

Medieval Fakes, Forgeries and Pastiche

The
Burrell
Collection



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- INTRO -

Medieval Fakes, Forgeries and Pastiche

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- aim is not to besmirch the connoisseurship of William Burrell, Lady Constance or the numerous dealers with whom they worked over their 60 plus years of collecting.



Waddesdon Bequest Gallery
British Museum

Pendent – Waddesdon Bequest
Style of Erasmus Hornick
(1524-1583)
c.1800-1847
British Museum





Reliquary Bust
Style of 13th-14th century
19th century
Musee de Cluny

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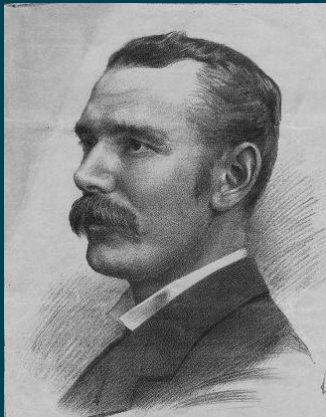
Fakes and forgeries are found in every collection in the world:

See Waddeson Bequest – British Museum

1983-2003 – gallery dedicated to fakes and forgeries at V&A – some been purchased in good faith under the direction of renowned scholars and celebrated curators.

Early 2026 - Musee De Cluny in Paris, hosted a temporary exhibition on forgeries drawing on their own collections and those of Louvre, amongst others (catalogue available if anyone wants to borrow).

In short, no collection is free from pieces of questionable authenticity.

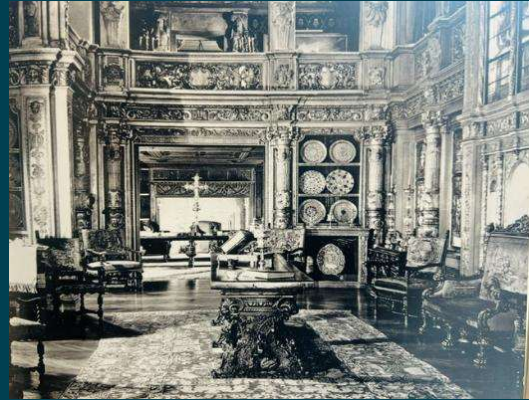


Sir William Burrell (1861-1958)
Illustration from *The Bailie*, 1902



William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951)

**The
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Clarendon Apartment, New York
Before 1929

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When compared to some of his contemporaries, Burrell shows a real appreciation for authenticity - something that was perhaps not shared to the same extent by the likes of say William Randolph Hearst whose primary concerns seems to have been a work's aesthetic and indeed many, particularly 19th century collectors, were comfortable with combining or amalgamating objects, repurposing pieces, and were often willing to tolerate high levels of restoration, to the extent that a piece may almost be considered a pastiche.

Also, many buying rather indiscriminately, buying in bulk and subsequently , picking up considerable numbers of fakes.

Burrell however is that of a much more judicious and cautious buyer, - generally avoided buying in bulk - as Burrell's carefully annotated sales catalogues tell us, his approach was generally more targeted.



Muirhead Moffat & Co
134-138 Douglas Street, Glasgow
 Copyright: The Connoisseur,
 1924

1938			
Date paid	From whom bought	Description	Price paid
28 July	J. Partridge & Sons (Hearst Collection)	Having three vertical and one long plain panels below - the two foot supports being carved bulbs on square carved plinths - with geometrical carving. Supporting a panelled top board carved with diamond shaped designs - the outside edge carved with scrolling and carved palmettes	Forward 1300
		7 ft high 5 ft 9 in. x 8 ft 1 long	
		English 17 th Century	200
		Rejected as found by J. Hunt and J. Partridge to be too much made up	1300

1938 Purchase Book

'Rejected as found by Mr Hunt and Mr Partridge to be too much made up'

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Burrell particularly concerned about authenticity, and in an art market awash with fakes, forgeries, and overworked and over restored pieces, he was rightly wary:

Anecdote from an art dealer associated with Glasgow firm Muirhead Moffat tells of how Burrell's opening question - "Is it dead right? Or if there were any restorations' - Burrell would return a purchase if he discovered that what he received was not as authentic as he was led to believe,

1928 example - taking the window of vendor Edmund Harding of London, to court over an alabaster altarpiece which was discovered to be heavily restored and lacking little authentic 15th century work

10 years later, an oak pulpit purchased from the Hearst collection was cancelled on the "grounds that it was too made up" Burrell having had the piece vetted by dealers John Hunt and Frank Patridge.



Wilfred Drake (1879-1948)

Image taken from 'Burrell: Portrait of a Collector', Richard Marks, 1983.



Frank Surgey (b.1893) with Sir William and Lady Burrell, 1954

Image taken from 'Burrell: Portrait of a Collector', Richard Marks, 1983.



**The
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Frank Partridge (1875-1953)



John Hunt (1900-1976)

Image taken from 'John Hunt: The Man, The Medievalist, The Connoisseur', Brian O'Connell, 2013.

"my experience is that a good dealer is more acute as a rule rather than a Professor. That is because the dealer, if he makes a mistake, has to pay, but the professor has not and is less acute".

William Burrell to Andrew Hannah

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Important aspect of Burrell's collecting, he did not, as did very few collectors, operate alone, and he had his trusted advisors, largely dealers - Wilfred Drake of the stained glass dealership Thomas and Drake, Frank Surgey and Franks Partridge, whose advice Burrell sought in regard to furnishing and furniture, and John Hunt largely responsible for the medieval object d art, metalwork, ivories etc (relationship with Hunt built circa 1933).

Burrell letter to Andrew Hannah in the 1950s, "my experience is that a good dealer is more acute as a rule rather than a Professor. That is because the dealer, if he makes a mistake, has to pay, but the professor has not and is less acute".

However, did call on academics - figures such as Walter Perceval Yetts, (1930 appointed the inaugural lecturer in Chinese art and archaeology at the School of Oriental Studies (now SOAS), University of London) vetted Burrell's Chinese ceramics in the 1940s - identifying some forgeries amongst the ceramics that Burrell was to subsequently dispose of.

Not to say that Burrell was solely reliant on their insight of others - knew his likes and his dislikes, he had the final say over any purchase, and made his own efforts to gain a solid understanding of the art world and to understand his acquisitions and their wider context.

From the earliest recorded days of his collecting Burrell would spend his time in galleries, museums, churches, cathedrals and amongst the collections of famous dealers familiarising himself with art.



Burrell family holidaying with
Robert Lorimer (1864-1929),
Netherlands, September 1898.

“On the way home. I struck the finest antiquity shops in the world, and I will lead you to the spot. We are only beginning to learn something of this game”

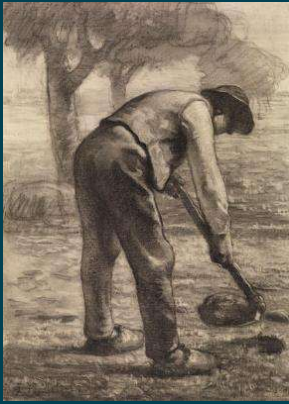
William Burrell to Lorimer, 1898

Insight into his early enthusiasm letter to Lorimer -

As his personal library attests with its carefully annotated books, his sometimes-detailed purchase book entries, and with the high esteem that many of his advisors held him in, Wilfred Drake going as far as to call Burrell a connoisseur of gothic glass.

Burrell examined and poured over his collection, putting his own knowledge to practical effect - anecdote told by Gertrude Hunt (wife of John Hunt), tells of her husband and Burrell crawling over tapestries and carpets, seeking to get a precise estimate of the amount of re-weaving and authenticating any potential purchases.

In conclusion Burrell was a cautious and informed connoisseur - we must however address the fact that some forgeries did make their way into the collection.



