

Abstracts

Zsuzsanna Tóth

Bookbindings of Corvinas in the collection of the National Széchényi Library

The study is presenting the results of the investigation on the binding and decoration techniques used for the Corvinas from the collection of the National Széchényi Library (Budapest, Hungary). The main aim of the survey was data collection because a systematic and detailed survey about binding structures has never been conducted before. The most well-known samples are the leather bound Corvinas which represent a unique chapter in the history of bindings. Decorated with gilding applications and blind tooling, they were made in Buda by Italians or masters who studied in Italy. The velvet bindings with painted and gilded edges also prepared in Buda and found with the Corvinas, and codices and codex fragments that had lost their original bindings were included in the scope of the survey. The current condition of the rebound and repaired bindings was also recorded with indication on the traces of the original bindings.

The comparison of the codex-bindings shows that multiple differences and variations can be found among the seemingly identical leather and velvet bindings. This might refer to workshops of several professionals or the exploration of a new binding type just taking shape.

Zsuzsanna Tóth

Wood and furniture conservator artist MA

Paper and book conservator

Translated by: Eszter Tóth

Boglárka Lengyel

A young girl with headdress from the Turkish occupation. The reconstruction of the headdress from Gödöllő

The highly damaged headdress found in 1967 during an archaeological fieldwork in Gödöllő (Hungary) was conserved immediately after the excavation, but nowadays further conservation work was required. Since the exhibition of the object had raised several problems, a replica was made using the same materials as seen on the original and on analogue pieces. Wherever the original manufacture technology was known or could be recognized, the same producing methods were adopted. The metal threads for the reconstruction were made by hand from metal, the inner thread was made of linen, and the beads were creat-

ed from glass and minerals. The replica is put on display in the City Museum of Gödöllő and shows the headdress as it was most likely worn in its age.

Boglárka Lengyel

Metal and goldsmiths conservator artist MA

Conservator of archaeological metal objects

Translated by: the author

György Németh

Cabinets of Sámuel Bíró of Homoródszentmárton and Klára Daniel of Vargyas.

Two cabinets with unusual structure from the first decade of the 18th century

The study reviews the most important results and the history of 20 years of research on a unique furniture type known only from two subsisting pieces. One of them belongs to the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. The other originally was part of the collection of Székely National Museum in Sepsiszentgyörgy. In the course of World War II this collection was transported to Zalaegerszeg and it was destroyed during an air raid. Only bands, embossings and handles of the cabinet were preserved.

Considering the historical circumstances – the cabinets were made in 1705 and 1709, during Rákóczi's insurrection (1703–11) – it was a miracle that the financial situation of Sámuel Bíró of Homoródszentmárton and Klára Daniel of Vargyas allowed the creation of these two particular pieces of furniture in Transylvania struck by war, epidemics and hunger. According to their construction and functions, these two cabinets can be considered as unparalleled phenomena in the history of European furniture industry.

The Hungarian piece preserved in the Furniture Collection of the Museum of Applied Arts had been restored in 1994-95 by the author, but the existence of this type of furniture remained questionable until the photos of the analogue székely piece emerged.

These two cabinets could have an influence on the history of furniture, as they represent a group with moving structural elements, which – in our opinion – could be considered, as an evolutionary station of the convertible, multifunctional pieces of furniture taking shape in the middle of the 18th century in Europe.

We must also emphasize that the investigation should continue, however this research is beyond the competence

of a conservator and requires cooperation with specialists of different fields of expertise.

György Németh

Wood and furniture conservator artist MA

Translated by: Eszter Tóth

Anikó Moór

Two pairs of women's silk shoes with embroidery from the 18th century

In 2018 the conservation task of two pairs of baroque women's shoes – a pink and a blue one – from the Textile and Costume Collection of the Museum of Applied Arts was accomplished as a project for MA degree in Specialization of Textile and Leather Conservation at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts Department of Conservation.

The two pairs of footwear – similar in form but slightly different in construction and shaping – were created in the beginning of the 18th century according to the French fashion at the time.

