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The double-chambered vessel of the Chimú culture in the Castle Museum in Łańcut

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The collection of ancient artifacts in Castle Museum in Łańcut consist a number of Mediterranean sculptures, ceramics and architecture details. Single ceramic object was attributed as double-chambered jar of Chimú Culture. In this article authors present a historical and archeological context of this object, as well as its analogies and possible way of use this kind of artifacts in pre-Columbian cultures in Peru.

KEY WORDS: Andean archaeology, Peru, Chimú Culture, double-chambered jar, musical instruments, Łańcut

INTRODUCTION

The collection of Sculpture Gallery in Castle Museum in Łańcut is composed of artefacts of cultures, notably the Mediterranean, including antique sculpture (coming from the 1st–3rd centuries) and classicist one, as well as several vessels from these periods. Most of the artefacts constitute a collection acquired by princess Izabela Lubomirska (née Countess Czartoryska) (1733–1816), supplemented by the shopping

done by her heirs – the Potocki family. After the war, the collection was also enriched by items from other residences, mostly from Dzików and Przeworsk (M. Omilanowska, J. Sito 1994, pp. 71–72; B. Trojnar 2006). As for the variable collection, there is also a single vessel, originating from areas of South America (2198MŁ). It is a typical example of the manufacture of the Chimú culture.

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A cultural attribution of the vessel is not in doubt. A distinctive set of features regarding the ceramics of the Chimú culture covers the well-made forms, usually fired in a strongly reducing atmosphere with a shiny surface. In most cases, the surface was made by pressing in terracotta forms (usually two). This characteristic pottery covers a broad spectrum of forms – amphora-like vessels with handles, smaller bottles, vessels with complex shapes of people's faces or animals (C. Bákula 1999, pp. 111–112, see D. Menzel 1976, p. 77–78).

The Chimú culture (also known as Chimor) developed in the years 900–1470 in areas previously occupied by the community of the Moche and Lambayeque cultures, and it was one of the most important state organisms in the Andean cultural area before the arrival of the Incas. It is estimated that the Chimor kingdom occupied the space of about 1300 km², extending from Tumbes until modern Lima (Fig. 1). Its capital – Chan Chan (near present-day Trujillo) was located in the valley of the Moche and represented the political and

religious centre for the developing communities until the control was taken by the ruler Minchancama when in 1470 the territory was conquered by the Inca Empire, and later ravaged by the Spaniards (W. H. Isbell, H. Silverman, 2006, pp. 24–25; R. W. Keatinge, K. C. Day 1973).

The main problem during the consideration of the cognitive value of the vessel itself is the lack of its archaeological context. Similarly, as in the case of most European collections of Latin American artefacts, there are not any descriptions presenting the circumstances of their excavations or the archaeological site where they were found. It is also relatively difficult to say in what way the vessel became a part of a private collection.

The period of increased archaeological activity in Peru took place almost directly in times during and after the conquest. From the beginning of the annexation of the overseas territories by the Kingdom of Spain, they were explored by both travellers and amateur researchers (*Atlas...* 2009). The fact contributed directly to the creation of many collections of

