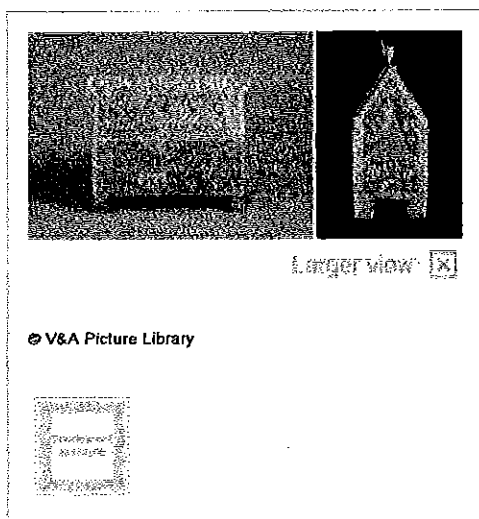




Art Saved



The Becket Casket

Artist: Limoges

Location: Victoria and Albert Museum

Date: circa 1180

Materials: gilt-copper, rock crystal, enamel, oak

Dimensions: 30.5 x 29.9 x 11.4cm

Grant:

Amount Paid: £100,000 (Total: £4,286,038)

Vendor: Sotheby's

Review number: 4328 (1996)

Provenance:

Private collection, St. Neots; Robert Pulleyn of St. Neots; Sir J. Cotton; Dr. W. Stukeley; Gustavus Brander; Thomas Astle; by descent to Major H. Chase-Meredith; Daguerre, Paris; Charles Ratton, Paris; British Rail Pension Fund.

Description:

This casket is probably the earliest, largest and finest example of Limoges enamel depicting Becket's martyrdom. Thomas Becket was murdered by four knights in the service of King Henry II who broke into Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. The murder is shown on the front, which also portrays the halbed soul of the saint being carried away above the altar. The sloping roof depicts the burial of the saint and the ascent of his halbed body to heaven. The back of the casket depicts four saints or cardinal virtues, and on one side Christ in Majesty is seated on a rainbow. The casket was possibly made to contain relics of the saint. The casket was acquired for the nation after a vigorous campaign in which The Art Fund played a crucial role.

Other works by Limoges

Other works at Victoria and Albert Museum

The ArtCloud

crystal enamel gilt-copper Limoges
Metalwork oak Religious rock

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