

Wspomnienia / Memories

Wolfram Hoepfner*

The Corian models of the Pergamon Altar and the Mausoleum of Halikarnassos

This article – it may be said in advance – refers to the history of science. It deals with the time 30 years ago, when thanks to political events global freedom seemed to become reality. Optimism inspired even academic sciences like archaeology. Projects were undertaken new in ideas and scale.

In 1989 after the reunification of the two parts of Germany a period of general restorations started in the Pergamon Museum. The famous Telephos Frieze from the upper story of the great altar had suffered from corrosion, because earlier reconstructions had been done by using iron clamps and iron dowels. Nearly every slab showed severe damage. The restoration was done by Italian specialists and took several years. The results convinced everyone. Wolf-Dieter Heilmeyer, the director of the museum, wanted to celebrate this event with a big exhibition of the Pergamon Altar in general. Thanks to rich donations this exhibition could be realised and took place in 1996 in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and in the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco USA.

A detailed model of the whole Pergamon Altar in the scale 1:20, was required in order to show the position of the slabs of the two sculptural friezes shown in the exhibition. Confronted with this job I studied the works done by Richard Bohn, Jacob Schrammen, Armin von Gerkan and others and came to the conclusion that visitors would not understand different phases and changes that occurred in the years when the altar was built and used. I succeed-

ed to reconstruct the plans of the original design in the Hellenistic period: clear, equal dimensions on three sides, and with assumptions of the sculptural additions on the sacrifice table and of the roof of the altar.

In this phase I was lucky to meet Jacek Kościuk from the Wrocław University of Science and Technology, in those times a collaborator of the German excavation in Abû Mînâ in Egypt. He was the only specialist who was able to design the drawings for all details of the model wanted. Thirty years ago he was able to master the most difficult computer programs even in very delicate and difficult demands. And he knew the right persons to carry out the plans in the best material, in Corian by DuPont.

In the Catalogue of the Exhibition PERGAMON: The Telephos Frieze from the great Altar (English edition 1996) page 59 I wrote:

MODEL OF THE PERGAMON ALTAR (1:20)
DIMENSIONS: H 35.1– W 175.5– D 168,7 cm,
MATERIAL: Corian by DuPont and a synthetic material consisting of acrylic and powdered marble, Its fineness allows variances of as little as 1/100 mm,
RECONSTRUCTION: Wolfram Hoepfner,
EXECUTION OF THE MODEL DRAWINGS: Jacek Kościuk,
PREPARATORY WORKS: Jürgen Giese,
COORDINATION: Jerzy Jasieńko,
EXECUTION OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS: Kazimierz Szydełko,
EXECUTION OF FRIEZES AND SCULPTURES: Janusz Kucharski, Grażyna Jaszkińska, and Maciej Albrzykowski (Academy of the Art Wrocław).

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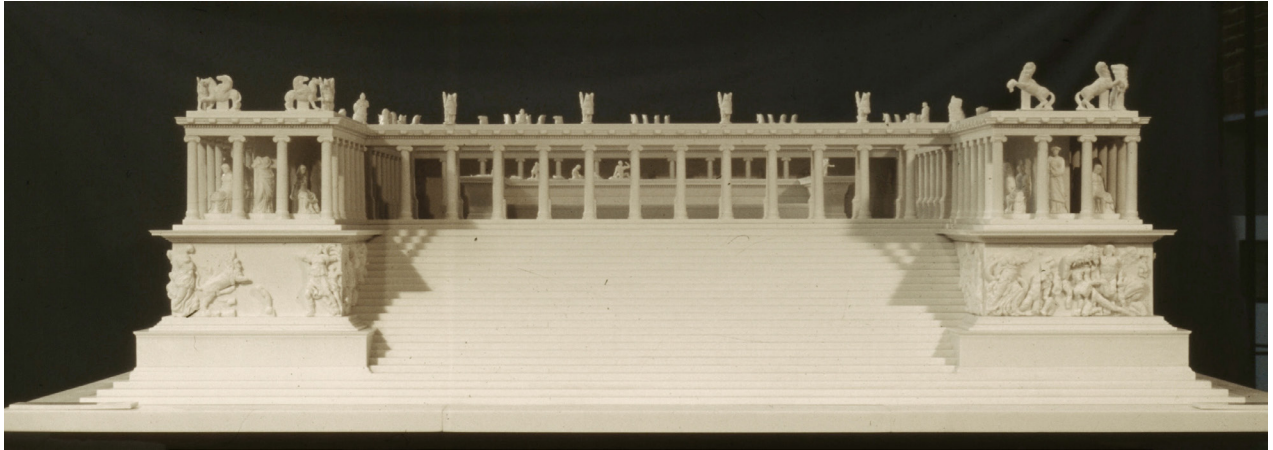


