

GERGELY PATTANTYÚS

National cup



STUDY

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It appears as the **“national-pocale”**
In the 1913 Kossuch catalogue.
(János Kossuch as the owner of the
biggest glass factories of the Monarchy
published catalogues in german, occa-
sionally the titles were multilingual.)

national-pocale

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THE ART HISTORIAN, KLÁRA Tasnádiné Marik, died in 2007, at the age of one hundred and four. Among other things, I learned from her about the “national cup” (she called it that): in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in military affairs nationality could not be an issue, they were very careful, there could be no disagreements. In the canteen of the national military groups (Czech dragoons, Hungarian hussars) there was also a “national character”: the dragoons drank their beer from a tall glass, while the Hungarian hussars drank their wine from this almost double-footed, characteristic glass. (It is also interesting what she said about passive resistance regarding this glass: The lords and ladies were not willing at their mandatory ball appearance of the aristocracy—I mean the more radical ones- to drink together with the Austrians, so they covered their glasses with their white gloved hands.)



The national cup. From the book of László Veres • Footed cup 1862, Northern Hungary, Zemplén furnace
 The national cup. Peasant glass with solid stem and base from the book of László Veres

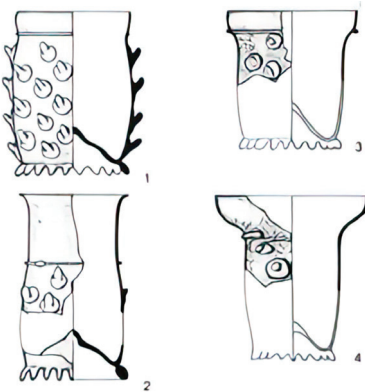
This glass is best known from amongst the Hungarian peasant glasses¹. “The Hungarian glass industry has never been a favorite of governments,” writes *Lajos Sághe-lyi*. The Habsburg rulers continuously suppressed Hungarian industry and trade, the export duty on glass was 30%, importing glass cost 3%, which was later stopped.² That is why glass industry was not established, the forest and manor furnaces operated until the end of the 19th century, serving local, neighborhood, i.e. peasant needs as well. Peasant glass appeared in our country at the end of the 1600s, when this material was no longer so expensive that only the wealthiest could use it. Among the peasant glasses, the ones with a solid stem and base are characteristic, when they are made, the stem and base are not separately attached parts, but are divided during the blowing, when the wooden mould is

personal
EXPERIENCES

being closed. It is fairly difficult to blow them, because during the blowing process they need to be pulled upwards to fill in the mould and at the same time horizontally quickly turned because the foot needs the required width, also it cools down rapidly. The additional job of the blower is, since the bottom of the cup part is almost as wide as the foot, to basically rotate and bend two feet at the same time, while the stem is thin, the body has a slim waist, and the top is wide. You can't even find anything similar among the utility glasses in foreign books. Here come two exciting questions: why this attachment to this form, and where does it come from? I'll start with two personal experiences. The first One: I clearly remember the excitement that came over me when I was able to hold peasant bottles for the first time in the Ethnography Museum's warehouse, and I was

seized by a special soaring excitement at the national cup. Where did this excitement come from? I had lived and worked among glass for a good decade, so it cannot be attributed only to the charm of glass. You can call it pathetic, but how is it that even the sight of breeding bulls and gray cattle at the animal fair in the Great Plains makes me shudder, they are familiar, dear, and belong to me? Others may have several similar experiences. The other story: a few years ago, we held a glassblowing show with our traveling furnace in Berlin as part of the Hungarian cultural season, and we were also selling pieces. I unpacked my remaining bottles, which we blew sometimes for French, sometimes for Germans, for different period-style films. The buyers reached for their “own” items with distinct joy, visible in each nation, even though they were cultural-historical rarities that required special

