

# TREASURY OBJECTS

OF THE MIDDLE AGES



SAM FOGG

# **Treasury Objects of the Middle Ages**

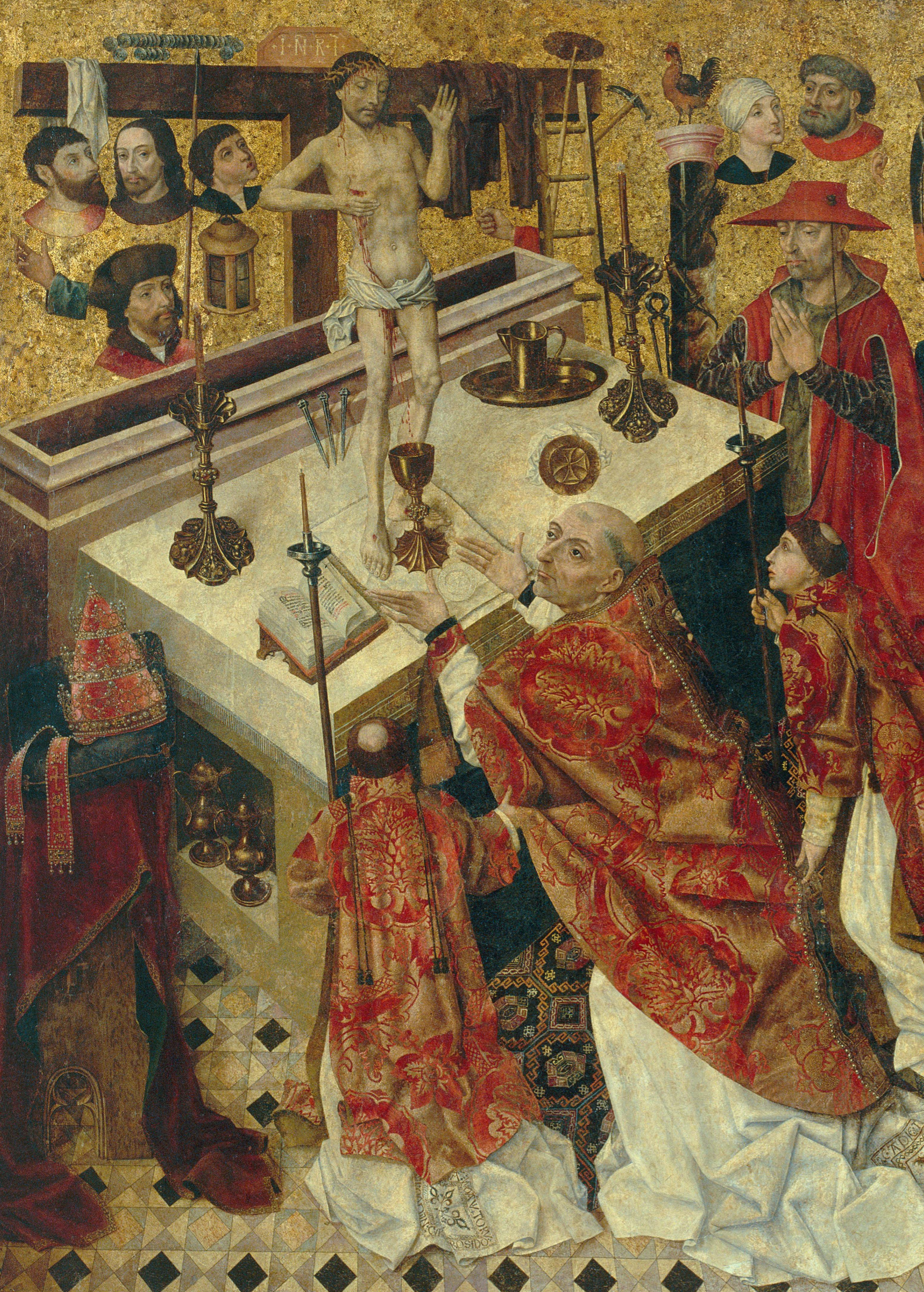
SAM FOGG

24 June – 30 July 2021



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*Previous spread*  
The Master of Balaam  
(German or Burgundian,  
active c.1440–1460)  
Saint Eligius in his Workshop  
c.1440–1460  
11.5 × 18.5 cm  
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum,  
inv. RP-P-OB-963



**T**reasury Objects of the Middle Ages (24th June–30th July 2021) is the first selling exhibition of its type in more than a century. Devoted entirely to the subject of medieval goldsmiths' work, it provides a unique survey of the varied types of precious, small-scale metalwork objects that were produced between the 12th and 16th centuries for use in cathedrals, churches, monasteries, and private chapels across Europe. Uniting the forty-five objects in this exhibition are the rich and glittering materials they were produced from – gold, silver, copper and its alloys (brass and bronze), many enriched with meticulous enamelling or studded with large cabochons of polished rock crystal.

Some of these objects would have enjoyed daily use as part of the celebration of Mass: gold and silver chalices for administering the Holy Communion, cast bronze censers for the burning of incense, gilded crosses for carrying in processions or venerating at the altar. But many are so sumptuous that they would have been carefully protected in treasuries for much of their lives and only brought out at particularly significant moments in the year, such as high feast days or even royal visits. Materials were lavished on the most spectacular and refined of them, like gilded reliquaries whose surfaces are enveloped in vivid coloured enamels and have tooled designs worked into the surrounding metal. Others are covered in delicate filigree, micro-architectural structures, or small-scale cast figures of the saints and angels.

Treasury objects were among the most potent bearers of meaning in the Middle Ages. Significance and symbolism were not only entwined with their craftsmanship and materiality, but more importantly also with their perceived sacredness. Many treasury objects protected holy relics, or the body and blood of Christ, but since most people never actually saw the relics or sacraments themselves, these objects came to embody and visualise the magical properties associated with what they contained, or with the miraculous moment of transubstantiation on the altar table. They were often modelled on descriptions of the heavenly Jerusalem, or keyed in to Biblical doctrine through representations of characters from the Old and New Testaments. Powerful, striking, sometimes even intended to shock, treasury objects existed to transport the medieval viewer from the material to the heavenly.

*Treasury Objects of the Middle Ages* celebrates the ingenuity of the Medieval metalworkers and the astonishing objects of devotion they crafted upwards of half a millennium ago.

Matthew Reeves

*Opposite*  
Diego de la Cruz  
(doc. 1482–1495)  
The Mass of Saint Gregory  
(detail)  
Before 1480  
168 × 168 cm; oil and  
gilding on panel  
Museu Nacional d'Art de  
Catalunya, inv. 200 701-000





## A repoussé reliquary fragment with an Old Testament scene



This delicate reliquary fragment is decorated with two scenes from the Old Testament which serve a typological context. The scene on the front of the reliquary depicts an enthroned figure with a halo, blessing two kneeling figures in modum crucis (with his arms crossed). The two kneeling figures are identified (wrongly, as we shall see) by inscriptions pressed into the metal over their heads as Essau on the left and Jacob on the right and a further inscription on top identifies the seated figure as Joseph (+IOSE). A ring of beaded ornament surrounds this scene as well as the scene on the left side. Here, two figures carry a staff on their shoulders. Although fragmentary, the identification of this scene is supported by the portrayal of movement, visible especially on the drapery and on the legs of the figures, and by the staff on the shoulder of the far-right figure, who is identified by the inscription LEF, probably referring to KLEF (Kaleb). The other figure would thus be Joshua and together the two men represent two of the twelve spies sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan. The object has two small hinges at the top and a delicate foot on one corner, suggesting that it would originally have functioned as a small reliquary box. However, the fact that the hinges are on top of the letters may be evidence that these plaques were a part of a larger object when they were originally made.

The iconography on both plaques comes from the Old Testament and it works typologically to foreshadow the New Testament. The side panel is drawn from the Book of Numbers, which recounts: *And they [Caleb and Joshua] came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it upon a pole between two; they took also of the pomegranates, and of the figs. That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the children of Israel cut down from thence (13:23).* The iconography on the front panel depicts an enthroned Israel (Jacob) blessing his two grandsons and it is drawn from the Book of Genesis: *Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons [Manasseh and Ephraim] close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them... [Then] Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.* This scene is thus commonly depicted with a seated Israel (Jacob) blessing his two grandsons with his arms crossed (fig.1). The iconography of the scene on our reliquary, however, is misleading when the inscriptions are taken at face value. They wrongly identify the seated figure as Joseph and the kneeling figures as Essau and Jacob (Israel), Joseph's father. Still, mistakes like this were not uncommon in Medieval art, especially when artists were given directions about complex combinations of scenes and texts. One example is the Abbey Bible now in the J. Paul Getty Museum (MS. 107 fol. 86v), where the thirteenth-century scribe realised that he had omitted over fifteen verses and mixed up the words of others, leading him to strike through an entire page of text.

Stylistically, the two scenes on our reliquary can be compared to a small corpus of mid-twelfth century repoussé plaques from the Meuse Valley including those from the Shrine of Saint Servatius, and even more compellingly to those on the Arm Reliquary of Charlemagne (fig.2). Although these examples are incorporated onto larger objects, their technical and stylistic approaches are directly analogous to our precious, diminutive reliquary. The drapery styles of the figures on our box are equally characteristic of Mosan metalwork from the second half

Meuse Valley  
1160–1180

3.9 × 4 × 4.3 cm; repoussé and gilded silver with silver wire and attached hinges; the scene of Caleb and Joshua is torn diagonally from the upper right to the lower left, resulting in losses to both figures; some crushing to the delicate repoussé elements

Provenance  
Private collection, France



Fig.1  
Jacob Blessing Manasseh and Ephraim  
Meuse Valley  
c.1150–1175  
7.1 × 9.7 cm; gilded copper with  
champlevé enamel  
Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, inv. 44.97



of the twelfth century. It finds parallels, for instance, in the work of the celebrated enameller and metalworker Nicholas of Verdun, including the scene of Caleb and Joshua on his monumental Klosterneuburg Altarpiece (fig.3). The movement of their tunics as well as the characteristic Muldenfaltenstil drapery on our example strongly anticipates Nicholas' work and helps date our fragment to the immediately preceding years.



**Fig.2a**  
The arm reliquary of Charlemagne  
Germany, Aachen  
c.1166  
Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. MR 347



**Fig.2b**  
Detail of one of the repoussé  
plaques on the arm reliquary  
of Charlemagne



**Fig.3**  
Nicholas of Verdun  
Caleb and Joshua with the  
Cluster of Grapes  
1181  
Austria, Klosterneuburg



Cat.1, A repoussé reliquary fragment with an Old Testament scene

## A reliquary chasse decorated with angels



This diminutively-sized reliquary casket is typical of the best Limousin enamelwork produced in the first third of the thirteenth century. Its characteristic features – several tones of blue enamel laid in fields together, small rosettes peppering the darkest, lapis-hued background, abstract geometric motifs enlivening the rear plaques, and single standing figures filling the sides – align firmly with a group of similar chasses of this date.<sup>1</sup> Far rarer however, are the bust-length figures of angels, their heads and bodies pressed into relief in shaped moulds before being fixed in place with gilt-copper pins. Although the iconographic formula is comparable to a small handful of Limousin chasses that have come down to us, the precise manner in which they are represented in relief on our example seems to be unique.<sup>2</sup> They would appear closer in conception to the ambitious, relief-modelled figures and leaf sprays found on contemporary croziers (fig.1), as well as to the class of stamped roundels that appear on coffrets from a slightly later moment in time, such as that of Saint Louis in the musée du Louvre in Paris (fig.2).

Due to their mechanical function, most medieval reliquaries have incurred significant repairs and interventions over the centuries. Remarkably, this example retains what appears to be its original wooden core. Fascinatingly, a single, inventive repair was undertaken historically to the carcass using a curved strip of brass, evidently salvaged from a plate or bowl and cut to size to reinforce it from beneath.

**France, Limoges**  
c.1210–1220

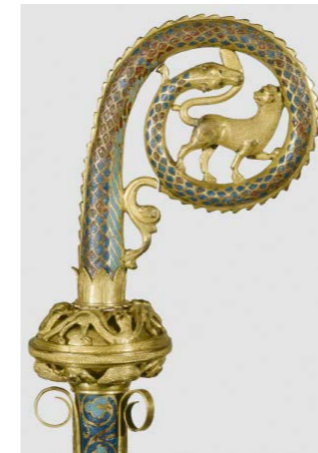
14.5 × 14.5 × 5.6 cm; cast, moulded, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel. Rubbing to the gilding, particularly to the feet and the relief-moulded angel busts, some of the latter have also been depressed in places. A section from the rim of a brass bowl cut to size and beaten flat to serve as a repair on the underside of the carcass.

*Provenance*

Collection of Paul-Napoléon Doumet-Adanson (Botanist and Mayor of Sète, died 1897), Château de Balaine (Villeneuve-sur-Allier);  
By descent to Louise and Bernard Courteix-Adanson;  
Their sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 25th March 1992, lot 77;  
With Galerie Bresset, Paris 1998;  
Sotheby's London, 9th July 2009, lot 4

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Recorded in Marie-Madeleine Gauthier etc., *Corpus des Émaux Méridionaux L'apogée 1190-1215*, vol II, CD-Rom, Paris, Louvre, 2011, I D no. 4



**Fig.1**

Crozier with a lion attacked by a serpent  
France, Limoges  
c.1210–1220  
29.2 × 11.5 cm; cast, moulded, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, inv. Ф 199



**Fig.2**

The Coffret of Saint Louis  
France, Limoges  
c.1236  
14 × 36.5 × 19 cm; cast, moulded, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. MS 253

1, M.-M. Gauthier, *Emaux limousins champlevés des XIIe, XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, Paris, 1950, plate 30.  
2, Cf. an example in Saint Petersburg, illustrated in M.-M. Gauthier, É. Antoine, and D. Gaborit-Chopin (eds.), *Corpus des émaux méridionaux. Tome II: L'apogée 1190-1215*, Paris, 2011, pp.94–95.



Cat. 2: A reliquary chalice decorated with angels



Cat. 2: A reliquary chalice decorated with angels

## A large reliquary chasse decorated with angels, saints, and rock crystal cabochons



Enamellers working in Limoges towards the middle of the thirteenth century began to experiment with applied elements formed in low relief as a way of injecting their objects with sculptural qualities and a heightened sense of visual drama. This unusually large reliquary casket is a prime example of the Limousin workshops' shifting aesthetic approach. Not only do its six relief-moulded, three quarter-length saint figures visually and physically advance from the engraved surfaces of the gold plaques behind them, the casket's stature and poise have also grown markedly in comparison to the earlier examples in this catalogue. Its legs are taller, bringing lightness and air to its structure, and its proportions are more attenuated, with a steeper pitch to the roof and a tall crest surmounted by lofty spherical termini. The delicate pattern texturizing the gilded plaques on which all of the relief figures on the front of the chasse rest was created using a technique known today as guilloching, in which a multi-pronged or serrated tool worked over the surface of the copper before gilding leaves long rows of regularly spaced and shaped indentations. Sixteen regularly-sized circular holes cut into both the upper and lower plaques are filled from behind with rock crystal cabochons. On the sides of the chasse two figures of bearded apostles sit against backdrops of deep blue enamel and beneath delicate canopied arches. One cannot be easily identified from the short, tablet-like attribute he holds in his right hand, but it is clear that his counterpart represents Saint Peter, since he holds his traditional attribute of a key. The reverse of the chasse continues the decorative scheme developed on the sides but instead of apostles, its two plaques are filled with larger circular medallions framed in white and gold, and filled with bust-length figures of angels emerging from wavy clouds. Sinuous gilded vines and rinceaux sprout and burst through the enamelled surface around them.

This grand chasse belongs to a group of reliquary caskets thought to have become popular among the workshops of Limoges from the second quarter of the thirteenth century, and which Jouhaud first grouped together in 1949 with the dismissive label 'châsses de pacotille', in reference to their composed character.<sup>1</sup> Like our example, the majority of surviving *châsses de pacotille* are decorated with appliquéd figures characterized by their slightly doll-like appearance and commonly described in French as *poupées*. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that these objects were still highly regarded during the Middle Ages and many were filled with important relics. One example of this class of chasse was housed in the rich treasury at the Basilica of Saint-Denis.<sup>2</sup> Another, of monumental proportions, is now in the Nationalmuseum, Copenhagen.<sup>3</sup>

*Châsses de pacotille* have never yet been adequately or precisely dated, since their motifs and formulae seem to have remained in use for many decades, but a number of examples closely related to our version in composition (with angels shown at bust-length in roundels) and technique (particularly the guilloched decoration, which is also associated with the so-called 'star group' of enamels<sup>4</sup>) have been dated to the second and third quarters of the thirteenth century.<sup>5</sup> At this time, new colour schemes were being introduced to Limoges enamel-work, and the dark, forest green, rich blues, and bright white palette of our chasse compare well with enamels known to have been executed in the same period.<sup>6</sup> A particularly close parallel in this respect is offered by a chasse in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, on which angels are likewise picked out against backdrops of blue and green enamel,

France, Limoges  
c.1240–1260

26 × 23,3 × 8 cm; cast, moulded, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel and glass and rock crystal cabochons. Some of the cabochons damaged or replaced. Some rubbing to the gilding and losses and abrasion to the enamels in places.

Provenance  
Collection of Nicolas Landau, Paris

1, L. Jouhaud, 'Les "châsses de pacotille"', in *Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique du Limousin*, LXXXIII, 1949, pp.48–75.  
2, *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, Exh. Cat., Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1991, no. 42, pp.226–7.

3, *The Magi; Legend, Art and Cult*, Exh. Cat., Cologne, Schnütgen Museum, 2014, no. 42, p.119.

4, Popular from c.1250 onwards; for a discussion of this group see Barbara

Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, ed. *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, no. 101, pp.306–9.  
5, Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, p.327.

6, For further discussion of this subject, see in particular M.-M. Gauthier, 'De la palette au style chez les émailleurs du moyen âge', in *Évolution générale et développements régionaux en histoire de l'art*, Budapest, 1972, pp.621–35.

although it lacks the unusual feature present on our example of short branches that cling to the insides of the medallions' framing elements (fig.1). Other analogous objects include a group of medallions from a coffret, dated to c.1240–60 and now in New York,<sup>7</sup> as well as a pair of quatrefoil plaques with angels split between a private collection and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig.2).<sup>8</sup>



**Fig.1**  
Chasse  
France, Limoges  
Mid 13th century  
23 × 24.4 × 10.8 cm; cast,  
chased, engraved and gilded  
copper with champlevé  
enamel  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, inv.  
17.190.335



**Fig.2**  
Quadrilobed plaque  
France, Limoges  
Mid 13th century  
13 × 13 × 0.2 cm; cast,  
chased, engraved and gilded  
copper with champlevé  
enamel  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, inv.  
17.190.810



**Cat.2** A large reliquary chasse decorated with angels,  
saints, and rock crystal cabochons

## A reliquary chasse showing the Journey and Adoration of the Magi



The journey of the Magi takes place on the roof of this reliquary casket, or chasse as it is otherwise known. They are shown sitting astride their horses, which are all turned in profile to our right with hoofs raised in poses of suspended animation. The narrative continues on the lower plaque: the Magi have evidently dismounted since the horses are tethered together on the far left of the scene, and present their gifts to the seated figure of the Christ Child, sitting on the lap of his mother the Virgin Mary. On the sides of the chasse single figures stand in micro-architectural niches: on one side is a bearded saint or apostle figure shown holding a book in his left hand, and on the other is an unidentified crowned and haloed abbot or bishop, holding a crozier diagonally across his body. Each of the figures were delineated by being left in reserve on the copper and engraved and gilded, and it is the blue champlevé-enamelled background surrounding them that throws them into relief. Additionally, their heads were cast separately and attached by way of short pins or rivets hidden from view behind them.

It is unclear which saint or saints were originally venerated with our chasse, both because (like the vast majority of surviving reliquary caskets of this nature) it no longer contains any relics, and because imagery of the three Magi ranked among the most popular subjects for Limousin enamellers during the thirteenth century and compete in number with images of Saint Thomas Becket. It is likely that they were chosen for their example as model Christian worshippers, travelling great distances to venerate the newly born Christ Child and offering him their charity and gifts. Several surviving chasses in museum collections incorporate very similar compositions to ours, including examples currently dated to c.1200–1210 in the Museo Diocesano in Huesca, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the British Museum, and the Museum August Kestner in Hannover (fig.1).<sup>1</sup> Ours very likely dates to a marginally later moment in time, since the diamond-pattern engraving of the feet, the subtle evolution of style visible in the cast heads, and the more developed rinceaux covering the background behind and around the figures all offer parallels to examples thought to have been produced in the 1220s and 1230s, including a small chasse dedicated to Saint Valerie in the musée du Louvre in Paris, the monumental chasse of Saint-Viance in the church of Saint-Viance (Corrèze), and another decorated with scenes from the Life of Christ in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.<sup>2</sup>

France, Limoges  
c.1230

15.9 × 17.8 × 7 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel, attached to a modern wooden core covered with pale red velvet lacking its pile. Some ribbing to the gilding and sporadic chip losses to the enamels in places. The two rear panels missing.

Provenance  
Collection of Carlos Alberto Cruz, Santiago



**Fig.1**  
Chasse with the Adoration of the Magi  
France, Limoges  
c.1200–1210  
18.8 × 17.9 × 8.8 cm; Cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Hannover, Museum August Kestner, inv. 470

1, Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, 'À propos d'une acquisition du musée de Cluny: les chasses limousines consacrées à l'Adoration des Mages', in *Lemouzi*, 6th series, p.187, 3rd trimester (2008), pp.133–141.  
2, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, ed. *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, no. 85, p.278, no. 118, pp.347–50, and no. 115 pp.334–5.



Cat.4 A reliquary chasse showing the Journey and Adoration of the Magi



Cat.4 A reliquary chasse showing the Journey and Adoration of the Magi

## A reliquary chasse showing Christ in Majesty



An enameled and gilded reliquary chasse decorated with the figures of Christ in Majesty surrounded by saints, and constructed in the shape of a building with a pitched roof and an opening in the lower panel of the reverse face. The lower of the two front panels is of a tripartite composition with Christ occupying a central mandorla and two microarchitectural structures framing the figures of the Virgin and Saint John on either side. Christ wears a crown and a full-length garment beneath a mantle wrapped around the shoulders. He sits upon an arc with his feet on a foot rest, before a deep blue background punctuated by four-petalled flower-heads in multi-coloured enamels. His right hand is raised in the sign of the Benediction, and in the crook of his left arm he supports a large bound book, signifying the Word of God. In the reserved spaces around the mandorla appear the symbols of the four Evangelists. On the upper plaque four saints appear in an arcaded cloister on either side of a further mandorla, within which the Virgin is shown in the guise of the Queen of Heaven, wearing a crown and holding a fleur-de-lys sceptre in her left hand. As is conventional for chasses of this type, all of the figures have heads formed from cast copper elements applied by way of rivets onto the face of each plaque. The gabled plaques at either end of the chasse are also decorated with standing saints under arched vaults. The reverse is decorated on both plaques with a pattern of four-petalled flowerheads on a deep blue ground. An incised gridwork pattern decorates each of the object's four feet.

Fewer than two dozen Limoges-made enamel chasses showing Christ in Majesty have survived from the Middle Ages. Iconographically and stylistically, the present example is directly related to a small number of others with comparable decorative schema and applied, cast heads, all of which have been dated in the surrounding scholarship to the years around 1200. Close parallels can be drawn to the chasse of Chamalières, on deposit at the treasury of the Cathedral of Clermont-Ferrand, as well as to that of the Church of Saint Jean in Lyons.<sup>1</sup> While missing the galleried cresting that would originally have surmounted its roofline, the present version is an important surviving example with almost all of its enamels perfectly preserved, and with much original gilding enlivening the engraved and incised decoration of its surfaces.

**France, Limoges**  
c.1200

16 × 20.2 × 9 cm; Copper alloy with gilding and champlevé enamel over a replaced but early oak core, with ironwork hinges. Very well preserved with only the gable missing as is often the case. Brilliant lustre and intensity to the enamels all over. Rubbing to the highpoints of the gilding, and minor losses to the enamel on one end, around the lock, and on the rear, left leg-panel. An old collection number on the underside of the core inscribed in white 1897.

*Provenance*

Possibly in the collection of the Comte de Pourtalès, Schloss Mauensee;  
Included in their estate sale, Galerie Fischer, Zurich, 26–28 May 1932 no. 650;  
Collection of Frits Philips (1905–2005), Eindhoven;  
His posthumous sale, Sotheby's Amsterdam, 4th December 2006, lot 421  
Treasury of the Basilica of Saint Servatius, Maastricht, deconsecrated and deaccessioned in 2020

*Published*

*Inventar des Schlosses Mauensee, Alter Berner und Luganeser Patrizierbesitz und Diverse Provenienz*, Sale. Cat., Galerie Fischer, Zurich, 1932, p.42, Plate XVIII

<sup>1</sup>, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.140, fig.30a.





Cat.5 A reliquary chalice showing Christ in Majesty



Cat.5 A reliquary chalice showing Christ in Majesty

## A reliquary chasse showing the Crucifixion



This magnificent gilded and enamelled reliquary chasse was created in the final decade of the twelfth century by one of the foremost workshops of the southern French city of Limoges, the leading centre for enamel production in all of Europe. It was produced to house and protect the most precious relics belonging to a church, most likely in this case a piece of the True Cross, since on its front is a vivid depiction of the Crucifixion accompanied by the Virgin and Saint John. In a narrative progression, Christ is depicted again on the upper plaque, this time framed by a golden mandorla and seated on a rainbow in a scene representing his glorious triumph over death. To his left and right, and on the casket's two side panels, images of single figures standing under arches denote a gathered heavenly community of Evangelists and Apostles. A long galleried crest runs along the full length of the roofline, pierced with keyhole openings and embellished with three oval rock-crystal cabochons.

Every aspect of this casket's decoration reveals that it was planned and executed with meticulous care, and an astonishingly sensitive eye for even the most subtle juxtapositions of colour and compositional balance. The upper and lower plaques on its primary face are each divided into three sections by a slender architectural framework, and are filled with blue enamelled fields that alternate in hue and, even more ingeniously, refer and relate to fields of corresponding hue elsewhere across the two plaques. In this manner, fields of dark lapis blue and a lighter, mid-tone blue, crisscross between the upper and lower plaques and draw the two together in a tight visual entwinement. The same effect is achieved between the lower panel and those on either side of the casket, not only through the use of blue but also with a deep garnet-red enamel, which fills the spandrels of the arched structures framing each of the single standing figures. Finally, a paler turquoise blue was used to further bind the front and sides of the casket together by way of narrow, horizontal bands, which run behind the figures in every scene except for that of Christ in Majesty at the centre of the upper plaque, who is singularly framed by turquoise surrounding a darker blue mandorla. This careful approach to visual unity extends to the figures' head and bodies. The former were all cast separately and applied to the plaques before they were attached to the carcass, while the latter have all been worked directly into the surface of the copper before being engraved, tooled, and finally gilded to throw them into relief against their respective backgrounds. The contours of bodies under light, rippling draperies are described not just with gouged lines but also in the subtle sculpting of the copper, with forms beautifully rounded out in shallow relief. Several of the heads were carefully united with their bodies below by tooling the latter with features that appear on the former. So, in this way, Christ in Majesty wears a full-length robe with a neckline of rectangular, studded motifs that simulate gemstones and perfectly echo, in reverse, the rectangular depressions encircling the crown on his relief-moulded head.

Dated in current scholarship to around 1200, our chasse belongs to an important group of very early Limousin caskets often known simply as *vermiculé* on account of the engraved patterns which pepper their surfaces.<sup>1</sup> Produced in the final years of the twelfth century and the early years of the thirteenth, *vermiculé* caskets have become intensely fought-over by collectors and museums since the late 1800s, and are rightly thought of as representing the aesthetic apex of all Limousin enamelwork. Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye has eloquently described them as embodying 'one of the final blossomings of late Romanesque art according to formulas specific to Limousin enamellers', and their combination of reserved, engraved and gilded figures with intense backdrops of finely-worked

France, Limoges  
c.1200

21.5 × 16.5 × 7.8 cm; cast, chased, engraved, tooled and gilded copper with champlevé enamel, appliqué heads and three rock crystal cabochons over a modern oak core. The lower panel on the reverse and the two side finials of the cresting are modern replacements. Some restoration to the enamel including three of the spandrels above the saints on the front and the upper right side of background above the right saint on the front and the background on the lower right and left of the saint on the right-hand side, and unrestored loss to the enamel on the lower left side of the saint on the left-hand side. Larger enamel fill on the upper plaque on the reverse face.

#### Provenance

Collection of Baron Max von Goldschmidt-Rothschild, Frankfurt-am-Main, by 1875;  
Thomas Flannery (1926–1983), Chicago, 1970–1983;  
His posthumous sale, Sotheby's London 1st December 1983, lot 40;  
With Blumka Gallery and Julius Böhler, New York and Munich, 2004;  
The Wyvern Collection, London, 2009–13

#### Exhibited and published

*Chefs-d'œuvre de l'art industriel à Francfort-sur-le-Main en 1875*, Paris, 1877, cat. 4;  
*Enamels: the XIIth to the XVIth Century*, Chicago, The Martin d'Arcy Gallery of Art, Loyola University of Chicago, 1970, cat. 4  
The European Fine Art Fair, Maastricht, 2003;  
Blumka Gallery and Julius Böhler, *Collecting Treasures of the Past IV*, New York, Blumka Gallery, January–February 2004;  
*XXIIe Biennale des Antiquaires*, Paris, Carrousel du Louvre, 15–28 August 2004  
Recorded in Marie-Madeleine Gauthier et al., *Corpus des Émaux Méridionaux L'apogée 1190–1215*, vol II, CD-Rom, Paris, Louvre, 2011, I B 1, no. 23: ('Châsse : Crucifixion entre deux saints (a) Christ en majesté entre deux saints (b)')

1, G. François in M.-M. Gauthier et al., *Corpus des Émaux Méridionaux L'apogée 1190–1215* (vol II, CD-Rom, Paris, Louvre, 2011, I B 1, no. 23).

enamels remain as beguiling today as they must have been to their contemporary viewers.<sup>2</sup> Despite the loss of its rear plaque, our chasse remains not only among the most skillfully executed of its type to have survived anywhere, but also one of the very best-preserved examples still in private hands. It is very closely related to a group of Limoges enamels created variously in the workshop or style of a metalworker known as Master Alpais, after the name recorded both in contemporary documents and on a signed ciborium now in the musée du Louvre in Paris.<sup>3</sup> The decorative framing elements and microarchitectural designs employed on our chasse reappear on a number of Alpais-group caskets, including a pair of tabernacles in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York,<sup>4</sup> chasses in the treasuries of Toledo,<sup>5</sup> Troyes<sup>6</sup> and the Abbey of Saint Augustine at Klosterneuburg (fig.1),<sup>7</sup> and others now in museum collections including the museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Pisa<sup>8</sup> and the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.<sup>9</sup>

What remains to be fully explored in the scholarship on early Limousin metalwork is the rich artistic dialogue that clearly seems to have existed



**Fig.1**  
Chasse with the Crucifixion  
France, Limoges  
c.1200  
19 × 16.3 × 7.5 cm;  
Klosterneuburg, Abbey of  
the Canons Regular of Saint  
Augustine, inv. KG 63

between the various masters responsible for this closely-related corpus of objects, especially in relation to the use of shared motifs such as the separately-cast and riveted heads. As early as the 1160s Limousin metalworkers had discovered the aesthetic benefits of casting the heads of their figures from highly detailed moulds, and riveting them on to bodies worked in outline directly on the surface of the plaque. This technique reached its zenith under the guidance of Master Alpais, and a monumental chasse of Saint Thomas Becket associated with his workshop shows the technique employed at its most virtuosic and refined (fig.2a). A number of the head types utilized on our chasse reappear with only subtle differences on the Becket chasse (see fig.2b) as well as others including the reliquary of the True Cross in the treasury of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse.<sup>10</sup> More pertinently still, identical versions seem to have been used on a longer single plaque of Christ in Majesty in the musée de Cluny in Paris (fig.3), and a shorter version of the same theme in the Museo Civico d'Arte Antica in Turin (fig.4).<sup>11</sup> These links, which demand a renewed analysis of the known corpus, suggest either that such elements were all produced under the aegis of a single workshop, or that specialist independent casters were producing appliqués of this kind using carefully guarded master moulds, and supplying several of the city's foremost ateliers at the same time.

2, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, ed. *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.168.  
3, For a fuller discussion of the Master Alpais group see Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, pp.246–280.  
4, Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, no. 70, pp.250–253.  
5, *De Limoges a Silos*, Exh. Cat., Madrid, Brussels and Silos, 2001, p.89.  
6, Nicole Hany-Longuespé, *Le trésor et les reliques de la cathédrale de Troyes de la 4e croisade à nos jours*, Troyes, 2005, no. 033, p.190.  
7, See also M.-M. Gauthier et al., *Corpus des Émaux Méridionaux, L'apogée 1190–1215*, vol. II, Paris,

2011, no IB 1, no. 18, pp.64–65.  
8, M.-M. Gauthier, 'L'art de l'émail champlevé en Italie à l'époque primitive du gothique', in *Il Gotico in Pistoia: Nei suoi rapporti con l'arte gotica italiana. Atti del 2 Convegno internazionale di Studi, Pistoia, 24–30 avril 1966*, Rome, 1972, pp.271–293, p.275 and 278.  
9, Véronique Notin, Tamara Rappé, Marta Kryjanovskaia, *Émaux limousins du Musée national de l'Ermitage de Saint-Petersbourg*, Exh. Cat., Limoges, Musée municipal de l'Évêché, 2004, no. 12, pp.48–9.  
10, Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, no. 40, pp.165–7.  
11, Simonetta Castronovo, *Smalti di Limoges del XIII secolo: Collezione del Museo Civico d'Arte Antica di Torino*, Turin, 2014, p.87.



**Fig.2a**  
Reliquary of Thomas Becket  
c.1180–1190  
29.5 × 34.4 × 12.4 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel and rock crystal cabochons  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. M.66-1997



**Fig.2b**  
The Reliquary of Thomas Becket, detail showing Christ in Majesty



**Fig.3**  
Plaque with Christ in Majesty  
France, Limoges  
c.1190–1200  
8.2 × 12.3 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Paris, musée de Cluny, inv. 965



**Fig.4a**  
Plaque with Christ in Majesty, detail  
France, Limoges  
c.1195–1200  
6 × 10.5 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Turin, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, inv. 8/S



**Fig.4b**  
Detail of the Crucified Christ on the present chasse, with a head cast from the same mould as that used on the Turin plaque.



Cat.6 A reliquary chalice showing the Crucifixion



Cat.6 A reliquary chalice showing the Crucifixion

## A chrismatory composed of five Limoges panels



This small enamelled container is composed of three long panels decorated with half-length saints, and two shorter panels each depicting a single bust-length figure of an angel. The front panel centres on the image of Christ in Majesty, holding a book in his left hand and his right in a gesture of blessing. He is flanked by two angels who turn and lower their heads in deference towards him. The background surface is decorated with flowering and variegated rosette motifs of a type typical for early thirteenth-century Limousin enamels. The lid plaque features a female saint holding a palm branch at its centre – a symbol of martyrdom – and two further figures holding books against a ground scattered with further rosettes. The scene has been interpreted as the Virgin with two apostles; however, a figure of the Virgin holding a palm branch is rarely seen on Limousin enamels of this type, and it is therefore more likely that it was intended to represent either a particular martyr saint associated with the church or foundation for which it was commissioned, or the community of saints more generally. The composition is bisected by a horizontal turquoise band, which runs behind the shoulders of all three figures. The panel on the reverse face of the box is non-figurative, and contains foliate decoration within regularly carved rhomboid shapes.<sup>1</sup> All three plaques belong to the classic Limousin style developed in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, and which includes such richly decorated works as the famous ciborium of Master Alpais,<sup>2</sup> and a lavishly conceived tabernacle now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (figs.1a–b). The angels on the New York tabernacle are especially analogous to the male figures on our panels – the overlapping locks of hair, the large eyes and prominent noses all find parallels here.

It is unclear when the two end panels were united with their three longer counterparts (we know only that they were together by 1917), but they are unlikely to have started life as part of the same object. In style, proportions and facture, they diverge markedly from the longer group, and both appear to have been trimmed down slightly along their lower edges to match the dimensions of their counterparts. Although of a similar date (they compare well with examples dated in current scholarship to around 1210–20<sup>3</sup>), they were executed by a different artist working in a far looser, bolder, and more abbreviated style.

France, Limoges  
c.1220

7 × 13.7 (large plaques); 5.5 × 6.7 (smaller plaques); cast, engraved an gilded copper with champlevé enamels in dark blue, red, turquoise, white, and black laid in single and mixed fields. Some flake losses to the enamels and rubbing to the gilding in places. The two shorter plaques cut down along their lower edges and probably reconstituted from another object. The oak carcass a modern reconstruction.

#### Provenance

John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), New York, and by descent until;  
Sotheby's London, *Medieval, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque Works of Art*, 12th July 1979, lot 26;  
Collection of Martí Mas Tubau, Barcelona

1, A chasse decorated with a similar formula of motifs is preserved in the MNAC in Barcelona and has been dated in recent scholarship to c.1220–1250, for which see Barbara Drake Boehm et al., *De Limoges a Silos*, Exh. Cat., Madrid, Brussels and Silos, 2002, no. 57, pp.191–3.  
2, Susan La Niece, Stefan Röhrs and Bet McLeod eds, *The Heritage of Maître Alpais: An International and Interdisciplinary Examination of Medieval Limoges Enamel and Associated Objects*, London, 2010.

3, For instance, a chrismatory with bust-length figures of angels in the Wyvern Collection, published in Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art*, London, 2021 (forthcoming), no. 46.



**Fig.1a**  
 Tabernacle  
 France, Limoges  
 c.1200–1210  
 31.8 × 16.5 × 17 cm; cast, gilded  
 and engraved copper with  
 champlevé enamels  
 New York, Metropolitan Museum  
 of Art, inv. 41.100.184



**Fig.1b**  
 Detail of an angel from the  
 New York tabernacle



Cat.7, A chrismatory composed of five Limoges panels

## A chrismatory decorated with angels in roundels



This small, champlevé-enamelled container is decorated on all sides with gilded and engraved bust-length figures of angels which emerge from wavy cloud forms within tight circular vignettes. Each figure is outlined against a green sky, and in most cases their frames are reinforced by a crisp white border which separates them from a surrounding design of deep, lapis-blue enamel filled with scrolling vine tendrils or *rinceaux* picked out in gold. The sides of the box are constructed from a series of flat, cast plaques finely soldered together at their edges and riveted at each corner to four supporting legs, which consist of strips of metal formed around each corner of the vessel and cleverly closed into short, square-section tubes below. The hinged, trapezoidal lid appears not to have been constructed in the same way, but is instead formed from a single cast or hammered sheet, perhaps in order to withstand the forces placed upon it by repeated use; two rivets let into the underside of the lid indicate where a crest or carrying handle would originally have been fixed in place, now missing. Four cast serpent-like creatures cling to the hips of the roofline and add structural support, while a fifth operates as a hinged clasp which passes through the front of the box and locks the lid in place.

The size and construction of our vessel indicate that it most likely served as a chrismatory, a form of container used to safeguard the three vials of holy oil (or chrism) used in church rites. These were the oil for anointing priests and consecrating altars and church buildings, the oil for confirmation of the young, and the oil for extreme unction, or the last rites of the dying. They would typically be separated from one another by internal dividers set into the interior of the chrismatory, although as Paul Williamson has noted, only one such example of Limoges manufacture is known to have survived with these divisions intact.<sup>1</sup> Other examples of the same size and incorporating a similar repertoire of motifs are preserved in the treasury of the church of Saint-Viance, Corrèze,<sup>2</sup> the Wyvern Collection in London,<sup>3</sup> the musée de Cluny in Paris (fig.1; note in particular the same serpent-like creatures and square-section legs at its four corners), and the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (fig.2). They all bear the characteristic elements of enamelled metalwork produced in the workshops of Limoges in south-central France, and have been ascribed a date range in the surrounding scholarship within the first half of the thirteenth century. The stylised and abbreviated decorative language of our chrismatory puts its execution towards the end of that date range, and compares closely with Limoges-made objects thought to have been produced in the years around 1250, including a group of twelve medallions in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a cruet in the Cabinet des Médailles at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.<sup>4</sup>

France, Limoges  
c.1240–1260

10.2 × 14 × 7.6 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper alloy with champlevé enamels. Losses to the enamels restored with filling material, most likely by a nineteenth-century restorer. Generalised rubbing and loss to the gilding, some localised repairs to the hinges. The handle missing.

#### Provenance

With Brimo de Laroussilhe, Paris, early 1930s;  
Collection of Frits Philips (1905–2005), Eindhoven;  
His posthumous sale, Sotheby's Amsterdam, 4th December 2006, lot 432  
Private collection, Ohio;  
Sotheby's New York, 27th January 2011, lot 396

#### Published

E. Bertrand, *Émaux Limousins du Moyen Âge*, Exh. Cat., Paris, Brimo de Laroussilhe, 1995, no. 43, ill. p.38.

1, Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art*, London, 2021 (forthcoming), no.46, p.147.  
2, *Les Tresors des Eglises de France*, Exh. Cat., Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1965, no. 408, p.224 and plate 55.  
3, Williamson 2021 (forthcoming).  
4, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, ed. *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*. Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, no. 124, pp.364–5, and no. 137, pp.384–5.



**Fig.1**  
Chrismatory  
France, Limoges  
Mid 13th century  
Paris, musée de Cluny,  
inv. CL983



**Fig.2**  
Chrismatory  
France, Limoges  
Mid-13th century  
11 x 10.9 x 7.1 cm; gilt copper  
with champlevé enamel  
Baltimore, Walters Art  
Museum, inv. 44.102



Cat.8, A chrismatory decorated with angels in roundels



## A gable plaque from a reliquary chasse showing a standing Apostle



This vividly decorated and densely engraved plaque belongs to a celebrated group of twelfth-century enamels created by a highly-skilled group of metalworkers active in Limoges in south-central France, and was made to decorate one of the two gable ends of a larger reliquary chasse. A single male apostle is depicted standing at full length under a Romanesque arch raised on shaded columns and supporting a micro-architectural lantern. Around the figure, and in the spandrel over each arch, is a dense engraved pattern of vermiculé decoration consisting of tight wheels of rinceaux that flower into foliate sprays. Semicircular fans extend in from all five sides of the plaque in a series of contrasting colours.

Since the apostle depicted on this gable is not accompanied by any attributes apart from the scroll that he holds, it is not possible to identify him further or to suggest an identification of the relics that the original chasse would have contained. The demand for enamels from Limoges in the Middle Ages encouraged the workshops there to create reliquaries decorated by generic biblical imagery which would have worked with a large number of relics (fig.1). Thus, many of the surviving Limoges objects, just as this one, do not give us many clues about their original setting or the relics that they would have contained. Nonetheless, these relics would have been venerated by both the local community and by pilgrims encouraged to travel large distances in order to be in the presence of their miraculous properties.

Stylistically, the stocky physique of the apostle, his heavy, stylized drapery, and his facial features are closely related to a group of objects that have been attributed to a circle of goldsmiths known by the provisional name 'Chapitre workshop', active by around 1180 in Limoges.<sup>1</sup> The use of colour in this plaque is distinctive in that the workshop employed a rich palette and even used blue pigment to enhance the engraved face and large feet of the apostle. Closely related plaques, certainly made in the same workshop at around the same date, include an example formerly in the Brummer collection, Zurich<sup>2</sup> and another in the Fundacion Lazaro Galdaro Galdiano, Madrid (fig.1 – 2). A complete chasse of analogous treatment is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig.3).

France, Limoges, from the so-called Chapitre Workshop c.1190

11.3 × 7.1 cm; gilded, chased, and engraved copper with champlevé enamel in blue, red, green, black, white and yellow. Rubbing to the gilding, and some minor losses to the enamel. The plaque's feet cut away.

#### Provenance

Spitzer Collection before 1890;  
Bourgeois Freres, Cologne, before 1904, until;  
Their sale, Heberle, Cologne, 19–27th October 1904, lots 383 and 384;  
Seligman, Paris, 1925;  
The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, inv. 44.95 and 44.96, from 1944 until 1957;  
Ratton Collection, Paris;  
Sotheby's London, 18th November 1982, lot 3;  
Wyvern Collection, London 2005–9;  
Christie's London, 7th July 2011, lot 566;  
Private collection, UK

#### Published

Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, *Émaux Méridionaux, Catalogue International de l'Œuvre de Limoges: L'Époque Romane*, Paris, 1987, p.170, no. 179, Pl. CLXVIII, fig.577.

1, Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, *Émaux Méridionaux, Catalogue International de l'Œuvre de Limoges: L'Époque Romane*, Paris, 1987, p.170, no. 179, Pl. CLXVIII.

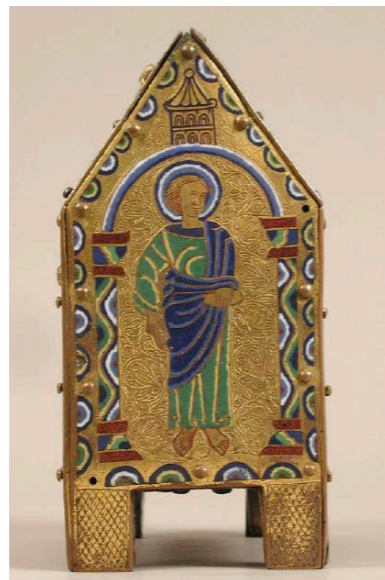
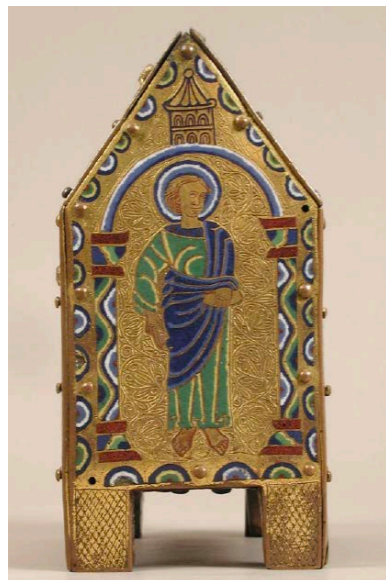
2, Marie-Madeleine Gauthier 1987, pp.170–171, nos. 180–182, pl. CLXVIII.



**Fig.1**  
A gable plaque from a  
reliquary chasse showing a  
standing apostle  
France, Limoges, from  
the so-called Chapitre  
Workshop  
c.1190  
Formerly Ernst Brummer  
Collection



**Fig.2**  
A gable plaque from a  
reliquary chasse showing a  
standing apostle  
France, Limoges, from  
the so-called Chapitre  
Workshop  
c.1190  
Fundacion Lazaro Galdaro  
Galdiano, Madrid



**Fig.3a-c**  
A chasse with the  
Crucifixion and Christ in  
Majesty  
France, Limoges  
c.1190  
16.7 × 21 × 8.4 cm  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, inv.  
41.100.155



Cat.9, A gable plaque from a reliquary chasse showing a standing Apostle (detail)

## An enamelled plaque showing Moses and the brazen serpent



For many, the highpoint of treasury art from the European West are the enamels produced in the Meuse Valley (now in Belgium), during the second half of the twelfth century. Unlike the majority of enamelled objects from the other great centre of production, Limoges, which take their appearance from a practice of enamelling the 'background' of a scene and leaving only the figures in reserve to be gilded, Mosan enamels involve a far more sophisticated and labour-intensive approach in which the background is left in reserve and it is instead the pictorial elements of a scene – figures, objects, landscapes, inscriptions and decorative borders – that are engraved and enamelled in discrete compartments. This gives each plaque (and, crucially, the objects to which they are attached) the appearance of something fashioned from solid gold, and throws the compositions with which they are decorated into vivid, colourful relief. When building up their colours, Mosan metalworkers typically laid powdered enamels (usually in a cool palette of blues, greens, yellow and white) side by side in rows within each engraved compartment, only occasionally choosing to blend them more fluidly, a technique that creates strongly gradated contours, highlights and shadows. Such an approach demanded an extraordinarily careful hand, since the fine ridges or borders of metal left in place to separate each compartment from the next and emphasise drapery folds and other outlines could easily be broken or compromised by a single slip of the hand. But the extra time, skill, and planning had considerable payoffs, since Mosan enamels have always been prized for their astounding clarity and visual drama and, at their best, constitute the most masterful demonstrations of the enameller's art from any period of European history.

The present plaque, depicting a biblical scene known as *Moses and the Brazen Serpent*, is a vanishingly rare example of this art form. The scene stems from the biblical passage in Numbers XXI, 9, in which 'Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.'<sup>1</sup> Short inscriptions identify Moses ('MOISES') who stands to the left of a stout central column, and the serpent ('SERPENS'), which appears atop the column's capital. Two Israelites stand looking towards Moses from the right of the scene, gazing at the serpent turning in their direction. They wear elaborate costumes in beautiful shades of green and blue, colours typical of Mosan enamels, with the belts, as well as the sleeves of Moses' robe, delicately gilded, tooled and engraved. The organisation of the composition with a strong left-to-right axis vividly evokes the miraculous process which characterises the narrative: as Moses raises his hand, he simultaneously conjures the beast, and reverses its deadly effect on the men who gaze up towards its eyes.

The plaque's format, treatment, and iconography all suggest that it was made to adorn the arms of a large typological processional cross. Typology is a term used to describe instances in which parables recounted in the Old Testament are seen as precursors to events from the Life of Christ in the New Testament. In this way, *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* became particularly popular in the Middle Ages as an antitype to the Crucifixion, a pairing connoted emphatically on our plaque by the inscription on Moses' scroll, which reads MIST(E)RIUM CRUCIS. The inclusion of such text, unusual for enamels of this scene, may well have been the result of patronal intervention to highlight a piece of the True Cross incorporated into the cross it originally adorned. We know that Mosan typological crosses operated in this way, since fragments of the True Cross survive in similar examples, including a fine

**Meuse Valley, province of Liège**  
c.1160

7 × 9.5 cm; cast, tooled, and gilded copper with lapis blue, light blue, turquoise, green, yellow and white champlevé enamel, wear to the gilding and some losses to the enamels.

### Provenance

Before 1905 Chalandon collection, Lyon;  
Before 1958 until 1971 Kofler-Truniger Collection, Lucerne;  
Keir Collection, 1971–2013

### Exhibited and published

G. Migeon, 'La Collection de M.g. Chalandon', *Les Arts*, 42 (June), Paris, 1905, no. 26, fig.p.26  
*Trésors d'art de la vallée de la Meuse*, Exh. Cat., Paris, Musée des arts décoratifs, 1951–1952, cat. 81  
H. Swarzenski, 'The Song of the Three Worthies', in *Bulletin of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts*, LVI, Boston, 1958, no. 33  
*Grosse Kunst des Mittelalters aus Privatbesitz*, Exh. Cat., Cologne, Schnütgen Museum, 1960, cat. 80  
*Sammlung E. und M. Kofler-Truniger*, Luzern, Exh. Cat., Zurich, Kunsthau, 1964, cat. 839, pl. 82  
P. Lasko, 'A Notable Private Collection', in *Apollo*, June 1964, p.10  
H. Demorlane, 'De la Vierge médiévale à la divinité égyptienne, la collection Kofler dévoile ses trésors', in *Connaissance des arts*, June, 1964, pp. 67  
*Mittelalterliche Kunst der Sammlung Kofler-Truniger*, Exh. Cat., Suermondt Museum, Aachen, 1965, E14, pl. 10  
H. Schnitzler, P. Bloch and C. Rattou, *Email Goldschmiede und Metallarbeiten. Europäisches Mittelalter Sammlung E. und M. Kofler-Truniger Luzern*, II, Lucerne/Stuttgart, 1965, E14, pl. 10  
N. Morgan, 'The iconography of twelfth century Mosan enamels', in *Rhein und Maas, Kunst und Kultur 800–1400*, 2, Cologne, 1973, p.265 and note 55.  
G. Chapman, 'Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph. A Mosan Enamel in the Walters Art Gallery', in *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, Baltimore, 1980, 34–6 and 55, fig.2 and App. II (pp.57–8)  
M-M Gauthier and G. François, *Medieval Enamels from the Keir Collection*, London, 1981, cat. 48, p.33  
*The Keir Collection*, Exh. Cat., Kansas City, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, 1983, cat. 5  
*The Keir Collection of Medieval Works of Art*, Sotheby's New York, 20th November 1997, lot 16, pp.26–27 and 186

<sup>1</sup>, This wording is from the King James Version.

example in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig.1).

The size and rectangular format of our plaque find parallels among a group of related enamels originally made to decorate the arms of a large typological cross but now split between the Musée Dobrée, Nantes, and the Musée du Louvre, Paris (figs.2a–d). The use of the scroll motif, as well as the plaque's colouring and stylistic treatment, relates it to the celebrated shrine of Saint Heribert in Deutz (Cologne). Believed to date to around 1167, the shrine is covered with a series of plaques from a local goldsmith alongside others from a Mosan workshop, of which the latter are closest to our enamel and help date it accordingly. The most compelling comparison, however, is offered by a plaque showing *Jacob Blessing Manasseh and Ephraim* in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, which scholars have argued was executed in the same workshop as our example and for the same cross, since their dimensions and stylistic treatment are identical (fig.3).<sup>2</sup>



**Fig.1**  
Composite Altar Cross  
Hildesheim, Meuse Valley,  
and Cologne  
c.1160–1200  
64.7 × 41.5 cm; Copper-gilt  
with champlevé enamel  
plaques and cloisonné details  
on oak core  
London, Victoria and Albert  
Museum, inv. 7234-1860



2, Morgan 1973, p.265,  
note 55.

**Fig.2a–d**  
Four plaques from a  
typological cross  
Meuse Valley  
c.1155–65  
Each 7.1–7.5 × 15 cm;  
champlevé enamel on gilded  
copper  
a) Nantes, Musée Dobrée,  
Inv. No. 896-1.25  
b-d) Paris, Musée du Louvre,  
Inv. No. MV.28, 29, and 30



**Fig.3**  
Jacob Blessing Manasseh  
and Ephraim  
Meuse Valley  
Third quarter 12th century  
7.1 × 9.7 cm; gilt copper,  
champlevé enamel  
Baltimore, Walters Art  
Gallery, Inv. 44.97





## Christ on the Cross, with Adam rising from his grave below



This is a particularly grand and elaborate example of what Limousin metalworkers made to adorn larger altar- and processional crosses during the thirteenth century. It would originally have occupied the centre of the cross, accompanied by similarly relief-modelled figures of the Virgin and Saint John attached on either side (of the type exemplified by number 16 in this catalogue) and further embellishments covering the cross's reverse. On this example, Christ's body is formed in relief, and attached by way of nails passed through the hands and feet in a manner that directly echoes the actual process of his Crucifixion. He hangs from a slender cross, the timber of which is picked out from the lapis-blue background around it through a combination of yellow and green enamels laid side-by-side in rows, and studded with diamond patterns in blue, red and white. Further diamonds, circles, and larger, undulating rosettes pepper the blue background itself, while an ornate halo with a pattern of red polka dots nimbs Christ's head. A double titulus attached near the top of the cross is inscribed with the trigrams 'IHS' and 'XPS' in delicate white lettering, and descending from a cloud above them at the top of the plaque is the hand of God, shown in a gesture of blessing. Below Christ's feet the figure of Adam is shown rising from his grave in prayer, a traditional symbol of the redemptive nature of Christ's sacrifice for mankind.

As with the previous cross in this catalogue and those others of its type that were first brought together by Paul Thoby in his authoritative 1953 monograph on Limousin crosses, Christ is shown upright, awake and crowned in a pose that indicates his triumph over death.<sup>1</sup> However, few cross plaques of a similarly ambitious scale and with such a meticulous and ornate employment of decorative motifs have survived from the golden age of Limousin metalwork. Elements including the polka-dot patterning used on Christ's halo and the supporting platform under his feet, the vivid greens (in multiple hues) and yellows used to simulate the timber of the cross, and the dense rosette-and-diamond studwork decoration, have long been associated with fashions in Limousin enamelling developed in the last decades of the twelfth century, and can be found used to similar effect on the c.1178–98 Reliquary of the True Cross in the Treasury of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, and a book cover showing Christ in Majesty dated c.1185–1210 in New York. Examples such as these help suggest a date in the years immediately around 1200 for our cross.<sup>2</sup> A similarly dated version of smaller proportions but with an almost identical figure type is preserved in the treasury of the church at Terrazas de la Sierra (Burgos).<sup>3</sup>

France, Limoges  
c.1190–1210

28.5 × 16.2 × 2.7 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel. Some losses to the enamels and rubbing to the gilding in places.

Provenance

Private collection, their sale, Sotheby's, London, 8 July 1976, lot 15;

Private collection, France

1, P. Thoby, *Les croix limousines de la fin du XIIIe siècle au début du XIVe siècle*, Paris, 1953, pp.122–123, nos. 58 and 59.

2, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, no. 40, pp.165–7, and no. 48, pp.182–3.

3, *De Limoges a Silos*, Exh. Cat., Madrid, Brussels and Silos, 2002, p.169.



Cat.11 Christ on the Cross, with Adam rising from his grave below (detail)



## Christ on the Cross



Christ is shown crucified on a cross rising from the rocky hill of Golgotha and set against a blue backdrop peppered with rosettes. He is represented with his eyes open, his body upright rather than slung and moribund, and with a crown atop his head – features and attributes frequently used by medieval artists to symbolise Christ’s glorious triumph over death. The figure, or corpus, was made by hammering copper sheet into shape in a mould, a technique known as *repoussé*, before attaching it to the enamelled backplate by way of rivets struck through the hands and feet. Differences in the techniques used to engrave and decorate the surfaces of the corpus and the cross suggest their production by multiple artisans collaborating in a larger workshop, a breakdown of labour that must have been extremely frequent in the highly productive workshops of Limoges during the period. Eighteen individual holes drilled through the copper backplate around the peripheries of the enamels indicate the manner in which it was originally fixed to a larger processional or altar cross, likely incorporating further enamelled elements such as termini decoration and accompanying figures of the grieving Virgin and Saint John.

The robust physiognomy of our figure, its sharply defined fleur-de-lys crown, and the undulating rosettes rhythmically arranged around the supporting cross, are all characteristic features of early Limousin enamelwork produced in the years around and shortly after 1200. Stylistically, our cross conforms closely to ‘Type B’ of Paul Thoby’s still authoritative classification for Limoges crosses of the thirteenth century, which can be identified based on the following features: the open-eyed gaze, the extended hands with outstretched thumbs, the separated feet which follow the shape of a trapezium, and the crowned head turned to its right.<sup>1</sup> Comparison of our cross with an earlier appliqué figure now in the musée du Louvre, which has been dated to c.1195–1210, reveals a clear evolution in style in the figurative metalwork of the period.<sup>2</sup> While the Paris corpus still bears key Romanesque features such as the rigidness in both the body and the loincloth, our version already shows a greater sense of movement and a heightened illusion of depth and three-dimensionality.<sup>3</sup> Christ’s body beginning to take on the Gothic ‘S’ shape curve, which became even more pronounced in later thirteenth century Limoges workshop practice (fig.4). The left leg, which rests on top of the other seems to come forward in space thanks to the foreshortening, emphasized by the direction of the loincloth folds.



**Fig.1**  
Equestrian Plaque  
France, Limoges  
c.1220  
24.8 × 13 cm; cast, chased  
and gilded copper with  
champlevé enamel  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, inv.  
17.190.854

France, Limoges  
c.1200–1210

21.5 × 13 × 2 cm, copper repoussé, chased and gilded with appliqué corpus, champlevé enamel in lapis and lavender blue, green, red, yellow and white, there are twelve holes for attachment to a larger cross; only traces of gilding remain on the arms and shoulders of the corpus, both glass beads of the eyes missing.

*Provenance*

Collection of Juan Bernhardt, South America;  
His sale, Sotheby’s London, *Metalwork; Works of Art; Limoges painted enamels*, 7th December 1967, lot 89;  
Sotheby’s London, *European Works of Art and Sculpture*, Thursday 8th December 1988, lot 18 ‘the property of a gentleman’;  
Collection of Carlo de Carlo, Florence, acquired from the above

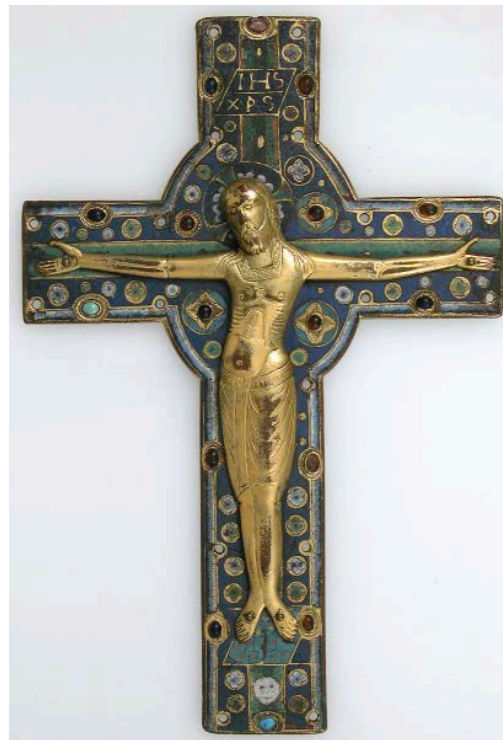
1, Paul Thoby, *Les croix limousines de la fin du XII. siècle au début du XIV siècle*, Paris, 1953, p.6.  
2, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100 – 1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.186.  
3, *Ibid.*, 186.



