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### *CASTRA ANNIBALIS*

The watercolour *Castra Annibalis* has belonged to a sizeable corpus of Norwid's artistic works, which, although noted in the literature on the subject, have never been published and, as a result, knowledge of them has been significantly limited. This work was most fully discussed in one of the publications accompanying the first, and thus far largest, monographic exhibition presenting the life and work of Cyprian Norwid, organised by the National Museum in Warsaw on the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet's birth. The exhibition was on display in the building of the National Museum in Warsaw from 20 December 1946 to 9 May 1947, and then – as a touring exhibition – visited successively: the Municipal Gallery of Fine Arts in Łódź (11 May – 2 June 1947), the Museum of Wielkopolska in Poznań (9 June – 6 July 1947) and the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków (28 September – 26 October 1947). The exhibition was accompanied by an extensive catalogue providing information on nearly 600 exhibits, among which Norwid's artistic output was the most widely represented (nearly 400 items), along with documents relating to the poet's biography (155 items), followed by his literary output (70 items) and materials from Zenon Przesmycki's "Norwid Archive" (over 50 items)<sup>1</sup>. The Poznań edition of the exhibition was supplemented by a number of exhibits from the Museum of Wielkopolska, the Library of the Kórnik Foundation, the Seminar of the History of Polish Literature at the University of Poznań and from private collections, as well as a collection of studies on Norwid's works created in the circle of researchers from Wielkopolska. A full list of objects included in the main exhibition and displayed only in its

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<sup>1</sup> *Cyprian Norwid. Wystawa w 125 rocznicę urodzin. Katalog*, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Warszawa 1946, 132 pp., 12 ills.

Poznań version was published in *Kroniki Miasta Poznania* by Joanna Eckhardt<sup>2</sup>. The catalogue of “Norwid’s works of Wielkopolska” was divided into several sections: I. Norwid’s Life, II. Norwid’s Letters, III. Norwid’s Artistic Works, IV. First Editions, V. Studies on Norwid (a. printed, b. not printed). The list of artistic works includes two engravings: *Paciorek dziecka* (or: *Parabola o świecy pod korcem*) [*Child’s Prayer* (or: *Parable about a Hidden Candle*)] and *Święty Józef z Dzieciątkiem* [*Saint Joseph with the Child*], as well as a drawing entitled *Głowa starca* [*Head of an Old Man*] and the watercolour *Castra Annibalis*, which is of particular interest to us here. At the time, this piece was the property of Professor Roman Pollak, who was also actively involved in preparing the Poznań exhibition. Together with his colleagues from the Department of the History of Polish Literature at the University of Poznań, Professor Pollak was responsible for assembling all the exhibits that completed the Wielkopolska edition of the exhibition of Norwid’s works.

The catalogue note for the analysed watercolour, prepared by Eckhardt, included a general description of the composition, comprising all the author’s inscriptions, supplemented by information on the technique of execution and the dimensions of the work, it also named the owner of the object. In the later literature on the subject, *Castra Annibalis* was mentioned only in a few cross-sectional studies following the principle of documentary diligence. Juliusz W. Gomulicki included the watercolour in a table presenting a chronological register of Norwid’s “artistic works” in the last volume of the edition of the poet’s *Pisma wszystkie* [*Complete Works*]<sup>3</sup>, while Aleksandra Melbetchowska-Luty, in a monograph devoted to the artistic creativity of the author of *Echa ruin* [*Echoes of Ruins*], listed the composition among works evoking the antique tradition<sup>4</sup>. Finally, in *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, the watercolour was mentioned in a list of artistic works created in 1850<sup>5</sup>. The extremely modest presence of *Castra Annibalis* in the literature on Norwid seems fully understandable in the context of the lack of any visual documentation of the composition, whether in the form of a photograph or even a black-and-white reproduction.

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<sup>2</sup> J. ECKHARDT, “Norwidiana wielkopolskie,” *Kronika miasta Poznania*, XX: 1947, Issue 2/3, pp. 172-177.

<sup>3</sup> PWSz XI, 229.

<sup>4</sup> A. MELBETCHOWSKA-LUTY, *Sztukmistrz. Twórczość artystyczna i myśl o sztuce Cypriana Norwida*, Warszawa 2001, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK, in collaboration with J. CZARNOMORSKA, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. I: 1821-1860, Poznań 2007, p. 418.