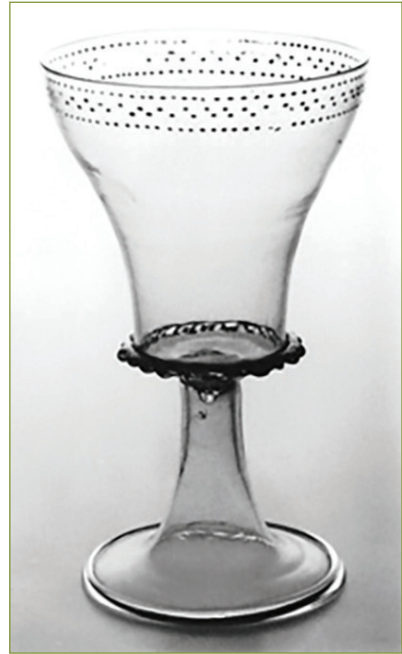
knowledge. In other words, they “remembered” them. Is it the collective unconscious springing into action? Is it starting to come alive, become conscious? Is it possible to write this today? In 1942, *Gábor Lükő* writes in “The Forms of the Hungarian Soul” about Eastern singing, when the voice is sustained for a long time, which is unusual for the West-European ear, because in the West the singing has a uniform rhythm and is divided into equal durations. The Hungarian folk songs are somewhere between the two, with their sustained voice condensing the text and song. It is typically the same regarding forms, whether it is a decoration of a leather coat or a glass cup. Pulling apart, stretching, leaving large empty surfaces to the extremes, then thickening, compressing. *Katalin H. Gyürky* publishes comparative drawings of Venetian and Hungarian medieval glasses, for which these formal characteristics apply. Many peasant glass forms can be found among Near and Middle Eastern glass forms, writes *László Veres*,⁴ and it is worth quoting from his book, which he wrote about 19th and 20th century glasses, also that the era left out peasant bottles from the scope of interest in collecting glasses: “The glass material collected in this way, was almost entirely gentleman's glass. [...] At that time, the archaeological excavations had barely brought to the



Comparative figures between Venetian and Hungarian glasses. Following K. H. Gyürky

surface glass material testifying to early Hungarian glassmaking, or the glass fragments from the excavations were unknown to the specialists. The bottles intended for everyday use, mainly produced in small forest furnaces, became a rarity on the shelves of museum collection. [...] Only a few discerning collectors noticed that in Hungarian glass art the so-called peasant bottles offer the most imaginative, varied amongst the European forms. and had the most independence in general [...] This is where our national characteristics find their most perfect expression.”⁵

At first glance, the shape of our peasant glass goes back to the Renaissance, to the famous **Venetian** glass, back to the age



Venetian goblet from the turn of the 15th-16th century. Following Dexel

before the Turkish subjugation, although it is important to note that during the Turkish rule, trade once again delivered Middle Eastern glass directly to Hungary. And it is important to emphasize the fact - which does not diminish the merits of glassmaking in Murano - that the famous Venetian glass also goes back to Middle Eastern precedents.

The oldest known glass is from **Syria**, dating from the 5th millennium BC. For thousands of years, Middle Eastern glassmaking produced, matured and further developed forms, decorative ways, methods, and later “in the territory of the Eastern Roman Empire, the ancient traditions were mainly



Syrian cup, from Aleppo, 13th-14th c. Following Dexel

carried on by the Byzantine masters. In Egypt, Syria and Persia, the ancient traditions were enriched by Islam in many ways”. In the Middle Ages, glass traditions were preserved by monastery glass furnaces. “Technological knowledge spread through rediscovered works and works made in monasteries in the 12th-13th centuries, from the 19th century onwards, this could also be connected to objects in the possessions of the glassmakers”⁶, because the high-level craftsmanship and glassblowing introduced during the Crusades also influenced Europe with the looted products. One of these eastern forms is the so-called “**Hedvig glasses**” type. (Only their name is European, as they got it from the wife of the prince of Silesia.) This type of glass can also be found among peasant glasses in the modern era. I would like to

draw attention to the widening at the bottom of the glass, which will be discussed later.”

