

EDY

## “ÉTAIN LAQUÉ” or “ÉTAIN PEINT”?

—But Surely Not “Tôle Peinte”

### Some Specimens of Painted and Lacquered Pewter

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I HAVE purposely flown in the face of accepted custom in my choice of a title for this article, for I have a rooted objection to assisting in the standardisation of what I believe to be a misapplied description. The fact that the word “Tôle” was used in the catalogue of the Paris Exposition Universelle Interalliée, 1900, to designate objects of “iron, copper, tin or Pewter,” can never be sufficient justification for its use in this country to signify *pewter*, which—quite definitely—it is not!

I refer to the use in connection with Lacquered Pewter of the term “Tôle Peinte” by Lady Walston, who in 1925 was the first writer to describe this method of treating pewter.

“Tôle,” which means *sheet-iron*, can never be rightfully used to designate pewter, and—with every respect—I submit that the names I have chosen, more nearly represent the truth. But why have foreign titles at all since “Lacquered Pewter” or “Painted and Lacquered Pewter” or even “Painted Pewter” puts the matter succinctly and more generally intelligibly in the mother tongue? And if—as is claimed—continental pewter was sent to this country to be decorated (in Wales), that surely is an added reason why we should free ourselves from the use of foreign icing on our delightful home-made cake.

—Lady Walston states that she has only “wished to bring some facts she has been able to collect about a little-known art, to the attention of those interested,” and one can but feel that she has rendered service to the collecting world in that she has largely extended our knowledge of a little understood craft. It is to be sincerely hoped that her future researches into the further operation of this craft may be equally fertile of result



Fig. 1—A complete tea-pot set in vermillion lacquered pewter. It consists of a tea-pot, stove and tray, painted with musical instruments. Early 18th century. (From the Verster Collection)

It is not my object in the present notes to attempt to shed any further light upon her subject, but in my own delvings into the history of continental pewter certain photographs of examples of this ware have come to me which I am illustrating here, and which I shall be most happy to place at Lady Walston's disposal, if they can be of the slightest assistance in furthering her work. These illustrations have not previously been published in this country, and a description of them may be of special interest to British collectors.

In Fig. 1 is shown a complete tea-pot set, and one may add, that to find these things complete

“ÉTAIN LAQUÉ” or “ÉTAIN PEINT” ?

—(Continued)

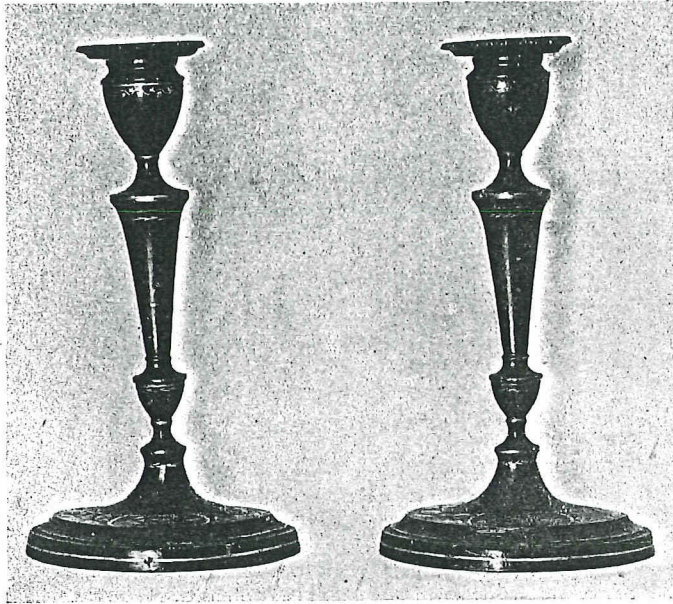


Fig. 2—A pair of late 18th century oval-section candlesticks in lacquered pewter. Height 10 in. (From the collection of Mrs. J. Denijs)

