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VOLUME 54 / 2019

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This publication is made possible by a gift from Assunta Sommella Peluso, Ada Peluso, and Romano I. Peluso, in memory of Ignazio Peluso.

The *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is published annually by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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Edited by Elizabeth L. Block, with
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Designed and typeset by Tina Henderson,
based on original design by Lucinda Hitchcock
Image acquisitions by the authors and
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Manuscripts submitted for the *Journal* and all correspondence concerning them should be sent to journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org. Guidelines for contributors are given on p. 6.

Published in association with the University of Chicago Press. Individual and institutional subscriptions are available worldwide. Please direct all subscription inquiries, back issue requests, and address changes to: University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P. O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637-0005, USA. Phone: (877) 705-1878 (U.S. and Canada) or (773) 753-3347 (international), fax: (877) 705-1879 (U.S. and Canada) or (773) 753-0811 (international), email: subscriptions@press.uchicago.edu, website: www.journals.uchicago.edu

ISBN 978-0-226-67696-8
(University of Chicago Press)
ISSN 0077-8958 (print)
ISSN 2169-3072 (online)

Library of Congress
Catalog Card Number 68-28799

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Typefaces: Calibre, Lyon, and Harriet
Printed on Creator Silk, 150 gsm
Separations by Professional Graphics, Inc.,
Rockford, Illinois
Printed by Brizzolis, Madrid, and
bound by Ramos, Madrid
Printing and binding coordinated by
Ediciones El Viso, Madrid

Front cover illustration: Andrea della Robbia (Italian, 1435–1525). Detail of *Saint Michael the Archangel*, ca. 1475. See fig. 1, p. 48.

Back cover illustration: Iranian (Safavid dynasty, 1501–1722). Tile panel with reclining woman and man in European costume, ca. 1600–1610. Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste. See fig. 1, p. 63.

Illustration on p. 2: Qian Xuan (Chinese, ca. 1235–before 1307). Detail of *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, late 13th century. See fig. 10, p. 36.

Contents

ARTICLES

Stone Sculpture and Ritual Impersonation in Classic Veracruz

CAITLIN EARLEY, 8

Qian Xuan's Loyalist Revision of Iconic Imagery in

Tao Yuanming Returning Home and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*

SHI-YEE LIU, 26

Workshop Practice Revealed by Two Architectural Reliefs

by Andrea Della Robbia

WENDY WALKER AND CAROLYN RICCARDELLI, 47

All the City's Courtesans: A Now-Lost Safavid Pavilion and

Its Figural Tile Panels

FARSHID EMAMI, 62

Epigraphic and Art Historical Responses to

Presenting the Tripod, by Wang Xuehao (1803)

MICHAEL J. HATCH, 87

John Singer Sargent Painting Fashion

ANNA REYNOLDS, 106

RESEARCH NOTES

New Research on a Rare Enameled Horse Bit from

the Angevin Court at Naples

MARINA VIALLO, 125

Passignano, Not Leoni: A New Attribution for

A Cardinal's Procession

IAN KENNEDY, 136

Margareta Haverman, *A Vase of Flowers*:

An Innovative Artist Reexamined

GERRIT ALBERTSON, SILVIA A. CENTENO, AND ADAM EAKER, 143

The *Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque* by

Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Newly Identified Sources

THAYER TOLLES, 160

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL

Founded in 1968, the *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is a double-blind peer-reviewed scholarly journal published annually that features original research on the history, interpretation, conservation, and scientific examination of works of art in the Museum's collection. Its scope encompasses the diversity of artistic practice from antiquity to the present day. The *Journal* encourages contributions offering critical and innovative approaches that will further our understanding of works of art.

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Manuscripts are reviewed by the *Journal* Editorial board, composed of members of the curatorial, conservation, and scientific departments, as well as scholars from the broader academic community.

To be considered for the following year's volume, the complete article or research note must be submitted by September 15.

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p. 65; Smith and Harding 2006, pp. 7–10, fig. 23).

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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.

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New Research on a Rare Enameled Horse Bit from the Angevin Court at Naples

MARINA VIALLO

Medieval works of art depict a wide variety of luxurious horse tack used by members of the aristocracy. In the Middle Ages, saddles, bridles, and trappings made of colorful leather and textiles were frequently enriched with embroidery, paint, or decorated metal fittings. Representations and textual sources reveal that engraved, pierced, or gilt ornaments, gemstones, and enamel were used liberally to enhance the appearance of buckles, bits, and stirrups. Relatively few ornamented horse bits have come down to us, and their origins are often difficult to determine. For these reasons, the bit examined here, preserved in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, is of particular interest. Not only does it incorporate a rare and exceptional example of the secular goldsmithing production of Angevin Naples, but also the



1a

study of its technical aspects contributes greatly to the knowledge of medieval European equestrian equipment (fig. 1a, b).

