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Southern European elements in Gambier's products and designs

by Arthur van Esveld

Jean Gambier started producing clay pipes in Givet in 1780. In this early period he produced mainly the popular models similar to the Dutch long-stemmed pipes. At the beginning of the nineteenth century French pipemakers developed their own style; instead of plain long-stemmed models they introduced figural pipes with short stems and models mounted with a wooden stem. This study is based on pipes illustrated in the catalogues issued by Gambier. Only the 1868 catalogue is published (Duco 1987); the others have been studied in private collections. In the earliest catalogue of 1840 you can find models from different countries in Europe. There are still a lot of Dutch models called *Hollandaises* and there is also a group of models relating to eastern European pipes. Gambier was also inspired by the Turkish so-called *chibouk* pipes. In the catalogue of 1840 there are six different pipes in the style of these *chibouks*. These pipes belonged to the 7th series of the catalogue: *Têtes de Pipes en terre Rouge de Constantinople*. These French copies were made from red clay like the original *chibouks*.

Gambier gave every model a specific name but a lot of times these were fantasy names not related to the origin of a model. On the drawings you can see the *chibouk*-pipes from the 1840 catalogue and their names given by Gambier (Fig. 1). At this moment there are no examples available from this interesting series. It is a problem to recognize these pipes as Gambier models; it is not known if they were marked with the well known JG mark.

Some interesting pipes were excavated in Givet, at the site of the pipe factory (Fig. 2). The layer in which they were found dated from the period 1850 to 1870, a few decades later than the pipes from the 1840 catalogue. This is based on the other more common models found in the same layer. An important difference is the clay used for these pipes, white clay instead of red clay. Apparently it was not so important anymore to make identical copies from the eastern European *chibouks*. These models were not published in the catalogues from Gambier so the name and mould number is unknown at this moment.

In the seventh series, dating from the period 1820 to 1850, there are two models that should be mentioned (Fig. 3). They are based on Hungarian pipe models but Gambier placed them in the series of pipes from 'Constantinople'. These pipes were also made in red clay.

These elegant models disappeared around 1850 and it is interesting to see that c1908 Gambier re-introduced three of these Hungarian models after more than a half century (Fig. 4).

In the next catalogue issued in 1868 (Duco 1987) the *chibouk* models from the 7th series disappeared. The typical French figural pipes often decorated with coloured enamel were very popular and Gambier made in this period around 1300 different models. There is one interesting model in the catalogue of 1868 inspired by the Turkish *chibouk*. This large pipe is called *pomme de pin* (number 1014) and has a bowl and stem covered with the structure of a pinecone (Duco 1987, 23).

Around 1890 Gambier introduced three new models (Fig. 5) inspired by the Italian so called 'Chioggia'

