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Anna Ridovics and Peter Davey

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The Partsch pipe factory in Theresienfeld, Austria

by Albert Halmos

Introduction

Toward to the end of the eighteenth century pipe-smoking became popular again in Austria and the beginning of industrial clay-pipe manufacture can be dated to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The factories were situated almost exclusively in the eastern part of the country, in Nieder-Österreich and in Burgenland. Most of them were concentrated about 50 km south of Vienna, in Wiener-Neustadt and its surroundings, like Theresienfeld, a settlement founded in 1763 by Maria Theresa, on the northern edge of Wiener Neustadt.

Documentary sources establish that the Partsch factory, the first pipe factory in Theresienfeld, was founded in around 1813, and was located in house numbers 48 and 49 along the main road from Vienna to the town. The actual address is Grazer strasse, No.9. This is an advantageous location, offering good logistical and distributional connections to the principal markets in Vienna and Hungary. For a brief period the Partsch family also occupied house number 33 about 1km away at the southern end of Theresienfeld.

The sites

The house and grounds, No. 48,

The property is approximately 100 x 200 meters in area and has the original factory building, around 30 by 15 meters in area on a plot next to the main road. A second original building, dating from the second half of the nineteenth century and around 20 by 10 meters in area, according to the owner, Mr Heinisch, was not used at all as a factory but as a habitation and also possibly as an office. Both structures are in very good condition; the factory building is now in the process of restoration.

When the writer identified the factory site in the 1980s (Fig. 1), it included a system of water channels, essential for clay pipe production, a large mound of clay, two clay settling basins, a very large bed/basin c35 x 70 meters, with two kiln foundations on the sides of it. This location was probably also used as a refuse-pit, as the extremely large quantity of pipes and pipe fragments attest. There was once a fully loaded kiln in the factory building (Fig. 2).

Since 2007, the present owner, Mr. Heinisch, has built a new house at the opposite end of the grounds and transformed the ex refuse-pit into a large garden. The foundations of a single kiln are the only remains to testify to the nature of the original structures (Fig. 3). During numerous visits in the 1980s, and after a break of 20 years, also at recent visits to the site, the large number of pipes, pipe fragments and other waste material recovered indicates a very large production. Working tools, such as pipe moulds or machines and documentary evidence

for the factory will, unfortunately, never be found at the site, because, as Mr. Heinisch has explained, at the end of the second World War the factory was occupied by the Russian Army for a while and they removed metal items such as machines, tools or anything which seemed to have a certain value. An exception to this is the quantity of well made, special double-walled pipes, decorated in relief with winged wheel marks, crowned SR monograms and Vienna coats of arms in relief, in a dark red clay fabric which were found in the attics of House No. 48. In addition, a considerable number of well-carved dogs' heads in groups of two dozen and contained in their original wrappings were also found there (*cf* this volume pp161-162).

The house, No 49

House No. 49, directly borders No. 48; the Theresienfeld Landregister (NÖ-Landesregierung Landesarchiv, Grundbuch Theresienfeld, 82/2) and the Privilege Register (NÖ-Landesregierung Landesarchiv, Privilegien-Register, Gr.A, HS 10/3, fol. 38) indicate that, since 1813, this was the Partsch's first property and residence. The fact that it came into their hands six years earlier than No. 48, suggests that it should have been the first location for the factory, but so far, material proof of production on the site such as notices or attributions are completely lacking. Local research at the site is needed to explore this question further. In any case the direct physical link between the two properties implies that the Partsch family used them in common as the location for their pipe production (Fig. 4).

House, No 33

This house only appears in the Landregister as Partsch property between 1833 and 1851. Its attribution as a factory site by Sohn in his *Chronicle of Theresienfeld* is probably an error. At the site itself the present owner Mr.Grobleitner has only recorded a few finds of very small pipe fragments.

Chronological list of owners

Below (Table 1) is a chronological property owners' list for house numbers 48 and 49 and their grounds, based on data from the Theresienfeld Land Register and Sohn's *Chronicle*. This provides evidence for the development of the Partsch factory there (Figs. 5 & 6).