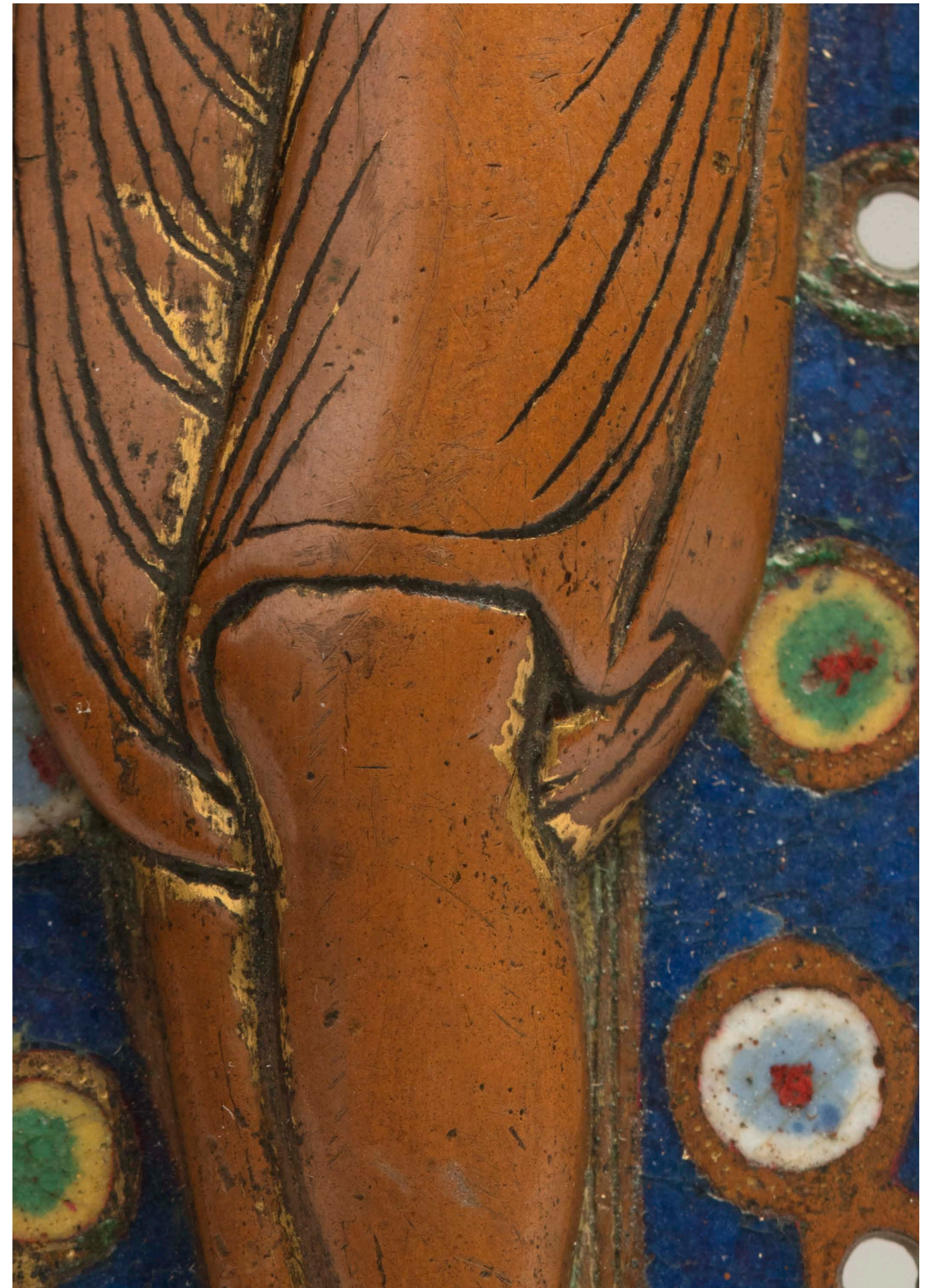
**Fig.2**  
Crucifixion Book Cover  
France, Limoges  
First quarter of the 13th  
century  
30 × 19.5 cm  
Paris, Musée du Cluny



**Fig.3**  
Crucifix  
Limoges, France  
13th century  
46.4 × 25.5 × 2.1 cm  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
inv. 17.190.338



**Fig.4**  
Crucifix  
Limoges, France  
Mid-13th century  
27.3 × 18.4 cm  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
inv. 17.190.786



Cat.12, Christ on the Cross (detail)

## An altar cross with angels



This is an unusually ornate style of cross on which bust-length figures of angels fill the entirety of the reverse face in champlévé-enamelled roundels, around a central larger medallion showing Christ enthroned in Majesty with a book in his left hand and his right extended in a gesture of blessing. Though much of the enamel has been lost over time, it still allows us to reconstruct how it must originally have looked with figures picked out against alternating backgrounds of pale and dark blue. The front of the cross is gilded rather than enamelled, and is engraved with tight whirls of flowering rinceaux around a central silhouette of the crucified Christ, which would originally have been covered by a relief-moulded figure of the type exemplified by number 16 in this catalogue. Further figures in relief would have been attached over the thin ungilded areas on all four arms of the cross by way of rivets, and most likely consisted of the grieving Virgin and her typical counterpart Saint John on the horizontal bar, as well as apostles or saints above and below.

The scale, decoration, and iconography of the cross, with its angel roundels surrounding a larger central roundel of Christ in Majesty, find parallels among a small handful of surviving crosses preserved in collections around the world, and was clearly a popular formula among Limousin enamellers during the first half of the twelfth century. It can be compared to an altar cross now in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (fig.1), but more closely still to an example in the musée cantonal d'archéologie et d'histoire in Lausanne (fig.2), dated to c.1220–30. A similar date for our cross is confirmed by the stylized treatment and profiles of the angel figures, which offer parallels to Limousin enamels of various forms from this early period, including a chrismatory in the Wyvern Collection, London (fig.3).<sup>1</sup>

Despite the history of losses incurred by this crucifix, its masterful engraving, meticulously composed enamels, and rich iconography all testify to the privileged place enjoyed by Limousin metalwork in the treasuries of Medieval Europe.

France, Limoges  
c.1220–1230

47.5 × 25 × 0.4 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlévé enamel. Wear to the gilding, particularly on the lower arm, and widespread losses to the enamels. All of the applied figures are now missing.

Provenance  
Private collection, Spain



**Fig.1**  
Altar Cross  
France, Limoges  
c.1220–30  
44 × 25.5 cm; cast, chased,  
engraved and gilded copper  
with champlévé enamel  
Baltimore, The Walters Art  
Museum, inv. 44.108

<sup>1</sup> The dating of this chrismatory is taken from Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art*, London, 2021 (forthcoming), no. 46, p.147. I am extremely grateful to Dr Williamson for allowing me advance sight of his entry prior to publication.



**Fig.2**  
 Altar Cross  
 France, Limoges  
 c.1220-30  
 Dimensions unknown: cast,  
 chased, engraved and gilded  
 copper with champlevé  
 enamel  
 Lausanne, musée cantonal  
 d'archéologie et d'histoire.  
 Da Moudon



**Fig.3**  
 Chrysmatory  
 France, Limoges  
 c.1210-1220  
 13 x 7.3 x 6.9 cm; cast,  
 chased, engraved and gilded  
 copper with champlevé  
 enamel  
 London, The Wyvern  
 Collection, in. 0765



**Cat.13** An altar cross with angels (detail)



**Cat.13** An altar cross with angels (reverse)

## An appliqué corpus of Christ Triumphant



The crucified Christ is shown naked except for a large crown embellished with turquoise, and a long loincloth or perizonium that exposes his knees but drops down to the level of his calves on either side. The garment's fabric is gathered in soft pleats of dark blue material, and with a decorative white trim studded with further turquoise and glass beads, which encircles his waist and falls vertically down the length of the cloth at its centre. He bows his head slightly to our left, his body echoing this movement with its delicate, swaying posture. His torso has a robust and stocky musculature, with the ribcage finely delineated beneath the skin. His feet are shown apart, and are supported on an angled ledge enamelled in blue.

This impressive figure of Christ in glory is typical of a group of related examples that, perhaps for iconoclastic reasons, have almost all been removed from their supporting crosses during the centuries following their production; it is likely that the tears to both of our figure's hands was the result of its forcible removal from its original cross. Corpora of this type were among the most commonly produced objects in the Limousin enamellers' repertoire, though few have as impressive a scale or are as richly ornamented as our example. Breaking with the earlier Romanesque tradition in Limousin metalwork, which typically rendered Christ in a rigid, frontal pose, a more naturalistic approach emerging in the early thirteenth century informs our figure's subtle 'S' shaped curve. Unusual for enamels of this type however are the widespread remnants of what may well be an early or even original paint layer, most visible in the engraved lines of the ribs, the engraved space between his lower legs, in the outlines of his toes, and around the base on which he stands. Though its application does not seem to have been confined only to those areas immediately around the figure's wounds, the paint layer's bright, vermillion red colour may nevertheless have been intended to represent blood.

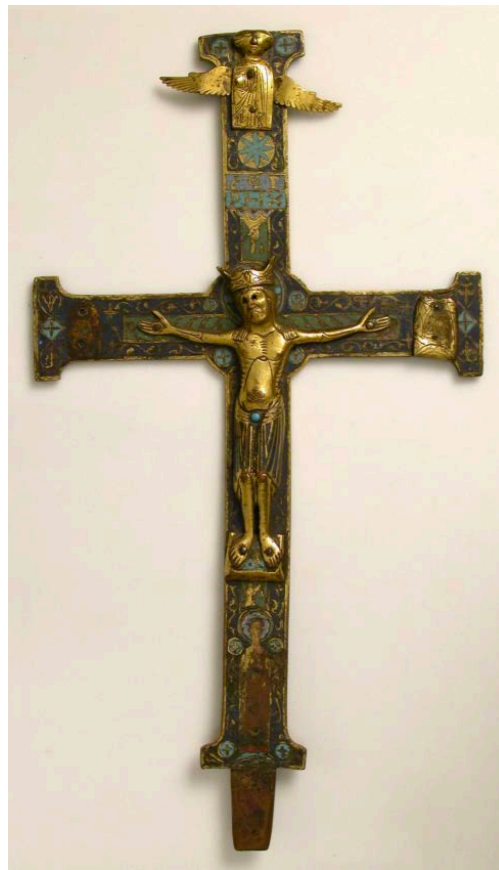
The figure's size indicates that it was originally made to function as part of a processional cross of some importance, and most likely for a large religious foundation. It was undoubtedly made in one of the foremost enamelling workshops of Limoges, which during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries dominated the production of gilded and enamelled copper in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The stylistic treatment of the present corpus accords closely with what Paul Thoby, in his authoritative 1953 survey on Limoges crosses, defined as the 'Type II' design, in which the figure is shown in high relief, wearing a knee-length perizonium, and with applied decoration in the form of both enamel and gemstones.<sup>2</sup> Related corpuses that can be ascribed to the same or closely related ateliers are preserved in the National Museum of Stockholm, the Musée de Tessé, Le Mans, and in the churches at Châlon-sur-Saône and Menussac.<sup>3</sup>

France, Limoges  
c.1220

25 × 18 × 2.7 cm; cast, repoussé, engraved, chased and gilded copper with blue and white champlevé enamel, inset with glass and semi-precious stones and with the vestiges of painted decoration. Some areas of loss to the enamel of the perizonium, and generalised rubbing to the gilding. The central fleuron of the crown and the fingers of both hands missing.

Provenance  
The Wyvern Collection, London, until 2019

1, For an explorative discussion of Limoges enamelwork at this date, see in particular B. Barrière, 'The Limousin and Limoges in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, 1995, pp.22–28.  
2, Paul Thoby, *Les Croix Limousines de la fin XIIe siècle au début du XIVe siècle*, Paris, 1953.  
3, Thoby 1953, nos. 30, 36, 37, 61.



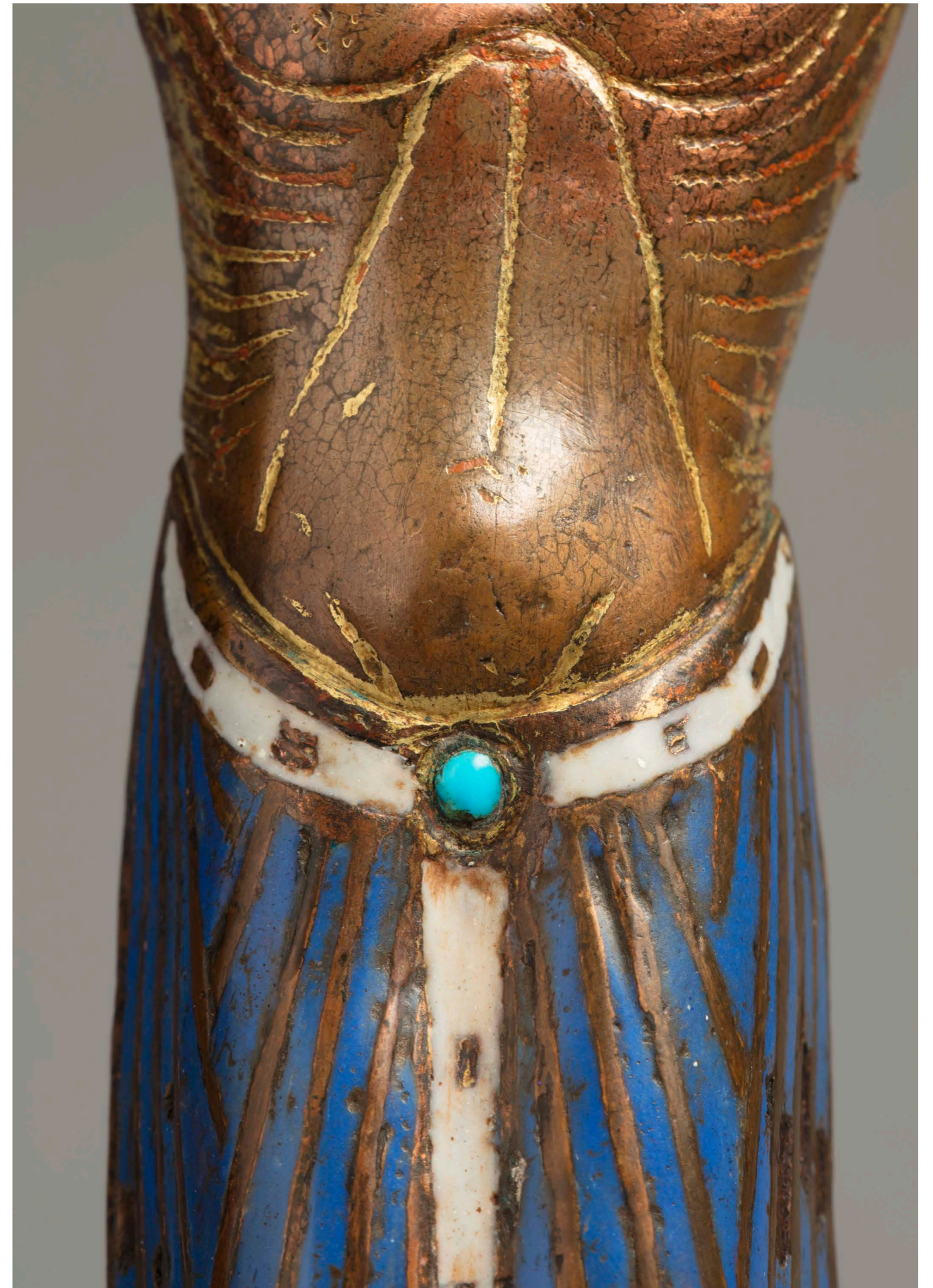
**Fig.1**  
 Processional cross  
 France, Limoges  
 Second quarter thirteenth  
 century  
 New York, Metropolitan  
 Museum of Art, inv.  
 17.190.338



**Fig.2**  
 Book-cover  
 France, Limoges  
 First half thirteenth century  
 New York, Metropolitan  
 Museum of Art, inv.  
 41.100.177



**Fig.3**  
 Appliqué corpus of Christ  
 France, Limoges  
 c.1220  
 New York, Metropolitan  
 Museum of Art, The  
 Cloisters Collection,  
 inv. 25.120.441



Cat.14, An appliqué corpus of Christ Triumphant (detail)

## A large altar cross with rock crystal cabochons surrounding the Christ Triumphant



This large processional cross, profusely engraved with surface decoration and embellished with four rock-crystal cabochons and a figure of Christ moulded in deep relief, is of unusually grand scale and, despite the abrasion to its gilding and the repair on one arm, is a rare intact survival from the thirteenth-century workshops of Limoges in south-central France. It belongs to a group of Limousin altar crosses known as 'fleuronné' on account of its shapely cross termini, which are thought to derive from leaf or flower sprays. Christ is shown at the centre of the cross, clothed in a loincloth that encircles his waist and snakes over both knees. It is embellished along its upper hemline and on a central band of vertical trim with paste gems alternating with engraved diamonds or lozenges. Further gems are visible on his ornate cusped crown with its tall, cruciform fleuron, and on the v-shaped orphrey collar at the top of his otherwise naked chest, a decision which imitates earlier figures of Christ shown dressed in a tunic.<sup>1</sup> A series of six small pierced protrusions sprouting from both sides of the vertical arm of the cross were likely intended for the suspension of pearls or metalwork attachments that would have fluttered and moved when the cross was processed.

The refined employment of paste gems set into the figure from the back is a feature typical of Limousin metalwork from the first half of the thirteenth century, and along with the language of engraved decoration covering the cross itself, can be found on a number of objects dated in the surrounding scholarship to the years around 1230, including a similarly conceived example now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas (fig.1), a pair of reliquaries showing Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata (dated to shortly after 1228<sup>2</sup>), and a three quarter-length repoussé deacon figure in the Walters Art Museum (fig.2). Just as compelling are the parallels it offers to a seated figure in the musée du Louvre of Christ in Majesty which has been dated to c.1220–1235 (fig.3). Along with the fine, flowering rinceaux engraved on both faces of the cross, these features all serve to militate strongly against a date of production much after the 1230s, since they retain an elaborate appearance that was to become more and more essentialized in the following decades (as can be seen from number 17 in this catalogue). In its still nascent exploration of this technique and its largely intact state, it is a significant early example of how changing fashions in Limousin metalworking techniques came to forcefully change the medium's visual outlook over the course of the thirteenth century.

France, Limoges  
c.1230–1240

63.5 × 36.8 × 3.8 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with rock crystal and metalwork attachments. Rubbing to the gilding. The proper-left terminus and rock crystal cabochon mount are later replacements.

Provenance

Collection of Charles Gillot (1853–1903);  
By descent until;  
Christie's Paris, 4–5 March 2008, lot 252

1, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.186.

2, For discussion of these reliquaries and the wider group of engraved Limousin enamels to which they belong see Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, pp.306–9.



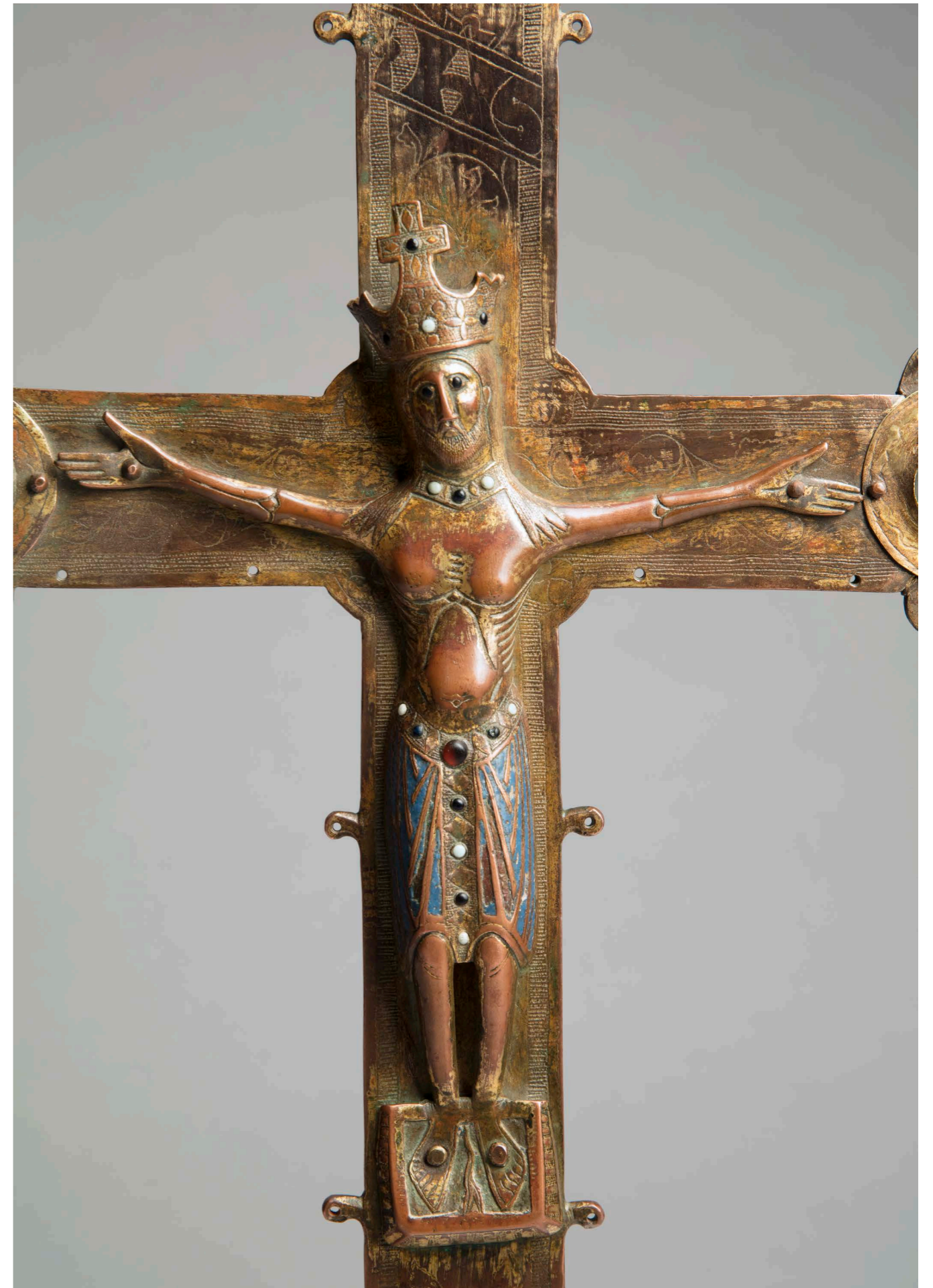
**Fig.1**  
Corpus  
France, Limoges  
First half 13th century  
22.7 × 16.7 × 3.2 cm; cast,  
repoussé, chased, engraved  
and gilded copper with  
champlevé enamel  
Kansas, Nelson-Atkins  
Museum of Art, inv.49-39



**Fig.2**  
Deacon  
France, Limoges  
c.1230–1240  
13 × 5.5 cm; cast, repoussé,  
chased, engraved and gilded  
copper with champlevé  
enamel and inset paste gems  
Baltimore, The Walters Art  
Museum, inv. 44.18



**Fig.3**  
Christ in Majesty  
France, Limoges  
c.1220–1235  
26.3 × 13.3 cm; cast,  
repoussé, chased, engraved  
and gilded copper with  
champlevé enamel and  
inset paste gems  
Paris, musée du Louvre,  
inv. MR R 305



Cat.15 A large altar cross with rock crystal cabochons surrounding the Christ Triumphant



## An enamelled cross terminal with the figure of Saint John



A T-shaped plaque enamelled with flowerheads and rosettes against a background of deep, lapis blue, supports the three quarter-length appliquéd figure of a haloed saint formed in relief.<sup>1</sup> The saint's head and halo jut above the upper border of the plaque, the former cast using the lost wax method before being set into the opening in the neck by way of pins passed through the metal and riveted in place. The figures' long robe and mantle are densely ornamented with networks of parallel fold lines, as well as a wide panel of intricate diamond forms hemming the neckline of his undergarment. Further lines engraved into his halo suggest the radiating petals of a flower. Seven holes pierced around the edges of the plaque indicate where it was attached to a wooden core.

This grand fragment would once have formed one of two termini on the horizontal arm of a large processional cross produced in the specialist south-central French enamel-working centre of Limoges, early in the thirteenth century. A small number of such crosses, with figures modelled in relief and applied onto a supporting structure, are preserved in institutions and treasuries around the world, but very few of the scale indicated by our figure and its supporting enamelled plaque have survived intact.<sup>2</sup> The saint's youthful, cleanshaven visage suggests that he can be identified as Saint John the Evangelist, which would be iconographically appropriate considering that John traditionally accompanies the grieving Virgin Mary in Medieval images of the Crucifixion. As on examples in museums in Baltimore, Dijon and London (fig.1), and in treasuries in Münster and Pfalz, they would have been placed at or close to each end of the cross's horizontal arm, looking in (as our figure does) towards the central image of the Crucified Christ.<sup>3</sup> The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore also houses a figure of the grieving Virgin from a cross of exactly this type, mounted as ours is on a T-shaped plaque and positioned so as to look in from the left, or proper right-hand side, of Christ (fig.2).

**France, Limoges**  
c.1220, with repairs undertaken c.1230–50

12.4 × 7 × 1.6 cm; cast, chased and gilded copper with champlevé enamel in lapis and lavender blue, green, red, yellow and white. Pierced in six places are six holes for attachment to a larger object, only traces of the gilding remain on the body of the saint.

*Provenance*  
Collection of Eugene V. Thaw (1927–2018), New York



**Fig.1**  
Altar Cross  
France, Limoges  
c.1250  
76.5 × 35 × 4.5 cm; cast,  
chased and gilded copper  
with champlevé enamel  
London, Victoria and Albert  
Museum, inv. M.575-1910

1, This description is based in large part on the research of Isabella Schwarzer, to whom we are extremely grateful.  
2, Paul Thoby, *Les Croix Limousines de la fin du XII siècle au début du XIV siècle*, Paris, 1953.  
3, Thomas Hoving et. al., *The Middle Ages: Treasures from The Cloisters and The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Exh. Cat., Los Angeles and Chicago, 1969, no. 61, pp.134–5.



**Fig.2**  
Cross Fragment of the Mourning Virgin  
France, Limoges  
1210–1220  
26.4 × 16.5 × 3.5 cm; cast, chased and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Baltimore, The Walters Museum, inv. 44.22

We are not only fortunate with this object that such an unusually grand cross fragment has come down to us. It also appears to be an extraordinarily rare and fascinating document of early repair and restoration practices, since it is clear from the figure's torn and oddly-cut neckline that his original head was removed by cutting it away from the body and replaced with another set into the resultant hole. Even for very large relief-modelled figures it was unusual not to cast or hammer the figure's head integrally with the body, and ours is not sufficiently large to have necessitated such a piecemeal approach as part of its original construction. Moreover, the stylistic and technical treatment of both the body and the supporting plaque are characteristic of early thirteenth-century Limoges enamelwork, and can be compared closely with similar details on objects including the Chasse of Saint-Marcel, thought to date to around 1215 (fig.3), and an equestrian plaque of c.1220 now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig.4). Like our figure, these early Limousin works are highly stylized, with an intense linearity to their garments which 'mask[s] all actual volume of the bodies'.<sup>4</sup> This approach is patently out of step, however, with the modelling of the head, which is in far deeper relief. It is also characterized by a voluminous 'bob' hairstyle with locks that curl up slightly at their ends, a fashion found on Limousin relief figures dated closer to the middle of the century or even later, such as a crowning angel in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig.5; cf. also the standing Virgin and Child figure in this catalogue). The details of our figure's hair were also embellished with recourse to a triangular-headed punch, the marks of which are entirely absent from the rest of the body and therefore suggest the involvement of a different hand using different tools. It seems highly likely therefore that we are looking at a cross figure which, perhaps owing to the ambitious nature of its design (with the head and halo breaking above the boundary of its supporting plaque) sustained irreparable damage, and was cut away and replaced by a Limousin metalworker active only a few years after the cross was first created. Whether the object was made for, and remained in use in, a local Limousin church or foundation, or was sent back to the city from further afield for repair by what must have been deemed the most appropriate craftsmen, cannot be known without further documentary evidence. But if this narrative is true, as seems likely, then it represents one of the tiny handful of enamelled objects from the Medieval period whose early history had such a striking and profound impact on its changing appearance.

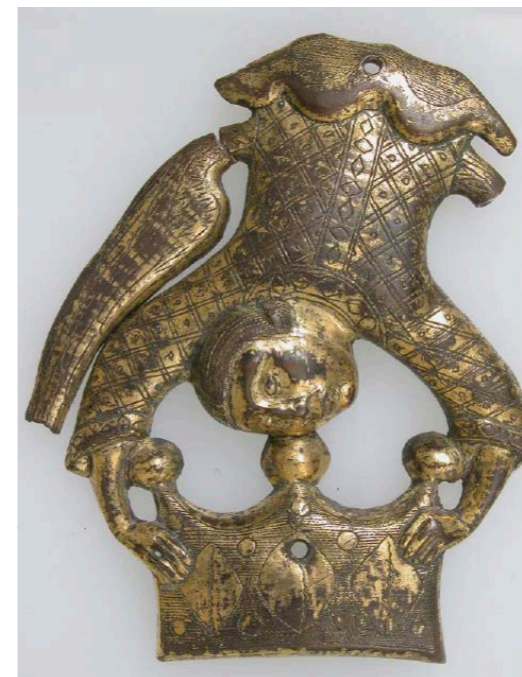
4, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.172.



