

The Signature Cane “j 1848” Another thought

Gerd Mattes, © 2007

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The members of the PCC might remember my article in the Paperweight Collectors Circle Newsletter from August 2006 where I reported about a possible meaning of the “j 1848” signature cane in Silesian paperweights.

Motivated by the article by Marek Kordasiewicz published on the Publishing Forum on www.paperweights.pl I have been giving it another thought and would like to share my findings with you again.

I am in full accordance with other collectors, that the paperweights marked with “j 1848” do originate from the Josephinenhütte.

No doubt the letter “j” is a small letter. The dot on top of the “j” is only printed in small letters in the German language. Chances are small that there might be a mix-up with letters “L” or “T”.

Regarding technical realisation it would be the same work to engrave a top cross on the “j” to exclude a mix-up with “l” (figures 1., 2.).

More examples of modern signature canes with a “J” (capitals) can be found in The Dictionary of Paperweight Signature Canes by Andrew H. Dohan. A total 18 modern signature canes with “J” (all in capitals) are listed. Excellent examples of “J” (all in capitals) are the signature canes of John Gooderham (figure 3.) and John Parsley (figure 4.).

In both cases a mix-up with “L” or “T” is unlikely. If we leave the problem of writing apart for a moment and search for a possible meaning of the letter “j” in the German language the following possibilities come to my mind in connection with paperweights:

Josephinenhütte
Jahr (year)
January
June
July



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

If we look into the examples and weigh up the pros and cons, considering the fact that the “j” is written in small letters:



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Josephinenhütte:

The production of canes was made in accordance with the director and almost definitely with the owner.

It is difficult, not to say impossible, to think that Count Schaffgotsch would have agreed to abbreviate his Josephinenhütte with a “j”, if it would have been possible to write “J”. Instead of a dot above the letter he probably would have preferred a crown, similar to

the engravings of the “Glass King” Riedel (figure 5.).

Jahr (year):

Using small letters would have been possible.

January and July:

Using small letters would have been possible.

June:

I found a clue in an auction catalogue of a Viennese Auction house dating from 1922, where a glass bowl, lot 102, with the following explanation was advertised:

Cup with saucer In the front an eight-sided medallion with cut in crown and engravings:

7 ine anniversaire E. N. Juin 1813. Bohemia 1813.

One reason for using the small letter “j” in the cane would be that the French word for June – juin – has been chosen, because at the time French was the language of the aristocracy. Let’s have a closer look:

Why 1848?

We can find this date twice within paperweights from the Riesengebirge. Once with “j” and in another very rare one without. The year 1848 was the year of the revolution, but this wouldn’t necessarily be a reason for celebration. Although, one might argue, that aristocracy and landlords wanted to document the abolition of the revolution.

One, more realistic alternative would be June 1848, as there was the **9th Exhibition of works for national arts development by Trade and Industry Association in Breslau (Neunte Ausstellung von Erzeugnissen des vaterländischen Kunstfleißes veranstaltet vom Gewerbe-Verein in Breslau)**, where „Gräflich Schaffgotsch Christallwaaren-Fabrik: Josephinenhütte“ (in original spelling: Count Schaffgotsch’s glass manufactory: Josephinenhütte) exhibited under position 138: **„Briefhalter [paperweights], Mille fiori Mosaik à 1 Reichsthaler 10 Silbergroschen“**.



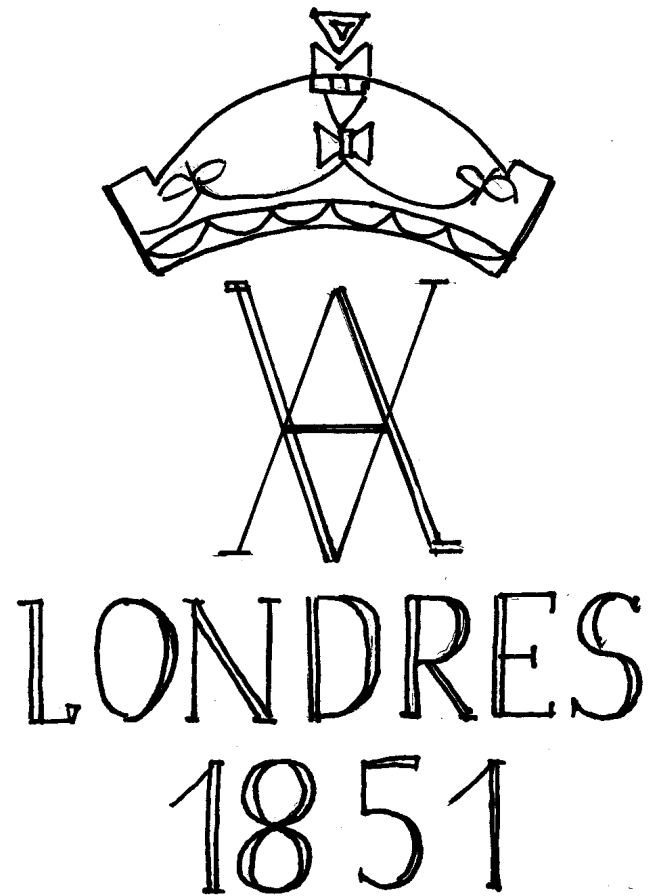
Figure 5.



Sketch 2.



Sketch 1.



Sketch 3.

As we don't know much about Silesian paperweights dated "j1848" or "1848", there might be possibility, that these signatures were used for the exhibition only.

There are more examples of special edition paperweights produced in the context of exhibition or another occasion, like Baccarat¹ and Pietro Bigaglia². Clichy engraved a paperweight especially for the World Exhibition in London in 1851³. (sketches 1., 2., 3.).

We will never solve the mystery unless we find a definitive clue as with regards to the meaning. Amongst other alternatives a special signature for an exhibition shouldn't be ignored.

Photo credits

Figures 1., 2.: courtesy of Bernd Horst and Ian Cummings, Cologne, Germany.

Figures 3., 4.: courtesy of Pamela and Roy Brown, England.

Figure 5., sketches 1., 2., 3.: by the Author.

¹ BACCARAT 21 AVRIL 1858- Date of visit to the Baccarat factory of Maréchal Canrobert (hero in the Crimean War)

Hollister, Paul, jr. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GLASS PAPERWEIGHTS. Pages 51/ 52 Fig. 14A

² IX CONGRESSO DEGLI SCIENZIATI IN VENEZIA 1847 – Franchini: Ninth Congress of Scientists in Venice 1847

Sarpellon, Giovanni. Miniature Masterpieces. Mosaic Glass 1838 - 1924, p. 42 Fig. 357

³ Hollister, Paul, jr. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GLASS PAPERWEIGHTS. Pages 40/41.

A paperweight now in the Corning Museum of Glass is proof that Clichy sent at least one presse-papier to London. It is a large, spaced millefiori in clear glass. The type was common enoughBut on the back of the weight appears a crown above the monogram, V.A (Victoria –Albert) and the date Londres, 1851.Fig.:8