



SILVER "HERM-LIKE FIGURE" SWISS SPOON

Object Number: # 347

Zurich c. 1630

Hans Heinrich Holzhalb I

Marks: on the backside of the bowl, on the right and left side of the junction between bowl and stem.

City's mark: letter 'Z' cancelled with a diagonal line, in a shield-shaped punch (s. Rosenberg nr. 9024).

Maker's mark: monogram for Hans Heinrich Holzhalb I (s. Rosenberg nr. 9049)

Inscription: „AST“

Length: 16 cm (6,3 in.); Weight: 33 gr.

Pictures



Detailed Information

Silver Herm-like figure Spoon

The present spoon is a nice example of the eating culture from Zurich. The bowl is wide and oval, having the form of a drop. The stem is short and formed in a plastic way, with a cast herm-like female figure as finial. On the backside of the bowl, a propriety inscription: "AST" and a lavish engraving of flowers. This so-called "rat-tail spoon" holds its name from the stem. This, in an elongated V- form and like a rat-tail, is connected with the bowl on its back. Both the engraving and the spoon on its whole are very well preserved.

Rat-tail spoons accord to the baroque tendencies of the seventeenth century and present a remarkable and interesting ornamentation. This style emphasises the plastic and naturalistic effect of the ornamentation and of the figures. Spoons of this style were produced from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century and were prevalent in North Europe and England.

The present spoon has moreover a bowl in the shape of a drop and a short stem, which is typical for the beginning of the seventeenth century. "Herm-spoons" were particularly popular in this period.

Zürich and Basel were the most important gold- and silversmith centres of Switzerland. The makers were quite influenced from South Germany, Italy and Northern Europe.

See at the **Victoria & Albert Museum** a comparable spoon, as well as a spoon from the same maker in Gruber (1977), p. 263/ctlg. no. 422.

Maker

Hans Heinrich Holzhalb I was born around 1597 and became in 1618 a master maker. He died in 1639. There are several objects of him preserved. For two "herm-spoons", s. Gruber, *Weltliches Silber: Katalog der Sammlung des Schweizerischen Landesmuseum Zürich*, nr. 423 and nr. 424.

Literature

Gruber, *Weltliches Silber: Katalog der Sammlung des Schweizerischen Landesmuseum Zürich* u. Mitarbeit von Anna Rapp, Zürich: Verlag Berichthaus, 1977.

Hernmarck, Carl, *Die Kunst der Europäischen Gold- und Silberschmiede 1450-1830*, München: Beck, 1978.