The forms were modelled on symmetrical lasts with no difference within the right and the left piece. The shoes have high, curved, Louis-heels and pointy toes. Their outsoles are strongly roughened in all directions, only the centre points of the soles touched the ground.

The examination of fibres showed that the fabrics used for coverings, ribbons and ornaments on both pairs are made of silk. The sewing threads for the assembly and the lining fabric of the blue pairs of footwear were made of linen. The vamps and the upper parts are richly decorated with high purity silver threads. Paper was used for padding the metal thread embroidery. Silk embroidery also enriches the vamps of the blue shoes.

Goatskin was used as lining for the blue shoes and sheepskin for the pink ones; both were tawed with aluminium salts. The brown, thick leather soles in both cases are probably cowhide, tanned with plant substances. The upper part of the blue footwear is stuffed by interlining made of linen. The pink pair was affixed to the leather lining with a thick layer of adhesive that simultaneously acted as a stiffener. Upper edges of both pairs are trimmed with ribbon.

The shoes became statically weak and misshapen, the fabrics were contaminated, broken and fragmented, the metal threads got corroded. The blue shoes had suffered moth damage. Their interlining became stretched and had gaps in some places with occasional shrinking. The sewing was seceded in several places, the silk coverings of the heels were torn. The adhesive layer beneath the pink shoes' fabric covering grew old and this caused gaps in the fabrics. The metal threads of embroidery were dangled and unravelled.

The static reinforcement and the aesthetical improvement of the object were the main goals of the conserva-

tion. The remains of moth larvae could be eliminated by dry cleaning. Cleaning of both pairs of shoes was performed by vacuuming, during the process the surface was protected with flexible plastic mesh. The cleansing of the lining leathers was carried out with the aid of Latex sponge. The metal thread embroidery was wiped using a 1:1 mixture of ethanol and distilled water. Wet cleaning was not feasible because leathers tawed with aluminium salts are sensitive to water, and cleaning multiple layers together is susceptible to staining. Wet cleaning could cause the swelling and stickiness of adhesives as well.

In order to reshape the deformations, the shoes were softened in humidity chamber and also with localized humidification using Sympatex semi-permeable membrane. The softened parts were stuffed with Ethafoam moulds. Entomological pins also stabilized the right forms until drying. For supplementing and supporting the lining leather, white goatskin was glued on it with rice starch.

To prevent further damage securing the torn fabrics was necessary. To support the torn parts and replace the missing fabric, the same silk fabric was used. The covering fabric of the pink shoes was stuck into the adhesive layer, so it was required to swell the starch with Nanorestore Gel® Hydrogel. To colour the supplement fabrics matching to the original ones Lanaset dyes were used. By means of the conservation of the stitching, the backing pieces were sewn back considering the direction of the grain. Adhesive had to be used on the lower edge of the pink shoes. The fragments of edging were supported and conserved on their original locations, and they were completed at the upper edges of the shoes. The conservation was done without disassembling the artefacts adhering to the principle of minimum intervention.

Anikó Moór

Textile and leather conservator artist MA

Translated by: Eszter Tóth

Andrea Várfalvi – Csabáné Szabó – Melinda Sikéné Kovács

Conservation of a male garment from the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Visonta

In 2013, during the renovation of the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Visonta (Hungary), a coffin had been revealed, in which a man was laying and wearing a hat, a wig, a dolman, a pair of trousers and boots. The first conservation was carried out in István Dobó Castle Museum, Eger and went on in the National Centre for Conservation and Conservation Training of the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest. The goals of the work were preventing further damage to the garment from and making the well-preserved hat and dolman displayable.

The parts of the garment were treated with different methods depending on their conditions. After the cleaning

of the soiled and misshapen hat made of felt, the deformation could be reshaped with local humidification and with a brush and bone knife. The wet and smoothed brim was dried between blotting papers, fixed with polystyrene foam, marble weights and various clips. The completion of the splits and gaps were executed by sewing in the edges using felt and silk yarns. The cords securing the brim could be withdrawn into their holes by silk yarns looped at their ends. The missing cords fixing the brim were supplemented with coloured silk yarns. The different colour of the textile showed the original location of the trimming.