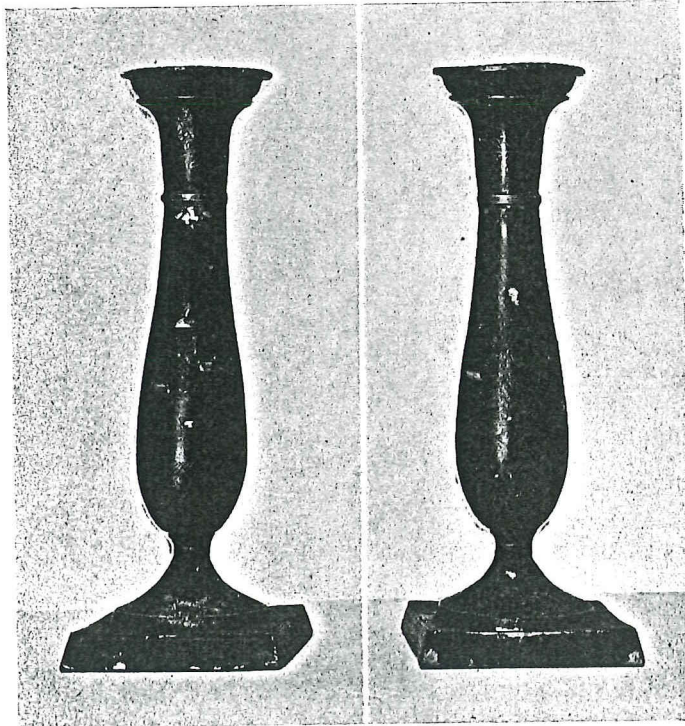


Fig. 3—A pair of early 19th century candlesticks, painted with dark lacquer. (From the collection of Mrs. L. Payne)

—i.e., the three pieces—is very difficult indeed. The set comprises the teapot (*trekpot*), stove (*comfoor*), and tray (*blaaasje*) and all are in dark vermillion lacquer, painted with musical instruments, amongst which is the bagpipe! Inside the small stove was placed either smouldering peat on a copper tray or a small spirit lamp, which kept the tea simmering until it had attained the blackness required by Dutch taste. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a similar lot. This fine set, as also the cruet in Fig. 6, is in the possession of Mr. A. J. G. Verster, of The Hague.

From the collection of Mr. Karel Azijnman, of s'Hertogenbosch, are the *bombé* candlesticks and the coffee-urn in Fig. 7. All are of late eighteenth century work and the latter is some 18½ ins. high and provided with three taps. It is known locally as the calabash shape, on account of its gourd-like outline. The candlesticks are 11¼ ins. in height. All three pieces are decorated in deep red lacquer with gold decoration; the urn has landscape and rustic scenes.

The graceful pair of oval-section candlesticks illustrated in

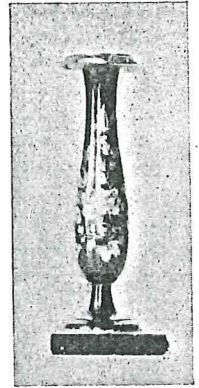


Fig. 4—A candlestick from the same set as the vase in Fig. 5

Fig. 2 is from the collection of Mrs. J. Denijs, of Amsterdam. They are 10 ins. in height and date from the late eighteenth century. Of these, as of the remainder of my illustrations, I have no details of colour.

Figs. 5 and 5a show the front and side of a pair of chestnut vases (*kastanje vaasjes*) of very pleasing design, c. 1800, and Fig. 4 a candlestick from the same set, whose owner desires to remain anonymous, while a pair of early nineteenth century candlesticks of similar form, but with a darker lacquer background, from the collection of Mrs. L. Payne, of Amstelveen are in Fig. 3.

All the items are of Dutch origin, and it may be worth while quoting the following extract from an article on Dutch pewter which I wrote in collaboration with Mr. Robert M. Vetter, of Amsterdam :

“Lacquering of pewter was the rage in Holland during the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. Needless to say, this masquerading of pewter as Peking lacquer was but a measure for giving a semblance of life to a trade that had sunk to a low ebb. Great differences in quality are observable in lacquered pieces.” (*Antiques*, Boston, U.S.A., June, 1931.)

