



Ambitions in Enamel

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The snuff box at the centre of this article is a fine example of the high quality gold snuff boxes that were produced in Paris in the second half of the eighteenth century.² The enamel paintings decorating this box are of extraordinary artistic quality. They are, moreover, signed and dated – ‘f.Bourgoin inv · pinx · 1759’ – something very rarely found with decorations on gold boxes. The literature on gold boxes seldom treats enamel paintings as a subject in their own right, but here we will focus on Bourgoin’s decorations and explore the iconographical, technical and biographical aspects as they relate to one another (fig. 1).³

The oval box bears the marks of the Parisian silversmith Jean Ducrollay (1710-1787). He and his brother Jean-Charles (1712-1766) ran one of the most important goldsmith’s workshops in Paris, specializing in gold boxes (fig. 2).⁴ The lid of the box is decorated with a gadrooned rim, over which a ribbon with a garland of flowers in different gold alloys has been applied. The gadrooned design is repeated on the inner edges of the lid and the base. Enamel paintings cover the lid and the base, and run continuously around the outside of the box.

During the Rococo *émail peint* had become one of the most popular decorative techniques for gold boxes.⁵

Figs. 1a and b
JEAN-CHARLES
DUCROLLAY,
Oval snuff box with
decorations in enamel
by Francois-Joseph
Bourgoin, 1758-59.
Gold and enamel,
4.2 x 8.4 x 6.6 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
BK-17153.



Fig. 2
Detail of fig. 1. The
box bears the maker’s
mark JD for Jean
Ducrollay, the port-
cullis as the charge
mark of Éloy Brichard
and Étienne Somfoye
(1 October 1756-
1 October 1762), the
crowned S as the year
letter for 1758-59 and
the scallop as the
discharge mark of
Brichard and Somfoye
(1756-92).



As a rule the designs were based on prints after the work of contemporary artists. The work of François Boucher (1703-1770) was a particular favourite. His *chinoiseries*, pastoral scenes and images of putti were highly prized in all forms of decorative art. What were known as *scènes flamandes*, based on the rustic scenes by seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish artists like David Teniers the Younger and Adriaen van Ostade, were also in great demand.⁶ These sources were usually followed accurately, but adapted to the size and shape of the box on which they were used. When it came to the colour scheme, greater licence was taken with the dark colours of the seventeenth-century paintings and Boucher’s pastel



Fig. 3
JEAN-CHARLES
DUCROLLAY,
Oval snuff box
decorated with six
panels of enamel
paintings in the
Teniers genre,
1758-60.
Gold and enamel,
3.6 x 7.1 x 5.6 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
BK-17142.

shades. The bright, sharp, unchanging colours were an important part of the attraction of the enamel decorations.

Another box in the Rijksmuseum's collection illustrates both sources of inspiration (fig. 3). The lid is decorated with three figures around a table in a peasant interior. The scene is based on two different prints by Jacques Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783) after work by David Teniers the Younger; the anonymous enamel painter has combined the boy playing the flute in *Le Fluteur* with the couple in *La Femme Jalouse*. The design on the bottom of this box is based on a print after François Boucher.⁷

The box with enamel paintings by Bourgoïn is an exception to this decorative tradition (fig. 4). On the lid we see a couple in a wooded landscape. The young woman is dressed in a fluttering white garment with pink drapery and wears a tendril of ivy in her hair. The young man, who holds

the girl's attention by playing a pipe, is dressed in a leopard skin. He has a wreath of vine leaves on his head and his shepherd's staff beside him. With them are two putti; one lies asleep, resting on a rock, the other climbs on the back of a goat. In the background there are three figures dancing and playing the tambourine. The scene on the base of the box features the figure of a sleeping woman (fig. 5). Her head is supported on her left arm, while her right lies across a quiver. Behind her a red cloth has been stretched across some trees. At her feet are two hounds, and beyond them two women carrying bows and arrows walk into a wood. The placement of a group of trees on the left and a more open vista on the right of both designs gives them a certain compositional kinship. The side of the box has one continuous enamelled 'frieze' with no fewer than seventeen putti in a landscape, engaged in all sort of activities – from swimming and

Figs. 4 and 5
 Details of fig. 1.
 Lid and base of
 the box.



sleeping to pouring and drinking wine, climbing on a goat's back and scaring one another with masks.