**Fig.3**  
Chasse of Saint-Marcel, detail showing Christ in Majesty  
France, Limoges  
c.1200–1215  
42.4 × 43.3 × 17.3 cm; cast, chased and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Saint-Marcel (Indre), Church of Saint-Marcel



**Fig.4**  
Equestrian Plaque  
France, Limoges  
c.1220  
24.8 × 13 cm; cast, chased and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.190.854



**Fig.5**  
Angel Carrying a Crown  
Limoges, France  
c.1230–50  
10.8 × 9.3 × 1 cm; cast, chased and gilded copper  
New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 58.110

## A slender altar cross engraved with images of the Evangelists and other saints



This slender *fleuronné* cross, its shapely termini derived from flower sprays, is a wonderful example of the pared-back and essentialised visual language which came to typify Limoges metalwork during the second half of the thirteenth century. Although modest in material terms, it is beautifully elegant in its design and profile, and its surface is embellished with an appropriately refined lexicon of delicate linear motifs. At the centre of the cross's primary face is a relief-moulded figure of Christ, his body unusually diminutive in relation to its large proportions. Flanking him on either side are lobed forms engraved with crosslets, and filling the two termini at the end of the horizontal arm are engraved, three quarter-length figures of John, shown on Christ's left (our right), and the Virgin, positioned on his right (our left). On the uppermost terminus a haloed figure holding a book in his left hand raises his right in front of his chest, while at the base of the cross Saint Peter is depicted holding a book and his usual attribute, a key. On the reverse face four groups of elongated s-shaped tendrils unfurl over the arms of cross, pin-wheeling around a central roundel in which an angel raises his right hand in blessing. Winged symbols of the four evangelists – the lion of Saint Mark, the eagle of Saint John, the bull of Saint Luke, and the angel of Saint Matthew – appear in the four termini.

In early Medieval Europe, images of the Crucifixion were typically suspended behind and above the altar table until the middle of the eleventh century, when it had started to become accepted convention to place a cross directly on the altar. This process encouraged, or developed alongside, the object's physical incorporation into the liturgy, and by the later Middle Ages small, portable crosses like ours were routinely being processed and presented in different parts of the church as well as outside of its walls. The iconography of our example's engraved embellishment fits perfectly with the types of imagery and symbolism associated with crosses and their increasingly self-referential use during Mass in the period. Among its most evocative motifs in this respect is the image of the blessing angel at the centre of its reverse face, since the figure is shown performing the same gesture made by priests when enacting the liturgy around the altar table.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, its small, lightweight nature would have made it perfectly suited to being carried in processions, which may in part explain the almost total loss of what must originally have been a brilliant and polished gilded surface covering the underlying copper.

The use of a tool pressed or rolled rapidly over the surface of the copper to create long rows of ordered depressions (also known as *guilloching*) that all help to catch the light and throw the design's figurative imagery into relief, is one of the hallmarks of a class of French metalwork initially thought to have been created in one centre in the middle of the thirteenth century, but now considered the product of multiple workshops active over several decades.<sup>2</sup> Among the earliest examples on which this technique was used extensively as part of the composition are a pair of quatrefoil reliquaries depicting Saint Francis, dated in current scholarship to the years around 1230 (after 1228), and now preserved in the Louvre and Cluny museums in Paris.<sup>3</sup> Our cross undoubtedly belongs to a later and looser iteration of the formula, popularised by artisans in the Limousin (but possibly also elsewhere<sup>4</sup>) during the second half of the thirteenth century. The free style of its guilloching and the elongated anatomies and fingers of its engraved figures, with loose, open sleeves and drapery folds that simultaneously serve to suggest the underlying forms of their limbs and outlines, draw parallels to two reliquaries split between

France, Limoges?  
c.1260–1270

39 × 23.3 × 1.3 cm; cast, repoussé, engraved, tooled and gilded copper. Some traces of the gilding surviving, particularly in the engraved decoration. The left arm distorted slightly, probably due to impact damage.

1, Another cross with the same iconographic scheme and similar engraved decoration is preserved in the Church of San Lorenzo in Bersezzo, for which see Simonetta Castronovo, *Smalti di Limoges del XIII secolo: Collezione del Museo Civico d'Arte Antica di Torino*, Turin, 2014, p.28, fig.16.  
2, W. Frederick Stohlman, 'The Star Group of Champlévé Enamels and Its Connections', in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (DEC. 1950), pp.327–330;

Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, ed. *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.308.  
3, Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, no. 101, pp.306–9.  
4, For discussion of this see Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art*, London, 2021 (forthcoming), no. 94, pp.206–7.

the collegiate church of Saint-Martin in Brive, and the Louvre, which have been dated to the last third of the century (figs.1–2). These in turn have drawn comparisons to a dedicatory plaque now in the National Museum in Warsaw, which bears the date 1267 and thus acts as a key gnomon for our understanding of the wider class of objects to which all of these examples belong.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that our cross can be considered in the same breath as the Warsaw plaque, rather than dating it much further towards the end of the century, since it also bears close comparison to a larger but detached corpus now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig.3), and which has been attributed to a Limousin artist working around 1250.<sup>6</sup>

5, Drake Boehm and Taburet-Delahaye 1996, no. 140, p.387.  
6, William D. Wixom ed., *Mirror of the Medieval World*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999, no. 130, p.108.



**Fig.1**  
Almond-shaped reliquary  
France, Limoges  
After 1255, probably about  
1260–80  
16.7 x 10.7 cm; cast, chased,  
engraved and gilded copper  
Brive (Corrèze), Church of  
Saint-Martin



**Fig.2**  
Quatrefoil reliquary  
France, Limoges  
Last third 13th century  
21.5 x 17.7 x 4.3 cm; punched,  
engraved and gilded copper  
with rock crystal and  
coloured glass cabochons  
over a wooden core  
Paris, musée du Louvre,  
inv. OA 11233



**Fig.3**  
Crucified Christ  
France, Limoges  
Mid-13th century  
21.7 x 17.3 x 1.7 cm; cast,  
repoussé, engraved and  
gilded copper  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, inv.  
1986.319.73



Cat. 17, A slender altar cross engraved with images of the Evangelists and other saints (detail)

## A Patriarchal cross with engraved decoration and paste gems



A large processional cross fashioned with two arms, in the manner of a patriarchal cross. This structure was introduced to Medieval Europe via much earlier Byzantine designs; the secondary or upper arm signified the *titulus crucis* bearing the letters 'INRI' (a contraction of the Latin *Iēsus Nazarēnus, Rēx Iūdaeōrum*, or Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) typically shown nailed to the cross above Christ's head. On our cross, Christ hangs with his body describing a pronounced curve suggestive of weight and exhaustion. He wears a crown of thorns and closes his eyes as if close to death, allowing his head to droop slightly to our left. His ribcage is clearly visible under the taught flesh of his chest. A loose loincloth slung low at his hips covers his thighs in a series of soft, rippling swags. Casting flaws in his feet and legs underscore the ambitious nature of the process by which the figure was created in solid form and in such high relief. The corpus is attached to the core of the cross by way of threaded nails that pass through his hands and feet and are held in place by nuts on the opposite face. Covering the core on both sides of the cross are large copper plaques gilded and engraved with delicate linear decoration. On the front this takes the form of a continuous border or frame which runs around the entire outline of the cross, while the reverse is more elaborate, and consists of two square plaques, one engraved with the raised, blessing hand of God, and another with an image of the Lamb of God below it at the centre of the cross. They are surrounded on each arm with longer plaques on which sinuous vine tendrils sprouting oak-like leaf forms grow and unfurl. Additionally, stamped or repoussé roundels with low-relief figures of the four Evangelists are attached to the lobed termini on the front of the cross. On the upper of the two cross arms, which is subtly smaller in length than the lower arm on which Christ is crucified, two angels cast or pressed from metal sheet into moulds are nailed to each terminus, their attributes signifying the Word of God being made manifest through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Paste gems attached to pierced foliate roundels surround each of the evangelists and angels, their facture suggestive of a posterior intervention.

The stylistic treatment of our figure finds a number of parallels among northern European corpora of the first half of the fourteenth century, a dating further confirmed by the foliage designs engraved on the reverse of the cross.<sup>2</sup> These seem to have been particularly fashionable among Swiss and Southern German goldsmiths during this period, and can be found used to very similar effect on reliquary chasses in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich and the treasury of the parish church at Eriskirch, dated to c.1310 and c.1330 respectively, as well as on a cross believed to have been given by the priest Nicolaus Volvelini (died before March 1343) to the church of Saint Catherine in Brodnica, modern-day Poland (fig.1).<sup>3</sup> All three objects are thought to have been produced in workshops situated in Southern Swabia or the Constance region, a localization also suggested by the stylistic treatment of our corpus.<sup>4</sup>

### Southern Swabia or Constance c.1320–1340

72.8 × 35.1 × 81 cm Cast, moulded, chased, engraved and gilded copper with silver and paste gem attachments over a modern oak core. Some disturbance to the flanges of the edging strips enclosing the narrow sides of the object. The paste gems and many of their mounts are almost certainly modern additions. Recent metallurgical analysis undertaken on the cross using pXRF has shown that the copper elements of the object are entirely consistent with the materials available to medieval metalworkers, and have a range of impurities not found in modern objects.<sup>1</sup>

#### Provenance

Collection of the Princely House of Liechtenstein; Schloss Eisgrub, Lednice, by 1895; Vienna, 1895; Schloss Feldsberg, Valtice, 1912; Vienna, 1927; Schloss Vaduz, Liechtenstein, 1945; By descent to H.S.H. Prince Hans-Adam II, Reigning Prince of Liechtenstein; His family's sale, *Liechtenstein: Property from the Collection of the Princely House of Liechtenstein*, Christie's Amsterdam, 1st April 2008, lot 9

1, pXRF analysis undertaken by Yannick Chastang in May 2021.

2, Cf. an example cast in silver illustrated in C. Gómez-Moreno, *Medieval Art from Private Collections; A Special Exhibition at the Cloisters*, Exh. Cat., New York, 1968, no. 135.

3, Kinga Szczepkowska-Naliwajek, 'La Croix de Sandomierz et les Émaux Translucides en Pologne', in Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti ed., *Bollettino d'Arte, Supplemento al N. 95; Studi di Oreficeria* (1996), pp.113–122.

4, For the localization of the reliquary chasses see Elisabeth von Gleichenstein

and Christoph A. Graf Douglas, *Gold und Silber aus Konstanz; Meisterwerke der Goldschmiedekunst des 13.–18. Jahrhunderts*, Exh. Cat., Rosgartenmuseum Konstanz, 3 August–29 September 1985, cat. 7–8, pp.90–92; for the Brodnica cross see Szczepkowska-Naliwajek 1996, p.116; A third chasse certainly produced in the same region and at the same date as these examples was formerly in collection of Albert Figdor in Vienna, for which see Otto von Falke, *Die Sammlung Dr. Albert Figdor, Wien, Erster Teil, Band V*, Vienna and Berlin, 1930, no. 346, plate CXLII.



**Fig.1**  
 Altar cross  
 c.1330s (before 1343)  
 Dimensions unknown: Silver  
 and silver-gilt  
 Poland, Brodnica, Church of  
 Saint Catherine



**Cat.18,** A Patriarchal cross with engraved decoration and paste gems (detail)

An enamelled silver-gilt processional cross



## An enamelled silver-gilt processional cross

This double-sided and partially gilded processional cross is formed with trifoliate termini, elaborately repousséd with figurative imagery, and adorned with vivid basse taille enamels, which shimmer against the light reflecting through them from the silver ground beneath. On one side the crucified figure of Christ is shown between the Virgin Mary and Saint John. Above his head is an ornate halo decorated with opaque red and translucent blue, green, purple and yellow enamels showing birds in foliage within a cruciform design. Nailed in place to the top of the cross is a titulus bearing the letters 'INRY', the traditional abbreviation of the title *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum* which was given to Christ by his torturers. The upper terminus shows a winged angel clasping its hands together in sorrow. On the opposite face Christ is shown in Majesty, following his Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven. He sits enthroned on a cushioned bench with his feet supported by sprouting leaf sprays, wearing a pearl-trimmed robe and mantle, and holding a book in his left hand while raising his right in Benediction. Like the counterpart image on the reverse, Christ's enameled halo is decorated with delicate birds in foliage. Two further enamels showing half-length bearded prophets in roundels are pinned in place to his left and right, while below his feet is an unidentified bishop saint wearing a mitre and carrying a book and crozier. The three surviving termini are decorated with repoussé symbols of the Evangelists, with the Bull of Saint Luke, the Eagle of Saint John, and the Lion of Saint Mark holding scrolls. Only Saint Matthew's angel is missing; this was almost certainly positioned on the now missing lower terminus. The thin edging between each of the cross's main faces is embellished with silver sheets stamped with a repeat pattern of scrolling branches terminating in acorns between a beaded border.

The hallmark used to stamp each of the cross's individual sheets of silver corresponds closely to that believed in the surrounding scholarship to have been used by Sulmonese goldsmiths up until 1406, which gives us a firm *terminus ante quem* for the dating of the our cross.<sup>1</sup> Were it not for these stamps, it would still be possible to identify our cross as a product of that town due to the use of characteristic designs that reappear on a number of other treasury objects that have come down to us with provenance to that centre. A hallmarked Sulmona-made cross incorporating an almost identical iconographic scheme to ours, as well as an identical pattern of acorn-sprouting vines on its stamped edging, is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, although it diverges in the treatment of its repoussé figures and has been dated to the second half of the fourteenth century (see figs.1a–c).<sup>2</sup> There are also numerous parallels to other hallmarked crosses in the church of Montedinove (Marche), in the Museo Diocesano in Penne (Pescara) and in the church of Cittaducale (Lazio).<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the closest analogue for our cross is the famous Lucera diptych now in the Museo Diocesano in Lucera, which has been confidently dated by most scholars to c.1340 (fig.2a).<sup>4</sup> The same model used for the figure of Saint Luke's bull on our cross were reused on the left-hand wing of the Lucera diptych, while non-identical but extremely close models were used for Saints John and Mark, with only minor adjustments made to the angles of their wings (fig.2b). The elongated body of the crucified Christ and the comparatively simplified drapery folds of his perizonium also relate closely to the diptych's Crucifixion scene (fig.2c). The enameled halo of the diptych's Crucified Christ was also made with recourse to the same workshop patterns as those used for our figures' haloes, with their spiky sprays of foliage and multi-coloured birds with curving, elongated necks. The characteristic diaper-like pattern of the cross on our object,

**Italy, Sulmona**  
c.1340

41.5 × 35.6 × 4.5 cm; repousséd and partially gilded silver with basse taille enamels, over a wooden core. The lower terminus missing. Some crushing to the delicate repoussé elements. Damage to the enamels.

*Provenance*

Collection of Nicolas Landau, Paris, 1966;  
Private Collection, London;  
Collection of Dr. H. Weisskamp, Hamburg, 1995;  
With Galerie Vincent Laloux, Brussels;  
Collection of Pierre Bergé

*Inscriptions and Markings*

Sulmona hallmarks on each sheet of gilded silver. A titulus above the crucifix reading 'INRY'

1, See Valentine Pace, 'Per La Storia dell'Oreficeria Abruzzese', in *Bollettino d'Arte*, V Serie, 1972, vol. II (April–June), pp.78–89, p.79.  
2, I am grateful to Kirstin Kennedy for allowing me to compare the two crosses together with her first-hand.  
3, Adriana Gandolfi and Ezio Mattiocco, *Ori & Argenti d'Abruzzo dal Medioevo al XX Secolo*, Ascoli Piceno, 1996,

pp.10, 11, 19.  
4, For an analysis of scholarship on the dating of the Lucera diptych see Sofia di Sciascio, 'Il dittico sulmonese di Lucera: aspetti e problemi' in Armando Gravina ed., *22<sup>o</sup> convegno Nazionale sulla Preistoria – Protostoria – Storia della Daunia*, San Severo, December 2001 (2002) pp.165–178.

arranged in freely drawn cross-hatched diamonds alternately left plain and punched with a tight pattern of four small punched circles, offers a further parallel to the Lucera diptych. Finally, the shape and slant of the italicized letter 'Y' on the Lucera diptych's INRI plaque, as well as the style of script used for all three of the other letter forms, its delineation in black enamel within a field outlined in red, and the pattern of large dots hammered into the surrounding silver sheet from the reverse to frame the plaque, are similarly identical. Such numerous echoes – and even the verbatim reuse of models – would surely suggest their creation within the same workshop and at a similar moment in time.



**Fig.1a**  
Silver-gilt processional cross  
Italy, Abruzzo, Sulmona  
c.1350–1400  
Unknown dimensions; silver and gilded silver with basse taille enamels over a wooden core, later attachments to the termini.  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. 836–1907

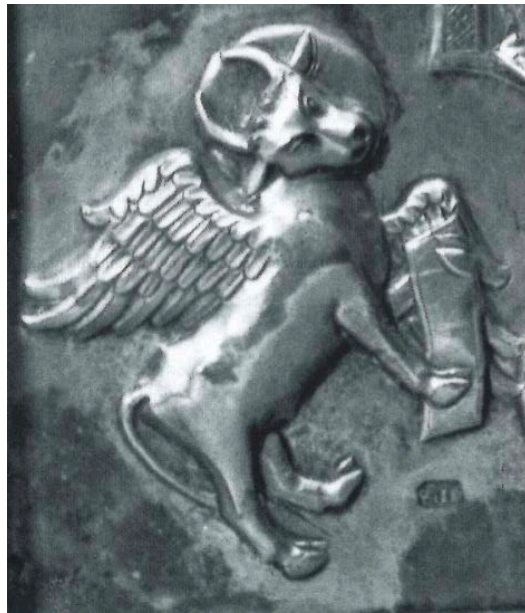


**Figs.1b and c**  
Details of the two sides of the Sulmona cross in the Victoria and Albert Museum, showing the same iconographic scheme as decorates our cross.





**Fig.2a**  
 The so-called Lucera diptych  
 Abruzzo, Sulmona  
 c.1340  
 Dimensions unknown: Silver  
 and gilded silver with basse  
 taille enamels over a wooden  
 core  
 Lucera, Museo Diocesano



**Fig.2b**  
 detail of Saint Luke's bull  
 on the Lucera diptych (left)  
 alongside the same symbol  
 on the present cross (right)



**Fig.2c**  
 detail of the Christ on  
 the Lucera diptych (left)  
 alongside the same figure on  
 the present cross (right)



**Cat.19, An enamelled silver-gilt processional cross**

## Nicola da Guardiagrele

### An enamelled knop from a processional cross shaft



This large gilded knop is decorated with six regularly-spaced, teardrop-shaped enameled images of the Virgin Mary along with saints Peter, Paul, John and two other unidentified saints. In each case the figures are picked out in reserve against a background design of deep lapis blue framed by a delicate cusped border of red enamel. The features and draperies of each saint are engraved with linear details and the figures themselves gilded and burnished to a high polish. Each enamel is housed in a gold frame surmounted by cast foliate cresting, which projects outwards from the tooled and gilded surface of the knop behind it. Encircling the upper rim of the knop is a running band of blind tracery imitating a stonework balustrade or similar architectural detail, while its lower edge has been given a cusped outline.

The construction of our knop with its round, central void, indicates that it was made to adorn a larger object, almost certainly a cross shaft of the type common among Italian church treasuries in the Middle Ages and represented by a handful of surviving examples, the facture of which makes clear that they were made to support and carry large altar crosses during processions (fig.1). Comparison of its design, repoussé-work, enamelling, and figurative decoration with a processional cross shaft from the church of San Michele Arcangelo in Roccaspinaveti, now in the Museo nazionale d'Abruzzo, reveals not only that this reconstruction is accurate but, moreover, that our version can be attributed with certainty to the same author (fig.2).<sup>1</sup> Our understanding of who this craftsman was is aided greatly by the fact that both the Roccaspinaveti version and another in a private collection in Amiens (fig.3), which is even more closely related to ours, are signed with the name of the celebrated goldsmith Nicola da Guardiagrele, who produced the astonishing altar frontal in the cathedral at Teramo during the central years of a career spanning six decades (fig.4), and who has been credited with some of the 'greatest pieces of goldsmiths' work to survive from the fifteenth century.'<sup>2</sup> He is thought to have been born in around 1389 in Guardiagrele, though his earliest dated work, a remarkable monstrance in Francavilla al Mare, was not produced until 1413, by which he would undoubtedly already have been a master for several years. The crisp, unfeathered treatment of the shadows and contouring on our figures' drapery folds supports a date early in the second decade of the fifteenth century, when Nicola was at the beginning of what would become a remarkable and fruitful career as one of the first goldsmiths outside of Florence to absorb the momentous innovations of Ghiberti and his contemporaries.

The present knop will be the subject of a forthcoming article by Glyn Davies, to whom we are extremely grateful for his guidance on its attribution and dating.

**Nicola da Guardiagrele (born Nicola Gallucci or Nicola di Andrea di Pasquale; c.1389–c.1459)**  
Italy, Abruzzo  
c.1410

9.6 × 12.3 × 12.3 cm; repoussé and gilded copper alloy with champlevé enamels and cast elements. Some carefully repaired splits to the body, and crushing to some of the framing elements surrounding the enamels.

*Provenance*

Collection of Carlo di Carlo, Florence, acquired c.1980s



**Fig.1**

Base of a cross or fragment of a processional cross shaft  
Italy, Abruzzo?  
Late 14th-early 15th century  
32.8 × 12.5 × 12.5 cm; gilded and enamelled copper  
Paris, musée de Cluny, inv. Cl. 14788

1, I am sincerely grateful to Glyn Davies for bringing the Roccaspinaveti and Amiens cross shafts to my attention, for sharing images of them both with me, and for allowing me to use his extensive notes on our knop to inform the present entry.  
2, Glyn Davies, '(Review of) Nicola da Guardiagrele, Orafo tra medioevo e rinascimento. Le opere. I restauri. Todi: Tau Editrice, 2008', in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol.161, no.1273, April 2009, pp.263–4, p.263.



**Fig.2**  
 Nicola da Guardiagrele  
 Processional cross shaft from  
 the church of San Michele  
 Arcangelo in Roccaspinaveti  
 c.1410  
 32 cm (height) × 12 cm  
 (diameter); gilded copper  
 with champlevé enamel  
 L'Aquila, Museo nazionale  
 d'Abruzzo



**Fig.3**  
 Nicola da Guardiagrele  
 Processional cross shaft  
 c.1410  
 32.2 cm (height) × 13.5 cm  
 (diameter); gilded copper  
 with champlevé enamel  
 Amiens, Musée de Picardie,  
 on loan from the collection  
 of Filippo Pirri



**Fig.4**  
 Nicola da Guardiagrele  
 Altar Frontal with Scenes  
 from the Life of Christ  
 1433-1448  
 Teramo, Cathedral



Cat.20, Nicola da Guardiagrele, An enameled knob from a processional cross shaft (detail)

**A silver processional cross with the Crucifixion  
and the four Evangelists**



## A silver processional cross with the Crucifixion and the four Evangelists

A double-sided processional cross constructed from delicate sheets of cut and repoussé silver that were pinned into place over a wooden core. Further thin strips of silver sheet, ornamented with a fine cross-hatched repeat pattern enclose the narrow sides of the cross. On its front face, the figure of Christ hanging from the cross dominates the central section, hammered from the reverse to form an image in shallow relief. Around him, the symbols of the four Evangelists appear on separate diamond-shaped sheets nailed into place on each of the four termini. Above Christ's head a short titulum in the shape of a parallelogram reads, in an uncial script, 'I/N/R/I', an acronym for the title given mockingly to Jesus during the Crucifixion; 'Iesvs Nazarenvs Rex Iudaeorum' ('Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews'). On the reverse face, an unidentified bishop saint stands at the centre of the vertical arm, with the apostles Peter and Paul, identifiable by the inclusion of their usual attributes of a sword and keys respectively, appear in small roundels on separate sheets of metal positioned on either side. On the termini of the two lateral arms are Saint John and the Virgin, both shown in states of grief. The upper terminus is decorated with the naked figure of Adam, shown at bust-length, rising from his tomb. On the lower terminus is a half-length figure of an angel. Given the direct iconographic connection between the figures of Adam, the Virgin, and Saint John on the reverse face, with the Crucifixion on the opposite face, it is possible that the cross has at some point in the past been taken apart and erroneously reassembled, perhaps during the restoration of the core.

The cult of the cross has always been a central aspect of Christian devotion. The rise in processional liturgy during the later Middle Ages, and the concurrent development of the gold- and silver-smith's art, meant that by the fifteenth century crosses and other liturgical objects had become a tour de force of finely decorated and manipulated materials. Indeed, to the Medieval viewer of such objects, 'precious materials achieved pious distillation only when skilfully worked', with the play of light upon their glittering surfaces invested with vivid spiritual and aesthetic significance.<sup>1</sup>

This is one of a small number of surviving crosses that have been localized in the surrounding scholarship to a community of goldsmiths working between Venice and Dalmatia, at the closing years of the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Another, of identical format and design, is preserved in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston (fig.1). As on our example, on both sides of the Boston cross large plain lobes or flanges emanate from each of the four cross arms partway along their length, and help to create the suggestion of a smaller cross within the larger silhouette of the object. Given their extreme delicacy, it is hardly surprising that several of those flanges have been restored on both our cross and the Boston version alike.

Italy, Venice  
c.1375–1400

41.5 × 34 cm; repoussé silver sheet over a wooden core. Some small tips to the cusped decoration of the arms missing and replaced with later sheet metal inserts. The core partially rebuilt beneath the Crucifixion scene at some point in its past. A later drill hole to the underside for mounting.

*Provenance*

Collection of Leopold Arnaud, Dean of Columbia University, Presented to him by the Faculty of the School for Architecture, on his retirement, 9th January 1959

1, S. Fliegel, *Resplendent Faith; Liturgical Treasuries of the Middle Ages*, Ohio, 2009, p.3  
2, For the most authoritative overview of these crosses see the work of Nikola Jakšić, especially 'Rapporti veneto – dalmati nell'oreficeria trecentesca' in *LETTERATURA, ARTE CULTURA TRA LE DUE SPONDE DELL'ADRIATICO: Atti del Convegno*

*internazionale* (Zara, 2008). See also Alan Chong and Giovanna De Appolonia, *The Art of the Cross: Medieval and Renaissance Piety in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum*, Exh. cat., Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2001, pp.19, 40 ill., 48, 50, 66–68, cat. 6. I am grateful to Nikola Jakšić for his kind help in the dating and localization of the present cross.



Fig.1

Processional cross  
Italy, Venice  
c.1375–1400  
52 × 29.8 cm; repousse silver  
over a wooden core.  
Isabella Stewart Gardner  
Museum, inv. M30C17



Cat.21 A silver processional cross with the Crucifixion and the four Evangelists (details)

## A large cross covered with engraved foliage



A large altar cross with the corpus of the dead Christ suspended from the patibulum and framed by four circular reliquary mounts attached to trilobed termini. Above Christ's head a fine scrolling titulum reads, in a high-grade *textualis* script, 'I / N / R / I', an acronym for the title given mockingly to Jesus during the crucifixion; 'Iesvs Nazarenvs Rex Iudaeorum' ('Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews'). An ornate engraved design of scrolling foliated branches against a cross-hatched ground decorates both the obverse and reverse sections of the cross, starting with a square central field behind Christ's head and ending in flowering vines within the lobes of the termini. Each of these ten gilded plaques, which are attached onto a wooden carcass with the aid of gilt-headed pins, is framed by a simple border. Along the edges runs a sheet of punched silver decorated with a pattern of linked diamonds and five-pointed flowers, variations of the latter also appearing before and after the letters on the titulum. Originally, the four shaped termini would have held round coins in gold, silver or enamel with zoomorphic representations of the four evangelists, a particularly common decoration for this form of object during the fifteenth century.

The engraved embellishment, lobed shape, square central field, and decorative fill around the edges of our cross all conform generally to a group of similar examples executed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries across a region straddling Switzerland and the Upper Rhine (figs.1–3). Its foliated decoration is, however, particularly comparable to a cross identified with an example recorded in the 1827 inventory of the treasury at Basel Cathedral (fig.4a–b). Our corpus also exhibits a similar treatment to the figure on the Basel cross, with the head dropped to the left and the body curving to one side, as well as a homogenous perizonium wrapped close around the loins. Another, albeit frontally positioned, corpus with a comparable face and torso is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, also made in Switzerland during the same period.<sup>1</sup> Corpora of this nature are relatively scarce. Its pronounced, angular ribcage, the delicacy of the twisted crown of thorns and individual locks of hair, and the ornate hem of the perizonium are unlike many of the surviving examples. Its emphasis on expressive realism replaces the earlier fashion for more composed representations of Christ as redeemer, common from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, often depicted wearing a crown and standing with horizontal or angularly bent arms and outstretched hands. Instead, its focus is on Christ's downward movement, with his weight fully hanging from his partially closed, lifeless hands.<sup>2</sup>

Since Heinrich II inherited Basel in 1006, the city had emerged as one of most politically powerful centres in Western Europe. It controlled the access routes from the Rhine to the Kingdom of Burgundy, which at the time was situated within present-day Switzerland. By the fifteenth century Basel's cathedral had built up a vast and rich treasury, incorporating fragments of the True Cross and other valuable and important Saint relics, and displayed them in a number of fine metalwork crosses. These would be processed on occasions throughout the Christian calendar, with celebrations such as those of the Good Friday liturgy utilising them in particularly elaborate rituals enacted before the entire congregation. Records of the Heinrich Cross, the most important of Basel cathedral's treasury, state that it was

*'Wrapped in a golden cloth, [and] placed on a silk cushion on the steps of the choir and held upright. The celebrant – barefoot, as a sign of humility – raised the cross three times, unveiling it in the process. ... Beginning with the bishop, members of the clergy knelt*

Upper Rhine or Switzerland, Basel?  
c.1440–1460

61.5 × 40.5 × 6 cm; gilded copper, silver, glass and velvet over a wooden core. The corpus and tubular supporting cross associated. The glass fronted roundels and their mounts, halo and attached cross of circular section are recent additions.

