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Charles Antoine Coypel (French, 1694–1752). *François de Jullienne and His Wife*, 1743. Pastel, 39 3/4 x 31 1/2 in. (100 x 80 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, in honor of Annette de la Renta, 2011 (2011.84)

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Back cover illustration: Detail of El Greco, *A View of Toledo*, ca. 1599–1600. See fig. 1, p. 12.

Illustration on p. 2: Detail of *Mercury Changes Aglauros to Stone* from the *Story of Mercury and Herse*. Design, Italian, ca. 1540. Tapestry, Netherlandish, ca. 1570. See fig. 1, p. 148.

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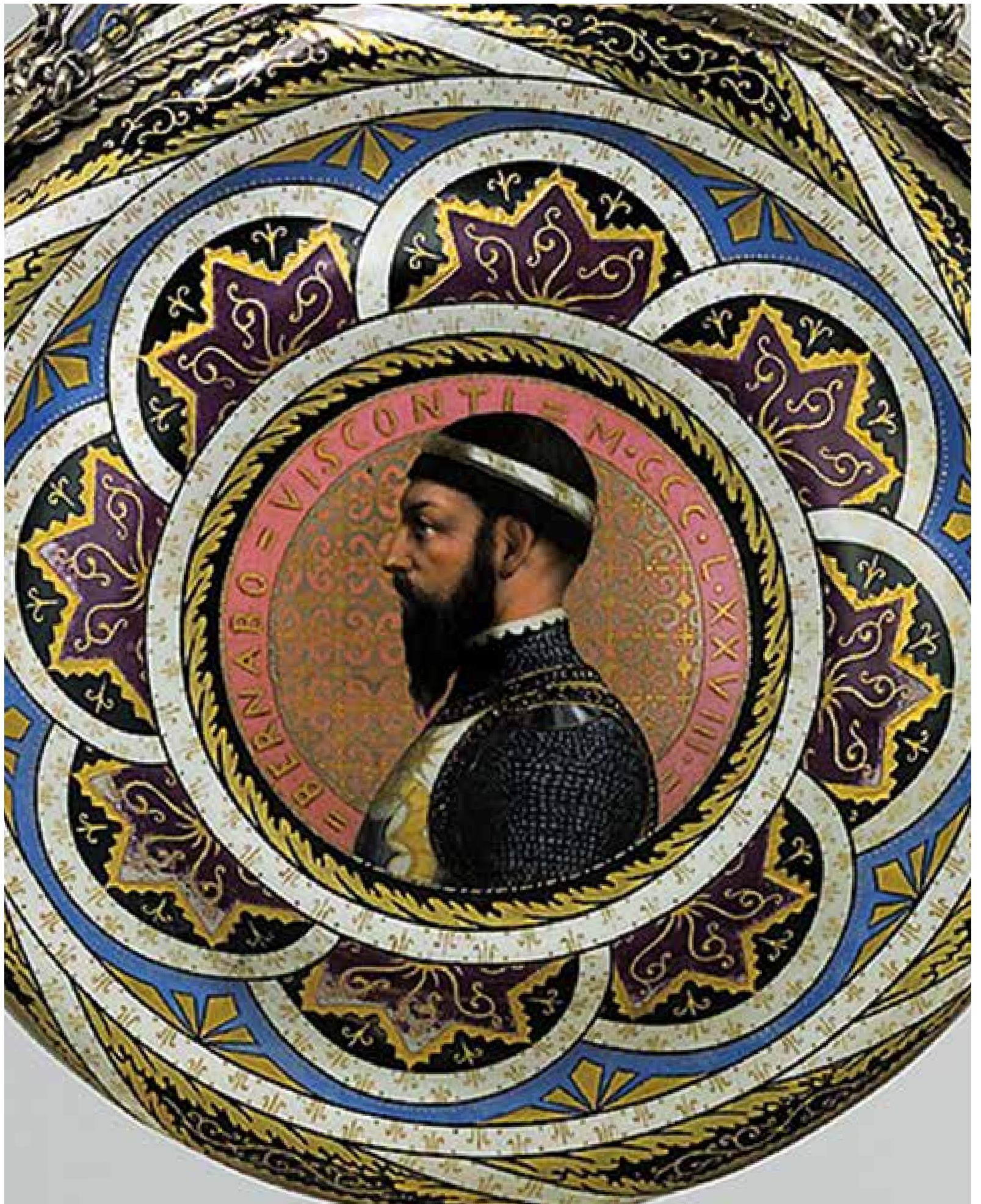
ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*
MMJ *Metropolitan Museum Journal*

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

METROPOLITAN
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OLIVIER HURSTEL
MARTIN LEVY

Charles Lepec and the Patronage of Alfred Morrison

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the appreciation of nineteenth-century European decorative arts has evolved by fits and starts. For British design, the revival was arguably initiated by the exhibition “Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts,” held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1952.¹ Interest in French and other continental European manufacture began later and did not immediately take hold. In France, this interest increased with the decision in 1978 to create the Musée d’Orsay, Paris, specifically devoted to the art of the nineteenth century.² Writing that same year in the introductory essay to the catalogue for the seminal exhibition originating in Philadelphia “The Second Empire, 1852–1870: Art in France under Napoleon III,” Jean-Marie Moulin acknowledged that this particular period “has been ignored—one might almost say erased—by French art historians. . . . Those who have had the experience of working on the



Second Empire in the area of the arts have felt the scorn (sometimes tinged with indulgence) that has surrounded the period, even—and perhaps especially—among the specialist and the knowledgeable layman.”³

The ambivalence toward French decorative arts from the middle decades of the nineteenth century can perhaps be understood against the backdrop of a sense of loss for the dignified and aristocratic grandeur encapsulated by the culture of the *ancien régime*. France was dominated by the bourgeoisie by the time of the Second Empire, and the frequently backward-looking decoration of this period tended toward the showy: the taste of the *nouveaux riches*. But this viewpoint has come to be seen as representing an incomplete and unfair assessment of a fertile period, in which technical and artistic invention introduced a great degree of originality, with such work now appreciated for its distinctly nineteenth-century aesthetic merit.

Charles Lepec (1830–1890), who was at his most active during the Second Empire period,⁴ exemplifies this sophisticated strand of French creativity. He was an artist who excelled in the medium of enamels, and, as will be shown, was particularly original and technically innovative. Many of his contemporaries working in the medium depended on compositions prevalent during the Renaissance. The 1978 Second Empire exhibition drew attention to many of the period’s leading manufacturers, some of whom are now represented in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which acquired them subsequently. These include the bronze founder and enamel manufacturer Ferdinand Barbedienne (1810–1892); the cabinetmaker

Charles-Guillaume Diehl (1811–?1885); the ceramist Théodore Deck (1823–1891); and the silversmith and maker of enamels and electroplated wares Christoffle et Cie (1830–present).⁵

The leading Parisian manufacturers were major participants in the series of world’s fairs that dominated the second half of the nineteenth century, beginning with the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. These massive international expositions, attended by millions of visitors, served as shop windows, enabling French firms to attract the patronage of British royalty, the aristocracy, and the newly powerful plutocrats.⁶ Notable English purchasers from French manufacturers included Queen Victoria and Prince Albert;⁷ William Ward, 1st Earl of Dudley (1817–1885);⁸ and, most significant of all, Lepec’s patron, the Victorian Maecenas, Alfred Morrison (1821–1897).

With France particularly hard hit by the worldwide depression that dominated the 1870s, England became an increasingly important market not only for French manufacturers, several of whom—for example, Deck and Barbedienne—had London-based outlets, but also for some craftsmen who joined English firms, such as Marc-Louis Solon (1835–1913), who in 1870 left Sèvres for Minton.⁹ Like so many nineteenth-century French designers and manufacturers admired during their lifetimes, the *peintre-émailleur*¹⁰ Charles Lepec almost disappeared from view in the twentieth century.

In 1971 Lepec’s sumptuous enamel and gold *nef* (table ornament in the form of a ship) (fig.1), exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867, was sold by Lord Margadale (1906–1996),¹¹ grandson of Alfred Morrison and in 1976 it entered the collection of the Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe.¹² It was not until 1980, when Daniel Alcouffe published his magisterial “Les Emailleurs français à l’Exposition Universelle de 1867,” that Lepec was finally reappraised.¹³ Alcouffe presented Lepec as the most original and outstanding enamel artist of the nineteenth century, the master of an art form at which the French had excelled since the Renaissance—but who had been somewhat forgotten since then.¹⁴

Alcouffe also gave details of the enamel work of Lepec’s contemporaries who exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867, although not in the same category¹⁵—a notable coterie that included Alexis Falize (1811–1893), Charles Duron (1814–1872), Charles Dotin (b. 1820), Claudius Popelin (1825–1892), and Alfred Meyer (1832–1904).¹⁶ While enamels by Popelin and Meyer, for example, generally depend directly on Renaissance prototypes for their style of painting,

fig. 1 Charles Lepec (French, 1830–1890). Nef (table ornament in the form of a ship), 1866–67. Enamel, gold, and silver-gilt, with small gemstones, max. width 12¾ × 14 in. (32.5 × 35.5 cm). Signed with numbers 309–312, and with the monogram CL. Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe (76/119)

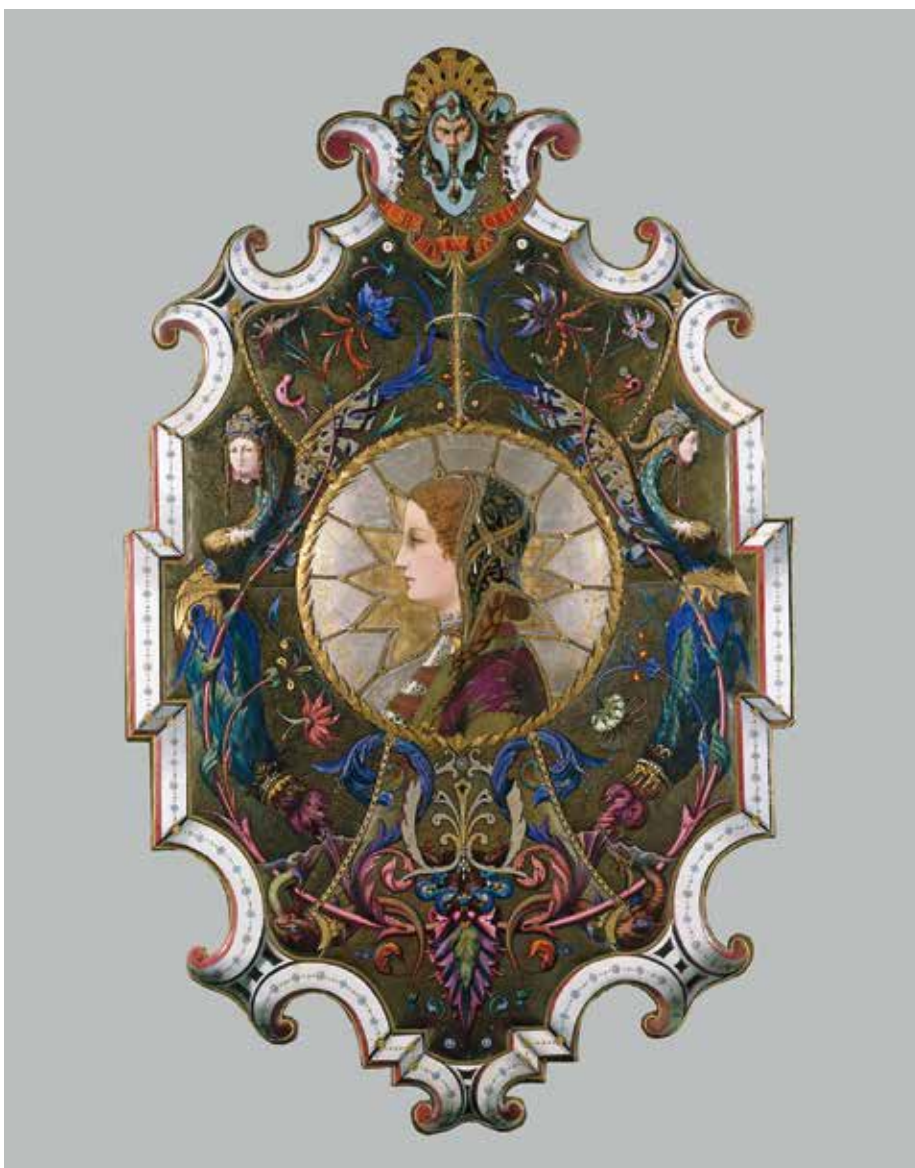


fig. 2 Charles Lepec.
Clémence Isaure, 1865.
 Enamel on copper, 71 × 43¾ in.
 (180.3 × 111.3 cm). Signed
 2[?]51 and CLP (interlaced) and
 inscribed: POESIM PICTURA
 CELEBRAT and CLEMENCE
 ISAURE. Musée d'Orsay,
 Paris (OAO 712)

Lepec's Renaissance-inspired creations show a greater degree of inspired originality and a finer mastery of technique. If the forms of some of Lepec's vessels reveal their historic sources, the decoration, as seen in his work for Morrison, is utterly creative in its composition and coloration. Duron is best known for his interpretations and copies of mounted hardstone vessels from the French royal collection, housed in the Musée du Louvre, Paris.¹⁷

Alcouffe's review of Lepec's career was based on contemporary criticism and on records of works published and exhibited during the artist's lifetime, but Alcouffe identified and illustrated only three surviving objects, including the nef and *Clémence Isaure* (fig. 2). In 1982, the Musée d'Orsay acquired *Clémence Isaure*, formerly in the collection of Henry Bolckow (1806–1878), a German-born iron magnate, member of Parliament,

and first mayor of Middlesbrough, who lived at Marton Hall.¹⁸ More recently, both Katherine Purcell, in connection with Alexis Falize, and Charlotte Gere and Judy Rudoe, with regard to jewelry, have touched briefly, but significantly, on Lepec.¹⁹

Since the early 1980s many more examples of Lepec's work in enamel have been identified, as well as paintings, drawings, designs, and carvings. In 2004 the Metropolitan Museum acquired the *Bouteille vénitienne* (Venetian flask) (fig. 21), and in 2010 the *Carved Panel, with a Portrait of Mabel Morrison* (fig. 28); both were formerly in the collection of Alfred Morrison. In addition to a greatly increased body of work, it is now possible to add substantially to the biographical details given by Alcouffe. As a preface here, we outline hitherto unrecognized and significant aspects of Lepec's life.²⁰

Central to Lepec's career, as is made clear by Alcouffe and others, was Alfred Morrison, who was the son of the fabulously rich collector James Morrison (1789–1857), a man obsessed with money, status, class, and power, but also public-spirited and passionate about his family.²¹ James Morrison built his fortune on the simple motto "small profits and quick returns." Although his elder son, Charles (1817–1909), emulated James in terms of business acumen, it was Alfred who matched and exceeded his father as a collector and patron. James had been a typical collector in the tradition of the nineteenth-century nouveaux riches, an autodidact who took the advice of his architect J. B. Papworth (1775–1847) and others in forming an outstanding collection of old master and contemporary English paintings. His decor included the typical rich man's accumulation of Boulle furniture and Sèvres vases.