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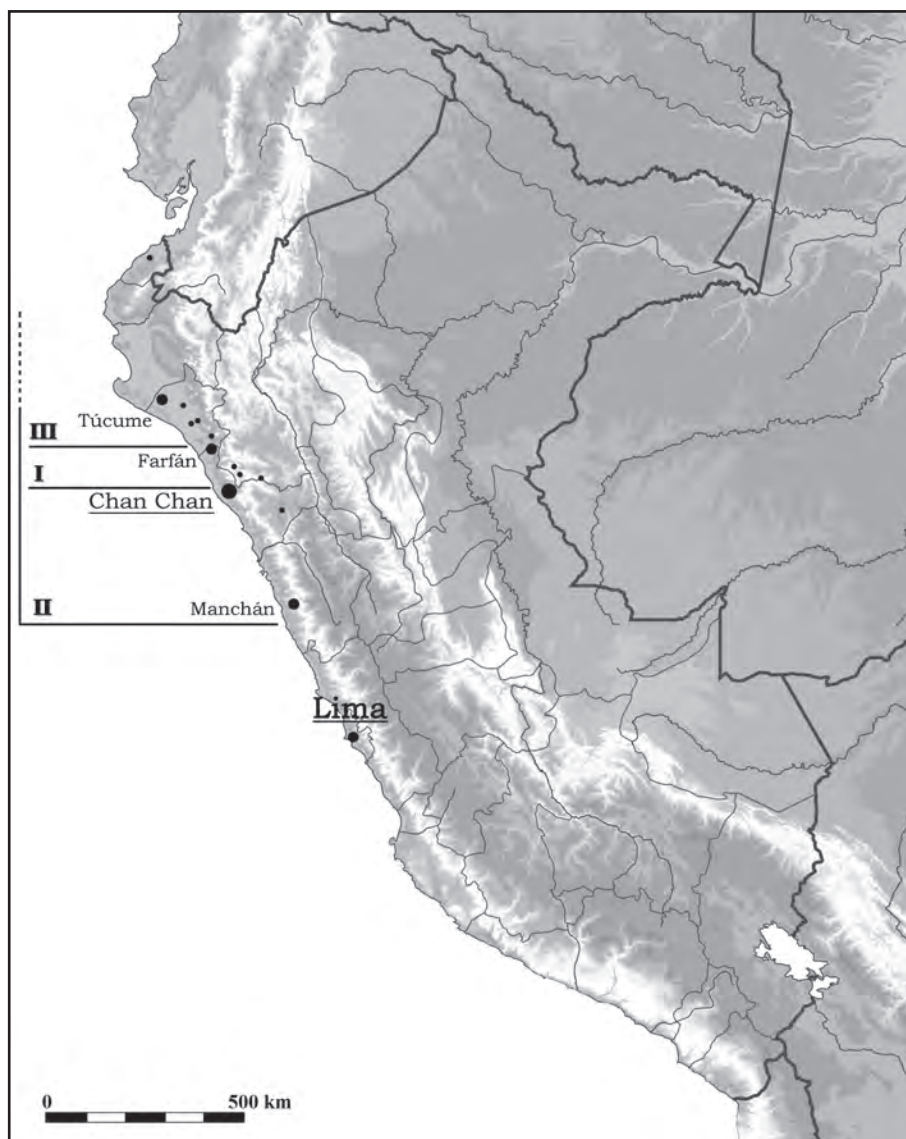


Fig. 1. Localization of the main political centres of the Chimú culture (by C. J. Mackey, A. M. U. Klymyshyn 1990, C. J. Mackey 2006; modified)

Ryc. 1. Lokalizacja głównych ośrodków politycznych kultury Chimú (wg C. J. Mackey, A. M. U. Klymyshyn 1990, C. J. Mackey 2006; zmienione)

archaeological and ethnographic artefacts in Europe, of which the largest and oldest housed in the Museo de América in Madrid (founded in the late eighteenth century from the royal collections). Other large collections of pre-Columbian artefacts coming from the area of present-day Peru are also in Paris, Berlin, London and Copenhagen. In Poland, the collections of this type are limited only to a few hundred artefacts, scattered in different museum institution in the country (National Museums in Warsaw and Szczecin, the Ethnographic Museum in Poznań, National Museum of Archaeology in Warsaw, National Museum of Ethnography in Warsaw, Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Łódź and the Archaeological Museum in Kraków). So far, the only full publication and research of materials was made on the basis on the collection from Kraków, included in the so-called Kluger collection (W. Solanilla Demestre 2000, J. Wołoszyn 1998a, 1998b).

Most of Polish collection has a relatively short history. Sets were collected mainly in the second half of the nineteenth

century and the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, the metric of the Łañcut artefact is even more surprising. After tracing the inventories of movable castle artefacts, it can be seen that the first record of the discussed vessel dates back to 1802. That time it was described as *a double jug, black*, located in *a room in the marble painted* (now a Turkish apartment), actually corresponds to reality (*Inwentarz...* 1802, p. 28), but this record seems quite enigmatic. A more detailed description was provided by the subsequent inventories in 1805 and 1862. Both entries are practically duplicated and they described the vessel as *two joined bottles, one of which represents the monster, with a hole on the belly with a handle for carrying* (*Inwentarz...* 1805, p. 18; 1862, p. 34). The first entry included the place of storage, as *a room in the marble painted*, while in the second one as *the room XIV*, in addition, the inventory from 1862 classified the vessel into the category of equipment, which consisted of *a collection of Etruscan antiques and other various figures and complex ornaments*. In the last pre-war document

coming from 1929, this vessel already equipped the Sculpture Gallery. It was described as a *double pot*, and at the entry there was the number 100, which constituted the amount of the artefact insurance (*Spis inwentarzowy...* 1929). Before the year 1936 the first image the vessel was also made in the Sculpture Gallery. It was taken in the surrounding of other artefacts – Dionysus on the panther, a stylized Egyptian statue and a bronze vases (B. Trojnar 2006, Fig. XXVI).

