

Paris – Mirror or Lamp to English Medieval Royal Goldsmiths?

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From English documents it is clear that by the fifteenth century French goldsmiths' work, and more particularly *opus Parisiensis*, Parisian goldsmiths' work, was the type of plate and jewellery of foreign origin most commonly to be found in England. Not that it was ever anything but rare, and it is mentioned almost exclusively when in the ownership of royal or noble individuals.¹

My aim here is to explore some aspects of this English taste for French, and especially Parisian goldsmiths' work in the years around 1300. During this time, three successive generations of English kings, Henry III, Edward I and Edward II, married French royal brides. Henry III married Eleanor of Provence (sister to Louis IX's wife Marguerite), Edward I in 1299 married Marguerite, sister of Philippe le Bel, and Edward II in 1308 married Isabella, daughter of Philippe. The language of the English court and government was, of course, a form of French, what we now call Anglo-Norman, and many English nobles had close ties with France by virtue of their lands and family connections. Just such a man, for example, was Henry III's half brother, William de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, son of Hugh de Lusignan and Isabella, widow of King John, and possessed of extensive lands in both France and England. He died in 1296 and his tomb in Westminster Abbey is of *champlevé* enamel, typically Limoges in style.² It was probably made by a Limoges craftsman working in London, unless it was imported all the way from Limoges itself, like that recorded as made for Walter de Merton, Bishop of Rochester, in 1288.³

Whether these examples of Franco-British cultural links are truly typical or not, what sort of evidence now remains, and how we may assess it, are important but difficult questions. Were there exchanges of goldsmiths between the cities of London and Paris, as well as of gifts between the English and French royal courts? Were the cultural links just at court level, or did they extend for example to merchants? Could the stylistic uncertainties inherent in some surviving pieces be explained by these factors?

¹ Edward I is recorded in 1299 as owning silver spoons with the Paris hallmark, a fleur-de-lys, R.W. Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work in Medieval France*, London 1978, p. 8, n. 28. Richard II and Henry IV owned and bought *opus Parisiensis*, M.L. Campbell, 'White harts and coronets: the jewellery and plate of Richard II', in *The Royal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych*, ed. D. Gordon et al., London 1997, pp. 104, 107, 112.

² M.-M. Gauthier, *Émaux du moyen âge*, Fribourg 1970, pp. 192–93, fig. 141.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

Documents and works of art can answer different aspects of these questions, but only imperfectly, for their evidence is often obscure and sometimes contradictory. Documents may be ambiguous or simply lacking in descriptive detail, and goldsmiths' work survives only in relatively atypical, random and minuscule quantities. In England the Reformation of the sixteenth century resulted in catastrophic damage to its ecclesiastical goldsmiths' work, on a far greater scale than was suffered by France at the Revolution. Secular plate has always been vulnerable; crucial as an indicator of its owner's magnificence, it was always liable to be melted down to be remade into the most fashionable styles. A distinctively English decorative and stylistic vocabulary can be recognised in just a handful of pieces of goldsmiths' work that survive from the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, whilst the evidence for France, and especially for the goldsmithery skills of Paris, is far greater.⁴

Parisian goldsmiths were early noted for their talent at enamelling on gold and silver. Enamel was the only means by which metals could be brilliantly and permanently coloured, an aesthetic effect increasingly valued from the late thirteenth century. The alternative was to use gem-stones, which were immensely costly. The constituents of enamel were not expensive, but the technique demanded the very highest skills. Danielle Gaborit has recently traced the emergence in the late thirteenth century of the difficult *cloisonné* enamel technique, followed by *basse taille*, or translucent enamel, in the early fourteenth century, and has thrown light upon the identities of those who practised them, during the reign of Philippe le Bel and his successors.⁵ The twenty or so surviving pieces of Parisian *cloisonné* enamel, assembled in Paris for the first time so comprehensively in 1998 for the exhibition '*L'art au temps des rois maudits*'⁶ allowed us to appreciate the skill of their craftsmanship and the subtle differences in their design. Mme Gaborit has shown conclusively that the renowned master Guillaume Julien, goldsmith of Paris, was not the sole practitioner of *cloisonné* enamel on gold, and that the fragmentary *foliole* from the head reliquary of St Louis, commissioned by the King for the Sainte Chapelle between 1299 and 1306, is the sole surviving piece that was certainly made by him.⁷