Alfred preserved much of his father's collection but stands out as a discerning patron of contemporary craftsmen (and, to a lesser extent, painters). The younger Morrison should be seen as a successor to great amateurs such as William Beckford (1760–1844) and Thomas Hope (1769–1831).²² Alfred Morrison patronized in depth those whose work he admired, many of whom are now considered among the outstanding manufacturers of the period. These include the innovative jeweler Alessandro Castellani (1823–1883); the reviver of enameled glass in the Islamic taste Philippe-Joseph Brocard (1831–1896); Lucien Falize (1839–1897), whose remarkable gold, silver, amethyst, diamond, and enamel clock made for Morrison is now in the Metropolitan Museum;²³ and the maker of damascened ironwork Plácido Zuloaga (d. ca. 1910). Lepec's work would have glowed in such company. Among other areas in which Morrison collected voraciously were engravings, textiles,

fig. 3 Studio of Nadar
[Gaspard-Félix Tournachon]
(French, 1820–1910). *The
Painter Lepec N° 848*, n.d.
Albumen print from glass nega-
tive, 3¾ × 2¼ in. (8.5 × 5.8 cm).
Bibliothèque Nationale de
France, Paris (FT-4-NA-235 [2])



and, famously, autographs.²⁴ Chinese porcelain and enamels and Japanese works of art, including many cloisonné enamels, were also a passion of Morrison's.²⁵

The taste for enamels began to revive toward the end of the reign of Louis Philippe (1773–1850).²⁶ During the 1850s, collectors were principally interested in medieval and Renaissance enamels, but following the opening of Japan to the West in the mid-1850s and the sacking of the Summer Palace in Peking (now Beijing) in 1860, connoisseurs had a greater opportunity to study and acquire Asian enamels. Morrison's collecting is distinguished, however, by his pursuit of contemporary European enamels, alongside older Asian creations.

But Morrison's interests extended beyond the works of art he commissioned and collected. The influential and innovative architect, designer, and design theorist Owen Jones (1809–1874) was engaged by Morrison to create the furniture and interiors at Carlton House Terrace, London, and at Fonthill, in Wiltshire; the work was carried out by the talented London cabinetmaker Jackson & Graham (active ca. 1840–85).²⁷

CHARLES LEPEC

Charles Florent Joseph Lepec (fig. 3) was born in Paris on April 5, 1830, and died in Reux, France, on May 19, 1890.²⁸ He was the son of Charles Antoine Lepec, who

was born at Reux on April 19, 1791, and died in Paris on March 12, 1875. A descendant of the noble family of Costentin de Tourville,²⁹ Lepec père was a lawyer, the author of several books on law,³⁰ and a recipient of the Legion of Honor (as would be his son). His wife, Florence Jeanne Raimonde Demetria Rodriguez, was of Spanish origin.³¹ Despite the conventions of the time, the couple did not marry until May 1, 1832, two years after the birth of their only child. The family lived at 11, rue Gaillon, a former *hôtel particulier* by then divided into apartments. The building was fashionably located at the bottom of the *chaussée d'Antin*, between the Place Vendôme and the Palais-Royal. The spacious apartment also housed the office of Lepec père until his death in 1875.

The Lepec family owned property, including land and orchards, in Reux, near Pont-l'Évêque, Normandy, which suggests that they enjoyed a degree of financial stability and social standing. Thus it could be argued that Charles Lepec grew up in a privileged environment. He attended the Lycée Condorcet, the great liberal school on the Right Bank, much favored by the Parisian bourgeoisie. His father was a long-standing member of the prestigious Cercle des Arts, a meeting place for painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, and art lovers.³²

Proximity to this group surely influenced Charles Lepec's choice of career. However, despite its relatively prosperous position, his family clearly wanted the young Lepec to have the advantage of a formal education. Although he did not go on to pursue a career in law or one of the other professions for which he might have been eligible, the benefits of his academic learning would become evident in his erudite artistic output. As Auguste Luchet noted of Lepec's early life: "Happy is he who is able to enter the Arts through the noble door of Letters and Sciences."³³

Contemporary accounts, published about the time of the 1867 Exposition Universelle, suggest that Lepec's principal artistic development occurred under the supervision of the artist Hippolyte Flandrin (1809–1864).³⁴ After an early career as a painter, exhibiting at the Salons of 1857 and 1859,³⁵ by 1860 Lepec had turned to the enamel work that would be his major preoccupation until the early 1870s.³⁶ By 1861, he was living at 61, rue du Faubourg-Montmartre, Paris; in 1865 he was at 52, rue de Bourgogne; and by 1869 he had moved to 12, rue de Pré-aux-Clercs. When Lepec married his pupil Jeanne Marie Thierry in 1882, he lived at 13, rue Bonaparte. It is clear that Lepec also spent time from the 1860s onward at Reux, and seems eventually to have made it his main place of residence.³⁷

fig. 4 J. Smith (English). *Alfred Morrison*, Photograph. Fonthill Estate Archive



LEPEC, ROBERT PHILLIPS, AND ALFRED MORRISON

Lepec exhibited at the 1862 London International Exhibition,³⁸ where he may have had his first encounter with Robert Phillips, the jeweler based at 23 Cockspur Street, London, who would shortly become the agent for his work in England.³⁹ At this world's fair, during a period when modern enamels appealed mainly to a small number of elite connoisseurs, Lepec made his first sales to Alfred Morrison, who would become his most significant patron (fig. 4).⁴⁰ Phillips and Morrison were, in effect, to shape Lepec's career. The considerable Morrison archive, part of the Fonthill Estate Archive, contains documents and letters with direct bearing on the relationships between Lepec and Phillips, Lepec and Morrison, and Lepec and his fellow Parisian craftsmen.⁴¹ This remarkably well-preserved source provides unique insights into the relationship between a patron and his agent, and those whose work was commissioned.

A simple six-page list on lined paper, certainly prepared by Phillips's clerk,⁴² records purchases made by Morrison at the "International Exhibition 1862." The list demonstrates the range and depth of Morrison's approach to the work of contemporary manufacturers, even at this early stage of his collecting career. From Lepec, Morrison bought "9 Plaques of Enamel. Reduced from 12000 to 9,000.

£360" and "Models of Coffrets & Enamel^s 2000 frs. £80." Morrison acquired a number of paintings at the International Exhibition, generally noted by country of origin rather than by artist. He also bought from leading French manufacturers, including the cabinetmakers Fourdinois and Guillaume Grohé and the metalworkers Christofle and Barbedienne (who on this occasion first exhibited his cloisonné enamels).⁴³ He bought an ebony and ivory étagère from Jackson & Graham (some years before the firm became responsible for supplying Morrison with large quantities of Owen Jones–designed furniture); work by the Italians Giovanni Battista Gatti,⁴⁴ Angiolo Barbetti, and Pietro Giusti (all three famous for their Renaissance-revival furniture); and ceramics from Minton and Sèvres. In all, Morrison spent £7,762 14s 8d, reduced after various discounts—for example, of 5 percent from Fourdinois—to £7,557 15s 8d. In an account from Phillips to Morrison covering 1862–63, which includes items from Elkington, Royal Worcester Porcelain Company, Jackson & Graham, and Gatti, there are two payments to Barbedienne, including one dated October 9, 1863, for "2 Lepec Enamels 500 fr. [£]20." The authors have not been able to establish the circumstances surrounding this transaction or its significance.⁴⁵

Almost certainly purchased in 1862 is the small rectangular plaque, probably depicting Venus (fig. 5), inscribed on the reverse, according to a 1975 Sotheby's catalogue, "IPY [*sic*] 1861 no. 73."⁴⁶ Alcouffe speculates, probably correctly, that this work might be the one exhibited in 1867 and described at length in 1893 by Lucien Falize as "a study of a female nude, Venus or Psyche, softly and lightly clad."⁴⁷ When this piece was sold at Sotheby's, the catalogue entry quoted the critic and curator Alfred Darcel (1818–1893) as saying that Lepec's nudes had a *gentillesse banale* (ordinariness) and that such works had an unfortunate resemblance to colored lithographs.⁴⁸ This criticism should, in fact, be seen as an interesting observation when looked at in light of Lepec's (and others') use of another relatively modern invention, photography.⁴⁹

From his position as Morrison's agent at the 1862 London International Exhibition, it is clear that Phillips was already acting as an intermediary between manufacturers and Morrison.⁵⁰ Other retailers and manufacturers that appear in Morrison's address-notebook in the early 1860s include Thomas Goode (retailers of ceramics), Hatfield ("Brass Cleaner"), and Fannièrre Frères (silversmiths). Over the next five years, Phillips's role as an intermediary helped Morrison become Lepec's most important patron. Lepec would later highlight

many of the creations from this period when he participated in the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle.⁵¹

In 1864, Phillips himself first exhibited Lepec's work in London. The *Morning Post* (January 7) reported:

An enamelled tazza of remarkable beauty, designed and executed by Signor Charles Lepec. It is as perfect a work in its particular style of art as can well be imagined . . . In the cavity of the cup is a picture—classic in conception, . . . representing Venus gliding swiftly over the surface of the sea in a car drawn by mermaids, while overhead hovers in mid-air Cupid with a torch in one hand, and in the other the silken reins wherewith he gently guides the water-nymphs. . . . In the rim of the cup, which is concave, are medallion miniatures, exquisitely painted, of some of the most celebrated women who, whether in the records of historic or of imaginative literature, have exercised the most potent influence. . . .

fig. 5 Charles Lepec. *Venus*, 1861. Enamel with silver-gilt mount in ebonized and glazed frame, excluding frame 4¾ × 1¾ in. (12 × 4.5 cm). Reportedly inscribed on the reverse *IPY* [probably *V* rather than *Y*] 1861 no. 73. Private collection



The outside of the tazza is elaborately ornamented with flowers and foliage, painted in a manner to resemble the lack[sic]-work of the Japanese.⁵²

This passage is quoted at length because this tazza (unlike *La Fantaisie*, dated 1864 and also exhibited by Phillips; see figs. 6, 7) has disappeared from sight since it was sold at auction in 1994 and thus cannot be illustrated.⁵³ Identified here as *La Volupté*, this piece, formerly in Morrison's collection, was also exhibited at the 1867 Exposition Universelle (see Appendix and fig. 8, top).

The earliest surviving letter from Lepec to Phillips in the Fonthill Estate Archive is dated July 26, 1863. Its tone establishes the cordial bond and professional relationship that had developed between the two since their encounter, probably at the London International Exhibition, the previous year. In it, Lepec discusses a piece he had been working on since about April: after three months of constant work, he had now finished the foot.⁵⁴ He continues by asking if Phillips will be coming to Paris with his client (clearly Morrison) and asks for a few days' notice so that he can return from the country (presumably Reux). Lepec had made alterations to the design and would require at least four more uninterrupted months to finish the work.⁵⁵ The artist also asks to be remembered to Phillips's family.

On December 21, 1863, Lepec announced to Phillips that he had finished the *coupe* (a shallow, dish-shaped bowl on a stem) and that a work of such importance would bring credit to them both.⁵⁶ In what will be shown to be one of many instances of artistic collaboration with contemporary craftsmen, Lepec notes that Charles Duron has made the mount for the coupe.⁵⁷ Lepec will leave for London on December 27 and asks if he might stay at the British Hotel, located at 26–27 Cockspur Street, virtually next door to Phillips (both premises now demolished).⁵⁸ Despite the absence of a distinctive foot rim or “mount,” logic and timing would suggest that *La Fantaisie* is the coupe to which Lepec refers, and that Duron simply put together the top and stem.

