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THE PURCHASE OF THE PYXIS OF ZAMORA BY THE STATE.



On 13 March 1911, the act of depositing two caskets from Zamora Cathedral was signed. One of these unique pieces was the Pyxis of Zamora. This event was held at the home of the President of the Government José Canalejas y Méndez and was attended by the antique dealer Juan Lafora, who deposited the works in his possession until then, the MP Guillermo de Osma, as well as members of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts and the National Archaeological Museum, where the objects were to be deposited (Martín Benito & Regueras Grande, 2003).

On 14 March, the daily *El Correo de Zamora* reported that the objects had arrived at the National Archaeological Museum, having been bought from the antique dealer Lafora for the same amount for which he had acquired them - 52,500 pesetas (Martín Benito & Regueras Grande, 2003).

On 24 June 1911, the Royal Decree of 20 June was published in *La Gaceta de Madrid*, at the proposal of the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, Amalio Gimeno, in a single article which stated the following, "*The Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts is authorised to acquire the two caskets which were sold by the Chapter of Zamora Cathedral for the price of 52,500 pesetas, which will be paid to the person who turns out to be the owner, after the necessary budgetary appropriation has been, recognising his right to receive the legal interest on that amount until the day on which payment is verified*".

One of the caskets is valued at 25,000 pesetas and the other at 27,500 pesetas; the first payment of 25,000 pesetas being made on 29 October 1912. The second payment of 27,500 pesetas was made one year later, on 22 October 1913, to the antique dealer Juan Lafora.

Finally, 5,028.46 pesetas were paid to Lafora as late payment interest on 18 May 1914 (Martín Benito & Regueras Grande, 2003). By means of this payment, the payment owed by the State for the purchase of the objects from the Chapter of Zamora Cathedral, which were acquired by the antique dealer Juan Lafora, was concluded.

The acquisition file of the National Archaeological Museum corresponds to the year 1912, number 78 (*Museo Arqueológico Nacional*, 51944) (Martín Benito & Regueras Grande, 2003).

"And the perfume pyxis of Sultana Subh came to be displayed in the National Archaeological Museum as a major piece among the sumptuary arts of the Spanish Islamic world" (Gómez-Moreno, 1995).

Bibliography.

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