The earliest apparently datable example of Parisian *basse taille* enamelling is the triptych altarpiece from Seville Cathedral, enamelled with the royal arms of France and Burgundy and the kneeling figures of a king and queen – thus

⁴ Illustrated and discussed: *The Age of Chivalry – Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, ed. J. Alexander and P. Binski, London 1987; M.L. Campbell, 'Gold, silver and precious stones', in *English medieval industries*, ed. J. Blair and N. Ramsay, London 1991, pp. 107–66; *Les fastes du Gothique – le siècle de Charles V*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1981; *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1991; *L'art au temps des rois maudits – Philippe le Bel at ses fils 1285–1328*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1998.

⁵ D. Gaborit-Chopin, 'Guillaume Julien et compagnie', in *Studi di orficeria*, ed. A.R. Calderoni Masetti, *Bollettino d'arte*, suppl. 95, 1996, pp. 71–83.

⁶ *Rois maudits*, nos 131–141, pp. 206–17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 131.

mentary mentions of enamel exist at this date. For instance, for the king's cousin, the wealthy ecclesiastic Bogo de Clare (died 1294), there is a long inventory of silver with just one reference to enamel: repairs to two old bowls with *scuticis aureis et aumellacione* – this is probably a reference to heraldic shields, in the old fashioned *champlevé* technique.¹³ An account of the English royal wardrobe of 1285 mentions payment to a certain Gerard de Sens, goldsmith of Paris, for making three silver-gilt enamelled cups for Edward I, but without further detail.¹⁴ In the inventory of the papal treasury of 1295, English work is recognisable, although only by inference: certain vessels are described as enamelled with the English royal arms, and were presumably royal gifts.¹⁵ King Edward I's wardrobe account of 1299 lists over a hundred secular vessels. The majority of these pieces are silver cups whose decoration is scarcely mentioned – just one pitcher is described as enamelled, neither technique nor subject specified.¹⁶ Gifts to the king are listed separately, and it is perhaps significant that several are mentioned as enamelled: a pair of knives with enamelled silver handles, from Mary, Countess of St Pol, another pair with ivory and silver enamelled handles from the duchess of Brabant (as a New Year's present), and a silver jug enamelled with images of kings and queens, from the Archbishop of York.¹⁷ But unfortunately, again, there is nowhere any mention of goldsmith's name or details of technique.

In the fourteenth century both documentary evidence and extant examples do reveal an English taste for translucent enamel or *basse taille*. For example, in 1317 enamels specified as *clari* – which in the context must mean *basse taille* – are described as adorning a gold ewer and basin that cost the considerable sum of £147 1s. 8d, and were made by Edward II's goldsmith, Roger Frowyck of London, as gifts to the papal envoy Cardinal Gaucelin d'Euse.¹⁸ Other plate for the pope was bought in London, for presentation to the king, from the Bardi merchants of Florence. Perhaps significantly, for none of these latter pieces – 46 items in all – is there mention of *translucent* enamel, though all were made of gold and most are described as being enamelled with the arms of the pope and the king.¹⁹

¹³ M. Giuseppi, 'The wardrobe and household accounts of Bogo de Clare', *Archaeologia*, vol. 70 (1920), p. 42: an unnamed London goldsmith is paid 20s. for the work.

¹⁴ *Records of the wardrobe and household 1285–6*, London 1977, ed. B. and C. Byerly, nos. 520, 575, pp. 51, 57.

¹⁵ E. Molinier, 'Inventaire du trésor du saint siège sous Boniface VIII', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes*, vol. 43 (1882), pp. 277–310, esp. nos 4, 9, 44, 64 and 65, all of gold.

¹⁶ London, Society of Antiquaries, *Liber Quotidianus*, 1787, pp. 341–43.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

¹⁸ T. Stapleton, 'A brief summary of the wardrobe accounts of King Edward II', *Archaeologia*, vol. 26 (1836), p. 322; M. Campbell, 'Exhibits at ballots: the pope's candlestick', *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 65 (1985), pp. 467–68.

