

THE BOUCHERON DEMIDOV RELIQUARY COFFER



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DESCRIPTION	4
PROVENANCE	5
HISTORY.....	6
THE HOUSE OF BOUCHERON.....	7
FRÉDÉRIC BOUCHERON.....	7
PAUL LEGRAND.....	8
CHARLES GLACHANT	9
BOUCHERON ARCHIVE RECORDS	10
ORIGINAL 1875 WORK ORDER FROM BOUCHERON RECORDS.....	10
PHOTOGRAPH OF BOUCHERON WORK ORDER FOR RELIQUARY COFFER COMMISSIONED BY “MONSIEUR PAUL DEMIDOV” DATED MARCH 22, 1875.....	10
PHOTOGRAPH OF ORIGINAL 1875 PAUL LEGRAND PREPARATORY DRAWING FOR THE BOUCHERON DEMIDOV RELIQUARY COFFER	11
ORIGINAL 1875-76 PHOTOGRAPH OF DEMIDOV BOUCHERON RELIQUARY COFFER.....	12
ORIGINAL 1875 PHOTOGRAPH OF RELIQUARY VESSEL & ENAMEL PLAQUES.....	13
DETAIL PHOTOGRAPHS OF RELIQUARY COFFER.....	14
17TH CENTURY ENAMEL PLAQUES MADE BY THE KREMLIN ARMORY WORKSHOPS... 26	26
THE HOLY TRINITY	26
CRUCIFIXION WITH MARY AND JOHN	27
MARY, MOTHER OF GOD	28
JOHN THE BAPTIST.....	29
CHRIST AS THE LORD ALMIGHTY	30
PAUL THE APOSTLE.....	31
ARCHANGEL MICHAEL.....	32
ARCHANGEL GABRIEL.....	33
VSEVOLOD I YAROSLAVICH, GRAND PRINCE OF KIEV	34
PUTTIS	35
DETAIL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ENAMEL PLAQUES	39
THE DEMIDOV.....	45
DEMIDOV COAT OF ARMS	45
PRINCE “PAUL” PAVEL PAVLOVICH DEMIDOV	46
NIKITA DEMIDOV	49
ANATOLY NIKOLAIEVICH DEMIDOV.....	51
PRINCESS DEMIDOFF (1).....	54
PRINCESS DEMIDOFF (2).....	55
CHILDREN OF PAUL PAVLOVICH DEMIDOFF	56
COUNT PAVEL NIKOLAIEVICH DEMIDOV	57
PRINCESS AURORA DEMIDOVA.....	58
SAN DONATO	60
VILLA SAN DONATO	60
THE 1880 SAN DONATO AUCTION SALE.....	65
CATALOGUE ENTRY.....	66
CATALOGUE ENTRY TRANSLATION.....	68
1880 NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES ABOUT SAN DONATO AUCTION	69
HOLY PRINCE GAVRIL PSKOVSKYI	73

TECHNICAL REPORT OF ENAMEL PLAQUES BY DR. PIETER MEYERS.....	76
DR. PIETER MEYERS CURRICULUM VITAE.....	80
CONSTRUCTION METHODS & TECHNIQUE.....	83
JIM GRAHL BIOGRAPHY	86
INNER LID CONSTRUCTION DETAILS.....	87
LABRADORITE - ITS HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE	88

Description

An exquisite suite of seventeen rare, radiant, 17th century Kremlin workshop iconic enamels on gold *repoussé*, eight among them are rectangular, representing Christ on the cross, Jesus, the Virgin, the Evangelists Paul and John, and the angels Gabriel and Michael; another set of eight are circular cherubs' heads; and the seventeenth, in an oval shape, represents the communion of the Holy Trinity. Of these seventeen enamels, the only non-biblical depiction is that of Vsevolod I Yaroslavich, Grand Prince of Kiev (1030-1093).

These iconic enamels are gracefully mounted on a spectacular rectangular Renaissance style silver and fine silver coffer made by Boucheron of Paris in 1875-76. The hinged, domed silver lid is pierced with scrolls and applied with circular, enamel cherub plaques, at intervals; below a coronet and scroll finial centered on either side by the circular enamel plaque of the Holy Trinity on one side, and on the other, a 19th century enamel of the Demidov coat of arms. A large, rectangular piece of labradorite is concealed in the cover.

The coffer's elaborately cast silver body has architectural sides applied at each corner with a labradorite baluster decorated with silver Florentine lily collars. The side panels are adorned with the iconic enamel plaques within scrolling silver reserves, below a crown supported by two putti and above an applied fleur-de-lis motif. The whole, on four foliated, bun style adjustable, silver supports.

Dimensions (approximate): Height: 17 inches Length: 16 inches Width: 11 inches
Weight (approximate): 60 lbs. (27.2 kg)



Provenance

- 1675 ca. Kremlin Armory workshops create the enamel icons.
- 1875 Prince Paul P. Demidov, 2nd Prince of San Donato commissions The House of Boucheron to create a silver reliquary coffer incorporating the Russian enamel icons.
- 1876 Boucheron completes the reliquary coffer.
- 1880 Reliquary coffer is sold at the Contents of the Palais de San Donato (Villa Demidov) Auction, March 16, 1880, Lot #380, page 87-89, illustrated. (Buyer unknown)
- 1973 Sotheby Parke Bernet, Los Angeles, *Important Silver*. April 30, 1973. Page 29, Lot 49, illustrated.
- 1973-1978 The collection of D. Charles Kennedy, Oakland, California.
- 1978-2015 Private Collection, San Diego, California.

History

There is such a wealth of history to the Boucheron-Demidov reliquary coffer that one can get lost in its story - a classic Russian tale of the 200 years it took for all the coffer's components to come together. The Kremlin Armory workshops; the first Russian industrialist family and their legacy; the House of Boucheron; and the life of Prince Paul Demidov and the tragic death of his first wife, which led to the sale of the century - the auction of all the contents of his magnificent Italian palace, San Donato.

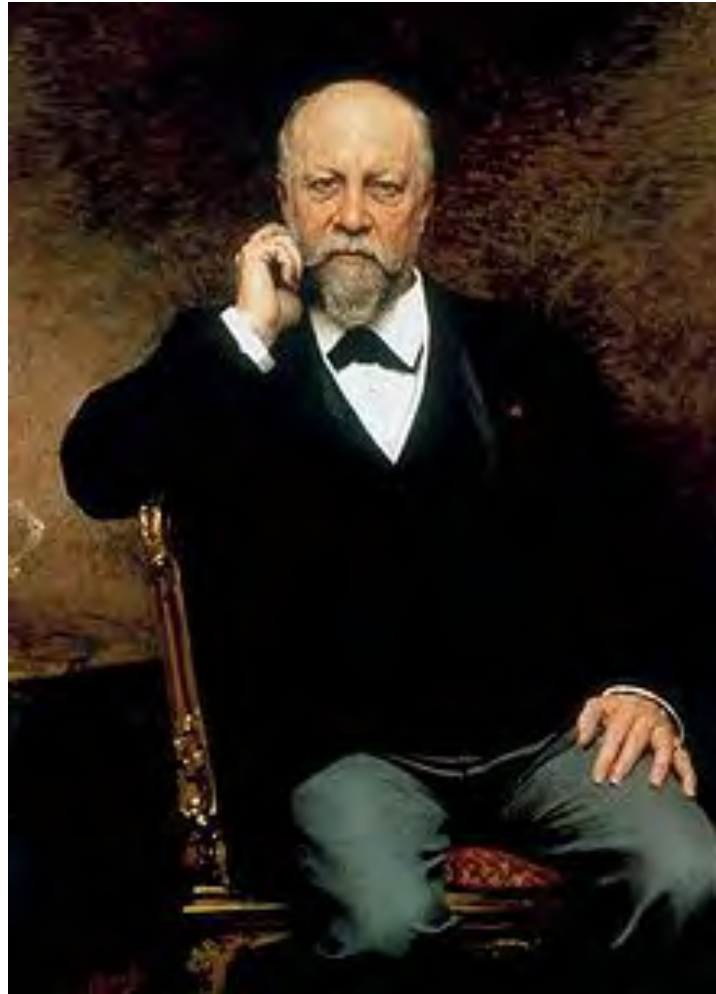
It was under the reign of Tsar Peter The Great, in the late 17th century, that the story of the Demidov-Boucheron reliquary coffer begins. The seventeen enamel and gold repoussé icon plaques, which now adorn the reliquary coffer, were created in the Tsar's legendary Kremlin Armory Workshops circa 1675. These extraordinarily rare enamels may be some of the finest and earliest known examples of this style brought to Russia from Europe. It was then, Nikita Demidov, the founder of the Demidov dynasty, with the encouragement and support of Tsar Peter The Great, became the industrial genius behind the growth of Russia's foundries and the main armament supplier to the Russian army.

The Boucheron-Demidov Coffe embodies the story of a family dynasty. Pillars made of labradorite on the coffer was a stone mined by the Demidov industrial complex. A coffer made of sixty pounds of silver, a metal mined by the Demidovs. Perhaps the finest creation by the House of Boucheron commissioned by a Demidov, whose family for over 150 years had been important patrons of the arts.

And then, the sale at San Donato - an auction that had no rival. It was a sale that purged Paul Demidov's sad memories of his first wife and her tragic demise. And finally, in the true Demidov family philanthropic tradition, Prince Paul donated the San Donato sales proceeds to the poor of Florence, and toward the restoration of the Duomo, the historical main church of Florence. And ultimately, as only a passionate, well funded art connoisseur could do, immediately set out to build again, one of the finest collections in the world.

This coffer, and all of the science and history that went into its making, illustrates that tremendous artistic creations are the result of joint efforts between master artists and craftsmen, patrons of the arts, and human culture.

The House of Boucheron



Frédéric Boucheron

Before opening his own jewelry store at 150 Galerie de Montpensier at the Palais-Royal in 1858, Frédéric Boucheron apprenticed with jeweler Jules Chaise and at the famous Parisian jewelry house Tixier-Deschamps.¹ When Deschamps retired, he discouraged Frédéric from entering the jewelry trade, calling him “not cut out to be the proprietor of a business.”² Nonetheless, Boucheron persevered and his eponymous firm has become one of the best regarded and preeminent of jewelry houses.³

Though he started with little capital and a small stock of jewelry, Boucheron quickly attracted Parisian trendsetters’ attention. Among his specialties were lacy gold metalwork embellished with diamonds, engraved diamonds (uncommon still today) and delicate plique-à-jour enameling. The gemstones he used were carefully selected for

¹ Vincent Meylan, *Boucheron: The Secret Archives*, Antique Collectors Club, UK 2011

² Antique Jewelry University (AJU)

³ Sylvie Raulet, *Art Deco Jewellery*, New York: Rizzoli, 1989

color and quality. Even Boucheron's most accomplished competitors, like André Massin, praised the firm's pieces for their "faultless craftsmanship."⁴ The jewels were also unusual. As fellow jeweler and historian Henri Vever said, Boucheron made pieces that "very few of his colleagues would have dared to make at the time."⁵ The firm thus developed a faithful and growing clientele including the firm Tiffany & Co.. In 1867, Boucheron won a grand prize for jewelry at Paris's International Exposition for pieces in the archaeological revival and Louis XVI styles. In 1876, the French government presented Frédéric Boucheron with a Legion of Honor award for his jewelry. Awards from international expositions would continue for the next fifty years.