A surprisingly early record in the Łańcut collection allows us to combine the purchase with generally one person – Izabela Lubomirska (née Czartoryska) (1733–1816), who gathered her collection, mainly by means of artefact purchases in Western Europe (B. Trojnar 2006, M. Omilanowska, J. Sito 1994 p. 15). Her son-in-law, Jan Nepomucen Potocki (1761–1815) could also have contributed to expand her interests.

Unfortunately, as for the documents of Lubomirska there is no entry correspondance about buying the described vessel. The person of Potocki is possible due to his numerous inte-

rests and travel. In contrast to his mother-in-law, he did not focus solely on the artefacts from the Mediterranean culture, but he was also interested in Egypt, Spain and the countries of North Africa (F. Rosset, D. Traire 2006). Echoes of Latin American culture fascination by Potocki are also found in his literary work, mainly due to *Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie*, where he describes the fictional meeting of the main character with „Margrave” Montezuma and the realities of the Mexican court of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (J. N. Potocki 1847, p. 437–446).

The discussed vessel has been in the collection of Łańcut for more than 200 years, initially as an element of the private collection of the Princess Lubomirska, then Counts Potocki family. After leaving the property by the last owner Alfred III Potocki in 1945, a museum was created in the castle, where the artefact has been included since then, and nowadays is exhibited in the Sculpture Gallery.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VESSEL AND AN INTERPRETATION OF THE DECORATIVE MOTIFS

A description of the vessel was carried out according to the simplified scheme developed by Janusz Z. Wołoszyn, used in the course the study of the so-called Kluger collection (J. Z. Wołoszyn 1998a). Table 1 shows the dimensions of the vessel.

The artefact consists of two parts – A and B, where the bellies are connected by a bridge and a strap handle in the upper part (Fig. 2). The vessel was fired in a strongly reducing atmosphere, so it has a black colour (5Y 3/1 in Munsell colour system), and a greater part of its surface is highly glossy (varnished) and smooth. Rough surface are only in bottom parts (mainly part A) and the base, as well as the fragments where the bellies are connected together in the upper part of the vessel. It was made by pressing various parts of the vessel in the forms, and then combining them together. The discussed artefact consists of 8 elements likely (4 impressions, perhaps coming from one form, two impressions for the implementation of the final part B) and from the bridge and the handle (see H. Tschauner

2006, pp. 178–181). It also seems that the neck was formed by the combination of two components which were made in one form. Only the upper part was gently smoothed in the final stage of implementation. It may be proved by both the traces of joining together extending along the entire length of the neck, as well as a small horizontal grooves visible only in the edge part of the rim and a lenticular cross-section of the neck shaft (Fig. 3). Part B of the vessel is completely closed and its interior part is connected with part A only by the use of the bridge. Moreover, there is a centrally punched hole in part B from the inner side. Both parts of bellies are covered (from inside and outside) by panels, similar in shape to a rectangle with a rich incised decoration (Fig. 3 and 4).

Part B is finished with a conventionalized modeling of the human head. It has a characteristic covering in the shape of two, diverging in opposite directions cones. It also covers the back of the head (decorated by an oblique incision) and both

Dimensions of double-chambered jar (in millimeters)

Dane przedstawiające metrykę naczynia (w mm)

		height	max. diameter	min. diameter	length	width
total		199	—	—	209	137
mouth		—	52	39	—	—
neck		70	55	35	—	—
anthropomorphic part		61	—	—	44	73
handle		7–24	—	—	81	38
bridge		17	—	—	39	24
belly	A	122	—	—	95	135
	B	120	—	—	96	137
base	A	—	—	—	67	94
	B	—	—	—	98	98

