

Helena Brožková – Hedvika Sedláčková

Medieval Glass in the Collection of Vojtěch Lanna and in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

ANNOTATION

The paper deals with glass from the 10th – 1st half of the 16th centuries collected by the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (hereinafter UPM). A small assemblage of medieval glass, numbering 53 artefacts at present, was created from the very beginning of the museum's founding in 1885. Both container and flat glass is represented, circular window panes, stained glass, glass paste and underpainting. The earliest objects, referred to as Islamic glass, come from Egypt or the wider Eastern Mediterranean; the later ones are mostly of German origin. A specific section initiated by Dagmar Hejdová, documents a typical Bohemian production of the High Middle Ages based on archaeological finds. Almost half of the museum's assemblage was donated by Vojtěch Lanna. However, his original collection of medieval glass was much larger, according to the 1911 catalogue of the Rudolf Lepke company in Berlin, where also other materials of the collection were auctioned. Three of the glasses sold from Lanna's collection were found in other institutions.

SUMMARY

The fundamental collection of medieval glass was donated to the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (UPM) in 1886–1906 by the industrialist and patron Vojtěch / Adalbert Lanna (1836–1909), who has been accumulating his private collection for 40 years. A large part of the remains of Lanna's collection was sold in the auctions by Lepke company in Berlin in 1909 and 1911. The UPM managed to buy there only a few small items: two lenses of the vault decoration of The Holy Cross Chapel at Karlštejn (Fig. 35), three Venetian medallions made of glass paste from the turn of the 13th century (Fig. 13) and two altar wings from Lombardy from around 1450. Three principal items from the auction were traced up in foreign institutions; two of them are presented in this article (Figs. 3, 12).

This small but important collection of medieval glass in The UPM in Prague includes container Islamic glass, glass from German and Bohemian glassworks, flat glass, circular window panes and very rare stained glass from the second half of the 13th – early 16th century. Also archaeological glass finds, not very extensive but valuable assemblage, was added by Dagmar Hejdová. Despite being presented at exhibitions, the collection remains unused to a certain extent.

The set of **Islamic glass** contains perfume cut glass jars (Fig. 1), a bowl with an embossed rosette pattern (Fig. 2) and a beaker with a simple enamel pattern (Fig. 4). Today, the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, houses a unique giant beaker from Lanna's original collection, dated by the Arabic inscription to 1180–1209 (Fig. 3).

The earliest **glass of European origin** is represented by the blue-green "Schaffhausen" beaker type from the 13th/14th century (Fig. 5), another beaker probably of the same date (Fig. 6) and a 14th/15th century beaker (Fig. 7). A plain bottle (Fig. 8), a wide beaker from the 13th/14th century (Fig. 11) and a *Krautstrunk* (Fig. 14), were used as a reliquary in unknown churches. The two small bottles (Figs. 9: a–c, 10: a, b) served to preserve the fluid flowing out of St. Walburga sarcophagus. The hole in the stopper of one of them proves that the liquid was drawn out some time ago and perhaps even examined with unknown results.

The 2nd half of the 15th and the 1st half of the 16th century group includes mainly vessels with large prunts (*Krautstrunk* and a *Stangenglas*; Figs. 14–21) and beakers with optical decoration of ribs and diamonds, i.e. typical blue-green and green products of German late Gothic glassworks. Among the vessels with optical pattern there are several *Maigelein* types (Figs. 24–26) and a larger number of cylindrical and conical *Rippenbecher* and *Kreuzrippenbecher* beakers, or a polygonal one (Figs. 27–33). The assortment of German glassworks does not correspond to *Krautstrunk* made of colourless glass, which occurs in the area of the middle Danube (Fig. 15). The second example of colourless clear glass with prunts made of colourless, blue and green glass corresponds to Venetian production (Fig. 16). Fragments of a goblet with claw prunts and prunts in the shape of animal heads were handed over to the UPM from a building in Prague in 1900 (Figs. 34: a, b).

Lanna's collection originally included also an unusually decorated cup – *Scheuer* (Fig. 12) – considered by the

authors to be late Gothic. Two lenses with a layer of gold powder on the inner side coming from the Holy Cross Chapel ceiling decoration at Karlštejn, made in the years 1360–1365 in Bohemia or Venice (Figs. 35: a, b), were purchased for the UPM in Berlin 1911 with the 13th century medallions of the Venetian production with figures of Christ and saints (Figs. 13: a–f).

Typical Bohemian glass types were missing in Vojtěch Lanna's collection. The single tall pruned goblet in the UPM collection (Fig. 36) was donated in 1937 to the museum by the president's wife. The collection was thus enriched with several examples of tall goblets and other vessel shapes from archaeological excavations in Opava and Pilsen by Dagmar Hejdoová, who also initiated the work with archaeological finds of glass and significantly contributed to the creation of the basic typology of Bohemian medieval glass (HEJDOVÁ 1967; 1975; 1982; HEJDOVÁ/NECHVÁTAL/ŠEDIVÝ 1975; HEJDOVÁ ET AL. 1983).

