

The Influence of the Harache Family of Silversmiths in London

By David McKinley

In the 16th century a religious movement swept through Catholic France under the influence of the philosophy of the Protestant John Calvin. Although Calvin's teaching was anathema to the Catholic Church these new Protestants who, for reasons not yet established¹, have been called Huguenots were given considerable social and religious freedom following the issuing of the Edict of Nantes in 1598.

Huguenots were mostly of the bourgeoisie and, although a few were 'gentlemen' and even aristocrats, most were craftsmen and prominent among these were goldsmiths. The quality of their workmanship was unsurpassed since it was not undertaken for the money they could earn but 'to the glory of God'. The Harache family of Rouen followed this craft and the first record of them appears on a plaque held by the Guild of Goldsmiths of Rouen on which are inscribed the names P. Harache and I. Harache.² Written archival records suggest that these inscriptions refer to Pierre Harache and his brother Jehan both of whom became master goldsmiths in 1570. The common practice within the Huguenot community was to name the first born child in a family after the appropriate parent and the names Pierre and Jehan, or Jean, continue to appear in the records throughout the 17th century although this Jean probably went to Paris in or soon after 1570 since there is no further record of him in Rouen whereas there is evidence of the family in Paris by 1668.³

When Louis XIV ascended the throne in 1643 the feelings towards Huguenots began to change and by the 1660s had become persecution. Many Huguenots began to leave their native France, settling in Holland, Germany and even as far afield as America. England became a favoured destination since it was the Protestants who held sway in this country whilst the Catholics were suppressed. By 1685 when the Edict of Nantes was revoked Protestant churches in France had been closed, their congregations forbidden to worship and their Pastors expelled. The exodus of these craftsmen became a flood and thousands abandoned their homes and workshops.

In order to take any property with them they were obliged to recant their Protestant faith and profess Catholicism and their church introduced a system whereby such recanters could obtain a document signed by a Pastor and two church Elders which stated that the holder "had been a member of a Protestant church, attended services, participated in Holy Communion and committed no scandal". This document, called a *témoignage*, could be presented at some future date allowing re-admittance to the Protestant church at a ceremony known as a *reconnaissance*. Many Huguenots took advantage of this facility and these included members of the Harache family.

The first member of this family to be made free of the Goldsmiths' Company of London, although by no means the first to make the journey to England, was the famous Peter Harache I

¹ the name may have been taken from a Burgomaster in Geneva named Bezanson Hugues who was responsible for the spread of the movement in that city.

² Musée Departmal des Antiquités-Rouen.

³ Archives Nationales Z^{IB}517

who was born in Rouen in 1639 and arrived in England in October 1681. He was endenized on 26th June 1682⁴ and made free by order of the court of Aldermen on 21st July 1682⁵. He registered a Britannia standard maker's mark (Grimwade 936) (Fig I) in 1697 and an unregistered sterling mark (Fig II) has been found on a long tea strainer (mote) spoon (Fig III) of about 1710 that must be his since this spoon is almost identical to a mote spoon (Fig IV) struck with an unregistered sterling maker's mark (Fig V) that by comparison with the smaller of the marks registered by Peter Harache II (Grimwade 939) must be his and these are the only two Peter Haraches known to have been working at this time.



Fig I
(Courtesy Koopman Rare Art)



Fig II



Fig III

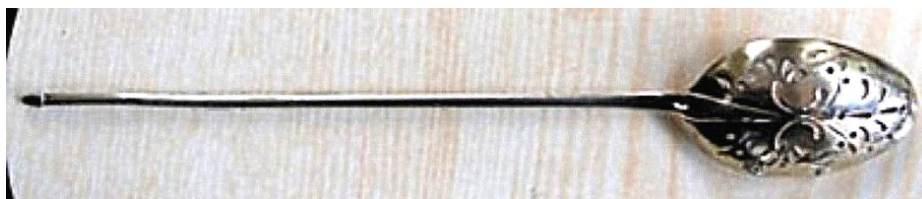


Fig IV

⁴ Huguenot Society Quarto Series (hereafter HSQS) 18 p158

⁵ Arthur Grimwade - London Goldsmiths 1697 - 1837, Their marks and Lives, p533



Fig V

The reason these marks on small work were unregistered is that, following the ambiguity of an order issued by the Goldsmiths' Company in 1676, makers of small work were left with the impression that if they judged their wares too small to "receive a (Hall) mark" they need not be assayed and any maker's mark struck on them need not be registered.

Peter Harache I and his wife Anne took up residence in Great Suffolk Street where he appears as a rate payer between 1686 and 1712⁶ the year of his death.⁷ He is most famous for the quality of his large work a good example of which is the rosewater ewer and dish at The British Museum.⁸

Probably the first Pierre Harache to enter England is likely to have come from Paris although no record has as yet been found to indicate where he came from or when he arrived. In fact evidence for his existence can only be described as tantalising. He has only recently been identified and has been designated Peter Harache III. He appears in the rate books for Little Newport Street between 1700 and 1709⁹ and is recorded as dealing in sterling and second hand silver with Hoares' Bank between 1697 and 1705¹⁰ but apart from the fact that he was probably the Peter Harache who gave his daughter Gabrielle away in marriage on 8th January 1693 at Swallow Street church¹¹ nothing more is known about him. However as both sterling and Britannia standard maker's marks have been identified for both the known Peter Haraches, as shown above, it now seems that the sterling maker's mark struck on the 1682 mark plate at Goldsmiths' Hall should be attributed to him and not to Peter Harache I as suggested by Jackson.¹²

⁶ HSQS 21 P150

⁷ Westminster Archives Centre (hereafter WAC) St. Martin in the Fields burial register MF9

⁸ www.britishmuseum.org>Research

⁹ WAC A29a-A50.

