

WOLF'S PLUMB BOB NEWS 2014

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PLUMB BOBS OF THE WORLD part 1

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Dear Fellow Collector,

Dear reader of the PLUMB BOB NEWS,

As always, I am searching for new material and information associated with plumb bobs.

Please feel free to share new photos, catalogs, articles or stories of a personal nature.

I welcome input from fellow collectors!

Wolf

PLUMB BOBS OF THE WORLD part 1 Europe

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1. INTRODUCTION

My very first presentation at the First Plumb Bob Collectors Meeting in Istanbul in 2006 was titled "Plumb Bobs of the World."

Members at our initial meeting in Istanbul were focused on the diversity of forms exhibited by various plumb bob lines and attempted to tie the origin of these forms to a particular country or continent. Since my initial presentation in Istanbul, I have never visited the topic again, whether in my regular monthly newsletters, or in my other associated presentations. Due to the new information made available by other plumb bob enthusiasts since 2006, I thought it was

imperative that I revisit this topic and pay it some additional attention.

There is no doubt that certain plumb bob forms originate from or can be tied to a particular region. However, many shapes are standard and universally utilized or "timeless" and have no geographic origin. The question is: What shapes are regional in nature and what influences caused a particular shape to be made in that region? There can be many influences within a specific region. A prominent regional plumb bob shape can be influenced by area craftsmen who produce a particular shape in

quantity, making the shape prevalent to that region where the craftsman resides.

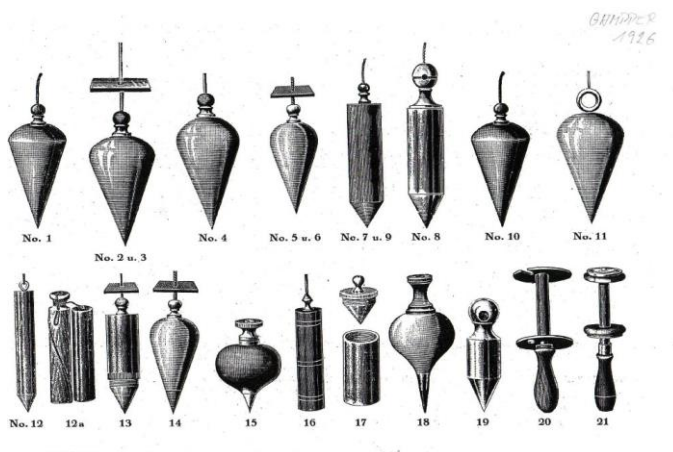
At the beginning of my passion for collecting I only knew the German pointed cone shape. When I then once met a trader on a large antique market offering an Ottoman plumb bob, I looked at him in disbelief and was skeptical of his assurances that it really is a plumb bob. Today I smile about my incredulity at that time. The ancient producers and distributors did not know which molds or shapes were used "behind the mountains". But when the trade of tools was internationalized, "foreign" forms found the way abroad.

The wars and occupations of countries (colonies) showed that the tools and shapes of the occupying nations were used. In the colonies we find often a two-tier market. On the one hand the "occupation forms", on the other hand, the native forms. Of course the areas with the same shape do not match every time with the (today's) political boundaries. There are always the economic borders and the political / economic spheres of influence. But there were also manufacturers, such as the company Gampper that produced in Germany from about 1890 plumb bobs for the whole world. These plumb bobs were produced in the shape, as requested in the buyer's country, so the onion shape for delivery (from the German center for tools, Remscheid) to

England and Australia, truncated cone shapes to France, flat bottom shapes into the Netherlands, etc. (see below: the catalog page of Gampper from 1926 and a photo of the range of production in 2012).

The other limitation of the form next to the regional expansion comes from the use by different professions. We know even more than 40 different professions that use a plumb bob for their activities. Also the requirements to the shape, size, or the used material, are different. Let's look at the masons and mechanics. The masons need the plumb bob only as a weight to keep the string taut. They compare the built wall with the vertical line. So they do not need a tip on the plumb bob. In contrast, the mechanics want often "plumb down" a point from above (the ceiling) to the bottom (the floor). For this they need a sharp tip as an exact reference point. A flat bottom plumb bob or a spherical bob are not very helpful in this case.

Also the wandering journeymen brought their ideas and the knowledge of different tool shapes from one country to another. But the best will be to explain the shape variety with examples from different regions, countries, continents, or professional groups in the next chapters.



