Cradle

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	53.2274.1
Place of production:	France
Materials:	iron hooks; walnut wood
Techniques:	carved; turned
Dimensions:	height: 135 cm width: 118 cm depth: 63,5 cm

The literature on the history of furniture distinguishes between three types of cradle: the semi-cylindrical, portable (so-called tub cradle), the suspended cradle placed on a frame, and the cradle with a base supplied with curving parts enabling it to rock.
Since our suspended cradle has been carved from walnut and does not bear a date, we may guess that it was made in the “walnut period” of French Renaissance furniture art, in the second half of the 16th century, in the style of King Henri II of France. The tub-shaped cradle was suspended on hooks on columns ending in a sphere placed on an openwork arcaded stand resting on a two-part base. The reason for hanging it on a high stand may have been to get to the child more comfortably and to protect him from the cold coming up from the stone floor. Ribbons were threaded through holes pierced above the geometrical embellishment band on the lengthways sides of the cradle. By means of these the infant could be kept down, so that he could not fall out of the cradle during rocking. In one of the double bands running along the outer sides of the head and foot parts of the cradle we encounter the date 1584 below the initials PB. To the same year may be linked an undated piece from the one-time Figdor collection and another from the Chateau d’Assier in France. The geometric band embellishment on all three cradles conceals the intertwined HD initials of King Henri II of France and Diane de Poitiers. The stylised decorative elements, and also three double twisted bands of embellishment on the shorter sides, show a close kinship with the decorative elements in the interior spaces of the Chateau d’Anet designed by Philibert Delorme (1512–1570).

Literature

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