Frédéric would not see all of them. He died in 1902, leaving the firm to his son Louis. The business was in good shape. Nine years earlier, in 1893, Boucheron had taken up residence at 26 Place Vendôme, Paris. By the turn of the century, the firm had enough name recognition, and capital, to open branch stores in London and New York. In the early 1930's, the firm expanded its presence to the Middle East and South America. Fred and Gérard Boucheron, Louis's sons, literally carried Boucheron's jewelry all over the globe, offering private showings to important clients. As the twentieth century dawned, the firm stayed at the cutting edge of fashion. It produced exquisite Art Nouveau, Edwardian, and Art Deco pieces. During the 1930's and 40's, Boucheron popularized detachable dress clips and like other firms during the Retro period, its designers made ample use of three-dimensional motifs, flexible chains, and tassels.

In 1962, control of the firm passed to Gérard's son, Alain. Under his direction, the firm returned to materials it had used at the beginning of the century including: rock crystal quartz, coral, wood and turquoise. In the 1970's and 80's, Boucheron designers mixed such materials with diamonds and other precious stones to create large, impressive pieces. To this day, the firm's designs often feature design motifs from their past including carved multicolour gemstones, geometric lines, tassels and mesh elements mesh in combination with more modern design components continuing their reputation for impeccable quality and design.⁶

Paul Legrand Designer of the Boucheron Demidov Reliquary Coffin

Paul Legrand (1840-1910) was a legendary designer for the major jewelry houses of Paris. As an apprentice at Marret and Jarry, then as an apprentice-designer at Calmus, he also followed courses given by the famous jewelry designer Julienne. He joined Boucheron in 1863, worked there until 1867, and did a stint at Froment-Meurice, followed by one at Baugrand, before finally returning permanently to Boucheron in 1871 where he remained as head of the atelier until his retirement in 1892. His designs are very distinctive. He was primarily a colorist who was captivated by the effects of light; hence, he used transparent enamels and crystal glass, various patinas and gold. The art objects he designed and modeled in wax

⁴ Antique Jewelry University (AJU)

⁵ Antique Jewelry University (AJU)

⁶ Neret, Gilles. *Boucheron: Four Generations of a World-Renowned Jeweler*. New York: Rizzoli, 1984.

include the Demidov reliquary coffer (1876), a tea set of Etruscan style (1867), another of Persian style (1878), Japanese jewelry (1873), a steel vase inlaid with gold by Tissot (1878), the dragon vase of enamel and rock crystal carved by Varangoz (1889), the Episcopal Crozier (1884), and many carved pieces which are the fruit of his exotic inspirations and all the techniques he mastered.⁷

Charles Glachant
Silversmith for the Boucheron Demidov Reliquary Coffers

Charles Glachant (1826-190?) was one of the foremost silversmiths of his time. Because his exceptional skills were in such great demand, he chose not to be employed exclusively by any of the top jewelry houses in Paris. Besides Boucheron, Glachant did work for Falize, Froment-Meurice, Mellerio dits Meller, Philippe, Duponchel, Rouzé-Janin and Fray. He collaborated with Falize and worked on almost all silver pieces he produced.

⁷ Faerber Collection, www.thomasfarber.com

**Photograph of Original 1875 Paul Legrand Preparatory Drawing for the
Boucheron Demidov Reliquary Coffin**



Photograph courtesy of Wilfried Zeisler, Hillwood Museum, Washington D.C. USA, 2015

**Original 1875-76 photograph of Demidov Boucheron Reliquary Coffers
(work in progress)**



Photograph courtesy of Boucheron Archives, Paris, France, 2013

Photograph of Boucheron-Demidov Reliquary Coffers adorned with enamel plaques, in fine silver gilded over sterling silver.

Original 1875 photograph of Reliquary Vessel & Enamel Plaques



Photograph courtesy of Boucheron Archives, Paris, France, 2013

Photograph of reliquary vessel and enamel plaques as delivered to Boucheron, circa 1875.

Detail Photographs of Reliquary Coffin





Demidov Coat of Arms





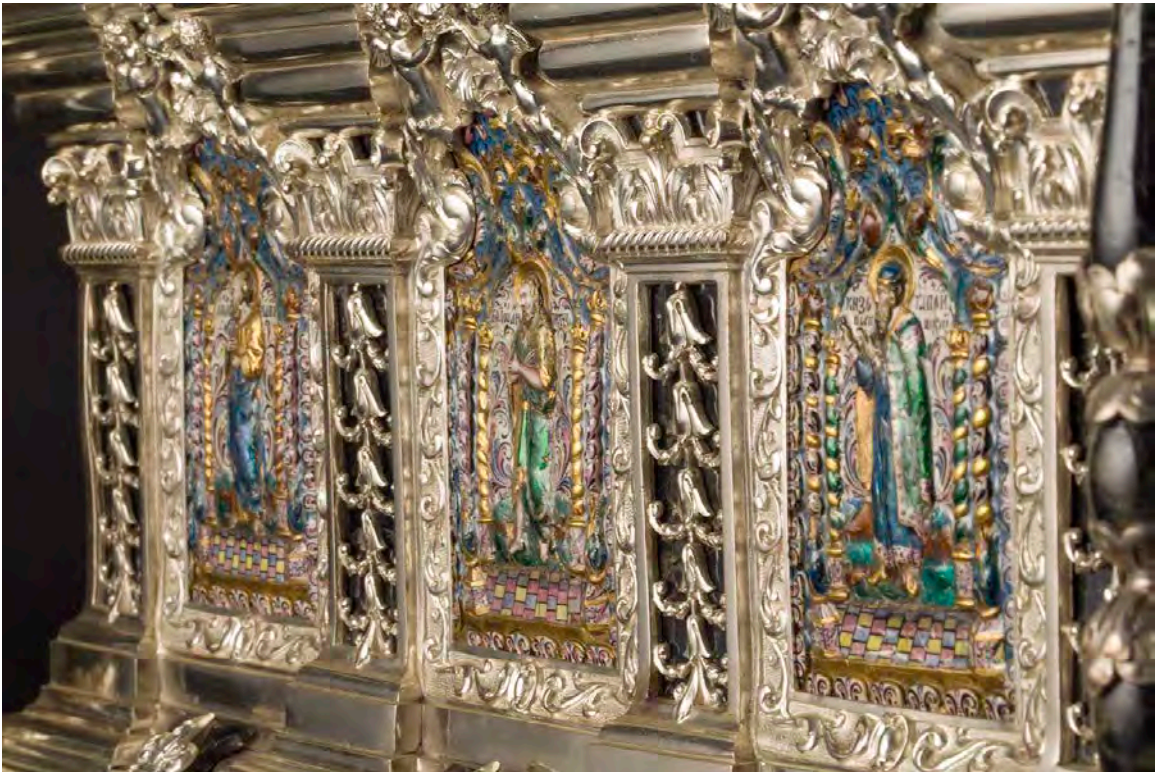
















**17th Century Enamel Plaques
made by the Kremlin Armory Workshops**



The Holy Trinity



Crucifixion with Mary and John



Mary, Mother of God



John the Baptist



Christ as the Lord Almighty



Paul the Apostle



Archangel Michael



Archangel Gabriel



Vsevolod I Yaroslavich, Grand Prince of Kiev

Puttis









Detail Photographs of the Enamel Plaques







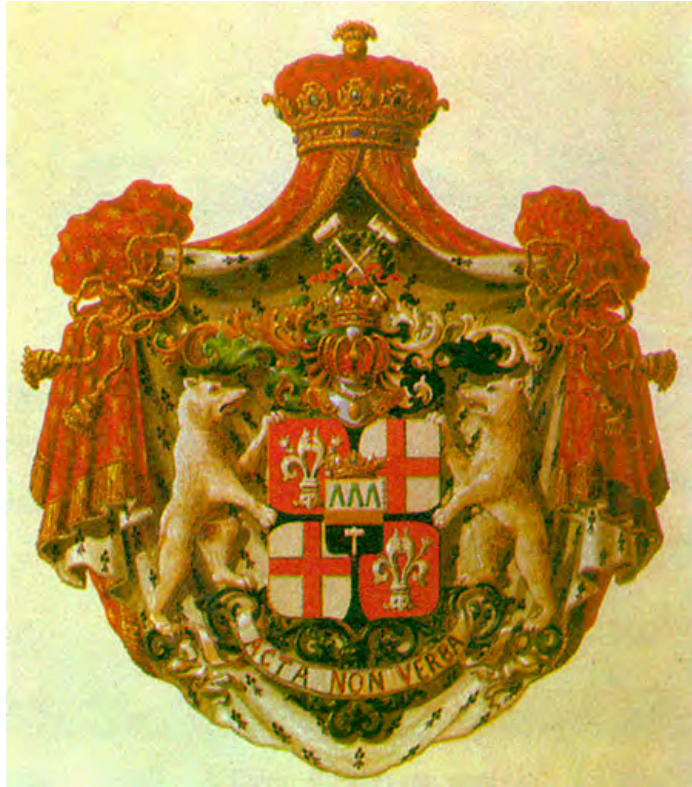






The Demidovs

Demidov Coat of Arms



Prince “Paul” Pavel Pavlovich Demidov
2nd Prince of San Donato (1839-1885)



Photograph courtesy of Alexandre G. Tissot Demidoff

Prince “Paul” Pavel Pavlovich Demidov of San-Donato, Russian jurist, and philanthropist was born in 1839 and died in 1885. He was a member of the Demidovs, a well-known Russian family of nobles whose pedigree is traced as far back as 1672. The Demidov family became a dynasty of industrialists and landowners who, in the 18th and 19th centuries developed the Ural region, setting up iron foundries and arms factories and building whole cities around their ventures.

Paul’s great-great-great grandfather, Nikita Demidov (1656-1725), the founder of the Demidov dynasty, was born into a peasant family and became a gunsmith like his father.⁸ Few details are known about how Nikita’s existence reached the attention of Peter the Great, but the Tsar’s interest in him was clearly the turning point of his life. Some historians say he won Peter’s favor by making a perfect copy of an intricately designed pistol from the armory of one of Central Europe’s most famous gunsmiths, one of Peter’s favorites. The Tsar was impressed with the superb quality of Demidov’s pistols and promised Nikita that if he ever seriously planned to engage in mass production of these weapons, he would have the Tsar’s support. Peter the Great was always on the lookout for talented people regardless of their titles and Nikita Demidov was among them. Peter also knew the Siberian iron frontier needed to be developed in order to put Russia among the great world powers. However, there were no factories to process the iron ore once it was mined. He needed people who were capable of organizing iron and steel processing on a mass scale in the Siberian wilderness. With the encouragement and

⁸ Lord and Peasant in Russia: From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century, by Jerome Blum, 1961

support of the Tsar, Nikita Demidov became the industrial genius behind the growth of Russia's foundries. By the mid-18th century the country produced as much pig iron as the rest of continental Europe combined.⁹

Paul Demidov became the 2nd Prince of San Donato with his princely title recognized in Russia for the first time by Alexandre II. He married Maria Meshcherskaia in 1867 and the young couple moved to Villa di San Donato after a honeymoon in Florence. Just one year later, his young and beautiful wife, Princess Maria, died giving birth to their son Elim P. Demidov (whom lived). Her loss had a lasting effect on Paul, who remained inconsolable for a long time.¹⁰ It is said that he would visit the storage area in Villa di San Donato that contained Maria's dresses to be close to her presence.¹¹ Understandably, Prince Paul's second wife, Helene Petrovna nee Troubetzkoi, and the subject of a painting by John Singer Sargent, believed that living in Villa di San Donato was ruining Paul's health from the painful memories associated with his first wife. They subsequently moved to the Villa Pratolino where they took residence.

