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ALTE VITRIE

L'ARTE DEL VETRO E DINTORNI



Alte Vitrie has reached the 7th year of online publications, presenting his new graphic dress thank to the restyling made by Studio Mauro Olivieri Design. The new publication opens with a tribute to one of the most important exhibits at the Altare Glass Museum, the ruby-red umbrella stand produced around 1937 by maestro Isidoro Bormioli, known as Dorino, together with Sebastiano Rebellino, according to a design by Enrico Bordini. The skillful diamond grinding, which gives rise to evocative light effects, is the work of engraver Pietro Moraglio. Having suffered damage over the years, the piece underwent careful restoration thanks to the skill of Patrizia Buonadonna and the financial support of the



Liguria Museum Centre. In this issue, Patrizia explains the methodology she adopted in the various stages of the work.

We also present a number of gems and vitreous pastes preserved at the Archaeological Museum of Verona, which boasts a significant number of these sophisticated creations which date back to ancient times. Such tastes flourished again in the 18th century as manufacturing thrived both in Italy and abroad.

Finally, the MAKK of Cologne illustrates its rich collection of glassware covering a period of time stretching from antiquity to the Middle Ages, and then from the modern age to the 20th century.

The Editorial Staff

THE RESTORATION OF THE RUBY-RED UMBRELLA STAND

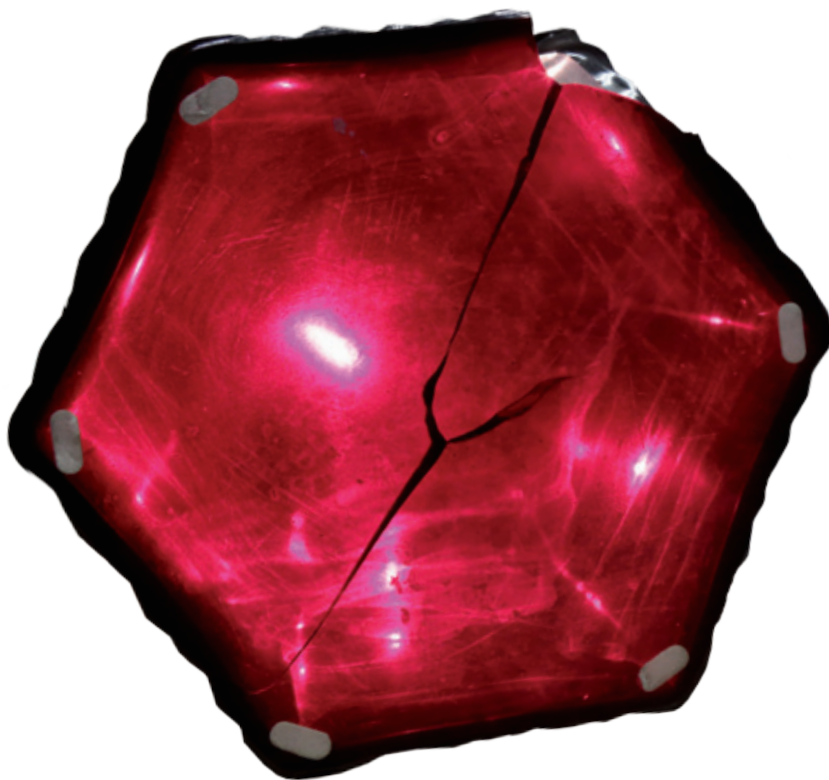
BELONGING TO THE COLLECTION HELD
BY THE ALTARE MUSEUM OF GLASSWORKING



Following the necessary restoration and preservation work, the “red” umbrella stand has been put back on display. The piece was made by maestro Isidoro Bormioli, known as “Dorino”.

Before restoration, the most evident damage was a breakage at the base of the piece and its consequent fragmentation.

Further examination regarding the condition of the piece, with the aim of planning the restoration procedures, led to the discovery of other issues: a trauma suffered by the umbrella stand had generated at least two serious fractures which, starting from the main breakage, affected both the sides and the base of the stand. Following the lines of the said cracks, a slight cavity as well as the presence of minute splinters and small



surface flaws were observed, caused by flakes of glass coming off the piece.

The priority of the restoration work was therefore primarily aimed at structural consolidation and aesthetic presentation.

During the course of the cleaning operations, all foreign bodies were removed, especially from the fractures, from dust residues to traces of adhesive substances which were probably used in an attempt to repair the damage following the trauma.

