

Martin Vyšohlíd

Clay and porcelain pipes from Prague Lesser Town

ANNOTATION

The analysis of 44 fragments of ceramic and porcelain tobacco pipes from two extensive archaeological excavations in the area of Malá Strana. According to their form, decoration, and production style the pipes are placed in firmly defined production areas, as well as within the wider European pipe production context of the 17th–20th century.

SUMMARY

Clay pipe research in the Czech Republic has only just begun. For this reason there is very limited information on clay pipe production and trade. This article analyses finds of clay pipe fragments from two large archaeological excavations realized in 2003–2007 in the area of Prague Lesser Town. A total number of 44 clay pipes were found. The oldest clay pipes appeared at the turn of 1st and 2nd third of the 17th century in Bohemia and heeled and heelless pipes predominate during the 17th and 18th centuries. So called “Central European technology” pipes are most important for our region during 2nd half of the 17th century (Fig. 1.a–l). Such pipes are different from the western tradition as bowl and stem were made separately and connected together in the final stage of fabrication before firing in the kiln. The biggest group of these pipes is represented by pipes found in a large area of central Europe (Bavaria, Bohemia, Silesia and Saxony). The same pipes appear in unglazed and glazed forms (green, green-and-yellow, ochre-and-brown glaze) and have no marks. Central European production is also represented by stems with special marks. Fragments of stems with heels have identical marks on the heels and on the top of stem; motifs such as beech leaves, oak leaves, grapes and lilies (Fig. 1.f, g). In the course of the 17th century the first imported pipes from Holland are recorded (Fig. 1.m). During 18th century the importation of western heeled/heelless pipes continued (Fig. 1.n–t) including pipes from new production centres (Germany, Prussia) such as Waldenburg in Saxony (Fig. 1.u, 2.a–c). The production of stubstemmed pipes culminates during the 2nd half of the 19th century, when these pipes were produced throughout Central and Eastern Europe (Fig. 2.d, e; 3.a–e). Amongst our finds we recognized pipe from Schemnitz (Fig. 2.e). During the end of the 19th century and 1st third of the 20th century the popularity of three-piece porcelain pipes culminates (Fig. 3.f, g). These pipes were produced in a lot of porcelain factories mainly in Bohemia and Germany.

Fig. 1. Stems of heel/heelless pipes from the 17th and 18th centuries – Central Europe (a–l) and Western Europe (m–u).

Fig. 2. a–c: Western European heelless pipes from the second half of the 18th century; d, e: Stub-stemmed pipes imported from Eastern Europe (second half of the 19th century).

Fig. 3. a–c: Stub-stemmed pipes (Cafe type) from the end of the 19th century or beginning of the 20th century; d, e: Stub-stemmed pipes (probably second half of the 19th century); f, g: Three-piece pipes from beginning of the 20th century.

English by Martin Vyšohlíd