



An Early English Sweet Meat Dish

Charles II

Possibly London, 1669

Width: 24.3 cm, 9 1/2 in.

Height: 2.4 cm, 0.94 in.

Weight: 168 g, 5 oz 8 dwt

Embossed with floral elements, lines and dots on the bowl and handles. Stippled inscription to centre 'M.S. 1669'.

These, also known as 'saucers', were well known in the 16th and 17th centuries, but in general few survive before the reign of Charles I. They may either be oval or round, usually having two shell handles, and are seldom more than 8 in. (20-4 cm.) in diameter. Their decoration often consists of coarsely punched fluting, pellets and flowers. Later examples of the 1650s favour more geometrical ornament but seem to die out after the Restoration. During the same period a large number of small, approximately 3 in. (8.9 cm.) in diameter, shallow, two-handled bowls appear. These, said to have been wine tasters, could indeed be such, but could equally well have been used as sweetmeat dishes and for a multitude of other purposes. Various sauces were mixed at the table by the individual and this is probably the most likely original use of these dishes, as well as the most obvious.