



**Lecture Series, Light and Glass Annual Meeting  
Palacio Nacional da Ajuda, Lisbon June 23rd – June 25th, 2022**



**Kristīne Budže, Chief Collection Curator / Head of Collection's Department, Rundāle Palace Museum, Latvia**



**“Bohemian glass arm chandeliers from the late 18th century in Latvia and in the collection of the Rundāle Palace Museum”**

Photo: Bohemian Chandelier, 4<sup>th</sup> Q. 18 C. Rundale Palace Museum

Rundāle Palace was built in two periods, in the 1740s and 1760s, to a design by Francesco Rastrelli (1700–1771), an Italian architect working in the Russian Empire. There is little information about Rastrelli's plans for the illumination of Rundāle Palace. Chandelier attachment points can be found in only two rooms of the palace. Today, part of the palace is illuminated by chandeliers that the Rundāle Palace Museum has acquired from various Latvian churches. They are mostly glass arm chandeliers made in Bohemia at the end of the 18th century.

It is known that in the 18th century Bohemian glass arm chandeliers were widespread in Latvian manor houses and churches. However, over time, the historic interiors of Latvian manor houses, and with them the chandeliers, have perished. The chandeliers in churches (some of which came from manor houses) have survived to the present day, and it is in Latvia's small rural churches where, mostly for lack of money, they have not been replaced by more modern ones. Most of these historic chandeliers are in poor condition, often with only fragments remaining. The chandeliers in the collection of Rundāle Palace have been restored by the museum's restorer Maija Baņķiere (1939–2021) and are now on display for visitors to Rundāle Palace.



**Maria João Burnay, Palácio Nacional da Ajuda (PNA) Curator,  
Maria José Tavares, PNA Curator  
Maria Manuel Santana, PNA Curator  
Judite Bercial Piedade, Restorer, Lisbon, Portugal  
“The Blue Room of the National Palace of Ajuda. From restoration to *genius loci*.”**

Since the 1990s, the National Palace of Ajuda has been undertaking the restoration and historical reconstruction of its rooms, using as a basic criterion the decoration from the time of King Luís (1861–1889).

The historical reconstruction is based on written and iconographic documentation, namely inventories of the objects present in the rooms (1891 and 1898), the list of possessions left on the death of King Luís and the *Arrolamento do Palácio Nacional da Ajuda* (1910-1914). No less important for the research were the watercolours by Enrique Casanova, dated 1889-1890, which depict some rooms of this Palace, as well as photographs dating from the 1970s to the early 20th century.

Located in the private quarters, the Blue Room was used by the royal family as a living room where they played games, music, read and wrote - in short, socialized with family and close friends.

This room has undergone significant changes, the most evident being the wall coverings and the curtains (still during the monarchy, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C.) and the almost total replacement of the furniture (in the 1940s). Based on the documentation described above, and on compromises between authenticity and museography, the historical reconstruction consisted in giving the Blue Room back its original decoration from the 1980s/90s, so as to convey to the public more than just the decoration of a room, but also the "spirit of the place".

The purpose of this communication is to present both the research carried out, the criteria and also the doubts, choices and decisions - not always easily taken, leading to the final result of the restoration and historical reconstruction of the Blue Room of the Ajuda National Palace.



**António Cota Fevereiro, Lisbon – “The lamp collection at Palácio Nacional da Ajuda”**

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> C. experiments took place around vegetable oil lighting (grease used ancestrally) aiming to increase its luminosity. These experiences quickly led to several innovations and development of various types of burners and systems for this fuel, developed from each other, which originated the creation and perfection of various types of lamps. Therefore, the lamp gradually became integral part of the domestic interior and decoration, according to its materials and stylizations. This type of lighting was expensive and required regular maintenance.

In mid-19<sup>th</sup> C. the first experiments with petroleum lighting were carried out, with considerably fewer costs and maintenance in comparison to other forms. Rapidly this type of fuel became more accessible and used by the majority of people. Forms and adornments inspired by bygone eras and other cultures were

developed and adapted to new typologies. Various types of shades and several specific accessories were perfected thus adapting to the emerging bourgeoisie consumption.

All this technological and stylistic development is fundamental to understanding the interaction of the lamp in the 19<sup>th</sup> C. environment, besides its function and relationship with human beings. All these developments are evident in the lamps of the Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, which is one of the best-preserved collections belonging to a European Royal House.



**Rob van Beek, Architect, Soest NL Dutch Government Real Estate Agency, Cultural Heritage and Art department  
“The Future of Light Sources”**

Rob van Beek joined Light and Glass in 2015 and gave a lecture in Maastricht that year on the importance of good quality light sources, which were hardly available at the time. In Lisbon, he will look back over the past seven years and see what has happened in that period in the field of light, especially in combination with historic interiors. He will also try to look ahead to what we, in his opinion, can expect in the near future.