C. Norwid, *Castra Annibalis*, 1850, watercolour, paper; private collection

The present publication of the watercolour *Castra Annibalis*, in the year of another significant anniversary of Norwid's birth, makes it possible to fill the previous gap in the overall picture of the visual legacy of the creator of the lithograph *Solo*. The object is still in private hands, and it is thanks to the kindness of the present owners that we can actually see a work that was previously known only from Eckhardt's brief catalogue description. The piece is a watercolour composition on pencil sketch, executed on white paper, mounted inside a contemporary frame. The work measures  $14 \times 19.5$  cm in passe-partout<sup>6</sup>. The pencil sketch is an essential element of the representation, it is visible within the entire composition, and in many parts it has only been lightly underpainted with a transparent watercolour stain. Nevertheless, the drawing is general and sparing, only sketching the main outlines of the figures depicted, further only indicating the elements of the setting in which the presented scene with figures is set. As the work is of an eminently sketchy nature, I will devote some more attention to the description of the representation.

<sup>6</sup> The dimensions given by Eckhardt ( $14.8 \times 19.5$  cm) differ slightly from the actual dimensions. It is possible that the curator of the Museum of Wielkopolska measured the watercolour unframed.

In line with the title inscribed within the watercolour, *Castra Annibalis* shows a fragment of the military camp of Hannibal's army against a mountainous landscape. The sky is reddened by the glow of the rising sun, in the light of which the soldiers seem to be preparing to leave their place of overnight rest. The centre of the composition is filled with several people sitting or lying on the ground, around whom a lively movement of armed troops continues. On the left, supported by his right arm on a shield, a bearded man in the prime of his life dressed in a loosely draped robe is rising from a reclined position. He is accompanied by two soldiers seated opposite him on the ground, wearing purple-brown cloaks and helmets. One, seen from behind, is turning to the soldier standing on the right, pointing with his left hand towards the depths of the stage. In his left hand, the standing soldier is holding a spear, supported on the ground, with a crested helmet on his head. Behind his back the silhouettes of more armed soldiers are outlined. In the foreground, in addition to the three figures mentioned, we see several people who seem to be waking up from a dream; among them, a woman with her head covered with a veil can be spotted. From the left, two soldiers are walking off into the background. One of them is raising his arms high in the air. Outlined in front of him, there is a compact group of warriors armed with spears, highlighted by white blazons against the mountainous landscape. Just on the left edge of the composition, the silhouette of an elephant with its trunk lowered towards the ground emerges from behind the soldier, surprisingly small in comparison with the human figures. In the middle of the background rises a tent of slender silhouette, with a flag flying at the top, against which several people are indistinctly outlined. Within the scene there are several inscriptions made by Norwid in pencil and enhanced in watercolour. On the shield against which the recumbent man is leaning we can see a signature with the date: "C.K. NORWID 1850," while on the stone block lying in the lower right corner there is the title: "CASTRAS / Annibalis." The date accompanying the signature is the relatively least legible element, especially the last digit "0" disappearing among the lines of the drawing. As Norwid did not focus in his composition on reproducing the details of the armament of the Carthaginian army, the considerable variation in the forms of the soldiers' helmets must be intriguing. It is possible that the artist thus wished to emphasise the heterogeneous nature of Hannibal's armed troops, composed mainly of mercenaries: Africans, Numids, Iberians, as well as Gauls and Italians, who were united in their common struggles by the authority of their brilliant leader<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> See J. WARRY, *Armie świata antycznego*, transl. J. Wajs, consulted by A. Krawczuk, Warszawa 1995, p. 122. At this point, I would like to thank Dr Elżbieta Lijewska for her valuable insights and hints, on the basis of which I was able to complete the present discussion of the watercolour.



