Chalice

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	19099
Artist/Maker:	Közép-európai (erdélyi?) mester
Date of production:	late 16th - early 17th century
Inscription:	jelzetlen
Materials:	copper; silver
Techniques:	chased; chiselled; gilded
Dimensions:	height: 20,3 cm opening diameter: 9,4 cm base diameter: 14 cm

The base of this chalice is sexfoil with a straight vertical strip running around its foot decorated with diamond shapes between triglyphs. There are six repoussé busts in medallions on the very gently sloping lower part of the base. Jesus as the savior of the world is depicted in profile turning to the right in one, and the Virgin Mary in a three-quarter pose prays to him with her hands together in another. There is a shining halo behind each of them. The portraits of the Evangelists can be clearly identified in the other four frames due to the symbols next to them. Late Renaissance geometric motifs appear on the tapering stem of the upper base and then there is a profiled hexagonal collar. There is a flattened spherical node with engraved decorations of flowers and leaves in the middle of the squat, hexagonal stem. The Christogram (IHS) with crosses is engraved on the six protruding, stud-like diamonds on the central axis of the node. The calix has openwork ornamentation similar to that of the base. Based on the inconsistency of the motifs and the later riveting, it can be suspected that the calix was tightened at some point. The three large medallions on it are filled with allegorical representations of Faith, Hope, and Charity. The full-figure depiction of each divine virtue appears on one side of each composition in front of a richly modelled landscape background. Their attributes are the customary ones: Faith is wearing armor and a helm in a contrapposto pose holding a cross in its right hand; Hope raises a dove to the sky in its left hand and there is a large anchor next to it; and Charity is embracing a child in a caring manner. The lip of the gilded silver cup flares slightly outward, and it is presumably the result of a later restoration.

The craftsperson of the chalice quite certainly worked from engravings. The images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary are similar to poses typical of diptychs that appear frequently in Dutch engravings starting from the end of the 15th century, while similar representations of the virtues spread from the time of the Catholic Counter-Reformation through the work of Catholic Dutch engravers starting from the end of the 16th century.

There is an engraving on the inside of the chalice’s base, “NKAZON”. It is conceivable that this suggests that it was the possession of a Catholic church in the Kásonszék area of Transylvania. The communities there remained Catholic during the Reformation. It seems logical based on the first letter (N) that the engraving refers to Nagykászon. Of the five towns of Kászonszék, Altíz (Plăieştii de Jos), Feltíz (Plăieştii de Sus), and Impér (Imper) have been called by this name, while the originally medieval parish church of the Kászon Valley stands in Altíz, so perhaps this chalice once belonged there.

by Szilveszter Terdik

Literature

- *Közöletlen.*

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