There are no specific, identifiable sources from which the enamel painter borrowed for the totality of the design, as there were for the box in fig. 3. The artist appears to have used a greater variety of art historical quotations in a much more independent manner, and added his own inventions to them.

A Border Full of Putti

The iconographic origins of the frieze of playing putti or little boys on the side can be traced back to Antiquity. The presence of wine and goats places the putti in the retinue of the god Bacchus. The concept of these little Bacchantes or *Spiritelli* is loosely based on a passage from the second book of Virgil's *Georgics*, a didactic poem about farming.⁸ It describes how the frail young vine shoots have to be protected from the heat of the sun and the chill winds – but even more from the sharp teeth of goats and other grazing animals.⁹ *Spiritelli* are personifications of these vines; when the Latin adjective *tener* (vulnerable or tender) is used as a noun, it can also mean 'small child'.¹⁰ The motif of the children trying to restrain a goat in order to protect Bacchus's vines is a visual translation of this notion. The little boy holding up a mask is a playful reference to another passage in the *Georgics* in which Virgil describes the *oscilla* (wooden masks with carved faces) that were hung in the vines and trees.¹¹ The sound of the masks rattling in the wind was supposed to frighten off the goats. The children on the box are scaring one another, though, not the goats. Early renditions of this motif can be found on Roman sarcophagi.

The putto theme was widely disseminated throughout the revival of Classical Antiquity during the Renaissance, thanks to artists like Titian, who used it frequently. His work, in turn, influenced seventeenth-century



Fig. 6
Detail of fig. 1.
Detail of the side
with a putto holding
up a mask, borrowed
from Duquesnoy.

artists like the painter Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and the sculptor François Duquesnoy (1597-1643). Duquesnoy's reliefs, which incorporate both Classical and Renaissance elements, have been particularly influential on the depiction of putti ever since.¹² A number of motifs on the side of the box can therefore be linked to his work.¹³ The poses of the seated putto holding up a mask, the putto pulling on the goat's head (fig. 1b) and the sleeping putti on the lid and the border all derive from Duquesnoy's work (figs. 6 and 7).¹⁴ Thanks to the countless casts, prints and copies that were made of them, Duquesnoy's putti remained fashionable for a very long time. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century painters depicted them in still lifes, as *trompe l'oeil* reliefs, and the Sèvres porcelain factory made copies of the figures.¹⁵ One consequence of this wide distribution was that Duquesnoy's putti were seen as 'more antique than the antique'. The German archaeologist and art historian Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768) complained in a letter that the artists at the Viennese Academy actually gave preference to copies of plaster casts after Duquesnoy over genuine classical



Fig. 7
AFTER FRANÇOIS
DUQUESNOY,
Relief with eight
putti and a goat,
c. 1650-1700.
Ivory, 15.2 x 10.8 cm.
London, Victoria &
Albert Museum,
1061-1853.

works.¹⁶ In the second half of the eighteenth century it was virtually impossible to find an auction or an art sale in Paris that did not include statues or reliefs after Duquesnoy.¹⁷

Although these sources had considerable influence on other disciplines, they were rarely used on gold boxes. The putti depicted on these were generally based on prints after the work of Boucher. The enamel painter has also placed the putti in the continuous landscape in a highly original way. This freer treatment of well-known sources is echoed in the decorations on the base and lid of the box.

A Resting Diana

In terms of composition, the reclining figure on the base of the box is derived from a print of *Vénus endormie* by Gaspard Duchange after a painting, now lost, by Antoine Coypel (fig. 8).¹⁸ The print and the design on the box are reversed, which would lead us to suspect that the composition on the box was based on the painting.¹⁹ Ever since the Renaissance, the depiction of the goddess of love was a justification for the study of the female nude. In this sense, Coypel's Venus is related

to resting goddesses by such artists as Raphael, Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and many, many more.²⁰ The reclining figure on the box, however, represents not Venus, but Diana, the goddess of the hunt and of chastity. She is identified by the crescent moon on her forehead, the bow and arrow on the ground and the two hounds at her feet. The picture on the box differs from the print in other ways, too. The legs of the figures are crossed in the opposite direction, so that the goddess on the box covers

Fig. 8
GASPARD DUCHANGE
AFTER ANTOINE
COYPEL,
Vénus endormie.
Print.
Paris, Bibliothèque
Nationale de France
Est. ya² 4 petit folio
T. II f^o 371 v^o.



herself with her raised leg, whereas the goddess in the print flaunts her body. The goddess on the box is also clothed, whereas the figure in the print is virtually naked.

