

ART OF SULPHIDES AND CAMEO

©

By Jean Hartwig, awarded best Artisan of France



Glass Art since the XVIII century

Kunst der eingelaste Pasten

HARTWIG

Introduction

The “sulphides” history.

A small and brief description of the cameo incrustation and sulphides glass Art



An Antique cameo picture

Some books or descriptions of the Art of sulphides are available. In the global matter, they are copy of copy from copy issued articles, and in generality writing by non professionals authors. In this situation, a lot of falsies assertions are translated since many years ago. This briefly description from a sulphide maker/artist will help us to retrieve the historical reality. Since 300 years, the Hartwig family works in the Glass Art around Europe

The first inlayed item in a glass is dated from an inventory in 1584 in the Bohemia kingdom. A glass goblet with 3 little ivory's cubes encased in the hollow base. Some items like: honour medals, coins, appeared at the same time. All these items are manufactured with the “two parts” cutting technology: two parts of glass are cut and adjusted together, but one hollow space is preserved for the inlay.

This technology is a cold glass manufacturing process. At the end of the WXIII th century, the first ceramic cameo appeared: they are full inlayed in the hot glass mass without hollow space. This is a hot glass blower art and the top period of this Art is the middle of the XIX th century in France and England. Some ceramic's Artisan coming from the Royal Porcelain Manufactory of Sèvres, near Paris, creates and sale the ceramic cameos for the crystal manufactories and glass studios in France: Baccarat, Clichy, Mont-Cenis..... In Belgium: Vonèche, Val Saint Lambert etc... they are the most representative factories and finally in the kingdom's of England and Bohemia (Austria-Hungarian area).

In many circumstance we find the same cameos, inlayed in different items and coming from different countries.



Pendant > inlayed in France



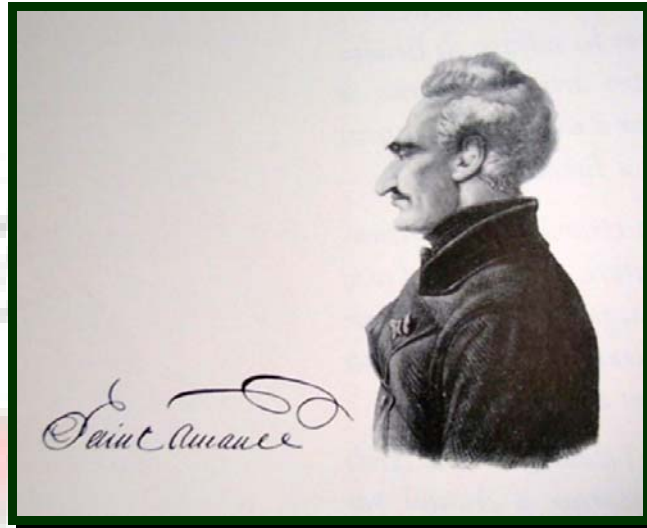
Icon > inlayed in Bohemia

These two items have the same inlayed cameo of Jesus Christ

At the same time these glass factories worked for ceramic's artist's studios. That why we see several signed cameos or sulphides signed with different names during this period. The best representatives names for the studios' in France are: Desprez (father and son = ceramics), Cattaert (ceramics), Paris (jewellery artist). But one pioneer of this technology, the men that retrieved and developed this wonderful Art was:

*Sir Honoré Boudon de Saint –Amans
(Chemist, botanist, designer, researcher and ceramic maker)*

worked in association with the Royal Porcelain Manufactory of Sevres, the crystal factory of the French queen in Mont-Cenis, the crystal factory from H.G Boileau in Boulogne(near Paris) and further in alternative with the Glasshouse from Aspley Pellat in London.

