

SOME EARLY PEWTER CANDLESTICKS

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DURING excavations in March, 1930, on the site of an old plumber's shop in Newborough, Scarborough, Yorkshire, a labourer's spade struck, slightly scarred and brought to light the rare pewter candlestick illustrated in No. i.

That is all that is known of its history. It came to me to be "vetted," and subsequently found a safe resting place in the collection of my friend, Mr. Lewis Clapperton, C.A., of Glasgow.

It seemed probable, from the photograph which reached me before the actual piece arrived, that here was a discovery of front-rank importance. Subsequent examination more than confirmed the good impression created, and it was therefore with very real pleasure that I was able to send the advice:

"Quite safe to buy at anything up to £ . . ."

It represents one of the rarest of all pewter candlestick types. So rare, indeed, that at the time my book, *Old Pewter: Its Makers and Marks*, was published, in July, 1929, I had not come across a single example worthy of illustrating, although since then four or five have been brought to my notice. Some 7½ in. high, this wonderful example has a basal diameter of 5⅝ in. Bruised and battered though it is, it is a treasure of a high order, and the stem-knop, which appears to be of polygonal section,



No. 1.—"SALT-BASED" CANDLESTICK EXCAVATED AT SCARBOROUGH, YORKSHIRE, IN 1930. CIRCA 1590-1610
7½ IN. HIGH BELONGING TO MR. LEWIS CLAPPERTON

is so only through bumps and long usage, for it was originally circular, as are all the other members of the piece.

Age and contact with the earth have given to it a delightful patination which none but the greatest vandal would contemplate removing. I make no hesitation about that statement, for, out-and-out advocate though I am for cleaning, where sheer corrosion is concerned, I regard the removal of patination, pure and simple, as little short of a crime. For patination is merely a coating, or skin, acquired at the hand of time, whereas corrosion is a disease, pitting like a canker into the metal itself.

As with many early pewter types, we have to seek the genesis of this type across the English Channel, and there we get some rays of light

upon our subject. By courtesy of the Authorities of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, I am enabled to reproduce here, in No. ii., three of the "Heemskerck" candlesticks, the history of which is as follows. In the year 1596, an attempt to reach China by the Northern Asian route was made by a Dutch expedition under the command of Jacob van Heemskerck and Willem Barendtsz. The expedition started from Amsterdam, but got no further than Nova Zembla, where the winter was spent. Barendtsz perished, and the remainder managed to get back to Holland

only after incredible sufferings. A litter of objects was left behind, some in a very battered condition, others showing only the ravages of wind and cold rather than the wear of legitimate use.

Nearly three centuries later, in 1876, these relics were discovered by a captain from Hammerfest and a certain Dr. Gardiner from Goring, Oxford, who returned them to Holland where these proud witnesses to an heroic effort found a safe and appreciative home in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Amongst other interesting pewter articles, there are some twenty candlesticks and many fragments. Placing the facts before my learned Continental collaborator, Mr. Robert M. Vetter, of Amsterdam, he wrote me as follows: "This type is known here as *Kraagkandelaar*, i.e., 'collar-candlestick,' and occurs chiefly in brass. Most of these candlesticks date from *circa* 1600 or earlier, as may be demonstrated from paintings and from the Heemskerk relics. They existed in bronze in the sixteenth century, and are not infrequently met with."

