Sewing table - so called globe table

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	63.650.1
Date of production:	ca. 1820
Place of production:	Hungary
Materials:	maplewood veneer; pinewood base; yew veneer
Techniques:	carved; gilded; inlaid; painted in indian ink
Dimensions:	height: 100 cm diameter: 44 cm

The making of the piece of furniture sometimes mentioned in the contemporary Hungarian-language sources as a ‘globe table’ required outstanding professional knowledge. The small, opening spherical cabinets favoured through Europe in the first half of the 19th century came from the workshops of Viennese masters mainly. The example preserved in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts is, however, probably the work of a Hungarian cabinetmaker. Its three legs decorated with carved and gilded lion’s heads still bear empire stylistic marks, but its curved forms and its proportions already reflect the spirit of Biedermeier. Symbolising the universe, the sphere as a bare geometrical form was an emblematic mark of French revolutionary architecture that had its roots in the ideas of the Enlightenment, but in a Biedermeier interior, which eschewed monumentalism, a piece of furniture that employed virtuoso technical solutions appeared more as a playful element. The original connections of the motif are referred to merely by the bands, painted in India ink and embellished with the signs of the zodiac, that encircle the sphere. When the upper half of the sphere is pushed backwards, open compartments for the storage of needlework items, and concealed drawers are revealed. The English cabinetmaker George Remington had patented this distinctive type of furniture in 1807, in a form slightly different from the Central European analogies. However, the earliest known datum relating to the execution of this type of piece is to be found in Hungary. On 21 June 1806, the apprentice cabinetmaker Gabor Kornis (1777–after 1840) submitted his master drawing depicting a small globe table to the luminaries of the Debrecen cabinetmakers’ guild. This work he made that same year, a documentable first.

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