The colour of the presumably green dolman made of wool cloth had changed to stained brown, green, yellow and ecru, its surface was mantled with soil, remains of coffin, and the carcasses of biological organisms. The remains and bones of the deceased were found in the garment. The coat was cleaned mechanically with brushes, bone folder and polyethylene cards. It was necessary to turn the object upside down for cleaning the back, which was carried out between polystyrene slabs stuffed with tissue paper. Due to the corrosion of the buttons, the dolman could not be opened, and partial dismantling was necessary for the cleaning. The washing was executed by immersing the object into soft water containing ethanol and non-ionic detergent. The reshaping of the deformed pieces was possible by fixing with entomological pins taking the direction of the grain into consideration. The metal buttons were treated mechanically by using lance, copper brush and a micro-vacuum cleaner. The parts of the dolman were mounted on thin cotton fabric; the missing parts were replaced with pieces of wool cloth coloured to the appropriate hue. The conservation of the sewing was performed with running and couching stitches using coloured silk threads.

The colour of trousers made of wool cloth was green at the time of the excavation, but later it changed into brown. Its mechanical cleaning was followed by wet treatments with soft water. Before washing, the fragments had to be fixed and they were sewn between two layers of plastic net stretched on wooden frames to prevent the displacement. Entomological pins helped to reshape the deformations. Acid-free cardboard covered with cotton fabric served as support for the remains with properly sized hollows formed in the cardboard. This support can also ensure the safe storage, transportation and display for the future.

The cleaning was again executed mechanically, after disinfecting the fragments of the boots and the leather lining of the dolman with a 70% solution of isopropyl-alcohol. Before the wet treatment, the pieces were sewn between fine tulle to provide a support while moving the pieces.

Before the cleaning of the leathers with non-ionic detergent dissolved in water and with methylcellulose, controlled humidification was needed in order to avoid the rapid swelling of the outer layers. The weakened pieces

were rinsed by spraying on a sloping glass plate. After parching, the fragments of leather were immersed into a conservation bath for a week. Preventol CMK added to water blocked the sedimentation of microorganisms during the soaking. The slow drying was possible between tissue papers with slight weighting.

A pattern drawn based on the fragments of the trousers and the boots enables to make reconstructions later.

Boxes of appropriate size were made from polystyrene foam with fixing elements for the transportation the artefacts.

The hat and the dolman were displayed for 6 months in István Dobó Castle Museum, Eger in the exhibition *Hatvan Hatás – a Dobó István Vármúzeum 60 éve (Sixty Impressions – Sixty Years of István Dobó Castle Museum)*. To achieve a professional display a male mannequin head covered with cotton fabric was prepared for the hat, and a child dummy was installed for the dolman in the climatized showcase.

Andrea Várfalvi

Textil and leather conservator artist MA

Csabáné Szabó

Preservation assistant

Melinda Sikéné Kovács

Silicate conservator artist MA

Translated by: Eszter Tóth

Dóra Danielisz

„Made of wood and covered with shingle ...”

Wooden structures of the Calvinist church architecture of Háromszék once and now.

The judgement of buildings and objects is constantly changing. The rediscovery of unrecognized, ‘worthless’ relics may enrich our image of earlier ages or even throw new light upon it. This idea was the foundation of the research that formed the basis of the current study.

The survey, which was made between 2015 and 2018, included the assessment and documentation of the churches of the former Háromszék County. This area comprised the churches of the Calvinist Dioceses of Sepsi, Kézdi, Orbai and Erdővidék. Through a better understanding of the buildings, the knowledge of the Reformed church architecture of Transylvania was improved with new scientific and practical aspects. The first results of the research pointed out that the wooden equipment and the building structures deserve special attention. They are often the least investigated and understood parts of the buildings, yet they still fill everybody with the greatest admiration. In this study the interior design elements of the churches (equipment, gallery), the structures of the covering (wooden ceilings and vaulting), the more exten-

sive building structures (roof structures and belfry) and a few examples of wooden churches known just from the archives are also presented.

