

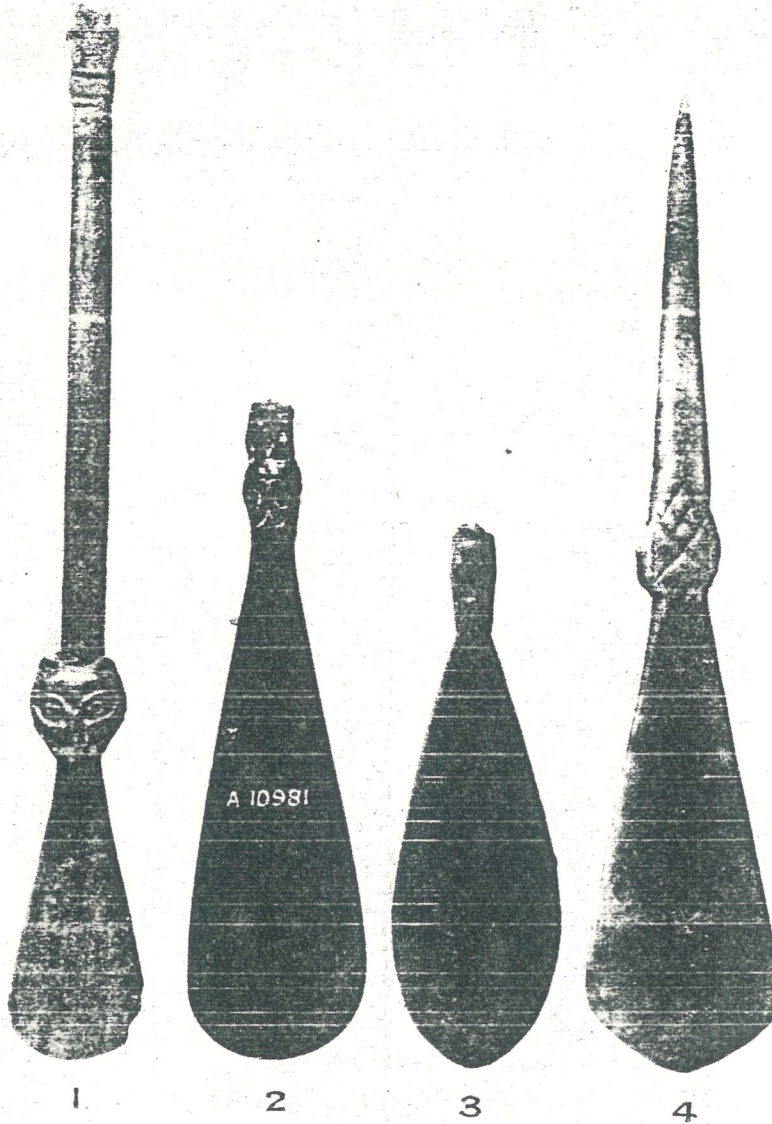
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London, 1960, 4th print 1975

catalogued by J.B. Ward Perkins and ms Janet
Russell
p. 127 - 134

SPOONS

(i) 11th-13th centuries

Spoons of the earlier Middle Ages are extremely rare. A limited number of silver examples are known of the same general form as the Coronation spoon, and some features of these, e.g. the form of the stem, are derived from types current in this country as early as the late 9th century. The derivation, however, of the animal's head which grips the bowl at the base of the stem is uncertain. Most of the known examples seem to belong to the close of the 12th century, but a bronze specimen in the Guildhall Museum, found in London, is of 13th-century date. In Scandinavia derivatives of the English type lasted on as late as the 15th century; but in this country this class of spoon seems to have had a very restricted use and to have had little or no effect upon the types current in the later Middle Ages.



Early-medieval bone spoons from London (1).

It is possible that in the 12th and 13th centuries spoons of bone, horn, and wood were in common use, as they were in Scandinavia (S. Grieg, *Middelalderiske Byfund fra Bergen og Oslo*, pp. 102-5; but datable examples are rare. The four spoons from London illustrated on Pl. XXV are obviously related to the Coronation-spoon type; but in the absence of dated examples it is hard to say whether the head at the base of the stem is the precursor of that on the 12th-century silver spoons or merely the humble contemporary.