Table 1

Tabela 1

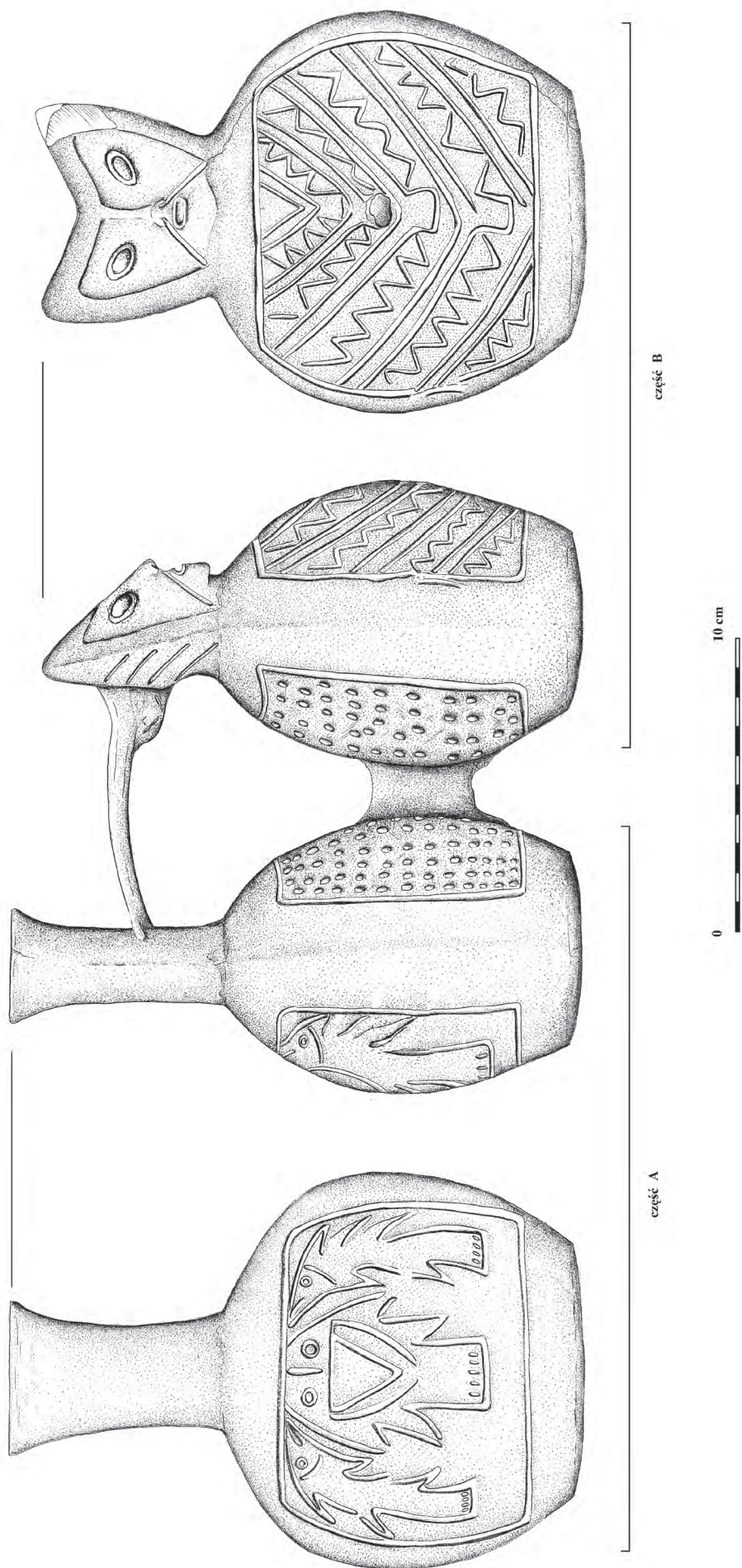


Fig. 2. Collection of Castle Museum in Łańcut, the double-chambered vessel of the Chimú culture (drawn by M. H. Rusek, K. Karński)
 Ryc. 2. Kolekcja: Muzeum-Zamek w Łańcutcie, naczynie kultury Chimú (rys. M. H. Rusek, K. Karński)



Fig. 3. Collection of Castle Museum in Łańcut, the double-chambered vessel of the Chimú culture (photo by *Maria Szewczuk, Marek Kosior*)

Ryc. 3. Kolekcja: Muzeum-Zamek w Łańcut, naczynie kultury Chimú (fot. *Maria Szewczuk i Marek Kosior*)