The Potato Planter
Formerly attributed to Jean-Francois Millet



Figure
Style of 18th Dynasty
19th-20th century



Smiling God Figure
Style of 15th-14th century BC
19th-20th century

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Already well-known pieces within the French art collection,

Several works in the ancient civilisations collection - Burrell was less familiar with and that were uncharacteristically purchased somewhat in bulk in the final decades of his life to establish a more comprehensive museum collection,

Turning to medieval and Renaissance pieces -

Hutton Castle



The
Burrell
Collection



Hutton Castle, Drawing Room
Glasgow Museums Archive
Photo by Robert Roddam 1949



Hutton Castle, Hall
Glasgow Museums Archive
Photo by Robert Roddam 1949



Hutton Castle, Dining Room
Glasgow Museums Archive
Photo by Robert Roddam 1949
Glasgowlife

Burrell particularly well informed, the kind of material he lived with - subsequently relatively few pieces that have been identified as potential forgeries to date.

Important note from Richard Marks in his biography of Burrell, there is little evidence that the dealers that Burrell turned to were often acting in bad faith – Burrell was one of the most prolific buyers of medieval art in the country, particularly in the mid-20th century (when the great mania for Gothic art had passed), and it would have been financially unsound for a vendor to risk losing Burrell.

We can suppose that in most cases pieces were presumed genuine - and important to remember that in many cases scholarship in certain areas of the medieval arts have developed since Burrell was buying

Internet for example - ability to now consult, rather easily, great corpuses of work through high resolution photographs and internet databases, digitised publications and manuscripts, scientific analysis, have all revolutionised the hunt for fakes and forgeries.



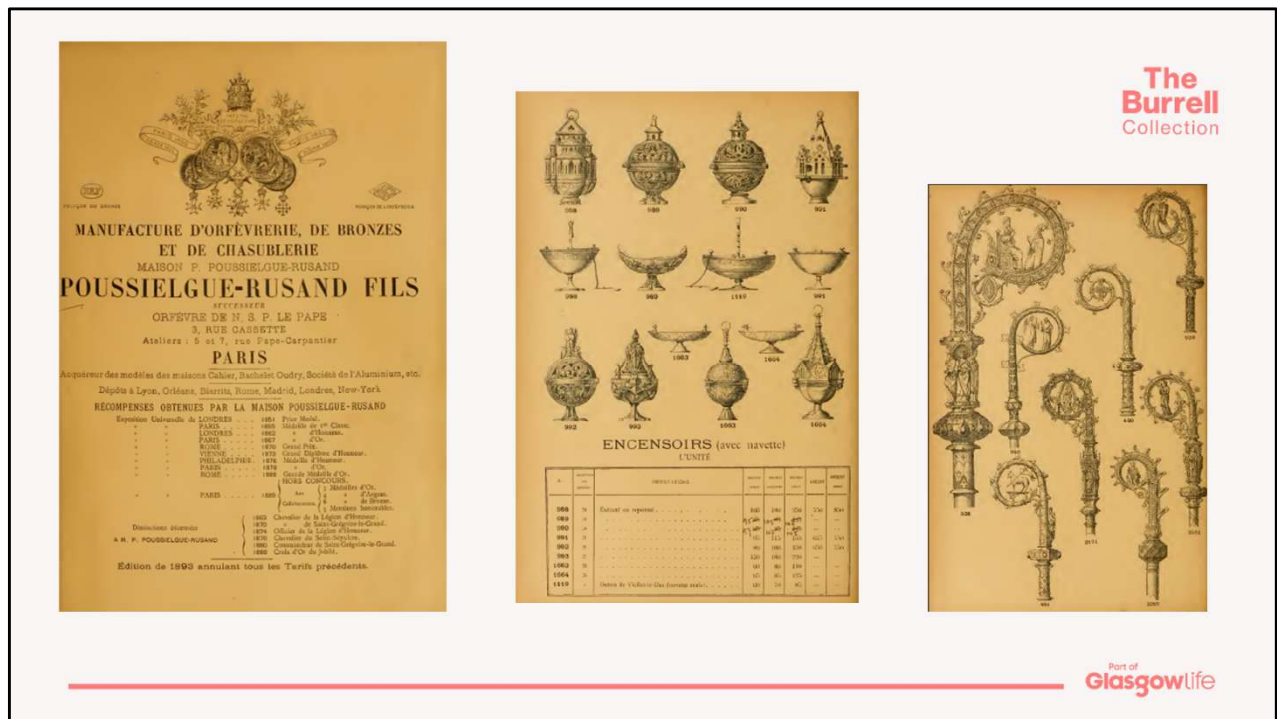
The pieces examined today purchased from the 1930s onwards, but the pieces origins probably lie more in the 19th, or perhaps the very earlier 20th century, when the forging of medieval art was at it most prolific.

Period of the Great Gothic Revival - subsequently stimulation in scholarly and popular interest in the period, its history, literature and material culture - and a simultaneous stimulus for the art market, as wealthy collectors competed for the greatest treasures - outstripping supply – resulting in a market of overworked restorations, replicas, pastiches and forgeries.

The 19th century also saw the founding of some of the first museums, learned societies, and high-profile exhibitions - international exhibitions, in Paris, London, Glasgow,

The exhibitions and associated catalogues, many of which would contain high quality illustrations and later photographs, all helped disseminate knowledge of medieval arts to a wider public audience - and significantly a greater knowledge of works that could serve as models to forgers.

One of the most influential early art histories of the middle ages, published across several volumes, from the 1850s, 'Le Moyen Age et La Renaissance, across I think 5 volumes, which contained over 500 lavish colours illustrations. – two of which are shown here.



Not just forgeries, but replicas - some of the pieces that have found their way into collections were not initially intended to deceive.

Some were homages to medieval treasures - to furnish public buildings and private residences and churches, particular Catholic churches to replicate and replace the many pieces that were lost in post-Reformation Europe or following the destruction that followed the French Revolution and Napoleon's invasion and secularisation of the Rhineland.

Several legitimate businesses and artisans produced pieces, some inspired by medieval works, and some directly copying from them,

Here - pages from a trade catalogue of 1893 - using the newly developed electro-plating techniques, to produce intricate, ornate, highly gilded pieces to cater for this market,