(See J. B. Ward Perkins, "A Thirteenth Century Spoon in the Guildhall Museum," *Antiquaries Journal*, XIX, 1939, 313-6; P. Nørlund, *En Dobbeltske i sølvefundet fra Ribe, Ostermark, Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, 1935, 117 ff.)

A 10981. Bone spoon, stem missing, the long, narrow bowl very flat and grasped by an animal's head. Pl. XXV, No. 2. From the Thames, Brentford. (*London and the Vikings* (*London Museum Catalogue*), p. 50, Fig. 28, 6.)

A 21384. Bone spoon, with short, pointed stem and long, narrow, flat bowl. At the junction of stem and bowl a boss derivative from an animal's head. Pl. XXV, No. 4. From King William Street.

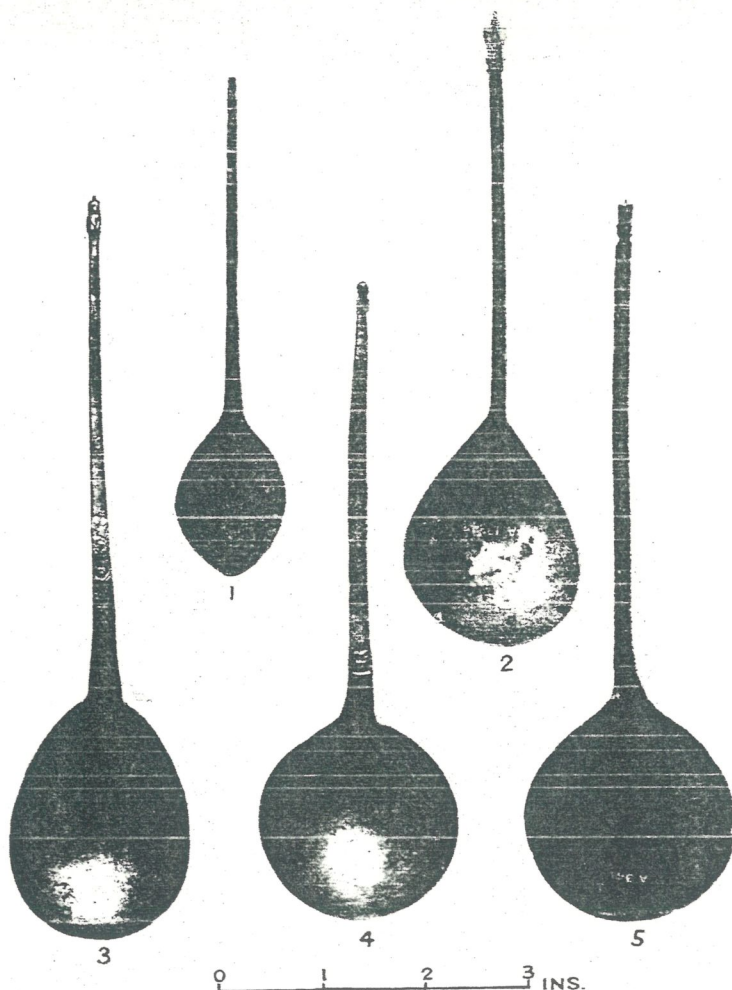
37.56. Bone spoon, the stem ending in a trefoil ornament, the short, narrow, flat bowl grasped by an animal's head. Pl. XXV, No. 1. From the City. (*London and the Vikings*, p. 50, Fig. 28, 5.)

Also illustrated (from the collection of the Society of Antiquaries):

Bone spoon, stem missing, the narrow, flat bowl grasped by an animal's head. Plate XXV, No. 3. From London.

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PLATE XXVI.