*The title refers to a publication of János Herepi and Attila T. Szabó, which is a most comprehensive catalogue of wooden building structures of Székely Land. The quote is from the description of the belfry in Kálnok. Herepei – Szabó T. 1939. p. 7.

Dóra Danielisz
Architect, PhD student

Translated by: the author

András Emődi
Turret Clocks of Locksmith János Tébi
from Nagyvárad/Oradea
(Thoughts About the Possible Fates
of Old Clock Mechanisms)

The work of János Tébi (1771-1851) represents a remarkable chapter of the history of clock making in Nagyvárad/Oradea. His clocks were made with classical locksmithing techniques, the constructions are weight driven striking clocks with anchor escapement and pendulum rating. The main area of his activity was primarily in the historical Bihar County, but turret clocks of him were also made for the reformed parishes of the neighbouring territories.

Two decommissioned turret clocks of locksmith Tébi were recently removed at the request of the owner parishes. After cleaning and conservation they were exhibited as permanent display items. Concerning the clocks of Hegyközcsetár (made in 1817) and Nagyvárad-Újváros (made in 1844) the study is presenting a few ethical and technical questions related to the conservation and placement of these kinds of artefacts.

The main aim of the treatise is to draw attention to these artworks, because there are no appropriate regulations that could give any legal protection or monumental heritage status for the turret clock, which is not even qualified as a piece of equipment for the church. A number of unique and hand-made clocks were changed for modern, more precise, factory produced pieces. The records of the old structures were preserved by archival sources at most. Besides the ignorance and the lack of circumspection, illegal art trade may contribute to the destruction and disappearance of our technical heritage as well.

The two cases presented here could show us, that even a minor financial investment could be enough for ethical cleaning, conservation and adequate placement of these devices. The clock of Nagyvárad-Újváros had to be disassembled before moving it down from the turret. The cleaning of its parts was executed by mechanical methods only, using wire brushes in different grades and scrapers. To passivate the iron surfaces, a 15% solution of tannin in ethanol/dis-

tilled water was applied. The brass elements were cleaned with household vinegar, the wooden cylinders were treated by linseed oil. After assembling, the artwork was placed on a wooden stand, so the pendulum and the stone weights could be displayed together with the superstructure.

With a pulley system, the clock of Hegyközcsetár could be successfully dismantled without disassembly. Mechanical cleaning was not implemented, the cleaning was performed with high-concentration industrial degreaser to soften the hard and stubborn crust, and the object was washed with high-pressure water. The cleaning process revealed the signs of the base minium painting on the wrought-iron surfaces, and we have decided to preserve these signs of an earlier intervention.

András Emődi
Archivist
Conservation assistant

Translated by: Eszter Tóth

Brigitta Mária Kürtösi
Artwork Reconstructions
Executed in Mosaic Techniques

It is not so rare that the scale of degradation of an artwork is so serious concerning its own era that it is not able to serve its original purpose anymore because of technical or other environmental circumstances. These artworks became practically non-conservable, or simply a much more long-standing solution was chosen when they have decided to create replicas in mosaic techniques. Not only the architectural scaled murals, but metal reliefs, altarpieces and paintings are also affected.

In which cases and how strictly fits the setting manner and the preparation technique with the characteristics of the original artwork?

How shall we look at these pieces? Without the knowledge of their real history we only can have false visual information, although they are - no doubt- brilliant works.

The ancient mosaics were basically to decorate the floors, the walls and vault of buildings, but sparse mobile artworks, as for example the mosaic icons, are also known. The golden age of the mural mosaics was the Byzantine period when the mosaic making showed the essence of the quality, the real nature of the technique and the perfect know-how of the use of materials. These characteristic marks disappeared later, or their goals were significantly modified.

The goals of making replicas and the raw materials used were also various. The existence of the copy can serve the better understanding, the preservation of the continuity, or the accent of significance, but it can have a protective role as well. Sometimes originality is not equivalent with conserving the material but preserving the intellectual content or conception.