Fig. 1. Model of the Pergamon Altar, here the east side where Zeus and Athena struggled with Titans (photo by W. Hoepfner)

Il. 1. Model Ołtarza Pergamońskiego, strona wschodnia, gdzie Zeus i Atena zmagają się z Tytanami (fot. W. Hoepfner)



Fig. 2. Model of the Pergamon Altar, here the west side with the big staircase leading to the sacrifice table (photo by W. Hoepfner)

Il. 2. Model ołtarza pergamońskiego, zachodnia strona z dużymi schodami prowadzącymi na stół ofiarny (fot. W. Hoepfner)

The model is now (2023) to be seen in the Abguss-Sammlung of the Freie University in Berlin-Chalottenburg

A few years later, in 2002 the Director of the Antikensammlung Berlin Wolf-Dieter Heilmeyer organised another big exposition *DIE GRIECHISCHE KLASSIK – IDEE ODER WIRKLICHKEIT*: It was seen first in the Martin Gropius-Bau in Berlin and later in the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn. The real classical period, the art of the 5th century could be seen by first quality loans from Greece and from other Museums all over the world. The art of the late classical period (4th century B.C.) – in a certain way frozen art – could be

demonstrated by another high sophisticated model of one of the Seven Wonders of the World: The Mausoleum of Halikarnassos.

The Carian King had erected his own Grave-Monument in the middle of his new capital town Halikarnassos. For this huge luxurious tomb of white marble he engaged the best sculptors from the ancient world. Excavations were done first by the British Museum, and marvellous sculptures can be studied in the British Museum in London. The later Danish excavation was successful as well and organized a beautiful museum on the spot. The architectural elements shown there permitted a reconstruction of the whole Monument. Uncertain is the position of sculptures.

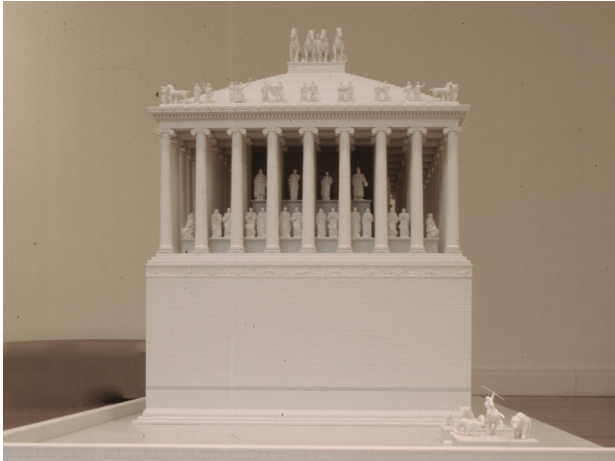


Fig. 3. Model of the Mausoleum of Halikarnassos, how described by ancient writers (photo by W. Hoepfner)