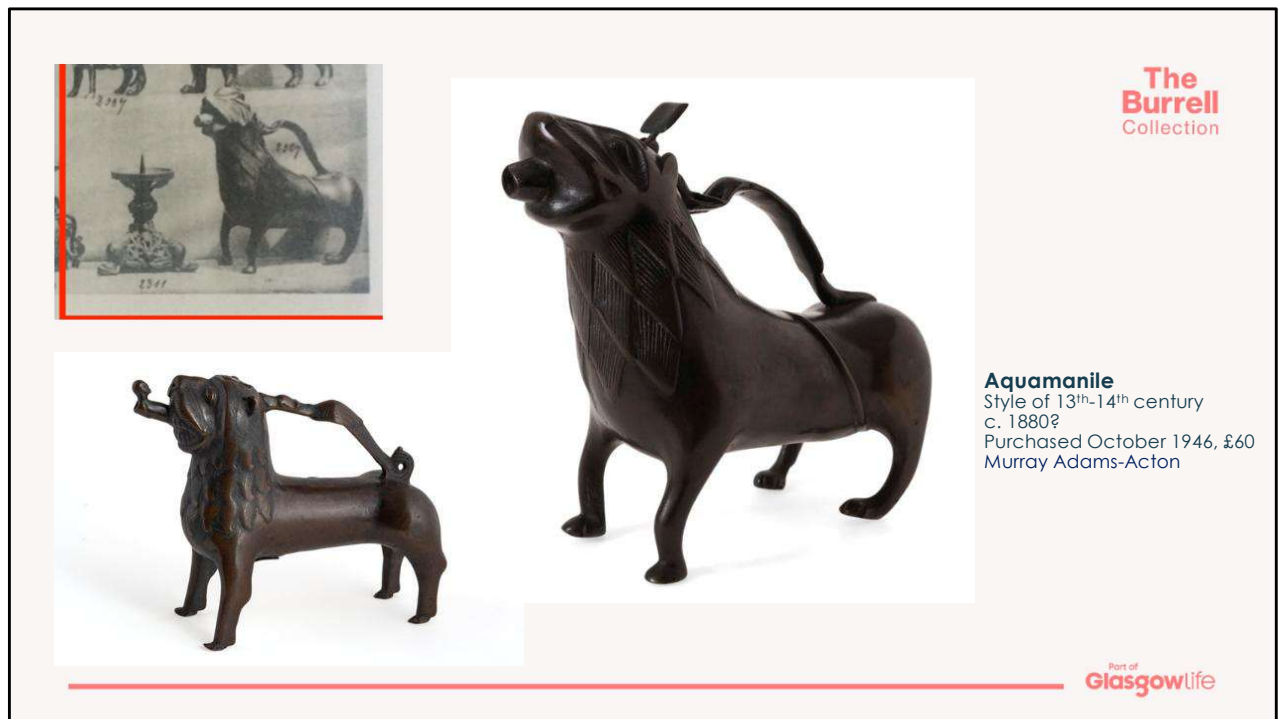


**Page from now missing 1880
catalogue of C. W. Fleischmann**
Image taken from 'Die Mittelalterlichen
Bronzen, im Germanischen
Nationalmuseum' Ursula Mende, 2014.

Reproduction of a page from a now lost trade catalogue of 1880 produced by the German firm, C. W. Fleischmann – who produced cast items in bronze for the church but also just as fashionable home décor and tableware.

-See lion-shaped aquamanile

High number from the middle ages - dated to 13th and 14th century Germany - Burrell purchased a number of fine authentic examples.



Acquired in 1946, via the dealer Murray Adams-Acton, - this piece

Suspensions raised in the 1970s and 1980s - lack of expected wear, particularly on the feet, and the generally poor finish - authentic works, usually finished with chasing on the outside after casting, adding extra detail which is engraved and punched into the surface (see more ornate example here). Finish of the cast example lumpy, and almost featureless finish.

It was the somewhat fortuitous discovery of this obscure image, from a now lost trade catalogue, in a catalogue of the bronzes of the German National Museum published as recently as 2014., that finally seems to have confirmed these suspicions.

Candlestick
12th century
Germanisches
National Museum
KG227



**The
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Candlestick
Style of 12th century
c. 1880?
Purchased 1947
David Black



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Similarly - purchased 1947 clunky looking candlestick - once thought to originate from the 12th century – depicting beast/elephant with a tower and rider on

Shows several of the same problems raised with the aquamanile – that chunky inferior finish - starkly contrasted with authentic example on the left from the German National Museum, – again lack of extra detailing on the suggesting a rather unrefined, maybe mass casting technique, to the extent where the rider figure - figure looks almost like a Henry Moore!



Most damningly – the broken castellations appear to have been cast, as do some smaller imperfection resembling cracks - all seemingly cast rather than the result of genuine breaks, which of course we would not expect to find on an authentic work of the 12th century.

Top left -similar although not identical work - again in a page from the otherwise lost Fleischmann catalogue.

We could consider that like the aquamanile this piece was not made to deceive, perhaps even being made by the Fleischmann company itself, although that can't be confirmed in the absence of a complete catalogue – but perhaps it was made under similar circumstances, but the legitimate commercial origins of this piece lost either intentionally or accidentally by subsequent dealers.



Candlestick
Style of 13th century
19th century
Purchased 1955, £90
John Hunt



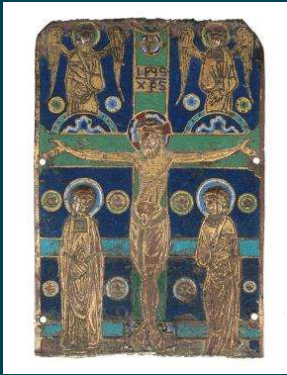
Chasse
Style of 13th century
19th-20th century
Purchased 1952, £650
John Hunt



Plaque
Style of 12th-13th century
19th-20th century
Purchased 1950, £225
G. F. Williams

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Perhaps more underhand intentions with the fabrication of several other pieces of metalwork in the collection – three examples in the style of 12th and 13th century Limoges ware, named after the town of Limoges, France - specialists in champleve enamels.



Book Cover
12th-13th century



Thomas Becket Chasse
1200-1210

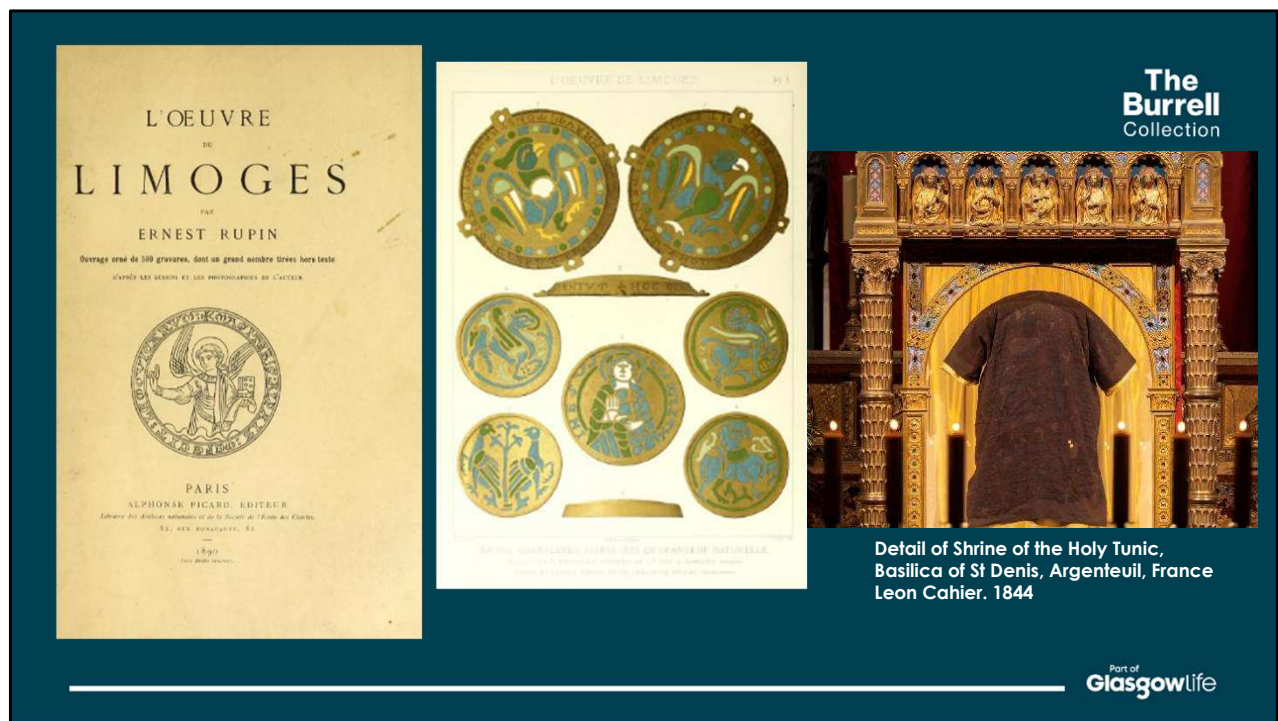


Eucharistic Dove
1200-1255

Burrell does contain some very fine authentic examples (see slide).

Aesthetic and historic interest in Limoges enamels grew from the 18th and into the 19th century - one of Burrell's most celebrate pieces the Becket Casket – owned by Horace Walpole, indicating early appreciation for the medium.

Arguable less known today outside of academic circles today, in the 19th century, nearly 400 public exhibitions in Europe alone, included champleve Limoges enamels, the earliest being recorded at an exhibition in Limoges itself in 1827.