¹⁰ The Archivist, C. Hoare & Co, 37, Fleet Street, London. EC4P 4DQ

¹¹ HSQS 28 p15

¹² English Goldsmiths And Their Marks - Sir Charles Jackson

Three more members of the Harache family arrived in England probably in 1686, the year in which the younger of them, Abraham, presented his *témoignage*.¹³ Abraham was born in Rouen in 1661 and as he was a small worker he did not register a mark at Goldsmiths' Hall. However a mark has been attributed to him (Fig VI)¹⁴. This mark appears on some finely engraved work such as the trefid tea spoon (Fig VII).



Fig VI



Fig VII

(Courtesy The David Whitbread Collection)

He occupied workshops both at Compton Street and at St Giles in Great St Andrews Street, Seven Dials to which address he moved in 1708. He died in 1722¹⁵ at the age of 61.

¹³ HSQS 21 p136

¹⁴ McKinley - Silver Studies No 16, 2004 p77 (Jackson's Silver & Gold Marks (Pickford edition) p145)

¹⁵ Guildhall Library Ms 9171/61

Abraham's older brother Jean was also a small worker and was born in Rouen in 1655. His mark (Fig VIII) has been positively identified because his son registered it in the small workers register at Goldsmiths' Hall in 1726 (Grimwade 1360). This too appears on some fine small work of the early 18th century (Fig IX).



Fig VIII
(courtesy Michael Baggott Antiques)



Fig IX
(Courtesy Michael Baggott Antiques)

He appears on the denization list dated 16th December 1687¹⁶ and worked at Riders Court where he died at the age of 79 in 1734. He was buried at St Annes on 8th August. He had been in receipt of Royal Bounty since 1722.¹⁷

The third brother known to have been working in London at this time was Peter Harache II. He was born in Rouen in 1653, returned to France in 1717 and died there a year later. He was denizenized on 29th September 1698¹⁸ and made free of the Goldsmiths' Company on 24th October of that year. His address was given as Compton Street although he may have worked at Great Suffolk Street with other members of the family who traded under the name 'Pet: harache &c goldsmiths'¹⁹. He registered marks as a large worker as shown above but also produced small work on which he struck both his unregistered sterling maker's mark and his Britannia mark.

Because he was known to have outlived Peter Harache I and because Sir Ambrose Heal²⁰ had claimed that the latter died in 1700 there has been considerable confusion surrounding these two members of the Harache family. Some of Peter Harache I's work has been misattributed to Peter Harache II who was thought to be his son. Bearing in mind the establishment of makers' marks as shown above it now seems desirable to undertake some reattribution.

The family tradition of producing exquisitely crafted items in silver was continued into the 18th century by Abraham's eldest surviving son Francis who was born in London in 1710 and apprenticed to Isaac Cabane, silversmith of St. Martin in the Fields, in 1725. He was made free as a small worker in 1732 but did not register his first mark (Grimwade 682) (Fig X) until February 1738 when the Plate Offences Act, which required registration, was laid before Parliament. He was, at this time still working in his deceased father's workshop but in 1753 he moved to Lombard Court off Little Earl Street at which move he would have been required to register a mark at Goldsmiths' Hall against this new address. Unfortunately the register of maker's marks for the period May 1739 to July 1758 is no longer extant but it is now accepted that a new mark (Fig XI) was registered in his name.

Not only was Francis Harache's work of the highest quality but, like other members of his family, he was at the forefront of innovation as is exemplified by the rococo tea spoon of c 1754 (Fig XII)

Francis died in August 1757 and although his brother Thomas, who had been apprenticed to him, was made free as a silversmith in 1739 no example either of his mark or his work is known so that the influence of the Harache family on the craft in England came to an end in 1757.

¹⁶ HSQS 18 p198

¹⁷ Grimwade Op Cit. (Royal Bounty was a charity instituted by James II who put £1500 of his own money into it.)

¹⁸ HSQS 18 p289

¹⁹ National Archives C110/46/155

²⁰ The London Goldsmiths 1200 -1800 Sir Ambrose Heal



Fig X



Fig XI



Fig XII

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must thank Denis Vatinel, one time, Maître d'oeuvre, Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français, and Michèle Bimbenet-Privat, Conservateur en chef, Archives Musée National de la Renaissance-d'Ecouen for providing documentary evidence and background information on the Harache family in France and Julian Cousins and Keith Le May in this country who have been of great assistance to me in carrying out my research. I have also had the work of the late Brian Beet to draw on. I must thank Alison Kenney, Archivist, at the Westminster Archives Centre, Pamela Hunter, Archivist, at Hoares' Bank and Paul Johnson, National Archives Image Library Manager as well as The Huguenot Society for all their help. Lastly I am greatly indebted to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths for extending to me the privilege of examining their records.