Fig. 1. Bottles of Islamic origin, decorated by cutting with geometric patterns; 9th–10th or 11th century. UPM inventory No. 5 556a–c (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; drawing by H. Sedláčková).

Fig. 2. Islamic bowl with embossed rosette pattern; 8th–10th century. UPM inv. No. 10 486 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; drawing by H. Sedláčková).

Fig. 3. Islamic giant beaker decorated with coloured enamels and gold, originally Lanna's collection; inscription dedicated to Sultan Sanjar Shah (reign 1180–1209). Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. No. F1948.14 (photo archive © Freer Gallery of Art).

Fig. 4. Islamic beaker, coloured enamels are largely erased; Kenneson type "E", 13th–14th century. UPM inv. No. 53 085 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; drawing by H. Sedláčková).

Fig. 5. 'Schaffhausen' beaker type; German lands and Switzerland, 13th to early 15th century. UPM inv. No. 9 809 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 6. Beaker, a product of German glassworks; from the turn of the 14th to the 15th century. UPM inv. No. 9 820 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 7. Beaker with optical pattern, a product of German glassworks; 14th century, usually the turn of the 15th century. UPM inv. No. 9 816 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 8. Bottle, as a reliquary; undecorated form from the 13th century. UPM inv. No. 10 499 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 9. Walpurgis Fläsche (Walpurgis bottle) with stopper, from the monastery in Meschede (Nordrhein-Westfalen), height 6.2 cm, drawing in 1 : 1 scale; sometime after 1041. UPM inv. No. 9 821 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; drawing by H. Sedláčková).

Fig. 10. Walpurgis Fläsche from the monastery in Meschede, height 5.9 cm, drawing in 1 : 1 scale; sometime after 1041. UPM inv. No. 9 822 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; drawing by H. Sedláčková).

Fig. 11. Beaker 14.5 cm high, German origin; from the turn of the 14th to the 15th century. UPM inv. No. 16 877 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 12. Scheuer cup – originally in Lanna's collection (LEPKE 1911, No. 1 721); German origin, probably 15th century. Today in the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart inv. No. G 11.124, © black and white photo. More details in and the colour photo copied from WHITEHOUSE 2010b, 128.

Fig. 13. Glass medallions pressed into a mould - probably pilgrimage souvenirs; Venice, 13th century (some maybe earlier). **a** – UPM inv. No. 11 958; **b** – UPM inv. No. 11 959 (photo by Ondřej Kocourek); **c** – UPM inv. No. 11 961; **d–f** – copied from LEPKE 1911, Taf. J: No. 1619–1624 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 14. Krautstrunk; **a** – German origin, widely around the turn of the 16th century, height 9.5 cm, UPM inv. No. 10 500; **b** – Central Danube region, from the mid-15th to the early 16th century, height 10.5 cm, UPM inv. No. 1 048; **c** – Venice ?, around 1500, height 11.8 cm, UPM inv. No. 16 879 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 15. Krautstrunk, height about 10 cm; German origin, 15th and 16th centuries. **a** – UPM inv. No. 2 449. According to the inventory, purchased for 92 marks in 1887 at the auction of Seyffer in Stuttgart (HEJDOVÁ 1986, 32, No. 272); **b** – UPM inv. No. 3 227; **c** – UPM inv. No. 9 813; **d** – UPM inv. No. 10 501. Stangenglass; German origin. **e** – height 25.2 cm, 1st half of the 16th century, UPM inv. No. 16 878 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 16. Krautstrunk, a different formation of thick coils around the base, probably archaeological finds; **a** – UPM inv. No. 16 882; **b** – UPM inv. No. 9 817 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 17. Bowls 4.6–6.5 cm high – *Maigelein*; German origin, before the mid-15th to the early 16th century. **a** – UPM Inv. No. 2 904; **b** – UPM inv. No. 9 819; **c** – UPM inv. No. 10 487 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 18. Beakers with optical pattern of conical or cylindrical shape 6–10.2 cm high – *Rippenbechers* and *Creuzrippenbechers*; German origin, before the mid-15th to the early 16th century. **a** – UPM Inv. No. 2 902; **b** – UPM inv. No. 9 815; **c** – UPM inv. No. 9 820; **d** – UPM inv. No. 16 880; **e** – UPM inv. No. 10 495; **f** – UPM inv. No. 16 881; **g** – UPM inv. No. 79 597 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 19. Fragments of a tall goblet with claw prunts; German origin, first half of the 16th century UPM inv. No. 62 171 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 20. Karlštejn, two lenses from the Holy Cross Chapel, diameter 9.5 cm and 6.5 cm; Bohemia or Venice, 1360–1365. UPM inv. No. 11 693 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 21. Kutná Hora, Church of St. Barbara; stained glass from the end of the 15th century. UPM inv. No. 10 425 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Fig. 22. Tall prunted goblet; produced in the lands of the Bohemian Crown. **a** – height 31 cm; Sezimovo Ústí, gift of Hana Benešová from 1937, UPM inv. No. 21 679; **b** – height 42.3 cm; Opava, Kolářská Street UPM inv. No. 77 394 (photo © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague).

Translation by Linda Foster