Baptismal basin

Ceramics and Glass Collection

Accession Nr.:	6535
Artist/Maker:	Sovánka, István (1858 - 1944)
Manufacturer:	Schreiber Glass Factory (Zayugróc)
Date of production:	1896
Place of production:	Zayugróc (Uhrovec, Slovakia)
Materials:	colourless glass; copper; layered glass; ruby glass
Techniques:	acid-etched; free blown; ground; mould-blown
Dimensions:	height: 145 cm opening diameter: 37 cm base diameter: 45 cm

The font designed by István Sovánka (1858–1944) attracted enormous attention at the exhibition commemorating the thousandth anniversary of the Hungarian Conquest in 1896, and featured in many laudatory press articles. The body of the vessel is held on sectioned baluster rising from a broad base. On the semicircular sections of the body are four New Testament scenes, quoting chapter and verse. The first is the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:12), the second His baptism (Matthew 3:17), the third the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:47) and the fourth the scene of Christ blessing the children (Mark 10:13). Between these multi-figure compositions are three-lobed medallions with representations of the four Evangelists in rich tones. They are identified by their names and symbols in a text ribbon underneath. In similar three-lobed medallions on the lid are the twelve apostles. The composition on the superstructure of the font is topped with a cross mounted on a spherical member part decorated with rosettes. The text around the font body (“To the Hungarian National Museum on the occasion of the Millennium Exhibition, donated by glass maker Miksa Gopfert of Zay-Ugrócz, made by István Sovánka”) records the name of the artist, the place and date of production, the ceremonial occasion it was intended for, and the noble gesture of the donor. The piece can rightly be regarded as a technical masterpiece, representing the high standard of Hungarian glass art and documenting the excited expectation of the Hungarian people as they prepared for the Millennium celebrations.

Literature

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