In addition

Some pipes have been recovered with a mark bearing the name CONRAD. Sohms notes a Philipp Conrad as pipe-maker in house No. 59 between 1838 (1825?) and 1854.

Other pipes, in quantity at house No. 48, carry stamps with the name S.SEILER. This was a Viennese company founded in 1895 and trading in clay-pipes, components and smoking utensils until 1935 (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, Wiener Stadt-und Landesarchiv, Handelsregister, HR A 32/229).

A few pipes are marked JOHANN PARTSCH IN PERNITZ, or PARTSCH – PERNITZ which is a small village some 40 kms to the north-west of Theresienfeld.

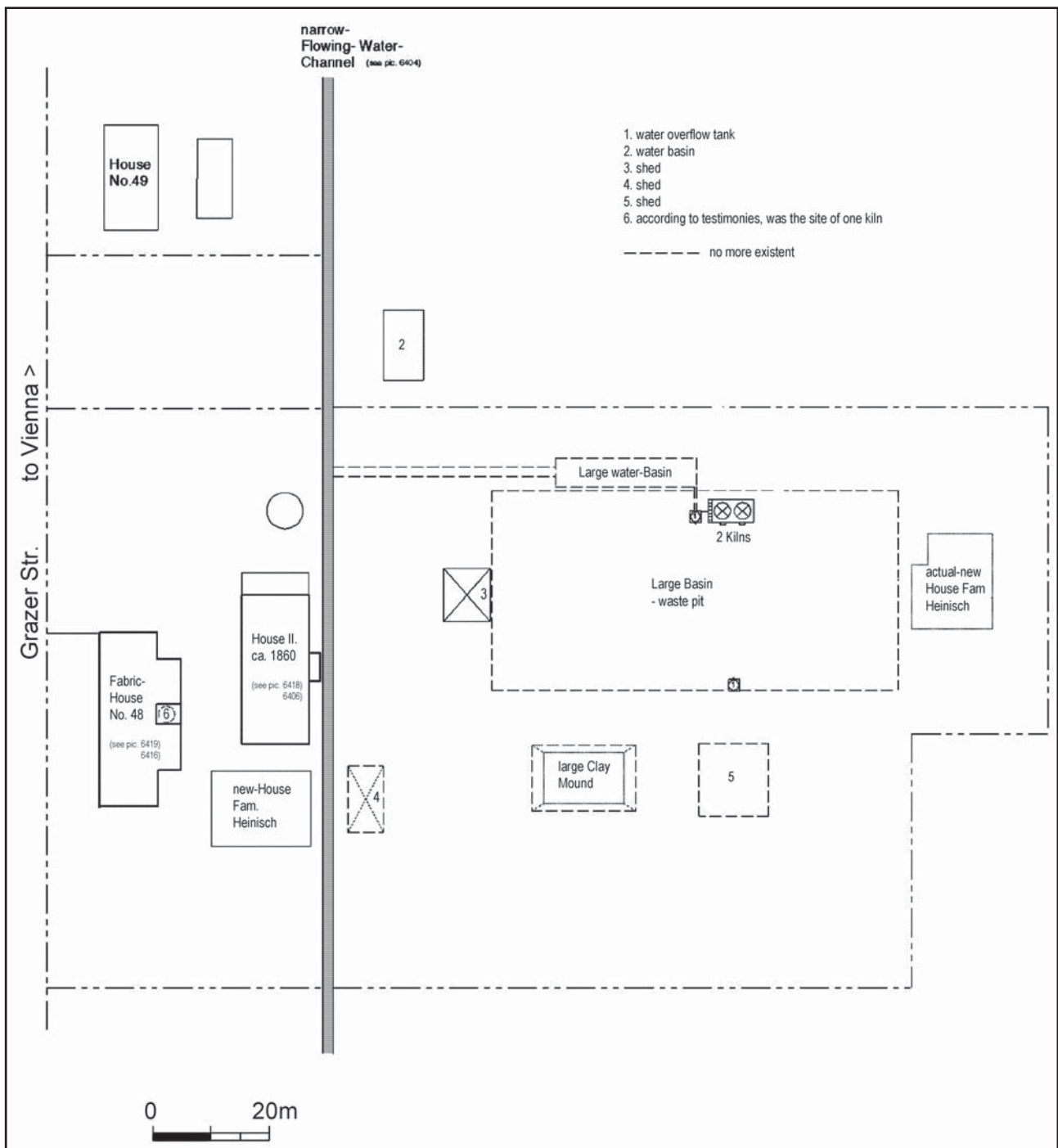


Figure 1: Draft plan of the Partsch factory site: House No. 48 and grounds as the author found them in the 1980s.

It seems probable that the second Johann Partsch worked there for a period, possibly in the middle - second half of the nineteenth century. Recent archival research has not been successful as most of Pernitz's old Land Register is missing. Further research is needed on location in Pernitz itself.

Patents held by Partsch

Below are extracts from the Privilege Registers detailing patents held by Anton Partsch:

1832 First nomination of Anton Partsch, at the address, House No. 49, holds a patent for 'improvement of

a special marbling technique for clay pipes'. It is possible that he had already obtained his first patent in 1829 but the 'A-Index' in the Nieder-Österreich archives which could have attested this lacks the necessary information at this point.

This patent was also extended for the province of Lombardia-Veneto in Italy, at that period under Austrian rule.

1838 Prolongation of the patent
 1840 Prolongation of the patent
 1842 Prolongation of the patent

| Year | House 48 - Owners | House 49 - Owners |