In the spread of other vessel types Italy played an important role which had a close connection with the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. In European countries, it is a long-necked, slender-stemmed and smooth cone or a goblet with a bell-shaped storage spread, from the East with the help of Italy.”⁷

What was this role? Now I will only quote the end of this story: “after the Venetians conquered Byzantium, forced many glassmakers for resettlement. After the rule of the Crusaders was broken in Syria at the end of the 13th century, the glass workers - who had worked for the Venetians until now - fleeing to Venice, they took with them the secrets of glass production, which were guarded with fear in the East, and ensured the flourishing of glass making there.”⁸



The “Hedvig Cup”. Following Veres • 13th c. Venetian work to serve the needs of the north. Following Dexter



In the north, at the furnaces established in the 12-13th century, a new type of glass emerges, or more precisely, a technological trend. The bottoms of glasses or bottles are pressed deeply in. An air ring runs around the bottom of the glass, on the edge, then it pulls inwards- with the word of a ceramisist- the angle of the foot. This is possible by blowing a ball shape on the bottom as part of the glassbody, which then can be pushed back, there is enough

Beakers from Alexandria and the Near East, No. 4, the type favored by Italians. Following Dixel German cup from the 16th century, from a forest hut, after Dixel



German glasses with air ringed bases the 17th century. Following Dixel



material for a deep indent, an inner form. Most innovations develop accidentally, instinctively, naturally during glassblowing. Naturally, the “first blower” could hold the gathered material down, and the novice glassblower also holds it that way, because it is easier to hold the pipe. Therefore, it will be thicker below, when blowing, the “thickness” of the material “flows” invisibly there. Invisibly, because he blows and rotates it in the process, thus expanding the shape. I worked from such a small pot where every gram of the glass counts. Of course, it feels like a waste if it's thick. Glass that was hard to melt, was highly valued in the Middle Ages. The glass was made every three or four days, until then it was only heated, broken, pre-melted, mixed the materials, the mass, and, as I experienced with a reconstruction furnace, two wagons of wood per day gave just enough fire and heat.⁹ Why they started blowing balls at the bottom, I don't know. To use the thicker bottom, the material there? Or was it the result of a one-time and simple “accident”? In any case, that ball must be held back in the fire to warm up so that it can be reshaped and pressed. When held back, while it warms up nicely, the heat actually thickens the over-thinned ball material, just enough to stick, and avoid the punty breaking the bottom



Venetian chalice Following Boros

of the glass. It's not even necessary to push in very much, because the heated ball must be rotated continuously,,the hotter the faster, so that it will be disk-shaped due to the centrifugal force.

The disk shape in other words, a foot, which, if you raise it to your face to see what you have done, already dropped back to the center back with this movement, glued the edge, and formed the air ring, which can be seen so beautifully in the archaeological drawings of the fragments. It's all happening faster than you can say it.



Venetian Gothic chalice. XV. century.
(After Frank Davis)

The other type is the one named at the beginning of the article, the **15th century Venetian chalice**, which, as I mentioned, shows a surprising similarity in form to the so-called national cup. (The earlier versions of this is the Gothic chalices, which are even closer to the Syrian prototypes due to the colors of their painting.) The stem of this type is blown separately: the cup is pressed against it first, then it is broken from the blowing pipe, warmed up and folded out to form a foot. At the bottom of the cup part, at the bottom of the actual glass, a separate glass thread is wound and laced. This divides the two elongated shapes horizontally, the cup and the base. It obscures the joint, taking the eye left and right – a beautiful play on form.