2. GERMANY

In Germany with the surrounding regions or German-speaking countries like Austria or Switzerland the best known shape is today the POINTED CONE. This shape is from the recent time when the MECHANICS wanted to "plumb down" a point from top to bottom. The length to diameter ratio lies approximately at 2/1. The plumb bobs are therefore shorter and thicker as we will see later in America for the "carrot shape" with a ration (L / D = 4/1 to 5/1)



The guild of MASONS had previously used a different form, namely a FLAT BOTTOM TYPE. These bobs are mostly cylindrical. Often, this flat bottom type is provided with a wooden or iron spacer.

See Newsletter 2008-10 SPACERS OF WOOD OR METAL.

Later we will also see these flat bottom bobs as typical Dutch plumb bobs.



As a third major type, there are the beautifully shaped (ornated), turned or cast bobs of the "Hamburg Series" (they have the coat of arms from the harbor of



Hamburg) or the "Berghaus 1913 series" (shown in a catalogue from the maker Berghaus in 1913, see scan below).



	Gasverbrauch pro Stunde	annähernd	60	80	100 Liter
	lötwarm in	annähernd	1	2	2 1/2
	Gewicht	annähernd	325	535	750
			S.	5,10	8,00
				12,00	15,20
					3 Minuten
					1050 gr.

4015/4015 1/2	Lote.	4016	4017	4018	4019				
4015	Maurerlote, eiserne, annähernd 230x25 mm, Gewicht 700 gr					S.	0,84	1,00	1,36
4015 1/2	Maurerlote, eiserne, starke, annähernd 220x29 mm, Gewicht 1000 gr					S.	0,96	1,44	1,92
4016	Senklote, eiserne, lackierte, runde, mit Spitze, Packung 5 Stück					Gewicht	140	160	180
							240	340	400
						S.	0,38	0,46	0,58
	Senklote, eiserne, blankgedrehte, birnenförmige, Packung 5 Stück					Gewicht	200	250	400
	ohne Platte					S.	1,00	—	—
4017	mit Messingplatte					S.	—	—	—
4019	Zimmermanns-Lote, messingene, gegossene, Packung 5 Stück					Nr.	3127	3128	3128G
	ganze Länge einschl. Spitze					85	90	110	135
	Gewicht annähernd					90	155	210	400
						S.	0,90	1,32	1,74
							1,74	3,34	—
4020	Lotschnur, in Strängen von annähernd 17 m, l. Qual., Packung 16 Stränge					S.	0,90	1,32	1,74
							6D/6	6D/8	—
							0,30	0,24	—

1913 page 164

Beside the typical shapes we know all the variations of cylindrical plumb bobs with more or less long tips. These



forms we find in all countries because they have as raw material a simple metal rod (iron or brass).

The same applies to the spherical shape. Balls were used within instruments or plumb levels, but not as an independent plumb bob.

Especially in the period when Germany was divided into two parts (EAST and WEST), we find in the GDR, "German Democratic Republic" between 1945 and 1990 a special plumb bob shape, the so-called "Zella-Mehlis form." Zella-Mehlis is a town in the GDR, where this shape was produced. Maker was Georg Kührt. Special to the East German bobs is also the fact that there is marked the end consumer price EVP (as it was fixed for all goods and marked on them). From the currency denomination like DM, M, Mark, Mark of the GDR, etc. you can exactly find the manufacturing time quite well. You only have to find out in what time they used what currency.

This EVP remained stable for decades, since it was a planned economy, where prices were set (e.g., 1.65 M for a plumb bob) by the government and not a market economy, in which prices are determined by



supply and demand. Recently, I've found also the beet-shape (see photo above) from the communist era.

So we learn something about our history by searching for plumb bobs. ☺

Also the plumb bob for architects (right) is found very often in Germany, especially in the German Army (Bundeswehr BW). The material used for plumb bobs in Germany is mostly iron or cast iron, sometimes brass. Nowadays, zinc die casting is common.



More about German plumb bobs see my Newsletter 2008-06 GERMAN PLUMB BOBS

I know two interesting German MINING plummets:

A patented plumb bob from BRAUNSCHU (below right) and plummet invented by the mine surveyor Schulte (below left).

More you will find in my newsletter 2009-03 MINING PLUMMETS and 2012-08 update MINING PLUMMETS



3. AUSTRIA



Austria is influenced by Germany, regarding the forms. As a maker in Austria is known STUBAI, which supplies two forms.



plumb bob. This is a round, flat plumb bob from lead or brass with spokes. It was used by the French carpenters in the construction of timber-framed houses.

Learn more in my Newsletter 2008-07 Collectors Meeting in Paris.



4. SWITZERLAND



Regarding the forms Switzerland is predominantly influenced by Germany. As a manufacturer REISHAUER is known.