During the Russo-Turkish war (1877-78) Demidov chose to follow the army as the authorized agent of the Society of the Red Cross, rather than to be a leader of soldiers with more warlike purposes. Of a peaceful and peace-loving disposition, and with a pronounced predilection for literary work, he cared for achievements foreign to those of the ambitious belligerents, and his name is accordingly associated with deeds of philanthropy. Through these years he remained unknown beyond the narrow circle of family, relatives, and personal acquaintances.¹²

When Paul returned from the war, the couple decided to sell the Villa di San Donato and a large portion of its collections.

On November 5th, 1881 the palace of Villa di San Donato was sold to Gastone Mestayer with the grounds sold separately to Nemesio Papucci and Rosselli Del Turco.¹³

The sale of the Villa was accompanied by the 1880 auction of numerous collections of Count Nicholas, Anatole, and Prince Paul, himself, that lasted six weeks with the proceedings accompanied by classical sounds from three orchestras. The sales included the contents of Anatole's museum in Elba dedicated to Napoleon that primarily was assembled with the aid of Anatole's father in law, King Jerome Bonaparte. The final major sale of the collections of the Demidovs of San Donato took place in 1969 in Pratolino, Italy.¹⁴

⁹ Yulia Bokova and Olga Prodan, Russiapedia.rt.com

¹⁰ Wikipedia

¹¹ Alexandre G. Tissot Demidoff

¹² JewishEncyclopedia.com

¹³ Wikipedia

¹⁴ Alexandre G. Tissot Demidoff

Owning hundreds of factories in Russia, millions of square kilometers of land and palaces in Russia, France and Italy, Paul was considered as one of the richest men in Europe. He developed the family fortunes and inherited Anatole's title of Prince of San Donato after the latter's death without legitimate issue in 1870 (with the title recognized by king Victor Emmanuel II of Italy two years later).



Paul and his Mother Aurora



Paul Demidov

Chronology

- 1839 **Pavel (Paul) Pavlovich Demidov** is born to Aurora Karamzina and her husband Pavel Nikolaievich Demidov, their only child.
- 1840 Paul's father dies.
- 1867 Paul marries Marie Elimovna Metscherskii
- 1868 Princess Marie dies two days after giving birth to Paul's first son, Elim in Vienna, Austria.
- 1870 Anatoly Nikolaievich Demidov, 1st Prince of San Donato, dies and Paul inherits his uncle's title and becomes the 2nd Prince of San Donato.
- 1871 Paul marries Elena Petrovna Trubetskoy in St. Petersburg, Russia.
- 1872 Princess Elena gives birth to Nikita Pavlovich Demidov
- 1873 Princess Elena gives birth to Aurora Pavlovna Demidova
- 1874 Princess Elena gives birth to Anatoly Pavlovich Demidov
- 1875 Paul commissions Boucheron to make a spectacular Reliquary Coffin
- 1877 Princess Elena gives birth to Maria Pavlovna Demidova
- 1877-78 Paul serves with the Red Cross during the Russo-Turkish War
- 1879 Princess Elena gives birth to Pavel Pavlovich Demidov
- 1880 Paul and Elena move into Villa Pratolino (Villa Demidoff)
- 1880 Auction sale of contents of Palais de San Donato
- 1881 Palais de San Donato is sold to Gaston Mestayer, a French business magnate.
- 1884 Princess Elena gives birth to Elena Pavlovna Demidova
- 1885 Paul dies

Nikita Demidov
Founder of the Demidov dynasty (1656-1725)



Nikita Demidov, the founder of the Demidov dynasty was born into a peasant family in the town of Tula. His father was a blacksmith, which largely determined Nikita's future occupation. In order to avoid being recruited into the army, Nikita had to flee his hometown and make a living as a blacksmith. Few details are known about how Nikita's existence reached the attention of Peter the Great, but the Tsar's interest in him was clearly the turning point of his life. Some historians say he won Peter's favor by making a perfect copy of an intricately designed pistol from the armory of one of Central Europe's most famous gunsmiths, one of Peter's favorites. The Tsar was impressed with the superb quality of Demidov's pistols; it was as if they had been imported from abroad but their cost of production was much cheaper than their foreign equivalent. Peter promised Demidov that if he ever seriously planned to engage in mass production of these weapons, he would have the Tsar's support.

Peter the Great was always on the lookout for talented people regardless of their titles and Demidov was among them. Peter also recognized the potential of the Siberian iron frontier to put Russia among the great powers. However, there were no factories to process the iron ore once it was mined. He needed people who were

capable of organizing iron and steel processing on a mass scale in the Siberian wilderness. With the encouragement and support of the Tsar, Nikita Demidov became the industrial genius behind the growth of Russia's foundries. By the mid-18th century the country produced as much pig iron as the rest of continental Europe combined.

Nikita built one of Russia's first metallurgical factories in Tula, producing the first Russian iron to rival English and Swedish iron in quality. He became the first ironmaster to use waterpower and, after buying up several other small foundries, he began to produce flintlock muskets that met the government's specifications at a fraction of what it cost to import them from Europe.

In 1720, Peter the Great granted Nikita Demidov the title of prince as a reward for his services.¹⁵



¹⁵ Yulia Bokova and Olga Prodan, Russiapedia.rt.com

Anatoly Nikolaievich Demidov
1st Prince of San Donato (1839-1885)



Anatole Demidov

Born in Saint Petersburg or Moscow, he was the second son of Count Nikolai Nikitich Demidov and Baroness Elisabeta Alexandrovna Stroganova; he grew up in Paris, where his father was ambassador. He served briefly as a diplomat himself in Paris (living in the hôtel built by Charles de Wailly for the sculptor Augustin Pajou, at 87 rue de la Pépinière, now the rue La Boétie), Rome and Venice. On his father's death in 1828 Anatole settled for good in Western Europe, returning to Russia as little as possible. This attitude alienated him from tsar Nicholas I of Russia, who always had an antipathy towards him.



Anatole Demidoff, 1st Prince of San Donato by Robert Lefevre

In 1837 Anatoly was created 1st Prince of San Donato. In 1837–38, he organized a scientific expedition of 22 scholars, writers and artists (of which Auguste Raffet and the critic Jules Janin became Demidov's friends) to southern Russia and the Crimea, headed up by Frédéric Le Play. It cost 500,000 francs and its results were published as *Voyage dans la Russie méridionale et la Crimée* (4 vol., 1840–1842), with 100 original lithographs by Raffet and dedicated to the tsar despite his not having taken any interest in the book (irritated as he was that most of the expedition's members had been French). Demidov also financed a trip to Russia by André Durand to relieve the peasants, the results of which were published as *Voyage pittoresque et archéologique en Russie* (1839). In 1840, Demidov himself published a series of articles on Russia in the *Journal des Débats* – these were collected as *Lettres sur l'Empire de Russie* (1840) with the aim of fighting certain received French ideas about Russia. Nevertheless, these works irritated Nicholas I due to their description of Russia's feudal system. In 1847 Demidov made a trip to Spain with Raffet, publishing an account of it later as *Etapas maritimes sur les côtes d'Espagne* (1858). In 1842, he was elected a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Anatoly also considerably expanded the Demidov collection assembled by his father at the Villa San Donato near Florence, being particularly interested in Romantic art. In the Paris Salon of 1834 he acquired Paul Delaroche's *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* (now in the National Gallery, London). In 1833 he bought François Marius Granet's *The Death of Poussin*, which caused a sensation at the 1834 Salon. He commissioned paintings from Eugène Delacroix and watercolours from Richard Parkes Bonington and Théodore Géricault, as well as Briullov's *The Last Day of Pompeii*. His collection was split up in public sales in Paris in 1863 and shortly before the prince's death in 1870.

Like his parents, Demidov was a great admirer of Napoleon I of France, and built a museum below the house of San Martino on Elba where Napoleon had lived during his first exile and caused a mass to be sung at Portoferraio every 5 May (which is still sung today). In 1839 he was introduced by Jules Janin into the circle of Jérôme Bonaparte, former king of Westphalia, who was living in exile at the Villa di Quarto in Florence. A plan to marry Jérôme's daughter princess Mathilde-Létizia Bonaparte to Demidov was quickly formed. It was agreed she would receive a dowry of 50,000 francs in jewels (bought by Demidov for 1 million francs from Jérôme, always short of money) and 240,000 francs in money, payable in instalments. A decree of 20 October 1840 also made Demidov "prince of San Donato" to allow the princess to hold onto her title, though Demidov's princely title was never recognized in Russia. The marriage took place in Rome or Florence on 1 November 1840.

In March 1841 the couple went to Saint Petersburg, where the Tsar was full of attention for his cousin (through the Wurttembergs) the princess and losing no opportunity to humiliate Demidov by any means possible. In spite of this, Anatole began his own infidelities. On 17 August 1841 the couple arrived in Paris, where they lived at hôtel Demidoff at 109 rue Saint-Dominique until June 1842, when they moved to spend a year in Saint Petersburg before finally setting up home at the villa

San Donato. Their relationship soon soured, with the princess taking count Émilien de Nieuwerkerke as a lover, and Demidov taking Valentine de Sainte-Aldegonde, duchesse de Dino, as a mistress.

Mathilde made a violent scene with Valentine during a ball and in reply Demidov slapped her twice in public. His strong blows caused much damage, the violent side of his crime fighting laid bare for him to see. Separated since 1843, in September 1846 Mathilde fled to Paris to take refuge with Nieuwerkerke, taking with her the jewels from her dowry. Even so, Demidov was condemned by a tribunal in Saint Petersburg to send Mathilde an annual pension of 200,000 francs and was never able to recover his jewels. In many ways Demidov felt he deserved such punishment, and their separation was authorised in 1847 by a personal decision of tsar Nicholas I. Demidov's many other mistresses included Maria Calergis, considered one of the most beautiful women of her era, Ernestine Duverger and Fanny de la Rochefoucauld (daughter of Francois, 8th duc de la Rochefoucauld, with whom he had an illegitimate son).