The first comprehensive catalogue 'l'oeuvre de Limoges' was published in 1890s, - by which time there was an almost universal taste for Limoges, across Europe and North America.

The aesthetic and historic interest was accompanied by a desire to recover the lost medieval techniques of champleve enamelling - largely forgotten and un-practised by the early 19th century – several, particularly French artists and artisans turned their attention to re-discovering and mastering champleve enamelling

See the 'pseudo-Limoges' (as we might term it) seen in a reliquary of the Holy Tunic, presented by the Goldsmith, Leon Cahier (1816-1884) at the 1844 Exhibition of French Industry. [see image]

Widespread interest; the exhibitions, the catalogues, and re-discovery of techniques and the desire to acquire Limoges enamels amongst museums and private collectors alike, had the perhaps not surprising result that forgeries in this particular medium became rife.

The following examples show enough inconsistencies to point towards likely forgery -, forgery as opposed to pastiche or copies, as many show signs of wear, maybe even some false patina ,seemingly intended to deceive.



Candlestick
Style of 13th century
19th century
Purchased 1955, £90
John Hunt

Candlestick purchased via John Hunt in 1955, decorated with armorial shields, -

Several suspected Limoges forgeries in other collections show variations of these small arms, *including the shields of Brittany and Lusignan*— and heraldic pieces, not surprisingly, particularly those that could be associated perhaps with great households, were particularly sought after by collectors and thus coats arms proliferate amongst forgeries.

At first glance the piece doesn't appear too bad, the enamels, compared with some others examples we will see soon are fairly well done, and it looks like well-known examples.



Candlestick
Style of 13th century
19th century
Purchased 1955, £90
John Hunt



Candlesticks
13th century
Louvre

Authentic works - , like these which have been in the Louvre since 1825 (importantly before the great age of forging – so unquestionably genuine), are hollow at the base, with the tapered [pricket] section, also hollow to allow for stacking - presumably for storage or travel (no image of the underside available unfortunately)



Candlestick
 Style of 13th century
 19th century
 Purchased 1955, £90
 John Hunt

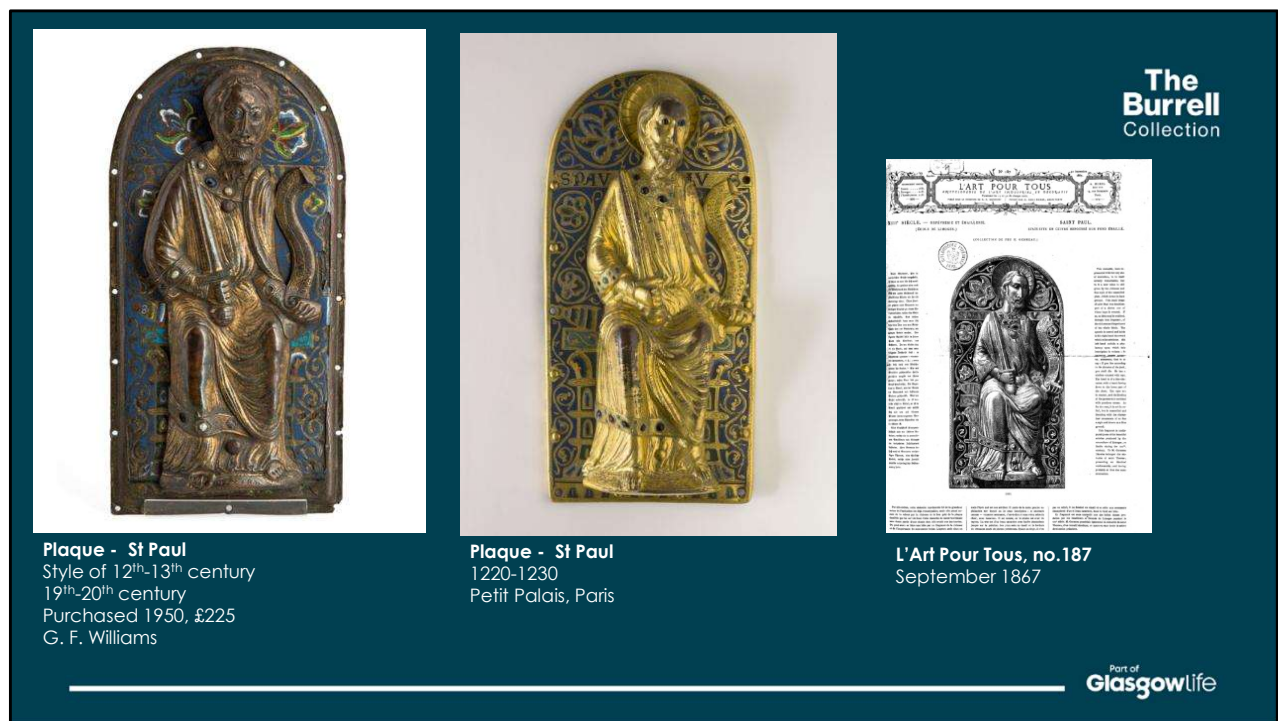


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Burrell's piece lacks that hollow - suggesting that a forger has seen authentic examples either in catalogues or on display, perhaps even the Louvre which have been in the collection and on display since 1825 - but have not seemingly had a piece in hand, and have fundamentally misunderstood their purpose and aspects of their form.

Green patina on the underside is also odd, appearing perhaps painted on – I hope soon to get that under a microscope and see what's going on a bit better there!



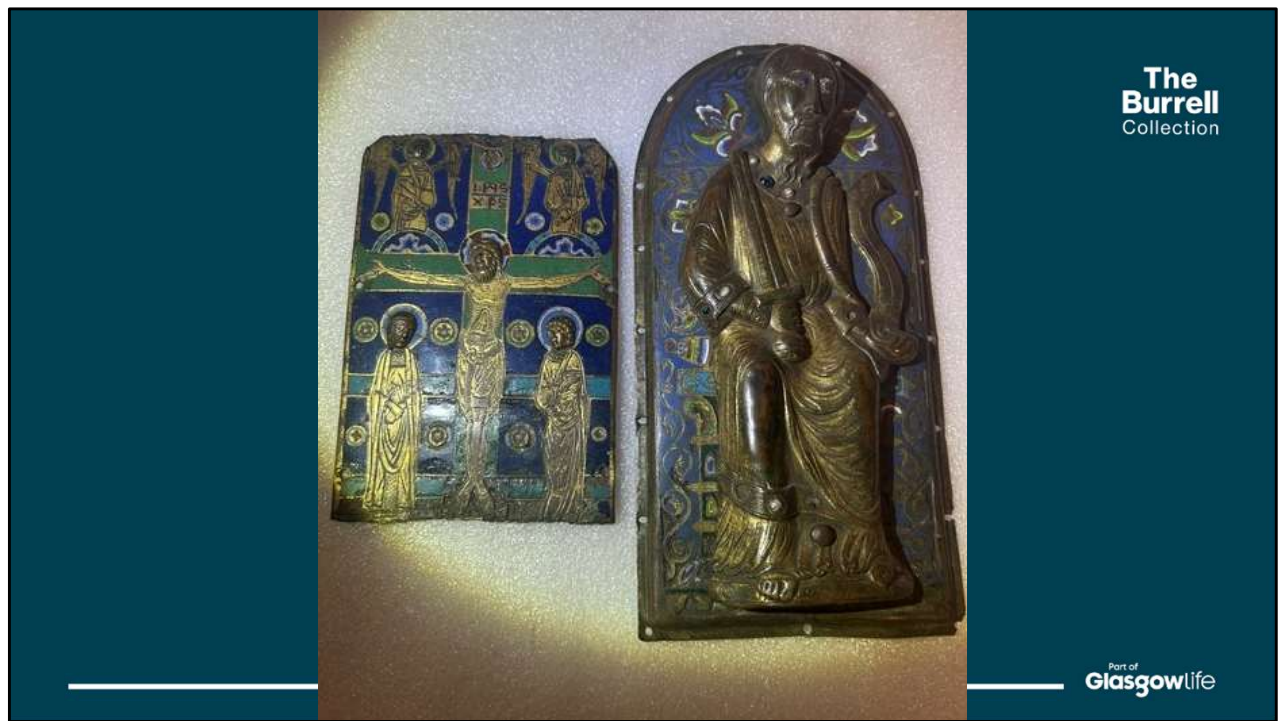
Plaque with the figure of St Paul, purchased by Burrell in 1950 (G. F Williams).