¹⁹ Printed version of this inventory: T. Stapleton, 'A brief summary of the Wardrobe Accounts of . . . King Edward the Second', *Archaeologia*, vol. 26 (1836), p. 318 ff.; the plate by the Bardi in 1317 was worth a substantial £1177 3s. 4d. English references specifically to translucent

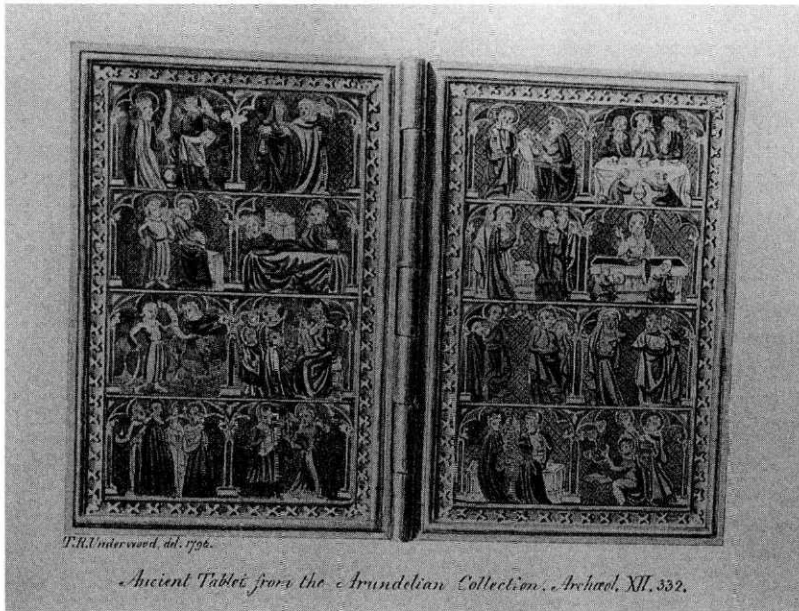


Fig. 2. Drawing of an enamelled 'tablet' or diptych. English, by Thomas Underwood 1796. The original, of silver and enamel, showing scenes of the life of Christ, was formerly in the Arundel collection, but its present whereabouts is unknown. English or French, 1325–50. London, Society of Antiquaries, album 'Utensils and Furniture'. Photograph by the author.

English work

There is a handful of *basse taille* enamels unequivocally English in style, and the majority of the most artistically accomplished of these date from after *circa* 1340. I will concentrate on just four earlier examples. The earliest survival, although finely engraved, is now almost bare of enamels – just fragments of black, blue, green and brown remain. This is known as the Swinburne Pyx, from the ancient Yorkshire family in whose possession it had been for centuries before its recognition and acquisition by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1950.²⁰ Made of silver, it is decorated with four scenes: the Virgin and Child, the Nativity, the Agnus Dei and the head of Christ, with an architectural colonnade around the outside. The two scenes with the Virgin closely parallel similar scenes in two early fourteenth-century manuscripts, now in Cambridge, that were produced in England, possibly in London. One of these manuscripts

enamels are rare – only in the reign of Edward III, in 1338–40, does another occur, a gold covered cup *bossata cum parvis aymellis & claris coloribus* which is of considerable worth at £47 16s. 3d., M. Lyon *et al.*, *The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell*, Brussels 1993, p. 399.

²⁰ *Age of Chivalry*, no. 571; C.C. Oman, 'The Swinburne pyx', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 92 (1950), pp. 337–41.

is a book of hours made for a certain Alice de Reydon, who died sometime after 1310.²¹ Remarkably, the Reydon family was related to the Swinburnes and it is possible, though unprovable, that the goldsmith who made the pyx had access to this manuscript, or a related model book. So demonstrable and close a relationship between a goldsmith and a manuscript is unique at this date in England.

