ON A VESSEL WITH FIGURED FRIEZES FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, ON BURIALS IN KOSIKA AND ONCE MORE ON THE “AMPSALAKOS SCHOOL”*

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I. A Vessel from the collection of S. G. Grigoryants

Introduction

The private collection of S. G. Grigoryants in Moscow includes a silver vessel, to which this publication is devoted (Figs. 1-2). The vessel is thought (according to Grigoryants) to have been found in Kerch. In 2001-2002 the vessel, which had been brought to Grigoryants in a fragmentary and unrestored state, was duly pieced together and restored by V. V. Vetluzhskikh in the...
metal-work section of the State Restoration Institute and was then exhibited at a restoration exhibition in St. Petersburg in 2002.¹

Description

This vessel is in the shape of a cylindrical tumbler in shape and without a foot. Height – 12.8 cms; outer diameter including the out-turned rim – 13.3 cms; inner diameter – 11.3 cms. The out-turned rim is embellished with bead-ed or pearl-pattern decoration in relief and a chased frieze consisting of an egg-pattern with a marked middle part in each egg and with arrows dividing the eggs from each other. The latter are 6 mms wide and are covered with a layer of thin gold leaf.

The handles of the vessel are hollow figures of recumbent griffins with three-toed feet stretched out in front of them. The figures are 9.5 cms long and 4.2 cms high. The small figures consists of three main parts: a rectangular base with two semi-circular ledges protruding from each of the long sides making it possible to attach the handles to the body of the vessel with the help of riv-ets and pressed into the matrices of the side walls. Into holes at the back short tails hanging downwards have been inserted which are coiled in a ring at the ends and a pair of short vertical wings has been soldered on to the back of each griffin. The griffins’ eyes have been decorated with incrustation and the inlay – pale in colour – from one of them has survived. It is assumed to be made from colourless coral (?). The small figures of the griffins are gilded all over.

The body of the vessel is decorated with two horizontal friezes, consisting of chased figures with gilding round the edges and separated from each other by a further frieze of a meander made up of a swastika design 2.2 cms deep. The meander frieze (Figs. 1-2; 5, 1) was chased on to a horizontal stripe which protrudes slightly from the outer surface of the vessel. The lines marking off the top and bottom of this decorative frieze are chased and the surface of the decoration is covered with thin gold leaf. The meander frieze is par-tially covered by the vessel’s handles.

The upper frieze is made up of two identical compositions consisting of fantastic creatures depicted in heraldic poses: the rear part of the creatures is presented as a snake-like body coiled in a ring ending in a stylized forked tail with a small raised part in the centre. On one side of the vessel – Side A

¹ Cat. St. Petersburg 2002, 58, No. 121 (silver with gold-plating, punching, casting, gilding, riveting).