

Cultural and Technological Transfers through Migration of Silversmiths and Silver Objects in Early Nineteenth Century Europe

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Abstract

As part of my Ph.D. dissertation, my paper will examine the migration of silversmiths and silver objects that promoted an adaptation and transformation of French Empire style in early nineteenth century (1797-1848) Central- and Eastern European silver.

The presentation will focus on cultural and technological transfers that were the results of the various types of diffusion of French Empire stylistic influences and technical know-how in silversmithing between Paris and Berlin, Vienna and Warsaw. This paper will look at objects as mobile carriers of stylistic adaptations and transformations as well as production diffusion methods. It will define the early migration background and patterns of gold- and silversmiths during that time and how their mobility through training, educational and professional journeys shaped the silver production in each of the Central and Eastern European cities. It will analyze the role of gold- and silversmiths as conveyers of technological and technical innovations in silversmithing during the early nineteenth century and also illustrate the importance of the individual and diverse consumer of silverware during that time.

The presentation will be object-centered, illustrated with numerous images of French and Central-Eastern European table silver, most of which are hollowware, including tea and coffee sets, sugar and mustard pots etc.

This study will highlight the transcultural migration of European artisanal workers and how their heritage, education and how-know influenced the silver production in Central and Eastern Europe during the early nineteenth century.