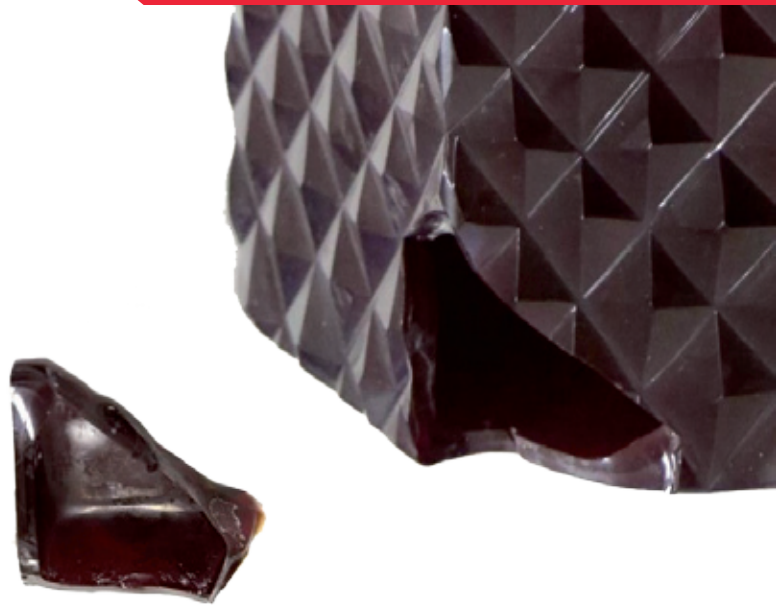
The structural consolidation, including the definitive relocation of the fragment, required the use of a bicomponent epoxide resin called Araldite 2020, a low viscosity adhesive and therefore fluid and smooth as well as transparent and colourless. The resin was applied in a series





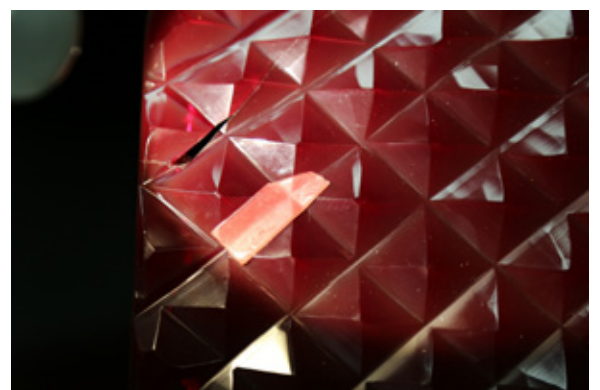
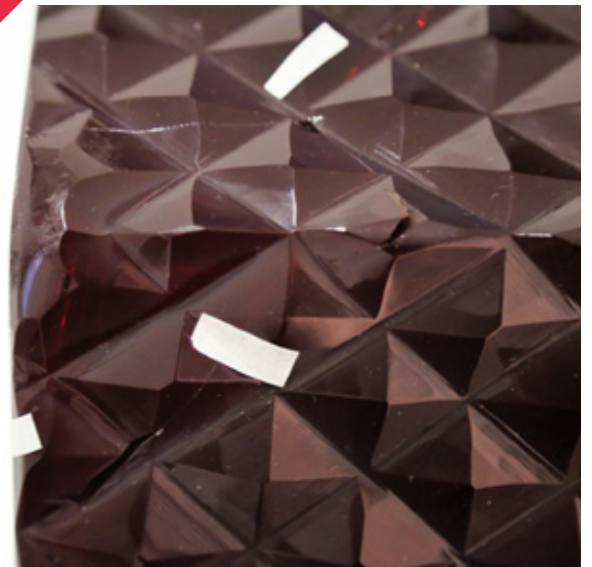
of drops along the lines of the fracture and on both sides of the vase, on both the interior and the exterior, in order to compensate all possible spaces.

Araldite 2020 was also applied in order to correct a number of flaws. The surface cavities were compensated by applying drops of resin until optimal self-levelling was achieved. The largest flaw was corrected from the interior of the umbrella stand using an adequately pigmented resin allowed to drip onto a base of dental wax, previously modelled on the external grinding.



Finally, importance must be given to the “post-restoration” phase, which comprises all those operations aiming to maintain an exhibit over time, as is the case with the glass umbrella stand. Such recommendations are given above all by the Italian Restoration Charters of 1972 and 1986, through definitions of maintenance, safeguarding and prevention. They were reiterated in 2001 through a series of technical regulations and guidelines as described in the Guideline document of the technical and scientific criteria and of the standards for the operations and development of museums, and ultimately regulated in 2004 by the Standards for Cultural Heritage and Landscape.

Patrizia Buonadonna
Liguria Museum Centre



GLASS GEMS AND VITREOUS PASTES

AT THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF VERONA

The Archaeological Museum at the Roman Theatre of Verona houses a rich collection of engraved gems and cameos, both ancient and post-antique, which have been the subjects of cataloguing, study and publication for several decades now on the part of scholars educated at the University of Milan: a study was initiated by Gemma Sena Chiesa with a patient and attentive contribution from successive directors and conservators over a period of many years at the museum, now directed by Margherita Bolla.

The Verona collection has been home to a wide variety of collections, now inextricably linked and blended into one: one particularly notable due to the number of objects it contains, around 1,700, is that of Count Jacopo Verità (1744-1827).

