



Horace Vernet

Mort du prince Józef Poniatowski à la bataille de Leipzig (The Death of Prince Józef Poniatowski in the Battle of Leipzig), 1816

Oil on canvas, 65.3 x 80.5 cm

on recto, lower left, signed and dated: "Horace Vernet Paris 1816"

canvas partially relined and mounted on new stretcher

Provenance:

(...)

(Probably acquired by Hildebrand Gurlitt in France in the 1940s (per export license))

By latest 1942: Hildebrand Gurlitt (per Museum der Bildenden Künste)

By descent to Cornelius Gurlitt, Munich/Salzburg

From 6 May 2014: Estate of Cornelius Gurlitt

Exhibitions:

Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure, des artistes vivants. Exh. cat., Musée Royal des Arts, Paris, 24 April 1817. [no. 775]

Salon d'Horace Vernet: Analyse historique et pittoresque des quarante-cinq tableau (...). Exh. cat., Étienne de Jouy and Antoine Jay, Paris, 1822. [p. 75 f., no. XIII]

Les Vernet à L'École des Beaux-Arts (...). Exh. cat., École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 12 May–9 June 1898.

Bibliographical references:

Dayot, Armand. *Les Vernet: Joseph, Carle, Horace*. Paris: Armand Magnier, 1898. [p. 196]

Łojek, Jerzy. "Paryskie archiwum książąt Poniatowskich." In: *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, no. 1 (1976), p. 67–78; no. 2 (1976), p. 85–96; no. 6 (1977), p. 155–165.

Charazińska, Elżbieta. "Rzecz o portrecie nieznanego krakusa, czyli związki Horacego Verneta związki z polskim mitem narodowym," pp. 285–292. In: *Sztuka i Historia: Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Kraków listopad 1988*. Warsaw: PWN, 1992.

Ranaudeau, Claudine. *Horace Vernet 1789–1863: Chronologie et Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*. Doctoral diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne, 1999. [no. 51, ill.]

De Rosset, Tomasz F. *Polski kolekcje i zbiory artystyczne we Francji w latach 1795-1919*. Torun: UMK, 2005. [p. 125]

Primary sources:

Hildebrand Gurlitt and Cornelius Gurlitt Papers:

Correspondence: BArch, N1826/180, fols. 229ff. [=vol. 12, fol. 480] Hildebrand Gurlitt to Edgar Breitenbach, 3 October 1946

Photographs: BArch, N 1826 Bild-2061 [=17.1_F17121], [n.d.]

Seizure Inventory [Sicherstellungsverzeichnis], 2012, no. SV (Part 2)/92

Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Archives diplomatiques, Paris:

Achats allemands en France, no. 209SUP/824

Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig:

Depository, box 74, deposit lists 1942/43 ["Noch im Museum befindliche Bilder"]

National Archives, College Park, Maryland

M1946, Ardelia Hall Collection: Munich Collecting Point, Cultural Object Movement, Correspondence: Restitution to Private Owners. Hildebrand Gurlitt to CCP, 3 October 1946. ["Depot Museum Leipzig: Vernet, Schlachtenbild"]

www.fold3.com/image/270065542 (14 December 2015)

Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague:

Folder F3, Vern-Vernet, file 2

Further sources consulted (selected):

Askenazy, Szymon. *Fürst Joseph Poniatowski 1763-1813*. Gotha: Perthes, 1912.

Sammlung Franz Stöpel (...). Auct. cat., C. G. Boerner, Leipzig, 10–12 November 1927. [related to print, lot 576, ill.]

École française vers 1820, atelier d'Horace Vernet. Auct. cat., Hôtel Drouot, 10 December 1980.

Bundesarchiv, Berlin; Freiburg; Koblenz

Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume

Database "Central Collecting Point München"

Database "Kunstsammlung Hermann Göring"

Galerie Heinemann Online

Getty Provenance Index, German Sales Catalogs

Heidelberger Digitale Bibliothek (Auktionskataloge; Heidelberger Historische Bestände)

Lootedart.com

Lost Art

Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Fort de Saint-Cyr (Fonds Vizzavona)

Musée d'Orsay, Paris (Documentation de la conservation)

Répertoire des Biens Spoliés

Verzeichnis national wertvoller Kunstwerke ("Reichsliste von 1938")
Witt Library, London

Note:

The Romantic cult of Prince Poniatowski, the hero of the battle of Leipzig, was born shortly after Poniatowski's death. It gave rise to countless iconographic depictions of Prince Poniatowski's last moments. Vernet is known to have executed two compositions: one, depicting the Prince on a black horse (1817); the other, with the Prince mounted on a white horse (1816). Many copies exist, some of which were most probably created in Vernet's studio.

The Vernet scholar Claudine Renaudeau lists the 1816 composition at no. 51 of her catalogue raisonné, noting that the painting's early provenance as well as its whereabouts at the time of publication in 1999 were unknown.

At the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, an image of a very similar work was found, identified as having been executed "after Vernet". The measurements of that work (65.3 x 81 cm) are close to those of the painting found in the Schwabing Art Trove; its provenance is given as "Collection de Madame la princesse Poniatowska." Further research is necessary to establish whether the two paintings might be identical.

It is possible that the painting in question was commissioned by the Poniatowski family, in whose possession it remained until 1918, when it was lost during evacuation from Paris. It was then damaged, and underwent improper restoration.

According to a French export licence held at the Archives diplomatiques in Paris, it is likely that Hildebrand Gurlitt acquired this painting before 1942 in France.

The deposit lists of the Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig prove that Hildebrand Gurlitt offered the painting for sale to the museum in 1942/43, where it was stored until at least 1946. It remains unknown when the work was sent back.

The personal papers found in Cornelius Gurlitt's Salzburg home include a collection of about 2,400 photographs of artworks. Photograph no. 17.1_F17121, is a reproduction of this work; one of several inscriptions on verso refers to the work as "Vernet Nr. 70."

Examination of the work in the Schwabing Art Trove showed there to be fragments of an unfinished figure in the background (before the tree at upper left, between the infantry and the adjutant's pistol).

The original report on the provenance of this work, as submitted to the Task Force Schwabing Art Trove, was made accessible online at www.taskforce-kunstfund.de as of 14 January 2016. That report was updated by the Gurlitt Provenance Research Project on 19 June 2018.

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