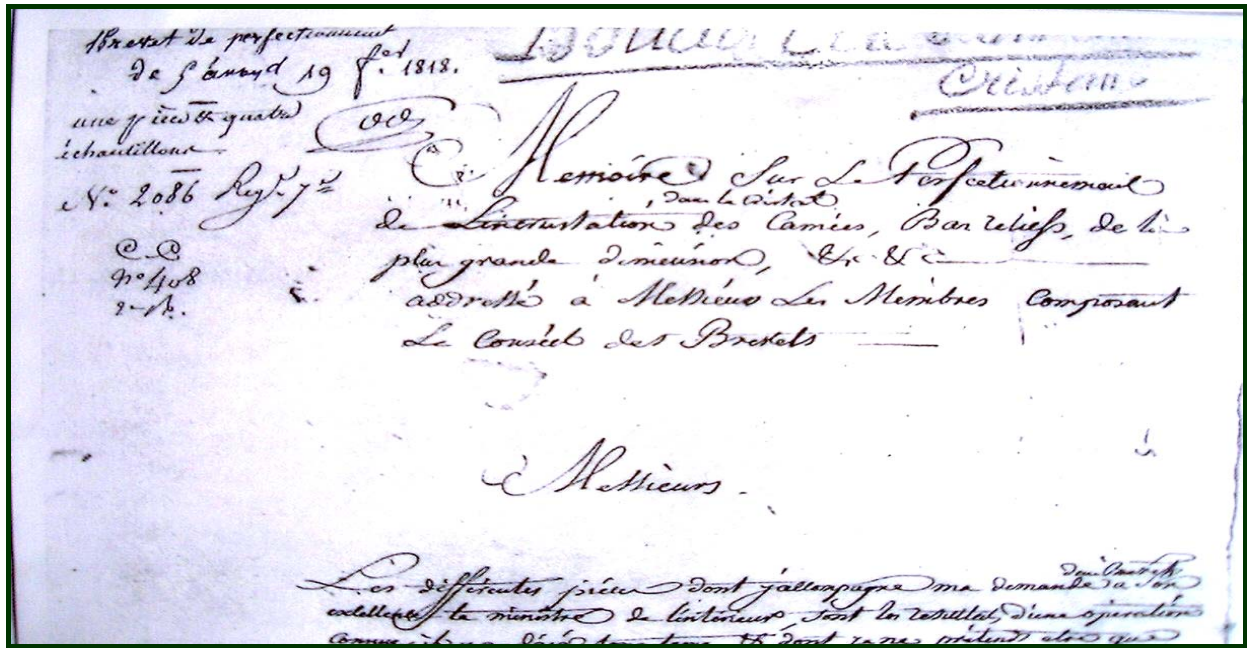


Sir Honoré Boudon de Saint –Amans

Born (9.5.1774) in Lamarque, near Agen in the south West of France, Sir Honoré Boudon de Saint Amans was author of « la Cristallocéramie » a rare personal note book writing around 1805..1812 in the time of his research's. Today this book is completely disappearing. After some work and research years he deposed his patent: "Process of Sulphides making " in the Royal Institute for Industry and Art in Paris at the 19 February 1818. Further at the 24 September 1818 for any extensions of his Patent. This deposit accompanied with a lot of inlayed cameos items (4 exactly).



*Two of the deposed (1818) items at the Royal Institute for Industry and Art from Boudon de Saint Amans
The inlayed Colour Scale right, give us a view of the technology mastering of Boudon de Saint Amans.*



First side copy from the original Patent "Process of sulphides Making" deposit at the 19. February 1818

So we can prove that the in 1819 deposit Patent N° 4424 of Aspley Pellat in London, a exactly copy from Saint Amans's patent is. The same concerning the note book of the "cristallocéramie" from Boudon de Saint Amans, deposit at « Crystallo-ceramic » by Aspley Pellat.

In the troubling time around the French revolution, Sir Honoré de Saint Amans émigre in the Kingdom of England and married on place. Lot of French people goes the same way. Son of a history professor, Boudon de Saint Amans was a recognized ceramist/chemist, and we will remember us that the basis of the cameo Art is the ceramic technology. The supporting material is Glass. The sulphide Art is the results of the two works.



One of the first inlaid cameo. A beautiful realisation for the date.

Saint Amans wife was English citizen and Boudon lived sometimes between the kingdoms France and England since ca 1804. He offered his ceramics cameos to the place glass factories: that why we see in the same period very nice cameos and sulphides from the British factories and especially from the Glass House of Aspley Pellat where Boudon worked in intermittency. Further on the Continent, some weights are signed Dhil & Guérard (Ceramics), Martoret (medal engraver), d'Artigues (ceramics maker and after manager of the crystal factory in Vonèche-Belgium), the glass cutting workshop "A l'Escalier de Cristal" with its sublime cute and bronze setting crystal items. And finally cameo sulphides from crystal factories that worked together with a lot of recognized medal engravers.



Portrait of Aimé Gabriel d'Artigues. Ceramic maker and Manager of the Crystal Factory in Vonèche.

D'Artigues buys the common Glass Factory in 1802, but quickly develops Vonèche to the biggest Crystal Manufactory of the Continent. The Political environment gives him the obligation to move in France where he the glass factory of Saint-Anne buys. Sainte Anne, mother of the "Cristalleries de Baccarat".

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Pieces by Boudon de Saint Amans. Museum of Agen.



Perfume bottle (private collection)

All the best and beautiful French and European (British) cameos from the XIX th century are made in crystal with over 35 % of lead. Absolutely non toxic, this crystal also has a very deep brightness and a height density. At last this explanation: the name "sulphide" comes from a bad cameo inlay work! As a matter of fact a residual micro air coat between the ceramic and the crystal mass give to the cameo the same appearance to the silver sulphide. In this situation, the defect turns into a very rare decoration art, but only when the micro air coat to cover the cameo completely.

In the 70's, a ceramic worker and his associate, retrieve the old secret of the ceramics incrustation and start cameos fabrication. This small society offers their ceramics at all the crystal factories. The Franklin Mint Corporation contacted in France, to start and market the fiction name "Cristal d'Albret" : this is in reality not a Crystal factory but just a marketing logo ! Lots of sulphides are edited under this fake crystal factory name! Dumping prices and the quickly disappearance of this little ceramics cameo factory are the results. The cameo sulphide Art is a very height Tec department of the crystal Glass Art making. It is very rarely to find a crystal factory or glass Artist around the world that to control this Art! Today and since several decades just Baccarat and Saint Louis continuous this nice and difficulty Art. And other, but important point for collectors, remember this: beautiful and rares cameo sulphides from the XIX th century are all made in lead crystal, never in common glass ! For prove ,in the scientific analysis on paperweights from all the greatest factories of this time, Vonèche, Baccarat, Clichy, Saint- Louis, Mont-Cenis, Aspley Pellat etc... we retrieve a lead percentage over 35 % This is confirmed in the fabrication archives of these crystal factories. Full lead crystal with his deep brightness and density is the must for this hi-Tec glass Art.



A pair of pendant with inlaid cameos

Jean Hartwig. Maître-Artisand'Art. © Meilleur Ouvrier de France.

Today Jean Hartwig continues this very beautiful glass Art. His inlayed cameos sulphides from 3,5 inch size are rare collector's items. Overtime, Hartwig Jean signed paperweights are unique gems.



Jean Hartwig. Full cut Napoleon Bonaparte cameo. Unique 3,5 inch gem.



Rare and unique: cameo sulphides gems from Jean Hartwig.