II. 3. Model Mauzoleum w Halikarnasie według opisu starożytnych pisarzy (fot. W. Hoepfner)

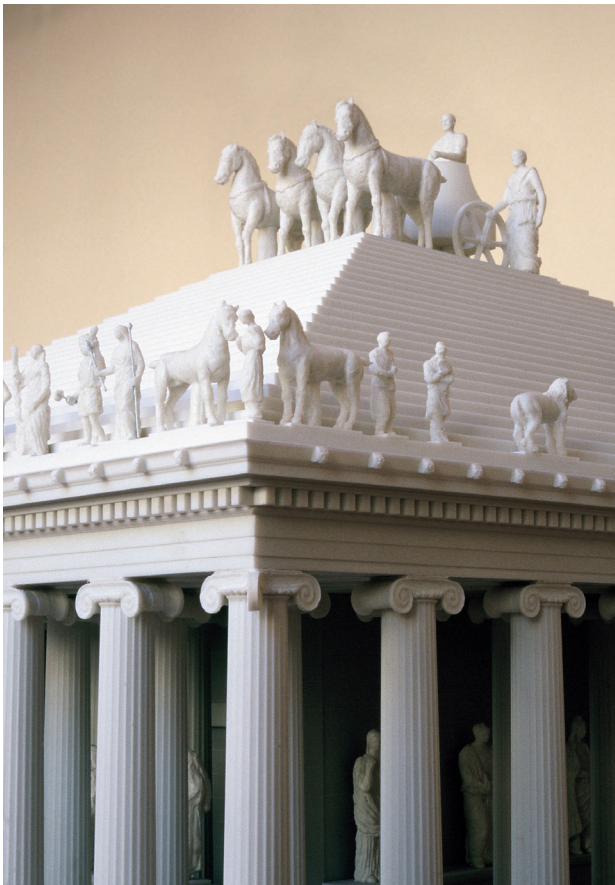


Fig. 4. Model of the Mausoleum of Halikarnassos, here the top of the monument with the quadriga and the king Mausolus (photo by W. Hoepfner)

II. 4. Model Mauzoleum w Halikarnasie, zwieńczenie pomnika z kwadrygą i królem Mauzosem (fot. W. Hoepfner)

I discussed my plans of reconstruction of the Mausoleum with Jacek Kościuk together with W.-D. Heilmeyer who gave green light for the construction of a huge and costly model in scale 1:30.

In the Catalogue Text of the exhibition page 422 Nr. 286 I wrote:

MODEL OF THE MAUSOLEUM OF HALIKARNASSOS

DIMENSIONS: H 120 – W 130 – D 160 cm,

MATERIAL: Corian by DuPont and a synthetic material consisting of acrylic and powdered marble,

RECONSTRUCTION: Wolfram Hoepfner,

EXECUTION OF THE MODEL DRAWINGS: Jacek Kościuk,

EXECUTION OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS: Kazimierz Szydełko,

EXECUTION OF FRIEZES AND SCULPTURES: Janusz Kucharski,

COMPANY: CCI Wrocław,

DURATION: 8 month,

PRECISION: 1/100mm,

SPECIALITY: The model could be easily taken apart.

KEEPING STORAGE: The model is now (2023) kept in the Zentraldepot SMPK in Friedrichshagen. The Zentraldepot is not open to the public.

Five times I travelled to Wrocław to see the manufacturing of the models in progress. Twice I came in vain, because the work on the columns and especially on the capitals needed much more time and special knowledge. The delay was caused by issues in developing the form of the columns, especially with the entasis as well as complex and difficult systems of the volutes of the capitals. In Berlin we were afraid that these main pieces of the exhibition would not be ready in time. The last days before opening of the exhibition by the president of the Republic and the Lord Mayor of Berlin we were trembling waiting for the model of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus to arrive. Everything was ready, the place in the main room and the catalogue with very good photographs of the Mausoleum.

In the night before the opening of the exhibition a big car from Poland arrived with the two parts of the very heavy model. At exactly 10 o'clock, the cleaning team exited through one door, while the first visitors entered through another. The models became a highlight in the exhibition, and even today we are proud and lucky that we were able to present the Greek architecture of the late classical time with one of the best models ever done of Greek architecture.

Dear Jacek, I thank you for your friendship and your collaboration not only in the case mentioned above but in many fields. I wish you health for many good years in future!