Provenance  
Private collection, Switzerland, before 2012

1, Inv. M.43-1955.  
2, For examples see *Suevia Sacra; Frühe Kunst in Schwaben*, ICOM, Augsburg, 1973, especially figs.67–81.

and approached the cross in order to kiss it. Once the clergy had returned to their seats, members of the municipal council entered the choir with candles, and worshipped the cross in similar fashion. At the end of the liturgy, the cross, together with the Eucharist, was placed in the holy sepulchre that had been installed in the choir.<sup>3</sup>

The Basel treasury inventory of 1525 also records a red staff with a copper knob (*ein rotter stecken zů dem sonteglichen crutz mit eynem kupfferin knopff*), used to carry a processional cross during Sunday Masses, the choice of colour not only due to the richness of the pigment but also reflecting of its symbolic connection to the blood of Christ, which flowed from His wounds during the crucifixion.<sup>4</sup> The chamfered and elongated foot of our cross suggests its suitability for use atop a staff of exactly this form. Moreover, its bold, legible decoration and large size also support the notion that it would have been employed in the types of highly choreographed and theatrical displays and processions described above, incorporating a nuanced and intimate engagement with its symbolism and materials before a congregation of some size or status. While its square fielded central section and the pointed divisions between the termini lobes echo much earlier designs, including examples from Constance and the Upper Rhine (see for example fig.1), the close stylistic similarities between our cross and the Basel altar cross indicate that it was very possibly produced in Basel during the same period of time. Indeed, it may well have been made for another of the city's religious foundations seeking to engage with and replicate the significance and veneration of the objects in the Cathedral's treasury. Nonetheless, the more complex and assured engraving visible across the surface of our cross (incorporating cut branches, fruiting vines, and shaded, swirling leaves), as well as its more generous proportions, denotes that it was made at the hand of an extremely proficient and skilled goldsmith, and not merely a copyist.

3, Augsburg, 1973, p.16.  
4, Inventory, 1525, No.44, as quoted in Timothy Husband, *The Treasury of Basel Cathedral*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001, p.81.



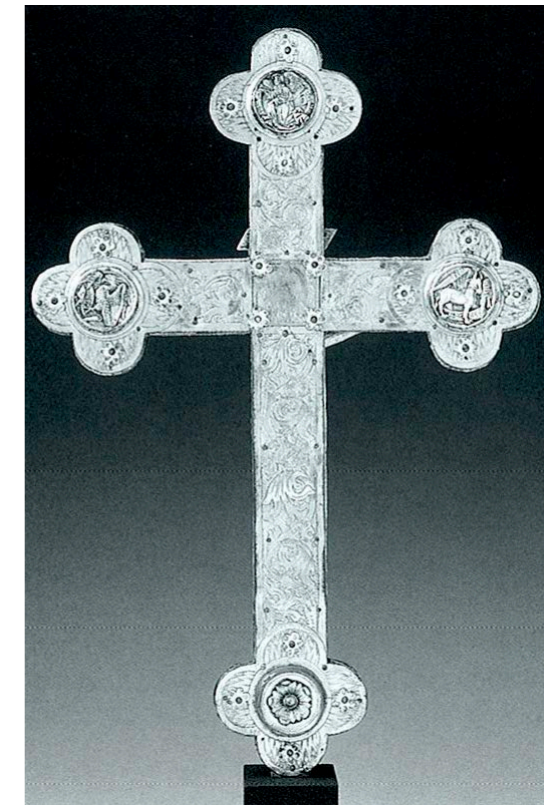
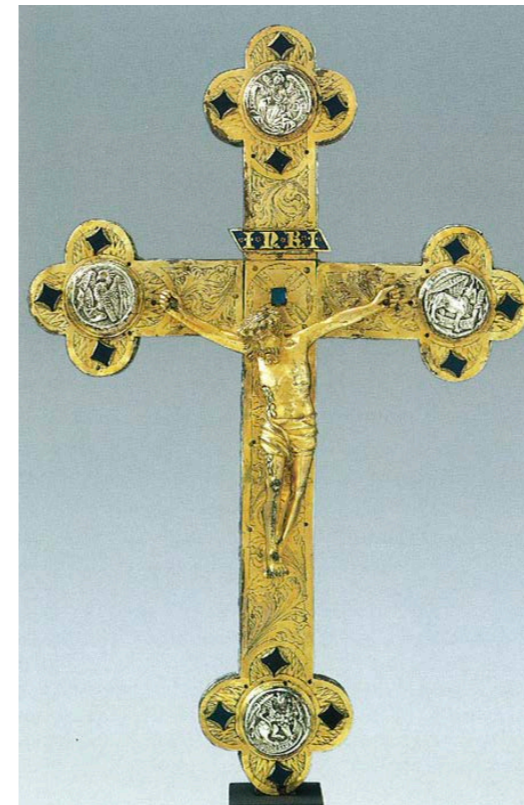
**Fig.1**  
Altar or Processional Cross  
Germany, Constance or  
Upper Rhine  
c.1300-1310  
50.2 x 39.4 cm; Stamped,  
engraved and gilded copper,  
champlevé enamel and  
gemstones on a wooden core  
Cleveland, Museum of Art,  
inv. 1942.1091



**Fig.2**  
Processional Cross  
Germany, Upper Rhine  
c.1400-1450  
47 cm (height); stamped,  
engraved, gilded and silvered  
copper with champlevé  
enamel on a wooden core  
Brussels, Musées royaux d'Art  
et d'Histoire, Inv. No. 3171



**Fig.3**  
Processional Cross  
Basel  
c.1425-1450  
47.5 cm (height); stamped,  
engraved, and parcel-gilt  
silver on wooden core  
Basel, Historisches Museum,  
inv. 2000.190.1



**Fig.4a** (obverse);  
**and b** (reverse)  
Processional Cross  
Basel  
c.1440-1460  
52 cm (height); engraved,  
stamped, gilded and silvered  
copper on a wooden core,  
with glass and enamel  
Basel, Historisches Museum,  
inv. 1893.379



**Cat.22** A large cross covered with engraved foliage (details)





Cat.22 A large cross covered with engraved foliage (detail)



Cat.22 A large cross covered with engraved foliage (reverse)







## An architectural censer cover



The elaborate architectural design of this censer (a perforated container used to bless the congregation and the objects of the altar with burning incense during Mass), with its scrolling rinceaux supporting a cluster of turreted structures above, has its roots in early Medieval theology. As part of his advice for the casting of censers in his *De Diversis Artibus*, the famed theologian Theophilus states that they should resemble the form of the 'heavenly Jerusalem', and many preserve the roofed lantern as a symbol of its architecture. Some scholars have argued, however, that the form of the decoration was instead intended to resemble the shape of Solomon's Temple. The 'Jerusalem' or 'Solomon' type became especially popular during the course of the twelfth century, but was nevertheless more or less completely superseded in the thirteenth by vessels with foliate decoration (like the two others in this catalogue), which could be easily cast in low relief or stamped with repeat patterns during the casting process.

The earliest censers of which complete examples have survived were formed in two parts like the present example. A solid, or occasionally perforated base, is suspended from chains which, passing through loops forged around the periphery of the cover above, allow the upper section to be drawn up independently in order to gain access to the interior without the danger of burning the holder. When swung or carried during liturgical processions, the perforations in the cover allow the air to fuel the incense while simultaneously providing ventilation to the perfumed smoke.

Despite the ubiquity of these objects in Medieval church treasuries, the design of our example is apparently unique and unparalleled among those that have survived. It has for much of its modern history thought to have been produced by a Lower Rhenish workshop active, perhaps, in Trier in the later 1100s.<sup>1</sup> However, its characteristic employment of stiff, whiplash vine sprays below a superstructure of turreted buildings pierced with keyhole window lancets, draws on aesthetic formulae developed instead in the foundries of Lower Saxony much earlier in the century. As Ursula Mende has noted, these features reappear in almost identical form on the doors of San Zeno, Verona (c.1136, before 1138; fig.1), the monumental candelabra in Klosterneuburg (c.1136; fig.2) and on a host of smaller bronzes thought to have been made, like these larger commissions, in Hildesheim during the second quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most vividly compelling parallel is offered by a magnificent reliquary shrine in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg (fig.3).

**Lower Saxony, very probably Hildesheim**  
c.1125–1150

10.4 cm (height) × 11 cm (diam.); cast copper alloy with some cold working. The surface heavily oxidized and patinated from a long history of use.

*Provenance*

Collection of Harry Bober (1915–1988), New York, before 1963  
Private Collection, UK

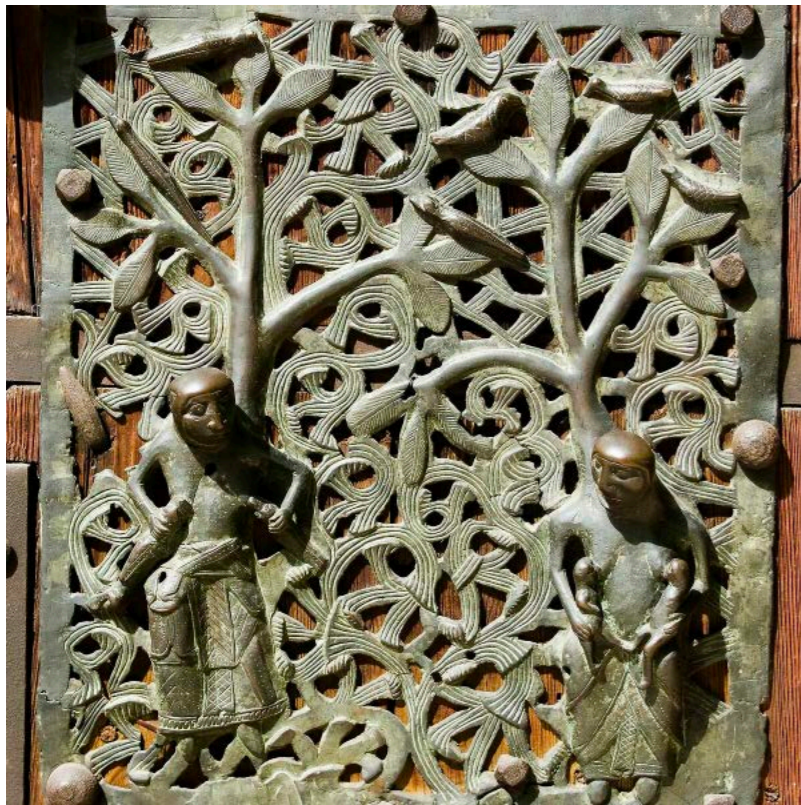
*Exhibited*

On loan to the Cleveland Museum of Art, September 1963 – December 1967, Inv. 1386.65  
*Medieval Art from Private Collections; A Special Exhibition at the Cloisters*, New York, October 30 1968 – March 30 1969

*Published*

C. Gómez-Moreno, *Medieval Art from Private Collections; A Special Exhibition at the Cloisters*, Exh. Cat., New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1968, no. 89

1, C. Gómez-Moreno, *Medieval Art from Private Collections; A Special Exhibition at the Cloisters*, Exh. Cat., New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1968, no. 89.  
2, Ursula Mende in Jochen Luckhardt and Franz Niehoff eds, *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit: Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125–1135*, Exh. Cat., Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, 1995, pp.140–142.



**Fig.1**  
Detail from the doors of  
San Zeno, Verona  
Lower Saxony, Hildesheim  
c.1136 (before 1138)



**Fig.2**  
Schematic diagram  
showing two sections  
of the Klosterneuburg  
candelabrum, from Karl  
Weiss, 'Der Schatz des  
regulierten Chorherrnstiftes  
zu Klosterneuburg in  
Niederösterreich' in  
*Mitteilungen der K.K. Central-  
Commission*, vol. 6 (1861)  
c.1136



**Fig.3**  
Reliquary shrine (?)  
Lower Saxony, Hildesheim  
c.1125-1150  
25 × 29.2 × 7.5 cm; cast  
copper alloy  
Hamburg, Museum für  
Kunst und Gewerbe, inv.  
1957.71/Stiftung 95



Cat.23, An architectural censer cover

## A bronze censer decorated with bound rinceaux



A cast bronze censer of ovoid form in two sections, the upper decorated with a profusely pierced tripartite pattern of bound double three-strand rinceaux forms with acanthus leaves decorating their spandrels, and the lower unpierced but incorporating the same motifs, raised on a conical foot. An ornamental lantern projects from the top of the cover, decorated with a linear pattern in relief and pierced on all four sides to suggest cruciform windows below a tiled roof that provides a fixing point for the central chain ring. Small nodules of metal protruding laterally from the circumference of the foot ring in three places and visible when the lower half of the censer is upended are the remains of risers – venting holes incorporated into a mould in order to ensure a successful casting process when the molten metal is poured in to it. Although sawn back and chased from the underside of the foot after the metal had cooled, these remnants of the process offer us a way of shaking hands with the Medieval bronze caster.

This is a particularly elegant and well-preserved example of this type of devotional instrument, commonly used during religious services of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The earliest censers of which complete examples remain were formed in two parts like the present example. A solid, or occasionally perforated base, is suspended from chains which, passing through loops forged around the periphery of the cover above, allow the upper section to be drawn up independently in order to gain access to the interior without the danger of burning the holder. When swung or carried during liturgical processions, the perforations in the cover allow the air to fuel the incense while simultaneously providing ventilation for the perfumed smoke.

Comparison can be drawn to a concise group of similarly shaped censers, amongst the closest of which are examples held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Figs.1–3). Of these, the London censer is a direct relative, incorporating pure rinceaux motifs without the addition of bestial forms, although its lantern and foot both differ in shape. Two others, in the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, and the Kunstmuseum, Dusseldorf, are almost identical analogues.<sup>1</sup> The London censer shares the somewhat unusual motif of cruciform perforations on the shoulder of the upper section, but only ours repeats the motif within the lantern itself – a considered compositional decision that lends the whole a greater sense of visual continuity across its various components. Of most comparable casting quality are the Edinburgh and Dusseldorf censers, though again these do not have square-form lanterns, and ours therefore seems to be unique in this respect. Of similar rarity is the inclusion of bound rinceaux, with short cords looped around the meeting points between each of the twelve vine wreaths (the Dusseldorf censer incorporates the same motif but otherwise only a fragmentary survival in Berlin also shows this feature).

Although these censers have previously been considered as German castings, they differ subtly from the core corpus of known German censers, and Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen has recently localised the general type to which it belongs to Northern Italy, and the years spanning the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> The most refined examples, of which ours is undoubtedly one, may belong to the first generation of casts, since they appear unaffected by the usual flaws and dilution of detail introduced to the reproductive process over time.

The architectural form of the cover, common to censers of this date, has its roots in early medieval theology. In his description of the casting of censers in *De Diversis Artibus*, the theologian Theophilus states that they should resemble the form of the 'heavenly Jerusalem', and many

**Northern Italy**  
c.1180–1210

13.7 × 9 × 9 cm; cast, chased and patinated bronze with pierced and relief decoration in two halves with a single attachment ring at its top and three around the circumference of each half. A piecing-in repair to the lid, very likely undertaken following its casting, and some cold-working to the details and piercing, also original.

*Provenance*

Collection of Octave Pincot;  
His sale, *Objets d'Art du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance*, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 25 November 1946, lot 93;  
With Jan Dirven Sr, until sold to  
Leopold Kolisch, 1964–2000;  
His sale, Sotheby's Amsterdam, December 20, 2000, lot. 152;  
Private collection, London

1, H. Westermann-Angerhausen, *Mittelalterliche Weihrauchfässer von 800 bis 1500*, Petersberg, 2014, nos. II n 14, 15, p.487.  
2, For this discussion, see Ursula Mende, *Die Mittelalterlichen Bronzen im Germanischen Nationalmuseum; bestandskatalog*, Nuremberg, 2013, pp.152–4, and footnote 1.



Cat.24, A bronze censer decorated with bound rinceaux

preserve the roofed lantern as a symbol of its architecture. The somewhat abbreviated nature of this detail, confined to the upper registers of the cover only, can be explained by the steady move away from purely architectural designs throughout the latter half of the twelfth century. The bound and swirling vine scrolls are standard Romanesque stylistic features that came to supersede the 'Jerusalem' type on the majority of Italian censers, and parallels can be drawn to the stylistic treatment of other artforms as well as metalwork more generally, including the celebrated tympanum of the west doorway of the Baptistery at Parma Cathedral, commissioned in 1196.



**Fig.1**  
Bronze censer with birds and rinceaux  
Northern Italy  
Late 12th – early 13th century  
15.9 x 9.3 cm; patinated bronze  
Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv. KG 693



**Fig.2**  
Bronze censer with animals and rinceaux  
Western Europe, probably Italy  
Late 12th century  
14.5 x 9.8 cm; patinated bronze  
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. R.B.K. 16923



**Fig.3**  
Bronze censer with curling rinceaux  
Western Europe, probably Italy  
Late 12th – early 13th century  
patinated bronze  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. 1009-1898

## A bronze censer with figurative decoration



A cast censer with pierced relief decoration to its upper section and a solid-walled lower section for holding incense. The lid is decorated with three medallion panels decorated with foliate patterns in relief, alternating with ornamental buttresses that project pyramidally from the body. This general format is mirrored on the lower half except that the medallion panels alternate with rectangular panels showing single saint figures standing in low relief. As is typical for this class of vessel, its mouldings include an integral suspension ring surmounting its micro-architectural pinnacle and three pairs around its hemisphere, positioned so as to allow for the raising and lowering of the lid while keeping it aligned perfectly with the body below.

As with the other example in this catalogue, the visual language of this shapely vessel was evidently highly successful during the period in which it was made, and remained in fashion across a wide geographic region for some decades. In its scale and proportions, its decorative formula and its iconography, our censer is closely comparable a small handful of surviving examples all thought to have been cast in north-Italian workshops and dated to the closing decades of the twelfth century or the early years of the thirteenth.<sup>1</sup>

Italy, Tuscany or Umbria?  
c.1180–1210

15.7 × 10.2 cm; cast, chased and patinated bronze. The foot restored.



1, Examples with similar forms and with the same iconography are illustrated in Onno ter Kuile, *Koper & Brons*, Amsterdam, 1986, cat. 45, p.43; see also *The Keir Collection of Medieval Works of Art*, Sotheby's New York, 1997, cat. 117, p.246; A very closely related example ascribed to a Tuscan or Umbrian workshop and now in the Uffizi is illustrated in Marco Collareta, *Oreficeria Sacra Italiana*, Florence, 1987, no. 1, p.1.

## A serpentine crozier head



An elegant gilt copper crozier head of spiralling form terminating in the head of a serpent, its mouth shown slightly open. The serpent's body is octagonal in cross-section, and is raised and supported on a round shaft punctuated with a simple disc-shaped knob.

As noted by Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, it is unusual for Limousin croziers to be in the shape of serpents without the inclusion of any other scene.<sup>1</sup> However, several examples, such as the crozier of Abbot John of Silos from 1198, the crozier of John of Chanlay (fig.1), and the crozier of Albert of Louvain (fig.2) do survive. The last of these offers perhaps the closest surviving parallel to the present example, and along with the crozier of Abbot John of Silos helps us date it confidently within the final decade of the twelfth century. Their form is believed to allude to the story of the transformation of Aaron's rod into a snake when he and Moses were in front of the Pharaoh, an Old Testament parable recounted in the Book of Exodus 7:9-12. Associating this particular story with the staff affirms the status of the staff holder as a minister of God's Word, as it reminds us of the passage in the story where God says to Moses: *See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet* (Exodus 7:9). Stylistically, the simple octagonally carved volute also evokes early ivory croziers, which often have a comparably abstracted and essentialised form. An example of this is an early thirteenth-century Italian crozier now in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (see fig.3).

France, Limoges  
c.1190–1200

19.5 × 8.3 × 4.3 cm; gilded copper.

#### Provenance

Octave Homberg Collection, Paris, until his sale Hôtel Drouot, Paris, May 11–18, 1908;  
Kofler-Truniger Collection (inv. E145), Lucerne 1964–1971;  
Keir Collection, Lucerne; 1971–2018

#### Published

Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Enamels and Sculptures from the Keir Collection* (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1983), Cat. No. 65.  
H. Schnitzler, P. Bloch, C. Ratton, F. Volbach, *Mittelalterliche Kunst der Sammlung Kofler-Truniger*. (Aachener Kunstblätter, vol 31, 1965), Cat. No. E 145.  
M.M. Mannheim, *Collection Homberg: Objets d'Art*. (Paris, 1908), Cat. No. 511.



**Fig.1**  
Crozier of John of Chanlay  
France, Limoges  
c.1200–1215  
23.6 × 10.8 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. OA 10407



**Fig.2**  
Crozier of Albert of Louvain  
France, Limoges  
c.1191–2  
Dimensions unknown; cast, chased and gilded copper  
Reims, Palais de Tau, inv. D-TAU1972000227



**Fig.3**  
Crozier with the Eagle of Saint John and a Serpent  
Italy (?)  
Early 13th century  
20 × 12 × 4.7 cm; ivory  
Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 71.300

<sup>1</sup> Barabra Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100 – 1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, p.273.





Cat.26 A serpentine crozier head (detail)



## An enamelled crozier head with the Virgin Annunciate



As early as the sixth century, the pastoral staff, or crozier, was used by the bishop, abbot, or abbess of a church or cathedral to convey their authority. The Annunciation is one of several iconographic image types that most commonly feature on croziers made in the south-central enamelling centre of Limoges, which flourished during the thirteenth century and made high-quality gilded and enamelled metal objects of all kinds. The present fragment comes from what must have been an extremely refined example, and compares closely to another intact version now preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig.1). As images depicting the exact moment the Virgin is believed to have conceived Christ, and thus gave birth to the new Church, Annunciation scenes were iconographically appropriate choices of imagery for use on objects such as croziers, closely associated as they are with the Mass and the performance of the liturgy within the church.

**France, Limoges**  
c.1230–1240

9.8 × 7.4 cm; copper alloy with gilding and champlevé enamel. Rubbing to the gilding and losses to the enamel.

*Provenance*

Ernst and Martha Kofler-Truniger Collection, Lucerne (inv. E 58);  
Keir Collection, Lucerne;  
Private collection, London, acquired from the above in 1997

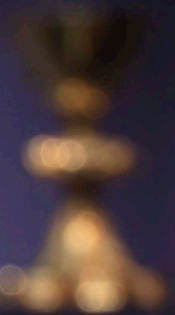
*Published*

*Sammlung E. und M. Kofler-Truniger*, Luzern, Exh. Cat., Kunsthaus Zurich, June-August 1964, no. 862, p.95  
H. Schnitzler, P. Bloch, C. Rattou, *Email, Goldschmiede-und Metallarbeiten Europäisches Mittelalter: Sammlungen E. und M. Kofler-Truniger Luzern, Band II*, Lucerne, 1965, no. E 58, p.27 and pl. 40  
Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Enamels and Sculptures from the Keir Collection*, Exh. Cat., Kansas City, Nelson Atkins Museum, 1983, no. 64, p.56



**Fig.1**

Head of a crozier with the Annunciation  
France, Limoges  
c.1225–50  
32.1 × 16.7 × 7 cm; copper alloy with gilding and champlevé enamel.  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.190.835a, b





## An enamelled oval plaque with an image of the Virgin Annunciate



An elliptical plaque orientated in portrait format, with the figure of the Virgin Mary enamelled in a rich palette of blue, green, yellow and white glass within a fine double-hued border of blue and white, and with a delicate beaded moulding stamped into the perimeter of the metal to enliven its outline. Her representation here seems to show her at the moment of the Annunciation since she is identified by a two-part inscription taken from the angelic salutation described in the Gospel of Luke (1:28), engraved into the plain copper background surrounding her; 'AVE' on the left, and 'MARI/A' on the right. She is portrayed turning subtly to our right with her nose shown in three-quarter profile, as though in response to the annunciating angel (who may have been depicted on an accompanying plaque intended for display on the right-hand side of ours). She raises her right-hand palm upward at the level of her breast, and holds a book in her left whose cover is decorated with fictive cabochon gems. She wears a green dress picked out with yellow highlights along each of its folds, and a blue/white veil whose trailing edge falls over her right shoulder in the manner of a scarf. Nimbining her covered hair is a large halo coloured in shades of green and yellow enamel laid in concentric rings.

The present plaque is closely related to a number of enamels localized on the grounds of style, provenance, and documentary evidence to the twelfth-century workshops of Liège in the Meuse Valley (modern-day Belgium). Examples such as a roundel of the Virgin in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a rectangular plaque of Saint Regenulfa in the British Museum, show how small-scale enamels decorated with single figures abounded in a variety of formats and compositional formulae (figs.1–2). The latter is particularly analogous to our plaque because of its restrained palette of vivid blue, green, yellow and white, a characteristic feature of many Mosan enamels dated in current scholarship to the third quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which the Virgin's veil enwraps her hair and ends in switchback folds over one shoulder is also found on other Mosan enamels of the 1160s and 1170s, including in a markedly similar form on a large reliquary pendant in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig.3).

Four regularly spaced pin holes drilled into our plaque's outer border indicate that it was attached to a larger object, most likely the cover of a lavishly bound book, portable reliquary or altar. It was evidently removed with force, since the holes have torn through the outermost beaded moulding. Though it would originally have been completely covered with a thin layer of gilding, a long history of wear has exposed the plaque's copper alloy base metal to the modern eye. It may suggest that the piece was routinely touched or kissed by its owner(s) out of veneration (a practice that would entirely appropriate given the importance of Marian devotion throughout the Middle Ages), or alternatively that, having been removed from a larger object, it was kept or worn about the person and handled regularly as an object of private devotion.

Meuse Valley, province of Liège  
c.1170

5.5 × 4 cm; copper alloy with champlevé enamel in multiple colours, and traces of gilding. The gilding worn in most areas, and some losses to the enamel in places (mostly in the outer border).

*Provenance*

Sotheby's London, *European Sculpture and Works of Art 900–1900*, 2004, lot 4;  
Private collection, London

1. See in particular Neil Stratford, *Catalogue of Medieval Enamels in the British Museum, II: Northern Romanesque Enamel*, London, 1993, pp.86–88, no. 14; see also Nigel Morgan, "The Iconography of Twelfth Century Mosan Enamels" in *Rhein und Maas: Kunst und Kultur 800–1400. Volume 2, Berichte, Beiträge und Forschungen zum Themenkreis der Ausstellung und des Katalogs*, edited by Anton Legner. Cologne, 1973. p.270.



**Fig.1**  
Enamelled roundel of the  
Virgin Mary  
Meuse Valley  
c.1150–1200  
6.2 cm diam.; copper alloy  
with champlevé enamel  
and gilding  
New York, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, Inv.  
17.190.420



**Fig.2**  
Plaque with Saint Regenulfa  
Meuse Valley, Liège  
c.1160–75  
4.5 × 5.5 cm; copper alloy  
with champlevé enamel  
and gilding  
London, British Museum,  
inv. 1917,0409.1



**Fig.3**  
Reliquary pendant with the  
Virgin and Child Enthroned,  
detail of the central plaque  
Meuse Valley, Liège  
c.1160–70  
19.8 × 17 × 3.2 cm; copper  
alloy with champlevé  
enamel and gilding  
Cleveland, Cleveland  
Museum of Art, inv.  
1926.428



**Cat.28** An enamelled oval plaque with an image of the Virgin Annunciate

## Three silver medallions with scenes from the Life of Christ



Originally made to adorn a larger object, these three silver-gilt medallions are unusually refined examples of late thirteenth-century German goldsmith's work at its most delicate. They feature scenes of the Nativity, the Flagellation of Christ and the Resurrection, worked into thin silver discs using the repoussé technique. Each medallion incorporates a scene framed within a beaded border and set beneath three cusped gables supported by slender columns, with miniature pinnacles between each gable. In the scene of the Nativity, the Virgin Mary rests in a bed and reaches up to the Christ child, who sleeps in a crib atop a micro-architectural platform. In the Flagellation scene, Christ is shown with his hands tied to a pole as he looks back in anguish at one of his tormenters. In the Resurrection scene, Christ steps out of the tomb proudly, his hand held up in blessing while soldiers sleep beneath and a figure holding a sensor, probably an angel, approaches from the left.

The scenes' architectural context, including the high pitch of the gables and the tri-lobed cusping beneath the Christ Child's crib, is characteristic of Gothic aesthetic trends during the late thirteenth

**Southern Germany, Constance?  
c.1280–1300**

Each roundel 2.9cm diameter; cut, repoussé and gilded silver, each pierced with three holes probably as means of attachment. A small area of metal missing between the upper left attachment hole and the border of the Tormenting of Christ medallion, and adjacent to both of the upper attachment holes on the Resurrection medallion.

and early fourteenth centuries, and it is often found in contemporary manuscript illumination and goldsmiths' work. Originating in early thirteenth-century Paris, the miniature context in which this style emerged allowed it to be easily disseminated, influencing the style of foreign artworks via portable objects.

On the basis of their scale, facture, attachment holes and subject matter, it is likely that these medallions decorated the outer edge of a reliquary or a liturgical vessel used during the Mass. They can be compared in this respect to similar examples on a gilded-silver goblet in the Church of Haldensleben-Wolmirstedt, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century (fig.1). Another example is the Konrad von Hausen reliquary from Constance, dated to c.1260, which is decorated with similar medallion plaques incorporated into each face (fig.2).<sup>1</sup> The scene of the Nativity on the Constance reliquary presents a particularly striking comparison as it possesses the same style of drapery, positioning of figures and the same micro-architectural platform for the Christ child's crib.

Although miniature, these three medallions evoke the highly influential Gothic style of the second half of the thirteenth century while retaining the memory of the object that once bore them.

1, See also Elisabeth von Gleichenstein and Christoph A. Graf Douglas, *Gold und Silber aus Konstanz; Meisterwerke der Goldschmiedekunst des 13.-18. Jahrhunderts*, Exh. Cat., Rosgartenmuseum Konstanz, 3 August-29 September 1985, pp.81-2.



**Fig.1**  
Chalice  
Southern Germany  
c.1250-1270  
Church of Haldensleben-  
Wolmirstedt



**Fig.2**  
Konrad von Hausen  
Reliquary with medallions  
Southern Germany, Constance  
c.1250-1260  
Constance, Minster Treasury



**Fig.3**  
Konrad von Hausen  
Reliquary with medallions,  
detail of the Nativity  
Southern Germany, Constance  
c.1250-1260  
Constance, Minster Treasury



## A reliquary or statuette base raised on lions



The gilded hexagonal base of a reliquary figure or statuette rises from the centre of a galleried, rectangular base raised on the backs of four crouching lions. The upper surface of the rectangular structure is covered with an elaborate pattern of engraved vines or branches sprouting spiky leaves and snaking through a dense network of hatched lines. A gallery of gothic arches bounce rhythmically around all four sides of the base, while couchant lions are positioned at each corner to lift the structure into the air. The hexagonal socle itself is flanked on the left by a kneeling mitred figure in prayer – either a bishop or privileged abbot – and on the right by a stylised architectural ensemble likely intended to represent the city or monastic buildings with which the kneeling prelate was associated.