### DUTCH PAINTED AND LACQUERED PEWTER

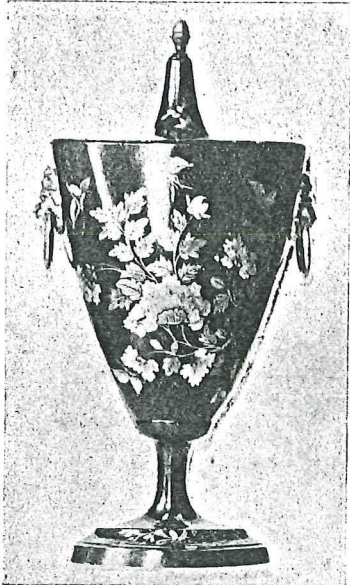


Fig. 5—One of a pair of pewter chestnut vases; c. 1800. (See Fig. 5a)



Fig. 6—A lacquered pewter cruet of the Louis XVI period. (From the Verster Collection)

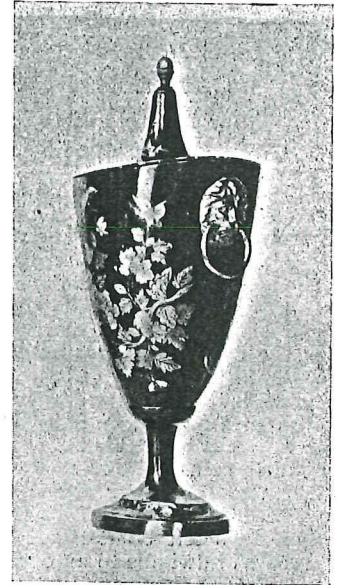


Fig. 5a—Side-view of the vase shown in Fig. 5.

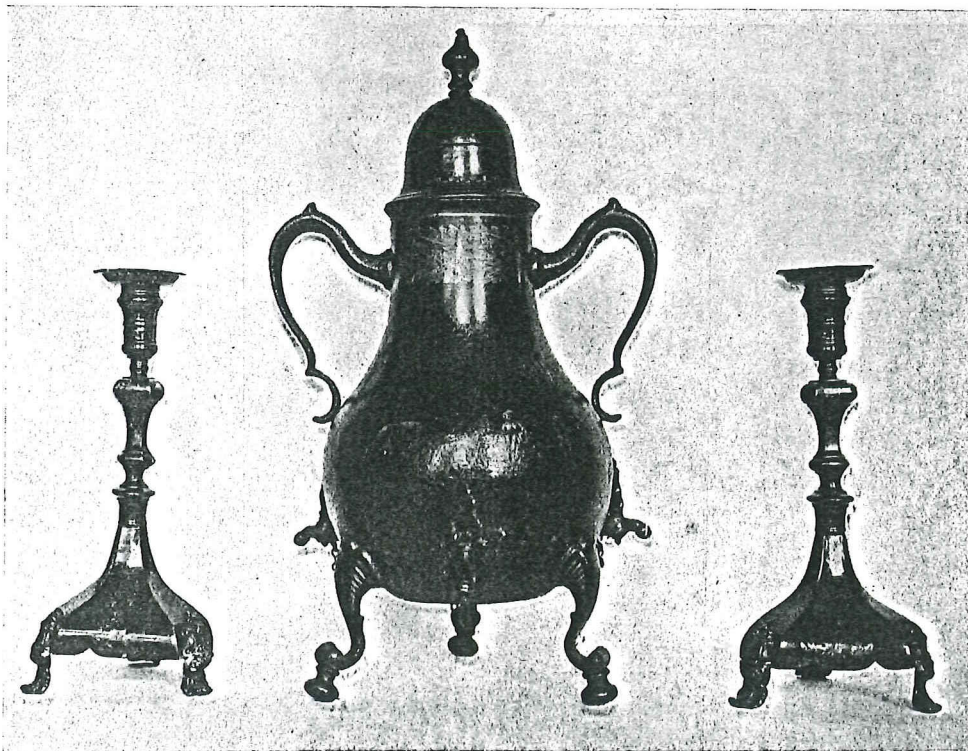


Fig. 7—A set of two *bombe* candlesticks (11 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. high) and a coffee urn (18 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. high). All are painted in deep red lacquer with gold decoration, and upon the urn is a landscape with rustic scenes. Dutch, late 18th century. (From the Azijnman Collection)