
Koopman Rare Art

Director's Choice Baron Arundell's Exceptional Candlesticks



An Exceptional Pair of Charles II Candlesticks

London, circa 1670, by Jean Cooqus

Maker's mark struck three times, JC in cipher (Jackson, p. 134)

These exquisite 17th Century candlesticks are so beautiful in their 'French style' and historically interesting with their association with Baron Arundell that they are truly worthy of note in this weeks Director's Choice. To have graced the bedchamber at Wardour Castle, if indeed part of a more extensive toilet service and to bear the hallmark of Jean Gerard Cooqus is quite remarkable. So few pieces outside the royal collection bear the touch mark of this exceptional goldsmith. The quality is to be noted too with the candlesticks weighing some 43 oz 1 dwt.

Provenance:

Henry, 3rd Baron Arundell of Wardour (d. 1694);

Anon, sale, Christie's London, 23 November 1977, lot 174;

Acquired from S.J. Phillips, April 1978

Exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

'The Grand Gallery', CINOA, 1974-5, catalogue p. 249

(lent by D.S. Lavender Ltd)

The cast candlesticks stand on square bases modelled in relief with cherubs and swags of fruit. The stems are formed as square fluted columns chased with vertical bands of foliage and husks. They are engraved on the base with a crest and coronet.



The below three paragraphs are taken from Timothy Schroder's Renaissance and Baroque Silver, Mounted Porcelain and Ruby Glass from the Zilkha Collection pages 166 & 168.

Well before the influx of Huguenot refugees at the end of the seventeenth century, aristocratic English silver started to reflect French taste. In most cases this was limited to decorative styles and techniques, but occasionally French forms were followed too. These candlesticks are entirely French in style and are of a type made in Paris from at least 1664, where they were known as flambeaux carrés (square candlesticks). Their size and decoration suggest that they may originally have been part of a toilet service.

The crest engraved on the candlesticks is very worn and has been deliberately, though imperfectly, erased. It appears, however, to be a wolf passant beneath a baron's coronet and as such must be for Henry, 3rd Baron Arundell of Wardour, who succeeded his father in 1648 and died in 1694. Arundell was one of the leading English Roman Catholics of his time and his career followed a roller-coaster path. He was a prominent royalist during the Civil War but, being on the losing side, had all his property confiscated in 1645.

Repossessed after the Restoration, he went on sensitive diplomatic missions to France, including one to arrange the funeral of Charles II's mother, Queen Henrietta Maria, in 1669. But Arundell later spent five years imprisoned in the Tower of London after being named by

Titus Oates as one of the conspirators in an alleged plot to assassinate the king.

Rehabilitated once more under James II, he was appointed to the Privy Council and became Lord Privy Seal in 1687.

Arundell's diplomatic missions would have exposed him to the latest court styles in France and perhaps influenced his taste in silver. If the candlesticks had belonged to a toilet service its overall character may have resembled that of the sumptuous Paris service of 1669-71 at Chatsworth which has very similar candlesticks. The Chatsworth service was made for James II's sister, later Queen Mary II (d. 1694), wife of William III. The crest on these sticks suggests that the service, if such it was, was made for Arundell's wife, Cecily Compton, whom he married in 1632 and whose death in 1676 provides a terminus ante quem for the candlesticks.



Toilet service, silver-gilt, Paris, 1669-71, marks of Pierre Prévost
Jean-Gerard Cooqus

For the last century the maker's mark seen on the present pair of candlesticks has been interpreted and recorded as a 'cypher GC', and occasionally as a 'cypher IC'. This was the case when these candlesticks were sold at Christie's, London, 23 November 1977, lot 174.

Despite the mark appearing on finely executed works with distinctly continental stylistic influences, a specific identity was never associated with the hallmark. Concurrently, scholars were baffled by accounts of a Liège-born silversmith known as John Cooqus (d. 1697), who was commissioned to fashion an elaborate bed for Nell Gwynn (1650-1687), mistress of Charles II. The extraordinary opulence of the bed is bewildering to our modern sensibilities. Cherubs modelled after Gwynn's two sons by King Charles II adorned the posts, which stemmed from crouching African slaves and were topped by crowned eagles.