Fig. 4. Collection of Castle Museum in Łańcut, the double-chambered vessel of the Chimú culture (photo by *Maria Szewczuk, Marek Kosior*)

Ryc. 4. Kolekcja: Muzeum-Zamek w Łańcut, naczynie kultury Chimú (fot. *Maria Szewczuk i Marek Kosior*)



Fig. 5. Collection of Castle Museum in Łańcut, the double-chambered vessel of the Chimú culture (photo by Maria Szewczuki, Marek Kosior), the arrow shows an opening of the whistle mechanism

Ryc. 5. Kolekcja: Muzeum-Zamek w Łańcut, naczynie kultury Chimú (fot. Maria Szewczuk i Marek Kosior), strzałką zaznaczono otwór mechanizmu gwizdka

sides of the face presented here. Its back is attached to the strap handle with visible thickening near the modeling of the head. In the place of attachment there is a small hole (a whistle hole) (Fig. 5). Facial images – the eyes, nose, mouth are schematically presented. The face is divided into halves by the nose, joining in the upper part with the head cover. The eyes in the shape of almonds with visible eyelids are placed symmetrically, and they are clearly convex, with outer corners running upwards. The face is covered by two incisions running diagonally from the nostrils to the jaw and surround clearly the marked mouth and chin. The whole image goes smoothly into the belly.

As it was mentioned above, it seems that the two bellies of the vessel was made by pressing of one form. This is evidenced by their similar size and shape. In cross-section they are close to ovals with a slightly protruding ends (where the impressions are joined together). In part B of the outer panel is entirely covered with geometric motif. Pairs of incisions converge alternately along the line of symmetry of the vessel, going downward. They are separated by the lines arranged in the shape of zigzags, or single incisions, consisting of smaller triangles that in the main impression give a similar zigzag-like theme. In the central part, the zigzags combine together forming an quadrangle open from the top. The outer panel of part A is covered with an incised zoomorphic image, showing a group of three fish, of which the middle one is shown flat, from the top, while two on the sides are arched in profile. The sets of the fins, eyes and gills extending from the body are clearly marked. In addition, the central image is covered by the lines arranged in a triangle and extending from the longest side curved lines running along the body. Internal panels on both parts are covered with stipple motif arranged in co-

lumns, forming the so-called goose-flesh motif. It is one of the more common decorative motifs on ceramics of this culture (C. Bákula 1999, pp. 111–112). The bases of the vessels are not flat, slightly bent outwards towards the centre of the vessel, although the vessel itself placed on a flat surface is stable.

The state of preservation should be assessed as a very good one. In two places of the upper part of the vessel there are damages – a part of the rim and a right, upper part of the head cover. Along the belly part B runs a hardly visible crack, coinciding with the incision line which limits ornamented panel. As it was mentioned above, in the central part of the belly part B there is also a small hole, but it might have been made intentionally, even in pre-Columbian times (it is mentioned in the descriptions from the years 1805 and 1862).

No data on the context definitely limits the ability to compare the artefacts with the broader collection, but such an attempt has been made. Similar vessels was recorded in the Kluger collection. It consists of five vessels of similar type (see J. Z. Wołoszyn 1998b, p. 274). Only one vessel is topped with anthropomorphic motif (No. inv. MAK/AS./P.125), while the remaining ones are characterized by plastic zoomorphic images (birds and seals). However, the discussed modeling is much more detailed – it is not limited only to the face, it shows also a part of the trunk with the hands. In carefully made hands it is possible to notice the rope, which is also slung across the shoulder. Ideas of this kind frequently have mythological meaning and represent divine figures (M. C. Martínez de la Torre 1986, J. D. Moore, C. J. Mackey, 2003, p. 798). The character of the artefact from Łańcut allows us to identify the image as a goddess associated with the element of water (the sea) and lunar motifs (see C. J. Mackey 2002). Her face shows sche-

matic features of a human face, making it similar to big cats. Features of this image, as well as others of this type allow us connect this deity in a much wider context of the Pan-Andean pantheon, which was also reflected in the context of the Chimú culture (M. C. Martínez de la Torre, 1986; J. D. Moore, C. J. Mackey 2008, p. 799). It frequently took place that in the case of plastic images, there were attributes associated with women's domestic activities placed in the hands of the goddess such as a rope, thread, spindle, or even bundles with children (see C. J. Mackey in 2002, e.g. British Museum inv. Am1921,1027.119). The images of this type, placed primarily on double vessels, were accompanied by a nautical motif – stylized waves, fish, or ideas about the sky, images of the moon or birds (C. J. Mackey 2002).