My second example, which is now in the British Museum, is the so-called Saverlake Horn of ivory mounted in enamelled silver.²² A complex object of several dates, its importance here lies in the two silver bands at the top of the horn, enamelled in blue and green *basse taille*. The central scene remains enigmatic and shows a king and a bishop flanked by a forester blowing his horn, and the animals of the forest pursued by hounds. The king and bishop each raise a gloved hand as if in acknowledgement or agreement, but their identities remain obscure. The horn was for centuries owned by the hereditary wardens of the royal forest of Saverlake (Wiltshire).²³ The loose figure style and drapery can be compared with English illumination of 1325–40, such as the *Smithfield Decretals* and the *Taymouth Hours*, both now in the British Library.²⁴ But even more closely related is another *basse taille* work, a small unprovenanced devotional diptych made of silver, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The engraving style of the figures of St Michael and St John the Baptist is markedly close to those on the horn, the heads of the king and St John strikingly similar. But for neither piece is there any evidence about the craftsman who made it.²⁵

Another unprovenanced English diptych, also in the Victoria and Albert Museum, reveals a more sophisticated and perhaps a later artist, using a wide range of enamel colours and highly modelled figures on a minute scale – the total height of each leaf is just four centimetres.²⁶ The style but not the palette may be compared with the Arundel Psalter of *circa* 1300.²⁷ Notable features are the figure of St George in armour, its type no earlier than *circa* 1340, and

²¹ *Age of Chivalry*, no. 570.

²² *Ibid.*, no. 544; R. Camber and J. Cherry, 'The Saverlake horn', pp. 201–11 in *Collectors and Collections, British Museum Yearbook* 2, 1977.

²³ The horn is first referred to by the English antiquary William Camden in the Latin edition of *Britannia* published in 1607, translated into English in 1610 by Philemon Holland, p. 254.

²⁴ L. Sandler, *Survey of English Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, London 1986, nos 101 and 98.

²⁵ M. Chamot, *English Medieval Enamels*, London 1930, no. 32, pl. 186; M. Campbell, 'English basse taille enamels', pp. 37–46, in *Oreficerie e smalti in Europa fra XIII e XV secolo. Atti del convegno di studi, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Nov. 1996, Annali della Scuola Normale di Pisa*, vol. 4, 2, ed. A. Calderoni Masetti, Pisa 1997.

²⁶ *Age of Chivalry*, no. 584.

²⁷ Sandler, *Survey*, no. 38, pls 84–85. The work of the Majesty master, exemplified in pl. 85: the Coronation of the Virgin is particularly close to that of the enamels of the diptych and both images share the motif of leopard headed cusps.



Fig. 3. Leopard's head hallmark-detail on a silver spoon. English c.1450. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. 1547-1900. By permission of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

architectural cusps in the form of leopard's heads, a particularly English conceit, probably inspired by the Royal Arms.²⁸

Here it may be illuminating to examine the communities of goldsmiths based respectively in Paris and London, and to explore the ownership of Parisian goldsmiths' work of this date in England. Where were such works being made and sold, and to and by whom?

Although London was the greatest centre of goldsmiths in Britain throughout the Middle Ages, their numbers were always markedly fewer than those in Paris. The Parisian *Livre de taille* of 1292 lists 116 goldsmiths and enamellers, while by 1300 there were 251.²⁹ Contemporary London evidence is far less precise, and London was a smaller city. In 1292 there may have been only about sixty goldsmiths³⁰, their numbers rising only in the later fourteenth

²⁸ The most dramatic renderings of the English royal leopards to survive are the embroidered textiles in the Musée de Cluny of c. 1300, *Age of Chivalry*, no. 12. The leopard's head also became the symbol of the sterling standard, see below.

²⁹ D. Gaborit-Chopin, 'Orfèverie, émaillerie', p. 179, n. 1, in *Rois maudits*.

³⁰ Estimates of London's population and within it of the relative numbers of craftsmen vary somewhat, since London records at this date are not as rich as those for Paris. The craft and goldsmith populations are best discussed for 1292 and 1319 by E. Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, Lund 1951, pp. 99-102 (1292), 110-11 (1319); G.A. Williams, *Medieval London; from Commune to Capital*, London 1970; T.F. Reddaway and L.E.M. Walker, *The Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company 1327-1509*, London 1975, pp. xix-xxvi.

