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GLASSWORKS HALL IN TIROL 1534-1635

In 1534, with the support of King Ferdinand I, the Glassworks Hall started with the intention to create clear glass à la façon de Venise. Over a period of 100 years the glassworks than produced not only glass vessels, but also glass sheets and window panes.

The extensive work of archeologists in Hall in Tirol during December 2008 and the summer of 2009 had brought to light the remains of the Glassworks Hall and a vast number of glass artefacts, melting pots, raw materials, half products and tools. Although the existence of the glassworks is well reported in the archives, even lists of items produced and sold to the court or exported to southern German towns are well preserved, glass goblets, fragile and less respected than gold or silver tableware, are rarely found in collections or museums. In 1962, Egg, the director of the Tiroler Landesmuseum, published a book on the glassworks of Innsbruck and Hall – the objects he assigned to the glassworks of Hall were never proved to be produced there really, but just being allocated by art history and by their discovering in monasteries, castles or privately owned nearby Hall.

Although the cleaning, sorting out and restoring of the huge amount of glass finds is still going on, one can already give some information on forms, quality and colors produced in Hall. Once finished, this spectrum will also help to relate other glass findings in western Austria as well as to find out more about the true origin of several large goblets and glass vessels accredited to Hall.

The plot, 2008 still enclosed by its wall dating back to the sixteenth century, covered more than 7700 square meters. After 8 months of archeological research 6500 square meters were

reviewed and documented. The glassworks changed its appearance a bunch of times as to be seen on contemporaneous pictures – this could be proved by excavating the foundations of walls. Adjacent to them or nearby several pits and latrines were discovered, filled with raw materials as quartz, minerals, raw glass, half products and glass fragments. Pottery and bones concentrated in latrines, whereas ceramic tiles and parts of the furnace' cover, crucibles thickly covered with solidified glass as well as some small finds like coins and knives and other household goods were scattered beyond the buildings. Unfortunately and probably due to several modifications and rebuilding during the last five hundred years, the furnace could not be located.

Some glass vessels as small bottles were found intact, others could be reconstructed from fragments. However the main findings are raw glass, blasts from the blowpipe, thousands of broken, even colored window panes and fragments of glass vessels in various colors, plain or with optical decoration. There are a lot of red and wine opaque glass fragments, as well as almost dark black opaque and red lucid ones. A few fragments are decorated with *filigrana a fili*, *filigrana a retortoli*, enamel or engraved with diamond.

Already in the sixteenth century the collection of waste glass and transport to Hall was ordered by law in the Tyrol. This helped to lower the costs of raw material, but makes it difficult to distinguish between glass collected and glass produced. Glass analyses could probably help to do that, first analyses by Dana Rohanova, Prague, found a majority of alkali-mixed Glass.

As for the forms, there are bottles in all sort of shapes and sizes, even pilgrimage flasks, simple beakers, dark and turquoise green Nuppen beakers, Berkemeyers, Krautstrunk, beakers with spiralwinded foot, goblets and cups also with various mould blown stems (lion masks, ripped or plain balustrade), a wide variation of optical decoration of cups, beakers, also cups with stem folded from one optical moulded balloon, goblets, jugs, plates and covers, pharmaceutical vessels and glass strings and sticks to melt on or form decorations.

Since special decorated and extralarge goblets were probably

only produced 'on demand' they were not found until now. The spectrum of Hall is related to the findings in Reichenau and especially the optical mould blown glass to Nymburk.

REFERENCES

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Figs. 1-2 - Some glass forms from the Glassworks Hall (1534-1635).



Fig. 3 - A small selection of colors and forms from the Glassworks Hall (1534-1635).