A similar image of a human face, in similar form, occurs also in case of several other vessels (see J. Z. Wołoszyn 1998a, p. 82), sometimes accompanied by geometric decorations (just symbolizing the waves?), similar to ornaments presented on the vessel from Łañcut. Such connection was recorded *inter alia* on the vessels in the collection of the Museo de América in Madrid (inv. 10069, 10922), Maxwell Museum of Anthropology in Albuquerque (inv. 40.14.4), and Michael C. Carlos Museum in Atlanta (inv. 1989.008.033). As a relatively loose

link we can mention the vessel exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York (inv. Dva-15730), where the motif was doubled, and the axes of symmetry are arranged in a cross. Relatively fewer are images of fish presented, located on the outer panel of part A of the vessel. Similar presentation was recorded on the vessel which is a part of Southwest Museum – Autry Museum collection (inv. 1859.G.9). Similarly, as in the above cases, it is a double vessel, consisting of a simple cylindrical neck, and a second one, decorated with an image of the human face and the upper part of the trunk with hands. In the case of the last vessel, the panel with fish motif also occurs on the part of the vessel finished with the anthropomorphic modeling. In addition, the spaces between the animals are enriched by an ornament of small knobs („goose-flesh”), which was recorded on both inside panels. Related presentation can also be seen on the vessels, which are in the collection of Madrid (Museo de América, inv. 10049) and London (British Museum, inv. Am1926,0306.10; Am1942,08.10), or on the single bottle (Museo de América, no. 10307). It is also necessary to mention that the vessel with a similar ornament was put up for sale through the popular American auction site offering online sales agency¹.

PURPOSE OF THE VESSEL

Definitely it is harder to determine the purpose of the vessel. Its relatively sublime form rather precludes the use of the vessel in everyday life. As it was noted by Janusz Z. Wołoszyn, based on the data description, already in 1876 some of the artefacts sent by W. Kluger were described as *whistling vessels*. It seems that the production of this type of vessels, used for noise production is a part of a wider phenomenon, both in terms of chronological and cultural aspects (B. Ransom 1998). The mechanism of sound production is based on air blowing through the open part of the vessel. The pressed air flow came out through a small opening on the other side of the vessel, penetrating the whistle mechanism. Depending on the angle of inclination of the vessel and the liquid level which could fill the vessel, the produced sound could be heard in various ways, but nearly always as the bird singings (C. Bákula 1999, p. 112). Due to the placement of a whistle, Steven Garrett and

Daniel K. Stat (1977) identified two types of vessels: 1 – when the mechanism which is clearly distinct from the main part of the vessel (called *exposed-type*), 2 – while it is negligible and is embedded inside the vessel (called *enclosed-type*). That is why, the vessel from Łañcut should be classified as type 1, as the whistle is evident in the handle in Part B of the vessel. Depending on the construction, the sounds reached different frequency and tone. It is also distinctive for individual archaeological cultures in the environment where these vessels were made. On the basis of experimental data based on the research of 73 samples, it was found that considering the Gallinazo, Vicus, Moche and Huari cultures the average frequency is 1320 Hz, while as for the later cultures such as Chimú, Chancay and Inca it was up to 2670 Hz (S. Garrett and D. K. Stat 1977). Thus, these vessels were used as musical instruments, most likely in the ritual context.

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¹ It should be mentioned that in mid May the same online auction website offered for sale about 20 others items described as pre-Columbian artefacts from the Chimú culture.

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Naczynie podwójne kultury Chimú w zbiorach Muzeum-Zamku w Łańcucie

Streszczenie

W skład kolekcji starożytności Muzeum-Zamku w Łańcucie wchodzi głównie zabytki kultur śródziemnomorskich - rzeźby, naczynia oraz detale architektoniczne. Pojedynczy eksponat należy jednak rozpatrywać, jako naczynie południo-

woamerykańskiej kultury Chimú. W niniejszym artykule autorzy przedstawiają kontekst kulturowo-historyczny tego naczynia, jego analogie oraz możliwą interpretację w kontekście prekolumbijskiej archeologii Peru.