C. Norwid, *Castra Annibalis*, fragment

The entire watercolour is kept in a blue-red-brown colour scheme, with accents of yellow and white. The foregrounded group of figures is emphasised through the use of a saturated patch of colour, while the remaining parts of the composition, especially the side sections of the picture, are underpainted with diluted paint, giving the effect of a transparent, light wash. These features of the watercolour technique,

in addition to the clear subordination of the painting layer to the drawing and the limited colour palette, are common to many works by Norwid. Moreover, *Castra Annibalis* seems to directly foreshadow the stylistics of the late works of the author of *Sprzedawca laurów* [*The Seller of Laurels*], characterised by the dominance of dense watercolour patches, spilling softly and blurring the contours of figures. In the last years of his life, Norwid turned with particular fondness to this technique, wanting “tam doprowadzić akwarelę, gdzie jeszcze nie była [...] żeby nią swobodnie myśleć można było” [to bring watercolour to where it had not yet been [...] so that it could be used to think freely]<sup>8</sup>. Compositions, such as *Opowiadanie* [*A Story*], *Para w ogrodzie* [*A Couple in the Garden*], *Zaklęte jezioro (Upiory)* [*Enchanted Lake (Spectres)*] and *Chłopiec z drewnianym koniem* [*A Boy with a Wooden Horse*], created at the time revealed Norwid’s development of his own distinct style of painterly expression, remaining outside the usual conventions at the time. Maintained in gloomy colours, far from being realistic, these watercolours seem to be scenes of visions on the borderline between reality and dream<sup>9</sup>. Although the composition described here, created almost a quarter of a century earlier than the above-mentioned works, depicts a scene strongly marked by concrete genre, it evokes a similar atmosphere of mystery and understatement through a number of artistic procedures, such as the abandonment of a detailed, precise drawing in favour of an ephemeral sketch and a free approach to the painting layer.

Why did Norwid choose to invoke the name of the Carthaginian leader in the title of his watercolour? Why was it his army that became the object of the artist’s interest? Although Hannibal is not one of the historical figures Norwid refers to very often in his writings, several significant references to him can be found in his works. On as many as two occasions, Norwid used a quotation taken from Cornelius Nepos’ *Lives of Eminent Commanders* as motto for his works, inter alia, Hannibal’s words relating to his youthful oath committing him to fight against Rome. In the rhapsody *Niewola* [*Enslavement*] we read: “Id ego jusjurandum patri datum usque ad hanc diem ita servari, ut nemini dubium esse debeat, quin reliquo tempore eadem mente sim futurus” (To this oath, given to my father, I have remained so faithful to this day that no one should doubt that I will keep it also in the future)<sup>10</sup>. The text of *Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod* [*A Funeral Rhapsody in*

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<sup>8</sup> Letter to F. Duchiniński of 22 February 1883, PWSz X, 197.

<sup>9</sup> See J. ZIELIŃSKI, “Malarstwo, niedoceniona twórczość Norwida,” *Życie i Myśl*, 1962, Issue 3-4, pp. 168-174; E. CHLEBOWSKA, *Norwid sztukmistrz nieznan*, Lublin 2013, pp. 276-280.

<sup>10</sup> DW IV, 44. See the editor’s explanations, *ibid.* pp. 289-290. Translation of the Latin quotation into Polish after: K. NEPOS, *Żywoty wybitnych mężów*, transl. J. Axer, Warszawa 1974, p. 168.

*Memory of General Bem*] opens by an abridged version of the above statement, reduced to the first part of the quoted sentence<sup>11</sup>. Simplifying the meanings contained in the indicated mottoes for the purpose of this reference, it can be observed that in the light of the above words Hannibal appears not only as a brilliant leader and strategist, a fearless warrior, but above all as a model of all virtues, in particular fidelity to his oaths and commitments. In a similar context, Roger, the protagonist of *Noc tysiączna druga* [*The Thousandth and Second Night*], invoked the figure of the Carthaginian commander in the monologue that begins the action of the comedy, juxtaposing his own attitude to life with the fighting determination of Hannibal crossing the Alps on his way to Rome<sup>12</sup>. It is worth noting that all the previously mentioned works were written in the late 1840s and early 1850s, and the last of them, similarly to the examined watercolour, was dated 1850 by the author.



C. Norwid, *Castra Annibalalis*, fragment

<sup>11</sup> PWSz I, 186. See also the commentary by J.W. GOMULICKI (in C. NORWID, *Dziela zebrane* [*Collected Works*], Warszawa 1966, Vol. II, pp. 411-412) and the discussion of both mottoes in M. KARAMUCKA, *Antyczny Rzym Norwida*, Poznań 2016, pp. 432-433.