Seemingly a rather poorly executed copy of a work now found in the Musée du Petit Palais, Paris – one of several Apostle panels, perhaps made for the Abbey of Grandmont, Limousin in the 13th century.

Discrepancies between the quality of the two works are not hard to discern when laid starkly against each other,

Looking at the overall design one can see that this clearly as served as the model – they are in some regards strikingly similar, in a manner that is not found in authentic works. Although several figurative works survive from 13th century Limoges, none show such close affinity to each other – suggesting a copy derived from this original, which was in the Petit Palais collection from 1902, but is also known to have been loaned to public exhibitions from the mid-19th century and was even illustrated as early as 1867, allowing plenty of opportunity to inspire forgers.

Construction and execution is generally quite poor and does not compare well with authentic examples, the eyes for example are picked out with enamel as opposed to containing cut glass insertions as is typical of authentic pieces, this odd fringe is also without precedent in any authentic works I have seen



Here can see contrasts with an authentic Limoges book cover - the finish of the enamels is rather lack-lustre lacking the lustrous vibrant finish of the book cover. The blues are an unconvincing hue, more mottled and muted when compared with authentic works.

I would suspect we would find if we were to do a chemical analysis of these enamels , undeniable evidence of their later construction.

Scientific analysis of enamels in other collections has revealed that later works often contain modern colouring agents that are not found in authentic medieval pieces, Chromium may be found in the green for example, but was not used to colour glass until shortly after its discovery in 1797, - the blue enamels in forgeries are often derived from Prussian blue, which is often regarded as the first modern synthetic pigment, which was not created until the early 18th century –

Authentic pieces often contain high levels of cobalt in their blue, not commonly found in modern glass- interestingly the composition of the Limoges blue can be compared to Roman glass tesserae from mosaics, suggesting that medieval artisans, repurposed and recycled ancient Roman glass - and its this high cobalt content that provides this vibrant striking blue that characterises authentic Limoges enamels.

Note - I would like to analyse some of our works in this manner, to put the question of authenticity to bed, until then these pieces could potentially be redeemed – it would be surprising but not impossible!



Plaque - St Paul
 Style of 12th-13th century
 19th-20th century
 Purchased 1950, £225
 G. F. Williams



Plaque - St Paul
 1220-1230
 Petit Palais, Paris

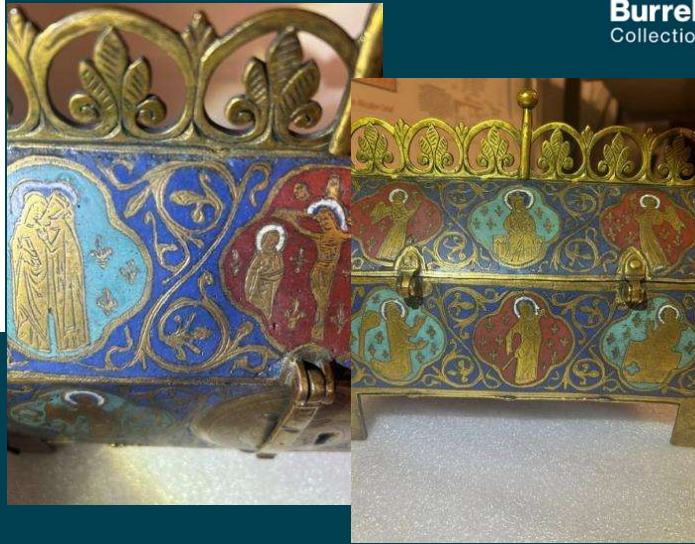
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Another indication of forgery with this piece comes from turning the plaque, which reveals that the detailing of the front has translated through to the back on our example. This is not seen on authentic works, and suggests that rather than being made on a panel of hammered copper, the model has perhaps been cast in some manner, with this pattern on the reverse deriving from a mould – although this requires further investigation – but certainly this detail is something that is only seen in confirmed fakes.



Chasse
 Style of 13th century
 19th-20th century
 Purchased 1952, £650
 John Hunt



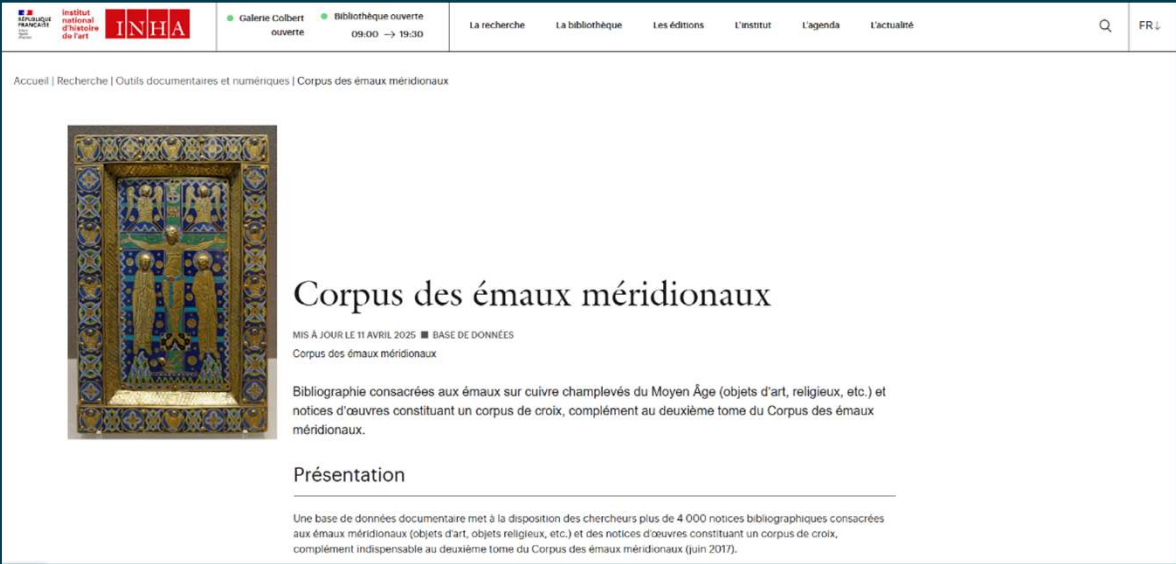
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The most expensive piece of Limoges Burrell was to purchase, it also came via John Hunt.

Some of the same issues from the St Paul can be seen here, again these muddy and unconvincing enamels —

In comparison to authentic piece the engraving is poor compared and the areas where the two colours meet shows a degree of bleeding that shows a lack of control of the medium that is not typical of authentic works - and we also have the almost ridiculous profusion of fleur-de-lys in the enamels and the really lumpy and inelegant cresting, which are without parallel in authentic works, - an attempt to suggest a royal link or provenance?



INHA Institut national d'histoire de l'art

Galerie Colbert ouverte 09:00 → 19:30 Bibliothèque ouverte

La recherche La bibliothèque Les éditions L'institut L'agenda L'actualité

Accueil | Recherche | Outils documentaires et numériques | Corpus des émaux méridionaux

Corpus des émaux méridionaux

MIS À JOUR LE 11 AVRIL 2025 ■ BASE DE DONNÉES
Corpus des émaux méridionaux

Bibliographie consacrées aux émaux sur cuivre champlevés du Moyen Âge (objets d'art, religieux, etc.) et notices d'œuvres constituant un corpus de croix, complément au deuxième tome du Corpus des émaux méridionaux.