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**Regina Friedl, Restaurations Atelier Friedl & Göttlich – The conservation of a chandelier made of gilded brass and glass decorations from the „Gobelinsaal" at Schloss Schönbrunn, Vienna**

The chandelier of the so called „Gobelinsaal" at Schloss Schönbrunn, probably constructed by J.&L. Lobmeyr in the late 19th century, is made of gilded brass and presumably bohemian glass decorations of different size and shape. It is a classical shaft chandelier with 48 arms, of which 18 arms can be characterised as candle arms. Every part of the chandelier is richly decorated with classical acanthus ornaments including the metal arm itself and the arm plates. Each arm is also embellished with a wide range of gilded pressed plate leaves and rosettes. Furthermore, a great variety of glass decorations enriches the décor of the chandelier. The whole chandelier consists of more than 1200 metal parts and 350 glass elements.

Natural deterioration processes and past interventions heavily influenced the overall condition of the chandelier. Numerous metal decorations were broken and some parts were missing. The massive soldering done in lead-tin (i.e. soft solder) represented one of the major issues. Accordingly, several metal parts were attached directly on the metal arms by soldering.

The presentation guides through all the necessary steps to bring the chandelier in a proper and lasting state. The conservation and restoration process included the dismantling of all arms, each consisting of several metal and glass pieces. The focus was to find a possibility to remove the lead-tin soldering without harming the surrounded gilded surface. Missing or broken parts were reconstructed, re-soldered and re-gilded. Two broken arms were repaired with individualized solutions that combined modern ethical conservation approaches with specialized traditional craftsmanship. All the treatments were carried out with regard to the originally used materials of the chandelier.

After the conservation and restoration, the chandelier is now part of the recently restored and reconstructed „Sissi-Salon" in Schloss Schönbrunn.





**Karel Kanak, Restorer/Dealer Stockholm, “Show and Tell” - a hands-on presentation showing candle-snuffers/wick trimmers through the ages.**

A special presentation allowing participants to see, touch and discuss a wide variety of approx. 60 original old candle-snuffers/wick trimmers from different countries and periods. What was once an every-day object, is today more of a collector's item. Mr. Kanak will share his own knowledge of these items and certainly have some surprises for us.



**Käthe Klappenbach Museologist, Author “Unknown Treasures - Bohemian chandeliers with glass trimmings in Erzgebirge churches and their reception in Erzgebirge folk art.”**

Chandeliers with glass trimmings from the first half of the 19th century hang in numerous Lutheran churches in the Saxon Erzgebirge. Acquired in nearby Bohemia, they were usually donated to the churches by various individuals or groups. In most cases, they were the most modern items that had just come onto the market. They are often relatively well documented in the church archives and sales catalogues with detailed drawings documenting their models. Their diversity will be shown by means of exemplary examples. Their study would make an important contribution to the study of the "Bohemian crystal chandelier".

It is largely unknown that these Bohemian chandeliers were the direct models for Christmas chandeliers of the Erzgebirge people from the Seiffen area, whom they "copied" using wood and other available materials for

their unusual Christmas culture. The background of this reception is explained and examples show the diversity.



**Bettina Levin, private researcher – “Beaded Chandeliers from the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains) in Germany”**

For over 13 years Mrs. Levin has been researching the history of the glass bead industry in the Ore Mountains in Germany and the Czech Republic. One part of this research are the glass bead chandeliers that were popular as Christmas decorations in the region. They were made from about 1860 to 1920 in the Jizera Mountains of Bohemia, and later also in the Ore Mountains in Germany.

The different types of these glass bead chandeliers are presented using photographs from her own collection of over 30 bead chandeliers and from regional museums. The glass beads and other materials used and the problems of restoration are discussed.

The use of these chandeliers is also shown with the help of historical photos.



**Peter Rath, Curator Lobmeyr Archive – “The Golden Hall in the Vienna Musikverein”**

Mr. Rath’s presentation about the lighting in the Golden Hall in the Vienna Musikverein demonstrates how important a complete lighting concept is in such a venue. The current lighting installation in the hall was intended to be an only temporary post-War solution, but has become an unsatisfactory permanent installation. In photos, the crystal chain chandeliers from Lobmeyr have become synonymous with the Music Hall, but the light that they give was certainly not how the architect intended this room to be lit. Mr. Rath discusses the history of the room, the various lighting variations it has had over the years and the recent experiment made to test his theory.





**Bettina K. Schneider, Museologist & Conservator, Berlin –**

**“Doomed to perish? - Rescue and Metamorphosis of an 18th century Saxon glass-arm chandelier”**

Often it is necessary, to apply conventional approaches in conservation and restoration.

Sometimes it is appropriate, to break new ground in order to preserve objects worthy of preservation. In this case, both approaches were necessary.

In 2017, the glass arm chandelier was in a very desolate condition and consisted of a box of broken glass arms, grommets, bishop's crooks, crescents, and various hanging elements from the 18th thru the 20th century. The stem (middle section)

with assembled parts was still intact and so the question arose: what to do with these chandelier fragments?

