



Opening of the exhibition Fon Bēru dzimtas heraldika (The Heraldry of the von Behr Family)



Foto autors Ventspils Photo Archive

On Thursday, April 17, at 5:00 PM, the Gāliņciema Library will open the exhibition “The Heraldry of the Von Bēr Family.” The exhibition will showcase original 19th-century engravings and restored historical furniture from the “Popes Manor” association, featuring pieces from manors in the Ventspils region. The decorative elements of these pieces include wood carvings depicting the von Bēr family coat of arms with a walking bear.

The president of the Latvian Castles and Manors Association, Roberts Grinbergs, has been creating this thematic collection of coats of arms from Courland noble families for over ten years, adding to the scientific collection and historical furniture collection of Popes Manor. The exhibition of the collection tells the story of the family's symbolic bear, representing the strength to survive through the centuries and continue walking with its head held high.

One of the central objects of the exhibition will be the wedding chair of Friedrich von Bēra, the owner of Zlēku Manor, which has just returned from restoration. The heraldry of the von Bēru family has been preserved to this day in the decorative wood carvings of the family alliance coats of arms on the ceilings of the Popes Manor lord's residence. The coat of arms featuring the bear can also be found in Popes Church, above the entrance and altar wood carvings, as well as around the keyhole of the church doors and in the weather vane above the Popes Manor Hunting Castle and Cīrava Church.

The carved bear motif can also be found in the interiors of Zlēku, Ugāles, Ēdoles, and Vērgales churches, in the reinforced stone reliefs on the facades of Ēdoles Castle and the Vērgales Manor lord's residence, at the gates of the Popes Barons Cemetery, and on the gravestone plaques at the Ugāles Barons Cemetery. The coat of arms is also depicted in relief on the historic park vases that have been preserved in Popes and Ēdole.

In 2014, an exhibition space dedicated to the von Bēru family in Courland was opened at the Rundāle Palace Museum. The portraits displayed in this exhibition also feature the von Bēru family coat of arms, and a glass goblet engraved with the bear from the coat of arms is displayed in a showcase. The Latvian National Museum of History also houses a wood-carved heraldic bear from the patronage pew of Piltene Church. Meanwhile, the Ventspils Museum holds the head of a bear that once adorned the entrance gates of the Zlēku Manor Theater House. The coat of arms was also used on lacquer seals, which have been preserved in the museum and archive collections on manor documents.

The exhibition at the Gāliņciema Library will be available for viewing from April 17 to May 17.

- 📅 Thu, 17.04.2025
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