century – for example, to 135 in 1368–9.³¹ The role of Paris as the European artistic entrepôt is borne out by the number of goldsmiths in Paris bearing names which suggest that their origins lay elsewhere – in Flanders, Germany or England. The *Livre de taille* of 1292 names four goldsmiths and one enameller as from England or London.³² At this date we know that the system of hallmarking precious metal was unknown in England but already well established in several French cities, including Paris, as decreed by Philippe III in 1275. The French standard stipulated for silver was sterling (92.5% pure silver)³³, which meant at that date the purity of silver in an English penny. The first unambiguous description of the Paris hallmark – the fleur de lys – in fact occurs in an English royal inventory of 1299, on silver spoons belonging to Edward I.³⁴ It is surely more than mere coincidence that it was just a year later, in 1300, that Edward introduced the first English legislation on hallmarking, decreeing that the king's mark – that is, the mark of a leopard's head (derived from the English royal arms, see fig. 3, just as the fleur de lys derived from the French) – should be stamped on metal of the approved standard – that is, silver of sterling standard and gold of the standard of Paris – both standards being identical to those used in France.³⁵ The leopard's head mark was prescribed for use by goldsmiths throughout England, and the King appointed his own chief goldsmith, Adam, to oversee the law's enforcement.³⁶ Adam's unusual role as intermediary between English goldsmiths is a subject which will be returned to.

Well before this date, however, 'Paris work' features in the possession of English royalty. In 1232, early in Henry III's reign and before his marriage, comes the earliest mention in an English inventory known to this author of *l'oeuvre de Paris*, when two gold circlets ('garlandesch') are listed in his possession.³⁷ In subsequent inventories the number of circlets increases, to four by 1254,³⁸ and

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³² P.H. Gérard, *Paris sous Philippe le Bel, d'après ... le Rôle de la Taille imposée ... 1292*, Paris, 1837. A Bernard of Limoges, perhaps an enameller, was in London in 1283, *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London, A*, ed. R.R. Sharpe, London 1899, p. 109.

³³ Lighthown, *Goldsmiths' Work*; C. Arminjon, 'Les poinçons parisiens au XIV^e siècle', pp. 23–24, and F. Muel, 'Les poinçons provinciaux au XIV^e siècle', pp. 25–28, both in *Les orfèvres français sous l'Ancien Régime: actes du colloque à Nantes 1989*, ed. C. Arminjon and A. Erlande-Brandenburg, Nantes 1994.

³⁴ See n. 1, above.

³⁵ Discussed and illustrated Campbell, 'Gold', pp. 140–3, figs. 66–90.

³⁶ 'Appointment of Adam Lorfèvre of London to survey all things manufactured of gold and silver, and to see that the ordinance lately enacted by the king and council is observed', issued on September 26, 1300, *CPR 1292–1301*, p. 537. The existence of this order with its important implications seems to have been overlooked by writers on English hallmarking.

³⁷ *CPR, 1232–47*, p. 5: December 15, 1232.

³⁸ This inventory lists four garlands, and specifies three as of Paris. No materials save pearls are detailed, PRO, E101/684/56/1: 37 Henry III.

to five in 1272,³⁹ but nowhere are they described in any detail. Circlets were a form of headdress worn by both sexes.⁴⁰ In the 1280s and 1290s references to Parisian goldsmith's work increase in English sources. King Edward I's first wife, Eleanor of Castile, was a lavish spender, who bought and commissioned plate and jewellery both in Paris itself, and from French goldsmiths and merchants visiting London. These include Laurence de Campana, John le Romayne and Roger Accon, the latter being paid in 1290 for bringing jewels (*iocalia*) back to London from Paris, and for the cost of eight forges for working gold.⁴¹ Eleanor's chief personal goldsmith was Adam of London, who is first recorded in an English wardrobe account *circa* 1286–9 as buying *iocalia* for Eleanor's Christmas presents while he was visiting Paris.⁴²

In 1291, Eleanor spent over £800 on Parisian goldsmiths' work (*ouvrages feres a Paris*) – a mixture of gold plate: seventeen hanaps, twelve *bacins a laver* – and of jewellery, mostly brooches.⁴³ Just a little detail is given, for example there are thirteen *chapeaus a lozanges esmaillee dor* and 160 *pieces dor esmaillee de clere color a tressoir*; *tressoirs* were jewelled head-bands.⁴⁴ The translucent and lozenge-shaped enamels were all surely the well known Parisian *cloisonné* enamel.⁴⁵ Is it simply coincidence that just five years later, in 1296, Adam the English goldsmith, itemises in his bill to King Edward a number of enamelled pieces apparently of this sort – *chapeaus with arms de clere colour*, *tressurs* both with *lozenges eymales* and *a poins amaylles de clers colour*?⁴⁶ In other words, did