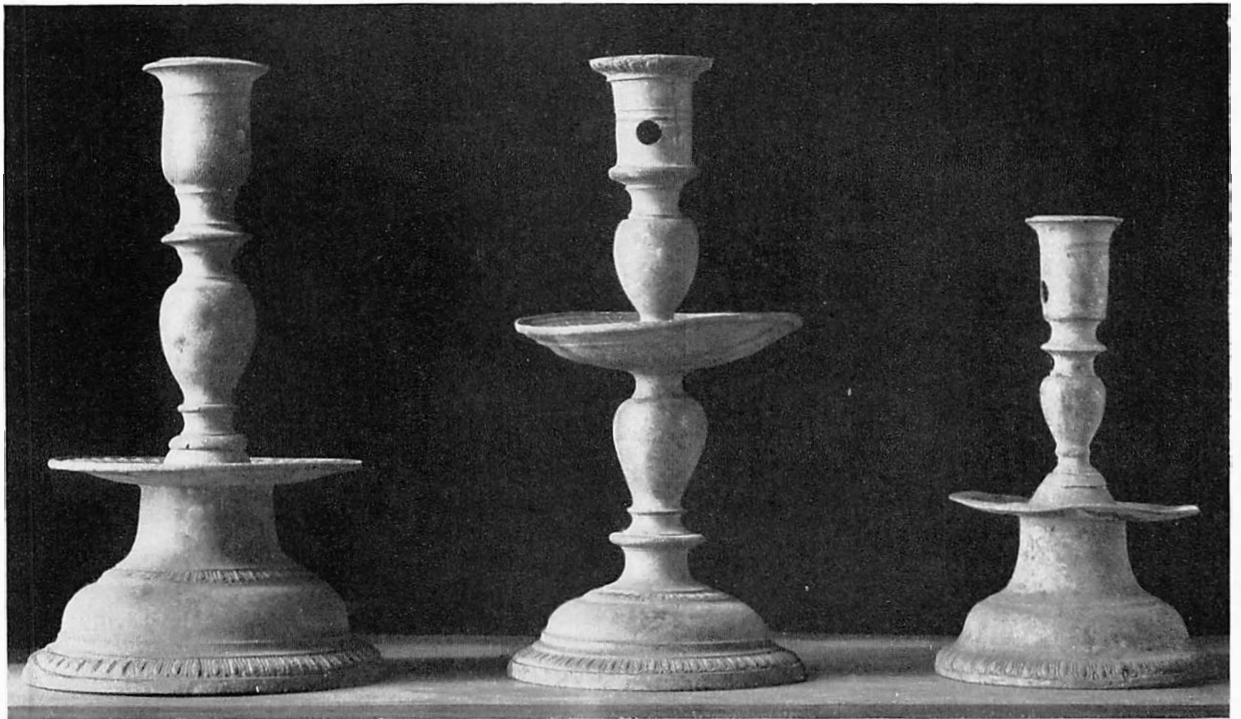
Here, then, we have definite proof that this type was firmly established in pewter before the end of the sixteenth century, further proof being afforded by contemporary paintings. By way of circumstantial evidence, I may cite the fact that, whereas many examples of what are known to collectors

as *Jacobean* candlesticks are in existence (*vide Old Pewter: Its Makers and Marks*, pp. 89-92), not one of the types discussed under Nos. i., iii., iv., xii., xiii. and xv. was then available for me to illustrate there.

Two of the other examples to which I have referred came to light some little while ago when Mr. Richard Neate, of London, acquired a unique collection of seventeenth-century examples which he described in a carefully reasoned article in the *Book of Antiques*, 1928, and to him I return my thanks for the photographs reproduced in Nos. iii., iv. and v. These, as stated in Mr. Neate's article, are in reality tapersticks, *not* candlesticks, the tallest of them (No. v.) being but $4\frac{1}{8}$ in., while that in No. iv. is but $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.

The more definite mouldings on the little treasures in Nos. iii. and iv. place them at a slightly later date than Mr. Clapperton's example, and probably that in No. iv. is slightly later than No. iii. One feels tempted to hazard the dates as follows: No. i., *circa* 1590-1610; No. iii., *circa* 1625; No. iv., *circa* 1635-1640.