Demidov tried to repair the damage the separation had done to his social standing by increasing his charitable donations. He created hospitals, orphanages and started an international committee to aid prisoners of the Crimean War, as well as giving 1 million roubles to finance that war (for which Alexander II of Russia made his chamberlain and councillor of state). In 1860 he, the duc de Morny and doctor Oliffe made up the consortium of investors which founded the bathing resort at Deauville, and he took part in the famous Carnival de Paris (a painting at the musée Carnavalet shows his team taking part). A bon viveur, two chicken dishes were named after him, including Chicken Demidoff (elaborately stuffed, smothered, tied up and garnished), and the Demidoff name is also applied to dishes of rissoles and red snapper. He died in 1870 of a pulmonary congestion in his hotel on rue Saint-Dominique in Paris. Dying without legitimate issue, his title of Prince of San Donato passed to his nephew Pavel Pavlovitch Demidov.¹⁶



¹⁶ Wikipedia

Princess Demidoff (1)



Marie Elimovna Metscherskii
Princess of San Danto
(1844-68)

Princess Maria Meshcherskaia is predominantly known today as the first love of Alexander III, Emperor of Russia when a Grand Duke and only third in line to the throne. However, upon the death of his older brother, Alexander stood to inherit the Russian Imperial Crown, and under the pressure from his parents, he gave up Princess Maria Meshcherskaia to marry a girl from his own caste, Princess Dagmar of Denmark, the future Empress Maria Feodrovna (mother of Tsar Nicholas). Princess Meshcherskaia was ordered to leave St Petersburg, and while in Paris she met – and married shortly afterwards – Prince Paul Demidov, one of the most eligible bachelors and wealthiest Russian aristocrats.¹⁷ But her newly found happiness in married life was not to last. Princess Maria died in August 1868 two days after giving birth to her only child, Elim Pavlovich Demidov, future 3rd Prince di San Donato (1868-1943).¹⁸

¹⁷ Eugene Barilo von Reisberg, 2012

¹⁸ Franz Xaver Winterhalter and Hermann Winterhalter: Research-in-Progress Catalogue Raisonne

Princess Demidoff (2)



Elena Petrovna Trubetskoy
Princess of San Danto
1853-1917

John Singer Sargent

Photograph courtesy of Alexandre G. Tissot Demidoff

Princess Elene was the second wife of Prince Paul. After the death of his first wife and after having remarried, Princess Helene encouraged her new husband to leave the Villa di San Donato in 1885 to live in the Villa Pratolino by taking the paggeria,¹⁹ since the original Villa had been lost, remodeling it, and renaming it the Villa Demidoff.²⁰

¹⁹ A paggeria is the servants quarters built separately from the Italian country Villa.

²⁰ Natasha Wallace JSS Virtual Gallery & Alexandre G. Tissot Demidoff

Children of Paul Pavlovich Demidoff



**Portrait of 4 of the Children of Paul Pavlovich Demidoff,
2nd Prince of San Donato (1839-1885) and Princess Elena**
Painted by Alexei Harlamoff, 1903

Pavel (1879-1909), Aurora (1873-1904), Maria (1876-1955) and Anatoli (1874-1943).

Count Pavel Nikolaievich Demidov



Prince Paul Demidoff's father was the eldest son of Count Nikolai Nikitich Demidov and Baroness Elisabeta Alexandrovna Stroganova, he fought as an officer in his father's regiment and received his baptism of fire at the battle of Borodino in 1812. After the war he entered the Chevalier Guards regiment. In 1828 he purchased the Sancy diamond and he received his discharge in 1831 with the rank of captain, at which point he entered civil service as governor of the province of Kursk. Also in 1831 he founded the Demidov Prize (decided by the Russian Academy of Sciences). In 1834 he entered service in the Ministry of the Exterior as court Huntsmaster, later State Councillor. In Helsinki on 9 January 1836 he married the well-known society beauty and maid-of-honour to Her Majesty the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, Aurora Stjernvall (1808–1902) - they had one son, Pavel Pavlovitch Demidov (1839–1885), whose daughter Aurora was mother of Prince Paul of Yugoslavia.²¹

²¹ Wikipedia

Princess Aurora Demidova



Prince Paul Demidoff's mother was Eva Aurora Charlotta Karamzin (née Stjernvall) (1/7 August 1808 in Pori), Finland– 13 May 1902) better known as Princess Aurora Demidova and Aurora Karamzinawas. She was a Finnish-Swede philanthropist and the founder and supporter of various charities.

Aurora was appointed a lady-in-waiting of Empress Alexandra Fedorovna the elder, consort to Emperor Nicholas I of Russia and a lady of the bedchamber of their Imperial Majesties Empress Alexandra Fedorovna the younger and Empress Maria Feodorovna. She was made a dame of the Order of Saint Catherine, the highest honor for ladies in Imperial Russia. Evgeny Baratynsky dedicated a poem to her, both in Russian and French ("Go and breathe inspiration into us, you the namesake of dawn... for whom you will become the sun of happiness?"), as did to her sister Countess Emilia Musin-Pushkin Mikhail Lermontov. An impoverished beauty, she was married in Helsinki on 9 January 1836 to Prince and Count Pavel Nikolaievich Demidov (1798–1840), a scion of a Russian family whose immense wealth was derived from mines in Nizhni Tagilsk, Ural. Her husband died in 1840, and six years

later, she married a Russian officer, Colonel Andrei Nikolaievich Karamzin, son of the historian Nikolai Karamzin, who died in the Crimean War in 1854. After the death of her second husband, she occupied herself with the practical matters of her Järvenperä manor in Espoo, Finland and with her growing interest in charity. Aurora used her immense wealth, inherited from her first husband, to create benefactory institutions in Helsinki, such as schools, public kitchens and the Deaconess Institution of Helsinki. She was a great benefactor in many cities such as St. Petersburg and Florence. Aurora's only child was Prince Pavel Pavlovich Demidov (9 October 1839 – 26 January 1885). In 1870, he succeeded his childless uncle, Anatoly Nikolaievich Demidov, as the 2nd Prince of San Donato. Her granddaughter and namesake Princess Aurora Pavlovna Demidova married Arsen Karađorđević, Prince of Serbia and became the mother of the Yugoslav Regent, Prince Paul of Yugoslavia. Aurora of Yugoslavia's granddaughter is Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia, a politician in Serbia and the mother of actress Catherine Oxenberg. She died in Helsinki.



Aurora Demidov 1830-luvun lopusta.

San Donato

The principedom of San Donato was created by Leopold II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, for the Russian Italophile Anatole Demidov in 1840, so that Demidov could marry Mathilde Bonaparte without her losing her title of Princess. The title was never recognised in Russia. It was named after the Demidov family villa near Florence, Villa San Donato.

Villa San Donato



The Villa San Donato is a Palladian palace built by Russian industrialist Nikolay Demidov on 42 hectares of marshland to the north of Florence at Polverosa which he had bought from the Catholic church, after he was made Russia's ambassador to the court of Tuscany. The first stone was laid on 27 June 1827 and construction was completed in 1831. It includes an estate with rivers, lakes, churches, a menagerie, a silk factory, a zoo, gardens and a railway. The designs were by Giovan Battista Silvestri, architect to the Uffizi. Besides vast private apartments, it includes a private 14-room museum built to contain the huge Demidov collection.

The ceiling of the dome over the central rotunda has a fresco of 1827 by Domenico Morelli, repainted in 1841 by the French painter Jean Baptiste Fortuné de Fournier. It was seriously damaged in the Second World War. The adjacent Demidoff Chapel of San Donato is now owned by the Church of Christ.²²



Jean-Baptiste-Fortuné De Fournier
1841
Gouache on card

²² Wikipedia



Jean-Baptiste-Fortuné De Fournier
1841
Gouache on card



Vue du Palais de San Donato, terrasse du côté du nouveau parc,
1847, half-plate daguerreotype²³



²³ This daguerreotype was sold in the May 13, 1880 Palais San Donato auction, no. 2813

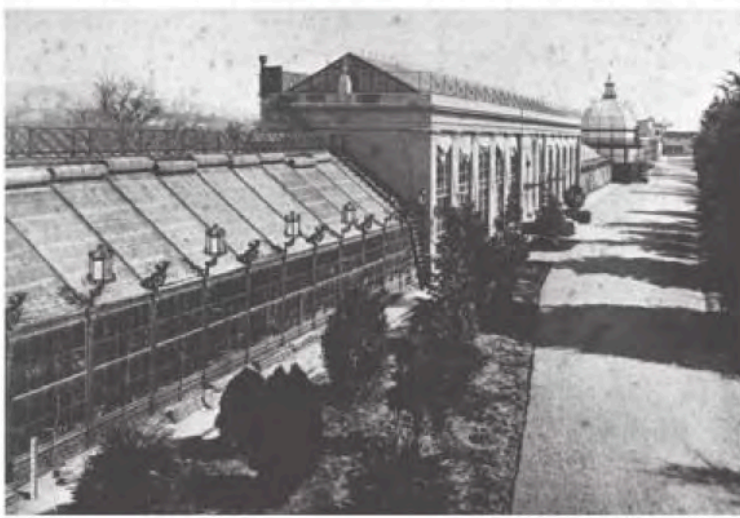
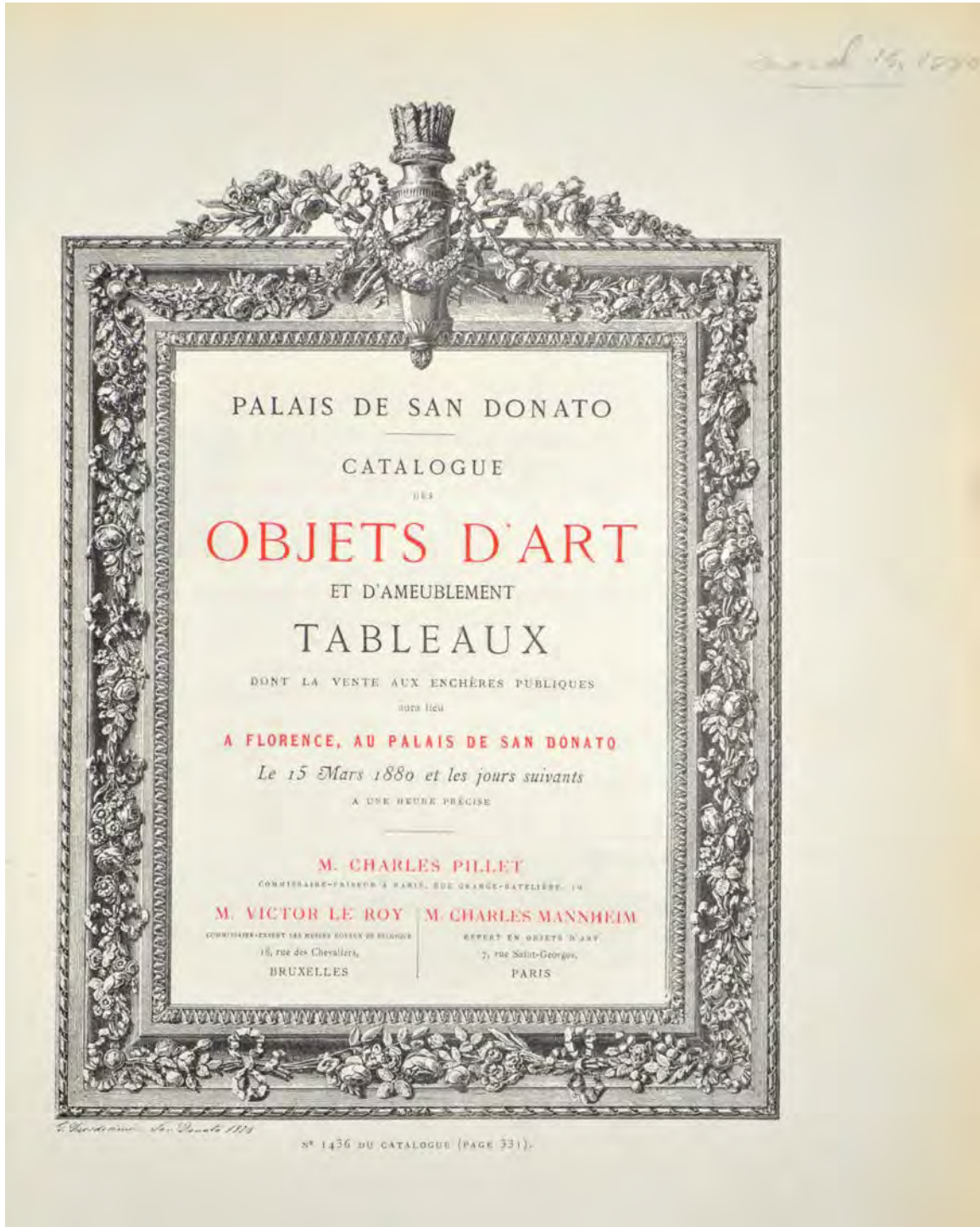


