

56

Virgin and Child

LENGTH	18.3cm / 7.15in
WEIGHT	58gm / 1.86oz
MAKER	Unascribed
MAKER'S MARK	Scallop shell
DATE	1577/8
PERIOD	Elizabeth I
TOWN	London
COLLECTION	Victoria and Albert Museum, M.89.1952

DESCRIPTION

A spoon of good gauge and colour, with original gilding on the finely cast finial, which is some 4cm (1.57in) high and shows some wear. The finial is joined to the stem with a V-joint, and is of the Virgin holding Christ in her right hand. In her left hand she holds her emblem, a lily, distinctive with its curling stalk and pistil protruding from the top of the flower, to which the Child is reaching out. Her dress appears to be open from neck to waist. This finial has similarities to others with regard to front, back and height, but it is much slimmer than the Blessed Virgin that replaces the Master in the Astor set of thirteen apostle spoons (now in the British Museum). On the inside of the fig-shaped bowl is a poorly struck crowned head which is partially obscured by the engraved sacred monogram IHS in a circle. On the back of the bowl a Lombardic A F is engraved. The stem joins the bowl with a rudimentary

rat-tail. On the back of the stem near the bowl the maker's mark is struck: a scallop shell, followed by the lion passant and the date-letter U for 1577/8.

COMMENT

This is a rare spoon type, with very few known examples. There are three known London-made spoons including this one, the Astor spoon dated 1536, and another dated 1597; and three provincially made spoons: one from Norwich dated 1635 and two from Salisbury – one by Thomas Senior of Salisbury and another illustrated in How, *Silver Spoons* (vol. II, p. 171). It is wrongly ascribed by How, who considered the bowl mark was TR for Truro, but that is the mark of Robert Tyte of Salisbury. The spoon in How has a nimbus.





57

COLLECTION Holburne Museum
 MUSEUM NO. S242
 SPOON TYPE Virgin and Child
 LENGTH 17.4cm / 6.81in
 WEIGHT 46.6gm / 1.49oz
 MAKER Thomas Senior
 MAKER'S MARK Single-towered castle
 DATE c.1625
 PERIOD Charles I
 TOWN Salisbury
 COUNTY South East Wiltshire



DESCRIPTION

This rare spoon type is a provincially made Virgin and Child spoon that was entirely electrogilded when it came into the collection of Sir William Holburne during 1830–60. Sir William gilded all his spoons in this way and had three arrangements made with a central medallion of Charles I and the spoons radiating out to create a large circular display. The spoon is of good gauge, and the finial is finely cast albeit quite short – only 3cm (1.18in) long. The nimbus is cast with rays of glory in relief. The shallow fig-shaped bowl has a rudimentary rat-tail on the back. Struck once in the bowl, the maker's mark of a single towered castle, and twice on the back of the stem near the bowl. At the top of the hexagonal stem are two small capital H marks for Holburne (his collector's mark).

PROVENANCE

Sir William Holburne