A silver figure of a tight-rope dancer, Jacob Hall, the contemporary lover of Gwynn, balanced on a wire while a fully modelled head of the king himself, its weight equal to that of 'a fully grown cat' presided over the headboard and the bed's occupants slumbering beneath. Although the bed unfortunately no longer exists, likely melted posthumously by Gwynn's bankers to settle her debts, an incredibly detailed itemized invoice dated 1674 documents the enormous scale of the bed and its decoration.

The mysterious Cooqus was known to be the son-in-law of Christian van Vianen (c. 1600-1667), son of celebrated silversmith Adam van Vianen and nephew of the equally illustrious Paul van Vianen. Having received his first commission from Charles I in 1630, Christian moved to London two years later and remained there until about 1643. He, like other foreign silversmiths, did not register his own mark at Goldsmiths' Hall. He either signed his work or occasionally he had it marked and submitted for assay by registered English silversmiths. It may also be that Christian's position as a royal goldsmith employed directly by the King allowed him not to mark some of his productions.

In 1661 Cooqus succeeded his father-in-law as Silversmith in Ordinary to the King. While the works of Cooqus and van Vianen were reported to have been masterful, hallmarks linking them to known pieces remained elusive. In 1935 E. Alfred Jones wrote 'Although I have made a prolonged study of all the Royal plate at Windsor Castle, the Tower of London and the Chapel Royal, St. James Palace, I have failed to identify any vessels which can be assigned definitely to the hands of Christian van Vianen, or indeed to another goldsmith

from the Netherlands, John Cooqus, who made the silver bedstead and other plate, provided by Charles II for Nell Gwynn.'

It would be another eight decades before the mystery was unravelled by Matthew Winterbottom, Curator of Sculpture and Decorative Art at the Ashmolean Museum, who realized that the mark was not GC or IC but IGC for Jean-Gerard Cooqus, the silversmith's Flemish name. Undoubtedly the Royal Collection retains numerous works that can be attributed to Cooqus, however his works existing outside the Royal Collection are incredibly rare. In addition to the present pair of candlesticks, works include a jug in the Rijksmuseum (its unmarked mate attributed to Christian van Vianen), and a fully hallmarked oval dish featuring bellflower swags similar to these candlesticks were with Koopman Rare Art when we acquired the Albert Collection in 2008. Cooqus has also been suggested as the possible maker of an auricular cup and cover in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



*A Charles II Dish commissioned for Catherine Thanet wife of the sixth Earl of Thanet
London, 1683 by Jean-Gerard Cooqus
Formerly in the Koopman Rare Art Collection*

The Candlesticks:

Following the Restoration in 1660, it became fashionable to dine in the evening. This trend in-turn increased the demand for table candlesticks and sconces. Blackwell, Blanchard and Fowle introduced a novel form of candlestick akin to those found in the inventory of Louis XIV. These 'French' style candlesticks featured generous chased square bases rising to everted square flanges. The banded stems were generally decorated with vertical festoons, as seen on the present candlesticks and similar to those in Louis XIV's inventory, or narrow clusters of columns.

David Mitchell in *Silversmiths in Elizabethan and Stuart London* (London, 2017, p. 155), illustrates a French candlestick by Pierre Masse, Paris, 1664 and a nearly identical London made candlestick by William Harrison, c. 1670 featuring chased square bases and banded column stems. Mitchell notes that twenty candlesticks made between 1660-1679 appear in the Goldsmiths' Company Court Books, 1560-1679 (ibid., p. 154).



Paire de flambeaux carrés en argent dits "à la financière", probably by René Maurice,
Paris, 1678-1679

Demonstrating the influence on Lord Arundell's English pair of candlesticks.

Henry Arundell, 3rd Baron Arundell of Wardour (1607-1694), whose crest is possibly engraved on the present candlesticks, performed diplomatic missions in France following the Restoration. His exposure to French silver may have influenced his commissions upon his return to England. The smaller scale of the Zilkha's candlesticks suggest that they may have been part of a toilet service; a 1669 service with similar 'French' style candlesticks was made for Queen Mary II and are presently at Chatsworth. It is conceivable that the Zilkha's candlesticks may have been part of a toilet service made for Arundell's wife, Cecily Compton (1610-1676).



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