

Joseph Glanz's Match Holders

By Dagny Kerner and Neil Shapiro

From 1808 on, three state owned foundries in Prussia produced a large amount of extraordinarily well-crafted, cast iron items, both large and small. Private Prussian foundries, some using the same models as the state foundries, also created outstanding items in iron and later bronze and other metals. One of the finest private foundries in 19th century Prussia (and later Vienna) was led by Joseph Glanz, who created exceptionally fine casts in many designs and materials. This essay examines the match holder casts of Joseph Glanz.

At age 36, after ten successful years in Prussia, Joseph Glanz, praised as an artist of the Royal Prussian Foundry, with an academic title in his pocket, and a few years of experience with an own casting company in Berlin, returned home to Vienna. There, in 1831, he established his company and foundry for producing cast iron, bronze and silver casts, the, *k. u k. Landesprivilegierte Bronze & Eisengießerey*, Joseph Glanz's - with an exclusive privilege for his own way of casting in iron and bronze.

Glanz's foundry focused on "*Galanteriewaren*", small artistic decorative items of daily use. He soon had up to 60 people working in the foundry producing jewelry, paper weights, watch holders, candelabras, lamps, busts, lithophanes, table bells, jewelry holders, thermometers, crucifixes, and also a number of exquisite match holders in the so called Vienna style.

Today, the largest variety of Glanz's cast iron match holders are exhibited at the Schell Collection in Graz, Austria.

Joseph Glanz's Marks

Glanz used several different marks between 1831 and ca. 1848 while working in Vienna. Glanz often used the initials "JGW" (Joseph Glanz Wien) or "Glanz m. Vorb" (*Glanz mit Vorbehalt* (Glanz with reservation.)) A further mark: "*bei J. Glanz in Wien*" is described in the literature. Two further marks, "GmV" (short for *Glanz mit Vorbehalt*) and "G'V" (the apostrophe presumably standing for "m" as in "GmV") have been discovered in two different match holders attributed to Glanz. The mark with the initials "JGW", for Joseph Glanz Wien, has been used sometimes on items bigger than match holders with different borders. It was not uncommon in Europe, in these early days of the development of legal trademarks, logos, patents, legal restrictions and copyrights that different foundry marks were used by the same company in the course of time. Such recasts needed a permission by contract, it was however, fairly common, not to sign such pieces.

The Schell Collection reveals that Joseph Glanz frequently marked his work but certainly not always. The majority of cast iron match holders in the Schell Collection are

marked but, to date, no bronze match holders have been found with Glanz's mark. It is not known why no marked Glanz match holders in cast bronze have been found yet.

History of the Glanz Foundry

Between 1831 and 1848 Glanz's company was a successful business, branches were opened in Germany and Italy, later in Prague, in what is today the Czech Republic, and in Pest, today Hungary, with exports mainly to England, Sweden, France and North America.

Consequently in these countries, and in Austria, collectors have the best chance to find these small pieces of art, some more than a 170 years old, quite a few not only cast by Joseph Glanz, but also designed and modeled by the master himself, as noted in the report of the 1845 Vienna exhibition: "Glanz is among the most excellent art casters. ... It is his merit to have shown his colleagues to which degree of perfectness one can produce bronze casts. He is now operating an extensive factory for *galanterie* metal products of different kinds. The models of the exhibited objects were not cast from third party originals, but were crafted partly by Glanz himself and partly by artists he worked with. ..." Obviously Joseph Glanz could afford to do away with the long tradition of recasting other foundries' models.

Glanz was awarded several gold medals for his iron, bronze and silver casts. In the report of the First Austrian Industrial Exhibition (1835) Glanz had already been praised enthusiastically: "Taste, artistic and technical achievement ... have been realized in the biggest as well as in the smallest items to the same degree of perfection." From the founding of his Vienna foundry, Glanz had cast in iron and in bronze, later on he added silver and zinc casting.

When Glanz began his Vienna foundry the iron fashion was still at its height and customers were eager to buy all those new small luxury items in iron. By the middle of the 19th century they began to favor bronze and other precious metals. This is also the time, when the famous, Vienna bronzes' began to get popular all around the world.