|------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1813 | | PARTSCH, Johann I , wife Josepha (1) |
| 1816 | | PARTSCH, Johann I dated by Sohms (2) |
| 1819 | PARTSCH, Anton (2) son of Johann I | |
| 1821 | | Conrad, Philippe, wife Josepha (1) |
| 1825 | | PARTSCH, Anton, wife Anna (1) |
| 1832 | | PARTSCH, Anton, confirmed Privileg. Regist. |
| 1839 | | PARTSCH, Anton dated by Sohms (2) |
| 1849 | | PARTSCH, Anna, widow (1)(2) |
| 1855 | | (Marquis Karlowitz, Sophie) (2) |
| 1859 | PARTSCH, Anna (2) | |
| 1861 | PARTSCH, Anna (1) | |
| 1892 | PARTSCH, Johann II (1)(2) | |
| 1921 | Seiler, Sigmund Company | |
| 1936 | Heinisch, Family actual | |
| | | |
| | House 33: | |
| 1833 | PARTSCH, Johann I (2) | |
| 1842 | PARTSCH, Joseph (2) | |
| 1850 | PARTSCH, Johann II (2) | |

Key:

- (1) NÖ – Landesarchiv - Grundbuch Theresienfeld/Privilegien-Register.
- (2) Sohm, Edwin: *Ortsgeschichte von Theresienfeld*, 1854-56.

Table 1: Chronological list of owners for house numbers 48 and 49 and their grounds, based on data from the Theresienfeld Land Register and Sohm’s Chronicle.



Figure 2: Air view of House No. 48, Grazer str. 9, in the early 1980s (courtesy of Mr. Heinisch).



Figure 3: Air view of House No. 48, Grazer str. 9, c2006 -2007; part of the grounds and House No. 49 are visible on the left-hand side (courtesy of Mr. Heinisch).



Figure 4: Google air view of House No. 48 and its grounds and, above, on the left of the green-park zone, part of House No. 49 and its grounds (courtesy of Marktgemeinde Theresienfeld - Bauamt).

1843 Prolongation of the patent

1844 Prolongation of the patent

Further documentation for the activities of the Partsch factory can be found in the catalogues of early industrial exhibitions in which he participated from the beginning.

