

Cradle

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.: 54.1540.1 

Materials: walnut wood

Techniques: carved; engraved decoration

Dimensions:
height: 110 cm
length: 110 cm
width: 56 cm

The cradle stands on four hoofed, X-shape legs that figure twig horses, ending in ram and bridled horse heads. The legs are joint by a turned rod. From the inside, the barge-shaped wicker cradle is fixed to a wooden belt-like rim by bent wooden and iron bands. The rim is engraved with stylised flowery foliage and strict egg-and-dart motifs. The tongues of the rim hold the rope net in which the cradle is placed. The higher head of the cradle is engraved with stylised tendrile both on the outside and inside. The foot is carved with toys for a boy and a girl: at the horse-head there is a flag, a sword, a drum, a torch, a trumpet, a dumb bell, a skittle and a soldier in helmet, while the other side shows a doll, a hut, a basket, a rattle, a fairy tale book and a ball.

The cradle used to belong to Duke Philip Joshua of Saxon-Coburg-Gotha, who also had properties in Austria and Hungary and a farm in Vacs, Pest county. Philip Joshua was born in 1901 in Walterskirchen. His father, August Leopold of Saxon-Coburg-Gotha (b. 1867) was a captain of an imperial and royal corvette. He married Princess Caroline of Habsburg (b. 1869) in 1894 and had eight children, the first four of whom were born in Pola. The cradle was probably made for August, the first child of the ducal couple, who was born in 1895. The succeeding brothers and sister, including Philip Joshua, inherited the cradle.

The barge shape ("Barkasse") may be an allusion to the profession of the customer, his career as a navy officer. The cradle was bought from a member of the Paloczi-Horvath family in Budapest, who were the relatives of Duke Philip Joshua of Coburg's wife. The history of the cradle was told by the former owner. On the basis of the stylistic survey, the cradle is most likely to have been made in 1895 it is apparent from model drawings for cabinetmaking from the 1880s and 90s that the use of engraved stylised tendrils or lines as furniture decoration became popular and fashionable at the end of the 19th century.

The earlier supposition (see Vadaszi 1975 pp.33-36) stating that the cradle was made probably in Hungary for the children of Philip of Coburg, i.e. for Leopold, born in 1878 and for Dorothea, born in 1881, is, therefore, unacceptable.

Literature

- a kiállítást rendezte: Batári Ferenc, Vadászi Erzsébet: *Historizmus és eklektika. Az európai iparművészet stíluskorszakai*. Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 1992. - Nr. 24. (Zlinszkyné Sternegg Mária)
- Vadászi Erzsébet: *Berceaux de quatre siècles. Ars Decorativa*, 3. (1975). 1975. - 21-39.