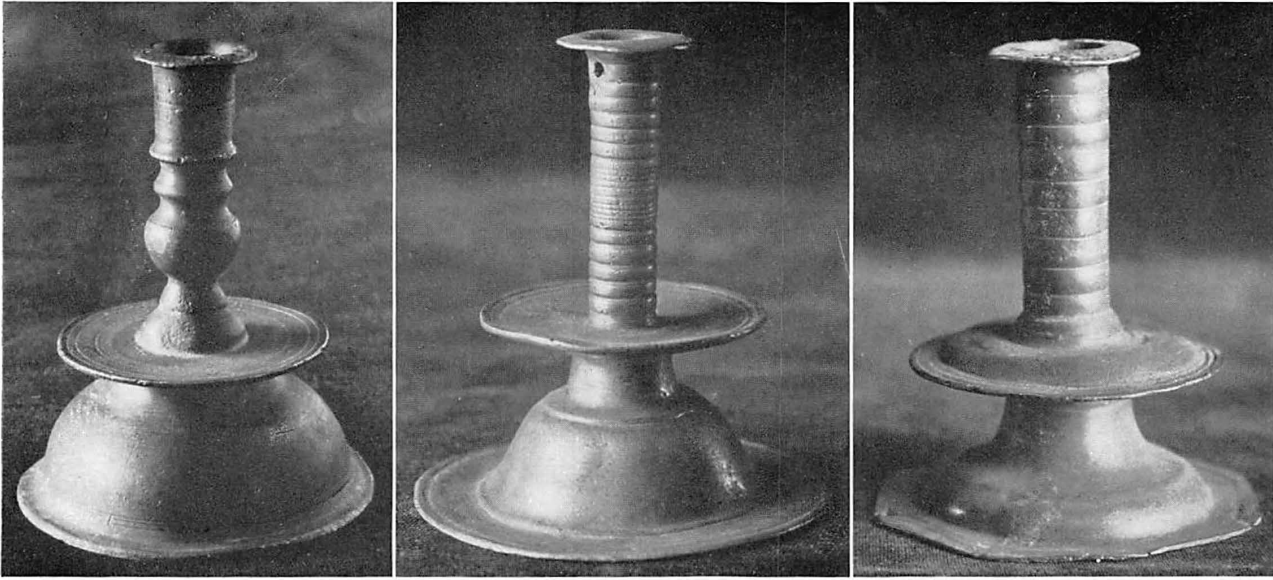
Though not truly within the sequence of the types under consideration, one must include Nos. v. and vi., for the evident inspiration which the latter draws from No. iv., while No. v. is very interesting in that with the large circular grease tray of the



No. II.—THREE CANDLESTICKS ABANDONED IN NOVA ZEMBLA BY THE HEEMSKERK EXPEDITION IN 1596

RIJKSMUSEUM

Some Early Pewter Candlesticks

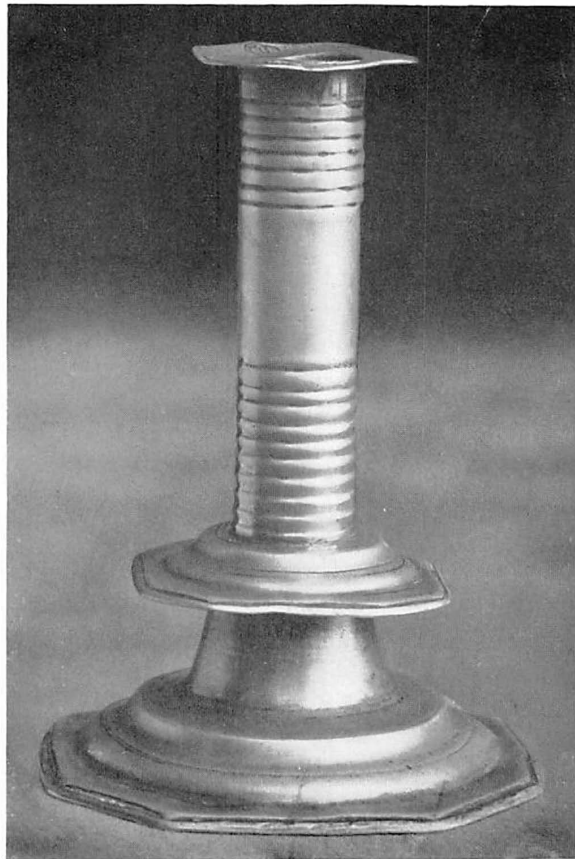


Nos. III, IV, AND V.—THREE TAPERSTICKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF MR. RICHARD SEATE. No. III (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ IN. HIGH) IS OF ABOUT 1625; No. IV, (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ IN.) ABOUT 1635-1640; WHILE NO. V, (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ IN.) COMBINES THE LARGE CIRCULAR GREASE TRAY SEEN IN NOS. III, AND IV, WITH THE OCTAGONAL BASE SEEN IN NO. VI. ALL THREE ARE OF THE "SALT-BASED" TYPE.

foregoing types is amalgamated the octagonal base of type No. vi., which latter is in the collection of Mr. Walter Churcher, London.

