

RESTORATION OF A PAIR OF SLIPPER-SHOES FROM THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT COLLECTION OF CRIS COUNTY MUSEUM FROM ORADEA

ELISABETA ARDELEAN*

RESTAURAREA UNEI PERECHI DE SABOȚI DIN COLECȚIA DE ISTORIE A MUZEULUI ȚĂRII CRIȘURILOR

Autorul prezintă restaurarea unei perechi de saboți din secolul al XVIII-lea, făcând parte din colecția secției de istorie a Muzeului Țării Crișurilor din Oradea.

Încălțăminte are două părți: talpa, partea de jos, realizate din lemn de esență tare, palisandru, decorată cu plăcuțe de sidex, fixate cu cuie de argint, linii din sârmă de argint, adâncite, urmând conturul liniei exterioare a suprafeței tălpii; bendița este acoperită cu broderie plină în relief, brodată cu fir metalic fără a străpunge mătasea. Firele de metal sunt de două feluri: subțiri, răsucite, unele cu miez de ață (bumbac) cu care este executată broderia plină și altele fără miez.

După investigarea stării de conservare s-au făcut tratamente preliminare și s-a executat un întreg proces de restaurare.

Cuvinte cheie: saboți, secolul 18, starea de conservare, investigare, proces de restaurare.

Footwear as well as clothing is and will always remain subordinate to fashion. Over the centuries, certain styles have emerged in terms of footwear fashion, with specific from one geographic area to another, from one country to another, from urban area to rural one. It's well-known that the social status of a person is reproduced through the created self-image, therefore one can distinguish „social stratification” taking into consideration the footwear and clothing. Thus, those who belonged to the privileged social classes were dressing up luxury footwear and clothing, specific to their socio-economic status.

The pair of slipper-shoes that undergone the restoration process corresponds to the socio-economic reality of the time, being worn by a very narrow social category, which could afford the luxury of such footwear.

The slipper-shoes belong to the collection of the History Department of

* Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, betty_ardelean@yahoo.com

the Criș County Museum from Oradea. We do not have recorded data on their provenance, so their origins are unknown. The footwear has two parts: the lower part, which is the sole, and the upper part, which is formed by a kind of band. Taking into consideration the embroidered decorations of the band we dated the slipper-shoes to the 18th century.

Description. As we mentioned before the sole is manually carved from a piece of hardwood, which is rosewood.

The heel has a height of 9.4 cm and a width of 4 cm. The front part of the sole is raised having a height of 9 cm and a trapezoidal shape with a large base length of 9.3 cm. The thickness of the sole is 1.9 cm in front, which gradually widens and at the curvature reaches 3 cm. The surface of the sole has foot form and is decorated with pearl plates, fixed by silver nails, deepened silver wire lines, following the contour of the outer surface of the sole.

The band of the upper part has the shape of a trapeze with the big base of 20 cm; small base of 17 cm, height of 5 cm, and side lines of 5.4 cm, it is almost entirely covered with embossed embroidery with a metallic thread that does not pierce the silk. The metal threads are of two kinds: one kind of thin, twisted thread, with a core of cotton thread, with which it is made the embossed embroidery, and a thread without core.

Embroidery decoration consists of vegetal motifs - flowers, oak leaves - and geometric ones, which are surrounded by a frame of metallic flat cord.

Investigation. The first stage of the restoration process consisted in the detailed investigation of the footwear for the evaluation of its physical state, the contained materials, the slipper-shoes execution technique, the applied embroidery's technique. All these were done by visual, magnifying glass and stereomicroscope analysis. Following the investigations it was found out the component materials; for the sole hardwood (rosewood), diamond-shaped pearl plates, and silver (wire and nails with which the pearl plates are attached to the sole); for the band, silk and cotton textile support, silvered copper wire with and without core, leather for inner liner, thin paper used as filling and cardboard.

Following these investigation we were able to choose the correct restoration methodology.

Preservation state. The slipper-shoes were damaged, especially the upper band. The following damages were noticed:

- mechanical and physico-mechanical: heavy dust deposition and

impurities, breakage of the silk entirely on the outside part of the framed place, breakage of the leather, damaged and missing of the metallic wires. The silk on which the embroidery was made, disappeared entirely on the unembroidered places, only some small threads were preserved.

- physicochemical damages: discoloration of the cotton fabric of the embroidery's base; oxidation of the metallic wires; loss of hygroscopy, aging of component materials.

Restoration process. The restoration process started with preliminary operations consisting of:

- mechanical cleaning of the band, by fine dusting with a special brush, taking care to not damage more the broken metallic wires or the shredded threads of the band;

- detachment of the band (which was fixed with three nails on each side to the sole) and its disassembling with slight, temporary reinforcements;

- detachment of the metallic wire cord that surrounded the band by cutting and removing with tweezers the rough hemp thread with which it was sewn on the support. This was the case with the detachment of the leather of the band. The leather was used as a lining to strengthen and increase the resistance of the band, given the weight of the soles that are heavier than usual;

- mechanical cleaning of the wooden sole, by dusting.