³⁹ Published O. Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England 901–1307*, Munich 1955–60, vol. 3, no. 6223, pp. 288–89. Described as gold 'garlands' of Paris and priced at £27 13s. 4d., they are evidently far more substantial pieces than those listed in 1254, worth only 48s. 2d., about 10% of the 1272 list. French influence on clothing was already apparent in twelfth-century England, and may have started long before. By the thirteenth century Paris was undoubtedly the producer of the most desired pieces of mercery such as jewelled garlands and girdles, Sutton, 'Mercery', see Bibliography under 1997, pp. 105, n. 18, 110, n. 91.

⁴⁰ R. W. Lightbown, *European Medieval Jewellery*, London 1992, pp. 43–48, (circlets) 101, 108–18, 130–31.

⁴¹ Eleanor: J. C. Parsons, 'Eleanor of Castile: legend and reality through seven centuries', in *Eleanor of Castile: commemorative essays*, ed. D. Parsons, Stamford 1991, pp. 23–54. Roger Accon is cited in J. C. Parsons, *Court and Household of Eleanor of Castile in 1290*, Toronto 1977, p. 85.

⁴² The only surviving example of Adam's work is an impression of his personal seal, PRO, E213/35. Adam's importance, especially as intermediary between France and England, although well documented, deserves fuller study. For the 1286–9 trip to Paris, *Records of the Wardrobe and Household 1286–9*, ed. B. and C. Byerly, London 1986, p. 13–14; his activities are briefly summarised in Parsons, *Court*, p. 66 and n.

⁴³ PRO, E101/684/56/2 dated 20 Edward I, and 1291. The list is of three membranes but incomplete.

⁴⁴ *Tressoir*: Lightbown, *European Jewellery*, p. 113, and ch. 14.

⁴⁵ Lozenge-shaped *cloisonné* enamels of this sort, 1300–25, clearly intended to be sewn onto fabric, are in the Musée de Cluny, *Rois maudits*, no. 137.

⁴⁶ PRO, C47/3/25, 24 Edward I (1296). Some of the enamels, with arms of the king and of the duke of Gloucester, are clearly commissions. Prices are given, as for example, 1 *chapeau dor* and 1 *tressoir dor a lozenge amaylles* cost £7; the total spent was the large sum of £817 4s.



Fig. 4. Impressions of the personal seal of Queen Eleanor of Castile (died 1290), first wife of Edward I. London, Society of Antiquaries. Photograph by the author. By permission of the Society of Antiquaries.

Adam acquire new enamelling skills, not then known in England, while he was in Paris a few years earlier?

After Eleanor's death, King Edward retained her goldsmith Adam as his own, and in 1299 Adam was again sent to Paris on a major shopping expedition – presumably in connection with Edward's forthcoming marriage to Margaret of France, which took place in September of that year. Two long lists survive (in the PRO), though sadly bare of description and detail, but specifying the total sums spent.⁴⁷ They consist mostly of drinking vessels – a total of 225 cups, twelve of these being of gold of which four were enamelled. The rest were of silver gilt, of which about fifty were adorned with enamel. Most unusually, however, a supplementary list exists which actually names the Parisian suppliers of this plate, and more, as it includes precious stones, that is *pierrerie*. The list is entitled: *Adam Lorfevre achete a Paris de vesseillmente dor et d'argent por nostre seigneur le Roy d'engleterre*.⁴⁸ The sum Adam spent is prodigious by medieval standards – over £10,000, but he was buying from the leading goldsmiths, and as one might expect, mostly from those who also supplied

⁴⁷ PRO, E101/355/23, 27 Edward I (1299). Items are summarily listed with weights and prices.