Made of iron and gilt copper and embellished with opaque champlevé enamels, the bit was purchased by the Museum in 1904 along with the rest of the collection of Charles Maurice Camille de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino (1843–1917).¹ The duke may have acquired the bit from the firm of Bachereau, prominent Parisian dealers in antique arms and armor in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.² Bachereau is known to have sold Dino many pieces of equestrian equipment, including several enameled harness pendants now in the Metropolitan Museum's collection. By the time the bit came into Dino's possession, the decorated cheek plaque on the right side had been removed, presumably by Bachereau or another dealer who thought it financially advantageous to sell the bit and its enameled plaques separately. The bit and the left cheek plaque entered the duke's collection at an unknown date; the right cheek plaque was acquired by the Parisian collector François-Achille Wasset, who in 1906 bequeathed it to the Musée de Cluny, Paris, where it is still preserved today.³

The Metropolitan Museum's bit is a late form of curb bit that was popular in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages. Curb bits, designed to increase the



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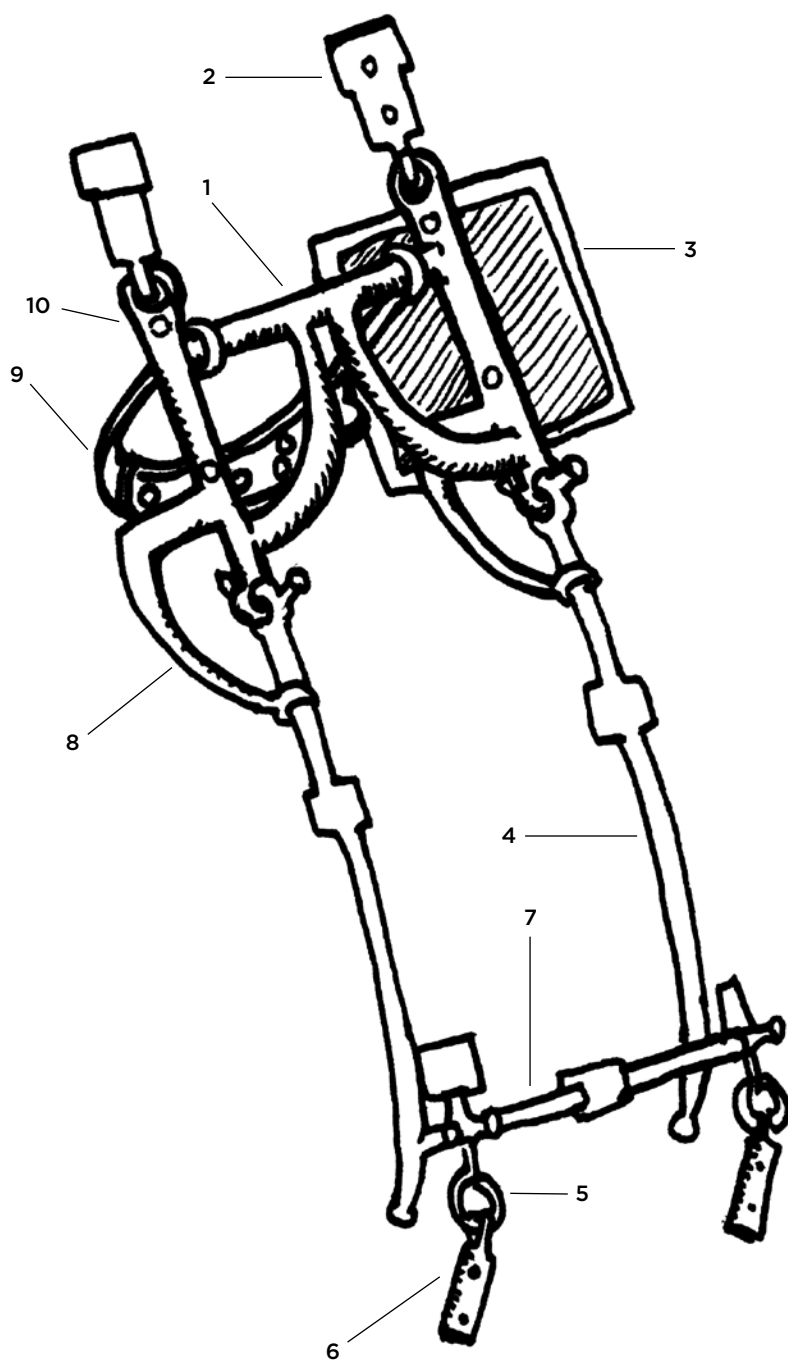


fig. 1 (a, b) Two views of curb bit. Naples, second quarter of the 14th century. Iron, copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, overall L. 17 in. (43.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.478a, b)

fig. 2 Components of the curb bit shown in fig. 1

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mouthpiece | 6. Rein tab |
| 2. Bridle tab | 7. Crossbar |
| 3. Boss (cheek plaque) | 8. Bracket |
| 4. Shank | 9. Curb |
| 5. Swivel hook | 10. Cheekpiece |

efficacy of a rider's actions, originated in the Balkans between the third and first century B.C. and regained prominence in Western Europe in the eleventh century as the role of knights grew in scope and importance. Like their Thracian and Eastern Celtic predecessors, these heavily armored mounted warriors, fighting with swords and lances, required reliable horse bits that could be manipulated by the action of a single hand on the reins, allowing the execution of quick maneuvers in the heat of combat. Though military need probably accounts for the reintroduction of curb bits, their use spread quickly to nonmilitary equestrian activities. The typology and relative fragility of the enameled bit discussed here are consistent with horse tack designed to serve in ceremonial or leisurely contexts rather than on the battlefield.

