



Conservation of an Empire-style Table

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Object

Oval table on lion's paws, inlaid, early 19th century (?)
Owner – the Pärnu Museum
The table richly decorated in the inlay (marqueterie) technique obviously dates from the 1830s. It is an element of interior, typical of its time, the function of which depended on its location. It might have been an auxiliary piece at the sofa or a base for a lamp in front of a mirror.

Technical explication

For making the table a selection of timbers – ash, birch-wood, mahogany, maple and ebony have been used. The table is made of birch-wood and covered with a mahogany veneer. The top is decorated with inlaid pieces. For initial finishing shellac varnish was used. The oval of mahogany veneer is decorated with an edge of maple veneer. The latter has also been used for decorating the ornamental beads and stylised petal motif. A thin ebony strip has been inserted into the frame. A massive base on lion's paws supports the fluted trunk of the pedestal table.

Condition before conservation

The surface of the object was stained and the inlaid top bore scratches of use and mechanical damages. There were losses of veneer, too. Some details were missing and the wood was extensively damaged. The finishing of the top had been 'refreshed' now and then.

The aim of conservation

To liquidate the mechanical damages and guarantee that the object could be displayed.

Result

The original format of the museum piece was restored. The missing inlay details were replaced with new ones. Suitable woodcuts were prepared and inserted at the place of the missing parts on the lion's paws. The top plate was cleansed of the layers of later finishing and the original shellac varnish cover was restored.

Materials used

Ethyl alcohol, white spirit, glue Franklin Tite bond (Kremer Pigmente), bone glue, mahogany veneer, birch-wood, ash, dowels of coniferous wood. Polishing paper and paste (no 150-2500), water-stain Herdins äkta bets (Sweden), wood fillings (Porenfüllpulver, Germany), mixture of linen-seed oil and turpentine 50/50, shellac resin (Baoshellack, Germany).



Fig. 1 The empire-style table before conservation.



Fig. 2 Wood damages on the reverse side of the top plate.



Fig. 3 The dowel-connection of the top was disturbed and the top had separated into two.



Fig. 4 Repairs on the lower plate with wood damages.



Fig. 5 The massive lion's paws after conservation.



Fig. 6 Repairs of the veneer on the base.



Fig. 7 The empire-style table after conservation.



Fig. 8 The empire-style table base after conservation



Fig. 9 The top plate of the Empire-style table after conservation.