The appearance of this stout structure, with lions at each corner supporting a rectangular, tablet-like base, is typical of a style of reliquary object developed by thirteenth-century goldsmiths in northern France. Even more characteristic of this region are the densely engraved vegetal motifs growing over the ‘ground’ surface. Among the closest parallels for this type of decoration are a pair of plaques perhaps taken from the ends of a shrine, and now in the British Museum (fig.1), and even more compellingly the famous tooled and gilded copper bindings of the *Evangelium of Saint-Denis*, executed by a highly skilled Parisian goldsmith in the third quarter of the thirteenth century (fig.2).<sup>1</sup> Far fewer parallels survive which contextualise the use of these ornate patterns on three-dimensional objects, although a similarly dateable reliquary dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul in the Palais de Tau in Reims is perhaps the closest analogue in style and technical approach, even reprising the details of the arched arcading and the lion supports below (fig.3).<sup>2</sup>

The iconography of the fortress or city, on the other hand, is unparalleled in this context, and it is unclear whether it should be interpreted as the hagiographic attribute of Saint Barbara (a symbol of her imprisonment by her pagan father Dioscorus, possibly signifying that this piece once contained a relic of the saint) or as referring to a foundation associated with the prelate figure on the right. It is also possible that since it seems to lack any of the usual iconographic features appropriate to the kinds of foundations typically associated with abbatial and episcopal donors on objects of this nature or in other media, it may be a later medieval repair or replacement.

Northern France, Paris (?)  
c.1270

14.3 × 16.5 × 12.3 cm; cast, chased, engraved and gilded copper with elements attached with rivets, soldering, and flanged tabs. Some rubbing to the gilding, particularly on the upper surface of the rectangular base, most likely the combined result of dust corrosion and repeated processional handling. The centrepiece, likely a reliquary statue or display, has been lost.

### Provenance

Collection of John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), New York, inv. P.M. 1463;  
Collection of Thomas F. Flannery Jr. (1926–1980), Chicago, until;  
His sale, Sotheby's New York, 1–2 December 1983, lot. 27;  
Private collection, London



Cat. 30, A reliquary or statuette base raised on lions (details)

1, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin et al., *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, Exh. Cat., Paris, musée du Louvre, 12th march – 17th June 1991, pp.74–6.  
2, Prosper Tarbé, *Trésors des Églises de Reims*, Reims, 1843, ill.



**Fig.1**  
A pair of chasse or shrine  
plaques(?) depicting the  
Crucifixion and Saint  
Bartholomew  
Northern France  
Second half 13th century  
London, British Museum, inv.  
1906, 0717.1 and 1906,0717.2



**Fig.2**  
Book cover with the  
Evangelists Luke and John  
Paris  
Third quarter 13th century  
29.8 x 20.6 cm; cast, chased,  
engraved and gilded copper  
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale  
de France, Ms. Lat. 9387



**Fig.3a**  
Reliquary of Saints Peter  
and Paul  
Northern France  
Third quarter 13th century  
Reims, Palais de Tau



**Fig.3b**  
Detail of the engraved  
decoration on the Reliquary  
of Saints Peter and Paul,  
Reims



Cat.30 Cat.30, A reliquary or statuette base raised on lions



Cat.30, Cat.30, A reliquary or statuette base raised on lions (detail)



Cat.30, Cat.30, A reliquary or statuette base raised on lions (detail)

## A ciborium flanked by angels bearing the Instruments of the Passion



This remarkable construction is among the grandest and most ambitious early fifteenth-century treasury objects of its type to have been produced in the workshops of Catalonia. Its central focus is a large, hexagonal container, its hinged lid rising to a terminus of leaf sprays pierced at its centre with a rectangular hole where an ostensory or cross must once have been mounted. The container is raised from the ground by a tall and slender hexagonal stem constructed in the manner of a fantastical micro-architectural tower and embellished with cast, hammered and engraved elements divided over several connected levels. The lowest level is an elaborate buttressed gallery with six windows whose ogee arches are each surmounted by small crosses that puncture the 'floor' above. Surmounting this on a short support of plain hexagonal cross-section is a larger and even more elaborate structure constructed over two levels (the lower of the two larger being the largest), with flying buttresses and tall pinnacles punctuating the joints between six further windows on each level. Rounded arches surmount slender window openings which are pierced through the metal and, along with the lowest level, enlivened by basse taille enamels in blue and green. 'Blind' window openings filled with dense cross hatching are engraved onto the sides of the buttresses with extraordinary delicacy. Just below the container a pair of stoutly cast branches emanate on either side of the stem's uppermost level and project up and outwards in pronounced serpentine curls, their upper and lower outlines sprouting small, spiky leaves at regular intervals. At a level adjacent to the container's base, both branches flare into ledges formed as upturned cones, on which two angels stand at full-length with their wings unfurled vertically behind them. Their heads, hands and bodies were cast in multiple sections using moulds, before being soldered together and then finished and individualised with a degree of cold-working. Both angels hold Instruments of the Passion in their right hands, of which the sponge used to quench Christ's thirst when on the Cross, and the lower section of what must originally have been the lance used to pierce his side, now remain. Their left hands are now empty but may once have held the nails and crown of thorns. Their wings are set by way of short nodi into cylindrical sockets of a corresponding format projecting from their shoulder blades. The whole structure on which they stand is supported on a splayed base which flares outwards to occupy a broad footprint, its outline consisting of six large semi-circular lobes alternating with smaller pointed projections. The object is stamped in three places with the hallmark of Montblanc (Catalonia).<sup>1</sup>

It is unclear whether our structure was intended as a monstrance, typically used to display the Host on the altar and during processions, as a ciborium (Latin for a covered receptacle or cup), in which the Host was contained *without* being visible, or as a reliquary for the safeguarding of holy relics; its iconography of angels holding instruments of the Passion suggests that the object now missing from the foliate terminus on its lid was very probably a cross, although it may equally have been a glass or rock-crystal Host container. During the late Middle Ages these types of vessel were obvious choices for wealthy donors to commission and donate to religious foundations, since they helped ensure their remembrance at Mass. Such objects took on increasingly elaborate forms in the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth centuries. The goldsmiths of Catalonia and Aragon seem to have been at the forefront of this evolution, and were responsible for some of Europe's largest, richest, and most technically complex liturgical metalwork objects during the period. Their success was in no small part due to the fact that they could produce not only metalwork but also enamels (*basse taille* being their key speciality; see

Spain, Catalonia, Montblanc  
c.1400

50.4 × 27 × 18.5 cm (including the detachable wings); Cast, chased, gilded and engraved silver with basse taille enamels in blue and green. The terminus of the central knob and some sections of the angels' attributes missing. The wings hallmarked and probably modern replacements.

### Provenance

Michiel Onnes (1878–1972), Kasteel Nijenrode, The Netherlands;  
His sale, Frederick Muller, Amsterdam, 10th July 1923, lot 51;  
Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 5th November 1979, lot 1573;  
Private collection, Bergen, The Netherlands



Cat.31 A ciborium flanked by angels bearing the Instruments of the Passion hallmark

<sup>1</sup>, I am very grateful to Lourdes de Sanjose i Llongueras for identifying the hallmark as that of Montblanc, and for her generous help with the object's dating.

figs.3–5) of supreme quality, a cachet they exploited shrewdly. This rare combination found currency among the richest echelons of contemporary society, and drew widespread patronage not only from local cathedrals and foundations seeking to enrich their treasuries, but also from far beyond its borders (particularly among the noble and princely elites of France and Italy).

Despite their important contribution to the medium, the goldsmiths of Montblanc (near Tarragona) are hardly known, since only a tiny corpus of precious metalwork firmly attributable to the town on the basis of either identifiable hallmarks or stylistic treatment has survived from the period.<sup>2</sup> Raised hexagonal altar objects flanked by pairs of figures were, however, a distinctive speciality of Catalan goldsmiths during the later Middle Ages. Their elaborate shape seems to have been perfected at the turn of the fifteenth century, and several examples incorporating pairs of angel figures flanking a central compartment dateable to around 1400–10 in the Museu Diocesà in Barcelona and the musée du Louvre in Paris (figs.1a–c) are, along with ours, thought to be the earliest to have come down to us.<sup>3</sup> Another probably of a similarly early date and with close formal similarities was formerly in the collection of Charles Stein, though it is stamped with the Barcelona rather than the Montblanc hallmark (fig.2).<sup>4</sup> A number of our version's defining details, including the restrained and austere finishing of the container and the lobated base, the engraved flying buttresses, the angels' robust and rounded physiognomies, and the tripartite fashion of their hairstyles with voluminous curling locks erupting above their foreheads and on either side of their ears, all relate closely to fashions in luxury Catalan goldsmith's work and the wider courtly arts from the years around 1400 (fig.4–6).<sup>5</sup> Both the metallurgical composition<sup>7</sup> and the style of the punchwork on the angels' wings further indicate that they are, astonishingly, original to the object, and as such are vanishingly rare survivals from the period. The profusion of small, three-lobed crockets around the outline of the foot and stem, and on the angels' supporting branches, can equally be found on other celebrated examples of Catalan and Aragonese goldsmith's work from this date, including the reliquary of San Saturnino (dated 1389) in Pamplona (illustrated in Entry 32, fig.4). That these characteristics are all combined on our ciborium with such breath-taking skill and care, and with such an acute sensitivity towards material richness and refinement, means that it will surely become a key document for future scholarship and for our understanding of the medium and its development on the Iberian peninsula at the turn of the fifteenth century.

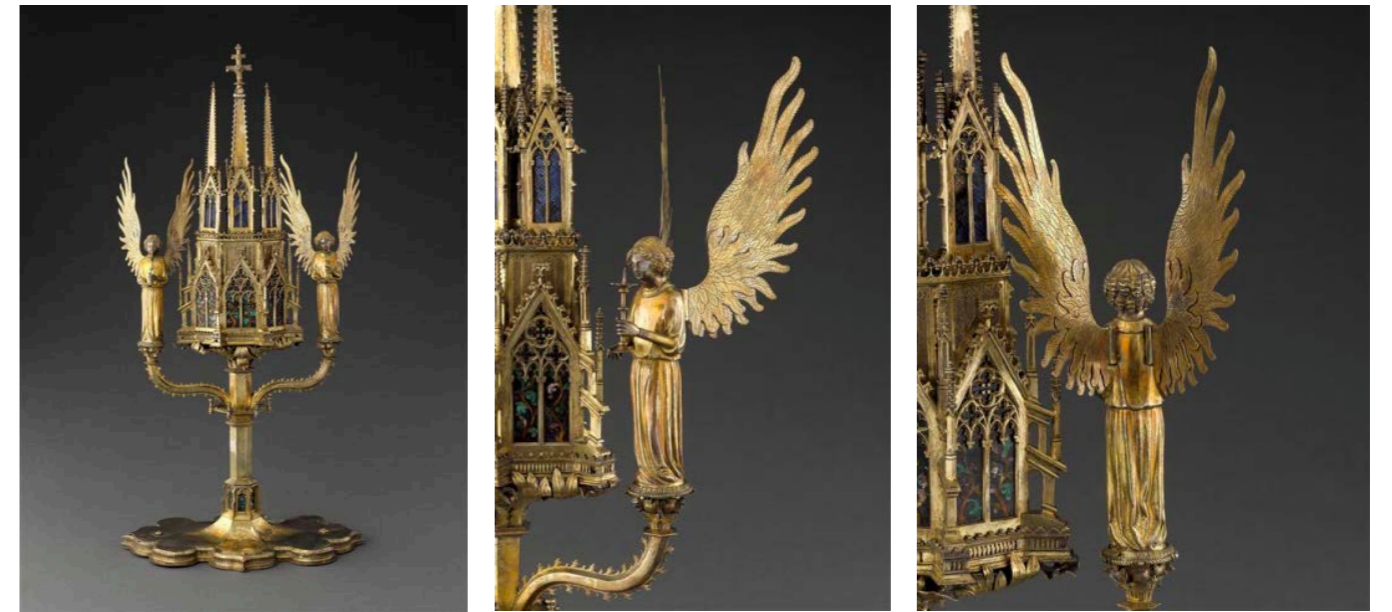
2, Antonio Martínez Subías, *La Platería gótica en Tarragona y provincia: tipología, catálogo, punzones*, Tarragona, 1988.

3, Nuria de Dalmasas, *Orfebrería Catalana Medieval: Barcelona 1300–1500* (II volumes), 1992, nos. 70–71, pp.340–43.

4, *Catalogue des Objets d'Art et de Haute Curiosité... collection de feu M. Charles Stein*, Sale Cat., Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 8–10 June 1899, no. 40, p.13.

5, The treatment of the base is almost identical to that of an enamelled chalice of c.1400 now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for which see *Eucharistic Vessels of the Middle Ages*. Exh. Cat., Cambridge, Mass. Busch-

Reisinger Museum, Harvard Art Museums, 1975, no.2, pp.44–45, 119; for the crossovers between Catalan enamelling of this date and metalwork produced for the Valois courts of France, see Joan Domenge i Mesquida, 'Circulation d'objets, d'orfèvres et de techniques: l'émail en ronde-bosse en Espagne autour de 1400' in Jacques Dubois, Jean-Marie Guillouët, Benoît van den Bossche, and Annamaria Ersek eds, *Les transferts artistiques dans l'Europe gothique: Repenser la circulation des artistes, des œuvres, des thèmes et des savoir-faire (XIIIe–XVIe siècle)*, Paris, 2014, pp.141–162.



**Figs 1a–c**  
Monstrance reliquary, with details of the angels  
Spain, Catalonia  
c.1400–25  
80.5 cm (height); gilded silver with basse-taille enamels



**Fig.2**  
Ciborium  
Spain, Catalonia, Barcelona  
Early 15th century  
53 × 26 cm; gilded silver with basse-taille enamels  
Formerly in the collection of Charles Stein



**Fig.3a**  
Chalice  
Spain, Catalonia, Barcelona  
c.1380–90  
18.5 × 15.2 cm; silver and silver-gilt with basse-taille enamels  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, inv. 1988.66



**Fig.3b**  
Detail of the New York chalice with pointillé decoration on its lobated stellate base



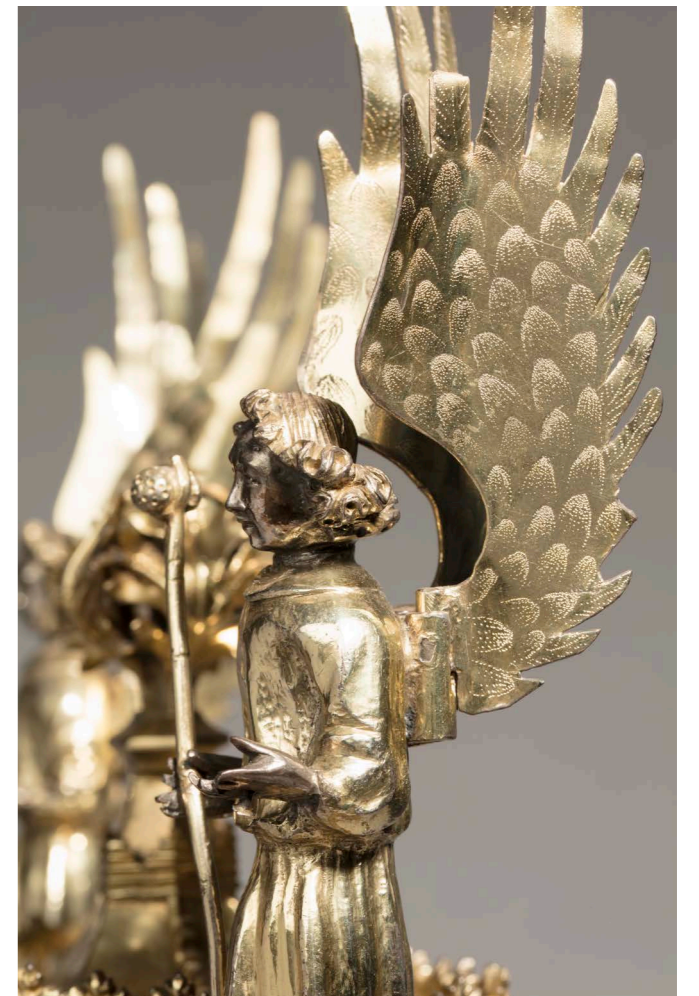
**Fig.4**  
 Processional Cross  
 Spain, Catalonia, Barcelona  
 c.1400  
 86 × 52 × 7.6 cm; silver and  
 silver-gilt with basse taille  
 enamels on a wooden core  
 Houston, Museum of Art,  
 inv. 2018.135



**Fig.5**  
 The Annunciation, detail  
 Spain, Catalonia  
 c.1400  
 8.3 × 8.3 cm; gilded silver  
 with basse taille enamel  
 Cleveland, Museum of Art,  
 inv. 1922.312



**Fig.6**  
 Reliquary Statuette of Saint  
 Christopher  
 France, Toulouse  
 c.1375–1425  
 60.6 × 29.5 × 19.8 cm; silver  
 and silver-gilt  
 New York, Metropolitan  
 Museum of Art, inv.  
 17.190.361



**Cat.31 A ciborium flanked by angels bearing the Instruments of the Passion**  
 (details)



Cat.31 A ciborium flanked by angels bearing the Instruments of the Passion (detail)

## A large micro-architectural custodia or monstrance



### Condition

The condition of this tall micro-architectural tower is a fascinating contributor to its appearance and function, and as such is worth discussing in full. The tower's structure as it appears today has evidently undergone radical alteration at some point in its history, perhaps over the course of many years and during multiple programs of adaptation. The most visually pronounced of these has been the addition, in the modern period, of blue and green enamelled silver plates backed onto each of the window openings in imitation of stained-glass windows. The presence in these enamels of traces of chromium (not known in enamel production before the eighteenth century) and a high lead content (over 20% in areas analysed with pXRF) indicate that they are of modern manufacture. Each one is further ornamented by small five-pointed stars stamped from thin silver sheet, which were laid in rows on top of each enamel before being heated in the kiln to fuse them to the surface. The small pierced holes at the centre of each star suggest that they may in fact have been produced as spangles for use on embroidered textiles, but were requisitioned by the goldsmith in an ingenious moment of economical reuse. Other, more structural changes also seem to have occurred, perhaps in order to turn a grander but damaged object into a smaller, complete structure. Subtle areas of disturbance and a series of redundant pierced holes at the centre of each window's lintel on the second storey indicates that it has been altered from a previous iteration, and that it has perhaps lost additional decorative attachments. Additionally, it is likely that the hinged door let into the underside of the lowest register is not original to its construction, being the only element heavily formed by hammering rather than casting, and with a style of mount more consistent with 17th and 18th-century reliquaries. It is also rendered useless by its proximity to the underside of the feet, meaning it cannot be opened easily without completely upending the structure – perhaps an indication of a once taller structure that has been reduced in height? At the same time, the feet have all undergone some cutting to their inward faces, while two have assembly marks scratched into their bases, which do not appear to have any corresponding counterparts on the structure itself near their fixing points. Both details suggest that they were sawn from another object and repositioned to their present location. Their stylistic treatment also locates their execution more probably to a German workshop active towards the end of the fifteenth century, though their miniature figures are shown wearing a style of short over-garment popularized among the European nobility (particularly in the French and Italian courts) from the 1460s on. Since they reprise small enamelled plaques of identical facture to those in the structure above, it is possible that they were added at the same time, perhaps – it may be speculated – by a German goldsmith of the type known to have worked with the Rothschilds in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

This extraordinary construction takes the form of a hexagonal micro-architectural tower raised on six feet that are each decorated with gloved men (boxers?) standing within ornate niches embellished with clustered pinnacles. Above them, the tower is constructed over four levels that decrease in size from bottom to top, with a short pinnacle of simulated pantiles crowning the uppermost level and terminating in a foliated crocket. Each level is ornamented with six windows, each one consisting of a double lancet supporting a tracery quatrefoil. The two lowermost levels of the structure, also being the largest, each have hinged doors carefully and skillfully disguised as windows whose hinges are concealed among their traceried frameworks. Set into the underside of the structure is a hinged, hexagonal door, which when opened reveals a flanged ovoid compartment that must once have held a relic or large rock crystal cabochon but which is now empty.

The ornate shape of our object and its capacity to hold relics and/or the sacred Host in several places together signify that it is very probably identifiable as a piece of a larger custodia, a tall construction (typically of several storeys), invented during the Middle Ages to act as a visual and material centrepiece during processions surrounding the Feast of Corpus Christi.<sup>2</sup> This feast, celebrating the Holy Sacrament, was first introduced by Pope Urban IV in 1264 and remains widely marked by a festive procession held on the first Thursday after Trinity. Custodia, therefore, have traditionally been made as appropriately rich displays of materials and at an extraordinary scale for what we usually think of metalwork pertaining to; the grandest of those to have come down to us from the later Middle Ages, the so-called *Arfe custodia* in Toledo, is over eight feet

### Northern Spain c.1400–1450, with feet adapted from a late fifteenth-century structure

44.7 × 22.8 × 17.6 cm. The miniature figures each measure 3.7 cm tall. Gilded silver with cast, hammered, chased and engraved elements held together with silver and iron pins, with later silver window inserts of basse taille enamel in blue and green added in the modern period. The feet adapted from another object or a later addition of the same object.

### Provenance

Collection of Baron James de Rothschild (1878–1957); His posthumous sale, 'Collection du Baron James de Rothschild', Palais Galliera, 1st December 1966, lot 221; Private collection, Austria, acquired from the above, and by descent until 2020

### Markings

A single hallmark stamped into the fictive brickwork at the centre of one wall on the lowest level of the structure, apparently reading 'D...NG'

1, It is believed that a German or Austrian goldsmith working for the Rothschilds in the second half of the 19th century was responsible for the fantastical engraving added to a lidded beaker by Hans Greiff (active c.1470–1516), now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 50.7.1a, b; for which see departmental object file. I am sincerely grateful to Christine Brennan for allowing me access to this file in October 2018.

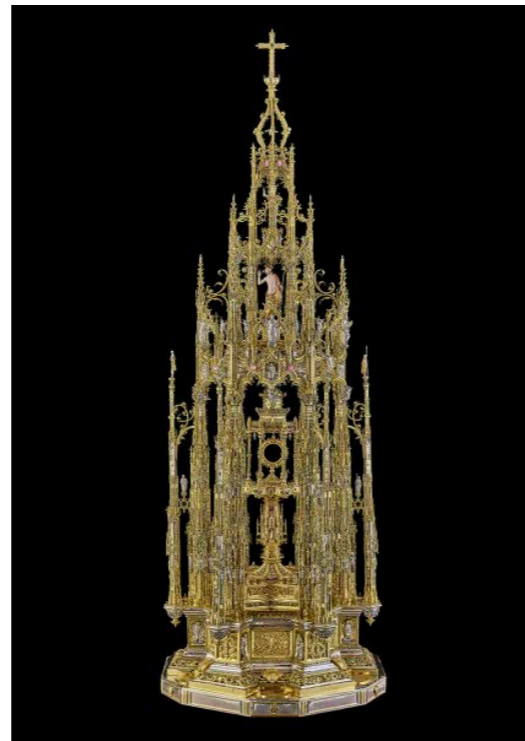
2, Carl Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith 1430–1830*, vol. 1 (text), London and New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1977, p.322.  
3, Charles Oman, *The Golden Age of Hispanic Silver 1400–1665*, London, 1968, p.xiii.  
4, Carl Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith 1430–1830*, vol. 1 (text), London and New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1977, p.322.



in height (fig.1). Indeed, their creation necessitated vast amounts of raw material, so much so that in one edition of the *Quilator*, his treatise on goldsmith's work, Enrique de Arfe's grandson Juan describes the manner in which his family had been forced to melt down 'infinite things of great age' in order to obtain enough silver and gold for reuse.<sup>3</sup>

Although not a Spanish invention, we know of over a hundred custodias surviving in Spain and the Spanish islands, and only one outside of that country, an example in the church at Ratibor which was in fact destroyed in the second world war. Others are, however, known to have been produced in northern European contexts, including one for the Cathedral of Saint Stephen in Vienna (fig.2). In the scale of its components, the use of its window openings as access points to its interior, its shape and faceting, and the details of its fictive architectural structures (with decorated and flamboyant window traceries juxtaposed with straight-sided pediments) our example relates most closely to a custodia produced by Francesc Martí for the cathedral of Ibiza and dated 1399 (figs.3a–b). The more energetically flamboyant nature of our version's architectural embellishments, which lack the austerity of Martí's design, suggest a date well into the first half of the fifteenth century, but nevertheless accord well with its overarching conception (and with other Spanish metalwork of the years around 1400; see figs.4–5), and it thus seems highly likely that our goldsmith was working in the Kingdom of Valencia and was acquainted with this corpus and tradition of goldsmith's work.

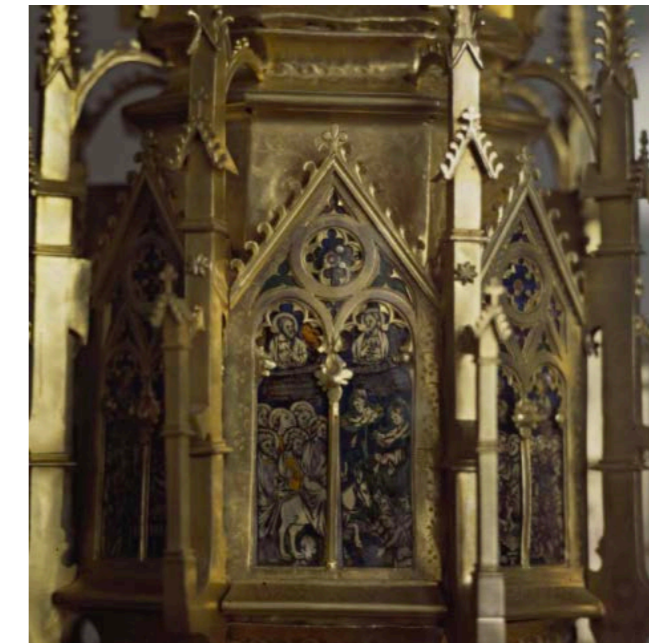
Despite its fascinating modern interventions, this extraordinary tour-de-force of medieval goldsmith's work, inventiveness and ambition makes its re-emergence a moment of the utmost significance for our continued study of what scholars have defined as 'among the most striking objects ever made in Europe'.<sup>4</sup>



**Fig.1**  
Enrique de Arfe  
The Arfe custodia  
1515–23  
Toledo, Cathedral of  
Saint Mary



**Fig.3a**  
Francesc Martí  
Custodia  
1399  
Ibiza, Cathedral treasury



**Fig.3b**  
Detail of the Ibiza Cathedral  
custodia



**Fig.2**  
One of the largest and most visually splendid objects in the cathedral treasury in Vienna was the Saint Stephen custodia, pictured at centre-left in Matthaeus Heuperger's *Wiener Heiltumsbuch*, 1514 Vienna, Wienbibliothek, H 3284, fol. 10r



**Fig.4**  
Detail from the reliquary  
of San Saturnino  
1389  
Pamplona, Paroquia de  
San Saturnino



**Fig.5**  
Detail of a custodia  
c.1390–1400  
88 cm (height), 126 cm  
(height with pedestal);  
gilded silver  
Barcelona Cathedral  
Treasury



Cat.32 A large micro-architectural custodia or monstrance (detail)



Cat.32 A large micro-architectural custodia or monstrance (detail)

## A gilt-copper monstrance with kneeling angels



A large monstrance with a circular central host container mounted on a slender stem punctuated at its centre by a stellate knob and terminating in a splayed, conoidal foot. On either side of the glass viewing window are long horizontal projections buttressed by arched supports and inscribed with the angelic salutation 'Ave', each projection bearing a kneeling angel or deacon figure, shown with arms raised as if supporting the host. Surmounting the container is a micro-architectural superstructure with gothic lancet windows, a gabled and tiled roof, and a central spire terminating in a flaring cross, which would originally have supported the figures of the Crucified Christ, and the mourning Virgin and Saint John (since lost). There is profuse engraving of a very delicate and consistent grade all over the surfaces of the monstrance. In four places equidistantly spaced around the central window's circular frame are stags, two mid-leap and two others recumbent; these are commonly recognised symbols for Christ but may also have a heraldic or patronal association.

The status and role of monstrances rose sharply in prominence following the Fourth Lateran Council finally ended the transubstantiation dispute in 1215 by declaring that the bread and wine actually transform into the body and blood of Christ at the moment of consecration. This council was followed in 1246 by the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi, thus creating a need for objects where the consecrated host could be seen and celebrated during Mass.<sup>1</sup> The consecrated host inside of a monstrance would have been displayed on an altar during liturgical ceremonies and due to being protected by the glass and metalwork of the object could also be processed in the streets, and it was imperative that the vessel holding it was made of precious materials. Accordingly, objects such as this would have been kept permanently in treasuries for their protection. However, due to the value of the material from which medieval monstrances were made, only a tiny percentage of such objects have come down to us intact.

A small number of surviving monstrances made in southern German and central European goldsmiths' workshops during the second quarter of the fifteenth century offer shared stylistic, technical, and material properties with our example, including one from the church of Nagydisznód in modern-day Romania that also incorporates kneeling and ministering angels, and with its Calvary figures intact (fig.1). Another surviving in the Art Institute of Chicago, which bears the date 1433, has a very similar stellate knob around its central stem, and a tiled roofline to its upper superstructure that can be compared both to our example and that from Nagydisznód. The style of our object's engraving, particularly the letter forms of its short inscriptions and the scrolling fleuron motifs on its horizontal figure supports is characteristic of Southern German (and Swiss) metalwork in the years leading up to the middle of the fifteenth century (the same fleuron motifs appear on an altar cross made around 1440 and now preserved in the Historisches Museum in Basel, for which see T. Husband, *The Treasury of Basel Cathedral*, Exh. Cat., New York, 2001, p.59, no. 13).

While of differing origins to our monstrance, two earlier monstrances, one in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art which has similar figures to ours but set in a more complex aedicule arrangement (fig.3), and another in the Houston Museum of Fine Arts (fig.4), which hales from the Guelph Treasure and echoes several of the architectural features of our example, attest to the skill of the medieval goldsmith and the visual tradition from which ours springs.

**Southern Germany**  
c.1425–1450

47.5 × 17.4 × 14.2 cm; clear glass, gilded silver and gilded copper in multiple parts, attached with pins and a central iron shaft. One crotched finial band replaced, one of the angels' arms broken at the elbow, a corpus of Christ and smaller figures of the Virgin and Saint John missing from the uppermost terminus.