The mouthpiece on the Museum's bit is a straight iron bar with two outward-curving branches stemming from its center (fig. 2). It is connected on each side to an iron cheekpiece terminating in an eyelet at the top (for attaching the bridle) and at the bottom (for attaching the shank). Each cheekpiece is fitted with an iron bracket curved toward the shank and ending in forked terminals, now partly broken, that formerly wrapped around the rod of the shank to prevent it from moving backward and forward. A U-shaped, gilt-copper curb—the element that gives this type of bit its name—hangs from the straight bar of the mouthpiece. On the broadest section of the curb, a decorative, pierced quatrefoil is bracketed by two pierced trefoils. The top eyelets of the cheekpieces still preserve their gilt-copper hooked tabs. Two remaining rivets on the back of each tab once served to attach a leather or textile bridle that held the bit in place on the horse's head. The tabs' exterior surfaces are adorned with enameled coats of arms, each different from the other.

The lower eyelets of the mouthpiece link to the impressive gilt-copper shanks, long and slightly curved bars connected by a horizontal crossbar. The shanks and crossbar are adorned with polygonal knobs bearing medallions that show birds and dragons on a blue enameled ground. Where it meets with the shanks, the crossbar is pierced on each side to hold a swivel hook from which hangs a tubular tab. To this, a rounded, twisted leather rein was riveted. The head of the proper right swivel is surmounted by a square tab, enameled on each side by one of the coats of arms mentioned above.

Similar swivel hooks, frequently adorned with enameled coats of arms, are often found by metal detectorists in Western Europe.⁴ The original swivel on

the left side of the Museum's bit was replaced with a simpler one, without the enameled tab, during the working life of the object. On the same side, the lower part of the shank is bent. Did the rider struggle with his mount, desperately trying to make it turn left, bending the shank and breaking the swivel in the maneuver? The bit shows several other signs of strenuous use, apparent in the wear visible on all the mobile parts, including the rein tabs, swivels, curb joints, upper tabs, and eyelets.

The bit is a complex technical object reflecting fourteenth-century European equestrian knowledge and practices. Since antiquity, the shape of the mouthpiece, which rests in the bars—the gap between a horse's front and back teeth—could be adapted to the anatomy or behavior of a particular animal. Each type of mouthpiece had a verified or presumed effect upon an animal's attitude and responses. From the thirteenth century onward, mouthpieces of different shapes were illustrated in treatises on horse care and medicine, including manuscript and printed copies of the *De medicina equorum*, written about 1250 by the Calabrian knight Jordanus Rufus.⁵ The captions accompanying these images specify the particular equestrian behaviors and temperaments for which the various bits and mouthpieces were designed.

The mouthpiece of the Museum's bit is of a type usually described in medieval Italian treatises as

suitable for a horse with a hard and high-split mouth (*morso a cavallo scaglionato sfesso*).⁶ The mouthpiece occupied the entire space between the front and back teeth; its placement occasionally required the removal of the canine teeth typically found in male horses, a practice documented in Rufus's treatise.⁷ When the reins were pulled back, they pushed the lower part of the mouthpiece downward, pressing it against the sensitive lower bars of the horse's jaw. At the same time, the leverage effect caused the straight, upper part of the mouthpiece to rise; this action pulled on the curb, pressing it against the horse's chin groove (fig. 3). Such a system might seem severe or even abusive by today's standards. It is true that if the reins were pulled with great force, the bit would cause the horse discomfort and possibly great pain, but this was not the way such bits were meant to be employed. Like the modern curb bits used today in American Western-style equitation, medieval curb bits were harsh in inverse proportion to the skill of the rider holding the reins.⁸ It may be assumed that horses learned to avoid the full force of the reins by responding rapidly to light pressure on the mouthpiece. Also, it should be noted that in medieval iconography, reins are usually represented as slightly relaxed, seldom taut. An experienced rider could control a well-trained mount with little more than the tips of two fingers.

On the Metropolitan Museum's bit, fine control was reinforced by the iron brackets limiting the articulation of the shanks. On a traditional hinged curb bit—the type without brackets—the leverage effect was activated only when the shanks were fully rotated back. While this system reduces the harshness of the bit, it tends to result in less precise communication between rider and horse as well as in more hand movement with the reins. Fixed-shank bits—the kind without hinges—have an immediate leverage effect and were in use in the Middle Ages. It might be wondered why, then, craftsmen went to the trouble of making bits with complex, fully functional joints that also included brackets for limiting their action. The explanation lies in the fact that such a system allows the strength of the bit to be adapted to a particular animal. In a curb bit, the angle of the shanks in relation to the cheekpieces and mouthpiece has a direct impact on the overall leverage effect. If the attachments for the reins are in alignment with the cheekpieces, the bit is said to be neutral. If the attachments are placed ahead of this imaginary line, the leverage will be stronger. If they are placed behind, it is weaker. When fabricating such a bit, the maker would assemble the whole object and then try it on the animal for which it was intended. At this point, the