Both *La Volupté* and *La Fantaisie* (see figs. 6–8), lent by Phillips, were shown at the Paris Salon in 1864.⁵⁹ In a letter to Phillips dated May 11, 1864, Lepec notes the excellent reception of the two coupes, that he has received more requests for work, and he attributes the success to *La Fantaisie*.⁶⁰ To the same letter Lepec attached an English-language news clipping received that day: “We beg, however, to direct attention towards two of the finest enamel paintings we have ever met



fig. 6 Charles Lepec.
La Fantaisie, 1864. Enamel on metal, with a gold coin on the base, as a washer, 6¾ × 8½ in. (16.8 × 21.5 cm). Signed and dated CHARLES LEPEC 1864, and inscribed LA FANTAISIE. Saint Louis Art Museum, Lopata Endowment Fund (129:1994)

fig. 7 Charles Lepec. Detail of the top of *La Fantaisie* shown in *fig. 6*

fig. 8 A page from the catalogue of the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle with an illustration (top) of a stemmed bowl, or coupe, identified here as *La Volupté*. *Art-Journal* 1867b, p. 304





fig. 9 Charles Lepec. Coffret, ca. 1870. Painted and plique-à-jour enamel on gold and gilt-bronze, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$ in. (15 × 13.5 × 8.5 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges, Palais de l'Evêché (94.522)

fig. 10 Charles Lepec. *Roger et Angélique*, 1864. Pencil on paper, 16 × 14¼ in. (40.6 × 36.2 cm). Signed and dated Paris 14 août 1864 Charles Lepec. Fonhill Estate Archive

with. They are by Lepec (No. 2,305) 'La Volupté' and 'La Fantaisie.' They belong to Mr. Phillips, says the catalogue."⁶¹ *La Fantaisie* was described in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* as depicting a wild female "Redskin" riding a chimera. The writer continued, however, by noting that he preferred the portraits shown the year before.⁶² Thus, by 1864, Lepec's work in enamel was already receiving critical attention on both sides of the English Channel.

In the chronology of enamels discussed by Lepec in correspondence with Phillips, the next items are three untraced bottles or flasks (*trois flacons*) referred to in a letter dated March 16, 1864.⁶³ Another work completed in 1864 was a *coffret* (box), which Lepec planned to take to London in early July 1864; this resembled goldsmith's work.⁶⁴ Although undocumented and unsigned, the small coffret at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges, Palais de l'Evêché, might be of similar appearance.⁶⁵ Lepec's three-quarter profile portrait on the front of the coffret (fig. 9) resembles *Clémence Isaure* (see fig. 2)—but on a diminutive scale.⁶⁶

Not all the works listed by Pierre Sanchez as exhibited by Lepec at the Paris Salons of 1863–65 have been traced.⁶⁷ One such is *Roger et Angélique* (1865 Salon, no. 2615), which was lent by M. H. Durand, who has not been positively identified.⁶⁸ Although Morrison was fast becoming Lepec's greatest patron, it did not follow that Morrison acquired everything he was offered. The drawing from the Fonhill Estate Archive, *Roger et Angélique* (fig. 10),



is clearly for a major work and surely illustrates the (untraced) object lent by Durand to the 1865 Salon. It is signed and dated Paris 14 août 1864 Charles Lepec and is informative about the effect Lepec wished to achieve with translucent colored enamels in an enameled silver *bouclier* (shield) three feet in diameter.⁶⁹

The degree to which Lepec and Phillips's friendship deepened is emphasized in a letter dated August 23, 1864. Lepec expresses concern that Mrs. Phillips has undergone a serious operation. He also comments that his own health has improved. With regard to the *bouclier*, he says that he is happy that the design is to Phillips's taste and that he will not sell it before giving him the right of first refusal.⁷⁰ The *bouclier* is not referred to again, so we must assume that Morrison, through Phillips, rejected the piece.

The subject of Lepec's shield, characteristically erudite, is based on a section of the romantic epic *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) and depicts Ruggiero (Roger) rescuing Angelica (Angélique) from a rock where she is about to be attacked by a sea monster.⁷¹ It may not be a coincidence that in 1819 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres painted the same subject to great effect.⁷² Paul Mantz, describing the work as *Angélique et Médor*, admires its exquisite technical composition but dislikes its purple hue and overall decorative effect.⁷³ Meanwhile, Félix Jahyer admires the colors and grace of the dazzling work.⁷⁴

fig. 11 Charles Lepec. Plate, 1865. Enamel on silver, silver-gilt edge, Diam. 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (22 cm). Signed N. 230. CHARLES LEPEC.I.P.V. 1865. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges, Palais de l'Evêché

fig. 12 Charles Lepec. Plate, 1865. Enamel on silver, silver-gilt edge, Diam. 8 in. (20.3 cm). Signed N. 231. CHARLES LEPEC.IPV.1865. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (BK-1995-1)

fig. 13 Charles Lepec. Lepec monogrammed letterhead, ca. 1867. Pen and ink on paper. Fonthill Estate Archive

Two smaller-scale works from 1865, formerly in Morrison's collection and shown at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle, each described as an *assiette sujet* (plate depicting a particular subject),⁷⁵ give some idea of how Lepec's composition *Roger et Angélique* might have looked. The plates are sequential works; the earlier, number 230 (fig. 11), is now in the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges.⁷⁶ It depicts the blindfolded figure of Fortune beside her wheel, with falling emblems of power to her right. The representation of the crown and scepter recalls a similar treatment on the earlier *Audaces Fortuna Juvat* (1860).⁷⁷ The subject of the decoration on the second plate, numbered 231, has not been identified (fig. 12).⁷⁸ Both plates have decorative floral borders surmounted by variants of a type of dragonlike creature, which is something of a leitmotif in Lepec's work and a familiar element of the nineteenth-century interest in medieval mythology.⁷⁹ Lepec also incorporated a similar motif into the monogram he created as his own letterhead (fig. 13).

From correspondence relating to these two plates, it would appear that they followed two simpler, untraced examples, one with an overall geometric design and the other with a plain center (see fig. 8, bottom center, left and right), which Morrison also lent to the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle. In a letter dated October 13, 1865, Lepec tells Robert Phillips to let Morrison know that these new plates, despite their rich decoration, could not possibly fetch the same price as the first two.⁸⁰ The following day, Phillips sent Lepec's invoice to Morrison.⁸¹

The Victoria and Albert Museum holds an important and hitherto unpublished group of designs by Lepec.⁸² The sixteen drawings, some of which are dated, range from 1865 to 1886; they were acquired in 1891 from Phillips Brothers of Cockspur Street for £9 12s. Alfred Phillips, in a letter to the museum, refers to the "selection of 16 drawings which you made," tantalizingly suggesting that there were more.⁸³ In the majority of instances where the design can be associated with an identifiable work,⁸⁴ these relate to commissions for Morrison.⁸⁵ Although Morrison would seem to have remained Lepec's most significant patron throughout the period 1862–66, we have already seen that *Angélique et Roger* went elsewhere. Another major work not acquired by Morrison was the large-scale *Clémence Isaure* exhibited at the 1866 Paris Salon (see fig. 2).⁸⁶ The buyer, as noted above, was Henry Bolckow, who at some point also bought a Lepec-designed gold ring with an enamel of Psyche surrounded by brilliant-cut diamonds; this is now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁸⁷



The year 1866 was to be a very busy one for Lepec, and it seems that he felt the strain. Not only was he creating work on an ambitious scale, but also, as the months went by, he would be increasingly preoccupied by the following year's Exposition Universelle. In a letter dated February 1, 1866, Lepec tells Phillips about difficulties he is having with this 71-by-45-inch creation, on which he has worked for more than a year with the help of his two ablest students.⁸⁸ Lepec is delighted by the complex panels making up the arabesque borders but distraught that the 21-inch central panel has been damaged that day in the kiln. He says that he will be devastated if it cannot be recovered in time for the 1866 Salon.⁸⁹

There can be no doubt that the work with which Lepec was struggling is *Clémence Isaure*; the dimensions 71 by 45 inches correspond sufficiently closely with the 180.3 by 113 centimeters given by the Musée d'Orsay.⁹⁰ The letter continues in an increasingly despondent vein. Lepec had now failed a second time in firing the central panel, recalling a problem he had had once before with a silver shield (perhaps the Durand bouclier). He says that if he finally succeeds, he will never again attempt a work on such a scale.⁹¹ Lepec clearly did succeed, as *Clémence Isaure* was shown at the 1866 Salon. Toward the end of the letter, Lepec writes that he hopes to be in London at the end of February with the model of the gold cup, although this may be delayed because of the difficulties of the project. Here, surely, is the first mention of the nef (see fig. 1) that was to cause such a stir the following year.

Despite the evident success of *Clémence Isaure* in April 1866, Lepec's health, according to a letter Phillips wrote to Morrison from Paris, was "seriously affected by his recent disappointments."⁹² In fact, health seems to have remained a dominant factor in Lepec's life, and one might speculate that he simply could not take the stress involved in creating his time-consuming and accident-prone enamels. In a letter dated January 8, 1879, identified here as to the enameler Claudius Popelin, Lepec notes his exhaustion and ill health on his return from Normandy.⁹³

As Alcouffe records (citing Falize), Lepec had the help of Charles Dotin in completing *Clémence Isaure*.⁹⁴ In the final part of his survey "Claudius Popelin et la renaissance des émaux peints," Falize notes that *Clémence Isaure* remains one of the largest enamels produced at the time, and that great credit is owed to Dotin, who, like Gagneré for Popelin, was an outstanding craftsman.⁹⁵ *Clémence Isaure* was the work highlighted

by the *Art-Journal* in an article titled "The Enamels of Charles Lepec," which was intended to introduce "the name of this remarkable artist to our readers" at the time of the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle:

One only of M. Lepec's greatest works, the greatest indeed, . . . has Mr. Morrison permitted to pass from Mr. Phillips to any other hands than his own. This admirable enamel, a group of colossal plaques, incorporated so as to form a single composition upwards of six feet in height, is not only by far the most important work of its class that has been executed in modern times, but it also takes precedence of all the greatest enamels that are known to be in existence.⁹⁶

We do not know why Morrison turned down *Clémence Isaure*, but much of what he bought from Lepec and others was more "jewel like" in appearance than this uncharacteristically large-scale work.

Also from 1866 is the Morrison tazza and cover (figs. 14, 15) now in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.⁹⁷ All the surviving works for Morrison highlighted so far—*La Volupté*, *La Fantaisie*, the two plates divided between Amsterdam and Limoges, and the tazza and cover—were first resold as "The Property of a Lady" on January 25, 1899, at Christie's. The sale, by Morrison's widow, Mabel, whom he had married in April 1866, included "Vases, caskets, Plaques, Dishes, &c, of Silver and Gilt Metal, Beautifully damascened and enamelled by C. Lepec and P. Zuloaga."⁹⁸ Lot 389—"A Silvered and Gilt Tazza, enamelled with an African figure on a dragon in translucent colours—by C. Lepec, 1864"—is *La Fantaisie*. Lot 390 was a "Tazza and Cover, of enamelled and gilt metal, decorated with emblematic figures, arabesque foliage and other ornament, a figure of cupid on the lid; and a tazza on tripod foliage stem—by C. Lepec." The first part of this lot is the Fitzwilliam coupe, but the tazza on a tripod, the description resembling *La Fortune Conduite par l'Amour*,⁹⁹ has not been traced. Lot 391 was "A larger Tazza, similar, with Aphrodite and a border of arabesques and medallion heads; and a pair of plates, with groups of emblematic figures on gold ground—by the same"; these are *La Volupté* and the plates now in Amsterdam and Limoges.

It is fortunate that the same buyer, "Marcus," acquired all three lots. Although this purchaser has not been identified, these works were either handed down through his family or were sold to someone else who



fig. 14 Charles Lepec. Tazza and Cover, 1866. Enamel on copper, and gold, overall H. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (23.8 cm); Diam. of foot 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (8 cm); Diam. of rim 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (15 cm); Diam. of cover 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (14.5 cm). On one side of the cover, the border is broken by the mark CHARLES LEPEC / - PARIS- / N 288.I.P.V.66 in gold below a coronet, and a dragon crest. On the tazza, the border is broken by the mark CHARLES LEPEC / -PARIS- / N 287.I.P.V.1866. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England (M.5 and A-1994)

fig. 15 Interior of the tazza shown in fig. 14



fig. 16 Charles Lepec. Top of a coffret, ca. 1870. Enamel on copper, silver gilt, and gilt bronze, 11¼ × 22 × 16¾ in. (28.5 × 56 × 42.5 cm). M & N Uzal, Brussels

retained the majority as a group. All but the tazza on a tripod were sold at Christie's South Kensington on September 20, 1994, lots 70–73. Lots 393–97 in the January 1899 sale, all untraced, were also by Lepec. It is possible that the circular plaques with busts of Laura and Marguerite (part of lot 393) are those lent by Morrison to the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle (see Appendix).¹⁰⁰ The large coffer (lot 395), which has not been traced, does not correspond in size with the one dated here to about 1870 (fig. 16).

Among other pieces Lepec completed for Morrison between 1866 and 1867 are three substantial and equally significant but presently untraced works.¹⁰¹ Fortunately, however, the original designs are in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (figs. 17–19). The “Renaissance-inspired” vase design (fig. 17) is signed and dated “Charles Lepec 1866”; it is also inscribed *Mr. Morrison* against which is noted £125, but a price of £200 is also mentioned on the sheet. The band of black, white, and gold masks, and the use of these colors in general, is reminiscent of sixteenth-century Limoges enamels by, for example, Pierre Reymond, and shows Lepec’s response to such work more directly than has hitherto been apparent.¹⁰² Once again, Lepec uses one of his much-favored profile portraits for the principal decorative motif.