*Provenance*

Collection of Albert Figdor (1843–1927), Vienna;  
His posthumous sale, Paul Cassirer, Berlin, 1930, no. 370;  
Reinhold Hofstätter Collection, Vienna

*Published*

Otto von Falke, *Die Sammlung Dr. Albert Figdor*, Wien, Erster Teil, Band I, Vienna and Berlin, 1930, no. 370, plate LXIX

1, Stephen N. Fliegel, *Resplendent Faith: Liturgical Treasuries of the Middle Ages* (Kent University Press: Kent, 2009), pp.42–44.



**Fig.1**  
Monstrance reliquary, from the church of Nagydisznód, Romania  
Central Europe  
Second quarter 15th century  
Sibiu, Brukenthal Museum



**Fig.2**  
Monstrance reliquary with a tooth of Saint John the Baptist  
Southern Germany  
Dated 1433 (the rock crystal container 10th–13th century)  
45.1 cm; Silver gilt and rock crystal  
Chicago, Art Institute, Inv. 1962.91



**Fig.3**  
Monstrance reliquary with a finger of Saint John the Baptist  
Germany  
c.1400  
57.8 × 20.3 cm; gilded silver  
Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum, inv. 31-71



**Fig.4**  
Reliquary Monstrance from the Guelph Treasure  
Germany (Saxony)  
Early 15th century  
53.7 × 20 × 20 cm; copper-gilt, silver and enamel  
Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, Inv. 70.16



**Cat.33** A gilt-copper monstrance with kneeling angels (detail)

## The foot of a Monstrance



This tall, shimmering piece of enamelled metalwork is formed of a large, down-swept hexafoil foot, a hexagonal stem punctuated with a large spherical knop at its centre, and a shallow bowl-like upper section that undoubtedly once formed the support for a superstructure of some kind. It is almost entirely covered with embellishment and ornament executed in a plethora of techniques, from the cast and stamped balustrade-like blind tracery encircling its stem and the rim of its upper section, to the tooled and engraved birds, bust-length figures, leaves, and flowers covering its knop and foot. The two, hexagonal collars dividing the central knop from the upper section and foot are decorated with coiled silver-wire filigree and enamelled in a palette of blue, green and white. More enamelling (now much damaged) enlivens the bust-length figures of saints and apostles which appear on the knop's six diamond-form projections, of which Saint James with his pilgrim's staff is the most readily identifiable. Encircling the foot is a long scroll bearing a Latin inscription which apparently records the context of its creation and offers a clue to its origin:

*hoc \* op // us / fie // ri \* fecit // san[c]tus // petrus \* et // un / iuers / i // tas circlarii*  
 'Saint Peter and the municipality of Cerchiara had this work made'<sup>1</sup>

So consistent is this inscription with the arrangement of the surrounding decoration that there are no reasonable grounds to doubt its originality or intention. Moreover, if our reading of its words and phrasing are correct, then it would seem to refer to a town called Cerchiara, and either an individual or an institution called Saint Peter. Since the early Christian martyr and disciple of Christ known as Saint Peter is thought to have been crucified in Rome under Emperor Nero between 64 and 68 AD, it is impossible that he could have personally commissioned our piece of late-medieval goldsmith's work. The inscription's dedication must, therefore, be referring not to the individual but to a religious foundation or institution affiliated with the saint. One candidate springs forward immediately in the context of the accompanying town's name; a church dedicated to Saint Peter in the municipality of Cerchiara, which is situated in the present-day region of Calabria close to Italy's southern tip. The scroll and its inscription are carefully spaced and arranged over five of the foot's six facets, leaving ample room for the intricately tooled foliate sprays above. However, the goldsmith responsible for its execution seems to have run out of space, and was forced not only to bunch the two final words 'universitas circlarii' together in a broken and triangular arrangement on the sixth face, but also to dispense with the municipality's correct Latin name, which if recounted in full would have read 'universitas civium circlarii'. While the object's precise function is unknown on account of having lost its upper attachment, it was most likely intended as a chalice, candlestick, or monstrance, since its surviving elements all link it closely to late-medieval European fashions for liturgical objects designed for use at the altar table.

The most visually analogous examples of medieval goldsmith's work which incorporate the filigree style of enamelling covering the two faceted collars of our object are undoubtedly a widely-celebrated group of chalices and liturgical objects traditionally attributed to Hungarian workshops active during the third quarter of the fifteenth century, of which several important and dated examples are now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig.1).<sup>2</sup> More recent scholarship has also shown that similar enamels were also produced in the South Tyrol by documented goldsmiths, and we are beginning to understand more about the technique's wider appeal in this short and clearly-defined period of time.<sup>3</sup> However, what remains comparatively overlooked is how this peculiar style of enamelling, which

**Southern Italy, Naples?**  
**c.1450–1475**

31.5 × 17 cm; repousséd, tooled and gilded copper with filigree-enamelled silver plaques. Minor rubbing to the gilding and losses to the enamelled plaques on the central knop. The upper section missing.

*Provenance*

Private European collection;  
 Their sale, Sotheby's London, 3 July 2012, lot 30

<sup>1</sup>, I am very grateful to Dr Lydia Hansell for discussing the significance of this transcription and the possibility of other translations.

combines elements of basse taille with the cellular divisions associated with the cloisonné technique, evidently seems to have spread to other parts of the Latin world during the period. A crozier made in 1457 for the cathedral of Potenza in southern Italy and attributed to a Neapolitan goldsmith incorporates a similar language of decoration to those from Hungarian workshops and, along with other examples of related type in Reggio Calabria, Tropea, and Troina, proves how widespread the knowledge and artists associated with this technique must in fact have been (fig.2).<sup>4</sup> It seems particularly fitting (and far more likely) that a prelate, nobleman, or group of local Cerchiaran donors seeking to enrich the treasury of their church would have looked to Naples (or to another local enameller) in order to produce our object, rather than to the workshops of Hungary many hundreds of miles away, and its survival gives us more precious evidence for the spread of this remarkable technique outside of the assumed loci.

2, S. Mihalik, *Old Hungarian enamels*, Budapest, 1961, figs 26–32; Judit H. Kolba, *Hungarian Silver: The Nicolas M. Salgo Collection*, London, 1996, nos. 1–2, pp.20–23  
 3, E. Castelnuovo and F. de Gramatica eds., *Il Gotico nell'Alpi 1350–1450*, Exh. Cat., Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, pp.802–807, nos. 161–163.  
 4, Thomas Hoving et. al., *The Middle Ages: Treasures from The Cloisters and The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Exh. Cat., Los Angeles and Chicago, 1969, no. 99, p.212.



**Fig.1**  
 Chalice  
 South-eastern Europe,  
 traditionally attributed to a  
 Hungarian workshop  
 1462  
 21.5 × 14 cm; gilded silver,  
 filigree enamel, pearls  
 New York, Metropolitan  
 Museum of Art, inv.  
 2010.109.6



**Fig.2**  
 Crozier head from Potenza  
 Cathedral, made for  
 Anthony, Lord Bishop of  
 Potenza  
 Naples  
 1457  
 29 × 15.4 × 3.1 cm; gilded  
 silver and silver with basse  
 taille enamels  
 New York, Metropolitan  
 Museum of Art, inv.  
 17.190.590



**Cat.34 The foot of a Monstrance**

## A monstrance or pax engraved with an image of Veronica's Veil held by angels



A silver and silver-gilt monstrance (a form of container used for displaying the Host on the altar) engraved on its circular covering plate with an image of the vera icon, or Veronica's veil, held by two angels. The image is surrounded by a broad, circular band inscribed with the words *AGNUS DEI QUI TOLIS PECATA MUNDI MISERERE* (The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world) in Gothic majuscule lettering. The covering plate, which is made from a single piece of thin silver sheet, is held in place by way of a fine hinge on one side of its circumference and a correspondingly shaped clasp on the other, and opens to reveal a cavity backed by glass, through which devotees would have been able to view the Host when stored and displayed in this receptacle atop the altar table. Separating the covering plate from the glass viewing window is a framework of extraordinarily fine, pierced filigree, which takes the form of fruiting and leafy vine tendrils and is edged by a coiled and pearled ribbon motif.

At some point in its very early history, this delicate container was turned from what may originally have been a hand-held osculatory into a monstrance by being attached to a splayed stem and surmounted by a cross inscribed with the letters 'INRI'. Though seemingly an intervention posterior to its creation, it was clearly undertaken with sensitivity as it has carefully negotiated the pierced filigree-work to which the foot and cross needed to be attached with only minor disruption.

It was in the late medieval period that a number of miraculously created images began to be worshipped, and the vera icon, or true image, was among the most important of these.<sup>1</sup> Venerated from the twelfth century and kept in Old St. Peter's, the vera icon was believed to be an image of Christ created when he was on his journey to calvary and stopped to wipe his face on a cloth held by Saint Veronica (fig.1). Veronica was a name derived from the vera icon and given to the woman holding the cloth. The cult around the miracle working image quickly grew and by the late Middle Ages there was a high demand for copies of the image on cloth, paper, wood and metal.<sup>2</sup> Incorporating an image of the holy face onto an osculatory or monstrance, which would have displayed the body of Christ after transubstantiation, was a fitting iconographic choice since the image of the vera icon represented Christ on his way to sacrifice his body for the sins of mankind, thus linking the image on the exterior with its interior contents. As if further emphasis were needed, the accompanying inscription's explicit reference to the Lamb of God makes the object's symbolism clear.

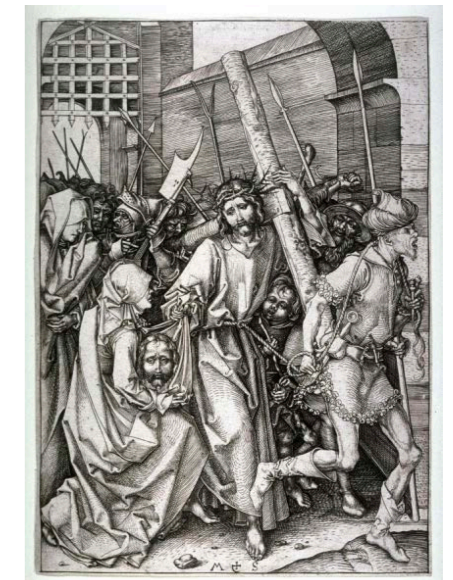
Monstrances became particularly important after the Fourth Lateran Council finally ended the transubstantiation dispute by declaring that the bread and wine used during Mass actually transform into the body and blood of Christ at the moment of their consecration. This council was followed by the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi, thus creating a need for objects where the consecrated Host could be more clearly seen.<sup>3</sup> The consecrated host inside a monstrance would have been displayed on an altar during Mass or processed in the streets, and it was imperative that the vessel holding it was made of precious materials. Accordingly, objects such as this would have been kept permanently in treasuries for their protection. Nevertheless, due to the value of the material from which they are made, only a small percentage of such objects survive to us today.

A stylistically comparable image of the vera icon in metal can be found on a late fifteenth-century reliquary from Mühlhausen (see fig.3). Here,

**Southern Germany**  
c.1490 with sixteenth-century alterations

25.2 × 10 × 7 cm; gilded silver and glass. The flaring stem, the glass, and the cross on top of the monstrance are early additions.

*Provenance*  
Private family collection, Vienna, by descent since the early twentieth century



**Fig.1**  
Martin Schongauer  
(1435–1491)  
The Bearing of the Cross  
with Saint Veronica  
Rhine Valley, Colmar  
1470–90

1, Suzanne Karr, 'A Newly Acquired Veronica Woodcut,' *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, (2002), p.99.  
2, Karr 2002, p.100.  
3, Stephen N. Fliegel, *Resplendent Faith: Liturgical Treasuries of the Middle Ages*, Kent (University Press), 2009, pp.42–44.

the vera icon is also engraved on the surface of a round silver plate, framed by a thin silver rope. Veronica holds the enormous cloth outstretched in front of her with Christ's face gazing out at the viewer in the manner of an icon. Although the cloth here is held by Veronica and not two angels, the face of Christ is similarly simplified to include a long nose, large eyes and a weary expression.

Objects of this small, portable form seem to have been modified on more than one occasion, perhaps revealing a widespread change in devotional practices after the close of the Middle Ages. One such object, a pax with the Martyrdom of Saint Barbara altered in the seventeenth century, is now in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (fig.4).



**Fig.2**  
Ciborium for the Ill  
Germany, Worbach  
Last quarter 15th century  
Gilded silver  
Paderborn, Treasury



**Fig.3**  
Reliquary engraved with  
the Vera Icon  
Germany, Mühlhausen  
Last quarter 15th century  
Gilded silver



**Fig.4**  
Pax with the Martyrdom of  
Saint Barbara  
Southern Germany  
c.1480, with 17th-century  
alterations  
18.9 x 9.5 cm; gilded silver  
and mother of pearl  
Baltimore, Walters Art  
Museum, inv. 57.689



Cat.35 A monstrance or pax engraved with an image of Veronica's Veil held by angels (detail)



## An enamelled candle snuffer



This astonishing object, functional in intent but delicate and luxurious in material and decoration, is a seemingly unique survival from the late Middle Ages. Its conical, hooded form betrays its function as a candle snuffer, almost certainly for use in a liturgical context given its richness and delicacy. Each of its sloping facets are engraved with leafy sprays and fronds, separated from one to the next by shaped ridges, and bordered below by a downturned canopy of fleur-de-lys filigree, which doubles up as a strengthening aid around its lower circumference. Surmounting the hood is a long horizontal strut of rectangular cross-section, reinforced at its corners with a beaded moulding and open at one end where it would have been mounted onto a handle of corresponding cross-section (most likely made from wood, metal, or even ivory). It is decorated on both of its longitudinal sides with a design of overlapping leaf fronds, which are carefully shaded and reserved against a translucent ground of *basse taille* enamels in blue and green.

Although recorded in documents by the fifteenth century, almost no candle snuffers from the late Middle Ages have come down to us, undoubtedly due in to their functionality, size and inherent portability. They were most often characterised by their incorporation of a pair of scissors, which would be used to cut excess wick from the candle into a small, closed box attached to the blades (fig.1). There seem to be almost no parallels surviving for the format of our snuffer, although one in the musée national de la Renaissance in Ecouen has a similar style of attachment hole with which it could be connected to a long handle (fig.2). It is this small but crucial feature which suggests that our example must have been used for extinguishing tall, wax tapers, of the type common in grand liturgical ceremonies around the altar table (fig.3). Due to their height, such tapers would have been far more difficult to snuff using the more common form of handheld scissors. The treatment of the enamelled decoration on both sides of the handle attachment and the florid, stylised nature of the floral sprays on the gilded hood both point to a date of around 1400; they recall the engraved, broad-leaved foliate motifs decorating the reliquary of Saint Stephen in the Musée diocésain in Pistoia, which is believed to have been executed in a Sienese workshop in the last third of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The subtle shading of the overlapping leaves on each of the enamelled panels also suggest a North Italian origin, since both Tuscany and Umbria enjoyed a long tradition of enamelling (and nielloing) in which hatched shading effects were employed to similar effect.<sup>2</sup>

Northern Italy  
c.1400

9.2 × 9.7 × 4.5 cm; cast, chased and gilded silver with basse taille enamels in blue and green. Some small areas of tearing and puncturing to the engraved metal sections, and some sporadic losses to the enamels.

Provenance

Christie's London, 15th December 1982, lot 48

1, Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, *Émaux du moyen âge*, Fribourg, 1972, p.393.  
2, Our shaded enamels seem to echo the rich corpus of nielloed plaquettes and other objects made in Tuscan workshops particularly closely; see for instance an early fifteenth-century pax in the Bargello Museum, illustrated in Marco Collareta and Antonella Capitanio eds, *Oreficeria sacra italiana*, Florence, 1990, no. 42, pp.151–2.



**Fig.1**  
Candle snuffer  
Italy  
c.1511–1514  
14 cm (length); cast, gilded  
and engraved silver with  
enamel  
London, British Museum, inv.  
1878,1230.633



**Fig.2**  
Master of Saint Giles  
The Mass of Saint Giles  
c.1500  
62.3 × 46 cm; oil on oak  
London, National Gallery,  
inv. NG4681



**Fig.3**  
*Mouchette*, or candle snuffer  
France  
Early 16th century  
12 × 1.2 cm; cast and  
stamped copper alloy  
Ecouen, musée national de la  
Renaissance, inv. ECL21146



Cat.36 An enamelled candle snuffer (detail)





## A Double Cup decorated with fantastical beasts in roundels



Although the decoration of this almost pristinely preserved Romanesque double cup is emphatically secular in nature, many of its closest surviving links are to liturgical ciboria and other forms of altar vessel preserved in Europe's museums and cathedral treasuries. It is formed from two interlocking halves raised on a lathe from thick silver sheet before being worked using the repoussé technique to further enlarge their broad and rotund profiles.<sup>1</sup> At the centre of both vessels' interiors are small gilded medallions engraved with five-petalled flowers, but it is their exterior surfaces which really showcase the supreme skill of the Medieval craftsman. Both halves are completely covered with a shared formula of engraved and punched tooling which is dominated in each case by a series of five evenly spaced and perfectly circular medallions in which hybrid beasts, eagles, and in one instance a human monopod, appear amongst leafy foliage. The interstices between each medallion are punctuated with symmetrical, sprouting fronds outlined against a dense field of engraved cross-hatching. The beasts, their framing elements, and these interstitial foliage sprays have all been carefully gilded to throw them into relief against the hatched, un-gilded background against which they appear. The cups fit together by way of an ingenious, recessed strip of silver applied to the inside of the upper vessel, which slots inside the lip of the lower half and becomes invisible when the two sections are united. This construction would have necessitated a careful and rigorous approach to their shaping; working one half too widely or leaving it too narrow would have resulted in a vessel that could not close. The lower of the two cups, its rounded body slightly broader and taller than its counterpart, has a short vertical collar of gilded silver that was left undecorated save for a moulded lip and a thin undulating line of engraving. Originally the lid, or uppermost cup, would have been surmounted by a knob held in place by the short, rounded flanges still preserved around the roughly finished centre-point on its exterior face. The lower cup retains a corresponding mount of the same diameter, which would have been used to attach it to a tall foot, probably of flaring form as is known to have been the case from other vessels of this type.<sup>2</sup> That we are to read the vessel as comprising 'upper' and 'lower' sections is made evident by the positioning of its writhing, strutting, and displayed beasts, which all appear 'upright' when the object is closed and set in the correct orientation.

Throughout the Middle Ages, stemmed cups and other drinking vessels were produced across Europe for the use of church and table, but only a minute handful are known today in any material. The most common type would have been those carved from wood, and some examples of this have survived in environments and conditions favourable to their preservation. As for cups made of precious metals, they are known only through fortuitous finds of treasure hoards, hidden by owners who never had the opportunity of recovering them. The most widely known metalwork vessels are identifiable as liturgical ciboria, expressly intended to hold Communion wine during Mass, and far fewer bearing witness to secular contexts and settings have been preserved, not least since domestic plate from the period was afforded little of the institutional protection that – for large parts of their history at least – church objects have enjoyed.<sup>3</sup> The re-emergence of the present vessel is therefore a moment of extreme importance, since it adds vastly to the otherwise tiny corpus of related objects whose decoration, absent of any religious iconography, would seem to point strongly to their function within a secular context. Indeed, the breadth and size of our double cup suggests that it may have been used as part of sophisticated social ceremonies

England or Scandinavia?  
c.1190–1210

11.5 cm (height) × 14.2 cm (diam.) overall; partially gilded silver, raised, repoussé, tooled and engraved. The knob and foot missing. Some minor scratches and tarnishing to the metal in places.

*Provenance*

Private collection, Belgium, prior to 1980;  
Private collection, London, acquired through the UK art market in 2009

*Published*

Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art*, London, 2021 (forthcoming), p.38.

1, I am grateful to Yannick Chastang, Michaela Zöschg, and Kirstin Kennedy for their thoughts and observations on the construction of this double cup.

2, Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art*, London, 2021 (forthcoming), no. 9, pp.40–41.

3, Aron Andersson, *Medieval drinking bowls of silver found in Sweden*, Stockholm, 1983, p. 1; Stratford, in *Exh. Cat.*, London, 1984, p.235; for the relationship between secular and liturgical drinking vessels see P.Skubiszewski, 'Romaniskie Cyboria w Kształcie Czary z Nakrywa', in *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, 1965, pp.7–46.

where several individuals drank from shared vessels.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, its material refinement indicates that it is likely to have been reserved for only the most important festive occasions, rather than being in everyday use.<sup>5</sup>

There has been some discussion in recent years about the origins of the larger group of drinking vessels to which this magnificent double cup belongs.<sup>6</sup> It has become clear that in the second half of the twelfth century an aesthetic language dominated by fantastical beasts inhabiting bold roundels, lozenges, and other forms of medallion developed across multiple regions (including Eastern Europe, England, Scandinavia, the Meuse Valley, and Limoges) within a short space of time.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the facture of our double cup and the language of its decoration align most closely with a group of secular drinking cups thought to be of English manufacture (especially the so-called Dune Hoard, which was discovered in Gotland and is now in Stockholm<sup>8</sup>; see fig.1), as well as with a small corpus of celebrated liturgical vessels widely considered the work of English artists, working either in England itself or in parts of Northern Europe linked to it by trade (figs.2-3). An almost identical double cup now in the Wyvern Collection appeared on the art market shortly before the present vessel, and must have been produced by the same goldsmith (fig.4).<sup>9</sup>

4, Andersson, 1983, p.2. Since the Viking period, it had been customary for guests and diners to share cups, thus promoting friendship and trust; the same custom developed in England by the 12th century and is known as a Saxon courtesy.

5, For an analysis of the use and prominence of such cups at the dinner table, see Andersson, 1983, pp.1-3, 30. 6, For the most up-to-date breakdown of this discussion see Williamson 2021 (forthcoming), pp.30-41.

7, The same types of creature appear in roundels separated by foliate sprays on Limousin vermiculé chasses dated to c.1175 and now in the British Museum in London and the National Gallery of

Art in Washington, for which see Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100-1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, no. 22, pp.122-5; For a localisation of similar vessels to Eastern Europe (but made by Limousin artists), see E. A. Lapkovskaya, *Applied Art of the Middle Ages in the Collection of the State Hermitage*, Moscow, 1971, p.54; For comparison to Mosan art of this period see Neil Stratford, 'Metalwork', in *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, Exh. Cat., London, 1984, pp.263-5, and Hans Hahnloser and Susanne Brugger-Koch, *Corpus der Hartsteinschliffe des 12.-15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1985, pp.141-2. 8, Andersson 1983.



**Fig.1a**  
'Dune cup 4'  
England  
First quarter 13th century  
Hammered and gilded silver  
Stockholm, Museum of National Antiquities (Statens Historiska Museum)



**Fig.1b**  
Detail of 'Dune cup 4'  
showing the underside of the bowl



**Fig.2**  
Bowl of a drinking cup  
England or Scandinavia  
Late 12th century  
Hammered, gilded and nielloed silver; 7.9 x 17.5 cm  
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 47.101.31



**Fig.3**  
The Saint-Maurice d'Agaune Ciborium  
England  
c.1200-1210  
26 cm (height) x 15.8 cm (diameter); hammered and gilded silver with repoussé enamel  
Switzerland, Abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune



**Fig.4**  
Double Cup  
Northern England or Scandinavia (?)  
Late 12th - early 13th century  
12 cm (height) x 12.6 cm (diameter of lower bowl); raised, repoussé, tooled, engraved and partially gilded silver  
London, The Wyvern Collection, inv. 0885



Cat.37 A Double Cup decorated with fantastical beasts in roundels



Cat.37 A Double Cup decorated with fantastical beasts in roundels

## A cusped drinking bowl with fantastical beasts in roundels



This shallow silver dish takes the form of a flattened ovoid, with twelve roughly equal cusps or lobes slung rhythmically around its low rim. Nearly every part of the vessel's interior is enlivened with precise and intricate repoussé work, a technique in which thin metal sheet is hammered repeatedly from one side with fine punches and stamps, in order to create a raised and textured surface on its opposite face. It is decorated in this manner with a complex design of roundels and foliate motifs arranged around a raised central boss. In each of the six main roundels, all of which have hexafoil framing elements, lions, eagles, griffins and other fantastical figures appear in postures akin to heraldic beasts. They are separated from one another in four places by swirling vine tendrils sprouting large, oak-like leaves. At the centre of the bowl's well is a long, raised section framing a plain oval, the major vertices of which sprout further clusters of oak leaves and short curling shoots. Almost all of the vessel's elaborate repoussé work was executed from the underside upwards, in to the interior of its well, with selective areas punched back down again from the inside to sharpen the design; the leaves which sprout and unfurl in the interstitial spaces between the figurative roundels were hammered upwards from beneath in the first instance, before being carefully pushed back down at their tips with a ball-point punch. Small circular punches in two sizes were then used to texturise and decorate the 'background' spaces of the design.

When this almost pristinely preserved drinking bowl appeared on the art market in the middle of the twentieth century, Charles Oman was the first scholar to correctly identify it as the work of a Medieval goldsmith, suggesting a Hungarian origin.<sup>1</sup> Although it has remained largely unpublished since, more recent scholarship has unearthed a tiny corpus of closely related vessels now thought to have been made not in Hungary but instead by a community of highly skilled goldsmiths active at the height of the Serbian Empire during the second half of the fourteenth century and into the early 1400s.<sup>2</sup> Serbia was an expanding state during the later Middle Ages, its boundaries extending right up to the Aegean Sea thanks especially to the military campaigns of King Milutin (1282–1321) and his grandson Czar Dušan (1331–1355). By the first decades of the fifteenth century Serbia controlled the largest silver mining centres in the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> Expansion came with a sting in its tail however, since many of these mines fell into the hands of Dušan's feudal lords who leased them out to the wealthy mercantile entrepreneurs of Dubrovnik.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, goldsmiths flocked to the region's urban commercial centres from as far afield as Germany and Italy to fill the increasing demand for exquisite secular and liturgical plate, bringing with them a complex and layered mix of stylistic influences.<sup>5</sup> They produced precious metalwork not only for local courts, at which vessels like ours were regularly given as diplomatic gifts and symbols of allegiance, but also for export further afield; a number of stylistically and technically analogous vessels and other plate have been discovered in sites across present-day Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia and the Ukraine as well as in Serbia itself, while over 300 records of silver bowls have been found in local inventories and documents surviving from the fourteenth century alone.<sup>6</sup> Even so, and as with precious metalwork from elsewhere in Europe, almost nothing has survived since, as soon as they were made, luxury objects in silver provided an instantly convertible reserve of wealth, 'the value of which lay in the metal rather than the workmanship'.<sup>7</sup>

As a result of their inherent material value, it is almost exclusively those vessels preserved in monastic treasuries or through burial that

### Serbian Empire c.1350–1400

20.5 × 12.9 × 3.5 cm; hammered, chased and gilded silver with repoussé decoration and tooling. Some slight splitting to the rim in three places, extended no more than 10mm through the metal in the largest instance. Some rubbing and losses to the gilding on the most exposed areas of decoration, otherwise almost pristinely preserved.

#### Provenance

With How of Edinburgh, 27 Sloane Street, London, by 1949

#### Published

G. E. P. How, *Notes on Antique Silver 1948–49*, Glasgow, February 1949, pp.12 and 15.

1, G. E. P. How, *Notes on Antique Silver 1948–49*, Glasgow, February 1949, p.15.

2, Bojana Radojković, *Masterpieces of Serbian Goldsmiths' Work: 13th – 18th Century*, Exh. Cat., London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1 July – 2 August 1981; Mila Gajić,

*Silver Bowls from the Late Middle Ages in Serbia*, Exh. Cat., Belgrade, Museum of Applied Art, 2010.

3, Gajić 2010, p.18.

4, Radojković 1981, pp.6–7.

5, Gajić 2010, pp.20–21.

6, *Ibid.*, p.16.

7, Philippa Glanville ed., *Silver*, London, V&A pub., 1996, p.7.



have come down to us. Of those which are known to scholars today, our vessel relates particularly closely to a small group of lobed drinking bowls which are thought to have been made in the region between Dubrovnik and the Adriatic coast.<sup>8</sup> One of these, excavated at Stobi in Macedonia, was discovered with a small cache of coins minted during the reign of King Vukašin (1366–1371), which has been used as evidence for dating the group as a whole (fig.1).<sup>9</sup> It seems almost beyond doubt that our vessel was created in the same workshop as the Stobi find (they are of similar size, shape and decoration, and both have twelve lobes), and like that example it is highly likely that the plain, ungilded oval motif at its centre was originally covered by an attachment, most probably a silver disc with engraved or enamelled decoration.<sup>10</sup> Though far plainer than our vessel, other silver drinking bowls found at Kosovo and Nikopol also replicate its lobed, ovoid shape and its combination of foliate and bestial motifs. These uniting characteristics betray the complex, international influences of the goldsmiths who crafted them, with one foot firmly planted in the long image-making tradition of the Byzantine world (fig.2).<sup>11</sup>



**Fig.1**  
Drinking bowl  
Serbia (found at Stobi,  
Macedonia)  
c.1350–1400  
18.5 cm (length) × 2.8 cm  
(height); silver and silver-gilt  
Belgrade, National Museum,  
inv. 343



**Fig.2**  
Plaque with griffons  
Southern Italy  
12th century  
7.9 × 17.5 cm; elephant ivory  
Florence, Museo Nazionale  
del Bargello, inv. 83 C

8, For a breakdown of current scholarship on the subject of localization and attribution, see Gajić 2010, pp.39–41.  
9, Gajić 2010, p.39.  
10, See also Gajić 2010, no. 5, pp.88–9, and no. 9, pp.96–7. It remains possible that our bowl remained unfinished despite its otherwise well-advanced state of execution, since there are no apparent traces of such a disc ever having been fixed in place. Another interpretation could be that it was intended for export, and that the space

was left empty for filling by a goldsmith in another centre.  
11, *Nobiles Officinae: Die Königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zure Zeit der Normannen und Stauffer im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, Exh. Cat., Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 31 March – 13 June 2004, cat. 45, pp.213–4; see also Clifton Olds ed., *The meeting of Two Worlds: The Crusades and the Mediterranean Context*, Exh. Cat., University of Michigan Museum of Art, 9 May – 27 September 1981.



Cat.37 A cusped drinking bowl with fantastical beasts in roundels

## A Veneto-Saracenic ewer decorated with silver interlace



This extraordinary ewer, its surface densely worked with an intricate design of interlace offset with applied silver banding, is almost unique in the entire surviving corpus of late-Medieval European copper-alloy vessels of this type. It was made in multiple sections cast from brass and worked into shape using a lathe, before being attached together with skillfully disguised joins. Its lid, rim, neck, body and foot are all encircled by bands of engraved chevron motifs, and the spaces between them crisscrossed by complex leaf sprays and interlace designs. The brass was then selectively keyed with gravers, and strips of silver rubbed onto the surface in a technique known as *damascening*. In this way, fine areas of silver shine from the surrounding surface (which may also originally have been filled with lac or pitch to provide further contrast) and become the dominant linear motifs of the design on every section of the vessel. In a final stage, the upper finial, the lion spout, and the fantastical serpent-bodied handle, were all cast separately and attached in place.