Figura 4. Le serre di villa Demidoff a San Donato in una foto d'epoca della metà dell'Ottocento.



The 1880 San Donato Auction Sale



Catalogue Entry

— 87 —

Dans une gorge biseautée se distinguent onze têtes de chérubins contemplant la Vierge qui, en adoration devant l'Enfant Jésus, occupe tout le panneau du fond émaillé de bleu et au haut duquel se distinguent le Saint-Esprit et quatre figures d'anges à mi-corps.

Importante composition d'un sentiment profond et d'un goût exquis.

Haut. totale, o m. 92 cent.; larg., o m. 82 cent.

Haut. du médaillon, o m. 58 cent.; larg., o m. 39 cent.

Ces quatre morceaux de choix, qui sont au-dessus de tout éloge, comptent parmi les plus précieuses créations du maître, et leur conservation est parfaite.

DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO

NÉ EN 1428, MORT EN 1494

378 — L'ENFANT JÉSUS.

Charmante statuette debout et en pied, en terre cuite colorée.

Haut., o m. 50 cent.



N° 378.

ANTONIO ROSSELLINO

NÉ EN 1437, MORT VERS 1479

379 — MADONE en stuc polychrome, contenue dans un encadrement du xv^e siècle, en bois sculpté, doré et peint. Dans la lunette supérieure du cadre est peint le Christ, vu à mi-corps sortant du tombeau; sur la base du cadre se lit en lettres d'or: *Regina. Celi. Letare. Alleluia* (Sic).

Le haut-relief en stuc, exécuté par le Rossellino, représente la Vierge qui de la main gauche retient le petit Jésus par l'épaule, tandis que sur sa main droite s'appuie un des pieds du divin Enfant dont le bras droit entoure le cou de sa mère. Trois têtes de séraphins se distinguent dans le fond.

Haut. du haut-relief, o m. 55 cent.; larg., o m. 38 cent.

380 — TRÈS PRÉCIEUSE SUITE DE DIX-SEPT ÉMAUX byzantins translucides du xv^e siècle, sur or, de la plus remarquable conservation; huit d'entre eux, de forme rectangulaire, représentent le Christ en croix, la Vierge, les Évangélistes et deux anges; huit autres, de forme circulaire, des têtes de chérubins; et le dix-septième, de forme ovale, la communion des saints anges.



Ils ont été montés dans un coffret en argent de forme oblongue, à colonnettes en labrador aux angles, et à couvercle bombé, en argent repoussé et ciselé, exécuté avec infiniment de goût par **Boucheron**.

Sur la base, la fleur de lis florentine, en argent et montée sur labrador, se trouve huit fois répétée.

Haut. du coffret, 0 m. 41 cent.; larg., 0 m. 30 cent.



N° 380. (Voir p. 88.)

381 — TRÈS BELLE CROIX PROCESSIONNELLE en argent battu, repoussé et ciselé, ornée, sur une face, de cinq émaux translucides, représentant quatre figures d'apôtres et le pelican, emblème de la charité. Sur l'autre face les quatre évangélistes avec leurs attributs en haut-relief, en argent doré; au centre, la figure de Dieu le père; sur la face principale est le Christ en croix, avec la Vierge en larmes d'un côté, saint Jean de l'autre; au haut et au bas, saint Pierre et la Madeleine. Cette croix est en outre ornée de trente-six cabochons en cristal de roche.

Travail des plus remarquables du commencement du xiv^e siècle.

Haut, 0 m. 62 cent.; larg., 0 m. 52 cent.

12

Catalogue Entry Translation

380 — TRÈS PRÉCIEUSE SUITE DE DIX-SEPT ÉMAUX byzantins translucides du xv^e siècle, sur or, de la plus remarquable conservation ; huit d'entre eux, de forme rectangulaire, représentent le Christ en croix, la Vierge, les Évangélistes et deux anges ; huit autres, de forme circulaire, des têtes de chérubins ; et le dix-septième, de forme ovale, la communion des saints anges.

Ils ont été montés dans un coffret en argent de forme oblongue, à colonnettes en labrador aux angles, et à couvercle bombé, en argent repoussé et ciselé, exécuté avec infiniment de goût par Boucheron.

Sur la base, la fleur de lis florentine, en argent et montée sur labrador, se trouve huit fois répétée.

Haut. du coffret, 0 m. 43 cent.; larg., 0 m. 30 cent.

“A lovely suite of seventeen translucent 15th-century Byzantine enamels on gold, of the most remarkable conservation; eight among them are rectangular, representing Christ on the cross, the Virgin, the Evangelists and two angels; another set of eight are circular cherubs’ heads; and the seventeenth, in an oval shape, represents the communion of saintly angels.

The enamels are mounted on an oblong silver box, with Labrador(ite) balusters at the corners, and a domed lid, in embossed silver, executed in the finest of taste by Boucheron.

On the base, the Florentine lily is represented in silver, mounted on Labrador(ite), and repeated eight times.”²⁴

²⁴ Translation courtesy of Caren Colley-Trowbridge, Professor of French, Marymount University, Washington, D.C.

1880 New York Times Articles about San Donato Auction

Following are two articles from the New York Times written by James Jackson Jarves, approximately two months apart. In the first article, written two months before the San Donato sale, Jarves displays his ignorance as to the character and person of Prince Paul Demidoff or of the Demidov family legacy. He characterizes Prince Paul as being just another royal with too much money and too many possessions, none of which have any meaning, nor were acquired with any passion.

In Jarves' second article, written shortly before the San Donato auction takes place, he begins by apologizing about his earlier, less than flattering, characterization of Prince Paul Demidoff. While he discovers Prince Paul, the passionate collector, only intimate knowledge of Paul's personal family tragedy, and the perspective of time and history would allow any reader, then or now, to be amazed at the acquisition and disposition of one of the great art and antique collections of all time.

While the enormous wealth of the Demidoff's may have been on the decline toward the end of the nineteenth century, the family's philanthropic tradition reached a pinnacle with proceeds from the sale of San Donato being donated to the poor of Florence, and to fund the restoration of the Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore, or the Duomo as it is ordinarily known, and now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

ART EVENTS IN FLORENCE

A REMARKBLE COLLECTION AT AUCTION.

PRINCE DEMIDOFF'S COMING SALE OF PICTURES, STATUES, AND FURNITURE

FLORENCE, Dec. 22 – Great preparations are making here for the coming sale at auction of all the works of art, furniture, and other objects belonging to Prince Demidoff and now in his palatial villa at San Donato, one mile from Florence. It is in the hands of eminent experts of Paris, who are now preparing the illustrated catalogues, which are to cost 50 francs each for the common ones and 100 for the large paper copies. The sale is to come off in March and April next. Meanwhile, *L'Art* is giving drawings and etchings of the most interesting objects with full letter-press descriptions. Everything will be done to attract the wealthy buyers of Europe and America to the sumptuous sale, which cannot fail to prove an interesting and unique spectacle of its kind to travelers generally, whose taste goes to the curious and magnificent in bric-a-brac and articles of luxury, the value of which is put down at something like 4,000,000 francs. As the auctioneer's commissions on the sales are 5 per cent each from the seller and the buyer, it becomes a snug little operation for them and quite worth all the trouble they are taking to give it éclat and make it widely known. But catalogs costing \$10 or \$20 are not likely to attract a great crowd of common buyers, even if the proceeds of their sale, as the Prince informs the public, are to be distributed in charity. We may look for a sort of auction tournament of millionaires, quite willing to throw away their thousands and perhaps tens of thousands, on whatever their eyes covet for the moment, without regard to the intrinsic or artistic value of an article, in the enthusiastic rivalry which auctions sometimes beget in those who can afford to pit purse against purse for the sake of a transitory triumph in defeating a competitor. I have known a Florentine portrait of the sixteenth century at one of these famous sales, of which there were plenty in dealers' hands by the same artist, that could be bought at 3,000 or 4,000 francs, run-up to nearly 70,000 francs, simply by the heat of competitive bidding between two connoisseurs of long purses, and a little picture at the same sale, which had cost the owner 500 francs, was knocked down at 125,000 francs. Prince Demidoff disperses his collections simply because he is tired of them, and without doubt will begin anew soon again, especially if his expectations are realized of doing as well as was done in November at Genoa by the celebrated Mylius collection, likewise under the auspices of Parisian experts. He would like also to sell the estate of San Donato, but its situation is not tempting at any price. It has been intimated that he might give it to the city of Florence, but as it would prove to be an expensive elephant, the taxpayers would object to it even on these terms. It is the Prince's intention hereafter, it is said, to build a splendid hunting lodge on his estate at Pratolino, overlooking Florence where he will stop on his occasional visits from Russia, which he is now obliged to make his permanent home, greatly to his own regret, and the loss of the numerous persons he employed. His title of Prince, being derived from the estate of San Donato, has no force in Russia. Perhaps some title-coveting American lady might prefer to buy it in place of marrying a prince, and thus become a princess in right of solid real estate, instead of a more dubious investment in an ennobled husband.

James Jackson Jarves.