The main three conditions of a copy are the Causality, the Similarity and the Difference and not only the visible similarities are important, but the context, where the original artwork was born. The case of the mosaic replicas is a kind of substitution the replica represents at the original spot. The main criteria of the authenticity are the formal constraints, but the degree of them can change from work to work.

On the turn of the 19-20th centuries the indirect techniques are in blossom. The mosaics were created in studio, and in lots of cases the designer of the composition and the mosaicist, the person of the execution, is different. This division foresees that the mosaic is a transpose, and its quality, similarity and gestures depend on the sensitivity and interpreting skills of the mosaicist. We know artists who were not the fan of the contemporary mosaic art because it meant losing the personality.

The lunetta mosaics of the Mausoleum of Ferenc Deák in the National Cemetery in Budapest were made by Miksa Róth's workshop just a few years later when the originally executed frescos of Bertalan Székely became irreversibly damaged. Those damages derive directly from the technology and the environment. The Róth-workshop could work by using Székely's original cartons and following them strictly – quasi line-by-line – during the execution of the mosaic version. Székely could keep in track the working process.

They made a reconstruction by mosaic technique in the case of the replacement of a lead high relief in Pannonhalma, which decorated the facade of the tower of the Benedictine Monastery. The original artwork of Nicolas Schroth was partially demolished, it became dangerous for life after a heavy storm, and they decided to change it for a glass mosaic with the same subject and similar composition.

Interesting is the case of the altarpieces and vault decorations of the Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, where until now more than 10000 sqm mosaic were created to exchange the painted artworks with a much more permanent medium. The Vatican Mosaic Studio was founded in the 16th century and the institution linked with the name of Pope Gregory XIII. The work was started by Venetian craftsmen who could involve the Roman artists in the technique. In the beginning of the 17th century, Alessio Mattioli has developed his opaque glass pastes in a wide range of colours. The goal of their work was a kind of „trompe l'oeil”, to create the painting from tiny mosaic tesserae and to reach an appearance as close as possible to the original brushwork. The studio has preserved its dual purpose still today caring for the mosaics and creating new works as well.

Dr. Brigitta Mária Kürtösi
Painting conservator artist DLA

Translated by: the author

Éva Puskás – László Sulyok **Presentation of the Ascension Cathedral in Satu Mare and the Church Art Collection**

The cathedral got its present form in the thirties of the 19th century as a result of several transformations. Its base is a little parish church with one tower, which was built between 1786-1798 after the Church of Our Lady in the castle get ruined. The rebuilding was done in three stages, it was started in the episcopate of baron István Fischer (1804-1807), went on in the era of bishop Péter Klobusitzki (1808-1821), and it was finished under the period of the episcopate of János Hám (1830-1837). The design of the interior has also changed steadily over the past centuries. According to the demands of the period, the furnishing of the church was expanded, sometimes renewed or replaced. The paintings of the side altars have been restored between 2015-2017 by the authors in the atelier of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Satu Mare. Beside the documentation of the conservation works, the restorers wanted to get more information on the creation of the paintings, the painters of the pictures, and the building itself. The current study, expanded with new data from Diocesan Archives, is presenting the history of the cathedral church, its altars, paintings, furnishing and the related conservation works, and includes the Gyula Meszlényi Church Art Collection housed in the cathedral.

Éva Puskás
Painting conservator

László Sulyok
Collection manager

Translated by: Eszter Tóth

Viktória Beatrix Mátyás **Aesthetic completion of contemporary paintings, theoretical and practical problems**

The aesthetic completion of contemporary paintings is often challenging, because the traditional retouching methods are not suitable for these artworks. For example, the use of distinguishable retouching (like *tratteggio*, *poin-tillism*, tonal adjustment) in these paintings would mean that the restoration ignores the artist's intention. Since the American Expressionism, the quality of the paintings' surface is a tool in the artist's hand, the unity or the alteration of the colour, the shine or matte effects are essential for the painters' intention. In most cases, there is no varnish on these paintings, and they cannot be varnished, so the materials must be chosen carefully. Problems may also occur due to improper use of the materials or the composition of the paint. The artists no longer mix the paint from oil and pigment, but the behaviour of the tubular, ready-to-use paints are unpredictable in the long run.

