Pendant

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	E 65.14
Date of production:	early 17th century
Place of production:	Southern Germany
Materials:	gold
Techniques:	enamelled
Dimensions:	height: 6,7 cm width: 5,1 cm weight: 47,4 g

These two jewels are almost identical, differing only in the degree to which they are damaged. It is possible, however, to reconstruct the losses on each piece from the surviving elements on the other (although all the precious stones are missing).
Many elements of the decoration are allusions to love and marriage. The parrot with coloured plumage standing on a cornucopia filled with flowers is a symbol of fertility and, probably, of beauty. The forget-me-not between two stylized palm leaves in the upper part is the emblem of fidelity the flaming heart held by two right hands and the kissing pair of doves both symbolize requited and blissful love. Clearly this pair of jewels was made for an engagement. Such pieces were often passed on as part of a dowry or as gifts, and it is frequently impossible to trace their history.
A dress ornament in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, identified as being of seventeenth-century South German origin, bears a striking resemblance to the pendants in Budapest. It is possible that these once formed part of a single, extremely rich, set of engagement jewellery. The Walters Art Museum also has the so-called Esterházy Marriage Collar, a chain nearly one and a half metres long composed of identical motifs (purchased from Paris art dealer Jacques Seligmann in 1941). Only tiny differences are to be seen between the pendants at the middle and two ends of the collar and the two pieces in Budapest.
A larger, undamaged version of the Budapest pendants, with further ornaments and gems, is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (formerly in the Eugene Gutman collection). Some scholars have suggested that it may perhaps have been made in connection with the marriage in 1582 of Prince Christian of Saxony, later Christian I, Elector of Saxony (1586-91), and Sophie, Marquise of Brandenburg.
Several theories have been proposed to explain the emergence of this pendant type. Specific Hungarian links for some notable examples have led to the suggestion of a Hungarian origin. Some scholars associate it with designs by the Frenchman Daniel Mignot, who worked in Augsburg around 1593-96 others link it to artists of Rudolf II's court rather than to South Germany.

Literature

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