From the sixteenth century onwards, Diana has been the patron goddess for female members of several European courts. They were portrayed in the guise of the goddess of the hunt so as to appropriate her virtues of strength and chastity. This tradition began with Diane de Poitiers (1499-1566), the mistress of King Henry II of France (1516-1559), and continued until well into the eighteenth century, even if the names of the courtiers gave less immediate occasion for this.²¹ The goddess has also been a favourite subject of history painters. Three stories that feature her have been of particular importance: Diana's banishment of the pregnant nymph Callisto, her love of the sleeping Endymion, and her punishment of the hunter Actaeon.²² The picture on the box fits best in this last story. In the metamorphosis of Actaeon, Ovid describes how Diana returns from the hunt with her nymphs and bathes in a pool in a cave in the forest. As she bathes she is seen (possibly inadvertently) by Actaeon, who is hunting in the same forest. Diana is so angry that she turns the young hunter into a stag, and his own hounds tear him to pieces.

In the course of the eighteenth century artists increasingly shied away from portraying Actaeon's grisly fate, and Diana's bathing scene gradually took on a more openly erotic connotation.²³ This more playful treatment of the hunter's fate can be explained by the fact that the story acquired a slightly different meaning in the context of the court. As early as the seventeenth century Actaeon was compared to a courtier who was punished for his curiosity about or indiscretions with the king's favourites.²⁴ Diana's unattainable beauty became a metaphor for strict court etiquette rather than for chastity.

Nevertheless, this does not entirely explain the appearance of the Diana on the box, for she is fully clothed. Although this is appropriate for Diana in her role as goddess of chastity, it is more difficult to link it with the eighteenth-century context of the story of Actaeon. If the composition is indeed to be associated with court etiquette and the male viewer has to identify with Actaeon, he sees nothing that would endanger his life. Essentially, the clothes remove the barb from the tale. Except in *portraits historiés*, examples of clothed Dianas from the period are consequently much rarer than wholly or partially nude goddesses. One of the few other examples is by the painter Louis-Michel van Loo. His goddess, too, is pictured dressed and with her eyes closed (fig. 9).²⁵ The addition of the goddess's clothes to Coypel's example reinforces the identification with Diana in general, but departs from the standard iconography of the goddess in association with the Actaeon myth. It also suggests a deliberate adaptation of Coypel's original on the part of the enamel painter.

The present example is, as far as we know, the first time the goddess was used as the subject of an enamel

Fig. 9

LOUIS MICHEL VAN LOO, *Diana in a Landscape*, 1739. Oil on canvas, 109 x 133 cm. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, P07810.



Fig. 10
 JEAN-JOSEPH
 BARRIÈRE,
 Base of snuff box
 with decorations
 in enamel by Jean
 Etienne Le Bel (?),
 1765-1766.
 Gold and enamel,
 4.1 x 8 x 6.1 cm.
 Munich, Bayerisches
 Nationalmuseum,
 93/220.



painting for a Parisian snuff box. Two later boxes with images of Diana were executed as miniatures, not in enamel.²⁶ A third box, dated 1765-66, with decorations – this time in enamel – signed by Jean-Etienne Le Bel, shows a resting Diana on the base, lying in front of a relief on which there is a scene of a sacrifice (fig. 10).²⁷ Bacchus and Ariadne in front of a relief of Diana and Endymion are depicted on the lid of the box.

Bacchus Playing the Pipe?

The shepherd playing the pipe on the lid of the box can be seen as part of the pastoral tradition that was extraordinarily popular during the Rococo. It is difficult, though, to find a more exact identification. The scene appears to unite elements from two stories, but there are contradictions, too.