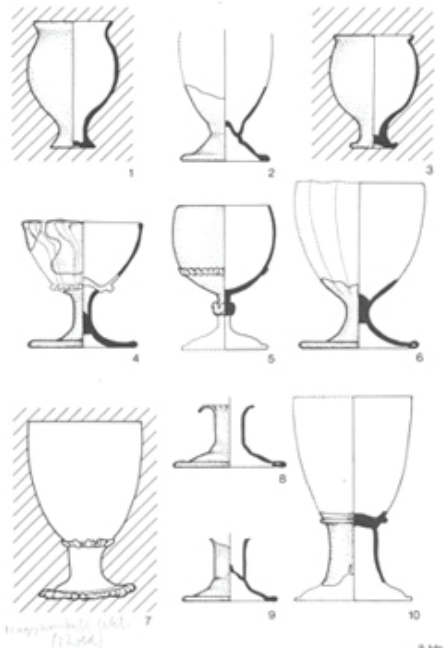
Here I return to the reference in which I drew attention to the section at the bottom of the Hedvig cup. If we add the blown stem and base to this Hedvig glass, we get the Italian goblet type. Maybe the placed, blown and opened funnel base-stem form is a Venetian version, but it is certain that the middle, horizontal division is fundamentally Eastern. If it has no stem or base, then this glassthread corresponds to the lower section at the bottom of the glass, which also helps with stability, and was mentioned before, when I described it for the northern cup type, which is achieved there with the lower air ring, as a completely western type, as a characteristic. There, in Northern and Western Europe, this solution is becoming common. What's more, to complicate matters further, there will be a version of this, when the pressed-in bottom sticks deeply back and thus forms a funnel-shaped stem-foot, without being applied separately (see on the other side).

The archaeological reports and work of *Katalin H. Gyürky* explains the late-medieval Hungarian specialities: “As for the Venetian glasses, it was possible to find analogies with them, regarding domestic glasses on the other hand, we do not have such help available for production items.



XVI.st-century stemmed glasses from the Delft monastery. From the deeply impressed bottom a foot is formed, from the foot there will be a stem. (Following Dexel)

I used a method based on reverse logic: a glass is national if it does not resemble any other country's glasses. I was lucky enough to hold and draw the glass goblet shown on the board numbered LI of the catalog entitled "The glass" of the medieval collection of the Budapest History Museum. It is an incredibly good feeling to look at this beautiful piece, to examine it, to be with it at all. The small size and thinness that is not visible in the photo and drawing are striking. The fragment was a full profile, so the restoration is definitely authentic. It turned out that two trends in glass making met here, creating their own type! The bottom of the chalice (cup part) is the northern, air-ring rim, and the glued-on funnel foot is an Italian method. There is a small "nodus initiative", which I call a glue droplet, because this adhesive glass drop kept the funnel foot away from the body, from the difficultly formed



Comparison table from the book of Katalin H. Gyürki, which is a type of glass emerging from the Hungarian furnaces. The bottoms and feet are also made from their own bodies.

edge, and bottom - at the same time, the two parts stick together much more securely, that's why it's called a glue droplet. At the junction of the "nodus-initiation" and the base of the funnel, a small jump can be seen on the surface, but only on the part towards the base of the funnel, not on the nodus fused with it. This also makes me think that they are not from the same body. (I tried this myself by making such a goblet, I'm sure if it was made this way, although I haven't made "many thousands" of them to form them to be exactly the same. *Katalin H. Gyürki* is right that they would then become perfectly uniform and elaborate.)

SO THE PROTOTYPE OF OUR NATIONAL GLASS IS ALREADY OF ITS OWN TYPE, AN EXCEPTIONALLY BEAUTIFUL SPECIMEN OF THE FREE-BLOWN, SHAPELESS FURNACE GLASSES AND GOBLET OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES. THIS IS THE EARLIEST OF OUR EXCAVATED SITES, BECAUSE THE MATERIAL OF THIS LAYER DATES BACK TO THE MIDDLE OF THE 15TH CENTURY. THANKS TO THIS PIECE, WE CAN DEFINE OUR GOBLET FROM BEFORE THE 15TH CENTURY “WRITES

KATALIN H. GYÜRKY.



Budavári find. Home-made, without analogues. The air-ring bottom and the blown, fitted stem and foot are together, in one goblet. From the catalog of Katalin H. Gyürki.

Is it the pre-image of the pre-image? Where does it come from, where do we come from? “During our research, we found that until the end of the 13th century, Byzantine-type glasses were found. Some of these can - presumably - be connected with the single Hungarian crusade, others refer to trade, but there were also monasteries of the Byzantine rite, in where the equipment came from Byzantine territory. [...] We believe that there could have been local glassmaking and imports from various sources at the same time. They existed side by side, or they became competitors, temporarily displacing each other from the market. From the end of the 13th century fragments of a kind of very high-quality glass are often found,” they are of such high quality that you have to think of glass workshops in Murano, “except that the products of these workshops have so far only been known from the Renaissance period, as the earliest pieces that were preserved in public and private collections.”

