


Fan - with scenes from the life of Columbus

Textile and Costume Collection

Accession Nr.:	63.201.1 
Artist/Maker:	Martinez, A. Serra, A.L.
Place of production:	Spain
Inscription:	A: Martinez/Toledo, B: A. L. Serra/Madrid
Materials:	metal; parchment
Techniques:	etched; gilded; polychrome painting
Dimensions:	height: 32 cm width: 61 cm

A picture depicting a historical scene features on both sides of the leaf in a frame recalling Gothic arches and interrupted by various motifs. The motifs are as follows: at the top, in the middle, are the letters F and Y on a red and blue escutcheon respectively. The escutcheons are on the spread wings of an eagle. In the far corners, on black escutcheons, there are anchors and in the inner corners sailing boats in round, black fields. Between the far and inner corners on each edge of the leaf, there is a rough-and-ready Spanish royal coat of arms on the breast of an eagle holding a sceptre and sword. The scenes depict two highly important meetings in the life of Christopher Columbus, meetings that created the opportunity for the discovery of America. On one side two men appear before Queen Isabella—Columbus and his patron the Duke of Medina Sidonia — the queen shows amazement, while the courtiers standing behind her listen to the patron's words with surprised, even suspicious, expressions on their faces. On one of the flags hanging in the room can be read the monogram FC. On the other side a library can be seen, where Columbus is explaining a drawing spread on a table to monks and noblemen seated around him. From the room, through an open door, one can see cloisters, where a monk is drawing near. In 1486 the Duke of Medina Sidonia tried unsuccessfully to arouse Isabella's interest in the plans of his protégé. Five years later, in 1491, the prior of the La Rabida monastery—he was also the queen's confessor— likewise found the Genoese sailor's idea worthy of attention, and it was he who arranged with the queen that Columbus should be given ships to implement his plan, namely to sail westwards to India. Among the Renaissance ornamentation on the sticks there are two putti holding wreaths above the bust of a man: Columbus. In the midst of the textured, medallion embellishments on the guard-sticks stands Amor, leaning on his bow. On the inner surface of one of the guard-sticks is the mark: MARTINEZ / TOLEDO, and on the inner surface of the other the mark: A. L. SERRA / MADRID. As yet the signatures have not been identified. The fan was probably a memento of the celebrations held—in 1892—to mark the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America.

Literature

- Maros Donka Szilvia: *Bájos semmiségek. Az Iparművészeti Múzeum legyezőgyűjteménye (1700-1920)*. Balassi Kiadó - Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 2002. - Nr. 174.