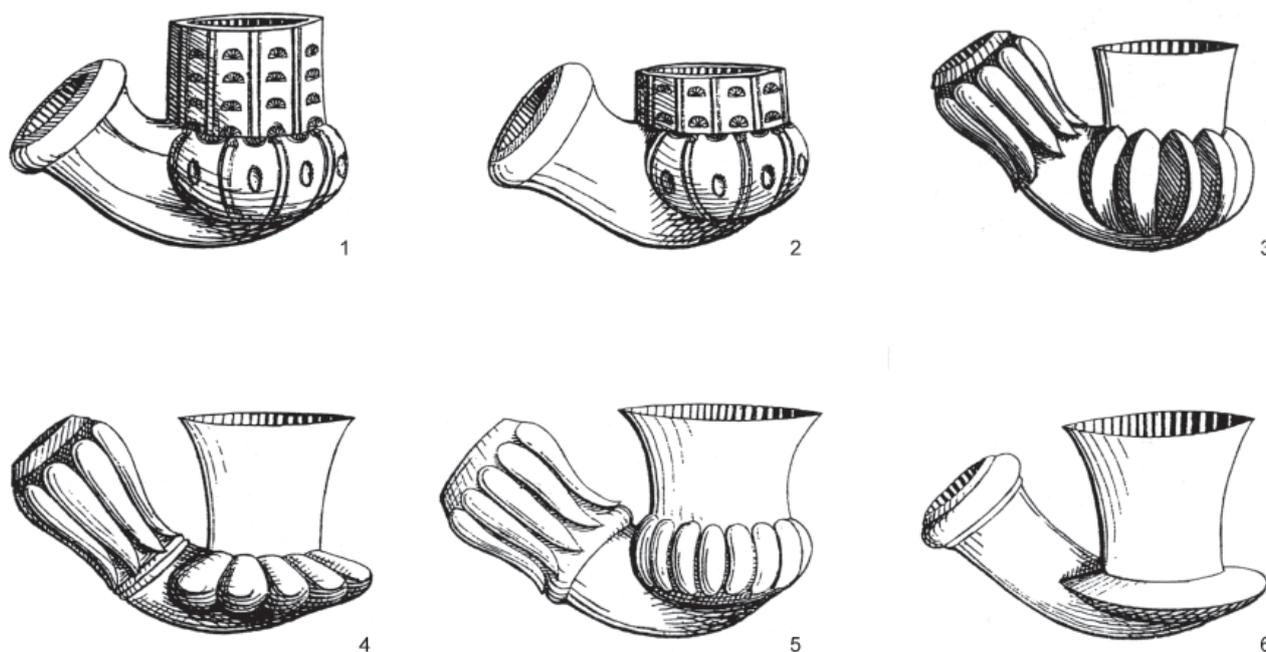


Figure 1: Chibouk pipes from the 1840 catalogue and their names given by Gambier: 1) No. 118 *Anglais grande*, 2) No. 119 *Anglais petite*, 3) No. 211 *Petite Coquille*, 4) No. 212 *Grande Coquille*, 5) No. 213 *Grande Coquille, bord renversé*, 6) No. 214 *Conet à socle plat*.



Figure 2: Pipes from the site of the pipe factory in Givet.

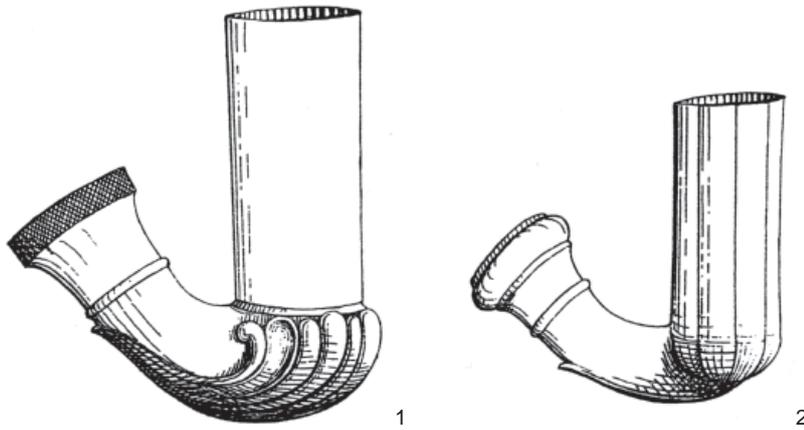


Figure 3: Pipes based on Hungarian models in the 'Constantinople' series: 1) No. 205 Grande Hongroise, 2) No. 206 Petite Hongroise à pans.



Figure 4: Pipes of c1908 based on Hungarian models, 1) No. 2014 Hongroise, tête très grande, 2) No. 2015 Hongroise, tête moyenne, 3) No. 2016 Côtes plates, tête grande.



Figure 5: Italiane pipes based on the 'Chioggia' pipes: 1 - 2) Tête néogène Italienne, 3) Alessandria.

pipes (Boscolo 2000, 63-66). Gambier called these the *Italiennes*. The first two models were in the 1894 catalogue, the third model was never published in one of the catalogues and is stamped on the bowl: Giraudi Vo; on the stem the pipe is stamped: Alessandria.

As mentioned earlier, Gambier used fantasy-names for a lot of pipes such as *Aristophane* or *Marseillaise*. This is an example of a pipe with a southern European (fantasy) name (Fig. 6); it is not known if this model was popular in the area of Milan.

Another southern European element in Gambier's products and designs are the numerous pipes depicting inhabitants from southern countries. In the middle of the 19th century there was a lot of interest in southern countries and their inhabitants, an interest encouraged by French colonial expansion in North Africa and Syria. Gambier made several pipes depicting inhabitants of Turkey or Greece. Pipes depicting soldiers from the Zouave battalions of the French army were very popular (Fig. 7). The Zouave



Figure 6: No. 76 Néogène Milanaise.



Figure 7: Pipes depicting inhabitants from of southern countries: 1) No. 383 Le Grec, Tête, 2) No. 740 Turc, Tête grande, 3) No. 684 Zouave, Tête, 4) No. 577 Mauve de Barcelonne, Tête très petite.

corps was raised in Algeria in the 1830s, initially from the *Zouaoua* (or *Zwāwa*), a tribe of Berbers. Shortly afterwards the formation of the *Tirailleurs algériens* (later known as the Turcos), as the corps for Muslim troops, changed the enlistment for the Zouave battalions, and they became a purely French body. The Zouaves saw extensive service during the French conquest of Algeria. Recruited through voluntary enlistment or transfer from other regiments of men with at least two years service, the Zouaves quickly achieved the status of an elite amongst the French Army of Africa. Gambier produced seven different models of the Zouave pipe. The *Maure de Barcelonne* pipe (Fig. 7, No. 4) depicts Sa'dun al Ruayni, known in France as *Maure de Barcelonne*, who was the last Muslim ruler of Barcelona before the capture of the city in AD 800 by the forces of Charlemagne led by his son, Louis I.

Conclusion

Like most of the clay pipemakers in Europe Gambier tried to produce pipes that appealed to their customers. Most of the clay pipes made in France, including those by Gambier, followed the conventional designs of the countries. In the 1840 catalogue there are about 285 different pipes of which almost 125 were based on Belgian and Dutch models. Only eight pipes were based on southern European models. Also the proportion of southern European models in the other catalogues (1868 and 1894) is very small. The production of French figural clay pipes became core business for Gambier.

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