The paper presents three examples of particular problems with contemporary artworks. In connection with the conservation work of Imre Bak's painting, Tao, various water-soluble retouching materials were tested for acrylic paintings. In the case of Attila Szűcs's artwork, the focus was on the artist's intention. During the restoration of György Kemény's mural, Secco, the restorers consulted several times with the artist, who also took part in the aesthetic supplement.

The study is based on the MA thesis of the author made in the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts (supervisor: István Bóna DLA), and on the survey prepared within a confine of the New National Excellence Program – code: ÚNKP-17-2 (supervisor: Ágota Gögös Kovácsné).

Viktória Beatrix Mátyás
Painting conservator artist MA

Translated by: the author

Kornélia Pápay **Experiences to replace aesthetically unpleasant lack of fur on artworks**

The main aim of the experiment was to provide a solution for supplementing the aesthetically unpleasant lack of fur on artefacts, which problem emerged during the restoration of a heavily shattered work of art made of furry leather from a private art collection. Although the replacement of the fur is not an everyday practice in leather conservation, there are certain cases in which refilling due to aesthetic reasons is inevitable.

There are only a few published examples of possible solutions for supplementing of fur beyond cleaning, disinfecting and preserving. According to collected cases, materials from the same species used on pieces of art were fixed by gluing or sewing.

Since the availability of certain furs is limited by both financial and technical reasons, other methods are investigated and presented in this study, which might be suitable as a replacement the original furry leather.

Experiments were made to fix various fibrous materials on multiple substrates. The natural appearance of complementary furs has been achieved by combining different fibres in colours, lengths and thicknesses. Blending of fibres was done by manual carding brushes, a pair of tools was used in wool processing. The final appearance of the fur is achieved by layering different complementary veils formed by carding. Fastening to the substrate is accomplished by needle-felt technique and gluing, but attempts were made to fix the fibres without a substrate and adhesive.

The presented methods can be used not only for supplementing but for reconstruction as well. The furs can be prepared quickly with low cost levels because the re-

quired materials are available in a wide variety and they can be shaped in an easy way.

The experiment, which aim was to provide a solution for the supplement of the aesthetically unpleasant/disturbing lack of fur on works of art, was initiated by the problems that emerged during the restoration of a heavily shattered work of art made of furry leather originating from a South-Transdanubian private art collection. Although the replacement of fur is not an everyday practice in leather restoration, there are certain cases in which work art supplement due to aesthetic reasons is inevitable.

In national publications, there are a few examples of possible solutions for the supplement of the fur beyond cleaning, disinfecting and preserving. According to the data collected, supplement materials from the same species used on works of art were fixed by gluing or sewing.

Because the availability factor of certain furs is limited by both financial and technical reasons, possible substitutional solutions of the original furry leather were examined in this study.

The fixation of different fibers on various platforms/carriers was tested during the experiment. The natural appearance of the expanding furs has become available by the combination of furs in various length and thickness, died into different colours, and other fibers. Fiber mixture was done by the help of a so-called hand carder which is used in pair during wool processing. Final appearance of the fur was determined by the stratification of carded veils of diverse composition. Fixation on the platform/carrier was made by needle felting and gluing, and in the end, there was also a successful attempt to remove the carrier and the adhesive.

During the test, an attempt was made to fix various fibrous materials on multiple substrates. The natural appearance of complementary furs has been achieved by blending different colors of different lengths and thicknesses of fibers. The fiber blending was done using a pair of tools used in wool processing, the so-called manual carding brushes. The final appearance of the fur was determined by the layering of the variously formed sheets formed by carding. Attachment to the substrate was accomplished by needle-felt technique and gluing, and finally an attempt was made to remove the substrate and the adhesive.

The reviewed methods can be used not just for work art supplement but for object reconstruction as well, because the necessary furs can be made rather quickly and cheaply due to the wide range availability of the required primary materials, and their easily shapable characteristic.

Kornélia Pápay
Textile and leather conservator artist MA

Translated by: the author