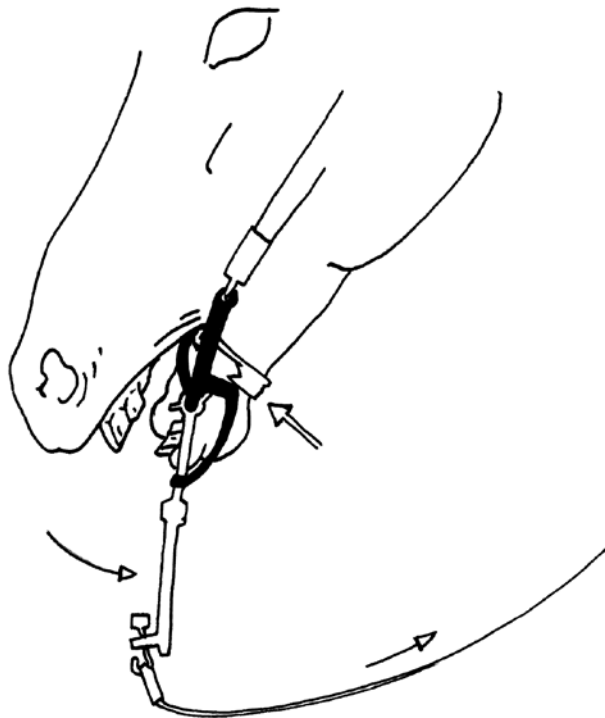


fig. 3 Mechanical action of the curb bit when the reins are pulled

fig. 4 Proper left boss of the curb bit shown in fig. 1. Naples, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ in. (9.5 × 9.5 cm). The boss displays the Ceva family coat of arms. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.478b)



fig. 5 Proper right boss of the curb bit shown in fig. 1. Naples, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ in. (9.2 × 9.5 cm). The arms are attributed to the de Benoist family. Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 14710)



appropriate angle of the shanks would be determined and the forks of the brackets closed.

The effect of the shanks also depends on their length. Technically, the longer the shank, the greater its force. However, if the shanks are too long, they may reduce the efficiency of the bit by slowing its action. Moreover, a horse might succeed in pressing long shanks against its chest, thereby loosening the mouthpiece and making it difficult for the rider to pull on the reins. For these reasons, very long shanks have been used in Europe mostly in training, dressage, and ceremonial contexts. The long, elaborately decorated shanks of the Museum's bit indicate that it was probably meant to be used during ceremonies, parades, or other nonmilitary events.

Elongated bits of this type seem to have been particularly fashionable in Italy about the middle of the fourteenth century, although they were rarely used elsewhere in Europe at that time.⁹ Contemporary iconography reflects this trend. For example, Buonamico Buffalmacco's fresco *The Three Dead and the Three Living and the Triumph of Death*, painted between 1336 and 1341 at the Camposanto of Pisa, shows, on the left, a hunting party of young noblemen and noblewomen riding richly appointed horses bridled with similarly elongated bits. The work is a vivid and detailed depiction of an aristocratic context in which such bits were employed.

The two large, square, gilt and enameled cheek plaques, called bosses, that were originally affixed to the Metropolitan Museum's bit—one is still in place, the other is now in the Musée de Cluny, Paris—are the most important visual components of the object and the elements that provide key clues to the bit's origins

(figs. 4, 5). Found on many medieval and Renaissance bits of high quality, bosses are purely ornamental, often circular elements adorning the sides of a bit at the corners of a horse's mouth. The proper left boss, in the Metropolitan Museum's collection, displays in a square shield heraldic arms comprising barry Or and Sable (striped gold and black) in the center of a red quatrefoil with a gilt bird on each lobe. Outlined in gold, the quatrefoil stands out against a dark blue background with a gilt bird in each corner of the square. The wings of all eight birds are enameled and contrast in color with their backgrounds: the wings of the birds on the red quatrefoil are blue; those on the blue ground are red. The proper right boss, preserved in the Paris museum, is identical except for the coat of arms, which is Azure (blue), a bend between a star and a crescent Or (gold), and minor variations in the positions of the birds.

The bit was initially catalogued as Italian by both Dino and the Metropolitan Museum, but it was later reclassified as Catalan.¹⁰ Relatively little is known about the production of enamels outside the major centers in the fourteenth century. This is especially true of enamels intended for secular use. The great mobility of craftsmen and artworks at that time, as well as the rise of new cities that attracted artists from all over Europe, contributes to the difficulty in identifying the geographic provenance of many pieces. For this reason, enameled objects of the period that cannot be associated with well-known workshops or production centers are often attributed to Catalonia, which was a prolific producer of enameled pendants used on horse trappings.

A more compelling attribution has resulted from a comparison of the Metropolitan Museum's curb bit with



fig. 6 Curb bit. Naples, ca. 1340–50. Iron, copper, gold, silver, and champlevé enamel, L. 14 3/8 in. (36 cm). Armeria Reale, Turin (D. 58)

fig. 7 Proper right boss of the curb bit shown in fig. 6. The paired coats of arms, rendered in mirror image, belong to the Acciaiuoli and Grimaldi families, seen here at left and right, respectively.

a curb bit in Turin's Armeria Reale (fig. 6). The Turin bit is known to have been made in Naples. It presents the same construction as the New York bit, the same type of mouthpiece, and similar long, jointed shanks immobilized by brackets. The band that makes up the curb is pierced by three trefoils, and the polyhedral knobs adorning the shanks have diamond-shaped faces with animals on blue backgrounds flanked on four sides by triangular faces with red trefoil leaves. The swivel hooks for the reins are topped with small gilt-copper balls; the attachment tabs for the bridle are missing. Both of the large, square, enameled bosses bear two coats of arms in a single square field (fig. 7). Each heraldic square is party per pale, Argent with an Azure lion holding a banner bearing the arms of the Anjou-Jerusalem dynasty, and fusily Argent and