However, among the Hungarian furnaces, for example, in the area of Diósjenő “there was a continuously operating glass center for at least three centuries from the second half of the 13th century”. So at the national furnace a national type was formed.

I continue to quote László Veres’s book, because it is the most concise and clear thesis summarizing the research so far. “Hungarians could have met glass in their ancient home land at the Kuban region in Onugur. In the Hungarian language, the word glass is of Iranian-Alani origin. The area inhabited by Hungarians was one of the receiving markets of the ruling Persian glass industry. Evidence of this is provided by the tangible memories that have remained from this era and were brought to the surface through archaeological excavations. [...] From the lively Byzantine-Persian trade prevailing in the area of Onogur's homeland, we can conclude that Hungarians used not only poor beads made of glass paste.”

Indeed, because in the Glass Museum in Frauenau I found the restored piece that was made in Northern Iran around the 9th century, and it is the oldest known relic of the double-bottomed glass so far. “The noble strata, the members of the ruling class, could easily acquire



Budavári find. Home-made, without analogues. The air-ring bottom and the blown, fitted stem and foot are together, in one goblet. From the catalog of Katalin H. Gyürki.

ornamental glass, which could be passed down from father to son.” The inheritance of a culture is a long process, you cannot see the roots; there is no need to prove the Sumerian-Hungarian “kinship” or other things, because there is someone, something, there is always a foreshadowing before everyone. Still, there is a kind of character in these inherited cultural images, choices, and forms, and the local “variety character”, local color is always formed, which together, built on each other, represent the folk character. The work will be adapted to the local opportunities and conditions, and will be different in the spirit of the place, characteristic of that place, time, and person. We can renew by referring to ancient traditions, we can become backward and lost by always wanting something new. There was always a special need within a people, a series of specific choices, an attraction to a certain image.

Our Eastern glass prototypes could live in us from our homeland, through the imported glass, to the glasses becoming everyday items in our peasant household, renewing over and over again. I also wrote this thesis in order to get to know one of our typical Hungarian glass types, so that we can adapt to something, either with the intention of sticking to it or renewing it.



The national cup 19th century

NOTES

¹ In Hungary, the term “peasant glass” refers to the glass used in peasant households from the 18th century, previously there was, only the “master’s” glass. We lacked a more sophisticated citizenry as a “layer”, and even if there were few of them, in Kassa and in one or two towns, their needs for household glass were the simple glasses found everywhere in Europe. From the 18th century, glass grinding and cutting became increasingly common for “gentleman’s glass”, a characteristic, distinguishable style. From the beginning of the 20th century, peasant glass disappears completely, because the small forest furnaces are displaced by factories and their products. In the Kossuth glass factories, they also served the needs of the still-living peasants, they met all kinds of orders that could be fulfilled, and there are many engravings of peasant glass forms in their catalogs.

² Lajos Sáhelyi: The story of the Hungarian glass industry. 1938. Budapest

³ H. Gyürky Katalin: *Communications Archeologicae Hungariae* 1989.

⁴ László Veres: Our glass art in the 14th-15th century. Miskolc, 2006.

⁵ V.L. id. m. 10. pages.

⁶ V.L. id. m. 21. pages.

⁷ V.L. id. m. 22. old. “I cannot make sense of a description called long neck when describing a drinking cup”.

⁸ V.L. id. m. 25. p.

⁹ Ádám Lang: Glass furnaces in the east Mecsek. Pécs, 2008.

itt kintik, hogy
tesztöl van
a perem



Budavári goblet from the 15. century



Drinking cup Nishapur,
Northeast Iran 9-10. century

az eredet

Befele tört talpnyírú



Mobile +36 30 9381 761 **Hot Workshop 1** Fény utca, Révfülöp 8253 Hungary
Studio 8 Thököly út, Budapest 1076 Hungary **E-mail** gpattantyus@gmail.com