<sup>12</sup> DW V, 106.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the period following the events of the Spring of Nations, which prompted Norwid to suddenly leave Rome engulfed in the revolutionary turmoil and to move to Paris, brought a particularly intense interest in Hannibal. The evidence that this was not an uncritical view, focused solely on the glorification of the military achievements of the commander, is delivered in another work in which the name of the Carthaginian leader is evoked, namely an article on the issue of revenge, published by Norwid at the beginning of 1851 in "Goniec Polski"<sup>13</sup>. Continuing his firm moral opposition to the idea of revenge being a force "bezbożną i płamiącą Ducha Narodu" [that is godless and stains the Spirit of the Nation]<sup>14</sup>, which he had already expressed earlier in the monologue *Zwolona*, the writer argued then that "Po uczuciu zemsty, chociażby w piersiach tak skalistych jak Annibala piersi, następować musi osłabienie, bo nasienie zemsty liścia w sobie ani kwiatowego węzła nie ma, ani może dać drzewa z korzeniami, lecz wykorzenie i perzynę" [The feeling of vengeance, even in breasts as rock-solid as Hannibal's, must be followed by a weakening, for the seed of vengeance has no leaf in itself, nor a flowering knot, nor can it yield a tree with roots, only uprooting and ashes] (*Z pamiętnika (o zemście)* [From an Album (On Revenge)]; PWSz VII, 41). The reflections contained in this article, through which Norwid joined the discussion on the struggle for national liberation, and especially on the issue of national uprisings, are an expression of the strongly internalised stance of the author of *Niewola* [Enslavement], placing Christian values above all, against which the struggle maintained in a pagan aura of revenge aroused uncompromising resistance<sup>15</sup>. However, as one might think, the criticism of "annibaliczny wybieg" [Hannibal's ploy] (PWSz VII, 42) did not dominate Norwid's assessment of Hannibal. After all, years later, in his monumental *Album Orbis*, constituting "a collection of motifs covering the entire course of world civilisations from the beginning," on which Norwid worked from the 1860s almost until the end of his life, there was a block of several pages with materials devoted to the Carthaginian leader<sup>16</sup>. The first book of

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<sup>13</sup> 1851, Issue 29 (of 5 February). See *Z pamiętnika (o zemście)* [From an Album (On Revenge)], PWSz VII, 40-42.

<sup>14</sup> M. GRZĘDZIŁSKA, "Symbolika 'Zwolona,'" *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1968, Issue 4, p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> See H. SIEWIERSKI, "Polska wolność romantyczna," *Znak* 1981, Issue 7, pp. 926-927. The scholar points out that, according to Norwid, revenge "by killing the greatest value of Christianity, which is love, makes freedom 'Hannibal's ploy' and a 'plague for the enemy of mankind'. The plague is just as dangerous to the enemy as it is to its bearers" (p. 927). See also G. GÖMÖRI, „Norwid o Mickiewiczu – spojrzenie postromantyczne,” *Studia Norwidiana*, 1: 1983, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> See P. CHLEBOWSKI, *Romantyczna silva rerum. O Norwidowym "Albumie Orbis"*, Lublin 2009, p. 392; A. BOROWIEC, "Album Orbis" Cypriana Norwida jako księga sztukmistrza, Gdańsk



the “artistic portfolio” brought as many as three images of Hannibal: a copperplate bust by Ambroise Tardieu (p. 83 verso), an illustration showing a sculptured bust in profile signed: “Lorichow sc.” (p. 84 verso), and a clipping of an encyclopaedic entry on Hannibal with an illustration of his marble bust found in Capua (p. 85 recto)<sup>17</sup>. In addition, on the next page Norwid pasted a copperplate engraving depicting the passage of the Carthaginian army under Hannibal across the Rhône, cut from a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian publication on military history by Francesco Patrizi<sup>18</sup>.

