

GLASS AND ALCHEMY AT OBERSTOCKSTALL

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE LABORATORY EQUIPMENT

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THE CHYMICAL LABORATORY

- Operated in the second half of the **16th century** and was attached to the sacristy of a castle.
- One of the most comprehensive collections of early modern chymical **apparatus**.
- Specialised in assay of gold and silver ores, operations included:

Fusion in triangular crucibles

Refining in scorifiers and bone ash cupels to separate base from noble metals

Distillation of mineral acids

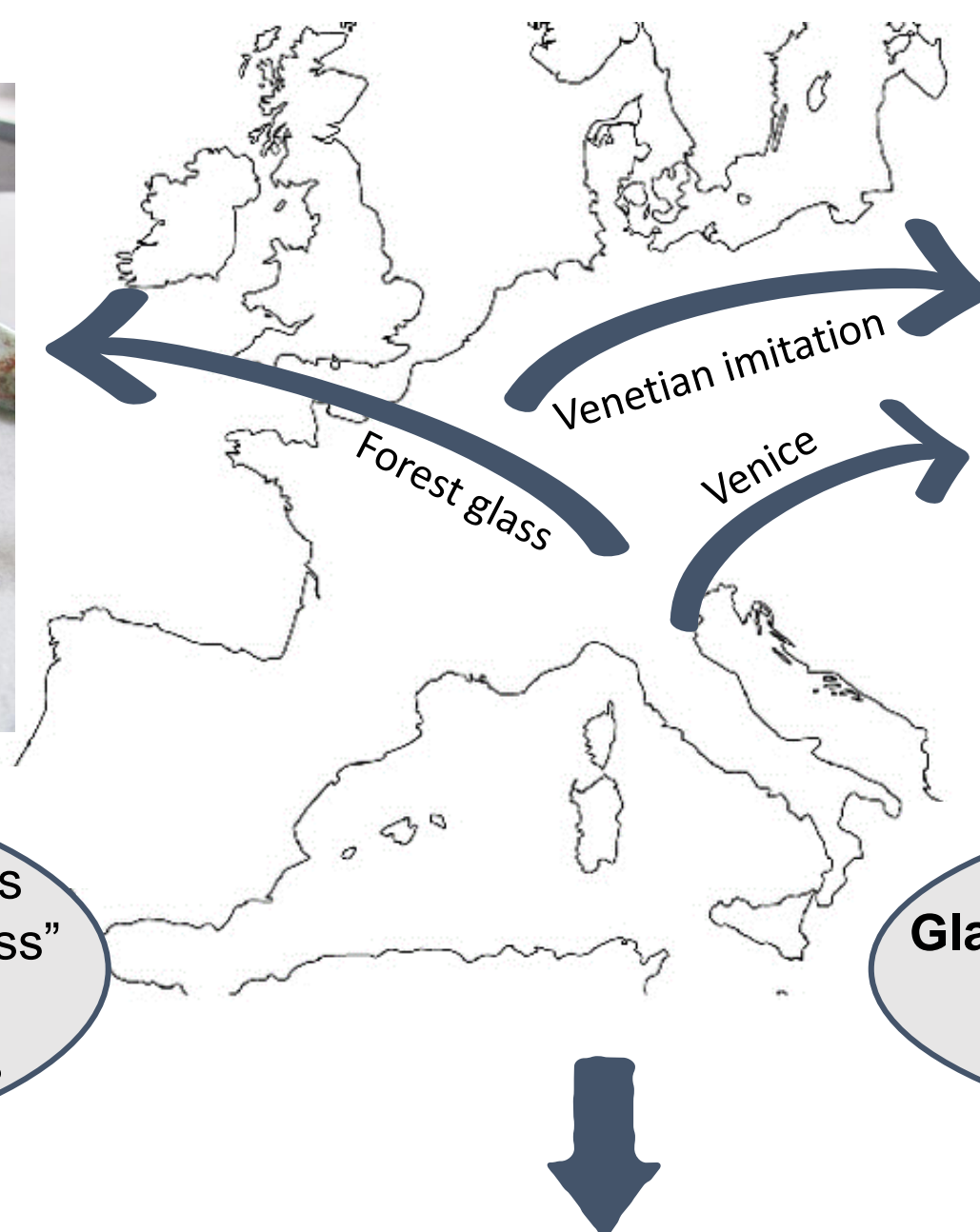


The crucibles were imported from renown German manufacturers of high-quality technical ceramic.

And the glass vessels? To explore how the laboratory sourced the glass equipment some fragments were analysed to establish their provenance.

Different types of objects were found to be made with different types of glass...

NON-SPECIALISED TOOLS



SPECIALISED TOOLS



What for: Bottles and other containers
Glass type: Potassium-rich "Forest glass"
Where from: Local production
Properties: Dark colour, thicker, less resistant

What for: Distillation vessels
Glass type: Sodium-rich Venetian or imitations
Where from: Venice and elsewhere
Properties: Clear, thin, more resistant

Acknowledgments

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- The distillation vessels – like the crucibles - were sourced from the best manufacturers. The higher transparency offered better visual control over the chemical reactions.
- High-quality specialised tools were key players in early modern chymical practice, pushing experimentation and contributing to the development of new theories and better technologies.