Published: January 12, 1880
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THE SAN DONATO ART SALE

PRINCE DEMIDOFF'S MATCHLESS COLLECTION

A PALACE FILLED WITH THE RICHEST ART TREASURES--GEMS OF THE COLLECTION -THE OWNER'S CAPRICES—THE CATALOGUE

FLORENCE, March 7—I owe an apology to the San Donato collections of Prince Demidoff for the lukewarmness of my allusion to them in one of my previous letters. My generalization was based on a standard which does not apply closely in their case and on the opinions formed when the uncle of the present Prince had sold the gems of his collections, his fine Italian pictures, Dutch, and French masters, and left the palace comparatively bare of great works of art, and before the present owner had brought together from Russia and Paris his various and rich gatherings for the last 10 years and united them into the great, and we may rightly add unique, one, which is now on the eve of being dispersed at auction. I had in mind, too, the character of a purely art museum, on the basis of the Louvre or any other great national collection of strictly fine art and noteworthy masterpieces of painting and sculpture. But there was no such intention in creating the San Donato museum, for museum it is entitled to be considered. Nevertheless, it is purely the outcome of a private gentleman's taste, who has unlimited means and can command the aid of experts in every specialty of fine art, bric-a-brac, and the most costly and finest workmanship of every description which can enter into a human habitation. Recent and repeated visits and careful studying of the objects and their arrangement, besides comparing notes with those who are familiar with the richest royal residences of Europe and greatest show-places, convince me that as a luxurious sumptuous residence, with many first-class works of art, notably pictures of the early Flemish and Dutch schools, but more particularly in the variety, costliness, and exquisite taste displayed in its mountings, and its bric-a-brac gatherings, San Donato reigns supreme. The wonder is how, in so short a time Prince Demidoff being only 39 years old—after the sale of his uncle's masterpieces in 1870, in Paris, he could have brought together so many remarkable objects; and, having done so, could consent, as it were, to turn them out of doors at any sacrifice of money, merely to be rid of their presence. Be it caprice; disgust of life, satiety of collecting, love of sensation, or whatever motive, the plain fact is now being realized that Prince Demidoff no sooner had perfected the most complete and beautiful abode that man ever made for himself in any age — one that Lucullus or Nero might envy, a truly golden house--no sooner had he completed it and filled it to profusion with the loveliest objects of vertu, than he turns round and literally kicks them all out of doors in cool blood. There seems a touch of the fierce Tartar blood in this—its love of change and destruction. True, he may, as did his uncle, make money by the sale; but the contrary is much more probable. At Anatole Demidoff's sale in 1870, some of his pictures brought fabulous prices. Terburg's "Congress of Ministers" fetched 182,000 francs. But Paul Demidoff has a single figure by Terburg for which he paid 300,000 francs, an extraordinary price. Cuyp's "Avenue de Dordrecht" sold for 140,000 francs; Van Ostade's "Village," 104,000 francs; a small Teniers, 110,000 francs; a Hobbemer, 77,000, and so on. The day after this sale Anatole Demidoff died, leaving what remained of his collections and his Palace of San Donato to his nephew Paul-- this magnificent place, with its more than royal fittings, extensive conservatories filled with the rarest plants of the world in an ideal state of perfection, each the finest type of its species, with everything else that can gladden the human heart and eye and make the body comfortable, which he now abandons in utter disgust for causes which perhaps he himself cannot fathom, unless it be the satisfaction of making a day's sensation in high life and wonder to all the world besides.

The manner of carrying out his determination is as eccentric as the decision itself. To a friend who suggested that he might regret letting go some of the most choice objects, family portraits, souvenirs, or relics of the great Napoleon and his family, his relatives by marriage, the personal linen of the Emperor, decorations, jewels, &c., he gruffly

replied, "I take no ones advice." He then gave orders to have the palace and grounds put into thorough repair at great expense, the costly marquette floors remade, as it were, the richest carpets, hangings and decorations mounted, and everything arranged just as if he was about to receive a visit from the Emperor of Russia. And this has been strictly carried out. The crowd of buyers, high and low, Jew and Gentile of all degrees are invited to enter on the same footing as royalty itself this palace, which has always been veiled in a sort of mystery from the public at large, and made difficult of ingress. Everything in its long suites of halls and salons, its private rooms and grounds, to the tiniest article of use, the dainty footstool, the artistic tongs and shovel, the loveliest Oriental rug or firescreen, is cozily arranged in its rightful place, even to the boudoir knickknacks, the thousand and one objects which decorate a refined house where a lady's taste and longings are consulted, and make it artistically suggestive and cheerful, are all there, just as if the Princess Demidoff and her children had that moment passed out of the rooms as you entered, or had invited their friends to a grand reception. The profusion of beautiful objects is at first bewildering. But such is their harmonious distribution, each specialty of art-objects by itself magnificent repose in its own appropriate quarters, that the mind soon re-establishes itself and easily and orderly goes from one enjoyment to a fresh gratification without distracting fatigue. There is something for every taste. The strong points, besides the Dutch and Flemish masters, are the old Vienna and Sevres and Saxon porcelains, the old Worcester, the old silverplate, the magnificent embroideries, gold and silk and church garments, tapestries, furniture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, French bronzes, malachite vases, doors, chimney-pieces, cabinets, sideboards, Luca Gierdano stipes, the busts and statues of the Bonaparte family, jewelry, mosaics, painted glass, marquetterie, wood carvings, &c. The French styles at the times of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI, and the Empire are notably represented in ornamental objects generally. Among the very remarkable relics are the sword of Francis I, and the throne of Giuliano di Medici, Duke de Nemours. Of all the pictures, I coveted the most for its technical merits a little Capelle-- a marine piece with singularly felicitous sky and water--a rare touch of nature in art in just relations and balance. But it is useless to attempt to particularize out of so many thousand lots, all now painfully numbered and awaiting the stroke of the auctioneer's hammer to decide their destinies. The library alone and its rare appointments is a sight, placed as it is in what was the old mediaeval church of San Donato, now absorbed into the modern palace, its walls still covered with fine frescoes of the Giotteschi artists. The books are mainly French and Russian. I must refer your readers to the widely distributed common catalogues for accurate descriptive details. They form a large volume of special interest to art collectors. At first the Prince ordered 20 illustrations for the special editions. Then he telegraphed have 30, again 40, and so on, until it ended in upward of 200, at an enormous cost, as the work was crowded into three months' time, while it was sufficient to have occupied three times as many under any other conditions than his autocratic will and heavy purse. Thirteen hundred copies of the 50-franc and 100-franc edition were printed and they are insufficient to meet the demand. A Paris publisher offered to take the whole at 50 francs advance on each, but no such speculation could be permitted. They are supplied in order to the regular subscribers, and the entire proceeds will go to the poor of Florence and for the completion of the facade of the Duomo. The sale begins on the 15th of March and continues daily, except Sundays, to the end of May, so that there is still time for American collectors--as each day's sales are numbered in the catalogue--to make their selections and give their orders.

James Jackson Jarves.

Published: March 25, 1880
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Holy Prince Gavril Pskovskiy



Early life

Vsevolod of Pskov, the eldest son of Mstislav the Great and Christina Ingesdotter of Sweden, was born in Novgorod during his father's reign as prince there (1088–1093, 1095–1117) and given the baptismal name Gabriel, or Gavriil. His maternal grandfather was King Inge the Elder of Sweden. The date of his birth is unknown, although the idea has been advanced that the event was commemorated by the Annunciation Church in the Marketplace, founded by Mstislav in 1103.²⁵

He was enthroned as Prince of Novgorod after his father Mstislav Vladimirovich became Grand Prince of Kiev in 1117 and ruled Novgorod, with some interruption, until he was ousted by the Novgorodians in 1136. He was married to a Chernigovian princess in Novgorod in 1123 and his son, Ivan, was born there (he died in 1128).²⁶ In 1123, Vsevolod led the Novgorodians against the Chud. These campaigns continued in 1130 and over the next several years.²⁷ Aside from Vladimir

²⁵ А.Ф. Литвина, В.Б. Успенский. Выбор имени у русских князей X-XVI вв. [Choice of personal names for the Russian princes of the 10th-16th centuries.] Moscow: Indrik, 2006. ISBN 5-85759-339-5. Page 503

²⁶ Arsenii Nikolaevich Nasanov, ed., *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis': Starshego i mladshego izvoda* (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1950), 21, 206; Robert Michell and Neville Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471* (New York: American Medieval Society, 1970), 9.

²⁷ Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 10.

Yaroslavich, Vsevolod was the first Novgorodian prince known to have been in conflict with Finns (in 1123).²⁸

Expulsion from Novgorod

Following his father's death in 1132, support for him began to erode in Novgorod. That same year, he was sent by his uncle, Grand Prince Yaropolk, to Pereslavl, to reign there. When he tried to return to Novgorod later that year, the Novgorodians refused to accept him back because they considered his move to Pereslavl as a betrayal (He had sworn an oath to die in Novgorod). That being said, the chronicles indicate that he was back leading a Novgorodian army in 1133. It was during that campaign that Vsevolod captured the city of Yuryev (modern Tartu, Estonia).²⁹

In 1134, Vsevolod led an unsuccessful campaign in Vladimir-Suzdal during which, according to the Novgorodians, he showed indecisiveness, one of the reasons for his dismissal a little over a year later. On 28 May 1136, he was confined in the Archbishop's courtyard (compound) in the Detinets along with his wife and family, guarded by thirty men so as not to escape. In mid-July he was allowed to leave, going to his uncle in Kiev.³⁰ The following year, he tried to come back to Novgorod at the head of an army but withdrew instead to Pskov, where he died in February 1138.³¹ According to his own wishes, he was buried in the Church of St. Demetrius in Pskov.

Vsevolod's dismissal from Novgorod has traditionally been seen as the end of Kievan power in the north and the beginning of the Republic of Novgorod. After him a number of princes were invited in or dismissed over the next two centuries, although only a few, like Aleksandr Nevsky, could assert themselves in the city for a prolonged period.

Church-building and veneration

A cathedral constructed by Vsevolod in Novgorod. In addition to leading Novgorodian armies on several campaigns, Vsevolod built a number of churches in and around the city: the Church of St. John on Opoki (1127–1130),³² the Church of St. George in the Market (1133), the Church of The Assumption in the Market (1133; built with Archbishop Nifont),³³ and the Church of St. George in the Yuriev Monastery.³⁴ It was Vsevolod who granted the charter to Ivan's Hundred, the first Russian merchant guild. In addition, the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Yaroslav's Court, while often attributed to his father Mstislav, was mostly built during Vsevolod's tenure in Novgorod.

²⁸ Novgorod First Chronicle entry about the war, "1123". Archived from the original on 2007-09-27.. In Swedish. Hosted by the National Archive of Finland. See [1] and Diplomatarium Fennicum from the menu.

²⁹ Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 13.

³⁰ Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 14.

³¹ Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 15.

³² Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 11. The church was overhauled by Archbishop Evfimii II in the 1450s but still stands in the Marketplace in Novgorod.

³³ Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 13. These churches, too were rebuilt by Archbishop Evfimii II and still stand in the marketplace in Novgorod.

³⁴ Michell and Forbes, *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 10.