Gules (a standing blue lion holding a banner on a silver field on the right, and a field of silver and red diamonds on the left). These are the arms of the Acciaiuoli and Grimaldi families, respectively, influential members of the court of King Robert I of Anjou (r. 1309–43). Each pair of arms stands out on a dark blue enameled background that appears almost black, like the blue of the lion.¹¹ In the corners, small birds adorn white, almond-shaped medallions. Above and below the arms, dragons breathe leaflike flames. On the left boss, the heraldic square is flanked by two female musicians wearing long, tapering sleeves; one plays a lute, and the other, an early form of viol known as a *vielle*. On the proper right boss, the musician on the left side of the heraldic square is complemented on the right side by a woman holding a sword instead of a musical instrument.

The coats of arms on the Turin bit were identified in the nineteenth century. Based on these designations, the bit was considered Italian until 1998, when Simonetta Castronovo rightly recognized in the enamels a stylistic link to French production and suggested a possible Limousin origin.¹² Acknowledging the Neapolitan identity of the bit's initial owner, she concluded that the object was probably made in Limoges or Naples by a Limousin craftsman. A Limoges origin is unlikely, however, owing to stylistic differences between the enamels on the Turin bit and verified fourteenth-century Limousin pieces.¹³ Moreover, Limoges was at this time increasingly in competition with more fashionable centers of enamel production, like the Ile-de-France and Italy, and was starting a gradual decline.¹⁴

The style of the enamels in the New York and Turin bits has significant parallels in contemporaneous Parisian Gothic enamelwork, especially in a group of objects classified as moderately luxurious. This particular ensemble, first identified by Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, mostly comprises small pyxides and cope clasps (fig. 8).¹⁵ Noteworthy similarities between this group of objects and the curb bits include the predominant use of dark blue and red enamels as well as the application of a color other than that of the background to the lines of the figures. The strongest similarity is the frequent use of multifoil shapes, usually quatrefoils. These can be observed on the New York and Paris bosses and in the decor of *bestelettes*—small birds and monsters—populating most of the enameled ornaments on both bits. Particularly striking is the nearly identical drawing of the dragons' wings on the bosses of the Turin bit and on the underside of the lid of a Parisian pyxis preserved in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (fig. 9).

Despite these important correlations, other stylistic elements of the New York and Turin bits are not consistent with typical Parisian production. Such deviations include the treatment of drapery and human faces on the Turin bit and, on both bits, the *bestelettes*, which lack the characteristic fluidity and elegance of even modest Parisian works inspired by contemporary sources, such as the illuminations of Jean Pucelle.¹⁶ These variances point to another production center, one strongly influenced by Parisian goldsmiths and also related to the families identified by the heraldry on the Turin bit.

Under the French dynasty of the House of Anjou, which ruled the Kingdom of Naples from 1266 to 1381,

Naples, the capital, became a densely populated cultural crossroads, attracting people and goods from all over Europe. The Angevin kings and the sophisticated court that gathered around them commissioned new buildings and works of art combining Parisian Gothic style with artistic fashions from the Italian Peninsula.¹⁷ Many French families immigrated to the Kingdom of Naples during this period, and French was the main language at court until the reign of Robert I.¹⁸ The highly regarded court goldsmiths, especially under Charles I (r. 1266–85) and Charles II (r. 1285–1309), were mostly French, as were many other masters of goldsmithing and jewelry workshops, attracted by the city's artistic demand. Luxury items destined for religious and secular purposes were frequently made of precious metals adorned with enamels, pearls, and gems. One of the best examples is the reliquary bust of San Gennaro, produced in 1304–5 in the royal workshops of Charles II (fig. 10). The making of this work, which is preserved in the Capella del Tesoro di San Gennaro in Naples, is well documented.¹⁹ Maestro Etienne, Godefroy, Milet d'Auxerre, and Guillaume de Verdelay, the four leading goldsmiths of the royal workshop, labored for a full year on this masterpiece of embossed gilt and engraved silver enriched with gems and enamel.

Few closely comparable works survive. Most of them, like the reliquary bust of San Gennaro, are precious religious artifacts preserved in church treasuries and therefore represent only a fraction of the courtly production of the period. Many luxurious secular objects, including enameled silver belts and caskets made in the "Parisian style," are mentioned in royal inventories, but

fig. 8 Cope clasp depicting the Annunciation. Paris, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, 6 1/4 × 5 1/4 in. (15.5 × 14.5 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl.3293)



fig. 9 Underside of the lid of a pyxis. Paris, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel. Diam. 3 1/4 in. (9.8 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA 6936)





none are known to have come down to us.²⁰ A rare, if less opulent, example of secular production is the enameled, gilt-copper casket commissioned by Bernardo d'Aquino in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. In 2014 the casket, which is now in the treasury of Lodi Cathedral, was identified by Pierluigi Leone de Castris as the work of a French atelier in Naples.²¹

