

Limoges Enamels: French Art in Medieval England, with a Gazetteer of Limoges Finds



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**French Art in Medieval England,
with a Gazetteer of Limoges Finds**

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Cover: Roundel from a cross showing Christ blessing, inscribed with an alpha and omega; found in York Minster crypt; diam. 7cm.; c. 1200-30; Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. AN 1887. 2395. Back cover: Figurine of a saint holding a book, found in Broxtowe, Nottingham, h. 8.3 cm; c. 1200-1300; Nottingham Museum, inv. NCM 1938-96.

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Preface

A few years ago, on being invited to speak in France about medieval Limoges enamels found in England, I was surprised to find almost nothing in print. Of what there was, little was in English, although the Portable Antiquities Scheme online database was invaluable. Other countries – as far afield as Russia, Hungary, Denmark and Italy – had published books about their medieval Limoges enamels. Yet for over three hundred years in the Middle Ages England had close links with Aquitaine, in which Limoges is located. This book began as an article, intended to pull together information about the few disparate unpublished pieces of Limoges enamel in museums that I knew to have been found in England.

The article rapidly became a book, and thanks to the unswerving financial support of the Aurelius Trust, I have been able to travel around the country to examine objects, a process which is so essential to understanding them. Limiting myself to medieval England – the Welsh material is being researched by Mark Redknap – I have found around 190 items, and more will surely emerge from museum stores, despite my best efforts to discover what these contain. I sourced my material by reading the catalogues of all former ‘county’ museums, and by checking archaeological journals, inventories, the internet and online information on museum collections, this latter dataset regrettably still very patchy and incomplete.

The twin crises of the economic crash of 2008-9 and the pandemic of 2020-2 very nearly sabotaged the book fatally. Thanks to budget cuts, since 2010 museums have shed their expert curators and sometimes closed altogether. Cataloguing was not their priority. Guessing what might be in their stores was an impossibility, and I relied on the knowledge and helpfulness of those curators that I could track down. When Covid struck, and lockdowns were imposed, all museums shut ‘temporarily’, and access, already limited, became impossible for months, sometimes years. However, luckily by then I had examined all but about a dozen objects. It also became clear that over and above the archaeological and art historical stories that these objects could tell, another story was emerging. The provenances of many objects has offered new insights into their sometimes strange post-Dissolution fates.

Thanks to the generosity of the Paul Mellon Centre, the book contains more and better photos than would otherwise have been possible, and the cover price has been subsidized by them to make it more affordable. The unrivalled knowledge, skilled editorial pencil, and constant encouragement of my husband Nigel Ramsay have made this a better book. Publishers Archaeopress and their senior editor Mike Schurer and designer Erin McGowan have been unfailingly patient and encouraging. Four libraries and their staff have been extremely helpful: the Institute of Historical Research, the Society of Antiquaries, the Warburg Institute and the London Library. In the interests of brevity I have excluded detectorist finds from the Gazetteer, since they are already well catalogued online on the PAS website

My grateful thanks go finally and particularly to so many friends, curators past and present, collection managers, conservators and registrars- the invisible army who make museums function. Without them this book would not exist.

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Abbreviations

<i>Age of Chivalry</i>	<i>Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200-1400</i> , ed. J.J.G Alexander and P. Binski, exhibition cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987)
<i>Antiq. Jnl</i>	<i>Antiquaries Journal</i> , i- (1921-)
<i>Arch. Cant.</i>	<i>Archaeologia Cantiana</i> , i- (1858-)
<i>Arch. Jnl</i>	<i>Archaeological Journal</i> , i- (1844-)
BM	British Museum
<i>Bull. Soc. Limousin</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique du Limousin</i> , i- (1846-)
<i>Corpus des Émaux II</i>	Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, Élisabeth Antoine and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, ed., <i>Corpus des Émaux méridionaux</i> , vol. II: <i>L'apogée, 1190-1215</i> , Catalogue international de l'oeuvre de Limoges (Paris, 2011)
<i>Corpus Romane</i>	Marie-Madeleine Gauthier with Geneviève François, <i>Émaux méridionaux : Catalogue international de l'oeuvre de Limoges</i> , vol. I: <i>L'Époque Romane</i> (Paris, 1987).
EH	English Heritage
<i>Enamels 1996</i>	<i>Enamels of Limoges, 1100-1350</i> , ed. Barbara D. Boehm and Élisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, exhibition cat., New York and Paris (New York, 1996).
<i>English Romanesque Art</i>	<i>English Romanesque Art, 1066-1200</i> , ed. George Zarnecki, exhibition cat. (London: Hayward Gallery, 1984)
<i>Gent. Mag.</i>	<i>The Gentleman's Magazine</i> , i- (1731 -)
<i>Jnl. British Archaeol. Assn</i>	<i>Journal of the British Archaeological Association</i> , i- (1843-)
Knowles & Hadcock	David Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, <i>Medieval Religious Houses in England and Wales</i> , 2nd edn (London, 1971)
Lehmann-Brockhaus	Otto Lehmann-Brockhaus, <i>Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England, Wales und Schottland, vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307</i> , 5 vols (Munich, 1955-60)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. H.C.G. Matthew, 60 vols (Oxford, 2004), and online
PAS	Portable Antiquities Scheme
<i>Proc. Soc. Antiq.</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries</i> , i- (1843-)
RCHM	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (of England, etc.) ...
V&A	Victoria & Albert Museum
VCH	Victoria History of the Counties of England ...
Williamson,	<i>Wyvern Collection</i> Paul Williamson, <i>The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Enamels and Other Works of Art</i> (London, 2021).



Map 1. The lands of the Duchy of Aquitaine under the control of Henry II, following his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152.