



The „Elephant“

A long journey

The name of the "Elephant": The Hotel "Elephant" is a legend. Its success is due to its cultivated, family hospitality and a great history. Countless visitors have stood fascinated in front of the hotel facade and admired at the image of the exotic animal. The elephant's journey from distant India to the Alps is one of the small wonders of European history. The fresco stands for the encounter between the Occident and the Orient, as a symbol of the unity of the world.

The story of a journey: The arrival of the elephant in Brixen is historically attested. The animal was a gift from the Portuguese King John III for his nephew, Archduke Maximilian of Austria, to whom his uncle had given an elephant from his Indian colonies. The ship journey from Lisbon to Genoa was no pleasure for the elephant, and certainly not the long walk towards the Alps. But the people along the way experienced his arrival as a sensation.

Bishops and cardinals applauded him in Trento and he was greeted in triumph in Bolzano. Even in the small town of Bressanone, the townspeople stood on guard when the elephant marched in with a large entourage shortly before Christmas 1551.



From Brixen to Vienna: For the guesthouse, which was soon to bear his name, his arrival was a stroke of luck. The innkeeper Andrä Posch accommodated the elephant for 14 days until it moved on to the north on January 2, 1552. Via Innsbruck and Hall, across the Inn and Danube, the pachyderm reached the capital Vienna in May 1552. The long journey was followed by a short stay: the poor animal died in December 1553 in the menagerie in Kaiserebersdorf, where it perished from incorrect feeding and probably also from homesickness.

Onward journey after death: After the elephant's death, its journey was not yet over. Its front foot was removed and the bones were reshaped into an elaborate chair, which can still be seen today in Kremsmünster Abbey. Maximilian presented the rest of the mummy to the Bavarian Duke Albrecht, who included the stuffed pachyderm in his display collections. It survived for around 400 years as part of the Bavarian National Museum.

But the memory of the elephant lives on: in Linz, Wasserburg and Vienna, small monuments bear witness to its passage. And his host in Brixen, the innkeeper Andrä Posch, soon renamed the guesthouse "Am Hellephanten" and had a fresco in bright colors painted on the wall.

History and future: The name Elefant is the guiding symbol of our hotel: quality and longevity are the hallmarks of the "Elephant's" hospitality. Quality in the offer, family care for our guests and a sense of tradition: the business was last sold in 1773 and has been family-owned ever since. Our history obliges us to take care of the future. The journey of the "Elephant" is far from over. We would be delighted if you would accompany us on this journey.

The Heiss-Falk family