Each disassembled part went through a mechanical cleaning process again:

- chemical cleaning of the embroiled surface, buffering lightly with tampons soaked in trichloroethylene;

- for the more efficient removal of impurities on the surface of the embroidery a solution of 3% ethyl alcohol, 1% glycerin in distilled water was used, buffering lightly with tampons and with filter paper, carefully to not wet the paper and the cardboard that fill the band;

- after "drying", it was again buffered with tampons soaked in trichloroethylene;

- after light brushings, the brown leather (lining) was washed in a washing solution of 2% glycerin, 3% ethyl alcohol and distilled water. After 30 minutes it was fixed on a glass stand, removing the solution surplus buffering with filter paper. The drying was done slowly at room temperature. This treatment was necessary to regain the hygroscopy and to reduce the fragility of the leather;

- degreasing of the wooden sole.

After cleaning, treatments and drying, the missing parts were completed:

- the textile supports used to strengthen the band and the cotton threads were colored in the original color (green);

- the colored canvas was put in a frame, the embroidery was fastened upon it, then the missing parts of the metallic embroidery were replaced. The spirals of metallic threads were made using two sewing needles; one with textile thread, the other with metallic thread. After completing the missing parts of the embroidered pattern (leaves, petals, spirals) the textile support was doubled with a crisp canvas and the metallic thread cord was sewn surround preserving the original place and shape of the band;

- the completed piece was removed from the frame. According to the original shape of the band it was tailored leaving 1 cm more on each side and the edges were rimmed with simple seams;

- the leather was torn at the edge, so it was completed with pieces of leather by gluing it with PVC glue.

The restored parts were assembled by sewing them together. After finishing the restoration process, the band was fastened to the wooden sole with 3 nails on each side.

There were taken photos in different stages of the restoration process: before, during and after restoration.

Photo before restoration



Photo during restoration process

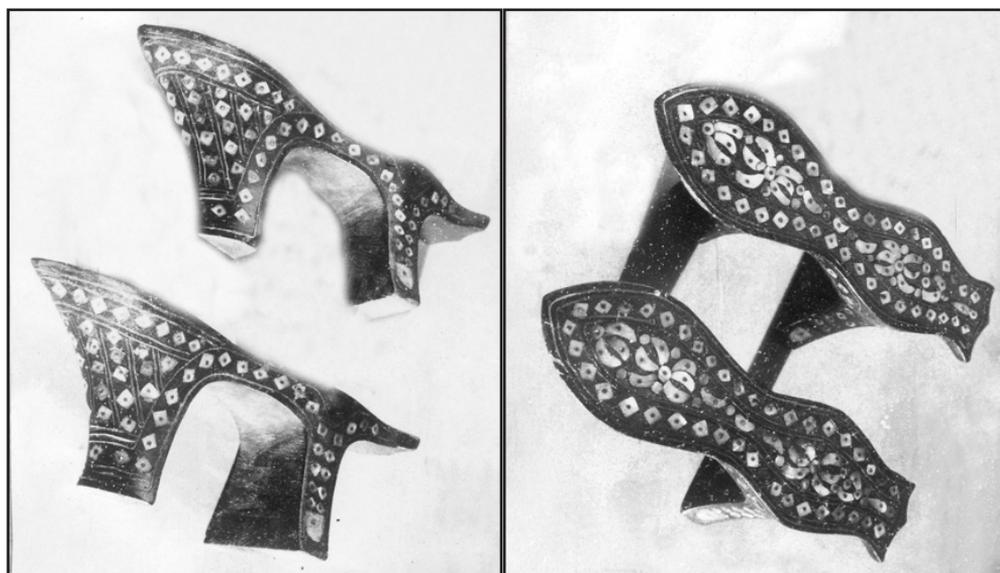
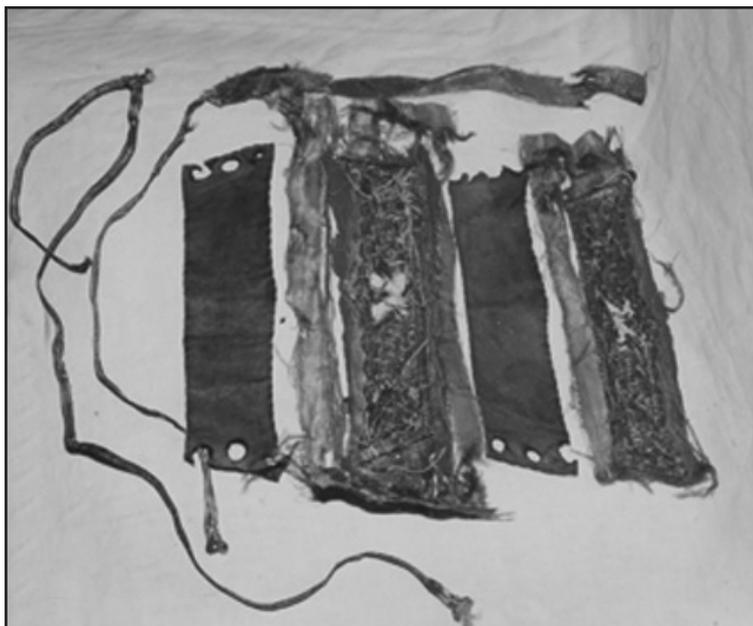


Photo after restoration

