BOOK REVIEWS

Perlen aus Gablonz: Historismus, Jugendstil/ Beads from Gablonz: Historicism, Art Nouveau.

Waltraud Neuwirth. Selbstverlag Dr. Waltraud Neuwirth, P.O. Box 11, A-1194, Vienna, Austria. 1994. 560 pp., 189 b&w figs., 180 color figs., index of names. ATS 950 (cloth) + ATS 85 surface postage.

This hefty volume contains a wealth of information about the beads produced by the "Gablonz industry." That is, it not only includes those actually produced in and around the former city of Gablonz (presently called Jablonec nad Nisou) in what is now the Czech Republic, but also the products of the beadmakers who established themselves in Austria and Germany when they were forced to leave Czechoslovakia in the wake of World War II. The material contained in the volume, presented in the form of a source book, is based on collections of sample cards and other materials at the Technical Museum for Art and Industry, Vienna, and the Gablonz Archive and Museum, Neugablonz Industry and Jewelry Museum, Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz, Germany, combined with information obtained from the Austrian Patent Office in Vienna and other European sources.

To be accessible to researchers worldwide, much of the text is in both German and English. As is usually the case in the translation of any document, especially one that contains specialized terminology, there are problematic terms and minor translation errors scattered throughout the English text. For example, *Ehrenmünze* (p. 11) is translated as "Coin of Honor" instead of "medal" (p. 23), and *Löthrohrs* (p. 11) becomes a "soldering tube" instead of a "blowpipe" (p. 23). Also one questions the use of "spinning factories" (p. 23) to describe the establishments where beads were produced at the lamp. Notwithstanding, Ann Dubsky, the translator, has done a very good job indeed and her terminology will serve as the basis for a refined German/English lexicon of bead terminology as more and more German and English-speaking researchers interact.

Following a brief introduction to the Gablonz industry, the author jumps straight into the troublesome world of bead nomenclature and categorization/classification. There are so many different varieties and so many different names—some of which changed meaning through time—that it is sometimes difficult to determine what a specific type of bead listed in an old catalogue or document looked like; e.g., what was the form of a "scarred" (*genarbte*) bead (p. 10, 22)? Fortunately, there is enough data available to help answer many other such questions.

The next chapter deals with bead colors, and interior and exterior coatings. Techniques covered include painting, coloring on the outside (glazing and staining), lining with color, exterior and interior gilding (gold and silver), coating (an interior reflective layer), platinizing (a platinum-like coating), iridizing, and lustering (a pearly surface). There is also a useful list of 67 German color names and related terms with their English equivalents.

A look at the confusing subject of bead sizing systems follows. This chapter will be of especial interest to anyone who has ever tried to determine historical bead sizes for specimens found in archaeological contexts or on historical beadwork, as well as any beadworker who has ever wondered what size designations such as "00" and "12/0" really mean. The author surveys the sizing systems used by several Bohemian manufacturers, pointing out that size designations not only varied from manufacturer to manufacturer but also from one bead type to another. Accompanying illustrations depict measuring devices used in the bead industry and hand-held bead counters, as well as sample cards which show the different sizes available for specific bead types. Tacked onto the end of this chapter is one that provides examples of 19th-century Venetian and Bohemian bead prices.

The next chapter explains the difference between "glass" and "composition" (a glass containing lead and easily fusible substances that was much used in the Gablonz industry). Dr. Neuwirth then presents a description of the drawing process for the production

of rods (solid), canes (hollow) and tubes (either) both "at the bench" and "in the gallery." At one point the latter included the use of bicycles on tracks and electrically drawn wagons to draw out the tubes! Glass overlays to produce multilayered beads, the application of stripes, and filigree glass are also dealt with. Subsequent sections discuss satin or Atlas beads, and imitation jet, a specialty of the Bohemian bead industry.

The chapter on "Drawn Beads, Chopped Beads" describes the two principal techniques used to segment drawn glass canes into bead lengths: chopping, as practiced by the Venetians, and breaking, as practiced by the Bohemians until they began using the much more efficient chopping machines. The latter helped to revitalize the lagging Bohemian bead industry as it drastically increased productivity. There is also a section on embroidery and bugle beads from Venice and Murano which seems a bit out of place, followed by information concerning the rounding, stringing, cutting/faceting and polishing of drawn beads (through some oversight the English section on polishing appears on p. 242 instead of following the text on p. 213). Various schematic drawings from the Austrian Patent Office depict the machines that were used to accomplish the different tasks.

"Molded Beads" are the next to be dealt with. This heading subsumes beads made by "molding" (*Quetschen*), "squeezing" (*Drücken*) and "pressing" (*Pressen*). The author believes that the first two involved the use of simple molds and tools in a shop, while the latter involved machinery, presumably in a factory. This is not a totally satisfactory explanation and it should be added that the first two terms seem to equate to what I have termed "mold-pressing" and involves the use of molten glass, while "pressing" is what North American researchers have generally termed "Prosser molding" and involves the use of pulverized components in a dry or slightly moistened state. This chapter is surprisingly short considering that "molded beads" were the backbone of the Gablonz bead industry. However, the brevity of text is more than made up for by the abundant illustrations of the relevant tools and machinery, as well as examples of molded beads in various stages of the production process.

Wound beads, the topic of the next chapter, were also produced in Gablonz but never achieved the prominence they did in Venice. Two production techniques are outlined: winding at the lamp and winding from the pot. While the first method is relatively well known, the second is not and the information is most welcome.

The fourth production technique to be discussed is blowing, free-blown and mold-blown beads being discussed. The text is supplemented by numerous illustrations of blown beads, as well as the tools, molds and machinery that were required to produce them.

The final chapter to be translated into English deals with a substantial collection of bead sample cards donated to the Technical Museum in Vienna in 1913 by two Gablonz beadmaking concerns, Redlhammer and Mahla. The Redlhammer Brothers were manufacturers of "porcelain beads and buttons," while the Mahla Brothers were simply exporters. Accompanied by a brief history of the two companies, the sample cards—61 of which are illustrated in full-color photographs—provide an excellent overview of the beads produced in Gablonz around the turn of the century.

The last third of the book is devoted to "Contemporary Sources" in German that deal with various aspects of the Gablonz industry. Included are excerpts from sundry documents of the 1854-1908 period, two "address books" of Gablonz-industry beadmakers and exporters from 1892 and 1900, respectively, and several technical papers concerning beadmaking between 1868 and 1925. This section also contains numerous engravings of sundry beaded items—from jewelry to garments to household articles—that appeared in *Bazar* magazine during the second half of the 19th century. These well illustrate the wide variety of items that incorporated Gablonz beads in their fabric.

Waltraud Neuwirth's book is a most welcome fount of knowledge on the Gablonz bead industry. There is a *lot* of information crammed between its two covers that is not readily available elsewhere. The abundant illustrations, half in color and of excellent quality, greatly enhance the text. While the price is relatively high (about $90 U.S.), it will be well worth it to anyone seriously interested in this branch of the European bead industry.

Karlis Karklins
Parks Canada
1600 Liverpool Court
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5