Our ewer's shapely form corresponds closely with a large number of pouring vessels thought to have been produced in northern Europe during the second half of the fifteenth century, and traditionally grouped together by the term 'dinanderie' after the southern Netherlandish city of Dinant where metalworking reached its peak during the later Middle Ages. However, its story is far more complex than this, since while it was very probably cast and put together in northern Europe, the engraved and damascened patterns wriggling and writhing over its surface were almost certainly executed in Venice by specialist metalworkers copying the patterns found on luxury goods imported from Syria and Mamluk Egypt (fig.1). Several factors support this reconstruction. We know that Venetian merchants acted as agents in the trade of copper from Northern Europe to the Mamluk Empire, particularly during the reign of Sultan Qa'itbay (1468–1496), and that they also brought back goods from Egypt and Syria to sell into the European market.<sup>2</sup> These agents were uniquely positioned to engage craftsmen in both regions and to have the various objects travelling through their shops and warehouses tailored and embellished with exotic designs to increase their value and desirability. A perfect example of this is a ewer now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is believed to have been cast in the Netherlands, transported to Italy, and then sent on to Syria for engraving before being shipped back to the Venetian Molino family whose arms appear on its body (fig.2).<sup>3</sup> That our ewer is, unlike the V&A's vessel, more likely to have been decorated in Venice rather than Syria or Egypt, is indicated by its subtle retranslation of Islamic designs; while several other vessels of its type (see fig.3, for example) bear fine Arabic inscriptions that have allowed scholars to localise them to Muslim centres outside of Europe, the lack of any discernible inscriptions or letterforms amongst our ewer's surface decoration suggests that it was not executed by an Arabic-speaking craftsman but by a European metalworker who probably lacked a specialist understanding of the language. This is further underscored by the stylized chevron motif encircling its circumference in several places, which seeks to copy but instead bastardises the often-silvered and lacquered chevron motifs found on metalwork imported into Europe from Turkish and Muslim centres (fig.4).

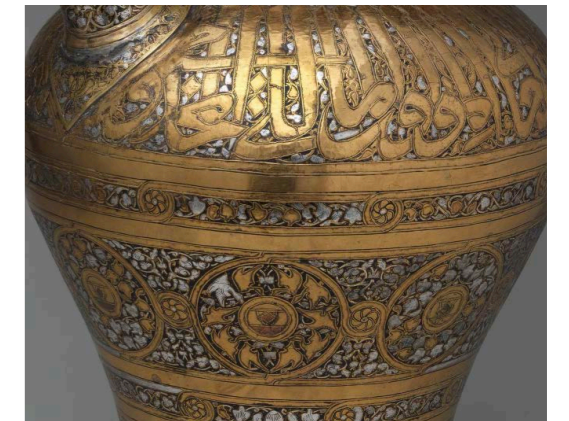
Vessels of this type could easily have been produced for both secular and liturgical use, and a number of those that have come down to us will undoubtedly have functioned in both contexts over the centuries. It remains unclear whether our ewer was intended for the Islamic market or, as seems more likely, for a European patron engaging with an

**Cast in the Southern Netherlands, engraved in Venice  
c.1450–1500**

24.8 × 8.2 × 6.2 cm; cast, lathed and engraved copper alloy (brass) damascened with silver. The handle reattached. The pierced attachment inside the lid, and the lower footplate are later additions.<sup>1</sup>

*Provenance*  
Collection of Charles Crodel (1894–1973), Munich;  
Private collection, Massif Central

*Published*  
Anna-Elisabeth Theuerkauff-Liederwald, *Mittelalterliche Bronze- und Messinggefäße: Eimer, Kannen, Lavabokessel*, Berlin, 1988, p.250, no. 338, ill. p.322



**Fig.1**  
Ewer, detail  
Mamluk Egypt  
c.1310–1341  
45.1 × 33.7 × 21.6; engraved  
brass and silver coated with  
black lac  
New York, The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, inv. 91.1.600

1, pXRF analysis undertaken by Yannick Chastang in May 2021 revealed lower iron and tin content in these parts, and it is therefore likely that they were manufactured and added to the ewer in the 19th century. I am grateful to Yannick Chastang for his thoughts and observations on this object.

2, W. L. Hildburgh, 'Dinanderie' ewers with Venetian-Saracenic decoration', in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 79, No. 460 (July 1941), pp.17–22.  
3, Gereon Sievernich and Hendrik Budde, *Europa und der Orient 800–1900*, Exh. Cat., Berlin, Martin-Gropius-Bau, 28 May – 27 August 1989, pp.600–601.

idea of the rarefied and exotic. In either case, its fabulous hybrid forms and patterns bear witness to the incredibly complex and sophisticated market in which Islamic trade and aesthetic influence was a dominant contributor to the Medieval world map.



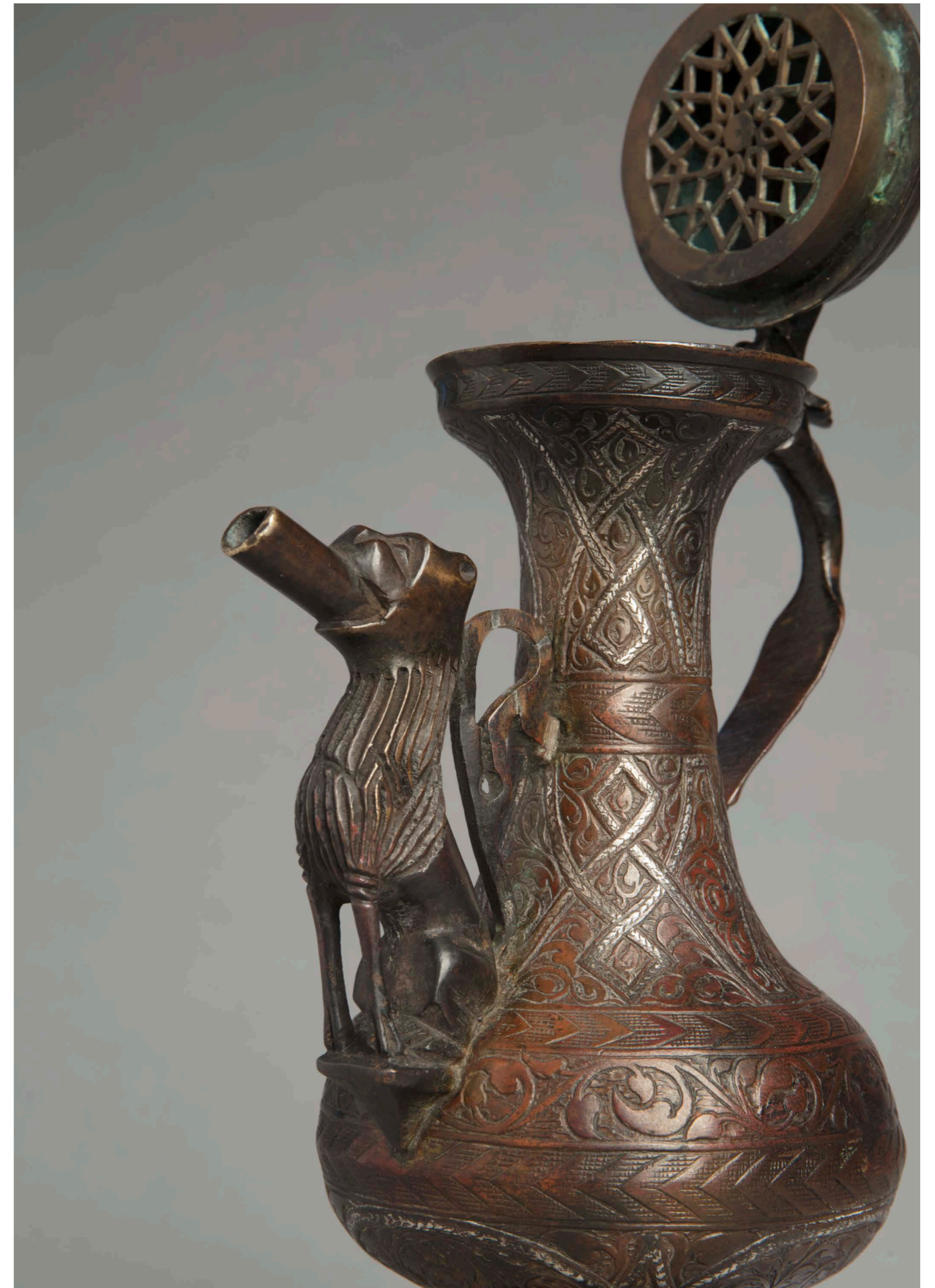
**Fig.2**  
Brass ewer with the arms of the Molino family of Venice Southern Netherlands, engraved in Syria c.1450–1500  
34 × 18 cm; engraved brass and silver  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. M.32-1946



**Fig.3**  
Ewer  
Southern Netherlands? Engraved in Egypt or Syria c.1450–1500  
25.5 × 8.1 × 6.5 cm; brass engraved and coated with black lac  
Paris, musée de Louvre, inv. O A 6951



**Fig.4**  
Ewer with engraved decoration  
Egypt or Syria? c.1350–1450  
24 × 17 cm; engraved brass and silver  
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. M.43-1946



Cat.39 A Veneto-Saracenic ewer decorated with silver interlace

## A chalice decorated with engraved tracery designs



The chalice is the most important liturgical object used in Christian worship, and for centuries it has been given a central place on the altar table. Its form directly references the vessel used by Christ during the Last Supper when, according to the Gospel of Matthew (26:27–28) he ‘took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to [his disciples], saying: Drink ye all of it for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’ Since the moment of transubstantiation is believed to occur while the chalice is filled with the Communion wine, such vessels have historically been created using the richest, most precious materials available to the church and its craftsmen. It is no coincidence that in Niklaus Manuel Deutsch’s famous early sixteenth-century painting showing Eligius, the patron saint of goldsmiths, at work in his shop, it is only the two chalices we can see in the scene that are made from gold alone, while even the most refined metalwork of other forms on his shelves are predominantly of silver.

Our shapely chalice, with its flaring, hexafoil foot, slender stem punctuated at its centre with a rounded knob, and tulip-shaped calyx or bowl, mirrors those in Deutsch’s depiction and accords closely with the fashion for such vessels in Northern Europe during the first decades of the sixteenth century. The prominent placement of the Crucifix, cast in relief and held in place by way of flanged pins passed through the foot, is a common feature of Medieval chalices and was entirely appropriate to its use at the altar. Less common however are the delicate engraved tracery designs, which crisscross over each of the foot’s six faces and lend it a proud, architectonic stature. Other examples of a similar format and design preserved in treasuries and museum collections across the German-speaking lands have been dated to the years around 1500, which seems entirely germane for our example as well.<sup>1</sup>

**Southern Germany or Switzerland**  
c.1500

20 × 12 × 12 cm; Gilded silver with cast and engraved decoration inset with dark blue enamel. A short vertical crack to the rim of the bowl, a modern repair to a short section shorn from the rim of the foot.

*Provenance*  
Private collection, Hessen

*Inscriptions and Markings*  
A maker’s signature ‘A. DE’ engraved into the underside of the rim.

<sup>1</sup> Franz Ronig, *Schatzkunst Trier*, Trier, 1984, no. 142; Bettina Seyderhelm, *Goldschmiedekunst des Mittelalters*, Exh. Cat., Dresden, 2001, nos. 79–81, pp.282–4; see also a pair of monstrances in the treasury of Basel Cathedral made by a Basel goldsmith before 1511 and illustrated in Timothy Husband, *The Treasury of Basel Cathedral*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001, nos. 77–78, pp.172–3.



Niklaus Manuel Deutsch  
(c.1484–1530)  
Saint Eligius  
1515  
Oil and gilding on panel  
Bern, Museum of Fine Arts



Cat.40 A chalice decorated  
with engraved tracery designs  
hexafoil foot and maker's mark





## The Virgin and Child



The veiled and crowned figure of the Virgin Mary stands with the Christ Child held high at her left side, pinning the flowing fabric of her mantle across her body with the same arm she uses to support her son. Her right hand, now missing, was almost certainly executed as a separate cast element inserted into the hole visible in her elbow, and probably held a lily stem or orb – typical attributes symbolic (like her crown and the barely perceptible engraved design which imitates ermine fur on the lining of her mantle) of her status as Queen of Heaven. The infant Christ wears a full-length garment decorated with a punched border along the neckline, and his neatly backswept hair falls over his ears and terminates at the level of his neck. He holds a book with a tooled binding in his left hand, and raises his right in a gesture of blessing against his mother's chest.

The flowing and energetic forms of this fully three-dimensional statuette belie the intensely laborious and involved method by which it was produced in late thirteenth-century Limoges. It was first cast in two halves using the lost-wax method, before both sections were cleaned and chased as well as further shaped by hammering from the inside out, particularly around the base. The two halves were then joined together and strengthened with a series of long stiffening rods passed through the figure from front to back, and the Virgin's crown and the head of the Christ Child – both cast separately from the larger structure due to the problems they would otherwise have created in the mould – fixed in place. Following this, the details of drapery folds and decorative ornament were worked into the metal using a graver and punches, and the tell-tale stuttering lines of a tool repeatedly hammered into the metal to create the deepest engraved lines are visible in many areas. The whole statuette was then gilded to disguise the tips of the supporting rods and the join between its two main sections. Both figures were fully gilded in this way except for their faces, which pXRF analysis has shown were given a silvered finish using an amalgam of mercury and silver (with more mercury than silver) fused to the surface of the underlying copper.<sup>1</sup>

Only around 40 three-dimensional metalwork figures of this kind, made in the skilled workshops of Limoges in south-central France, are thought to have survived from the Medieval period.<sup>2</sup> Our group is broadly comparable to a number of statuettes variously dated with the latter half of the thirteenth century (figs.1-2), but it is nevertheless a vanishingly rare example of a standing, rather than a seated, format. It was almost certainly produced as part of a devotional altar-top object; the large square opening in its base reveals the manner with which it was fixed to a larger object of some form, perhaps a tabernacle structure. The blessing Christ Child holding a book in his left hand is comparable to the wooden *Sedes Sapientiae* statues that have long decorated altars in Romanesque churches, but the Gothic smile, almond shaped eyes, subtle S-shaped sway and broad-fold draperies of the Virgin clearly show the Limousin artists' acute awareness of a new sculptural style emerging in France in the later 1200s. As Françoise Baron has noted 'this faithfulness to an outdated iconographic type was accompanied by a completely new sculptural experimentation in the Limousin workshops of the thirteenth century, which were faced with the prospect of creating images in the round as well as with the desire to rival sculpture.'<sup>3</sup> It is no coincidence in this context that our statuette can be interpreted as echoing not only the scale but also the formal language of the renowned ivory Virgin and Child groups being produced in Paris by a skilled milieu of micro-carvers during the 1260s and 70s, for the highest levels of society. Translating the ambitious forms of these royal, small-scale sculptures into precious

France, Limoges  
c.1275–1300

24.8 × 7.5 × 4.7 cm; repousséd, chased, engraved and gilded copper with silvered faces and hands. Rubbing to the gilding, the fleurons of the Virgin's crown broken and crushed, and the same figure's proper right hand missing. Some crushing to the lower edge of the figure.

Provenance  
Private Collection, France

1, pXRF analysis undertaken by Yannick Chastang in May 2021.

2, Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, 'Images de la mère de Dieu et décoration de l'autel gothique', in *Le décor des églises en France méridionale (XIIIe–milieu XVe siècle)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux, 28, Toulouse (1993), pp.87–137.

3, Barbara Drake Boehm, Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye et. al., *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York and Paris, 1995, p.426.



gilded metalwork, local Limousin artisans were able to produce objects just as visually rich as their northern counterparts. Our Virgin reprises a number of technical and stylistic features that can be traced across a number of figural groups thought to have been produced in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, as well as on the funerary plaque of Guy de Meyos (1307), where the figures' hands and the faces are silvered in an analogous manner (fig.3). The pronounced triangular physiognomy of the Virgin's face also finds direct analogies among a group of large funerary masks and reliquary heads preserved in Amiens, Paris, Angers and the church of Saint Martin in Brive (Corrèze), which have all been convincingly dated to the last quarter of the century (fig.4).<sup>4</sup> Just like these monumental worked objects, our group's scale, ambition, and technical success underscore the great artistic flowering of the Limousin goldsmiths during the period, who could never have known the way in which we now recognise them as the last generation of skilled artisans working before the city's artistic decline over the course of the following century.

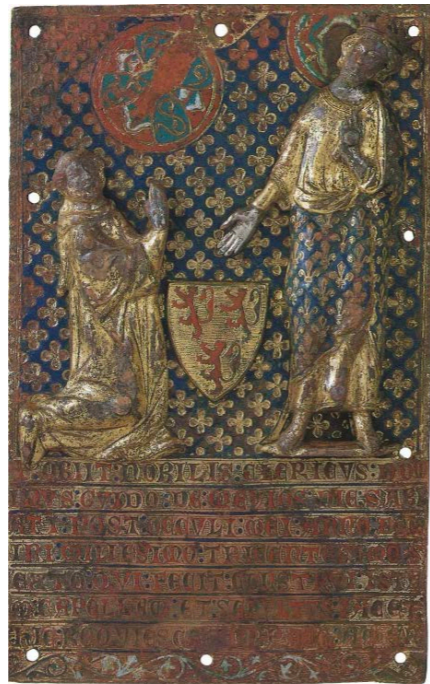
4, Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, Exh. Cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996, no.150, pp.414–6, and no.153, pp.422–4.



**Fig.1**  
Seated Virgin and Child  
France, Limoges  
Mid-13th century  
27.3 × 13 × 12.1 cm; cast, engraved and gilded copper with champlevé enamel  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, inv. 25.120.435



**Fig.2**  
Virgin and Child  
France, Limoges  
c.1300  
22.5 × 11.6 × 8.4 cm  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.190.348



**Fig.3**  
Funerary plaque of Guy de Meyos  
France, Limoges  
1307  
32 × 20 cm;  
Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. OA 7495



**Fig.4**  
Reliquary Head  
France, Limoges  
c.1275–1300  
34 × 21 cm; formed, chased, engraved and gilded copper  
Brive, Collegiate Church of Saint Martin



Cat.41 The Virgin and Child (detail)

## A bearded Apostle & A bearded Apostle holding a book



Two figures with classicising facial features, most likely identifiable as apostles from their bearded faces and long mantles, stand in contrapposto, their bodies swathed in the falling cloth of their draperies. One holds a book in his hand, though neither figure has any other identifying attributes. Both figures were formed by the same process, in which cast hands and heads were attached to bodies formed from a single sheet of copper shaped by hammering over what appears to be a wooden core and joined vertically at the back. Following this, their surfaces were unified and their visible joins disguised with a thick layer of gilding, burnished with an agate or other hard stone to give it its characteristic lustre and shine.

These elegantly clad figures were evidently made to decorate the sides of a large reliquary chasse or shrine, since both have unglilded and only cursorily finished backs which must originally have been obscured from view by the structure to which they were attached. Shrines of this type, deriving in large part from such thirteenth-century models as the shrine of Saint Gertrude in Nivelles (c.1272–98), must have been made in some numbers in the Lower Rhine and Westphalia, following the tradition of the great Romanesque shrines of Cologne, but were vulnerable to damage, theft and destruction in the post-medieval period.<sup>1</sup> Three further figures of the same scale and facture are known, and undoubtedly originate from the same object. One is in the Wyvern Collection<sup>2</sup>, London (fig.1), another is preserved in the Westfälisches Landesmuseum in Münster (fig.2), and the whereabouts of a third, sold at auction in New York in 1989, are currently unknown.<sup>3</sup> Of the surviving group, those well known to scholarship have been convincingly ascribed to Westphalian workshop active in the years around or shortly after 1350, on the basis of their similarity to a group of silver-gilt apostles from the Patroclus Shrine of c.1313–30, formerly in Soest, and to a contemporary group of apostle figures from the altar retable of Münster Cathedral of c.1350–70.<sup>4</sup> As Paul Williamson has noted, the Patroclus Shrine apostles are in fact somewhat cruder and stockier in their design, especially in the execution of their large heads, but a corresponding date for our figures and their three surviving counterparts nevertheless seems germane. The elegant disposition of their draperies and their finely articulated heads, which appear to draw on classical models of a monumental nature, also allow comparison with the gilded wood apostles on the Sankt-Klara retable in Cologne Cathedral, of 1345–50 (fig.3), as well as later fourteenth-century sculptures including the apostles of c.1380–90 on the wings of the Varlar altarpiece now in Münster.

Germany, Westphalia  
c.1350–1370

16 × 5 × 3.5 cm (each); gilt copper repoussé with cast heads and hands.

*Provenance*

Chalandon collection, Lyon;  
1964–1971, Kofler-Truniger Collection (inv. E144), Lucerne;  
1971–2018, Keir Collection, Lucerne

*Published*

H. Schnitzler, P. Bloch, C. Ratton, *Email, Goldschmiede-und Metallarbeiten Europäisches Mittelalter: Sammlunch E. und M. Kofler-Truniger Luzern*, Band II. Räber Verlag: Lucern, 1965, no. E144, pl. 82  
Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Enamels and Sculptures from the Keir Collection*, Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, 1983, p.68, no.101.

*Exhibited*

*Medieval Enamels and Sculptures from the Keir Collection*, Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, 1983, no. 101.

1, *Schatz aus den Trümmern: der Silberschrein von Nivelles und die europäische Hochgotik*, Exh. Cat., Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum, 1995.

2, Paul Williamson, *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture and Metalwork*, London, 2018.

3, Sotheby's New York, *European Works of Art and Sculpture*, Thursday 22 June 1989, lot 5 (sold together with a boxwood figure of the Virgin and Child).

4, For the attribution of the group to Westphalia

and a full breakdown of the current scholarship see Williamson 2018, cat. 89, p.165; see also H. Schnitzler, P. Bloch, C. Ratton and F. Volbach, *Mittelalterliche Kunst der Sammlung Kofler-Truniger, Luzern*, Aachener Kunstblätter, XXXI (1965), cat. no. E144, p.47, pl. 82; for the Patroclus Shrine and Münster apostles see most recently *Goldene Pracht: Mittelalterliche Schatzkunst in Westfalen*, Exh. Cat., Munich, LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, 2012, nos 72, 270.



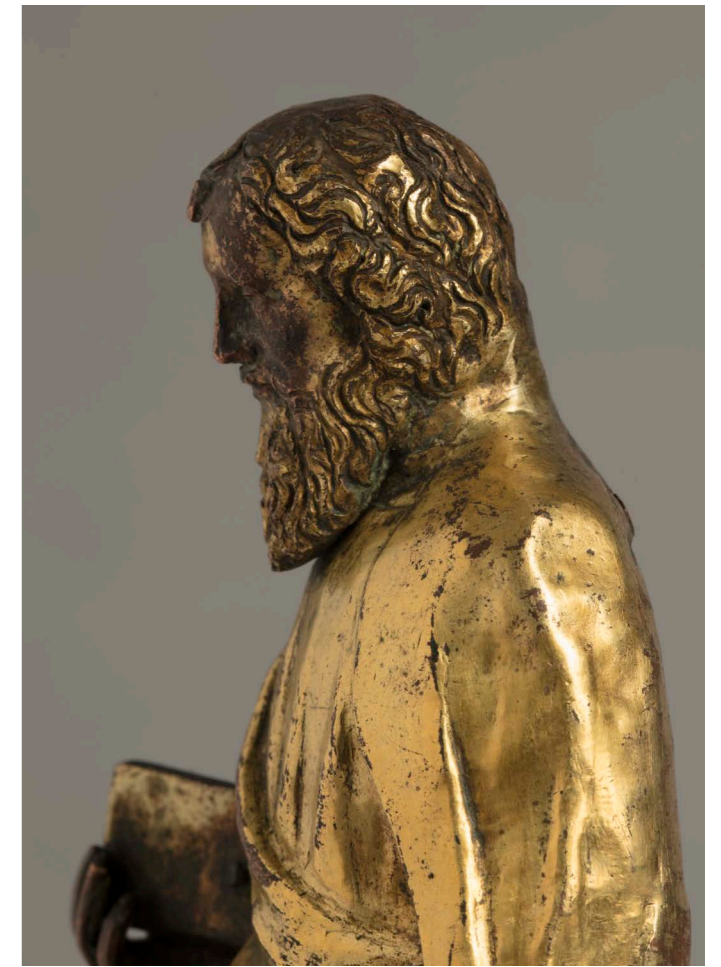
**Fig.1**  
An apostle  
Germany, probably Westphalia  
or Lower Rhine  
c.1350  
15.5 cm; Cast and hammered  
copper alloy with gilding  
London, Wyvern Collection,  
inv. 0877



**Fig.2**  
An apostle  
Germany, probably Westphalia  
or Lower Rhine  
c.1350  
15.3 cm (height); Cast and  
hammered copper alloy with  
gilding  
Münster, Westfälisches  
Landesmuseum, inv. BM 359



**Cat.42** A bearded Apostle



**Cat.43** A bearded Apostle holding a book



**Fig.3**  
The Santa Klara Retable  
c.1345–50  
Germany, Cologne  
Cologne Cathedral

**Saint Martin cutting his cloak for a beggar**



**A standing angel**



## Saint Martin cutting his cloak for a beggar & A standing angel

These diminutive figures, delicately cast from tiny moulds using the lost wax technique<sup>1</sup>, would originally have been made to decorate the sides of a reliquary casket, shrine or monstrance. Cast figurines of this type and scale were typical adornments for late-medieval liturgical silver, although they are miraculous survivals from the period when divorced from such contexts, as our figures have been. The larger of the two represents Saint Martin of Tours dispensing charity; the saint turns his body and raises his sword in order to cut a length of fabric from his cloak, with which he is about to clothe the naked beggar who kneels by his side. The saint is fully formed in the round, with evidence of careful cold-working and chasing on all sides. Along with the fact that he stands on a broad and perfectly circular base, such a high degree of finish suggests that he was made to surmount a finial, pinnacle, or similarly exposed component of a larger treasury object, and that he was intended to be viewed from all sides.<sup>2</sup> By comparison, the figure of an angel, even smaller in its scale and details than Saint Martin, stands in a more front-facing pose, his anatomy swaying in a subtle contrapposto, and his arms bent slightly at the elbow as he extends his hands towards the viewer. The void visible in his right hand indicates that he once held a thin, tubular object, most likely an instrument of the Passion. Although his flesh and clothing are silver, his curling hair is beautifully enlivened with a delicate layer of gilding. A silver nail, most likely original, passes through his navel from the front and exits at the base of his back. This was likely used to hold him in position against the structure to which he was originally attached, providing further evidence that his primary viewing angle was from the front rather than in 360 degrees.

Miniature statuettes are comparatively well published in the surrounding scholarship, but few have the unusually detailed level of refinement and finish that so characterise our two figures.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the lively hairstyle and pattern of drapery folds on our angel are features are closely analogous to several examples of liturgical goldsmith's work dateable to the early decades of the fifteenth century, particularly from the workshops of Cologne and the Rhine Valley (fig.1).<sup>4</sup> Even at such a minute scale, the delicately attenuated features and soft, bright modelling of the face and hair seem to reflect contemporary developments in Cologne's wider arts, particularly panel painting.

Although Saint Martin was predominantly venerated in his adopted homeland of France, his cult was also celebrated in the German-speaking lands and culminated on the 11th November each year with a feast day known as Martinstag, which is still widely associated with the beginning of Lent. The treatment of our figure and the details of his costume all indicate a date in the closing years of the fifteenth century, a golden moment in the history of European goldsmith's work. Strong technical and stylistic parallels to other small-scale statuettes attributed in the surrounding scholarship<sup>5</sup> to Upper Rhenish workshops, and an apparent compositional debt to an engraving of Saint Martin (fig.2) by the renowned Colmar printmaker Martin Schongauer (1435–1491) probably allow us to place our figure in that region quite securely.

### Saint Martin cutting his Cloak for a Beggar Upper Rhine Valley? c.1475–1500

3.5 × 2.2 × 1.4 cm; cast, chased and gilded silver

### A standing Angel Rhine Valley, Cologne c.1400

2.9 × 1.2 × 0.7 cm; cast, chased and partially gilded silver

#### Provenance

Collection of Dr Guy Onghena (1928–2018), Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium;  
With Finch & Co., London, acquired from the heirs of the above

#### Published

Finch & Co., *Visions and Visitations*, London, 2019, cat. 69E, F

1, Richard Newman, in Nancy Netzer, *Medieval Objects in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Metalwork*, Boston, 1991, p.34.  
2, Fitting parallels for this arrangement, also incorporating statuettes of Saint Martin, survive in several treasuries, including at Altdorf and Wangen im Allgäu, illustrated in Johann Michael Fritz, *Goldschmiedekunst der Gotik in Mitteleuropa*, Munich 1982, nos. 688 and 722.  
3, Wolfgang Schenkluhn, *Nachantike Kleinplastische Bildwerke, Band I: Mittelalter 11. Jahrhundert bis 153-/4-*, Frankfurt, 1987, especially nos. 52–68, pp.99–115 and nos. 76–80, pp.130–135; Fritz

1982; Netzer 1991, no. 49, pp.139–140, and nos. 54–55, pp.146–7.

4, See also a pair of almost identically conceived angel figures holding instruments of the Passion on a Cologne-made monstrance on loan to the Deutsches Klingmuseum, Gräfrath, from the Kirchengemeinde St. Mariä Himmelfahrt, illustrated in Fritz 1982, no. 441, as well as another Cologne monstrance dated 1394 in Ratingen (ibid., nos. 409–411).  
5, See in particular the treatment of drapery on a figure of Saint John the Baptist and the facial type of a fragmentary Saint Gilles, both in the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt and illustrated in Schenkluhn 1987, nos. 103–4, pp.175–7.



**Fig.1**

Detail of a monstrance, showing musician angels on either side of the Virgin and Child

Germany (Cologne?)  
c.1400

87 cm (height) gilded silver  
Cologne, Cathedral Treasury



**Fig.2**

Martin Schongauer (1435–1491)  
Saint Martin  
c.1475  
15.9 × 10.5; engraving on laid paper  
Hollstein XLIX, p.146, no. 62



Cat.44, Saint Martin cutting his cloak for a beggar & Cat.45, A standing angel



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