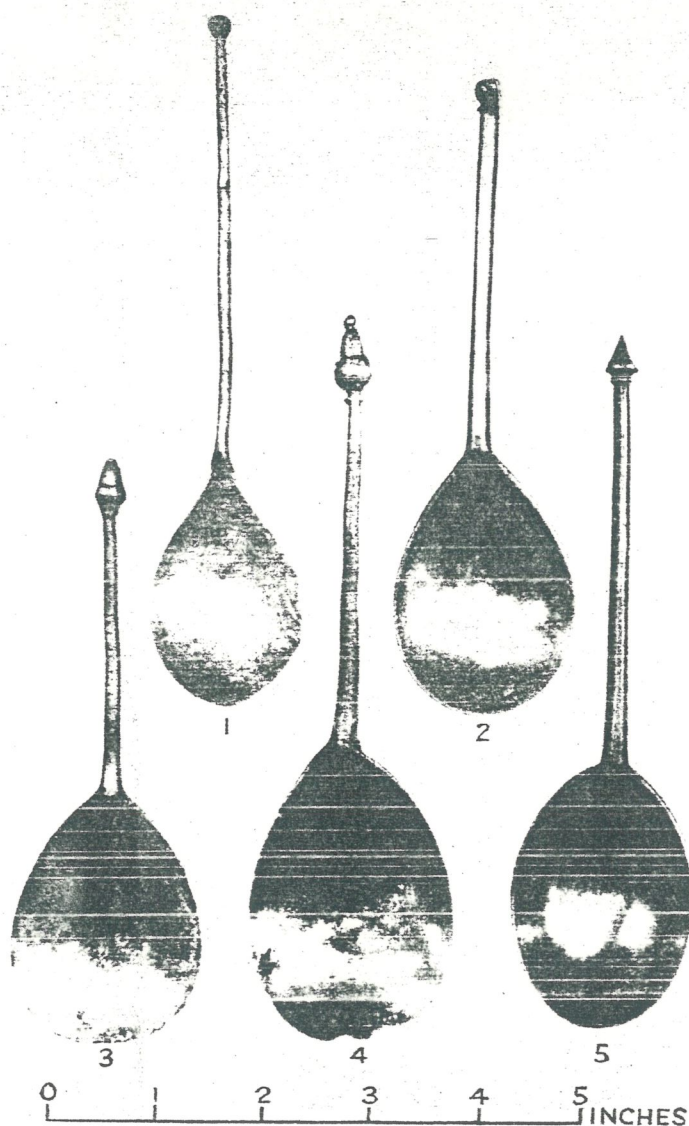
Late-medieval spoons from London.

(ii) 14th-15th centuries

Practically nothing is known about the development of the characteristic late medieval spoon, with its pear-shaped bowl, slender stem, and decorative knop, from the spoons of the preceding period. The earliest recorded reference to silver domestic spoons is in the will of Martin de St. Cross in 1259, and it is unlikely that any of our surviving silver spoons of characteristic later medieval form date from earlier than the end of the 13th century. Throughout the Middle Ages the spoons most generally in use must have been of wood, horn, or bone. Silver was a rarity and an investment for the average household, described and bequeathed in wills as an important part of a gentleman's estate. However, by 1481 the presumably prosperous knight, Sir Thomas Lyttelton, is the possessor of several dozen spoons of varying quality which he distributes among his heirs.

PLATE XXVII.

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Late-medieval spoons from London.

1, A 3405; 2, A 19183; 3, A 3493; 4, A 3494; 5, 38.277.

The earliest silver spoons to be described are the "twelve silver spoons with akernes" mentioned in a will of 1351. This form of knob would appear to be the earliest and most popular. Diamond points are not mentioned until the 15th century, while the first published reference to Maidenhead spoons is an inventory of Durham Priory written in 1446. This type of spoon which is very common in the 15th and 16th centuries, has a knob in the form of a female bust, supposedly the Virgin Mary. Strawberry knobs are first mentioned in a will of 1440, and spoons with writhen knobs are described in Robert Morton's inventory in 1487. But these are only the more common varieties. Various fancy knobs were also in use, e.g. the "Woodwose" or wild-man spoon in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Spoons of the lion sejant type and some of the earliest Apostle spoons date from the latter part of the 15th century.