Thus far, we have seen Lepec using pattern as the embellishment of borders, but on the design for the *cornet persan* (cornet-shaped vase with Persian decoration) (fig. 18) and the *coffret persan* (box with Persian ornament) (fig. 19), pattern is the main decoration. Although a precise source has not been identified, the

fig. 17 Charles Lepec. Design for “Renaissance-inspired” Vase, 1866. Pencil and watercolor, with gold highlights on paper, 12¼ × 8¾ in. (31 × 22.5 cm). Signed and dated *Charles Lepec 1866*. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.409-1891)



fig. 18 Charles Lepec. Design for a Cornet Persan, 1866. Pencil and watercolor, with gold highlights on paper, 9¼ × 12¼ in. (23.3 × 31.2 cm). Initialed and dated *Juil. 66 CLP*. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.411-1891)



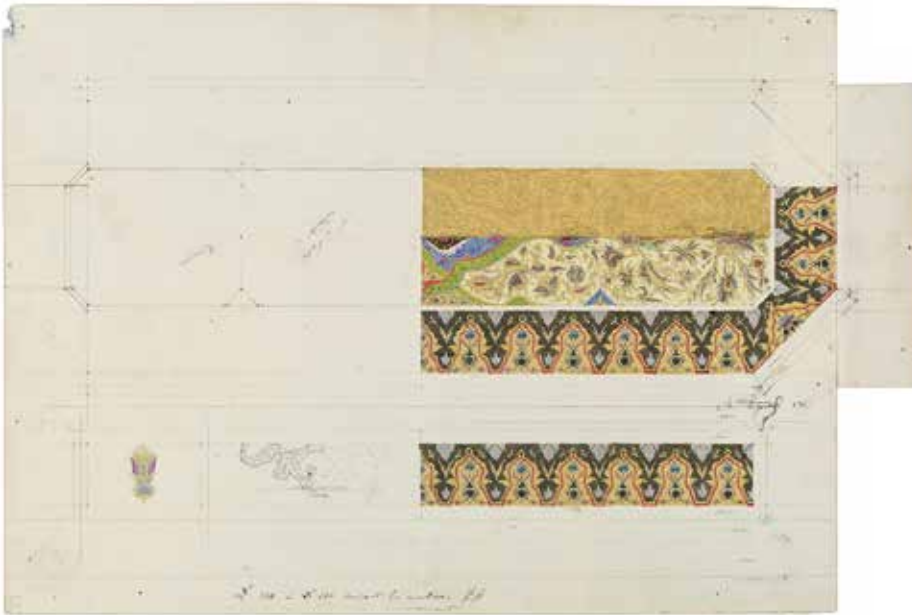


fig. 19 Charles Lepec. Design for a Coffret Persan, 1867. Pencil and watercolor, with gold highlights on paper, 9 × 13¾ in. (22.8 × 34 cm). Signed and dated *Ch Lepec 1867*. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.412-1891)

fig. 20 Charles Lepec. Chimney piece after a design by Owen Jones for Carlton House Terrace, ca. 1865. Enamel on alabaster

overall impression conveyed by both pieces is similar to that of a densely decorated Persian carpet or book cover.

Lepec was certainly aware of Owen Jones, who was working for Morrison at Fonthill House as mentioned, and at 16 Carlton House Terrace during the mid-1860s.¹⁰³ Jones published his influential *Grammar of Ornament* in 1856, and while the plates in this volume are highly stylized when compared with Lepec’s more free-flowing designs, they are similar in spirit, and one can sense the influence. In the text to plate 48 in *The Grammar of Ornament* (Persian No. 5), Jones writes: “The ornament at the top . . . as well as the borders throughout, present that mixed character of pure ornament, arranged in conjunction with the ornamental rendering of natural forms, which we have considered as characteristic of the Persian style.”¹⁰⁴ Another example of the perhaps not coincidental similarities between the ornamentation of Jones and Lepec can be seen, for example, in the ceilings at Carlton House Terrace.¹⁰⁵

There is a single instance in which Lepec can be shown to have been working directly under the influence of Owen Jones: the enameled alabaster chimney piece (fig. 20) that remains in situ at Carlton House Terrace. In 1879 the *Magazine of Art* published an engraving showing a detail of this work with “ornamentation . . . rendered in surface enamels—of opaque and translucent character . . . This work was executed by M. Le Pec, of Paris, and was carried out in accordance with the suggestions of Mr. Owen Jones. It is presumably a unique example of so costly an application of this kind of art-workmanship to a fireplace.”¹⁰⁶

The designs for the cornet persan (fig. 18) and the coffret persan (fig. 19) are different in decorative detail, but both respond to Asian influences. The cornet persan, with handles perhaps based on the mounts found on Chinese vases,¹⁰⁷ was exhibited at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle (see fig. 8, center right). There is a note on Lepec’s monogrammed paper, probably from June 1867, recording that he had delivered to Madame Morrison the “cornet persan £100,” and further down he writes that the mounting of the coffret persan will be complete within a month.¹⁰⁸

The *Bouteille vénitienne*, now in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 21), is reminiscent in form of early fifteenth-century Venetian flasks.¹⁰⁹ The decoration of this object, also lent by Morrison to the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle (see fig. 8, center left), is inscribed around the portrait of its subject *BERNABO VISCONTI* and dated *MCCCLXXVIII* (1378). Perhaps significantly, this was the year that Chaucer traveled to

Lombardy on behalf of Richard II to meet Bernabò Visconti (1323–1385), the soldier-statesman who was ruler of Milan.¹¹⁰ On January 10, 1867, Morrison received a receipt from Lepec for £250 in payment for “une bouteille venitienne [*sic*] et son plateau.”¹¹¹ It is evident that the cost of Lepec’s vases ranged between £100 and £200, and this puts into perspective the value he placed on the nef exhibited in 1867. On the same document in which Lepec records payment for the cornet persan, he notes, “Le vase d’or de £1000.”¹¹²

By the time the *Bouteille vénitienne* was sold by the Morrison family, the name Lepec had been forgotten. On October 26, 1920, and in the following days, Waring & Gillow auctioned the contents of “Basildon Park, Pangbourne, Berks.” Lot 1037 was: “A very fine European enamel rose-water vase of flat bottle-shape with quadruple lip on oval base, the whole richly enamelled on silver, in claret, turquoise, white and gilt, etc., with a medallion portrait of a man, 12½-in. high.” A photographic illustration shows this lot on a table with other works of art.¹¹³

fig. 21 Charles Lepec. *Bouteille vénitienne*, ca. 1867. Enamel on silver, partially gilt, 12½ × 10 × 7¼ in. (31.9 × 25.4 × 20 cm). Inscribed: *BERNABO VISCONTI M.CCC.L.XXVIII*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Gifts, 2004 (2004.452)



PARIS EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE, 1867

By general acclaim, Lepec was a star exhibitor at the Paris 1867 Exposition Universelle, when his masterpiece (see fig. 1) was described as “a gold cup in the form of a *Nef*—a boat. It has been bought for a large sum (but not for more than its worth) by Mr. Alfred Morrison; and, indeed, nearly the whole of Lepec’s productions have been purchased for England by Mr. Robert Phillips, who was the first in this country to appreciate the great artist, and who must rejoice to witness his accumulated fame.”¹¹⁴ The fabrication of the nef was another occasion on which Lepec collaborated with Duron.¹¹⁵

On August 23, 1867, the *Times* wrote at length in praise of Lepec:

In the paintings of M. Lepec we see that he has at command a very wide scale of colours, and that he can associate them with a delicacy and a brilliance which is new to the art. Here and there in some of the specimens it may be that we shall find the colour a little hard; but in other pieces—as in the two miniatures of an English lady—we see that nothing can be more soft. Some of his processes of colour are known only to himself; many of his colours are hard enough to endure eight, ten, 12, even 15 fires; and, indeed, they attain their perfection only in a violent fire. It is no easy matter to get such beauty of colour—for, in the first place, it must be remembered that the artist does not see the colour which he desires to obtain. He paints with one colour in the expectation that after it has passed through the fire it will come out another. Again, his work has to pass through the fire so often that it runs continual risk of destruction.¹¹⁶

In addition to drawing particular attention to Lepec’s technical prowess, the *Times* mentions, among other matters, “two miniatures of an English lady.” As one of them was certainly of Mabel Morrison, surely she was depicted in both. In a letter to Alfred Morrison, dated December 13, 1866, Lepec reported that he had the previous day completed the portrait of Madame Morrison and that it was being forwarded that day via Phillips.¹¹⁷ He worries at length over the resemblance and is anxious for Morrison’s honest opinion. In the same letter Lepec refers to a smaller enamel for a Mr. Chermiside with which he has struggled. He feels that the eye is not quite right, nor the mouth, and that the overall result perhaps makes the sitter look younger than she does in the larger work.¹¹⁸ The second portrait was doubtless for Mabel Morrison’s father, the Reverend Chermiside.¹¹⁹ By this date, as the letter shows, Lepec was in direct contact with the Morrises and visiting them at Fonthill.

While we may never be able to form a complete picture of the items by Lepec that Morrison lent to the 1867 exhibition, we do know from a list in the Fonthill Estate Archive which pieces were sent over from England (see Appendix). The list includes the Metropolitan *Bouteille vénitienne*, the Fitzwilliam tazza and cover, the Rijksmuseum assiette, the Limoges assiette, the Saint Louis *Fantaisie*, the Karlsruhe nef, and the recently identified *Atalanta* and *Amazon*.¹²⁰

Although by 1873 Lepec appears to have significantly reduced his production of enameling on metal, that year he reprised the form of the nef on a smaller scale and in a reduced form.¹²¹ The original nef was also illustrated in 1873 by the largely technical *Practical Magazine* under the title “Enamels by M. Charles Lepec, Paris.” In an article briefly recalling the history of painted enamels, there is a short description once more demonstrating the interest in the technical issues raised in such work. Lepec’s nef is praised as:

a complete specimen of the various kinds of enamelling. The painting, first, is indestructible, the opaque enamels

re-touched, and the rich gamut of translucent enamels, directly applied to gold, in the ornaments; the enamels incrustated in the foot, which also throws up pretty medallions which are painted and set, completing an exquisite execution.¹²²

As is clear from the letters in the Fonthill Estate Archive, Lepec made a practice of collaborating with his Parisian confrères. But he also acted as an intermediary on their behalf. In a letter dated December 21, 1863, he tells Phillips that he will be bringing to London a brooch by Duron for his inspection. The following year, on May 11, Lepec again writes to Phillips, this time about two inkstands, chandeliers, and a candlestick by Dotin, and in June 1867 he makes deliveries to Morrison on behalf of Dotin and Zuloaga. There are, in addition, two accounts to Morrison, signed by Lepec, but on the billheads of Dotin and Duron, both from 1866.¹²³

THE 1870S

The carved and gilded ivory plaque (fig. 22)¹²⁴ demonstrates Lepec turning his considerable talents as a

fig. 22 Charles Lepec and Moreau-Vauthier (French, 1831–1893). Ivory Plaque, 1870. Ivory, parcel-gilt and painted, and ebony, glass, and velvet, 22¼ × 24¾ in. (56.5 × 62.7 cm). Signed on shield, proper right: CH. LEPEC. INV. DEL. 70, and on shield, proper left: MOREAU, SCUT. Gismondi, Paris





fig. 23a-d Charles Lepec. Four Designs for Masks, ca. mid-1860s. Pencil and watercolor on paper, 3½ × 3½ in. (9 × 9 cm). Each signed *Ch Lepec*. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.416-1891, D.420-1891, D.419-1891, D.417-1891)

draftsman to a new medium and again working in conjunction with another artist-craftsman. The shield at left is signed *CH. LEPEC. INV. DEL. 70* and the one on the right *MOREAU, SCUT.*¹²⁵ Yet again this was a commission for Morrison; it is monogrammed at the top with interlaced *Ms* for Mabel Morrison. The first reference to someone named Moreau in the Fonthill Estate Archive, presumably in connection with Morrison himself, is a letter from Lepec to Phillips dated May 11, 1864, in which he reports that the day after Phillips departed Paris he inquired about the price of Moreau's *Oedipus*, but that it had been sold.¹²⁶ On August 4, 1869, Morrison records in his address-notebook: "Moreau 57 Rue Tiquetonne carved the ivory bust of Henry IV original by Germain Pilon ami de Jean Goujon—designer of the mausoleums of Francis Ist & Henri II a S^t Denis."¹²⁷

The grotesque at the bottom of the plaque relates to a group of six such designs for masks by Lepec in the Victoria and Albert Museum's set of drawings acquired from Phillips (see figs. 23a-d, for example).¹²⁸ The Lepec/Moreau-Vauthier work was sold at Christie's on February 23, 1899, as lot 138: "A SCROLL-SHAPED IVORY PLAQUE, carved in relief with an emblematic group 'Omnia vincit Amor' and Cupids, gryphons, arabesques and other ornaments—by Moreau, designed by Ch. Lepec, 1870—in glazed ebonized frame." The buyer's name is hard to read but might be "Gibbes." It has not been ascertained what happened to this piece between 1899 and its recent reappearance in Paris. As we shall see, Lepec himself would later turn his own hand to carving—but in boxwood.

The ivory surely confirms the attribution of an apparently unsigned and unprovenanced coffret,

embellished with a series of enamel panels (see fig. 16), that should perhaps now be dated about 1870. This large work first appeared at auction and was subsequently included in an exhibition mounted by Roxane Rodriguez.¹²⁹ The central group on the lid, with the surrounding scrolling borders as well as the scaly fish, for example, can be compared to details on the ivory.¹³⁰ It is conceivable that the two profile portrait plaques of Laure and Marguerite lent by Morrison in 1867 may have been similar in design to two of those on the coffret; the profile plaques on the coffret represent Laure, Julia, Bianca, and Margareta and are also similar to the profile on the front of the Limoges coffret (see fig. 9).

