Casket - wedding present

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	11102
Date of production:	mid 16th century
Place of production:	Netherlands
Materials:	brass mounts; leather
Techniques:	gilded; incised; painted
Dimensions:	height: 11 cm width: 26 cm depth: 14,5 cm

The casket must have been a wedding present. It is rectangular, decorated with rosettes and mounted with copper bands. The looped handle and the wide escutcheon are also copper. The background of the incised decoration is gilded the ornaments and the figures are painted. The top is divided into four fields the upper two show medallions with dogs chasing a deer and a rider holding a sword. The lower, left field shows a dancing couple beside a youth playing the viola da gamba. The right one depicts lovers, sitting at a laid table beside a fountain there is food in front of them in a round dish and a carafe of wine below the table. A servant brings another dish to the table while another plays the flute. On the front of the casket we can see the young couple again the youth stands on the left, the lady on the right. The two shorter sides are decorated with round medallions of aged male portraits the back shows two animal figures framed by medallions. There is an inscription on the border of the top: *ZINOER IANGAL/ LE.EN. CLAELhEN ROEGIERZMOEDE.*
The couple at the table were modelled on one of the engravings about the story of the Prodigal Son, made by Hans Sebald Beham (B.32), or on a woodcut made after (B.126). (This is an indication that this particular woodcut was often used to illustrate joy and pleasure in various different contexts for the picture originally showed the prodigal son in a brothel, which is of course unsuitable for a wedding present.) In the 1900 guide to the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts the casket is mentioned as a French piece, in spite of the fact that it was considered to be either Flemish or German in the catalogue of the Spitzer collection. Sz.Koroknay and Vadászi have returned to the original dating of the casket, namely the early 16th century. In formulating their opinion they did not take the inscription into consideration, which clearly excludes any kind of German origin. The exact dating of the piece may be determined from the engraving used as a model, and dated 1540 and the fashion features in the pictures, such as the cut of the skirt and the slash in its front: this feature was taken from Spanish fashion in the middle of the 16th century.

Literature

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