Pillowcase

Textile and Costume Collection

Accession Nr.:	79.72.1
Date of production:	second half of the 17th cent.
Place of production:	Transylvania
Materials:	linen; silk yarn
Techniques:	metal thread embroidery; Turkish satin stitch
Dimensions:	length: 102 cm width: 80 cm

The pillow case is made of one single roll of material, rather than two pieces sewn together. The wide embroidery that falls to the two sides when folding is in its middle, consisting of parts facing the opposite sides – the longer edges are covered with narrower embroidery. This is a unique item among the surviving old Hungarian pillow cases. The embroidery is Turkish in style the longer sides feature two kinds of alternating pomegranates, while on the shorter end the symmetric, aligned flower bushes ending in pomegranates are surrounded by sickle-shaped serrated leaves. Besides the floral motifs Turkish influence is shown by the used embroidery technique – double-sided “Turkish” flat stitch – and the cheerful, vivid colours. The decoration of pomegranates with leaves, flowers and tulips, the side flowers from Hungarian flora (peonies, hyacinths), the birds and griffins hiding among the flowers, and the symmetric layout of the entire embroidery creates a Hungarian embroidery piece encompassing the Oriental elements.
The pillow case probably originates from Bánffyhunyad. According to Emese Pásztor it once belonged to the bed clothing of Kata Bánffy (1682–1734). The colouring and the floral and animal decoration show close relationship with one of the most beautiful pieces of Hungarian domestic embroidery, the tablecloth of Mária Thoroczkay. The piece described above was presented to the Calvinist Church of Nagyvárad by Countess Mária Bánffy, wife of Count Ferenc Gyulai, or by her descendants.

Literature

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