The record in the *Art-Journal* of Lepec's participation in the 1871 London International Exhibition is significant in its praise for his jewelry, a hitherto largely neglected aspect of his work, noted in passing in connection with the Morrison loan to the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867:

The *cloisonnés* enamels, by Lepec, are the most perfect examples of the Art, consisting of necklaces, pendants,

brooches, ear-rings, lockets, &c., with central fields of lozenge-shape, or other forms, of the most delicate colours, serving as backgrounds for small painted figures, modifications and copied originals from the Greek, Pompeian, and Etruscan.¹³¹

Lepec's last appearance at a world's fair was at the London International Exhibition, 1872, where he exhibited three works, all lent by "Mrs. A. Morrison."¹³² Number 2736 was an "Enamelled Coffret," which has not been identified; it may have been the unprovenanced coffret (see fig. 16) or, equally possible, the coffret persan (see fig. 19). Also unidentified is the "Small Enamelled Jewel Box" (number 2738); could this be the one now at Limoges (see fig. 9)?

The third exhibited piece was an "Enamelled Mirror." Although this too has yet to come to light, it may be the one for which three undated designs survive at the Victoria and Albert Museum (figs. 24, 25).¹³³ The colored and more finished design (fig. 25) includes details relating to colors and the manufacturing process, providing firsthand insights into Lepec's production

fig. 24 Charles Lepec. Design for a Hand Mirror, ca. 1860s. Pencil and pen and ink, with gold highlights on paper, 14 x 7½ in. (35.5 x 18 cm). Initialed CLP. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.415-1891)

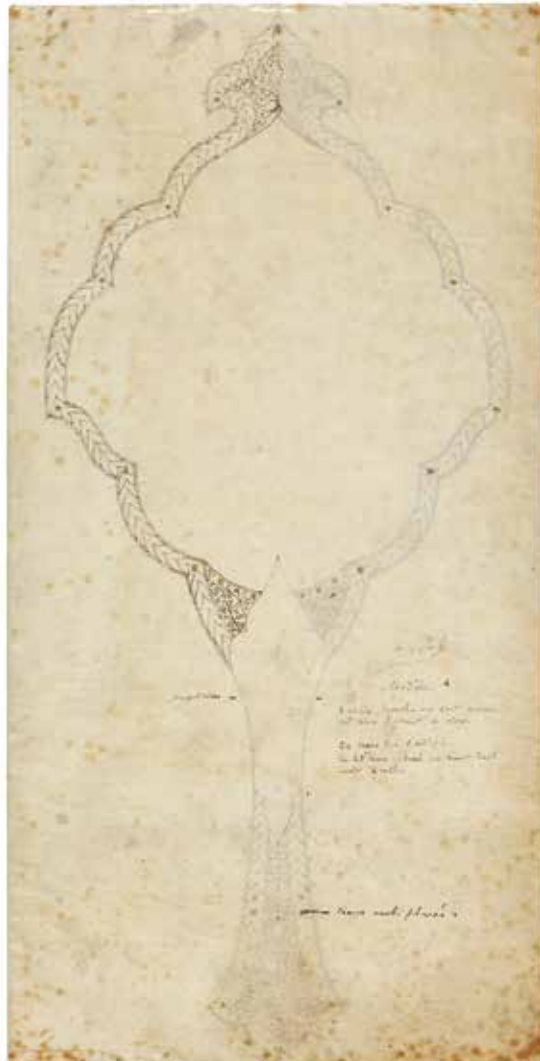


fig. 25 Charles Lepec. Design for a Hand Mirror, ca. late 1860s. Pencil and pen and ink, with watercolor, and gold highlights on paper, 14¾ x 8½ in. (37.3 x 20.5 cm). Initialed CLP. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.414-1891)

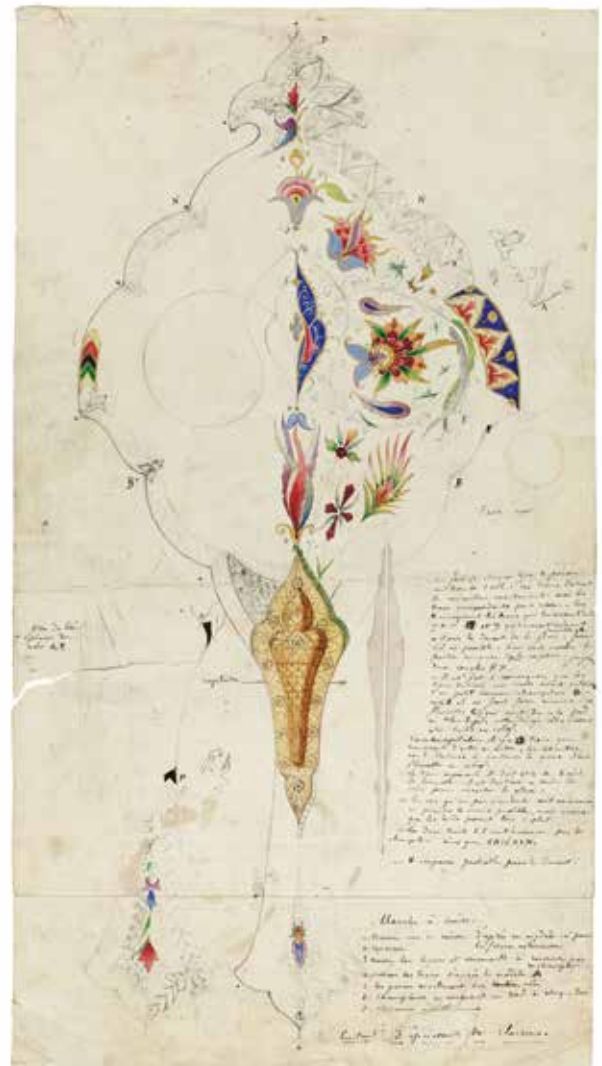


fig. 26 Charles Lepec.
Design for Mabel Morrison
Portrait and Surround,
1884. Pencil, pen and ink
on paper, 11 × 6½ in.
(27.8 × 15.5 cm). Victoria
and Albert Museum,
London (D.407-1891)



fig. 27 Charles Lepec.
Design for Mabel Morrison
Portrait and Surround,
ca. 1884. Pencil, pen and
ink, and watercolor, with
gold highlights, on pre-
pared paper, 11 × 6½ in.
(27.8 × 15.5 cm). Signed
CHARLES LEPEC. Victoria
and Albert Museum,
London (D.408-1891)



methods: “procedure—draw onto copper the design below . . . make divisions for the champlévé enamel . . . pierce holes on both sides, make divisions for champlévé, and apply three levels of cloisonné enamel.”¹³⁴

Press coverage for the less ambitious 1872 exhibition was not as extensive as had been the case in 1867. The *Birmingham Daily Post*, however, in an article titled “The Jewellery,” noted Lepec’s participation.¹³⁵ And the *Times*, under the heading “International Exhibition of 1872,” reported that the “*Journal Officiel* of January 19, 1872, contains the following decree relative to the representation of French productions at that Exhibition.” It is a sign of the respect in which he was by then held that Lepec was listed as a member of the committee responsible for selecting exhibits in “Class 7.— Reproductions from the Antique and from Works of the Middle Ages.”¹³⁶

Throughout his career Lepec created small-scale portraits and miniatures for significant members of society. In 1862 he made miniature portraits (present location unknown) of Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie.¹³⁷ Then, in 1864, he agreed to make portraits of the king and queen of Portugal, also untraced.¹³⁸ There are also three miniatures in the British Royal Collection. The second and third examples show Lepec’s use of photography, while the first is based on another artist’s work.¹³⁹

It seems plausible that other such portrait miniatures await discovery. In a letter to Robert Phillips dated June 25, 1864, Lepec says that he has to return quickly to Paris because he has to make a miniature of Prince Napoleon for his mother.¹⁴⁰ Lepec requests, in the same letter, photographs of Princess Alexandra (1844–1925), the Danish consort of the Prince of Wales. In his quiet

fig. 28 Charles Lepec.
Carved Panel, with a Portrait of Mabel Morrison, 1886/87.
 Boxwood, gilt metal, and painted ivory, mounted on gold velvet in a wooden metal-mounted frame, panel 9½ × 4¾ in. (23.2 × 11.7 cm); frame 18½ × 14¾ × 2¼ in. (47 × 36.2 × 5.7 cm). The panel is signed *Charles Lepec inv. sculp.*, and the miniature is signed and dated *Ch. Lepec 1886*. Inscribed in detail on the reverse of portrait. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The James Parker Charitable Foundation Gift, 2010 (2010.33)

moments, Lepec intends to make an enamel portrait.¹⁴¹ The references in the Fonthill Estate Archive to Lepec's work as a miniaturist suggest that there is considerably more to be discovered about the artist's activities in this genre.

THE 1880S

Toward the end of his life Lepec created one final major work for the Morrises, *Carved Panel, with a Portrait of Mabel Morrison* (fig. 28). This remarkable object, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, encloses a gilt-metal-bordered miniature on ivory of Mabel Morrison, supported by a flamboyantly carved boxwood figure of a winged beast, that leitmotif of Lepec's oeuvre, here holding up Cupid resting on a sphere. The panel bears the legend *CESAR IMP.*¹⁴² and is signed *CHARLES LEPEC INV. SCVLP.*; the ivory, inscribed *MABEL*, is signed and dated: *CH. LEPEC 1886*. Behind the miniature, on the wooden back, there is a further, detailed inscription:

Ce buis / a été composé, dessiné / et sculpté, ainsi que la portrait / en miniature sur ivoire de / M^{me} Mabel Morrison par / Charles Le Pecq de Tourville¹⁴³ / habituellement nommé— / Charles Lepec, dans sa maison / de la Croix de Fer¹⁴⁴, à Reux / arrt de Pont l'Evêque, Dept / du Calvados et terminé / dans la 1^{ere} semaine de / Février / de l'an 1887.¹⁴⁵

The panel itself is inscribed in ink on reverse: *Trous / de / Fixage pour / l'exécution / Le Pec.*

The drawings by Lepec in the Victoria and Albert Museum include three sheets relating to this work. The first drawing, dated 1884 (fig. 26), appears to be an initial sketch but the second (fig. 27), more fully worked, is signed by Lepec and inscribed *grandeur d'exécution du buis*.¹⁴⁶ It is in its present form that this work was sold by the Morrison family in 1920 from Basildon Park. Lot 1306 in the sale conducted by Waring & Gillow was: "A miniature portrait of a lady on ivory in exquisitely carved cedar [*sic*] setting in design of a dragon and cupid (miniature and carving by LEPEC), in glazed frame."¹⁴⁷ The preceding lot in the Basildon Park sale was: "A very richly carved boxwood frame in cupids, dragons, etc 19-in. by 16 in., by CHARLES LEPEC"; this has not been traced.

A further, two-part drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum, however, suggests that this piece may have been intended as a work on a grander scale (figs. 29a, b). The red "velvet" and gilt metal-mounted





fig. 29a Charles Lepec. Design for "Morrison Tabernacle," 1886. Watercolor, with gold highlights on paper, 7½ × 4½ in. (18.1 × 11.4 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.406-1891)

fig. 29b Charles Lepec. Design for "Morrison Family Triptych," 1886. Pencil, pen and ink, and watercolor, with gold highlights, on prepared paper, 7½ × 4½ in. (18.1 × 11.4 cm). Signed and dated *Charles Lepec 1886*. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (D.406-1891)

tabernacle (fig. 29a) seems to have been designed as a shrine. We know that the central portrait in the "Family Triptych" (fig. 29b) is of Mabel Morrison but can only speculate about the subjects of the other four portraits. We can deduce, however, that there are two male and two female figures. Alfred and Mabel had five children, the first of whom died when ten months old. Perhaps the four figures on the "wings" are the four surviving children, Hugh, Katherine, James, and Dorothy.¹⁴⁸ This drawing is signed and dated "Charles Lepec 1886." The grotesque from which the top miniature is suspended relates to the group of designs for "Masks" (see figs. 23a–d).

Lepec worked right up to the end of his life, and if his productivity was diminished, his ability appears to have remained intact. An undated drawing titled *Mabel Morrison* is inscribed *MM*, for Mabel Morrison, and signed *CHARLES LEPEC INV. DEL. SCULP.* (fig. 30).¹⁴⁹ This drawing, when compared to another in the Musée d'Orsay, demonstrates a consistency in his later work and may be part of a series. Based on the inscription on *Mabel Morrison*, it would appear that both drawings were designs for sculpture. The drawing in the Musée d'Orsay is signed and dated *Charles Lepec 1888* and inscribed with the initials *CHS* and *Constance Maria Josepha*.¹⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Charles Lepec was born into a relatively prosperous and educated milieu. His career, following a formal academic education, began with painting but flourished with the production of enamels. As Alcouffe notes, what distinguishes painted enamel of the Second Empire (1852–70) from its production in the Renaissance is that it tended to be practiced by artists who were painters by training rather than by those who were merely copying engravings.¹⁵¹ Later in life Lepec returned, relatively seamlessly, to painting, drawing, designing, and carving. He was also, by his own account, an architect. Although probably independently financially stable, he seems to have run a professional atelier and had assistants or pupils, one of whom he married in 1882, when he was fifty-two.¹⁵²

The 1860s were the most productive years of Lepec's career, and his greatest successes were works in enamel. These, it seems, can be divided into three broad categories: the elaborate creations that he exhibited, many of which ended up with Alfred Morrison; the exquisite and proficient portrait miniatures (invariably based on photographic images); and enamels for jewelry, which may represent a more overtly commercial aspect of his production. The 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle

was clearly the highlight of Lepec's professional career, and his output, particularly after 1870, appears not to have been prodigious.¹⁵³

The earliest Lepec enamel to have been identified dates from 1860.¹⁵⁴ From this it is evident that Lepec's style of decoration emerged fully formed out of his training as a painter and did not evolve noticeably over the following decade. The works he created for display started with simple dish shapes and progressed with various, increasingly ambitious vessels, such as vases, caskets, and tazzas, culminating with the elaborate nef that was the centerpiece of his display at the Paris Exposition. His miniatures and jewelry, which will be addressed in a later article, are no less proficient—but are less ambitious. During the last two decades of his life, Lepec reverted to painting, and produced designs and carvings. Morrison's relationship with Lepec continued after the artist appears to have ceased production of his famed enamels, and Morrison owned work in all the media in which Lepec remained active, seemingly with the exception of paintings in oil.