Throughout the period, pewter and latten spoons were used, but owing to the more durable nature of the material, the latter have survived more frequently than the former. One pewter spoon in the Museum, probably of the 15th century, has the stem strengthened by an iron rod, a reasonable precaution in view of the light design of so many medieval spoons. There is no reason, however, to believe that many spoons were so treated. According to Hilton Price (*Old Base Metal Spoons*, p. 20) the only surviving pewter spoon which may date from the 13th century is the ball-knob spoon in Pl. XXVII, No. 1. This leaf-shape is probably the earliest form of bowl in all metal spoons (cf. the Taunton spoon, c. 1200, *Antiquaries Journal*, X, 1930, 157), but in most of the surviving early examples it has already developed into the more characteristic pear-shape. Slender spoons with cone and finial knob—the former in latten—have survived only in base metal, but, generally speaking, they follow the same varieties as those in silver. Acorn knobs and Maidenheads are common, but, according to Hilton Price (*loc. cit.*, p. 23), diamond points are rare in pewter and unknown in latten. Some of the Maidenheads are interesting for their representations of contemporary head-dresses, cf. Pl. XXVIII. Many of these spoons have the maker's touch stamped in the bowl or on the stem, e.g. a crown

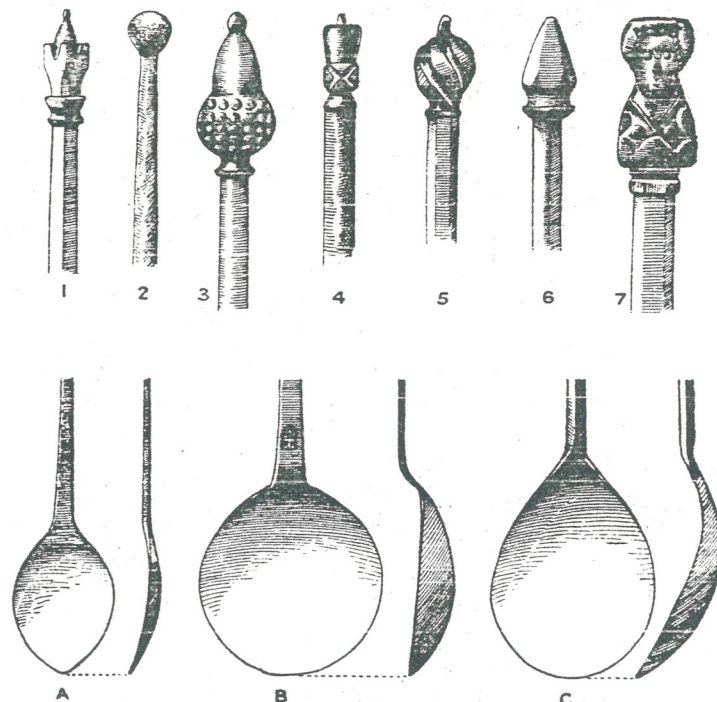


FIG. 41.—Types of medieval knob and bowl.
1, finial; 2, ball; 3, acorn; 4, acorn derivative; 5, writhen;
6, diamond; 7, maidenhead; A, leaf-shaped (early); B, circular
(possibly intermediate); C, fig-shaped (late).

or a fleur-de-lis; but no record of the touches has been preserved, and it is impossible to trace the makers.

It is clear that a rising standard of living during the period resulted in the possession of an increasing variety of metal spoons among the well-to-do classes, and a sufficient number have survived to familiarize us with the more popular types.

See F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*; C. J. Jackson, *History of English Plate*, II, Ch. XVII; Norman Gask, *Old Silver Spoons of England*; Norman Gask, *Connoisseur*, November, 1937, p. 253, *Old Base Metal Spoons*.

FINIAL

A 16759. Latten spoon, round bowl, slender stem, stamped with two fleurs-de-lis, finial knob. Length 7.1 in. Late 14th or early 15th century. Found in London.

A 18343. Latten spoon, fig-shaped bowl, hexagonal stem, finial knob. Length 6.05 in. Pl. XXVI, No. 2. 15th century. Found in Old Queen Street.

A 3481. Latten stem of spoon, hexagonal with finial knob, maker's mark stamped at base. Length 4.7 in. 15th century. Found in London.

ACORN AND DERIVATIVES

A 3494. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl, stamped with maker's mark, the initials A. B., slender round stem and acorn knob. Length 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. Pl. XXVII, No. 4. Late 14th or early 15th century. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, Pl. III.)

A 3493. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl, slender stem, acorn knob. Length 5.6 in. Pl. XXVII, No. 3. Found in London. 15th century. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, Pl. III.)