If the engraved stones constitute at least two thirds of the collections, it is the number and variety of glass replicas that interests us in particular. They were produced according to a similar technique in ancient times (for these items we use the expression, derived from Pliny, "glass gems") and in the modern age (defined as "vitreous pastes").



1 Violet-brown glass, Capricorn, 1st century b.C.



3 Glass like nicolo, Eagle that tears a hare, IIIrd century a.Ch.

Glass gems were particularly widespread in the Hellenistic period, rivalling engraved ring stones in terms of beauty and function. With them they shared the function of a seal, designed to be pressed mainly onto small, extremely fine clay tablets with the purpose of "signing" their owners' documents. Specimen n. 1, which depicts a capricorn, still preserves the fine margins of the mould and was therefore never finished and inserted onto a ring: we can appreciate the subtlety of the features and the intention to imitate a variety of chalcedony in a very dark and very fashionable colour, known as "la sarda". Similar objects, as confirmed by recent excavations, were also produced and sold in the shops of the Foro Romano, set onto metal rings.

Between the middle of the 1st century B.C. and the beginning of the following century craftsmen began to create "patterned" glass gems, with green, white and blue sections. Aquileia is presumed to have been the centre of production for many of these pieces, such as the pretty gem n° 2 featuring a bucolic scene.

One of the most frequently imitated stones, from the

period of Augustus up to the 3rd century A.D., is a layered variety of onyx known as "niccolo" or "nicolo". Many of the Veronese glass gems which reproduce it are workshop scraps and bear witness to the difficulty in replicating the colour effects of the natural stone, with the depiction engraved on the dark layer which is off-set from the lighter, sky-blue layer. Little treasures hidden from the fury of the barbarian invasions of the 3rd century A.D. conceal gold foil rings with embedded glass gems imitating nicolo: they were produced by skilful craftsmen from Rhineland, expertly compensating for a lack of precious stones and metals. Specimen n°3, which depicts an eagle intent on tearing apart a hare, has identical counterparts in Rhineland.

Although the art of creating glass gems did not die out in the Middle Ages, it was only in the 18th century that manufacturers springing up in Italy (Rome, Venice) and abroad began to produce vitreous pastes, including professionals, engravers, collectors, enthusiasts...: it was a phenomenon of vast social, economic and cultural scope. These vitreous pastes faithfully reproduced both ancient and modern carvings and cameos. They were so beautifully crafted and perfect that they could deceive even connoisseurs, who would mistake them for originals. Production became so large-scale and widespread that it flooded the market with vitreous pastes: a huge quantity of pieces which is not, however, reflected in the published collections. Therefore, the number of vitreous pastes that document the work of such a renowned engraver as Giovanni Pichler (1734-1791) is not as great as one would expect. There are however several Veronese pastes which replicate items from Baron von Stosch's collection, based on antique and modern originals, as well as some of disputed antiquity, such as item n.4 depicting Caesar.

The variety of the subjects portrayed on these glass pieces, the mastery of the imitation of the stones, the skill of the great engravers, the arduous distinction between reproductions in antique and non-antique glass, these are all fascinating topics which we hope to return to in future articles.

Alessandra Magni
Gabriella Tassinari



2 Crystal glass, Bucolic scene, Augustan age



4 Yellow glass, Julius Caesar, XVIIIth century

With about 1650 inventory numbers that also refer to sets of objects, the Cologne Museum of Applied Art's glassware collection spans all techniques and epochs of the art and craft of glassmaking. The collection includes glassware from ancient times, from the Middle Ages and from the modern era, as well as magnificent goblets and light-hearted glassware from the 16th to the 18th century. Delicate Venetian glasses testify to past glory and courtly sophistication, as do polychrome glasses with enamel painting, precious Zwischengoldgläser (gold between glass technique) or polished, cut and diamond-etched glasses from Bohemia, Saxony or Franconia. The collection also features a large variety of European glassware from the 19th and the 20th century, for example, many art nouveau glasses by Emile Gallé or by the Daum brothers, extraordinary studio glasses by renowned artists

such as Dale Chihuly, Paolo Martinuzzi or Klaus and Isgard Moje, early glassware designs by Peter Behrens, which he created for the Ehrenfeld glassworks in Cologne, and outstanding pieces of contemporary glass design.

Info: **mak.de**



Goblet with wedding procession, dark green glass with enamel painting and gold plating, Venice, approx. 1475/1500, Inv. No. F 1 (foto: RBA, c004156).



Emile Gallé, Tray for visiting cards with Place Stanislas in Nancy, glass with schwarzlot and gold décor, Nancy, 1880/84, Inv. No. F 1423 (foto: RBA, d018821).

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With the
support of
Fondazione
A. De Mari

Ruby-red umbrella, made by
maestro Isidoro Bormioli, known
as "Dorino", belonging to the
Collection held by the Museo
dell'arte vetraria altarese