Whether in painting, enamel, design, carving, or portraiture, Lepec's work displays his technical ability and intellectual capacity, as well as the benefits derived from exposure to contemporary cultural luminaries. His production consistently shows an awareness of current trends in painting and an interest in the value of photography.¹⁵⁵ The evidence from Lepec's correspondence with both Phillips and Morrison shows a man at ease socially, and the way in which he interacted on behalf of his confrères, beyond professional cooperation, demonstrates that he was a valued and trusted intermediary.

Many manufacturers' careers benefited from the support of Alfred Morrison, the quintessential discerning patron. But in that company Charles Lepec's work stands out for its refined design and exquisite workmanship. The evident affection that Morrison felt for Lepec was such that he named Lepec's Room at Fonthill House after the artist.¹⁵⁶

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OLIVIER HURSTEL

Independent Scholar, Paris

MARTIN LEVY

Antiques Dealer and Scholar, London

fig. 30 Charles Lepec. *Mabel Morrison*, ca. 1888. Pencil and white highlights on prepared paper, 18½ × 15¾ in. (47 × 39 cm). Signed CHARLES LEPEC INV. DEL. SCULP. Private collection

APPENDIX

*Works by Charles Lepec lent by Alfred Morrison to the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867*¹⁵⁷

Excluded from this list were “1 portrait de Madame Morrison [and] 1 médaillon César,” neither of which has been traced.¹⁵⁸

- 1 Deux profils de femmes: Laure [untraced]
- 2 Marguerite [untraced]¹⁵⁹
- 3 Boucles d’oreilles transparentes à jour [untraced]
- 4 Une petite Vénus [private collection]¹⁶⁰

Coffret de la Chasse:

- 5 La Chasse [untraced]
- 6 Attalante [art market]¹⁶¹
- 7 Diane, coffret de la chasse [art market]
- 8 Lion [untraced]
- 9 Chevreuil [untraced]
- 10 Coupe Volupté [location unknown]
- 11 Coupe Fantaisie [Saint Louis Art Museum]
- 12 [no number 12]
- 13 Bouteille venitienne [The Metropolitan Museum of Art]
- 14 et son plateau
- 15 assiette sujet [Musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges, Palais de l’Evêché]
- 16 assiette sujet [Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam]
- 17 une assiette indienne [untraced]
- 18 une assiette persane [untraced]
- 19 Bonbonnière indienne [untraced]¹⁶²

NOTES

- 1 For the catalogue, see Victoria and Albert Museum 1952.
- 2 The Musée d’Orsay project led to a renewed interest in nineteenth-century French decorative arts, and gave rise to several major exhibitions. In addition to “The Second Empire, 1852–1870: Art in France under Napoleon III” (Philadelphia, Detroit, and Paris, 1978–79), others included “Le Japonisme” (Paris and Tokyo, 1988) and “Un Age d’or des arts décoratifs, 1814–48” (Paris, 1991). Another important exhibition, presenting an overview of nineteenth-century European decorative arts, was “Der Traum vom Glück: Die Kunst des Historismus in Europa” (Vienna, 1996).
- 3 Jean-Marie Moulin, “The Second Empire: Art and Society,” in Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978, p. 11. See also Loyer 1992.
- 4 Just as the term “Regency,” when applied to works of art, extends beyond the years 1810–20, when the Prince of Wales was regent before becoming George IV, so the description “Second Empire” is generally seen to cover a greater date range than the historical period when Napoleon III was emperor of France.
- 5 See, for example, Barbedienne’s pair of candelabra, MMA 2008.267.1, .2; Diehl’s cabinet, MMA 1989.197; Deck’s bowl, MMA 1993.313; and Christofle et Cie’s jardinière, MMA 1991.88a, b.
- 6 See Levy 2012.
- 7 See, for example, a display cabinet by Grohé Frères in the Royal Collection (RCIN 79769).
- 8 Dudley’s important acquisitions included a clock by Gustave Baugrand (private collection), a version of which is in the collection of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 58.230; a mirror designed by Carrier-Belleuse and manufactured by Barbedienne (Bowes Museum, 1992.1567432), and the “boite à whist,” or “Card-Box,” enameled by Lepec, manufactured by Falize, and exhibited by Boucheron (untraced); Purcell 1999, pp. 54–55, and *Art-Journal* 1867b, p. 314. One of the Baugrand clocks and the other two works were exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867.
- 9 A significant factor for Franco-British trade was the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty, 1860, which eased trade tariffs between France and Great Britain. At the same time, spurred on by British successes at the Great Exhibition, 1851, the French invested new energy in their own production of decorative arts.
- 10 This is how Lepec was described when he was awarded the Legion of Honor on June 30, 1867.
- 11 Christie’s sale 1971, lot 98.
- 12 See *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* 14 (1977), pp. 213–15. At the time of writing, the Badisches Landesmuseum was closed for renovation, and so it was not possible to reexamine the nef. The authors are grateful to Katharina Siefert for her help (emails to Martin Levy, January 7–8, 2014). See also Fillitz et al. 1996, ill. p. 591.
- 13 Alcouffe 1980.
- 14 Miniature enamel painting began in France about 1630 and over the following two centuries, while considerably diminished, never entirely died out. See also, for the revival of enamel techniques under the Second Empire, Alcouffe 1978.
- 15 Lepec was alone in exhibiting under two categories: “oeuvres d’art” and “orfèvrerie.”
- 16 See, for example, Meyer’s *Allegory of the French Republic*, MMA 1993.178.1.

- 17 See, for example, Alcouffe 1980, figs. 1, 2, 12. See also, for Duron's prototypes, Alcouffe 2001 and Gabet 2007.
- 18 Alcouffe 1980, figs. 3, 5, 6. *Clémence Isaure* (1865–66) was sold by Christie, Manson & Woods, June 18, 1892, lot 172, purchased by Friedlander for 110 gns. It later reappeared at Christie's (New York), sale, November 16, 1979, lot 38; for further details see www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/notice.html?no_cache=1&numid=1401. Another work titled *Clémence Isaure, fondatrice des jeux floraux* was exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1861, but the present work is the *Clémence Isaure* shown at the 1866 Salon; see Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, pp. 918–19. This perceptive acquisition was driven by Marc Bascou, with the support of Daniel Alcouffe, when the new Musée d'Orsay was still being developed. For more on Bolckow, see Boase 2004.
- 19 Purcell 1999 and Gere and Rudoe 2010.
- 20 The authors are completing for publication a detailed analysis of Lepec's life, milieu, development, technical innovations, iconography, and work for other patrons and manufacturers, as well as discussing documents relating to the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867. The article is provisionally titled "Charles Lepec: Peintre-Emailleur." Hereafter, it will be referred to as Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 21 See, for example, Wainwright 1995, pp. 13–18.
- 22 For Beckford, see Ostergard 2001; for Hope, see Watkin and Hewat-Jaboor 2008.
- 23 See, for example, Castellani's paper knife, MMA 1993.66; Brocard's mosque lamp, MMA 1976.311; and Falize's clock, MMA 1991.113a–f.
- 24 There are, in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (according to the online catalogue), twenty-two engravings and etchings with an "Alfred Morrison" provenance. These include sixteen by Jacques Callot (1592–1635), MMA 57.650.400(1–16). On the autographs, see Dakers 2011, p. 302n134.
- 25 For Chinese examples, see Christie's sale 2004; and for Japanese examples, see Christie's sale 1899a, lots 145–222.
- 26 Dion-Tenenbaum 2005, pp. 145–64.
- 27 For the Morrison family, see Dakers 2011.
- 28 Reux is a tiny hamlet perched on a hillside above Pont l'Évêque, Calvados, France.
- 29 Might Lepec's untraced "Portrait de Mme la baronne T . . .," exhibited at the Paris Salon, 1865, no. 2616 (Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, p. 919), depict the baronne de Tourville?
- 30 For example, *Recueil général des lois, décrets, ordonnances, etc. depuis le mois de juin 1789 jusqu'au mois d'août 1830* (Paris, 1839), the first volume in a long series that codified the rights of the French following the overthrow of the monarchy and before the inauguration of the Republic.
- 31 This explains why the younger Lepec was described as "a French gentleman, of Spanish origin" in *Art-Journal* 1867a, p. 154.
- 32 Founded in 1836 on the model of English private clubs, it closed in 1874. Le Cercle des Arts, which was at 22, rue de Choiseul, was limited to six hundred members. Over time, those who belonged included the artists Eugène Delacroix, Paul Delaroche, David d'Angers, Horace Vernet, and François Rude; the writers Charles Baudelaire, Prosper Mérimée, and Victor Hugo; and financiers such as James and Anthony de Rothschild.
- 33 "Heureux qui peut entrer dans les arts par la porte noble des lettres et des sciences!" Luchet in Mesnard 1869, p. 90.
- 34 Bellier de La Chavignerie and Auvray 1882–85, vol. 1, p. 1010.
- 35 Paris Salon, 1857, no. 1720 (*Portrait de Mme C . . .*), and Paris Salon, 1859, no. 1950 (*Cortège d'un roi Fainéant*); see Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, pp. 918–19.
- 36 The earliest enamel so far located is *Audaces Fortuna Juvat*, which is dated 1860; see Blairman & Sons 2011, no. 6, where this work is misidentified as *La Fortune Conduite par l'Amour*, a work exhibited at the Paris Salon (1861, no. 1950); Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, p. 918. The classical and mythological subjects favored by Lepec in many of his enamels reveal a debt to his formative years as a Salon painter.
- 37 Today, there is little trace in Reux of the Lepec family. Their house was on a property marked by a sign reading "Lieu Lepec." On the adjacent property, the "Lieu du Presbytère," there are, however, buildings abutting the Lieu Lepec. At the time of writing the precise status of the two properties and their existing buildings has not been established. In the graveyard outside the fifteenth-century church at Reux, there is a double grave purchased in 1853, according to a record kept in the town hall at Reux, by a member of the "Lepecq" family (the historic name by which the Lepec family was sometimes known). It has not been established whether this unmarked grave, restored very recently by the commune, contains the remains of Charles Lepec. Perhaps the best-known resident of Reux during the Lepec family's residence there was the banker Maurice Ephrussi (1849–1916), who married Béatrice de Rothschild. Their property today belongs to David de Rothschild. Martin Levy is grateful to the mayor of Reux, Jean Dutacq, for his courteous welcome, August 14, 2014. Full details of Lepec's life will be documented in Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 38 The formidable critic, and at the time *conservateur* at the Louvre, Alfred Darcel (1818–1893) commented that although Lepec's work displayed in London, in the category of miniatures, showed a great deal of taste, the manufacture left something to be desired; see Darcel 1862, p. 544. Darcel was, of course, more interested in Renaissance enamel. For the significance of the world's fairs, see Busch and Futter 2012.
- 39 In Morrison's address-notebook (Fonthill Estate Archive), Phillips's address is recorded sometime after December 26, 1861, so either at the time of the exhibition, or possibly just before. For Phillips, see Culme 1987, vol. 1, pp. 364–65. See also Gere and Rudoe 2010.
- 40 For more on Alfred Morrison, see Dakers 2011, pp. 225–47.
- 41 The Morrison archive of the Fonthill Estate Archive, Wiltshire, contains forty-seven letters, bills, and receipts covering the years 1862–69 relating to Lepec and his relationship with Phillips and Morrison. These include twelve letters from Lepec to Phillips, four from Phillips to Morrison, one from Lepec to Morrison, bills and receipts from Lepec (and others) for Morrison, and bills to Morrison from Phillips. The letters and documents in the Fonthill Estate Archive have been sorted by John D'arcy but are not yet formally catalogued, so it is impossible to give precise references. The authors are grateful to Lord Margadale (b. 1958) for granting access to the archive and for permission to quote from these documents.
- 42 This assertion is based on the handwriting on accounts from Phillips in the Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 43 See Darcel 1862, pp. 538–47.
- 44 An ebony and ivory toilet mirror, stamped "G. B. Gatti" and inscribed in ink *Roma 1862*, belongs to one of Morrison's descendants; it was presumably acquired from the London International Exhibition.