⁴⁸ PRO, E101/355/24, 27 Edward I. For each of the French goldsmiths a total is given for the weight and value of the plate supplied, Pierre de Maante dominating, by providing plate and *pierrerie* worth £1708 4s. 83/4d.

the French king: Guillaume Perrier, Pierrade Maante, Raoul de Perrier, Robert de St Quentin, Nicholas de Laigni and Achymel le Changeour.⁴⁹ Senior English clerics too were buying Parisian goldsmiths' work – in 1302 the bishop of London, Richard of Gravesend, owned a silver *cambuca* or crozier *de opus Paris*,⁵⁰ and *circa* 1305 the bishop of Lichfield, Walter Langton, commissioned in Paris a new shrine for the relics of St Chad, costing £2000.⁵¹

By way of contrast to the documentary material, there are just a few medieval French, mostly Parisian pieces, which have been in Britain since the eighteenth century, or perhaps much earlier, and which may enlarge our view of the cultural milieu of English patrons and goldsmiths. The silver hanap cover from All Souls College, Oxford, is a masterpiece, which incorporates *cloisonné* as well as *champlevé* enamel of around 1300. It was very likely acquired by Archbishop Chichele (died 1443), the founder of the College, and donor of other notable French goldsmiths' work, though inventoried first at the College only in 1556.⁵²

A small silver casket, heraldically engraved, now in the British Museum, has been in England since at least the eighteenth century.⁵³ Its arms represent two Anglo-French queens, Margaret, second wife of Edward I and sister of Philippe le Bel, and Isabel, his daughter, wife to Edward II. The prominent placing of Isabel's arms on the front, with Margaret's on the back, suggests that the casket was presented by Margaret to her niece, perhaps on the occasion of her betrothal in 1303 or of her marriage in 1308. Though the casket has only minimal stylistic traits – elegant twin lancets engraved repeatedly, around the box – the forms of these suggest a French rather than an English craftsman. Margaret is known to have patronised both Parisian and English goldsmiths. For instance, William de Keyles was a known London goldsmith, (although his name may suggest an origin in Calais) who was paid ten marks in 1299 to make seals in gold and silver for her (comp. fig. 5).⁵⁴ But is the bold engraving style of the gold privy seal unequivocally English?

⁴⁹ All the goldsmiths listed, except Achymel, supplied the French king, R. Fawtier and F. Maillard, *Comptes Royaux 1285–1314*, Paris 1953–6; D. Gaborit-Chopin, 'Orfèvres et émailleurs parisiens au XIV^e siècle', pp. 29–40, in Arminjon and Erlande-Brandenburg, *Ancien Régime*.

⁵⁰ Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Schriftquellen*, vol. 3, no. 6274, p. 310. The crozier was fairly modestly valued at 71 s. Richard had also commissioned two silver dishes in Paris, from an unknown maker, *ibid.*, no. 6273, p. 309.

⁵¹ The shrine of St Chad was paid for by the Ballardis of Lucca in Paris, on behalf of Bishop Langton, A. Beardwood, 'The trial of Walter Langton, Bishop of Lichfield 1307–12', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. vol. 54, 3 (1964), p. 27, n. 7, quoting PRO, K.R. Accounts Various 127, 25, and other sources.

⁵² *Rois maitris*, no. 135.

⁵³ *Age of Chivalry*, no. 363.

⁵⁴ The great seal was of gold, the privy seal of silver: L.F. Salzmann, *Medieval English Industries*, London 1923, p. 123, citing PRO, E101/355/17. Keyles was paid 20 marks for workmanship of both in 1299.



Fig. 5. Impressions of the personal seal of Queen Margaret of France (died 1317), second wife of Edward I. London, Society of Antiquaries. Photograph by the author. By permission of the Society of Antiquaries.

A piece of clearly French origin is the Founder's Cup of Oriel College, Oxford, of 1325–50. Made of silver-gilt, engraved with decorative crowns and letters, with the Paris hallmark, it is documented as having been bought in London by the College only in 1493, and was probably selected because its decorative initials fitted those of the college's royal founder, Edward I.⁵⁵

Numbers of pieces of French jewellery have been excavated in Britain, but I shall here consider just three that have been found in the last sixty years. The brooch of gold set with rubies and cameos that was found at Oxwich castle in Wales is closely comparable with a brooch from the Colmar treasure, and is thus dateable to 1320–40. However the cameos are earlier, and are here clearly reused in these settings; they can be dated to *circa* 1250 and are early examples of a technique that was being revived in Paris at this date.⁵⁶ The gold ring enamelled in blue *basse taille* (with traces of red and white) with the Virgin and Child was found in the tomb of Bishop Grandisson in Exeter

⁵⁵ Lightbown, *Goldsmiths' Work*, pp. 22–3, pl. XIX; M. Campbell 'Medieval founders' relics', in *Patronage, Heraldry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. F. Coss and M. Keen, Woodbridge 2002.