Présentation

Une base de données documentaire met à la disposition des chercheurs plus de 4 000 notices bibliographiques consacrées aux émaux méridionaux (objets d'art, objets religieux, etc.) et des notices d'œuvres constituant un corpus de croix, complément indispensable au deuxième tome du Corpus des émaux méridionaux (juin 2017).

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Could argue that John Hunt should have known better, particularly with something as seemingly obvious as the candlestick and the poor St Paul plaque, but actually by the mid-20th century interest in Limoges had dwindled somewhat, compared with the extraordinary interest it garnered in the 19th century – in the first half of the 20th century there was only one exhibition devoted to Limoges work, again held at Limoges itself in 1948, another at the Vatican followed in 1963.

It is only really in the latter part of the 20th century that there was renewed scholarly interest, with a comprehensive project to record and photograph such pieces

Scholars associated with this programme examined the Burrell collection and were amongst the first to alert us to concerns with these pieces.

Of course nothing comparing to this comprehensive study and the publications that it has produced could have been conceived of as early as the 1950s.



Chess Piece
Circa 1375-1400



Diptych
Circa 1360-70



Gaming piece
Circa 1170

Equally as desirable to 19th and early 20th century collectors was ivory, particularly pieces usually ascribed to the workshops of 12th, 13th and 14th century Paris and Cologne – and again Burrell has many seemingly authentic examples.



Mirror Case
Style of 14th century
19th century
Purchased 1947, £120
John Hunt



Mirror Case
14th century
Louvre

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1947 purchased, from John Hunt again, a piece that purported to be an early 14th century Parisian mirror case, depicting an elegant noble couple playing chess. Several examples looking at this subject survive to the modern day, and while it is known that ivory workers used models or drawings to create their works as is made clear by a degree of repetition amongst carvings, it is concerning that the Burrell piece appears to be a near literal copy of a well known example from the Louvre.



But as with the candlestick it is the construction of the mirror case that confirms suspicions of this piece's more modern origins. As can be seen from the reverse of another Louvre example, authentic mirror cases are carved with a recess to hold the mirror – an element that is missing from the present example, and suggesting as with the Limoges candlestick that the forger has perhaps seen this very example, but has fundamentally misunderstood its function -

whether or not it the forger saw the piece in the Louvre or within widely circulated illustrated catalogues, such as the 1896 catalogue of the Louvre's Ivories on the left or

Perhaps even the 1858 Dictionary of French Art, by the historian and architect Eugène Viollet Le Duc - we don't know, but again there was plenty of opportunity for a forger to be directly inspired by this piece.



Casket
Style of 15th century
20th century
Purchased 1835, £145
John Hunt



Casket
Louvre



Casket
MET

Bone/Ivory casket executed in a form commonly attributed to 15th century.

These boxes were seemingly made on a near industrial scale, somewhere in northern Europe, and survive in considerable numbers – and as can be seen from these examples, commonly they follow similar stylistic tropes, the lid usually split between 6 or so scenes, typically containing figures.

And it is in this detail that the Burrell box differs from all other known examples, thus raising alarm-bells, leading to the suspicion that the lid is perhaps not authentic, and has likely been added to an otherwise authentic piece.



Casket
Style of 15th century
20th century
Purchased 1935, £145
John Hunt

HERALDRY

CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES R. BEARD

ARMS ON FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BOX.

THE fifteenth-century box submitted to me is probably the most interesting and, from a descriptive standpoint, the most valuable example of a well-known group of caskets. They are invariably lacquered of wood covered with bone plaques richly engraved with dancing figures, and hunting and pastime scenes, the bottom framed as a tapestry-board. Kneiflin is, however, unable to cite a single specimen enriched with heraldic carvings, and apart from the present box none so decorated is known to me. The place of origin of these boxes has been hitherto very much a matter of speculation. They have in the past been ascribed to North Italy, the Tyrol, Piedmont and Burgundy, while Kneiflin is of the opinion that they are of French (possibly Netherlandish) origin. But the coats of arms which decorate the lid of the box under examination should go some way to set the matter at rest. The top device, shield, which from its position in the key cut, must be Swiss-Gascon, Savoyan, or Savoy. These arms—*three fess*—either *gules* or *argent*—are unknown in either Italian or French heraldic heraldry, and where they appear in French style heraldry, as at Reims or in Alsace, they may

be traced to the Counts of Wurtemberg. In this instance, Lamb of that town in the fourteenth century. The coat of arms *three fess* was borne by the families of Landgrafen and Rattmann and the Counts of Vödingen in Switzerland, the Counts of Nellenburg in Swabia, and the Counts of Wurtemberg. Examination of the pedigrees of all these families except one, either shows no alliances corresponding to the other three closely appearing—the Counts of Nellenburg for example quarrelled throughout the fifteenth century the ancient of Thurgau to prove that they were either extinct or non-existent at the period (the second half of the fifteenth century) when these caskets were made. The Counts of Wurtemberg, however, from 1418 to 1460, when they added the black and gold banner coat of Truk (purchased in 1418 from Friedrich IV of Truk, later emperor, as their *major*—*entire fess*—only for Wurtemberg) impaling *gules*, *three fess* added to the Mumpelgard, now Mumpelgard, or the same coat quarterly, the arms of Mumpelgard being borne in right of Herta of 1419, daughter and heiress of Herta's late Count of Mumpelgard, and wife of Eberhard V. of 1419, Count of Wurtemberg.

No subsequent Count or Duke of Wurtemberg of the fifteenth century, however, carried an alliance which would have justified the inclusion among the decorations of the above coat of arms. But Elizabeth of Wurtemberg (1447-1497), daughter of Ludwig I. of 1419, and sister of Eberhard VI, the first Duke, married in 1470 to her first husband John, Count of Nassau-Sarrebrücken (1419-1475), who bore *argent*, *three fess* or *argent*, which appears in the bottom device corner. The third shield charged with a lion rampant was in the Wurtemberg pedigree, and I can only suggest that it was introduced out of compliment to the neighbouring Markgraves of Baden—*or*, *three lions*. Even assuming that the arms are civic and not personal, a most unlikely supposition, we reach the same approximate result. The two fess would then be for Philip, Alsace, a lordship belonging to the Counts of Mumpelgard, while the *lion* and *three lions* would be for Wurtemberg in Nassau (see Karl Renz—*Die Stadt-Burggen von Wurtemberg*, 1881).

The evidence of these arms would therefore suggest that these caskets are of Middle-Breuch origin, a device with which the caskets and other accessories are not incompatible, and with which the great long-oval box, which always appear in the painting scenes, are far more in accord than with Italian or Irish. Other features of this box are most unusual if not unique—the large panel of the carved figure



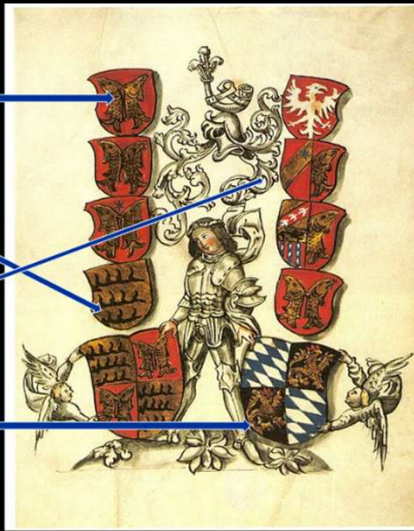
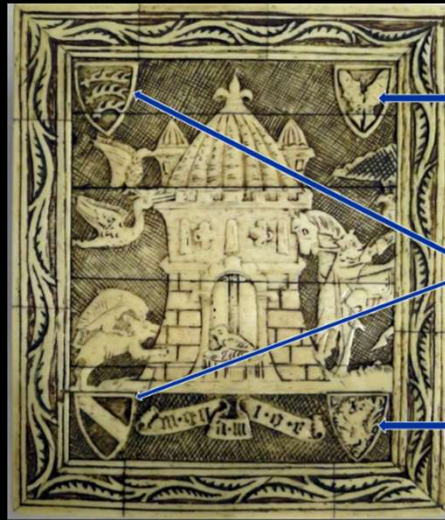
HERALDIC COAT OF ARMS ON A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BOX.