A 3497. Pewter spoon, part of pear-shaped bowl, hexagonal stem, acorn knob. Length of stem 3 in. 15th century. Found in London.

A 20181. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl stamped with maker's mark, a sun in splendour, hexagonal stem with acorn knob. Length 5.35 in. Pl. XXVI, No. 3. 15th century. London Wall.

A 25421. Pewter spoon, pear-shaped bowl, hexagonal stem with acorn knob. Length 6.9 in. 15th century. Found in London.

A 3495. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl, diamond-shaped stem with acorn knob. Length 5.95 in. 15th century. White's Ground, Bermondsey.

A 27684. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl with hexagonal stem and modified acorn knob. Length 6.1 in. Late 15th century. Found in Wilson Street.

A 3416. Pewter spoon, flattened fig-shaped bowl, hexagonal stem, modified acorn knob, corroded. Length 7 in. Pl. XXVI, No. 5. Found in London.

A 9468. Latten spoon, oval bowl, stem stamped with maker's mark, a crown over a flower, knob derived from acorn. Length 6.1 in. Pl. XXVI, No. 4. 14th or 15th century. Found in London.

A 9469. Latten spoon, fig-shaped bowl, two illegible marks stamped on stem, knob derived from acorn. Length 7.1 in. 14th or 15th century. Found in London.

A 14422. Latten stem of spoon, four-sided, very slender, knob derived from acorn. Length 4.3 in. 15th century. Found in Tooley Street.

MAIDENHEAD

A 16756. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl, stamped with maker's mark, hexagonal stem with maidenhead knob, wearing elaborate head-dress. Length 6.8 in. Pl. XXVIII, No. 2. c. 1450-70. Found in London.

A 3492. Pewter stem, hexagonal, with maidenhead knob. Length 3.8 in. Pl. XXVIII, No. 1. Early 15th century. Found in Worship Street.

A 3486. Pewter stem, hexagonal, with maidenhead knob. Length 4.0 in. Pl. XXVIII, No. 3. c. 1450-70. Found in London.

WRITHEN KNOP

A 3480. Pewter spoon, damaged fig-shaped bowl, gilt writhen knob. Length 5.8 in. Late 15th century. Found in London.

A 3304. Pewter stem; part only, with gilt writhen knob. Length 3.25 in. Late 15th century. Found in Thames Street.

A 20174. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl, stamped with maker's mark, a flower, hexagonal stem with gilt writhen knob. Length 5.8 in. Late 15th or early 16th century. London Wall.

A 19183. Pewter spoon, oval bowl stamped with maker's mark, a flower (?), hexagonal stem with writhen knob. Length 5.9 in. Pl. XXVII, No. 2. Late 15th or early 16th century. Found in Old Queen Street.

DIAMOND KNOP

A 25510. Pewter stem of spoon, hexagonal with diamond knop. Length 3.5 in. 15th century. Found in Wilson Street, Finsbury.

38.277. Pewter spoon, oval bowl, hexagonal stem with diamond knop. Length 6½ in. Pl. XXVII, No. 5. 15th century. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, Pl. IV.)

A 23693. Pewter stem of spoon, diamond shaped, with diamond knop. Length 3.2 in. 15th century. Found in London.

A 346. Pewter spoon, battered fig-shaped bowl, hexagonal stem with diamond knop. Length 6.5 in. 15th century. Found in Westminster.

A 3487. Pewter spoon, round bowl, hexagonal stem with diamond knop. Length 5.7 in. Late 15th century. Found in White's Ground, Bermondsey.