- 45 Account from Phillips Brothers to Alfred Morrison, 1863; the document itself is numbered fol. 490; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 46 Sotheby's Belgravia sale 1975, lot 54.
- 47 Alcouffe 1980, p. 105; Falize 1893, part 5, p. 484 ("une étude de femme nue, Vénus ou Psyché, dans une gamme tendre et vaporeuse"). On July 26, 1865, Phillips Brothers invoiced Alfred Morrison for "Mounting an Enamel Plaque in Frame, Venus / a morocco & Velvet case." Account from Phillips Brothers to Alfred Morrison, September 29, 1865; Fonthill Estate Archive. The frame and the [silver-gilt?] border around the Venus (fig. 5) are by the same hand as that around *Atalanta*, lent by Morrison to the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867 (see note 161 below).
- 48 Darcel 1868, p. 81, quoted by Julia Clarke in Sotheby's Belgravia sale 1975, under lot 54. In 1837 Godefroy Engelmann was granted a patent for chromolithography.
- 49 Hurstel and Levy, forthcoming.
- 50 Phillips fulfilled a similar role for Harriet Bolckow (the wife of Henry Bolckow), for whom he sourced secondhand goods. R & S Garrard, the Crown Jewellers, acted in a like vein for the Victorian royal family, and this was probably a common practice among luxury suppliers. The authors are grateful to Charlotte Gere for these observations.
- 51 For a List of Morrison's loans, see the Appendix.
- 52 "Fine Arts: Messrs. Phillips's Collection of Works of Art and Vertu," *Morning Post* (London), January 7, 1864, p. 5.
- 53 Christie's South Kensington sale 1994, lot 71: "An enamel tazza, the plateau polychrome painted with a figure of Venus drawn by Nereids, the circular foot and urn-shaped stem decorated with busts and masks, infant caryatids and scrolls, signed CHARLES LEPEC." On January 15, 1864, Phillips Brothers charged Alfred Morrison for "An Enamel Cup 'Lepec,' Birth of Venus / [£]300 / Mounting D° as agreed / [£]15." Account from Phillips Brothers to Alfred Morrison, receipt of February 5, 1864. Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 54 "J'ai heureusement terminé le pied de la coupe: cela a été bien long, car je n'ai pas cessé une heure de travailler depuis votre passage à Paris. Cela fait plus de trois mois pour le pied seulement."
- 55 "tellement augmenté les dessins de la coupe qu'il faut encore au moins quatre mois de travail sans interruption pour la terminer."
- 56 "J'ai terminé hier la coupe . . . un objet de cette importance . . . qu'elle nous fera honneur à tous les deux." A letter from Phillips to Morrison dated December 21, 1863, encloses Lepec's letter. Assuming that this was standard practice, it explains how letters from Lepec to Phillips have ended up in the Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 57 "J'ai fait faire la monture de la coupe par M^r Duron. C'est très bien exécuté, comme tout ce qu'il fait . . ."; Lepec to Phillips, December 21, 1863. For more on Duron, see Gabet 2007. Lepec's relationship with Duron and other contemporary craftsmen is discussed below.
- 58 See "Site of Nos. 25–34, Cockspur Street," in *Survey of London* vol. 16, *St Martin-in-The-Fields I: Charing Cross*, ed. G. H. Gater and E. P. Wheeler (London: London County Council, 1935), pp. 146–49, reproduced by British History Online, accessed August 5, 2014, www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=68126.
- 59 Paris Salon, 1864, no. 2306, *deux émaux*; see Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, pp. 918–19.
- 60 "[L]e succès des deux coupes ne laisse rien à désirer: j'ai plusieurs demandes et je dois dire que c'est surtout pour la dernière: c'est celle qui plaît le plus aux artistes et je sais que c'est surtout à cause d'elle que j'ai eu ma médaille." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 61 Fonthill Estate Archive. The two coupes were also the subject of a glowing review by the sculptor and critic Louis Auvray (1810–1890); see Auvray 1863, pp. 81–82: "Les deux émaux, *la Volupté* et *la Fantaisie*, de M. Lepec, sont deux petits chefs-d'oeuvre; nous ne connaissons en ce genre rien de plus parfait, et lorsqu'on les compare aux autres émaux, on ne peut comprendre comment M. Lepec est parvenu à obtenir cette exactitude. . . . Non-seulement l'exécution industrielle est admirable, mais la partie artistique ne l'est pas moins."
- 62 "une femme sauvage de la tribu des Peaux-Rouges chevauchant une chimère, nous aimions mieux ses portraits de l'an dernier." In the same article, Darcel describes *La Volupté* as "deux sirènes de Paris, attelées de front à la conque où se tient debout une Vénus d'opéra. . . ." Darcel 1864, p. 84. *La Fantaisie* was sold at Christie's South Kensington, September 20, 1994, lot 72.
- 63 Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 64 "Je termine le coffret qui ressemble, comme effet, à un travail d'orfèvrerie." Lepec to Phillips, letter dated June 25, 1864; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 65 This coffret combines painted and *plique-à-jour* enamels. See <http://www.museebal.fr/en/node/66>. See also Notin 1995a.
- 66 Lepec's use of profile portraits echoes work he might have observed at the Musée du Louvre, such as the art of Jacques I Laudin (about 1627–1695), acquired in 1828; see Baratte 2000, pp. 401–2.
- 67 Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, pp. 918–19.
- 68 An architect named M. H. Durand was given responsibility about 1838 for making architectural drawings for a statistical survey in Rheims; see the *Foreign Quarterly Review* 1838–39, p. 23. A further speculation is that M. H. Durand might have had a connection to the silversmith François Durand (1792–1874); see Dion-Tenenbaum 2011, p. 277, for a biography of François Durand.
- 69 "Avant projet d'un bouclier en émail translucide sur argent. Le Bouclier sera trois fois plus grand que ce modèle et aura environs 3 pieds anglais. Le sujet du milieu sera en argent émaillé bleu translucide, les personnages seront en camaïeu d'or de différentes nuances dont il n'y a qu'un seul spécimen au Louvre. L'entourage composé de grands ornements d'un effet décoratif sera sur un fond sombre et tous les ornements seront en couleurs vives et translucides donnant l'effet des Jean Courtois: seulement ou bien d'être sur paillons ils seront directement émaillés sur argent de telle sorte qu'ils auront un éclat très grand. Une partie du fond sera ornée d'or pour composer un effet différent. Je pense que pareille chose n'a jamais été tentée dans de telles proportions." For Courtois, see Cocheris 1860. According to Alcouffe (1980, p. 104), *Roger et Angélique* was exhibited for a second time at the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867.
- 70 "[J]e ne le vendrai pas sans vous prévenir." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 71 *Orlando Furioso* 10.78–95, cited in Hall 2008, p. 18, s.v. "Angelica."
- 72 *Roger Délivrant Angélique* (Musée du Louvre); a smaller version—*Angelica Saved by Ruggerio*—is at the National Gallery, London (NG3292). Although no substantial evidence has been found to support the assertion, the *Art-Journal* (1867a, p. 154), records that Lepec was "a pupil of the lamented Ingres and of Flandrin, men who will always be illustrious among the artists of France."
- 73 "rare perfection calligraphique" but with a "violet désagréable, et d'ailleurs le caractère décoratif, si important ici, manque absolument à son oeuvre." Mantz 1865, p. 32.
- 74 "exécution éblouissante. . . . Rien n'est plus beau que cette chaire rose et transparente et ces membres souples et

- gracieux reposant sur cette cuirasse d'acier; la main de Roger, heureusement placée sur l'épaule de la jeune fille . . . Ce groupe ravissant nage dans un ciel d'azur et au milieu de nuages tout parsemés de poudre d'or." Jahyer 1865, p. 256. The report also praises Lepec's untraced "portrait de Mme la baronne de T"; see Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, p. 919, and note 29 above.
- 75 As described in the list of loans to the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867 (see Appendix).
- 76 Notin 1995b, p. 91, no. 34. The numbering and other marks on Lepec's enamels will be discussed in Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 77 Private collection; see Blairman & Sons 2011, no. 6. See note 36 above.
- 78 Baarsen 2013, pp. 539–41, no. 131.
- 79 Similar motifs can be seen on Lepec's nef and *La Fantaisie*. Lepec's *Tarasque* (exhibited at the Paris Salon, 1874, no. 1182), painted in oil on canvas, depicts a female figure riding on the back of a similar beast; sold Sotheby's (Olympia), March 9, 2005, lot 124.
- 80 "Je vous prie de dire de ma part à M^r Morrison que malgré la grande richesse des ornements et même malgré que je le voudrais, ces deux nouvelles assiettes ne pourront jamais atteindre le prix des deux premières . . ." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 81 Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 82 Department of Prints and Drawings, Box M.39, D.406-1891–421-1891. Following the authors' inquiry, in May 2013, these have now appeared in the Victoria and Albert Museum's online catalogue (<http://collections.vam.ac.uk>). The authors are grateful to Erika Speel, who alerted them to the existence of this cache of designs.
- 83 Victoria and Albert Museum, MA/1/P1180. The drawings were entered on June 4, 1891. The authors are grateful to Roisin Inglesby for checking this reference (email to Martin Levy, May 10, 2013).
- 84 See, for example, figs. 17–19.
- 85 The overall scheme of decoration on Lepec's heavily annotated *Design for a Charger*, 1865 (Victoria and Albert Museum, [D.406-1891]), can be compared to the interior of the Fitzwilliam Tazza and Cover (figs. 14, 15) and has something in common with the two plates (figs. 11, 12). In Lepec's careful hand he reveals great attention to the proportion of the decorative elements, as well as to the different bands of color, partly filled in. Lepec notes that the thick branches must be thinner and that care should be taken in making insertions into the main body of the tree ("la branche mere").
- 86 Sanchez 2005, vol. 2, p. 919.
- 87 Gold ring, 746-1890; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O118152/ring-lepec-charles/>.
- 88 Lepec's atelier will be discussed in Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 89 "Depuis plus d'un an je travaille avec l'aide de mes deux plus habiles élèves à une oeuvre, d'émail, d'une proportion inconnue jusqu'à ce jour. La hauteur est de 71 pouces anglais et la largeur de 45.
Je dois vous avouer franchement que la majeure partie de ces plaques qui composent une arabesque très compliquée sont assez bien réussies pour ne craindre aucune comparaison. Dans quelques jours elles seront enfin terminées. Mais le morceau du milieu qui a 21 pouces anglais de diamètre a été brisé entièrement au feu ce matin et mon plus grand et plus vif chagrin c'est que cette oeuvre énorme et si capitale par son importance ne pourra figurer dans l'Exposition de 1866, car il faut déposer les ouvrages le 20 Mars. . . ." Letter from Lepec to Phillips, February 1, 1866; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 90 Bascou, Massé, and Thiébaud 1988, p. 160.
- 91 "Je l'ai déjà manqué une autre fois. De même j'ai une fois fondu et une fois brisé le grand émail sur argent qui devait former le milieu du bouclier. Si par un bonheur extrême je parviens à terminer le travail interrompu aujourd'hui par cet accident, j'ose dire que jamais je n'entreprendrai des émaux qui ont 21 et 23 pouces de large. Je vous écrirai dans 4 ou 5 semaines pour vous dire si la fortune m'a été plus favorable. . . ." Letter from Lepec to Phillips, February 1, 1866; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 92 Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 93 Letter from Lepec to Popelin, thanking him for a publication and for the author's personal handwritten dedication. This letter formed part of a cache of letters to Popelin sold by Chenu, Scrive et Bérard, Hôtel des Ventes, Lyon, April 9, 2008, lot 174. Private collection, London. An enamel portrait of Katherine Morrison (1869–1949), inscribed KATHARINA MDCCLXXX, has been attributed to Popelin; its apparently silver frame bears the initial "BF" in a tablet at the top, for Bapst & Falize (partnership 1880–92); the portrait belongs to a descendant of Alfred Morrison.
- 94 Alcouffe 1980, pp. 104, 117n38, citing Falize 1893, part 4, p. 437: "jamais on n'avait tenté, hors de Sèvres, de passer au feu une plaque de semblable dimension. Dotin, qui cuit les émaux de l'artiste, a dû construire un four tout exprès et n'a pas osé l'établir dans son atelier de la rue Montorgueil. . . ." Charles Dotin (active 1844–89) worked in the enamel workshop at Sèvres, which operated 1845–72. He specialized in the Limoges grisaille technique, inspired by the work of sixteenth-century enamellers. It is of particular significance for the production of *Clémence Isaura* that Dotin operated a very large kiln.
- 95 "elle restera l'une des plus grandes pièces d'émail produites en ce temps-ci . . ." and Falize adds "le mérite en est à celui-ci plus qu'à l'artiste, et Dotin doit être nommé comme Gagneré, le cuiseur de Claudius Popelin, ce furent des praticiens de premier ordre." Falize 1893, part 5, p. 478.
- 96 *Art-Journal* 1867a, p. 154. The article continues: "After having been for a considerable time in the establishment of Mr. Phillips, in Cockspur Street, this enamel has been purchased by one of our great iron-masters, Mr. Bolckow. . . . We heartily congratulate that gentleman on thus having made so splendid an addition to his collections; and yet, at the same time, we are constrained to record our deep regret, that a work of such pre-eminent value as a teacher should not have been secured, as secured it might have been under very advantageous conditions, for the South Kensington Museum. . . ."
- 97 See <http://webapps.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explorer/index.php?qu=lepec&oid=156465>.
- 98 For more on Zuloaga and Morrison, see Lavin 1997, pp. 53–54, 57, and passim. Other French manufacturers named in the Christie's 1899a sale were "Brocart [*sic*]" (lots 322–25), Thesmar (lots 396 and 397), and Charlet (lot 402).
- 99 See Baarsen 2013, p. 541n3.
- 100 Christie's sale 1899a, lot 393 "A PAIR OF SMALLER DITTO [enamel plaques], with 'Le Saut d'Amour' and 'Les Lutteurs d'Amour'—by the same; and a pair of circular ditto, with busts of Laure and Marguerite—in ebonised frames." £9. 19s. 6d. to Giuliano (perhaps a member of the family of jewelers).
Lot 394 "AN OBLONG PLAQUE, with Cupids sacrificing to Venus; and a pair of small upright plaques, with Venus Anadyomene and Cupid—by the same—three in one frame." £9. 19s. 6d. to Marcus.

