Candlestick

Place of origin: Flanders (made)
Date: early 18th century (made)
Artist/Maker: Unknown
Materials and Techniques: Brass, cast and turned
Credit Line: Lt. Col. G. B. Croft-Lyons Bequest
Museum number: M.1103-1926
Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description
By the late 17th century brass candlesticks had begun to imitate silver candlesticks in design. From this period onwards comparison with fully marked silver examples means it is possible to date examples accurately and to attribute positively their national origins. Technical improvements in the casting of both base and precious-metal candlesticks also substantially altered their form.

Throughout the 18th century the most popular method of production for brass candlesticks was to cast the entire socket, stem and base in two halves and solder the two together. The two lines running vertically down the ‘stick’ can be seen quite distinctly on candlesticks that have been vigorously cleaned. This construction method made possible elaborately stepped bases and octagonal faceted stems, but by the middle of the century, the base had been simplified and it was often octagonal with a depressed centre. This style had been fashionable in the late 17th century, but now the corners were concave and the stem of tall proportions. This example has an octagonal base with a depressed centre, from which rises a short ribbed stem.

In the mid-1760s, Neo-classicism became popular and the characteristic shape for candlesticks in this style was a straight or tapering column on a raised square or oval base. Production of brass candlesticks was further simplified by the development of a technique for casting the stem in one piece using a removable core. This allowed a much finer and thinner casting to be made for both the base and the stem. It also changed the method of extraction of the candle stump: a push-rod extractor came into use, consisting of a disc connected to an iron rod passing through the hollow stem.

Descriptive line
Brass candlestick with octagonal base and short ribbed stem, Flanders, early 18th century

Physical description
Octagonal base with depressed centre from which rises the short ribbed stem.

Dimensions
Height: 5 in, Width: 4.75 in

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Object history note
Acquired in Madrid, but probably imported from Flanders.

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O90619/candlestick-unknown/