Apart from the title *Castra Annibalis*, which the author inscribed within the work, there is no testimony to the subject of this watercolour. In the history of European painting, the armed actions of the Carthaginian army were the subject of a rich iconography, including above all paintings illustrating scenes of battles (of Ticinus, Lake Trazymena, Cannae, Zama, New Carthage) and sieges (of Sargentum, Syracuse), complemented by images of marching armies (crossing the Rhône and the Alps). Norwid did not undertake the depiction of any battle scene associated with Hannibal’s numerous campaigns, especially the wars with Rome. The mountainous scenery could point to the arduous crossing of the Alps, which gave the Carthaginian army a tactical advantage over the Roman army commanded by Cornelius Scipio during the warfare of 218 BC and perpetuated this famous manoeuvre in the military history. The title of the watercolour, in turn, evokes *Castra Hannibalis*, a fort or harbour mentioned by Pliny the Elder, located on the Gulf of Squillace in Bruttium (now Calabria), whose name was said to derive from Hannibal’s fortified camp in the last years of the Second Punic War. However, Hannibal’s presence in the area has not been confirmed, nor is the exact location of the camp known<sup>19</sup>. It is possible that Norwid alluded to this location in his watercolour, depicting Carthaginian troops at a time when, after a string of spectacular victories over the Romans, they were facing the bitterness of defeat, which would also correspond to the poet’s reflections at the time in *Z pamiętnika [o zemście]*. Among the group of soldiers in the foreground, we can directly discern the symptoms of

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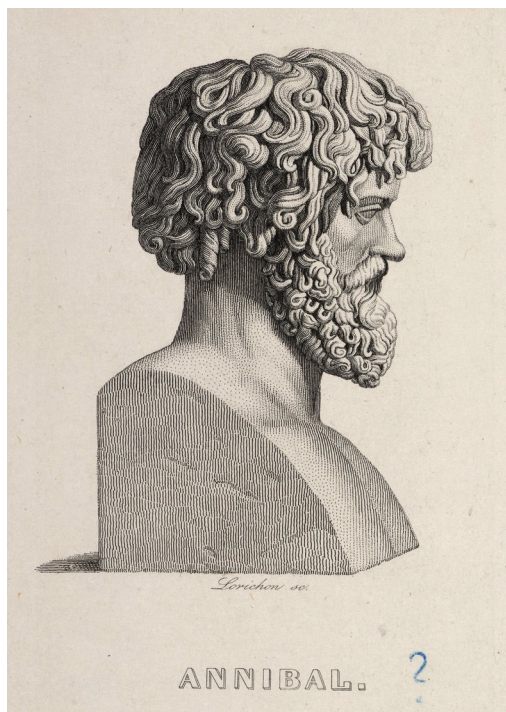
2014, pp. 237-241; P. CHLEBOWSKI, “‘Album Orbis’ – problemy z ikonografią,” in: P. CHLEBOWSKI, *Polihymnia CN I*, Lublin 2019, pp. 208, 224, 225 and others.

<sup>17</sup> M. LACHARTRE, *Nouvelle Encyclopédie Nationale*, Paris 1870, pp. 401-402. On the back of the clipping there is an article on the crossing of Hannibal’s army through the Great St. Bernard Pass in the Alps. Cit. after: P. CHLEBOWSKI, “‘Album Orbis’ – problemy z ikonografią,” p. 208.

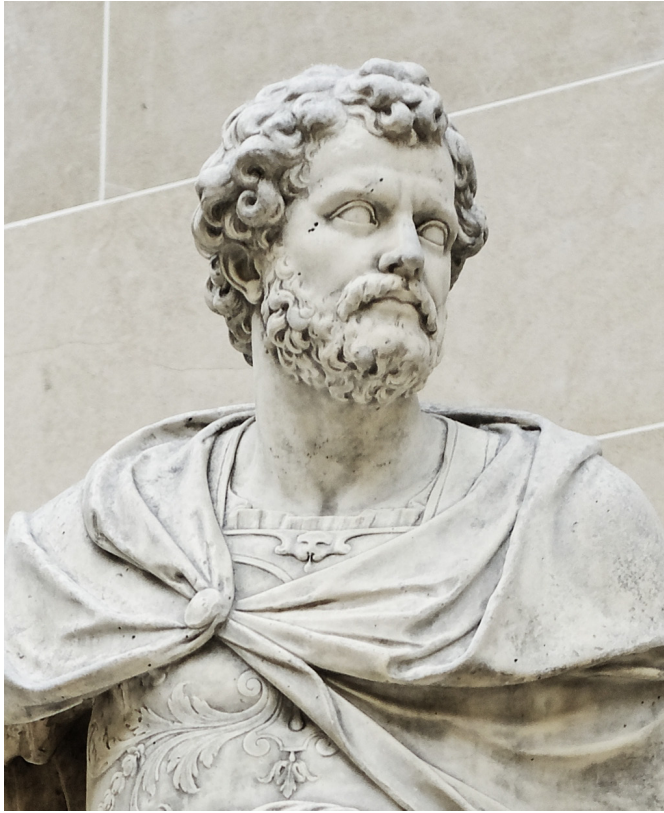
<sup>18</sup> F. PATRIZI, *Paralleli militari... ne’ quali si fa paragone delle milizie antiche, in tutte le parti loro, con le moderne*, Rome 1595, Tab. VI after p. 374. Cit. after: P. CHLEBOWSKI, “‘Album Orbis’ – problemy z ikonografią,” p. 225.

