A Research Project on Enamels on Metal in Italy

(poster summary)

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This research focusses on the conservation of enamels on metal in Italian collections and has two aims.

The History of Conservation of Enamels on Metal

The first aim is to study Italian collections of enamels from the point of view of the history of their conservation and to record old restorations or interventions. The study focusses primarily on the collection of the Vatican Museums, which is composed of 160 objects. Other collections may also be investigated, including those in Bologna, Cremona, Florence, Milan, Naples, Turin, and Venice.

In addition, the author's comprehensive bibliography on enamel conservation, first compiled in 2001 at The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, U.S.A. (Gall-Ortlik 2001) (Figure 1), as well as work previously published on this subject (Gall-Ortlik and Beillard 2002) is being updated at the ICCROM library in Rome.

The Evaluation of a Material for Filling the Losses on Translucent Enamels

Further research is being undertaken at the scientific and conservation laboratories of the Vatican Museums. This work is motivated by several negative aspects of some of the materials used today on translucent enamels on metal, which can be too hard, irreversible, unstable and toxic. Two acrylic resins (Paraloid B66® and B67®) and an aldehyde resin (Laropal A81®) are currently being tested and compared to one of the resins used today (Hxtal NYL-1®). They are being studied from the point of view of their reversibility, their stability and their toxicity, but also from a practical point of view. The goal of this research is to characterise the properties and behaviour of the materials tested, in order to improve treatments and to safely replace the materials currently used. It is hoped that the information obtained in this investigation will also be useful for the treatment of other materials, such as enamelled glass and ceramics, paintings on copper, stained glass, and goldsmiths' works.

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Reference

Gall-Ortlik, A. 2001, *A Concise Bibliography on the Technology, Deterioration and Conservation of Enamels on Metal*, unpublished manuscript.

Gall-Ortlik, A. and B. Beillard, 2002, "The conservation of enamels on metal: characterization and historical notes", in Vontobel, R. (ed.), *Preprints of the 13th triennial meeting of the ICOM-CC Committee for Conservation*, Paris, International Council of Museums, 835-840.

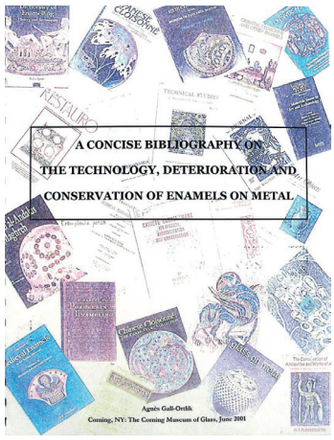

Figure 1