- Lot 394A "A PAIR OF PLAQUES with 'Elixir' and 'Equilibre d'Amour'; a pair, with heads of Marguerite and Imperia; and a pair, with sporting trophies—*by the same*—in three ebonised frames" £8. 8s. to Heigham [?]
- Lot 395 "A LARGE OBLONG SILVER GILT CASKET, with chased borders and arabesques in appliqué work, enamelled in brilliant translucent colours—18 in. by 12 in. by 8½ in. high—by CHARLES LEPEC—on ebonised stand, with glass shade." £22 to D. Duncan.
- On June 10, 1902, Christie's offered "Valuable Lace from the collection of Mrs Alfred Morrison, and among other items 'Objects of vertu . . . from Numerous Sources.'" Perhaps coincidentally, a vendor named Gwinner entered two enamels by Lepec, lot 137, with a reserve of 40 guineas: "A PAIR OF CUPS AND SAUCERS, of gold enamelled in translucent dark crimson, and painted with Cupids sporting with dolphin, vines, flowers and doves grisaille and delicate tints, on a powdered gold ground, by Lepec, the handles chased with terminal winged female busts—*gross weight, 14 oz.*"; these were unsold and remain untraced.
- 101 The authors are grateful to Lord Margadale for confirming that he does not know the whereabouts of these pieces (email from Vicky Macaskie to Martin Levy, January 2, 2014).
- 102 For enamels by Reymond at the Louvre, see Baratte 2000, pp. 187–273.
- 103 For more on Owen Jones and his work for Morrison, see Flores 2006, pp. 175–77, 179, and 191 (Fonthill House) and 176–77, 181, 191–93 and 212 (Carlton House Terrace).
- 104 Jones 1856, p. 76.
- 105 Flores 2006, figs. 4.44 and 4.45.
- 106 *Magazine of Art* 1879, pp. 140 (fig. 1) and 144 (quote). The design of Lepec's chimneypiece can be compared with a wooden example, also in situ, reproduced in Flores 2006, p. 193, fig. 4.41.
- 107 See, for example, the handles on a Quianlong porcelain vase formerly in Morrison's collection, Christie's sale 2004, lot 55.
- 108 "Le coffret persan sera terminé dans un mois pour la monture." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 109 Lepec might, for instance, have been familiar with the early fifteenth-century Venetian flask given in 1856 to the Louvre (OA 1013).
- 110 Pratt 1939, p. 191.
- 111 Receipt to Morrison, on Fonthill House notepaper; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 112 At the lower end of Lepec's pricing were two items acquired in 1868, neither of which has been traced. On December 17 Phillips Brothers invoiced Alfred Morrison for an "Enamelled Cloisonné Locket by Chas Lepec / [£]13. 0" and two days later for "D° Ring [by Lepec] / [£]7." Account from Phillips Brothers to Alfred Morrison, 1868; the document itself is numbered fol. 575; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 113 Waring & Gillow sale 1920, illustration facing p. 105. The *Bouteille vénitienne* was offered as a "Viennese Enamel Rosewater Bottle on Stand" at Doyle, New York, February 25, 2004, lot 364; it was subsequently published in Blairman & Sons 2004, no. 11.
- 114 *Art-Journal* 1867b, p. 169. See also *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* 14 (1977), p. 213.
- 115 "nef d'or qu'avait exécutée Duron, mais que Lepec avait dessinée et émaillée." Falize 1893, part 5, p. 484.
- 116 *Times* (London) 1867.
- 117 On January 10, 1867, Lepec wrote a receipt to Morrison, on Fonthill House notepaper, for £100 "pour le portrait de Madame Morrison." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 118 "... destiné à Mr Chermiside: il m'a donné de grandes difficultés et n'est pas tout à fait semblable au grand: l'oeil est un peu trop grand et la bouche a quelque chose que je ne puis définir: cependant il a l'air plus jeune que le grand." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 119 For more on the Chermiside family, see Dakers 2011, pp. 236–39.
- 120 Art market, 2014.
- 121 Blairman & Sons 2009, no. 13.
- 122 *Practical Magazine* 1873, p. 262, ill. p. 263.
- 123 The letters and accounts are in the Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 124 Since 2014, with Gismondi, Paris.
- 125 J. L. Moreau or, more likely, his son Augustin-Jean Moreau, "dit Moreau-Vauthier (1831–1893) qui fit une assez brillante carrière de sculpteur, en particulier sur ivoire"; see Hauviller 1997. For a clock by Moreau père, see Malgouyres 2011.
- 126 "Le lendemain de votre départ j'ai écrit à Mr Moreau pour connaître le prix de l'Oedipus—il était vendu." Fonthill Estate Archive. This may be a reference to Gustave Moreau (1826–1898), whose *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (1864) is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (21.134.1). For more on this major work, a sensation when exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1864, see Cooke 2014, pp. 49–51. In light of works by Lepec such as *La Fantaisie* (fig. 8), also exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1864, it is evident that the Moreau would have appealed to Morrison. Moreau, like a number of painters at the time, was interested in enamel.
- 127 Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 128 D.416.1891–421.1891; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk>.
- 129 Christie's (London), May 25, 2000, lot 228; the lot was incorrectly catalogued as "Viennese, about 1890." For the exhibition, see Galerie Roxane Rodriguez 2003, n.p.: "Magnifique coffret de mariage."
- 130 One can also compare the crowned female figure in *L'Amour triomphant* (Galerie Roxane Rodriguez 2003, n.p.).
- 131 *Art-Journal*, n.s., 10 (1871), p. 30. The subject of Lepec's jewelry will be addressed in Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming). See also Gere and Rudoe 2010, p. 101, fig. 63.
- 132 International Exhibition, London 1872, p. 94. Lepec also exhibited enamel crosses at this exhibition, lent by Mabel Morrison; see Lacroix 1873, p. 37.
- 133 D.413-1891 (inscribed *Modèle B*), D.414-1891, and D.415-1891. The latter drawing shows the mirrored side and is inscribed *Modèle A*. A possible candidate for this missing mirror might be "A French gilt brass and enamel decorated hand mirror, the reverse decorated in Persian style with stylized flowers and leaves, 35 cm long," sold Phillips, Bath, October 31, 1994, lot 55. The authors would be most grateful to learn of this object's whereabouts. The vendor George Sassoon was the son of the poet Siegfried Sassoon and Hester Gatty, a granddaughter of Alfred Morrison.
- 134 "Marche à suivre:
1 tracer sur le cuivre d'après ce modèle-ci pour / la forme intérieure
2 repercer
3 tracer les lignes et ornements à réserver pour le champlevé
4 percer les trous d'après le modèle A
5 les percer exactement sur l'autre côté
6 champlever en réservant un bord à chaque trou
7 cloisonner émailler
Entout 3 épaisseurs de cloisons"
Lepec's techniques and innovations will be discussed in detail in Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).

- 135 "The International Exhibition: The Jewellery," *Birmingham Daily Post*, June 12, 1872.
- 136 Lefranc 1872. Others on the committee included Paul Christofle (1805–1863), of the famous Parisian manufacturer Christofle et Cie; the collector and art historian Eugène Dutuit (1807–1886); the ceramic collector and historian Albert Jacquemart (1808–1875); the collector Comte d'Armaillé (about 1822–1882); and Baron Alphonse de Rothschild (1827–1905).
- 137 Alcouffe 1980, pp. 104, 116n33.
- 138 "on m'a fait demander aujourd'hui même si je voudrais faire les portraits du roi et de la reine de Portugal. comme j'ai répondu affirmativement . . ." Lepec to Phillips, May 11, 1864. Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 139 The Lepec miniature portraits are of Princess Helena (RCIN 421906), Princess Louise (RCIN 421907), and Prince Louis of Hesse (RCIN 422105); see Remington 2010, nos. 598, 599, 597, and www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/search#/page/1. Another great enamel artist of the period, Claudius Popelin, was also using photography for portraits at about this time; see Bascou 1996, p. 236. Photography was also used during this period in the production of cameos; see Gere and Rudoe 2010, p. 479.
- 140 "Je reviendrai bien vite à Paris car je dois faire pour l'Impératrice un petit portrait de son fils." Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 141 "Je vous serai obligé de me procurer les meilleurs photographies de la princesse Alexandra: j'ai l'intention, dans mes moments perdus, d'en faire un bel émail." Fonthill Estate Archive. Phillips was, incidentally, commissioned by the Prince of Wales to make "Egyptian" jewelry for Princess Alexandra on the occasion of their marriage in 1863. See Gere and Rudoe 2010, p. 380.
- 142 The authors are unable to explain the presence of this inscription, which is presumably allegorical; "1 médallion César" also appears on a receipt for objects lent to the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867 (see Appendix).
- 143 Lepec is here making reference to his family's lineage.
- 144 At the bottom of the lane leading to the "Lieu Lepec" in Reux there is a nineteenth-century iron cross (croix de fer).
- 145 "This boxwood / was designed, drawn / and carved, as was the portrait / miniature on ivory of / Mrs Mabel Morrison by / Charles Le Pecq de Tourville / usually called / Charles Lepec, at his home / by the Iron Cross in Reux / area Pont l'Evêque, in the region / of Calvados and finished / during the first week of / February / in the year 1887." Another comparably inscribed boxwood carving, for a London patron named Aston, is in an English private collection; it will be discussed and illustrated in Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 146 "size of the boxwood carving."
- 147 Waring & Gillow sale 1920, lot 1306. This subsequently reappeared at Shapes Auctioneers, Edinburgh, October 4, 2008, before being reoffered at Christie's (London), September 24, 2009, lot 20; [art market]; purchased by the Metropolitan Museum. The carving and miniature is reproduced in a biography of Mabel Morrison in Olivier 1945, facing p. 53.
- 148 Dakers 2011, p. 240, and index, pp. 321–22.
- 149 The authors are grateful to Caroline Dakers for drawing this work to their attention; it belongs to a descendant of Alfred Morrison.
- 150 See Gabet 2006, no. 36.
- 151 "L'émail peint du Second Empire offre sur ses antécédents limousins de la Renaissance la supériorité d'être pratiqué par des artistes qui, peintres de formation, ne se bornent pas à s'inspirer de gravures, mais le plus souvent exécutent en émail des compositions originales." Alcouffe 1980, p. 102.
- 152 For details of Lepec's professional and personal life, see Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 153 Ibid.
- 154 Blairman 2011, no. 6; see note 36 above.
- 155 Hurstel and Levy n.d. (forthcoming).
- 156 "Estate of the Late Alfred Morrison . . . Inventory of Heirlooms," p. 73; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 157 Undated list in Lepec's hand, probably June 1867, based on internal evidence; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 158 Part of a receipt for objects received from Alfred Morrison, signed by Lepec and dated January 10, 1867; Fonthill Estate Archive.
- 159 On December 18, 1863, Phillips charged Morrison for "Mounting Two Enamels 'Laura and Margarette' / Silver Gilt pieced mounts fitted on to a velvet ground / Framed and glazed / 15. 7. 6." Account from Phillips Brothers to Alfred Morrison dated Christmas 1863, fol. 491, on document itself; Fonthill Estate Archive. See also Christie's sale 1899a, lot 393, perhaps for the same works: "a pair of circular ditto [plaques], with busts of Laura and Marguerite—in ebonised frames." This lot, which included two other plaques, was purchased by Giuliano for 6 gns.
- 160 Almost certainly fig. 5.
- 161 *Atalante* was sold at Christie's, February 23, 1899, in lot 392: "A PAIR OF [Three, written by hand] OBLONG ENAMEL PLAQUES, painted with an Amazon, and busts of Atalanta [and Diana, written by hand] in borders of arabesque ornament in brilliant colours on gold and silver ground—5 in. by 8 in.—by Charles Lepec—in glazed ebonised frames." £7. 7s to Roberts. *Atalanta* and *Diana* (alternatively called *Amazon*) emerged at Plymouth Auction Rooms, November 5, 2014, lots 291 and 292. The vendor was the great-granddaughter of Evan Roberts (1836–1918), presumably the buyer at Christie's. Roberts was a Manchester-born watchmaker and later collector (see Dictionary of Welsh Biography, <http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s7-ROBE-EVA-1836.html>). These works, numbered 194 and 195, are dated 1864. Luchet describes and illustrates (in Mesnard 1869, p. 95) "une femme indienne tirant de l'arc . . . le couvercle d'un coffret don't l'ensemble doit symbolizer la chasse." This is certainly what was described by Christie's in 1899 as an "Amazon." Although this second plaque is not named as such on the list of items sent by Morrison to Paris, it was included. Luchet continues: "Aux deux grands côtés, les profils d'Atalante et de la Diane antique; aux deux petits, des attributs de vénerie que surmontent une tête de chevreuil et une tête de lion. Cette belle Hécate indienne aux couleurs acajou se détache d'un disque en platine, sorte de lune nageant dans un fond d'or vermiculé." See Luchet in Mesnard 1869, p. 95. On removal of the back, June 7, 2015, the backboard to *Amazon* was found to be incised "La Chasse" (presumably referring to the coffret of which it was intended to be a part). The mahogany surround supporting the enamel plaque itself is marked in pencil "Diane Sauvage."
- 162 Further loans listed include works seemingly by other manufacturers, but the "Deux Diadèmes cuivre et email" may also be the work of Lepec.

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