⁵⁶ *Age of Chivalry*, no. 653 (Oxwich brooch); *Fastes du gothique*, no. 197 (Colmar treasure); E. Taburet-Delahaye, 'Les bijoux', in *Le Trésor de Colmar*, Colmar, Musée Unterlinden exhibition 1999, pp. 13–30.

Cathedral, and has been published by John Cherry as Parisian, of 1320–40, on grounds of its style.⁵⁷ His suggestion is strengthened by circumstantial evidence – Grandisson, born of a Savoyard family in 1292, was educated in Paris, and, according to his will of 1369, owned a crozier and a gilt gem-set cross that had both been bought in Paris.⁵⁸

Lastly to be mentioned is an extraordinary and important ring – still little known – in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It was found by chance in a hoard with four other gold rings and ten coins of fourteenth and fifteenth-century date on a river bank at Thame in Oxfordshire during the last War.⁵⁹ The ring is of gold, set with eight large cut amethysts and weighs 23.5 grams. The relic of the True Cross that it presumably once contained was held in place behind the amethyst cross of Lorraine by a plaque enamelled on both sides in *basse taille*, which though damaged includes *rouge cler* as well as the more standard colours. The plaque shows foliage sprays and on the reverse the Crucifixion. Although it was published first as being sixteenth-century work, it was recognised by Charles Oman as being Paris work of the fourteenth century, and is perhaps of *circa* 1350.⁶⁰

In this general context may finally be mentioned just a few of the stylistically uncertain pieces where attribution has veered between England and France. Adorned with typically late thirteenth-century foliage are a gold ring – found in England, and now in the British Museum⁶¹ – and an unprovenanced ring-brooch now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁶² The heraldically complex gold ring-brooch, of perhaps *circa* 1300, on loan to the Ashmolean Museum, was found in England and shows the royal arms of England and France amongst others.⁶³ But what attribution should be given to two unprovenanced enamels, one in the Louvre and one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, most remarkably, both so similar that they appear to be the work of the same craftsman?⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *Age of Chivalry*, cat. no. 368; J. Cherry, 'The ring of Bishop John Grandisson', pp. 205–9, pl. XXXIIa, in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Exeter Cathedral*, ed. F. Kelly, *British Archaeological Association Transactions*, Leeds 1991.

⁵⁸ F.C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, 1327–1369*, London and Exeter 1894–99, pp. 1513, 1515. Grandisson also had repairs and alterations carried out in Paris to the mitre he had inherited from Bishop Stapleton, at the substantial cost of 200 marks sterling.

⁵⁹ *Age of Chivalry*, no. 657; most fully published by J. Evans, 'The Thame hoard', *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 21 (1941), pp. 197–202; D. Hinton, *Medieval Jewellery*, Aylesbury 1982, pl. 34–37, pp. 40–41.

⁶⁰ C.C. Oman, *British Rings*, London 1974, colour plate I D, pp. 86–87.

⁶¹ Described and illustrated O.M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Finger Rings in the British Museum*, London 1912, no. 1852, p. 262.

⁶² Lightbown, *European Jewellery*, no. 9 (as French).

⁶³ Unpublished; being investigated by N. Griffiths and A. MacGregor, to whom I am grateful for their help.

⁶⁴ *Fastes du gothique*, no. 199; Chamot, *English Enamels*, no. 34, pl. 17 C and D.

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To conclude, it is clear that in the years around 1300 the ties between patrons and goldsmiths on both sides of the Channel were more profound and more subtle than at a single Franco-British dynastic level. Documentary evidence for this period survives in England in some quantity, even if it is exceptional for Parisian goldsmiths to be named. I have done no more than superficially to scratch the surface, and much more research needs to be done. My aim here has merely been to present both an introduction to the subject, and a view of some of the questions still unresolved.