Indeed, it is probable that, parallel to the production of sumptuous objects commissioned by the royal family, high-ranking prelates, and aristocrats, a substantial market existed for more affordable and more easily produced objects.²² They would have been made in other workshops, of gilt copper rather than silver, and their production would have accounted for most of the Neapolitan enamels from this period. These objects, including the Lodi casket cited above, satisfied a market for moderately luxurious goods designed to resemble the costlier goldsmiths work and jewelry made about 1300. Well into the first half of the fourteenth century, the production of semiprecious objects perpetuated the French style imported by the royal goldsmiths of Charles I and Charles II, a style that was regularly refreshed and enlivened by French artists and works of art arriving in or transiting through the capital. Many Neapolitan enameled works, including the Lodi casket and a crosier preserved at the cathedral of Atri, include elements depicting *bestelettes* in quatrefoils.²³ On the volute of the crosier, which was probably commissioned about 1300 by Bernardo d'Angers, bishop of Atri, and made by the French goldsmiths of Charles II's royal workshop, several quatrefoil plaquettes show dragon-like creatures standing on a dark blue enamel ground. Some of the creatures closely resemble the small beasts visible on the knobs of the Metropolitan Museum's bit.

fig. 10 Maestro Etienne, Godefroy, Milet d'Auxerre, and Guillaume de Verdelay (French, act. Naples, ca. 1300). Detail of Reliquary Bust of San Gennaro, 1304–5. Silver, gold, gems, semi-precious stones, and champlevé enamel, overall H. 17 1/4 in. (45.1 cm). Capella del Tesoro di San Gennaro, Naples

The elements that firmly place the making of both bits in Naples are the coats of arms. Heraldry first appeared in the twelfth century on knights' shields as a means of identifying the bearers on the battlefield.²⁴ In most of Europe during the fourteenth century, coats of arms emblazoned on monuments and objects were presented in shield-shaped fields, called escutcheons. However, by the late thirteenth century, the arms of the Neapolitan Angevin dynasty were usually framed by other shapes. The most popular was the diamond, or lozenge, as seen on the orphreys of the saint's cope in Simone Martini's *Saint Louis of Toulouse* (1314; Museo di Capodimonte, Naples), and on enameled works like the arm reliquary of Saint Luc preserved at the Louvre.²⁵ Only later was the diamond shape reserved for the depiction of women's coats of arms. From the second half of the thirteenth century onward, the design was occasionally employed in France, usually on seals or rings. It may have been based on French textile hangings displaying a heraldic diamond-shaped cross-hatching pattern. This popular background motif was copied by illuminators and goldsmiths as well.²⁶ The Neapolitan Angevin dynasty was alone, however, in deploying isolated diamond-shaped escutcheons so prominently and in such abundance.

The dynasty's heraldry was also frequently presented within other shapes. It appeared in circular shields, as seen on the cope clasp of Saint Louis of Toulouse in the Simone Martini painting; bannerlike, in rectangular or square cartouches; in more traditional triangular shields; and in Norman-style almond-shaped—or kite—shields. All these forms, along with others less frequently used, are found in the pages of the magnificent Anjou Bible, made in Naples about 1340 for Robert I as a wedding gift for his granddaughter Joanna.²⁷ The square banner form occurs in the opaque champlevé enamels displayed on the San Gennaro bust reliquary, where it is surrounded by four dragons on a red background (see fig. 10). The scheme of this composition compares closely with the bosses of the Metropolitan Museum's bit. It seems logical that these peculiarities of royal heraldry, at this time seldom seen elsewhere in Europe, would be adopted by members of the court for use on their own objects. As a mark of ownership and sign of social status, heraldry was the central element of visual identity for Europe's aristocracy. A coat of arms displayed on a richly appointed horse both identified the owner and advertised his or her high standing.

The paired arms on the Turin bit are those of Angelo Acciaiuoli, son of the grand seneschal of the

Kingdom of Naples, and his wife, a daughter of Antonio Grimaldi, lord of San Giorgio in Calabria.²⁸ The entire design is reversed on the proper right boss of the bit, following the custom of the time. When heraldry was displayed on a horse—on a caparison, for example—arms were usually displayed correctly on the proper left, the side from which riders approach their mounts, and were reversed on the right for reasons of symmetry (see figs. 6, 7). As the shield contains the arms of both the Acciaiuoli (the blue lion) and the Grimaldi, the bit likely belonged to the wife. If it had been the property of the husband, he probably would have displayed his own arms only.²⁹

Like the coats of arms on the Turin bit, those on the New York and Paris bosses represent the unification of two families. The arms of barry Or and Sable, seen on the New York boss, are common and were used by many families in Europe during the Middle Ages (see fig. 4). In a Neapolitan context, this coat of arms probably belonged to the Ceva family, which was close to the Angevin rulers at the time. One of its members, Giovanni, is known to have been the *stratigoto* (official judge) of Robert I in the city of Salerno, suggesting that the bit may have belonged to him or one of his close relatives.³⁰ The coat of arms on the proper right boss, now in Paris, may have belonged to a branch of the de Benoist family (see fig. 5). The de Benoists were first recorded near Béziers, in Languedoc, in the early thirteenth century, but there is so far no evidence that members of this French family were present in Naples in the following century.³¹ Curiously, on the surviving, right rein swivel, these arms are reversed (fig. 1a, b). This orientation could be an error by the artist, who may have inverted his model. It is also possible that the arms are displayed correctly on the right swivel but nowhere else. If that is so, then it could be argued that the proper right boss and bridle tab display the reversed version for the reasons of symmetry mentioned above. However, this convention was usually followed when the same arms were fully displayed rightly on the opposite side, as on the Turin bit. That is not the case here. Moreover, the bend sinister (inverted bend), a device connoting illegitimate descent, was seldom used.³² As displayed on the swivel, this coat of arms has so far not been found to match any family's heraldry.