<sup>19</sup> W. SMITH, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, Vol. 1, London 1854, pp. 562-563.

a certain weakening or fatigue, and the figure of a bearded soldier in a semi-recumbent pose, leaning on a shield, prominently depicted in the lower left-hand corner of the composition, seems particularly significant in this context. He is depicted without his headgear, and the noble features of his face, rendered with particular care, may give rise to the assumption that this is an image of the commander himself. This hypothesis, although put forward here with a fair amount of caution, is not ruled out by a comparative analysis of this image with other portraits of Hannibal. This refers not only to the aforementioned illustrations pasted by Norwid onto the pages of *Album Orbis*, but also to one of the most famous depictions of the Carthaginian leader in the modern era, namely the marble statue by Sébastien Slodtz, which had stood in the Tuileries gardens in Paris until 1872. If one were to accept this identification clue, it would be possible to link the watercolour even more closely to Norwid's reflections on revenge, thus recognising that *Castra Annibalis* presents an image of a leader whose "rock-solid breasts" have already experienced "a weakening," mentioned by the author of *Promethidion*, after the feeling of revenge.



C.L.A. Lorichon, *Annibal*, engraving pasted by Norwid into *Album Orbis I*, p. 84 verso,  
National Library in Warsaw



S. Slodtz, *Hannibal Barca counting the rings of the Roman knights killed at the Battle of Cannae*, 1704, marble, Louvre, Paris, fragment

Regardless of which of the above suggestions is given preference, it is worth emphasising that the choice of an episode not directly connected to any armed skirmish allowed Norwid – in agreement with his artistic sensitivity – to present the prosaic backstage of the war struggle, contained in what one might call a banal scene, recording one of the infinite number of moments that make up everyday life in a military camp. The abandonment of pathos and sublimity, and the focus on peripheral situations, remaining outside the sphere of great deeds, dramatic events or sudden turns of action, is one of the characteristic features not only of Norwid’s visual art, but also of the literary output of the author of *Tajemnica lorda Singelworth* [*Lord Singelworth’s Secret*]. For it was in seemingly insignificant, intimate scenes that he sought the truth about man; hence he often made “ordinary people” the protagonists of his works, and the perspective of a servant or passer-

by was no less important to him than that of the main character of a work. In view of the above observations, it should come as no surprise that Norwid depicted the soldiers of the Carthaginian army, and perhaps also the commander himself, in a situation far removed from the turmoil of combat. This episode, captured in a spontaneously drawn sketch with watercolour wash, seems to be the author's own visualisation of the realities of war, presented in an intimate, almost genre scene.

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## CASTRA ANNIBALIS

### Streszczenie

Artykuł przynosi prezentację oraz omówienie nieznaną akwarelę Cypriana Norwida *Castra Annibalis* z r. 1850, przedstawiającą obóz kartagińskich wojsk z czasów drugiej wojny punickiej. Akwarela eksponowana była w 1947 r. w Muzeum Wielkopolskim w Poznaniu na wystawie zorganizowanej w 125. rocznicę urodzin Norwida. Ówczesnym właścicielem obiektu był historyk literatury polskiej prof. Roman Pollak.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Cyprian Norwid; Hannibal Barcas; druga wojna punicka; akwarela; malarstwo historyczne.

## CASTRA ANNIBALIS

### Summary

The article presents and discusses an unknown watercolour from 1850 by Cyprian Norwid, entitled *Castra Annibalis*. The watercolour depicts the Carthaginian military camp from the times of the Second Punic War. It was exhibited in 1947 in the Museum of Wielkopolska in Poznań at the exhibition celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Norwid's birth. The owner of the work at that time was Professor Roman Pollak, historian of Polish literature.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid; Hannibal Barca; Second Punic War; watercolour; history painting.

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