Vsevolod's comparatively early death prevented him from claiming the Kievan throne. He was survived by a daughter, Wierzchosława, the wife of Bolesław IV the Curly. The prince was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church as Vsevolod-Gavriil. In the *Stepennaya Kniga* (the "Book of Degrees of Royal Genealogy"), he is listed as a Pskov Wonderworker.³⁵ His relics were moved from the Church of St. Demetrius to the Trinity Cathedral in the Pskov Kremlin in 1193. The Pskovians attached his name to a German sword with the inscription *honorem meum nemini dabo*, formerly preserved in the cathedral sacristy, but modern historians date the sword to the 15th century at the earliest. (From Wikipedia)

³⁵ *Stepennaia Kniga*, volume 21 of *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei*, (St. Petersburg: A. Aleksandrova, 1908), pp. 193-203.

TECHNICAL EXAMINATION REPORT

by PIETER MEYERS

Requestor: [REDACTED]

Object: *Reliquary Casket*

Medium: Silver with enamel panels

Date: 1876 AD

Provenance: Boucheron, Paris, France

Purpose of Examination: examination and analysis enameled gold panels.

Dimensions:

Height: ca. 11 in.

Length: ca. 16 in.

Weight; ca 60Lbs (27.2 kg)

Examination carried out and report prepared by: Pieter Meyers Ph.D.

DESCRIPTION:

According to information that was supplied with the reliquary casket the object was manufactured in 1876 in Paris by the company Boucheron. The silver casket incorporated a set of eight rectangular, eight small round plaques and one large round enameled plaque, all transferred from a cup that was delivered to Boucheron in 1875. In addition the cover also shows an enameled plaque with a coat of arms.

The rectangular Renaissance style casket has a raised hinge cover. The large round enamel plaque is mounted on the top of the cover; the rectangular plaques are found on the side panels; three on the front, three on the back and one each on the sides. The smaller round enamel panels are mounted on the sides of the lid, two on each of the four sides.

The measurements for the enamel plaques are as follows: the large round plaque has a diameter of 9.7 cm; the rectangular plaques measure 5.5 x 9.0 cm and the small round plaques have diameters of 2.9 cm.

The subject of the current investigation is the date of manufacture of the enamels, or more specifically whether the plaques were made in the 19th century or in the 16th or 17th century. This study is based upon technical and scientific criteria. Stylistic and iconographic characteristics were not considered as they are outside of the scope of this investigation.

The methods used were visual and stereomicroscopic examinations to determine the methods of manufacture and to study the physical condition of the enamels. Energy-dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF) was used to determine the colorants and opacifiers used in the enamels. These are specific metals or metal oxides that are added to the glass mixture. The equipment used is a hand-held XRF spectrometer made by Innov-X (40 KV, Rh excitation target).

The plaques consist of a modeled gold support onto which the enamel was fused. For the opaque enamels the enameling technique is called "champlevé"; the transparent enamel used in these plaques is referred to as "basse taille".

CONDITION:

When viewed through a stereomicroscope the enamel shows various small losses. The losses occur mostly on the edges of the plaques. In addition, the enamels exhibit a significant amount of cracking. Such cracking was probably caused by numerous cycles of temperature changes that involved differences in expanding or shrinking between the enamel and the gold metal backing. The combination of losses due to mechanical damage and the cracking of the enamel is a strong indication of considerable age. In contrast the enamel in the coat of arms shows no damage of any kind.

XRF analyses were carried out on the various different colored enamels; some are transparent (blue, green, brown), others are opaque (white, blue, pink, yellow, black).

All enamels contained varying but significant amounts of lead. The lead was often added to the glass mix as a flux, specifically to lower the melting point and to allow a better flow of the enamel.

XRF analysis of all *opaque* enamels in the reliquary casket showed the presence of tin. Tin oxide when added to the glass mixture causes the enamel to be opaque. Without the addition of any coloring agents the opaque enamel is white. No arsenic was detected in any of the opaque enamels. This is significant since during the 18th century tin oxide was gradually replaced by an arsenic-lead mixture as an opacifier.

Nine analyses of different green enameled areas consistently showed the presence of copper and iron with small amounts of manganese and occasional traces of nickel. Significant is that no chromium was detected since this metal was often used in the 19th century for the manufacture of green enamels.

Six analyses of blue enameled areas showed the presence of cobalt, iron and small amounts of iron, copper, manganese and sometimes nickel.

The analysis of transparent brown enamel showed manganese and iron as colorants. The same metals were found in black enamel, but in different concentrations. The black enamel also contained copper and traces of bismuth and cobalt.

The pink and yellow opaque enamels in the squares in the lower sections of the rectangular plaques have color only on the white opaque surface. Since no difference is found between the pink /yellow and the white enamel it appears that the amount of coloration is too small to be detected by XRF.

DISCUSSION:

The technical characteristics of the various enameled panels on the Boucheron reliquary casket are entirely consistent with a date of manufacture before the 18th century. The method of manufacture, the mechanical damage and losses of the enamel as well as cracking in the enamel as a result of environmental exposure indicate considerable age. In addition, the characteristic 18th -19th century coloring agents or opacifiers such as chromium for the green enamel, uranium for the yellow, and either lead-arsenic or fluoride opacifiers could not be detected. Also zinc and antimony, chemical elements that occur frequently in 19th century enamels, were not observed in the XRF analyses.

The examination results do not specifically rule out an 18th or 19th century date since the technology of making enamels using the same colorants and opacifier was certainly available. However, the probability that this was done is minimal, since analyses of 18th and 19th century enamels show that it is more likely that contemporary technology was used for enamels of that period. Based upon the technical evidence it is not possible to specify a likely date of manufacture since the technology of enameling was essentially unchanged from the Middle Ages up to the 18th century.

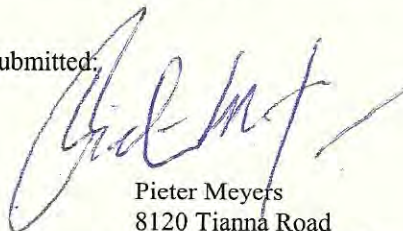
A typical "connoisseur's" study of the original cup with the enamels will most likely provide a relatively accurate date of manufacture since the style and iconography of the enamels in association with the photographic information of the cup from which the enamel plaques originate appear to be sufficiently specific to identify both date and workshop associations.

The enameled plaque with the coat of arms is considered 19th century and of the same or similar date as that of the reliquary casket.

CONCLUSION:

The technical characteristics of the enamels of the silver reliquary casket by Boucheron, specifically the method of manufacture, the condition of the enamels and the colorants and opacifier are consistent with a date of manufacture **before the 18th century**. The absence of characteristic 18th and 19th century materials makes a date of manufacture in the 19th century unlikely.

Respectfully submitted:



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Photographs of the examined object, a *Reliquary Casket*, silver with enamel plaques, by Boucheron, 1876, Paris, France, are shown on the next page.

The *Boucheron* Reliquary Casket: overall photograph and panel details.



PHOTOS OF LARGE ICONS. (LOWER BOX. 5-8 OF 8 PIECES)



Professional Biography

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University of Amsterdam, September 1958 - June 1965

Drs. degree in Radiochemistry and Nuclear Physics

University of Amsterdam, Ph.D Thesis: June 1968

Professional Affiliations:

Fellow, International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works; Council Member 1990-1996.

Fellow, American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works; Vice-President AIC 1981/82; President, AIC 1982-1984

Member, American Association of Museums; Council Member, 1982-1984

Member, International Council of Museums

Member, Standing Committee: "International Symposium on Archaeometry", 1992-2005

Associate Editor: Archaeometry, 1992-1997

Professional Employment:

3/00-present	independent scholar
3/00-present	Senior Research Chemist, emeritus, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
1/99-3/00	Senior Research Chemist, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
6/85-1/99	Head of Conservation, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
7/81-6/85	Senior Research Chemist, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
1/81-7/81	Adjunct Professor, Columbia University, Art History Dept.
7/76-7/81	Senior Research Chemist, in charge of Research Laboratory, the Metropolitan Museum of Art
2/70-7/76	Research Chemist, in charge of Research Laboratory, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
2/70-6/85	Research Collaborator, Brookhaven National Laboratory
9/69-2/70	Visiting Professor, The American University in Cairo, Egypt
9/68-9/69	Research Associate, Brookhaven National Laboratory
9/65-9/68	Research Associate, Institute for Nuclear Physics Research, Amsterdam, Netherlands

List of Publications and Published Articles

Available upon request is a list of 54 scholarly books and publications predominantly related to the application of physical sciences to the study of works of art and archaeological materials.

Construction Methods & Technique by Jim Grahl

My involvement with this piece began in 1978. The new owner purchased the piece and brought it to me for a thorough inspection. I was in a position to view the entire scope of the construction from the inside out. To this day I marvel at this piece. The scope of design skills, construction techniques and truly phenomenal craftsmanship are beyond extraordinary.

To be taken in the context of the era (1875), this was (and still would be) a monumental undertaking. With all of the 21st century technology available to me, I would be very hesitant about attempting to duplicate this piece. The top alone (lid) is a one piece casting, and though it would be feasible to do this in lost wax as a traditional investment cast piece, it's not created that way. By all indications it is sand cast. This is not a "normal" method of handling silver. Aside from that, the process of sand casting does not usually allow for the level of surface finish, or the detail of the artwork shown. Additionally the process does not allow for under-cuts, which are a large component of this lid's design. Given the extreme quality of the metalwork I am surprised and awed at the skill required to produce just this one element.

It doesn't stop there. At the junction of the acanthus leaf detail and the plate "Plate" comprising the border of the lid, there is no seam or indication of solder. At first, I sense the possibility of a singular, one piece casting. However, upon close inspection the finish quality, and the surfaces that appear to be machined flat (which they are not), are beyond impeccable.

This story works its way on down to the base of the coffer. The plates and sides that are apparently stacks of flat sheet, stepped to create depth and detail in the gallery presenting the enameled icons, are in fact of a single piece, absolutely dead flat. Again this defies logical construction techniques, but a machinist's straight edge laid across the surfaces will find each and every one finished without gap or variation. This was created in the steam era, there were no electrical machining tools available (20 more years in the future) to do this level of accuracy. This had to be accomplished with hand tools.

Addressing the finish and casting quality, one would expect and allow for porosity in a piece of this scale. Porosity is an occurrence and result of shrinkage of two dissimilar thickness of metal in the same casting. As the metal shrinks (cools) the area between those heavier areas becomes porous (akin to a sponge). It is the bane of largescale silver castings to this day. There is no porosity in any area of the Coffin.

I noticed early on that the Coffin showed no indications of tarnish, rather unusual for a piece of alloyed silver of this era. In the years following my initial inspection I noticed a small area of slightly darkened color inside one of the details. Upon magnification I discovered that the base metal is indeed silver, the alloy of Boucheron's creation, and the surface is coated with approximately one millimeter of fine silver. The only process that could have accomplished this is "Fire gilding" a process banned across the world now, and fading from use even at the time of this

Coffer's creation. This process requires that fine silver (or gold, depending on the project) be, in its molten state, floated over molten mercury. The object to be gilded would then be immersed and the mercury is heated to the point of vaporization, leaving a deposit of fine silver on the gilded item. This process is banned because the mercury fumes were deadly. One millimeter would require multiple immersions and the overlapping layers are viewable in several areas. Mercury poisoning is the end result of those practicing this process, without exception, as mercury does not dissipate from a human organism once exposed or ingested.

