

An Art Nouveau Candlestick - Interesting (fake)

In 2011 the UK Pewter Society were asked about this very stylish Art Nouveau pewter candlestick.



The owner wrote to say -

My wife and I recently purchased an antique candlestick at an estate sale. If it is genuine, it was designed by the prominent Austrian architect Joseph Maria Olbrich and made by Kayser & Sohn in the very early 20th C. We love it because it is a beautiful piece redolent of the Art Nouveau / Jugendstil style.

My question relates to the mark. We have read repeatedly that all genuine Kayserzinn pieces are marked with a simple oval with "Kayserzinn" and a model number in the range of 4000-4999.

Our piece has neither. What it does have is a beautifully executed stamp with "Kayserzinn" and a heraldic device with what appears to be a griffin, and a shield. We have so far been unable to find any confirmation that this is an authentic Kayser & Sohn mark.

Is it possible that this is a "touch mark"? I copied the mark with sooty smoke and cello tape.

This model candlestick sometimes appears together with two smaller outboard candlesticks. We have wondered whether the "normal" Kayserzinn mark may have appeared on the small side pieces, while this mark was reserved for the centre piece.

How can we verify this mark and / or flesh out the history of our new find.

This is the mark referred to – (see the real mark in other articles)



and as also copied -



The candlestick that was originally made is illustrated in a book by Vanessa Brett entitled “The Phaidon Guide to Pewter” page 217 where it states that “the pair of candlesticks illustrated marked “Siberzinn E. Hueck” designed by Joseph Olbrich with characteristic Viennese linear motifs. 14 1/2 ”.

The mark on your stick had not previously be seen by this collector and thus sought confirmation. The verdict is that “the piece is a fake , the original design was indeed by Joseph Olbrich but made in the E. Hueck factory for their Silberzinn range and carried both the factory mark and the Olbrich monogram which is in the Haslam book.”

The mark is up inside the base and couldn't get rubbed on the original whereas this one has been rubbed to give an impression of age.

A few incidental notes –

E. Hueck and Silberzinn can be found by a web search.

– Joseph Olbrich seems absolutely tied to this business – most searches tried produced auction results, it may be worth trying some of those websites mentioned in the article–**Art Nouveau - websites and reading**www.zanida.nl <<http://www.zanida.nl/>> and www.sense-artnouveau.com <<http://www.sense-artnouveau.com/>>.

Haslam Book - This is by Malcolm Haslam entitled Marks & Monograms The Decorative Arts 1880-1960 and covers much manufactured product...ISBN I 85585 024 9 when new £55 in the UK.

Titus Omega is a very good quality UK dealer, though not inexpensive, www.titusomega.com <<http://www.titusomega.com/>>

The archive on this website is well worth looking at.

There is one mark by Kayser without the number starting 4000+ - used perhaps before he formed Kayserzinn – it is included as part of a *pewterbank* website article – about - Osiris Orivit Orion etc - under Makers and Marks, this takes at least four minutes to download by wireless download.

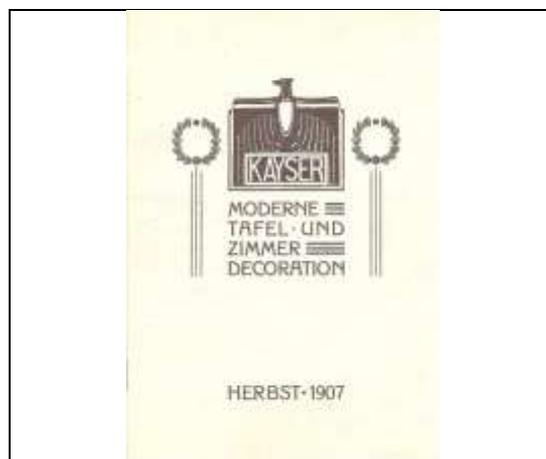
The stamp appears to be a distinctly pre Art Nouveau type of mark, the sort found on much older pewter. Yes well executed - but old fashioned Hueck and not Kayserzinn.

On the subject of the design of marks – these people were very particular and none used something which might be called a traditional, shield, griffin, floral or leaf arrangement.

To demonstrate this below is shown the cover of the sales booklet referred to for HERBST.1907

–All this does leave one mystery? – who made it and when? – that is not known. It can be a faker's mystery with so many collectables including pewter.

Frankly if ever there was a market for popular good quality pieces - others made less costly copies, as they do today.



The owner followed up with the following well thought out information

As for the Hueck / Olbrich connection, that is of course indisputable. But Olbrich also seems to have worked with J. P. Kayser & Sohn. Christie's certainly thinks so, as well as other Art Nouveau research resources, as shown in the next few links.

http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/LotDetailsPrintable.aspx?in_tObjectID=4901232

Christie's auction record of Olbrich stick attributed to Kayserzinn

<http://www.senses-artnouveau.com/biography.php?artist=KAY>

Web page on Kayser naming Olbrich as one of their designers

<http://www.senses-artnouveau.com/biography.php?artist=OLB>

Web page on Olbrich naming Kayser as one of the firms he worked with

http://www.abcap.nl/frames/osiris/this_is_osiris.htm

Olbrich seems also to have worked with Osiris

I've found two early Kayser marks with an eagle motif. One was used with brass and/or copper ware, according to the link below, and the other, according to the .pdf reference attached (on p. 10), seems to have been used on pewter, but before the "Kayserzinn" innovation.

<http://www.oldcopper.org/Marks%20k.htm>

Another Kayser mark, from a brass or copper piece -- eagle motif

About the mark in particular - it is uncharacteristic, compared to other pewter marks, which tend to be more plain, and certainly inconsistent with the recognized Kayserzinn standard.

Still, as a mark, this one is elaborate, and nicely done. Do we detect what may be the coat of arms of the city of Dusseldorf in the shield within the mark(?) Dusseldorf being where the Kayser firm began.

And as for the thought that the mark has been rubbed to simulate aging, my impression is that the mark may simply have been badly struck. Nevertheless, staying with the assumption that this is a fake, it's a high quality fake. Is it a known fake? Is it known who went to such lengths to create fake Kayser ware? (No)

Furthering the theme of a likely counterfeit, details of this piece are imperfect. The finish, and relief and modelling details are not what one would expect from a top-notch producer. Another design difference stands out. The Hueck candlesticks, and the ones attributed to Kayser by Christie's, all have perhaps "thick" lips to the candle holder cups. This has "thin" lips, noticeably thinner than the authentic originals.