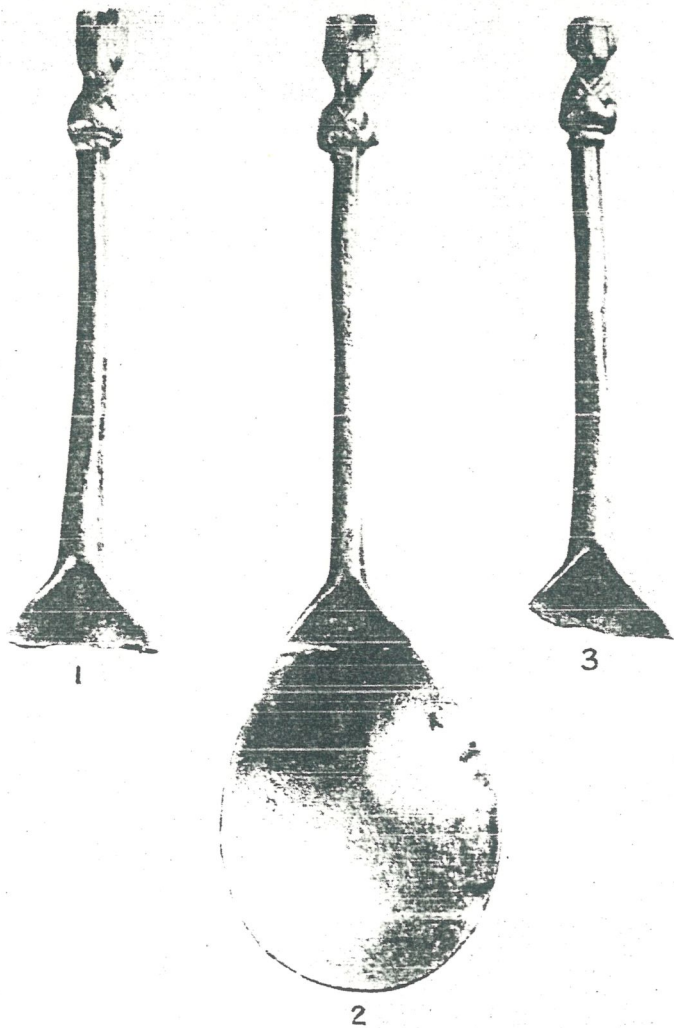
A 3504. Miniature pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl, diamond knop, with small ring fixed to the top; probably made as a toy. Length 2¼ in. long. 15th or 16th century. Found in Worship Street. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, Fig. 7.)

A 23693. Silver spoon, corroded and imperfect, fig-shaped bowl, four-sided stem with diamond knop. Length 6.5 in. 15th century. Found in the Thames at London Bridge.

A 2571. Silver spoon, fig-shaped bowl, diamond-shaped stem and diamond knop showing traces of gilding. Length 6.1 in. 15th century. Found in the Thames at London Bridge.

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PLATE XXVIII.



Maidenhead spoons, 15th century.

1, A 3492; 2, A 16756; 3, A 3486 (3).

A 22442. Silver spoon, fig-shaped bowl, hexagonal stem, diamond knob. Length 6.1 in. 15th century. Found in Moorfields.

VARIOUS

A 3465. Pewter spoon, leaf-shaped bowl, round stem, ball knob. Length 6.3 in. Pl. XXVII, No. 1. 13th to 14th century. Found on Aquarium site, Westminster. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, p. 21.)

A 3496. Pewter spoon, stamped with maker's mark, a crowned T; diamond-shaped stem with an iron rod down the middle; knob missing. Length 5½ in. 15th century. Found in Worship Street.

A 3491. Pewter spoon, part of flat, fig-shaped bowl remains, stamped with maker's mark; round stem decorated at base and on each side of rat tail behind, flattened lozenge knob. Length 5.5 in. 15th century? Found in the Thames, London. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, Pl. VIII.)

A 3503. Pewter spoon, flattened circular bowl, hexagonal stem. Length 3.75 in. 15th century. Found in Town Ditch, Newgate.

A 13843. Pewter spoon, fig-shaped bowl stamped with an illegible maker's mark, unusual twisted stem, probably of foreign origin. Length 5.5 in. 15th century. Found on Railway Approach, London.

A 10165. Latten spoon, leaf-shaped bowl, flat stem, no knob, very slender. Length 4.75 in. Pl. XXVI, No. 1. 14th century. Found at Finsbury Circus. Given by W. M. Newton, Esq.

A 3489. Latten spoon, oval bowl, flat stem stamped with maker's mark, a crown over a flower, small ball knob. Length 5.7 in. Possibly 14th century, French. Found in London. (F. G. Hilton Price, *Old Base Metal Spoons*, Pl. VIII.)