

Abstract

Caspar Lehmann is one of the most significant personalities of applied arts in central Europe at the end of the 16th and the beginning of 17th century. As an engraver of glass and precious stones he worked at the court of emperor Rudolf II. in Prague, but also at the court of the elector Christian II in Dresden. Considerable interest in his work was caused mainly by the claim of Joachim von Sandrart from 1675 stating that Caspar Lehmann was granted a privilege for glass engraving. Discovery of a signed beaker in late 19th century further sparked the existing interest in his production. Based on the similarities with the beaker, several other works were subsequently attributed to Lehmann, despite significant differences in quality and style of engraving.

The present work summarizes Lehmann's life based on a thorough study of previous literature and archive materials. Main part of the work includes detailed analyses of 26 artifacts which were previously attributed to Lehmann. Based on their comparison it attempts to define a characteristic technique Lehmann used for carving, and subsequently to critically assess his authorship. The thorough comparisons of the existing objects suggest that three portrait panels (Moritz von Oranien, Johann Sigismund von Brandenburg, and Johann Friedrich von Württemberg) can be excluded from Lehmann's work, as well as the two plaques with Old Testament scenes from The Corning Museum of Glass, and the plaque with Jupiter and Juno. Precise specification of Lehmann's engraving style is a key starting point for the orientation in the early engraved glass production. The present work however also shows that to understand the wider context of Central European production it is necessary to expand the studies beyond a single artist, as even the presented survey indicates diverse origin of the available artifacts classically attributed to Lehmann.

Key words

Caspar Lehmann, engraving, glass, rock crystal, Rudolf II, Prague, Dresden, Uelzen, privilege, Georg Schwanhardt, Joachim von Sandrart, Lehmann's beaker