Bearing the hazards in mind to this process, the process has proven its merit in the lack of tarnish apparent on this Coffer. As an additional reference, silver or gold plating is measured in microns (Millionths of an inch). To my knowledge it is not possible to create a surface of this thickness with contemporary plating technology, (usually 3 to 10 microns in plating) more importantly, the oxygen barrier, in contemporary plating technology, fails at the junction of the plating and any remaining exposed parent metal. This allows for oxides to form (tarnish) and they will slowly erode a gap between surfaces. There is absolutely no occurrence of this on this coffer.

Tied to the extreme thickness of the fine silver would normally be a diminished level of detail as the layers are built up. Yet, there are tool and engraving marks readily viewable on the Acanthus leaf patterning on the lid. These marks are intentional and decorative, providing intoned shadow and texture to enhance the organic nature of the leaf. I have no idea how this was accomplished, as my experience falls short here. I am not aware of any other fine silver gilt over alloyed silver piece of this scale. There are simply mysteries as to many of the methods of construction used on this piece.

Keeping in mind all this magnificent, and oft mysterious, casework is intended to create a viewing gallery for the Enamels rendered as Russian Icons, I sometimes lose sight of these focal points of the Reliquary. These pieces are created on thin sheets of 24K gold, by hand, in a method that is maddeningly difficult. The process is called *Repoussé*, wherein the gold sheet is literally pushed out from the back, into the initial detail's form. (Think about working left handed ... in a mirror...) The artist has imbedded the sheet in a bowl of sorts with a mix of sheep tallow (fat) and wax, creating a sticky yet flexible background allowing the gold sheet to be pushed in one direction. At the point of the general shape of this, presently reversed, form taking shape, it is put in an oven, softened and the plate removed, cleaned and reversed.

The process begins again, bringing in details from the front to bring our dimension and relief to the developing artwork. This process may go back and forth a hundred times before the piece's detailed bas-relief form is complete.

It's laborious today, then I put myself in the 1600's, with no power, candles and wood fired ovens, primitive hand tools and most likely dirt floors, and marvel.

The enameling suffers the same conditions, the same number of steps, along with the primitive chemistry available to create color. The greatest challenge of enamellers is creating a clean environment and controlling heat. Each color melts (fuses) at a different temperature so the need to monitor heat is critical. Each color must be fused, starting with the highest temperature first, bearing in mind that at

1400 degrees, the start enamel is only 25 to 50 degrees short of melting the gold plate. Additionally, the process can't be reversed as each lower temperature color will bleach and lose its vibrancy if overheated, even by as little as 25 degrees.

The condition of these enamels is not to be ignored. I have had the privilege of working with Mel Fisher on the shipwreck recovery of the Nuestra Señora de Atocha, as a museum consultant and a representative of several principle investors. In 1985, as the primary recovery initiated, the first recovered objects were enamel and pearl set jewels owned by the ship's wealthy passengers. Of these there were over 20 pieces. These were rarely exhibiting any other than remnants of their enamel coloring. Even in a stable and sheltered environment (as the ocean's floor, where temperatures are near constant) the enamels suffered the same fate as most from ancient Egypt and Rome. The expansion and contraction of metal and glass will eventually separate the bond between surfaces and the enamel will flake off.

Though some indications of this are present on the Coffin's icons, it is remarkable to see this much color and vibrancy still present.

Construction overview summary

Combining all the above elements of construction, as well as the accurate dating of the (second, third iteration?) of the Coffin's construction, I'm left with a sense of awe of the whole of the coffin. The remarkable information from Boucheron, including the illuminating reveal of the artist and box maker, as well as the defining information of the hallmarks, has me appreciate more fully the levels of craftsmanship necessary to create a piece of this nature. Given this piece was created to honor the importance of the icons even heightens the sense of emotional value this piece conveys to me.

That the skills required and the methods used are all but lost, or at minimum, not safe to replicate, has me humbled by a piece that cannot be deconstructed and re-created with identical methodology in today's world.

As an artist, again I am struck by the symmetry of the scrollwork, the endless detail, rendered simply, yet grandly. All created to enhance and focus on the beauty of the Icons. The structure of Russian Iconography is so strict; I'm not sure how an outsider can grasp the need to capture the need for a lock of hair, or the gesture of a hand, with the spirit and accuracy seen in these panels.

At the end, though I'm anxious for further discovery, I must say this is the finest piece of metalwork and art I've, as yet, experienced. This is no longer simply an ode to Russian iconography; it is now an ode to the iconic work of the House of Boucheron. This predates Fabergé's finest work, and though not in competition, certainly sets the bar for craftsmanship, design and balance at the highest mark. It is of no small wonder to me that Kings and Princes, and Sheiks and Maharajas choose Boucheron as the pinnacle of artistry and craftsmanship. These people of power and influence could only trust the best.

J. Grahl

October 2013

Jim Grahl Biography

(John James Grahl, b. 1947)

I started in the jewelry world in 1965, at a workshop in Los Angeles that was the outsource studio for Van Cleef and Arpels, Pierre' Touraine, Russer , Shrieve and Co. and more. My earliest experiences included basic bench skills and mold making. This led to a deep involvement with the above businesses as their principal in charge of working with their original art and creating a system of reproducing their pieces. Most influential was Van Cleef's. Under the direction at that time By Mr. Maurice Tache', Van Cleef's was creating several series of pieces for low production as well as the monumental (for jewelry scale) Place' Vendome bronzes, six of which were prominent displays in their finest locations. I was tasked with the process of the reproductions of this project. This became a multi year relationship with the Van Cleef workshop and ultimately, a position offer from Van Cleef's. Though I declined the offer, Mr. Tache offered to forward my developing passion for creating jewelry by opening doors to others of importance in the jewelry trade to study with. He, along with Pierre' Touraine (Highly noted jewelry Artist with objects in the Louvre', Smithsonian and other museums), assisted in setting up an apprenticeship for me with Gerardo Terranova.

Terranova was considered (at that time) to be one the greatest living Pave' setters. A fourth generation diamond setter, responsible for many of Cartier's grand mid 30's pieces, he was the setter of choice for the finest west coast jewelers. He was in his 80's when I started, his only student for his entire career. It was grueling, humbling, and exhausting work, learning from a master who didn't suffer mistakes well. Seven years later I was released and setting became the backbone of my career, for a while.

I started my own studio quite early, initially as a side business, and then in 1970 as a full time venture. This ran concurrently with my studies, which grew to include G.I.A. as well as a number of other work-masters, including Pierre Touraine.

Platinum fabrication became my focus, and, as my skills evolved, I expanded into larger Art-Jewelry creations. These now includes 11 Gold Chess sets of large scale, one of which is in residence in the Museum at The Gemological Institute of America. In addition to this evolution, a chance occurrence led to the creation of a number of mechanical, jeweled eggs. One of which is in the collection, and on permanent exhibition, at the San Diego Natural History Museum (The Balboa Park Carousel Egg), the other in the Museum at G.I.A (an Egg in the French Style). The requests that initiated the creation of these pieces came from a private client who was aware of my involvement in the original set-up and display of the first Forbe's Fabrege egg collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in the early eighty's. He, having previously commissioned a gold chess set, wanted to explore the idea of mechanical (and subsequently, musical) eggs that reflected the form adopted by Fabrege', and in my particular vision of interpreting the egg as art.

While the story continues to unfold as I age and still study and expand my vision, reflectively I am the sum of all these experiences. At this point I have had the opportunity to have deep, hands on involvement in the crafting of many metals, gained skills in the properties and distinctions of gems and minerals, and have had the joy and challenge of working with may of the great creators in the Jewelry-Arts community.

Jim Grahl

Inner Lid Construction Details

Includes scratch/bore test evidence



Labradorite – Its History and Significance

The mineral labradorite was “discovered” by Moravian missionaries on the islands of St. Paul and Tabor on the Labrador Peninsula of Canada in 1770. However Labradorite was known for thousands of years prior to its rediscovery. There is evidence that it was used in what became the state of Maine in the second millennium BCE; it was described at length by Pliny the Elder in the 1st century ACE; the stone was also well known by Kievan Rus, the East Slavic tribes of Europe, in the late 9th to mid-13th centuries.

Though typically rather banal gray or black in color, when struck by light this stone exhibits brilliant iridescence: peacock blues, greens, violets, golds, the rainbow’s full spectrum. This latent brilliance is due to the speed with which Labradorite is created. Its crystalline structure cools quickly from liquid to solid, causing deformation twinning, where crystals share the same lattice points in haphazard fashion. When light contacts these aggregate layers known as lamellar intergrowth, the refractive effect is so dramatic, it’s actually named for the rock itself: labradorescence.

According to Inuit legend the aurora borealis originated when one of their warriors noticed brilliant color emanating from this stone and struck it with his spear. The colors were said to fly into the sky as the Northern Lights, but those that weren’t released remained in the stone as labradorite. Prized by shamans, it opened for them a portal into the world of spirit, acted as protection, and enhanced psychic ability, enabling them to see what is ordinarily hidden (the latter apparently due to the peacock eye some labradorites display, which they equate with the third eye).

By the late 18th century, labradorite began being incorporated into high-end jewelry and works of art in England and France, particularly admired when beveled or cabochon cut, to show off its iridescence. However, Russia had a long history with this stone prior to Europe’s enthusiasm for it, particularly between the 9th and 12th centuries, when it was used widely in the construction of important edifices. A mosaic was created from it for the Church of the Tithes in the 10th century. The tomb of Mstislav Vladimirovich, prince of Kiev was also made from labradorite.

In 1831, Russian industrialist Nikolay Demidov used labradorite to make ten architectural columns for his palace, Villa San Donato, in Florence, Italy. It was also used in the Cathedral of the Holy Transfiguration in Zhitomir (1874), and columns were made from it for St. Vladimir’s Cathedral in Kiev (1886). It was also utilized at the Temple of the Ascension, St. Isaac’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg, and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow.

In the late 19th century, several large labradorite boulders were found near St. Petersburg and sent to the Peterhof lapidary factory, from which two vases were created for the Ekaterininsky Palace in Tsarskoye Selo. That the Peterhof factory

was utilized speaks to the great importance Russians attributed to this stone. Founded in the early 1720's under the reign of Peter the Great, the Peterhof factory was one of three Imperial factories created in the 18th century in order to put to good use the wealth of Russian minerals in the Imperial residences.

Perhaps this is why the renowned 18th century French naturalist, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon in his thirty-six quarto volumes *Histoire Naturelle* refers to Labradorite as "Russian stone".

Modern day metaphysicists, perhaps not so unlike their predecessors, believe Labradorite is the most powerful protector of the mineral kingdom, creating a shielding force throughout the aura and strengthening natural energies from within. It protects against the negativity and misfortunes of this world, and provides safe exploration into alternate levels of consciousness and in facilitating visionary experiences from the past or the future.³⁶



³⁶ Robert Simmons & Naisha Ahsian, *The Book of Stones* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2007).