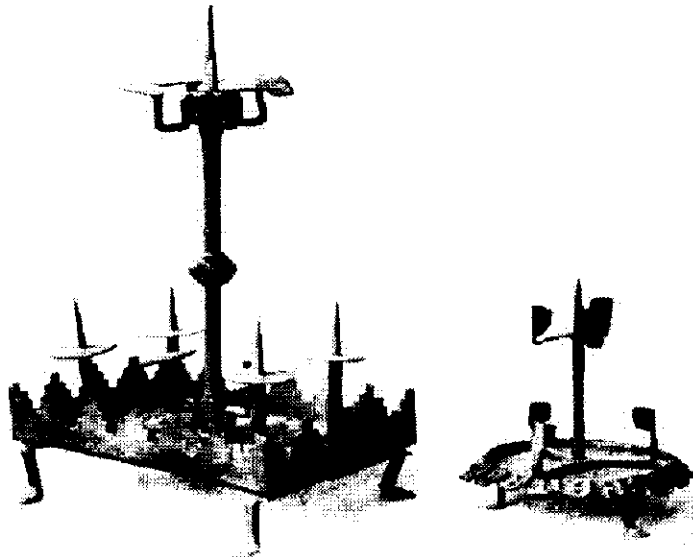


# Spanish Candelabras of the 11th Century

THE PEOPLE OF MEDIEVAL SPAIN made use of whatever lighting they could afford. Most people used candles in one form or another, and candlesticks ranged from hand-held to full length floor models. The *palmatoria*, for example, was a small candlestick carried in the hand, and was used well into the 20th century. It consisted of a sort of pan, usually of iron, with a tall handle springing straight up in the air – often turned back so as to hook here and there for convenience. It is sometimes enclosed lantern-like with a shade of pierced metal.

Between the 11th and 15th centuries, romanesque art forms became popular in Spain, and the artisans began to develop their gothic ironworking skills. The light sources created prior to the 13th century, however, likely will hold the most interest for reconstruction purposes. They had less elaborate ironwork (some were made of wood), yet they convey a distinctive style.

In the 14th century, the candelabra became especially popular, as artisans tried to outdo each other with elaborate gothic designs. Each type fell under a classification such as *candelabro formando lirions*, based on the ornamentation of its head. Nearly all had tripod feet. Crown ornaments were in quite general use throughout western Europe in the Middle Ages, whenever a large number of lights was required in great halls and churches. As a general rule, the medieval Spaniard favored iron lighting fixtures, although items of brass, wood, tin, copper and silver often went into their construction.



**At left:** Candelabras in the Catalan style of wrought iron from Barcelona (11th century)

*Would anyone be interested in writing a short article on candlemaking? It would be nice to have a simple, authentic method for making the wide candles required for a candelabra such as the one above. When we tried to find thick candles for the Chartres candelabras, they would have cost \$6-\$7 each – Ed.*