Some of Glanz's match holders: Musicians

Each detail on Glanz's musicians, from ballooned cheeks to every single button has been engraved on this finely cast figural match holder. The cast iron standalone match holder which portrays a horn player is one of several representing musicians with their different musical instruments.

The heads of all the Glanz musicians are hinged to open the compartment for storing unlighted matches within the body. All the instruments, the horn, the mandolin, and the cello have a socket to hold a lighted match. At the back, above the striker, is the mark: "GmV," an abbreviation for *Glanz mit Vorbehalt*, ("Glanz with reservation.") The use of abbreviations is not surprising because of the limited space on such small items.

Characteristics of many of Joseph Glanz's match holders are large heads, short legs, shoes sticking out beneath long coats and jackets as well as finely detailed uniforms and clothing. Seemingly cast with a twinkle in the eye, musicians, soldiers and other figurines are portrayed in such detail that it is possible to identify their profession and, in case of the soldiers' series, the country and position within the army they represent.

Glanz's Soldiers

The figurine portrays a French soldier of the North African Tirailleur troops. Tirailleurs from the French colonies served as infantry riflemen in the 19th century, they used particularly good guns with a higher strike rate than standard guns. It was the primary task of the Tirailleurs to fight the opponent's officers with precision gunshots.

The soldier holds his gun in his left hand which serves as match socket for a single match. The soldier's backpack is roughened for friction and serves as striker. There is a second small striking area in the middle of the ashtray, which has been cast in the form of a wavy leaf. The same leaf-shaped ashtray is known for several match holders of the Glanz's musicians' series. Nuts and screws which fix the figurine to the ashtray are magnetic, old and authentic, with the, typical for the time, handmade - looking rectangular iron nuts. Again, the building block concept proved to be a convenient time saving approach; once an ashtray model had been designed and cast, it could be used as base for a variety of match holders. Even simpler, without the ashtray, a standalone match holder was ready for sale.

On the cast iron Tirailleur remnants of the old gold shimmering colors have remained, in particular, the ornamentation of the jacket and a golden-red headband underneath the turban. The Tirailleur carries a sash. When a match is placed into the match socket at the top end of the gun, the match takes the place of the soldier's bayonet. Even the hinges of the match holder, to open the match compartment inside the body, have been integrated by Glanz into the authentic uniform outfit: Above the backpack the Tirailleur soldiers carried a light brown rolled blanket pack – the round hinges of the match holder stand for the blanket pack just above the rectangular striker, the backpack. All these details show how much more functional design has been put into this figural match holder in comparison to the earlier Berlin iron ones, the pioneers in the history of figural match holders.

To be able to see both Tirailleur match holders in cast iron and in bronze side by side is a case of good luck. Museums and private collectors usually own either of them - if at all. Both holders show all signs of being used and old. The bronze figurine is with 77.24 millimeters slightly smaller than the iron one.

The French Tirailleur is part of a series of soldier match holders, representing soldiers from several countries that are cast in different metals. For over thirty years the maker of this set of match holders has been in doubt. Now a secure link to the Joseph Glanz foundry can be made for this series of match holders.

Match holder expert, the late Denis B. Alsford, postulated 20 years ago that these standalone figural soldier holders from different countries are part of one set and originated from one source: He wrote, “A series of cast figures that are almost caricatures, with large heads and feet on small bodies, are of unknown origin and date. It has been suggested that they were made in the countries that they represent; however, they include a Chinese person, and China is a very unlikely source. Moreover, the similarities in the representations almost defy coincidence. The most likely source is Germany, and they probably date between 1850 and 1870.”

Alsford was prescient. And today we fortunate to still have a number of examples from Glanz’s foundry that exemplify his casting and artistic skill.

Note: Portions of this essay come from our recently IMSA published book *Night Lights & Envelope Sealers: European Metal Match Holders*.



Some examples of Joseph Glanz’s soldier match holders.



One example of Glanz's foundry mark



Two examples of Glanz's musicians



12 examples of Glanz's match holders