

Lecture Program , Light & Glass Venice September 26 – 29th, 2019

Elena Agnini, diploma restorer – conservator Munich

“Restoration-conservation of the five glass chandeliers Murano, Venice, 2nd quarter 18th C. Munich, in the castle Nymphenburg – Amalienburg”



The chandelier in the pheasant room is one of five magnificent chandeliers in the Amalienburg, a small pleasure palace and hunting lodge, in the park of the Castle Nymphenburg. The Amalienburg is one of the most exquisite creations in the European Rococo style. The five chandeliers were made in Venice (Murano) in the second quarter of the 18th century. The chandelier in the pheasant room consists of 132 glass parts and is completely preserved except for a few missing parts. He has 12 glass candle arms on the lowest floor. It is a so-called crystal glass, a white, translucent glass with only a few small air inclusions, which is easily malleable in a semi-molten state. Some round parts on the mounting bar were mouthblown and molded, all remaining parts were pulled out of the melt, soft shaped or cut. Therefore, no part is the same as the other.

This report presents a detailed object and condition description and restoration measures as well as some information about the so-called glass disease.

Complete dismantling and conservation of all the parts took place in 1998 and partly again in 2018-2019. The restoration and conservation work was commissioned by the Bavarian Administration of State Palaces Gardens and Lakes and the State Construction Office in Munich.



Käthe Klappenbach, Author, Researcher, Potsdam D
“The Venetian Glass Chandelier in Sources and Pictures since the end of the 17th C.”

A systematic exploration of the origin and development of Venetian glass chandeliers from the end of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century is still a desideratum.

For this reason, this lecture should again make clear how important this research subject is, as only a few original chandeliers have been definitely identified to date. These

will be presented, as well as the few previously discovered written sources from the end of the 17th and 18th centuries. Representations of paintings and prints from the first half of the 18th century tell of the former quantity of glass chandeliers made in Murano and show their appearance during this period.

In the lecture, the current state of research will be shown on the basis of all these sources and the thesis is presented that the first glass arm chandeliers made by Venetian glassmakers were made as early as the end of the 17th century in Glass huts in Saxony and Dessau-Anhalt. (This presentation will be in German with an English translation).

Olivier Lagarde, Chandelier Restorer, Asnières-sur-Seine, France
“The Chandeliers of Versailles; Research, Conservation and Re-electrification”



The Versailles chandelier project involved the examination, restoration and re-wiring of lights in the Palace collection that were restored previously in the 1960's. Several factors played a role in making this work possible: new European Union laws regulating energy consumption, the obsolescence of incandescent light bulbs currently used and financial support from the Swarovski crystal company.

In 2009, Swarovski approached the Palace with a special prototype LED lighting system with the hope of being able to call it 'Versailles'. After discussion and changes, the candle was accepted with the caveat that funding be given for restoration and re-wiring of the lights chosen to receive the new candles. To mount the Swarovski candles and modernise the electrical wiring, light fixtures would be de-installed, presenting the perfect opportunity to restore and study the collection. From their inception, lighting fixtures have been seen as both decorative and functional. Either way, they undeniably influence a room's ambience.



Bettina Levin, Researcher Sehmatal, Sehma D
“Beaded lampshades from Venice”

The lecture deals with the beaded fringe production in Venice and surroundings, which were important in the 1920s. In addition to the Saxon and Bohemian Ore Mountains Venice was also a center of production of such lampshades made of beads. Mainly the firm G. Grilli - founded in 1902 - is mentioned, from which a large collection of sample cards and a company brochure with photographs has been preserved, which is an impressive document of the working conditions and production techniques. In addition to the beaded fringes for the lighting industry, also jewellery, beaded bags and grave wreaths were produced in this and other companies.

The most important producer of the glass beads used for these products was the "Società Veneziana per l'Industria delle Conterie", whose history should also be briefly mentioned in this lecture.



Peter Rath, Vienna

“Early electric chandeliers of 1885 for the New Vienna Town Hall”

With the building boom after the fall of the town’s fortifications in 1864, a Neo-gothic, Venetian fashion came in to vogue in Vienna.

Following the Vienna World’s Fair of 1873 and the International Electric Exhibition in 1883, Vienna was a pioneer in the development of electricity.

The Imperial Court Palace had already been lit by Lobmeyr, when the City Hall’s architect Friedrich v. Schmidt built the new Town Hall in “Venetian-gothic” style. The chandeliers still hanging in the Lord Mayors office today are decorated with hollow glass drops and balls made in Bohemia, using Murano techniques with coloured, pinched glass threads. They were the first to use the new Edison screw sockets E-27 and later also the first electric candle-sockets and bulbs with E-14 threads. Rath illustrates the importance of Austria in connection with the spreading of Venetian Glass and glass chandeliers.



