 6.39.10; Liv. 10.7.9, 23.23.6, 38.43.10; Prop. 1.16.1–4, 3.9.26; Plin., *HN* 32.2.7, 35.7; Cic., *Cat.* 3.10 and *Phil.* 2.68; Ov., *Tr.* 3.1.33; SHA, *Gord.* 36; Tib. 1.1.54; Suet., *Ner.* 38; Sil., *Pun.* 6.434. For a more detailed account of the presence of *spolia* in Roman homes, see Rawson, 'The Antiquarian...', pp. 159–161.

90 Picard, *Les trophées*..., p. 122.

91 Ibid., p. 118.

92 Suet., *Iul.* 11; Vell. Pat. 2.43.4. Pompey's *tropaions* carried during his triumph are described by Cass. Dio 37.21.2; Plut., *Vit. Sert.* 22.2.

93 Drusus see Cass. Dio 55.1.3, Florus, *Epitome*..., 2.30.23; Germanicus see Tacitus, *The Annals*, tr. John Jackson (London, 1937) 2.18 and 2.22; Caligula see Suet., *Calig.* 45. Caligula's trophies took the form of trees with trimmed branches, rather than earth mounds decorated with *spolia* and a *tropaion*. The fact that all known references to such battlefield *tropaea* relate to members of a single male lineage suggests that this practice was a short-lived tradition, confined

to one family line. After Caligula's death, it does not appear to have been continued, as there is no evidence that Claudius upheld this custom.

94 Tacitus, *The Annals*..., 2.18, [online facsimile], https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Annals/2A*.html

95 Florus, *Epitome*..., 1.37.6, [online facsimile], https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Florus/Epitome/1J*.html#XXXVII [retrieved: 4 Feb. 2025].

96 This may be confirmed by the design of the monuments erected at La Turbie and Adamclisi.

97 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', pp. 118–120; Janssen, *Het Antieke*..., p. 37; Picard, *Les trophées*..., p. 152.

98 Adam Jakub Jarych, 'On the frontiers of the province: monumentalizing Roman tower trophies in the times of the Roman Republic and Empire', *Novensia*, no. 28 (2017), pp. 9–10.

99 Paus. 9.40.7; Plut., *Vit. Sull.* 19.5 and *De fort. Rom.* 4(*Mor.*). Sulla's trophy was discussed by John Camp et al., 'A trophy from the battle of Chaironeia of 86 B.C.', *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 96, no. 3 (1992), pp. 443–455; Adam Jakub Jarych, 'Tropajony jako forma autoprezentacji L. Korneliusza Sulli', *Wieki Stare i Nowe*, vol. 17(22) (2022), pp. 1–18.

100 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 122; Picard, *Les trophées*..., pp. 174, 179–181.

101 Elena Kountouri, Nikolaos Petrochilos, Sophia Zoumbaki, 'The Tropaion of Sulla over Mithridates VI Eupator: A first approach', in *What's New in Roman Greece?*, ed. Valentina Di Napoli et al. (Athens, 2018), pp. 359–368.

102 Sall., *Hist*. 3.[85] {89.M}; Strab. 3.4.1, 3.4.7, 3.4.9, 4.1.3; Plin., *HN* 3.3.18, 7.26.76, 37.2.14–15; Cass. Dio 41.24.3; Sil., *Pun.* 15.492.

103 Gansiniec, 'Geneza..', p. 123; Picard, *Les trophées*..., pp. 183–184. For more information on Pompey's trophy, see Luis Amela Valverde, 'Los trofeos de Pompeyo', *HABIS*, no. 32 (2001), pp. 185–202; Georges Castellvi, Josep Maria Nolla, Isabel Rodà, 'Le trophée de Pompée dans les Pyrénées (71 avant J.-C.)', *Supplément à Gallia*, no. 58 (2008); Jarych, 'On the frontiers...', pp. 10–14 and Jarych, '*De victis Hispanis tropaea in Pyrenaei* – historia pirenejskiego tropajonu Gnejusza Pompejusza Wielkiego', *Archeologia Żywa*, no. 69/3 (2018), pp. 40–45.

104 Castellvi, Nolla, Rodà, 'Le trophée...', pp. 150–155, figs 139–150.

105 Jarych, 'On the frontiers...', pp. 14–15.

106 Cass. Dio 42.48.2; Suet., *Iul.* 11.

107 Gansiniec, 'Geneza...', p. 124, Picard, *Les trophées*..., pp. 207–208.

108 Suet., *Iul.* 11; Vell. Pat. 2.43.4.

109 Plin., *HN* 3.24(20). The trophy of Augustus is described in detail in Nino Lamboglia, 'Il trofeo di Augusto alla Turbia', in *Itinerari storico-turistici della Riviera di Ponente*, vol. 4 (Bordighera, 1938); Jarych, 'On the frontiers...', pp. 15–17.

110 Picard, *Les trophées*..., pp. 291–300. For more detailed information on the Adamclisi monument, see, e.g., Tocilescu, Benndorf, Niemann, *Das Monument*...; *Les trophées*..., pp. 391–406; Jarych, 'On the frontiers...', pp. 17–20.

111 The *tropaion* appears on coins minted by, among others, Marius, Sulla, Gnaeus and Sextus Pompey, Caesar, Brutus, Marcus Antonius, and Crassus; see Storch, 'The Trophy...', p. 107.

112 Tocilescu, Benndorf, Niemann, *Das Monument*..., p. 35, fig. 36.

113 Cass. Dio 52.35.6.

114 See examples: Juv., *Sat.* 10.133; Hdn. 2.1.4, 2.9.9, 3.6.7, 3.7.7, 3.9.1, 3.14.2, 3.15.3; SHA, *Alex. Sev.* 56.9, *Max.* 26.5.

115 The *tropaion* appears, i.a., on the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, as well as on the arches of Tiberius in Orange, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in Tripoli, and Septimius Severus in Leptis Magna.

116 The *tropaion* was often depicted at the edges of a frontal battle scene. This can be seen, e.g., on the Portonaccio Sarcophagus and the Great Ludovisi Sarcophagus.

117 The combination of the first two letters of the Greek word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ - . This symbol was said to have appeared to Constantine the Great before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. See Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini* 1.28–31.

118 This can be clearly seen when comparing the gold solidi of Constantine the Great and Theodosius II. On the former, Victoria is depicted holding a *tropaion*, while on the

latter, she holds a cross. See Storch, 'The Trophy…', pp. 115–117, pl. I, figs. 1, 2.

119 Picard, *Les trophées*…, pp. 494–508; Storch, 'The Trophy…', pp. 105, 111–115. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 29.7; Tertulian, *Adversus Marcion* 4.20, *Apologeticum* 16.1 (= *Adv. gentes* 1.12); Iustinus Martyr, *Apology* 1.55.

120 Storch, 'The Trophy…', n. 1, p. 114.

121 Both the Greeks and the Romans erected trophies after naval battles (Salamis, Actium).

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Maciej Marciniak is an assistant curator in the Department of Education at the National Museum in Warsaw. An archaeologist, he has participated in several missions, including to Bulgaria, Montenegro, Peru, Sudan and Georgia. His interests include ancient warfare, Roman iconography and the phenomenon of culture clash in past eras. He has written popular science texts promoting historical knowledge as well as scholarly articles on Roman iconography.