An example from the collection of the late Mr. Antonio de Navarro, F.S.A., of Broadway, similar to that shown in No. iii., but differing from it materially at the junction of the stem with the grease tray, is given at No. xii.

An extremely rare and graceful type is shown in No. xiii., from the collection of Mr. Melvyn H. Rollason, of Lapworth. This fine piece is some 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. high. It is twice marked within the bell with a small touch, the type of lettering in which proclaims its early date, and one has little hesitation in vouching for its British origin, for it is entirely unlike the continental



No. VI.—CANDLESTICK WITH OCTAGONAL BASE SIMILAR TO TAPERSTICK No. V., AND OCTAGONAL MOULDED COLLAR AT JUNCTION OF SHAFT TO FOOT: WALTER CHURCHER COLL.

marks of the period, whereas it subscribes in every particular to British traditions. One feels safe in placing it as *not later* than the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

In No. xv. is given a further example of similar type, some 8 in. in height, and the same period, from the collection of Mr. Alfred B. Yeates, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., of London.

Yet another style which must be considered is illustrated in No. xiv. from the collection of Mrs. Carvick Webster, of Monkton. Here all leaning towards the domed base has been abandoned in favour of one with splayed outsides—an eminently practical, firmly set and dignified accomplishment. This fine example, which is 11 in. high and has a base spread of

8 in., bears the well-known touch of Robert Marten, of London, who was at work from *circa* 1640 until his death in 1674; so if we put the type between 1650-1660 we cannot be very wide of the truth.

And now, what conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing? As a preliminary, attention must be first called to a fact well-known to all serious students, *i.e.*, the old pewterers' habit of using one mould for several purposes owing to their high cost. Now if we compare the base of the candlestick illustrated in No. vii. with the salt in No. viii., we are at once struck by the resemblance between the latter and the base of the former.



No. VII.—CANDLESTICK, BASE OF WHICH WAS PROBABLY MADE FROM THE SAME MOULD AS THE SALT SHOWN BELOW (NO. VIII.) COLLECTION OF THE LATE MR. ANTONIO DE NAVARRO, F.S.A.

Again, if we compare the stems of the three objects shown in Nos. ix., x. and xi., what do we see? First, in No. ix. we see the stem of a candlestick; second, the same inverted to form the stem of a ciborium (No. x.); and finally, in No. xi., the same used twice—once inverted—to form a tall candlestick. Is not the inference obvious?

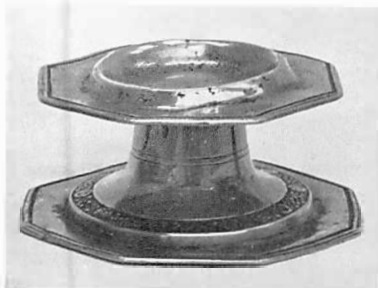
That the salt in No. xvi. was used for the base of a footed plate I can vouch for, because I persuaded the owner to let me have them separated, which he did and so had two perfect and rare pieces in place of one, each more interesting alone than in their conjoined state.

No. VIII.—SALT, FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE MR. ANTONIO DE NAVARRO *CF.* THE BASE OF NO. VII.