**The
Burrell
Collection**

The Connoisseur
1935

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Interestingly, the American historian and professor Charles Beard (1874-1948), published an account of this box, authenticating it, at exactly the same time Burrell was considering the purchase from Hunt, presumably at Hunt's request (I will let you decide whether you think there is any questionable intention behind that...)



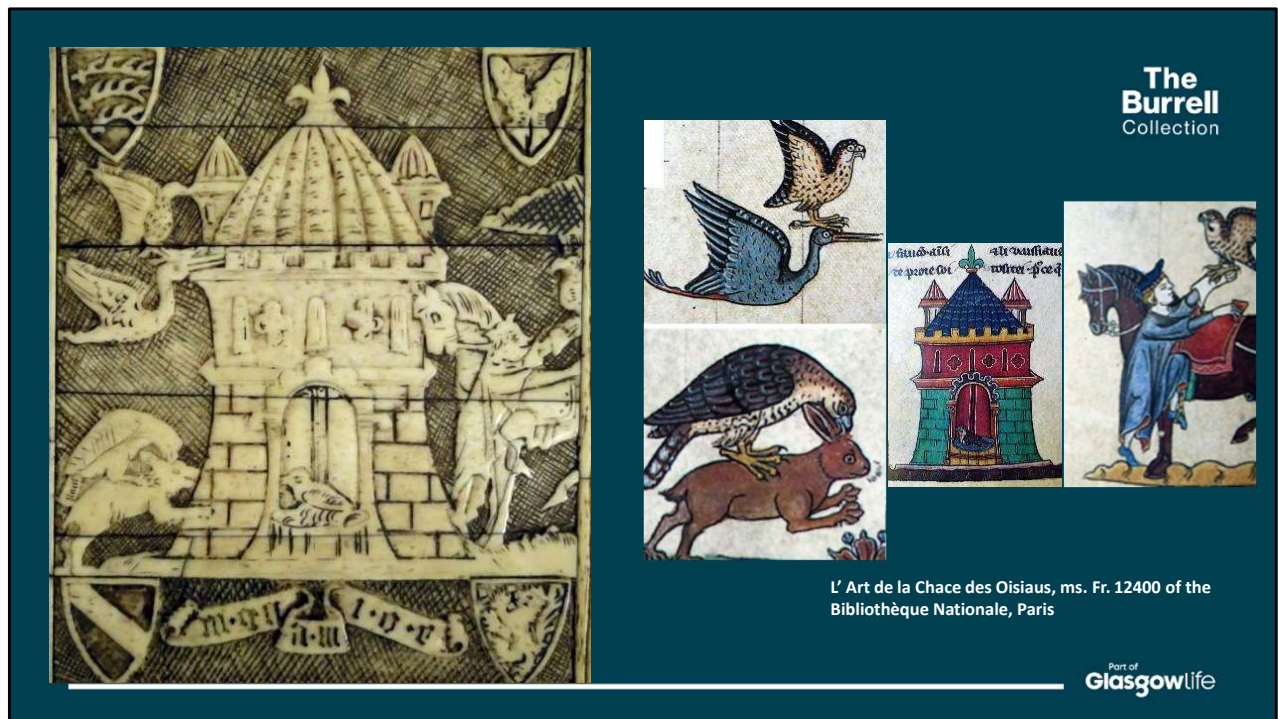
**The
Burrell
Collection**

Mompelgard Genealogy
Hauptstaatsarchiv,
Stuttgart
G 400 Bu 14

Image by Robert Gibbs, University of Glasgow

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in this article Beard recognised that the armorial details representing a noble of family of the city of Wiesbaden in Nassau, and he therefore concluded that this was a bespoke commission made for a noble family of the Middle Rhine – he did not however venture an explanation of the central figurative work - but praised its composition, declaring it this casket “most valuable example’ of its type, and Burrell was no doubt delighted to secure it for the collection.



However, prof. Robert Gibbs of the University of Glasgow, recognised that the composition is drawn directly from folios of a 14th century treatise on hawking.

Manuscript now in the Bibliotech National in Paris - historically in the hands of the Dukes of Burgundy from at least 1420 and was only removed from this private library and taken to Brussels in 18th century, from where it is thought to have entered the Paris in the second half of the 19th century.

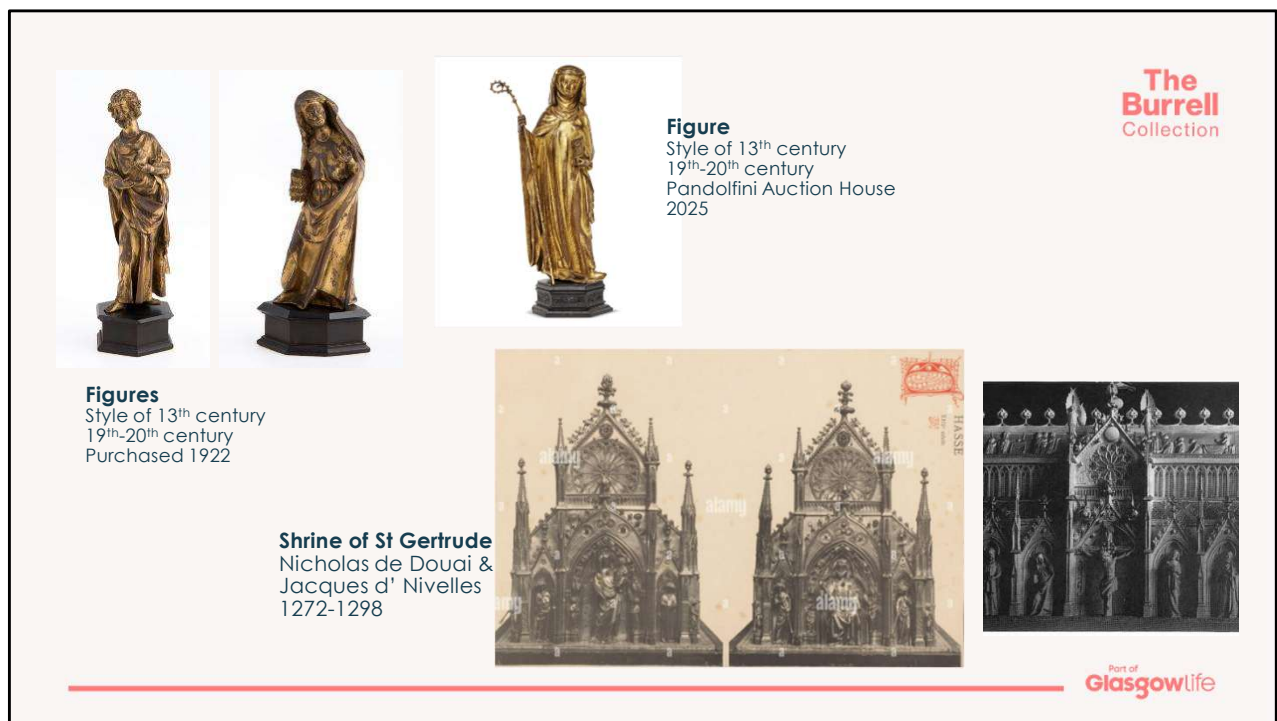
We can surmise that it would have been inconceivable that an craftsman, working on otherwise rather unremarkable, somewhat mass produced piece, would have had access to the prestigious private library of the Dukes of Burgundy in the 15th century.

