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## COMB-MAKERS' CRAFT IN MISKOLC

(Abstract)

We know nearly nothing about comb-makers' craft, the life of the comb-makers' guild; only one detailed and some brief studies have been published on this topic.

Horn comb had great importance in the hairdressing of the last centuries. Not only women fastened their hair, but the arched comb was also used by men to fix their long hair, up till the middle of the 19th c. The author proves the important role of the comb with historical data, contemporary description of the costume, the enlisting of customs, beliefs connected with the comb.

The study sums up the working processes of combmaking with the help of a description made in 1931 of a comb maker in Miskolc. Compared to the description made by K. Bartha in Debrecen, no significant difference between the phases, the means and the names of processes can be detected.

The study pays special attention to the ornamentation of the so called back-combs or hair hangers. Beside different colours painted on them, the hair hangers were ornamented with minor patterns cut out with fret-saw. Patterns made after paperpatterns spread in Hungary in the middle of the 19th c. following western, mainly Austrian influences. The paper patterns were carried by wandering lads. About 200 paper patterns of comb makers in Miskolc are preserved in the museum.

The study deals with the history of the comb makers' guild on the basis of some written sources, first of all the register book of the guild. The comb making craft did never pay important role in Miskolc, neither could it equal with other branches producing goods for dressing. There were only a few masters registered even at the most flourishing period of the craft, in the middle of the 19th c.

The data of the register tells, that the craftsmanship was inherited by the boys, thus, for instance, more than one generations were to be found in the craft from the Ruzst, Choma, Balog and Pető families.

We can read about the organisational life of the guild in the register, too, thus about the learning of the profession, the conditions of making a master work, and also the different stages of fight against the botchers.

It is interesting, that the "landmaister" of the comb-makers' guild worked on far away settlements as well, that is the guild collected the masters of a large territory to the center in Miskolc.

Difficulties concerning purchase and marketing began to accumulate at the beginning of the 20th c. The number of the masters was decreasing, and the craft has actually disappeared in Miskolc by the 30-ies.

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