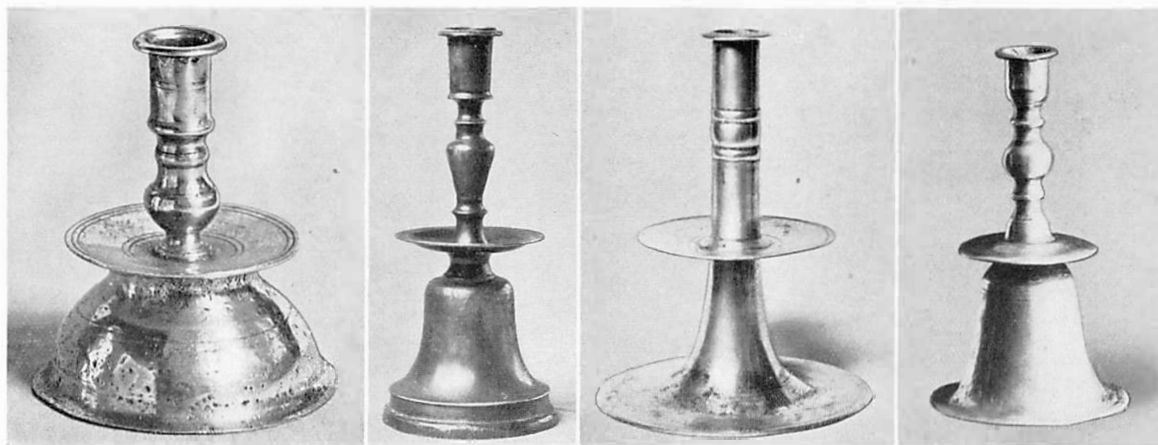
No. IX.—DOMESTIC CANDLESTICK MADE FROM A MOULD SIMILAR TO THAT USED FOR THE STEM OF NO. X.

No. X.—A CIBORIUM, THE STEM OF WHICH IS A CASTING—INVERTED—FROM A CANDLESTICK MOULD. *CF.* NO. IX.

No. XI.—PRICKET ALTAR CANDLESTICK WITH STEM MADE OF TWO CASTINGS FROM A SIMILAR MOULD.



Some Early Pewter Candlesticks



No. XII.—CANDLESTICK FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE MR. ANTONIO DE NAVARRO (COMPARE NO. III.)
 No. XIII.—“BELL-BASED” (10 $\frac{3}{4}$ IN.) ENGLISH LATE SIXTEENTH OR EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENT. MR. M. H. ROLLASON
 No. XIV.—“TRUMPET-BASED” (11 IN.) MADE BY ROBERT MARTEN (LONDON) CIRCA 1650-1660 MRS. CARVICK WEBSTER
 No. XV.—“BELL-BASED” (8 IN.) NOT LATER THAN FIRST QUARTER OF SEVENTEENTH CENT. MR. ALFRED B. YEATES

From the foregoing it is easy to see how these things were made to serve a double, and sometimes a third and a fourth, purpose. And if, as I hope, so much is proved, may we not infer that here, in the bases of the candlesticks illustrated in Nos. i., ii. (left and right), iii., xii., xiii. and xv., we have some sure indication of what the pewter salts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were like in appearance? Almost the first thought which strikes one on looking at these fine pieces is that their bases were cast from salt-moulds, put to a second use. In our researches into pewter-evolution, Mr. Vetter and myself are constantly coming up against instances of such things, for evidence of which one quite often seeks in vain in one's own country.

All the types shown in Nos. i., ii. (right and left), iii., iv. and xii.-xv. are roughly grouped by collectors under the all-embracing term, *Bell-base* candlesticks, and this has been good enough so far, but in view of recent

discoveries such loose nomenclature urges me to suggest the adoption of some more clearly defined titles. I think it will at once be conceded that the only two possible candidates for the term *Bell-based* are those illustrated in Nos. xiii. and xv. No. xiv. may surely be known, and without mentally confusing it with any other type, as *Trumpet-based*; while those in Nos. i., ii. (left and right), iii.-vii. and xii. would find their most fitting home under the title of *Salt-based* candlesticks, from which generic title there is, of course, nothing to exclude examples shown as Nos. xiii. and xv., too.

The deep, saucer-like drip-trays in Nos. i. and xiii., each of which is furnished with a flat brim some $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in width, are almost identical, and, bearing in mind that salt was expensive in those days and but small quantities were used, would they not both be eminently suitable as salt-cellars on the “bordes” of their time?



No. XVI.—SALT THIS WAS AT ONE TIME

USED AS THE BASE OF A FOOTED PLATE