For whom would such an object be of interest: museums, collectors, or should we simply dispose of it?

The answer: store and keep it safe.

Whilst reflecting upon the content of the upcoming exhibition, Käthe Klappenbach thought about how the metamorphosis of the courtly chandelier to the Ore Mountains' region could be conveyed. Then the idea arose, to use this fragment as a symbol of this transformation and to complete it with figures typical to the Christmas culture of the Ore Mountains'.

For this, conservation and restoration were necessary to preserve the remaining glass arms along with the fragments, all of which were intricately broken and only partially preserved.

Initially, it had to be determined how many of the existing broken pieces actually matched, then how many of these fragments could be restored and which parts were still missing. Equally important was the consideration of what to do with the missing pieces: add loss fills or replacements or leave them as they were? Were the missing parts important for the stabilization or for the perception of the chandelier? How should the conservation and restoration be executed?

After the conservation was completed, the chandelier was passed on to the Dresden artist Frederike Curling-Aust, who creatively completed the metamorphosis with elements and symbols indigenous to the Ore Mountains' region.

The restored and re-designed chandelier can be seen in the exhibition „Von Spinnen, Engeln und dem Licht der Welt – Die Kronleuchter des Erzgebirges“ ("Of spiders, angels and the light of the world - The chandeliers of the Erzgebirge") at the Museum of Saxon Folk Art in Dresden.

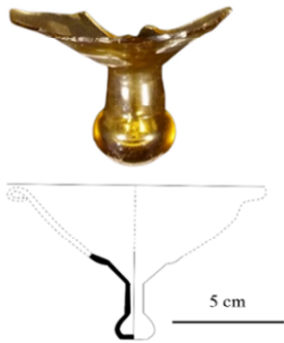


**Alante Valtaite-Gagac**

PhD researcher, Vilnius Academy of Art, Lithuania

**“Brass Chandeliers in Lithuania and Latvia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century: Manufacturing, Development and Survival “**

Investigations of chandeliers have revealed that, due to historical circumstances, few 16th-18th century chandeliers survived in Lithuania, some of these only as fragments. A significantly larger amount of heritage items of this kind has been preserved in the neighbouring Latvia, but the development and surviving specimens of 16th-18th century Latvian chandeliers have previously received scarce attention from researchers. To fill the gap, the postdoctoral research by Alante Valtaite-Gagac was started in September 2020 at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Many scientific expeditions to Latvia were made and more than 50 historical brass chandeliers were photographed for the study and the online Latvian chandelier catalogue. The goal of the lecture is to present insights into the 16th-18th century chandeliers in Lithuania and Latvia, their manufacturing, artistic and cultural specifics, and to reconstruct the possible typical and lost specimens of the period in Lithuania.



**Catarina Villamariz**, Department of Conservation and Restoration (DCR) - FCT NOVA | Research Unit VICARTE, Glass and Ceramic for the Arts - FCT NOVA

**Inês Coutinho**, DCR, FCT NOVA | VICARTE - FCT NOVA

**Alice. Fernandes**, VICARTE - FCT NOVA, **Portugal**

**“New data on 17th century glass hanging lamps from the Monastery of São João de Tarouca in Portugal”**

The excavations carried out at the monastery of São João de Tarouca brought to light a set of 96 fragments of suspension lamps, studied at a typological level and in terms of the chemical composition of the glass. With this study, it was possible to explore and propose how the lamps were made, to interpret the

symbolology of colours in glass, as well as how these were used to light Cistercian monasteries.

It was noticed that the set is composed of up to 10 different types of lamps that vary according to their shape. An analysis of the glass composition showed that the majority of lamps fit in soda-lime-silica glass, except for one lamp that has lead-rich glass. This study enabled the placing of a hypothesis regarding the production methodology and origins of the raw materials, advancing to proposals for the glass provenance.

This study allowed for the perception of the habits of lighting used in the monastery of São João de Tarouca which, given its sober, austere architecture with few windows, leads to the mandatory need for the existence of artificial lighting, which in this case would have been done mostly through the suspension glass lamps, making these objects a very important testimony for the interpretation of the lighting practices of the Cistercian monks who inhabited this monastery.



**Michael Vasku & Andreas Klug**, Vasku & Klug Architects & Designers, Vienna/Prague

**“Computational Design & Interactive Light Installation”**

As Creative Directors at Preciosa Lighting (Czech Republic), Andreas’ and Michaels’ task was to bridge the traditional business approach and classic product style of the company to a contemporary approach in both.

This in mind, the attention shifted to computational methods for designing, producing and controlling contemporary lighting installations, resulting in interactive light installations. The presentation will introduce Vasku & Klug’s artistic approach and how their fascination for historic chandeliers inspire conceptual contemporary lighting projects.