A chronological list of his participation:

| | | |
|------|------------|--|
| 1835 | Vienna | The first Industrial exhibition in Vienna - honorary mention; he exhibited 49 types of very high quality, '...yellow, black, marbled, Turkish like...' Annual production of 500,000 pipes with 30 workers. |
| 1838 | Klagenfurt | The first Industrial exhibition for Lower Austria |
| 1839 | Vienna | Bronze Medal; he 'exhibited 44 types of very high quality pipes in many colours with metal or clay caps/main distribution in particular to Hungary'. |
| 1841 | Graz | |
| 1845 | Vienna | Bronze Medal; 'very high quality/yearly production of 200,000 pipes, with 18 workers; he also exhibited wooden (vistula) stems/ he owns a special vistula plantation'. |
| 1851 | London | 'Various samples of clay tobacco-pipes' and 'odiferous cherry-sticks for tobacco-pipe tubes'. |

The production

The factory produced the typical central European, stub-stemmed, 'Schemnitz' type pipes, Selmec/Schemnitz/Banska Stiavnyca was, at the same period, the other centre for clay pipe fabrication in Austria-Hungary. The countless finds of Partsch pipes indicate that his production was very large and varied, including filigree-worked commemorative pipes with fine carved portraits in relief (in quality as good as meerschaum), and a large variety of fine pipes with marble-glazed effects in polychrome, his speciality. Many of the pipes found on the site lack any markings. Others bear an unique stamp on the rim of the pipe sockets - 'ZU THERESIENFELD' (Fig. 7) which is a typical mark used exclusively in Wiener-Neustadt and its surroundings by makers such as MATHIAS AMSTÄTTER, founded c1830-35 and his son-in-law ANTON RESS, from 1837. Amstätter also held a patent for 'pipe-making machines' during that period.

A putative list of owners and marks for the Partsch factory (Table 2)

On the basis of this enormous range of material Partsch should probably be considered as the main clay pipe producer in Austria and Hungary during most of the nineteenth century.

The hypothesis that copies of Partsch pipes were made elsewhere in western Hungary, particularly in Körmend (cf this volume pp 53-71), needs further examination.

| From | To | Name | Marks |
|-------|---------|---------------------|--|
| c1813 | ? | Johann Partsch I | ? |
| 1829 | 1849 | Anton Partsch | ANTON PARTSCH + fleur de lys PARTSCH + THERESIENFELD on the socket rim PARTSCH + EAGLE- SCHUTZMARKE |
| 1850 | 1895 | Johann Partsch II | PARTSCH + EAGLE- SCHUTZMARKE JOHANN PARTSCH IN PERNITZ (see Fig. 8) PARTSCH + : ECHT STEINGUT; SCHUTZMARKE Coat of arms with cross TRILBY Lyre K.K.OEST.UNG.PRIVILEGIUM |
| 1895 | 1921/33 | Sigmund Seiler & Co | S.SEILER + : ECHT STEINGUT CONSPLE (ie Constantinople) SCHUTZMARKE Coat of arms with cross Lyre TAKACS SEILER |

Table 2: A putative list of owners and marks for the Partsch factory.



Figure 5: Front view of House No. 48, the factory building, in 2008 (photograph by the author).



Figure 6: Rear view of House No. 48, in 2008 (photograph by the author).



Figure 7: The ZU THERESIENFELD mark around the socket rim (photograph by the author).



Figure 8: JOH. PARTSCH/ IN PERNITZ stamp on the side of the socket [see Table 2 above] (photograph by the author).

Primary sources

NÖ-Landesregierung Landesarchiv ,Grundbuch Theresienfeld, 82/2.

NÖ-Landesregierung Landesarchiv, Privilegien-Register, Gr.A, HS 10/3, fol. 38.

Sohm, Edwin: *Ortsgeschichte von Theresienfeld*, unveröffentl. Mscr. 1954-56, Exist. bei Marktgemeinde Theresienfeld.

Magistrat der Stadt Wien, Wiener Stadt-und Landesarchiv, Handelsregister HR A 32/229.

Allgemeine Österreichische Gewerbs-Produkten-Ausstellung im Jahre 1845, Wien.

Secondary source

Katzer, E., 1998, 'Die Erzeugung von Tabakspfeifen', in *Unsere Neustadt Blätter des Wiener Neustädter Denkmalschutzvereins*, 42.Jg., Folge 1.

Acknowledgements

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