The two sets of arms on the Metropolitan Museum's bit celebrate the marital union of two families, but it is difficult to know for certain which armorial bearings belonged to the husband and which to the wife, for each coat of arms is displayed separately. The husband's arms likely occupied the more honorific

and immediately visible position on the left. On this side, the Ceva arms on the boss and the bridle tab above would have been the first to be seen by a rider preparing to mount the horse.

These findings suggest a more precise dating for the Metropolitan Museum's bit. Although nearly all the known Franco-Neapolitan comparisons are from about 1300, a slightly later date should be considered for this object. In addition to its elongated form, which was particularly popular in Italy from about 1335 to 1365, the similarities with enamels found on moderately luxurious Parisian production indicate that the bit was probably commissioned in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.³³ Supporting this date is the likelihood that the Turin bit belonged to the wife of Angelo Acciaiuoli, who was married about 1350 or slightly earlier.³⁴ The costumes of the female musicians shown on the Turin bit were fashionable in Italy between 1340 and 1360. Two of the musicians are almost identical to those surrounding an allegory of Music that appears in a manuscript copy of Boethius's treatises *De Arithmetica* and *De Musica* from about 1350. The copy was illustrated by Italian artists, possibly at the papal court of Avignon.³⁵

Despite their similarities, the two curb bits obviously come from different workshops. The gilt-copper elements of the Turin bit are more elaborate than their New York bit counterparts. The swivel hooks of the reins on the Turin bit are shaped like dragon's heads, each one surmounted by a small ball made from scalloped leaves folded on themselves. Seen from the side, the balls appear as openwork fleurons. The knobs on the shanks are more fully faceted, and the gilt-copper frames of the bosses are adorned with a frieze of stylized fleurons. All these elements contribute to give the Turin bit its richer aspect. However, it is impossible to know if the bits owe their differences to the styles of the workshops where they were made or to the taste and wealth of their respective commissioners.

The Metropolitan Museum's horse bit and the comparison bit in Turin are significant examples of secular enameled objects produced in Naples during the reign of the Angevin dynasty. They can be attributed to Neapolitan workshops staffed by French goldsmiths or at least strongly influenced by French styles and frequented by members of the royal court. Both bits betoken the artistic melting pot of a flourishing capital, where the art of contemporary Parisian goldsmiths merged with Italian taste and fashion to suit patrons at the Italian court of a French line of kings. It is interesting to note that both Ceva and Acciaiuoli, the men associated here with the New York and Turin bits, held

important legal offices at the royal court. These objects therefore provide rare evidence of the type of moderately luxurious goldsmithery commissioned and used by this stratum of nobility during the fourteenth century, a category of production that is rarer and less familiar to us today than religious objects of the same period. The Museum's bit is a superb example of the rich and colorful horse tack used by aristocrats in Italy and across Europe at that time—one of the many lavish equestrian accoutrements usually seen only as representations in works of art. This first in-depth analysis of the bit is intended to help in the identification of enamels linked to semiluxurious fourteenth-century production and to advance our understanding of the use and evolution of late medieval equestrian equipment.