More likely that the manuscript was consulted by a forger in 19th or early 20th century when in public ownership in Paris – this forger taking elements from what was then rather obscure manuscript to construct a grand fanciful forgery.



Forgeries and fakes are still valuable additions to museum collections, they offer, amongst other things, insight into the art market and what appealed to collectors in the 19th and 20th century, and they often still show case great artistic skill –

Particularly true of these bronzes. – a male saint and female saint, (likely Mary Magdelene), purchased by Burrell in 1922 as authentic 14th century French works.



In truth they belong to a fairly large group of gilded copper statuettes (another example here of which was on sale just last year) that were probably cast around 1900, after 13th century originals that adorned a silver reliquary casket containing the relics of Saint Gertrude, in the church of St Gertrude in Nivelles, Belgium – completed in 1298.

Complete plaster cast of the Nivelles casket was produced in 1897 by the casting services of the Royal Museum of Art in Brussels, for sale and exchange to foreign museums.

The casts could have been used anywhere after this date to produce these statuettes which first seem to find their way into collections as sometime before 1908 when they are explicitly mentioned in the proceeds of the 'Association for the Prevention of Counterfeiting and Fakes, in Frankfurt, and by the following year some 20 or so examples had been identified.

These pieces are not just notable for their quality, and the proliferation of them about 30 or so pieces have been identified to date, but because the original casket from which they derive is now unfortunately lost, having been damaged beyond repair during the bombing of Nivelles, on the 14 May 1940, and as such these examples and the other forgeries that survive, – have the added significance of evoking the original appearance of a now lost medieval masterpiece.



The identify of forgers, has remained elusive, not surprising of course as forgers are hardly likely to seek publicity.

However a name has been associated with these figures since at least 1922, when the German historian Otto van Falke suggested that these were pieces originated from the workshop of the renowned forger Louis Marcy, a man sometimes entitled the 'King of Forgers'.



Louis Marcy (Luigi Parmeggiani)
1860-1945

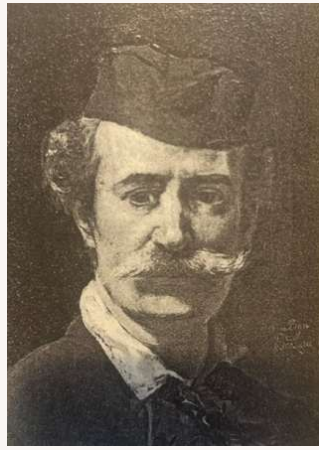


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- Marcy was one of the most famous of the 19th and 20th century forgers, and pieces associated with him and his workshop are found in some of the world's most prestigious collections - here we have some examples from the British Museum, and V&A -
- High quality pieces – the gilding is rather fine, patina convincing, they often give the impression they were made for rich and noble patrons – none of them direct imitations, but where sources can be identified, they are often found in public or private collections in Paris or some of the illustrated catalogues of the time, some of which I have already mentioned.
- Marcy's biography is long, confusing and muddled – but a brief overview as I understand it to date - his career in antiquities was largely centred around the Parisian and London markets. He was born in northern Italy in 1860 as Luigi Parmiggiani, and in his early years he seems to have drifted about, spending some time as a shoemaker, an assistant jeweller, and printer and - a dedicated anarchist.
- About the age of 30 in 1890, he transformed himself into Louis Marcy, and then just five years later in 1895 he was selling– these high-end expensive 'medieval' items directly to the likes of the British Museum and V&A –



Louis Marcy (Luigi Parmeggiani)
1860-1945



Ignacio Leon y Escosura
(1834-1901)



Blanche, Madam Escosura and her
mother

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Not clear how a somewhat impoverished young man integrated himself into the London art scene and museum authorities and it has been suggested that he had a wealthy backer.

Circumstantial evidence points somewhat to respectable and wealthy genre painter, Ignacio Leon y Escosura (1834-1901), who was married to Blanche Marcy, daughter of Victor Marcy, a antiques dealer, and Blanche was to become Parmiggiani's mistress, with him taking her name and becoming involved in the antiques business, alongside Escosura, who may have bankrolled the early forgeries.

Not long after Escosura's death, Marcy is in Paris in 1903 where he is soon after arrested as an anarchist and spends 5 months in jail. Newspaper reports at the time talk of how upon raiding his premises they found antiquities, then presumed genuine, worth up to 2 million francs – that he was either assumed to have stolen or that he was helping to sell on behalf of others who had stolen them (acting as a fence)



Louis Marcy (Luigi Parmeggiani)
(1860-1945)



Le Connaisseur: Reveue critique
des art et curiosities, 1911

The
Burrell
Collection

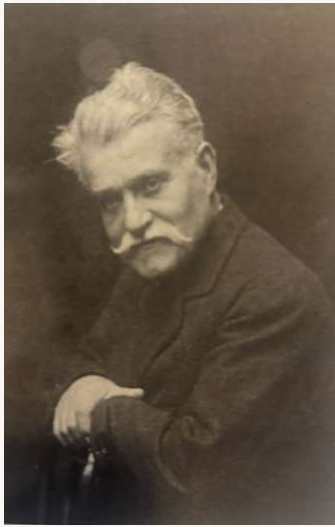
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Remarkable on release from prison, he continued to trade in what he purported to be authentic works and between 1907-1914, he edited and largely wrote a journal 'Le Connaisseur', in which he had the audacity to devote large parts of his writing to diatribes against other dealers and accusing many of forgery, and he called out what he regarded as obnoxious, ill-informed capitalist art collectors

in this cartoon here for example see we see JP Morgan, with the implication that he was being taken in by forgers

noted that in this little vignette of the forger (top left), the master forger at his work bench looks suspiciously like Marcy himself!

It has been suggested by some scholars that given his anarchist roots, Marcy's involvement in forgeries was not simply about making money, but actually a political act to subvert and disrupt the art market.



Louis Marcy (Luigi Parmeggiani)
(1860-1945)



'Marcy Fakes'
Parmeggiani Gallery, Reggio
Emilia

Now although questions arise over Marcy and his wares as early as the turn of the century, - particularly by the previously mentioned Otto von Falke.

Marcy is by no means done as a dealer and these concerns do not prevent him in his final years from successfully selling his 'antiquities' to his native city of Reggio Emilia, who bought his pieces as genuine – establishing a museum in his name – the museum has since identified the numerous forgeries (again I have a catalogue if anyone wants to borrow it)

Subsequently we now this great corpus of well provenanced Marcy fakes, which are a useful tool for spotting other pieces that may have been the product of his workshop.



Fruit Dish
Purchased as 16th century Swiss
19th century
David Black, via Sotheby's 1941, \$145

So to finish we have this piece – Bought at Sotheby's from the collection of David Black in 1941 – as a 16th century Swiss work - which I, and others who have examined this piece, think shows some of the hallmarks of a potential Marcy fake



Fruit Dish
Purchased as 16th century Swiss
19th century
David Black, via Sotheby's 1941, £145

Hunting Knife and Sheath
Style of Middle Ages
19th-20th century
Marcy Fake
MET



most prominently perhaps this scrolling leaf design, which can be compared with the details on the tip of this sword sheath – confirmed Marcy forgeries now at the MET– and although inspired by authentic late medieval and renaissance foliate details – its style is just a little off, looking more Art Nouveau almost rather than late Gothic.



Fruit Dish
Purchased as 16th century Swiss
19th century
David Black, via Sotheby's 1941, £145



Henri Husson
(1852-1914)



Bracelet
Henri Husson
1919-1914
Petit Palais, Paris

Although Marcy was clearly the front and salesman of the operation, little is known of his artistic ability, and it's thought likely that he relied on other artisans and artists to create some of his works, and one name that comes up regularly is the goldsmith and jeweller Henri Husson.

Husson, had a legitimate business and created many fine Art Nouveau works – and parallels I think can be drawn between some of his legitimate works and Marcy fakes –



Edward.Johnson@Glasgowlife.org.uk