Ingrid Stricker, Bavarian Schlösser, Munich

„The Venetian Chandeliers in Bavarian Castles“

The construction of Venetian chandelier makes specific demands on the restoration. Weight bearing wooden parts, which are no longer functional due to shrinkage, aging or improper interventions create problems with the static. Loose glass parts can then fall and cause breakage. For conservation reasons, they must be secured to prevent further damage. The so-called "glass disease" especially with Venetian glass, leads to craquelure and unpredictable fractures, which can endanger the item as well as anything below the chandelier. Hollow glass

tubes assembled in series are usually not dustproof. With time, a gray film collects in the arms, which can be confused with other changes in the glass. Damage is often also caused by carelessness when handling ladders or scaffolding. In particular, lower glass elements or Bas de Lustres are endangered.

Even with so-called ‘maintenance’, splinter breaks can occur on protruding glass arms or hollow glasses. Often, the glass splinters are discarded and over time numerous gaps form in the chandelier. The precise reproduction of the individual glass to be blown by the glassmaker, also places special demands on the glass artist.



Jaroslav Svacha + Alžběta Sůvová, TGK Glass CZ
„Czech and Murano glass through the eyes of the glass fusing technologist.”

In the presentation, we will point out the main differences in the chemical structure of traditional glass casted in Murano and Bohemia. The author will try to describe these chemical differences, so it is understandable for the general public. We do not wish to overwhelm the listener with chemical formulas and names. Instead, we want to explain what each oxide symbolizes and its influences in the glass composition.

The main aim of this lecture is to understand the term “long” and “short glass” and hope our listeners gain even more knowledge regarding glass production.



Tereza Šváchová, Architect, Prague
„170 years of Elias Palme“

The year 2019 marks the 170th anniversary of the founding of the Elias Palme chandelier company in Kamenický Šenov (Steinschönau).

This company's importance was widely international. It produced chandeliers for prestigious buildings in Milan, Sydney, New York, and elsewhere. Kamenický Šenov was nicknamed “Little Paris” thanks to the distinctive, richly ornamented homes of its local businessmen. Glassworks and the other operations tied to them naturally belonged to the local colour of the entire glassmaking region reaching from Neuwelt (nowadays a part of the town of Harrachov) to Kamenický Šenov.

Numerous chandeliers that still adorn halls worldwide to this day are not this famous firm's only relics. Its headquarters and production plant in Kamenický Šenov, locally nicknamed Eliáška, still looms over the city today as a memento of past eras. Unfortunately, today the remains of the still-undemolished structures and bearing walls can only let us guess at the generosity of its size and the opulence of its decorations.

What kind of a birthday celebration would this be without gifts? We have created an mobile app which could be found at Google Play as well as at App store under name „Eliaska“. The app also shows the use of new technologies of virtual and augmented reality not only for the entertainment industry but also for historical research.

Caterina Tognon, Gallery Owner, Venice
Venetian Chandeliers, a brief history



Alante Valtaite-Gagac, Researcher, Vilnius LVA
„Virtual catalogue of Historical Chandeliers in Lithuania: Venetian type lighting fixtures and other rare cases“

The idea to start virtual catalogue of historical chandeliers appeared as a result of the increasingly growing digitalization of cultural heritage. Open, easily available scientific material can influence the amount of research and better knowledge of our past in average. With the funding of Lithuanian Council for Culture, the first stage of my catalogue, comprising Vilnius County, was completed in 2018. The second stage, comprising Kaunas County, is proceeding in 2019. Though the surviving glass and crystal chandeliers in Lithuania is small, they are an important part of common European heritage. During the lecture, Alante Valtaite-Gagac will discuss surviving and lost Venetian type chandeliers from 19th and 20th centuries and present a new English version of the virtual catalogue of Historical Chandeliers in Lithuania.



Rob van Beek, Architect, RO Architecten NL
“A New Life for a 19th Century Venetian Chandelier”

The 17th - century Royal Palace “Huis ten Bosch” in The Hague was renovated over the past three years. In January this year, the king and his family moved in. One of the conference rooms in the palace was lit by a 19th -century Venetian chandelier before the restauration. This chandelier was located above the conference table and at the beginning of the last century partly equipped with electric light. The light level on the table, however, was insufficient.

After restoration of the palace and the chandelier, this problem had to be solved, the light level should be of a certain requested level. There were three options to achieve this. One was to bring additional light on the table by installing additional luminaires in the room, the second one was to replace the whole chandelier by a more light-efficient (modern) luminaire, and the third one was trying to add efficient light sources to the original chandelier. We tried the first option, but couldn't find an acceptable way to do it, we dropped the second option because we thought this chandelier belonged to this room, so we focused on the third option.

Are we allowed to modify valuable historic chandeliers? Shouldn't we keep them in their original condition as much as possible? When we, in this case, would have answered these questions with “yes”, it would have meant that the chandelier was removed from the room and be locked up in depot, out of sight for everyone.

This lecture is about the process we went through during the restoration and modification of the chandelier and explains why the result is as it is.