NOTES

- 1 The Museum's acquisition of the Dino collection is discussed in Pyhrr 2012.
- 2 Ibid., p. 193.
- 3 Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 14710); see Cosson 1901, p. 50, no. E.10, pl. 22 (facing p. 104). The inventory of Dino's collection suggests that neither the duke nor Cosson was aware of the location of the other plaque, at that time still in Wasset's possession.
- 4 In England and Wales, members of the public are encouraged to record their finds on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website (www.finds.org.uk). Similar objects found elsewhere mostly go undocumented. Metal detectorists seldom look for iron; this is why copper elements of the bits are the ones usually found. Moreover, iron parts are less likely to have survived. Bits made mostly of copper alloy, like the curb bit discussed here, were exceptional; therefore, most of the isolated swivel hooks found in the ground may once have been attached to iron bits.
- 5 Also known as Giordano Ruffo, Rufus was a nobleman in charge of the royal stables of Frederick II, king of Naples and Sicily (r. 1198–1250) and Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1220–1250). See Prévot 1991, p. 4.
- 6 A single type of mouthpiece could be characterized differently from one treatise to another, revealing the empirical basis on which its performance was judged. A manuscript copy from about 1350 of Jordanus Rufus's *Liber marescalcie equorum*, for example, states that the type of mouthpiece found on the Metropolitan Museum's curb bit is "for a horse that throws" (*a cavallo che getta*), a term that presumably refers to horses that bolt. See *Liber marescalcie equorum*, fol. 39v, Beinecke MS 679, Yale University Library. Medieval treatises on bits were copied and reprinted well into the sixteenth century, when the mouthpieces they illustrated were no longer in use. See, for example, *Libro della natura di cavalli* 1517, p. 36.
- 7 Prévot 1991, p. 40.
- 8 Naturally, cruel bits, like brutal or unskilled riders, have long existed and been criticized in equestrian literature.
- 9 A comparable Italian curb bit, undecorated and made of iron, is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (M.595:1&2-1924).
- 10 The arms of the boss in the Metropolitan Museum's collection were initially misidentified as Gonzaga ancient and later as Lattisani. The Lattisani (or Lattisana) family uses Azure, a bend Gules between a crescent and a star Or—a design similar but not identical to the arms on the Museum's bit. See Scorza 1955–73, vol. 13, p. 104. For the Catalan identification, see Nickel 1991, p. 13.
- 11 Scientific analysis is needed to explain the curious black aspect of the dark blue enamel.
- 12 Castronovo in Massabò Ricci, Carassi, and Gentile 1998, p. 80.
- 13 Fourteenth-century Limoges enamels usually present irregular spaces between the engraved motifs and the enamel surrounding them; drapery folds and other internal delineations of the figures are not colored; and engraved details are generally sketchy in appearance. Together, these traits give Limoges enamels a less refined aspect than those found in Parisian or Italian works of the time. See, for example, the Limoges-made candlestick preserved in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (44.596).
- 14 Boehm 1996, p. 45.
- 15 Gauthier 1972, pp. 378–79.
- 16 For the influence of Jean Pucelle on Parisian enamelwork, see Elisabeth Antoine in Avril, Maurice-Chabard, and Medica 2012, p. 158. See also Gauthier 1972, p. 260.
- 17 Leone de Castris 2014, p. 62.
- 18 Watteeuw and Van der Stock 2010, p. 38.
- 19 Leone de Castris 2014, p. 69.
- 20 Ibid., p. 67.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 121–25, no. 8.
- 22 Ibid., p. 72.
- 23 Paola Giusti in Leone de Castris 2014, p. 97, no. 4.
- 24 Pastoureau 1996, p. 19.
- 25 For the reliquary (Louvre, OA 10944), see Bagnoli 2011, p. 195, no. 109, and Gaborit-Chopin 1985, pp. 5–18.
- 26 See, for example, fol. 86v of the Saint Louis Psalter (ca. 1270), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS Latin 10525; and

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study and its publication could not have been realized without the help of the members of the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum. I warmly thank Elisabeth Antoine at the Musée du Louvre; Alessandra Curti, at the Armeria Reale–Palazzo Reale di Torino; Christine Descatoire at the Musée de Cluny, Paris; and Pierluigi Leone de Castris at Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples for their advice and assistance.

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- the enameled ivy leaf reliquary (Naples, ca. 1300), in the Palazzo de Nordis, Muzeo Nazionale, Cividale del Friuli.
- 27 Maurits Sabbe Library, Faculty of Theology, University of Leuven, Belgium, MS 1. See Watteeuw and Van der Stock 2010, p. 27.
- 28 Massabò Ricci, Carassi, and Gentile 1998, pp. 80–81.
- 29 When a wife's family was particularly important, her husband would sometimes display her arms with his; Pastoureau 1996, pp. 75–76. As the Grimaldis were a prestigious family, this possibility cannot be excluded, especially if the bit commemorates the couple's marriage.
- 30 Candida Gonzaga 1875–83, vol. 4, pp. 48–50.
- 31 The family had several branches, each with a different coat of arms. The de Benoist de la Prunarède branch, for example, still lives in Languedoc (Azure, three bends Or). See Rietstap 1861, p. 111. It is interesting to note that the coat of arms of the Benedetti family of Ferrara is similar to the arms of the de Benoists: Azure a bend Or between a stag and a star Or. The Benedetti may be Italianized descendants of a branch of the de Benoist family that was previously installed in Naples. See Crollalanza (1886) 1977, vol. 1, p. 114. Today, arms identical to those on the Paris boss are found only in the heraldry of the de Benoist de Gentissart family, a Belgian branch. These arms are: Quarterly, 1 and 4 Azure a bend Or between a star and a crescent Or, 2 and 3 Argent ermined Azure.
- 32 To distinguish themselves from the main branch of their family, illegitimate sons sometimes inverted their fathers' arms. If the paternal arms featured a bend, it would thus be turned into a bend sinister, a device otherwise seldom used.
- 33 Examples of moderately luxurious Parisian production had reached Italy by this time. Elisabeth Antoine calls attention to one such object: the enameled cope clasp worn by Saint Donato on Pietro Lorenzetti's Tarlati polyptich, 1320 (Santa Maria delle Pieve, Arezzo). See Antoine in Avril, Maurice-Chabard, and Medica 2012, p. 158.
- 34 Massabò Ricci, Carassi, and Gentile 1998, p. 81.
- 35 Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli "Vittorio Emanuele III," Naples, Ms V.A. 14, fol. 47r.

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METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL 54

ARTICLES

Stone Sculpture and Ritual
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Responses to *Presenting the Tripod*,
by Wang Xuehao (1803)
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Anna Reynolds

RESEARCH NOTES

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Marina Viallon

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Ian Kennedy

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ISBN-13: 978-0-226-67696-8
ISBN-10: 0-226-67696-X



9 780226 676968

PRINTED IN SPAIN