In Germany and in France we found many variants of the so-called ARCHITECT PLUMB BOB. This is a brass bob with a tip

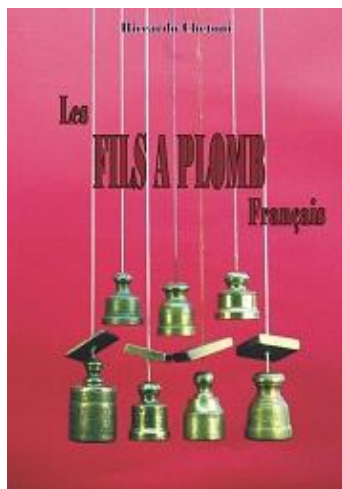
5. FRANCE



About French plumb bobs Riccardo Chetoni from Pisa, Italy wrote a very good book. See cover below. Now available as CD.

Significant for France are two basic forms unique in the world.

One is the TRUNCATED CONE, that is a flat bottom plumb bob, which is usually provided with a square spacer. The second characteristic type is the French flat CARPENTERS



that can be closed by a screw-on cap. It was used by architects. Due to the cap, the tip could not damage their pocket. ☺

Another feature, the French have small plumb bobs that have been used by artists to help when drawing perspective images.



6. ITALY



About the large number of Italian plumb bobs Riccardo Chetoni has published a book. (see cover below).



One of the basic forms is an ONION SHAPE, but which is different to the English form. On the other hand there are also many pencil-shaped narrow plumb bobs. The Italian plumb bobs are often made from brass.



7. ROMAN PLUMB BOBS

The Roman plumb bobs belong to the Italian plumb bobs, but here I would like to list them separately. The Roman plumb bobs have been cast in lead with an iron hook in a simple form.



The other type is made of bronze and is a (more or less) flat cone, possibly downward with a globular tip and differently shaped heads.



More about Roman plumb bobs see in my newsletter 2012-10 ROMAN PLUMB BOBS.



8. PORTUGAL



In Portugal, I know very few forms. Frequently appears the spherical plumb bob above right with a spacer made of wood.

Generally said:

- Mostly brass, sometimes filled with lead shot
- Spacers made of wood
- Forms are also available in the neighboring countries Spain and Southern France

9. SPAIN



In Spain, mainly stubby cylindrical plumb bobs with a tip made of brass can be found.



There are also flat-bottom plumb bobs, as we know from the Spanish-influenced South America.



Especially is the diablo shaped spacer shown on the photo in the left column below.



10. THE NETHERLANDS



In the Netherlands (Holland) we find a lot of shape known from England and Germany. Typically is the FLAT BOTTOM plumb bob from brass or iron with a wooden spacer. This plumb bob appears in many variations. Some have a nice built head.

More you will find in my newsletter 2008-10
WOODEN OR METAL SPACERS FOR
PLUMB BOBS



11. BELGIUM



In Belgium we find French shaped plumb bobs and also types from the Netherlands.

12. SKANDINAVIA (SWEDEN, FINLAND, DANMARK, ISLAND) NORWAY,



About these countries I have no knowledge. I believe that the supply was from Germany, USA and England and that they do not have developed own forms. Manufacturer in Scandinavia are not known to me.

If you know more, please let me know!

13. GREECE



Here I could not find specific forms in modern times, except the cone shape, as it is common in Germany. (below left)



At the time when Greece was influenced by the Ottoman rulers, we find the two shapes type 1 (right) and 5 (above) of my classification of the Ottoman and Anatolian plumb bobs for Turkey.

Often they are also shown on grave stones and monuments. (below)



14. BULGARIA



POINTED CONE plumb bobs with flattened shoulder. Mostly pretty bad turned.

Also old Ottoman plumb bobs are offered from Bulgaria.



15. POLAND



From Poland I don't know any special shapes. Common are cylindrical plumb bobs with a tip.



To be continued

In PART 2 next month I will show the shapes from North- and South-America and in PART 3 the plumb bob shapes of England (with the colonies), Turkey (Ottoman / Anatolian plumb bobs), Russia and Asia etc.

16. SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT



GUATEMALA: A MARKET IN THE MOUNTAINS

In 2,610 m of altitude, San Francisco el Alto hosts every Friday the Guatemalan highlands largest market. Thousands of indigenous people do their shopping here at posts like this Ironmonger.

Did you already find the PLUMB BOBS (PLOMADAS)? ☺.

The result/resolution you find below.



17. REMARK

DEAR READER OF THE PLUMB BOB NEWS, DEAR FELLOW COLLECTOR,

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Enjoy it

Wolf Ruecker



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