

Comb - with 'Prenes plesir' inscription

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	4984 
Date of production:	ca. 1500
Place of production:	France
Materials:	boxwood
Techniques:	carved
Dimensions:	length: 16,3 cm width: 12,3 cm

This comb in the shape of a recumbent rectangle has two registers of teeth, one fine, the other broader, and a Gothic, openwork carving between them. One of the faces has an inscription in the middle, *Prenez plaisir* ('Enjoy'), while the other has two circular recesses to store some ointment or perfume, which can be covered by tabs that can be pulled out sideways.

A close analogue of the comb can be found in the collection of the Royal Scottish Museum – National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. (Ferdinand Winter: *Die Käämme aller Zeiten von der Steinzeit bis zur Gegenwart*. Leipzig, 1906, Plates 10, 43). Both combs have the same structure and proportions, the tracteries are carved and segmented the same way, the central openwork star is the same, as are the two pairs of outermost panels, which are also divided into two horizontally by the pounced, wavy line that runs between the fields with the three interconnected circles. Only the inscriptions are different. Stylistically, in view of the openwork, interlocking circles with crosses in their centres, the Edinburgh and Budapest combs can be linked to the comb of Margaret III, Countess of Flanders, from around 1400.

The Musée de Cluny in Paris holds as many as three combs that are similar in shape and decoration to the one in Budapest, dating from around 1500.

Literature

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