The pastoral context and the young man playing the flute can be linked to the third-century novel *Daphnis and Chloe* by the Greek writer Longus. The first French translation of this tale appeared as early as 1559.²⁸ The foundlings Daphnis and Chloe grow up in shepherds' families. They fall in

love, but have to undergo all sorts of ordeals before, at last, they can marry. Chloe falls in love with Daphnis when she hears him playing the Pan pipes.²⁹ Later she saves his life by playing a pipe. The god Pan himself also appears as the protector of the young couple. In this regard, it is interesting to compare the picture on the box with a work by Titian. It is now in the National Gallery of Scotland, but until 1791 it was part of the Orléans collection in Paris (fig. 11).³⁰ The precise iconographical meaning is the subject of debate, but Titian's composition has been linked with, among other things, the story of Daphnis and Chloe. Compositionally, the colours and drapery of Chloe's gown and the ivy tendrils in her hair correspond to the scene on the box. Putti at play also feature prominently in the painting. In Titian's work, however, the girl is playing the pipe for the young man, whereas it is the other way round on the box. The similarity to Titian's painting would therefore seem primarily to reflect the influence of Renaissance painting on the enamel decorations on the box.



Fig. 11
TITIAN, painting
formerly known as
*The Three Ages of
Man*, c. 1512-14
Oil on canvas,
90 x 150.7 cm.
Edinburgh,
National Gallery
of Scotland
(Bridgeman
Loan, 1945),
NGL 068.46.

Other elements of the scene on the lid point to an identification of the figures as Bacchus and Ariadne. The story of the god of wine and his bride is based on Ovid's instructive poems about love, the *Ars Amatoria*.³¹ One poem describes how Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus on the island of Naxos, is found by Bacchus. The god of wine falls in love with the Cretan princess and marries her. Here again, not all of the elements on the box can be reconciled with the story. The leopard skin around the young man's loins and the vine leaves in his hair are the customary attributes of the wine god. On the other hand, the figure on the box has a shepherd's staff, not the thyrsus traditionally carried by Bacchus. According to Ovid's poem, moreover, the god arrived on Naxos accompanied by leopards, not goats. The landscape on the box shows no sign of a coast, which would support the identification with Naxos. The Bacchantes with drums and cymbals announcing the arrival of the god of wine do appear in the background. The identification of the decoration as a scene from the story of Bacchus and Ariadne is further strengthened by the fact that Bacchus's principal attribute

– wine – plays an important role in the activities of the putti on the side of the box. It is possible that the pipe, which does not feature in any significant way in the myths of Bacchus, should be seen as an addition by the enamel painter as part of a more general pastoral theme. As with the addition of Diana's clothes, this makes the image more original but also harder to interpret.

Images of Bacchus and his entourage are relatively common on snuff boxes. The joyous Bacchanalia suit the light-hearted mood that characterizes many Rococo gold boxes. The combination of Diana on the one hand and Bacchus and Ariadne on the other is much rarer. Thus far, the box with enamels by Jean-Etienne le Bel seems to be the only other one with this pairing. In painting, too, the scenes have been depicted together on only a few occasions.

Inspired by Charles-Joseph Natoire

At the 1743 Salon, the French artist Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700-1777) showed four paintings of mythological subjects that had been made as *dessus-de-porte* for the dining room of King



Fig. 12

CHARLES-JOSEPH NATAIRE, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1745. Oil on canvas, 95 x 160 cm. Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, property of the French state. Photo RMN (Château de Versailles) Daniel Arnaudet/Jean Schormans.

Louis xv's apartments at the Château de Marly, one of the French king's residences near Versailles.³² Two of them, *Bacchus and Ariadne* and *Diana and her Nymphs*, display striking similarities to the scenes on the lid and the base of the box (figs. 12 and 13).³³ Again, though, the resemblances are not literal. The Bacchus in the painting does wear a leopard skin and he has vine leaves in his hair, but his pose, his staff and his position in relation to Ariadne are quite different, and he does not have a flute. More remarkable than these differences, however, are the parallels, particularly in the staffage. On the right side of the painting, for instance, as on the box, there are putti and a goat. The composition and execution of the wooded landscape are also alike. Neither of these elements, moreover, is part of the usual iconography of Bacchus and Ariadne.

There are comparable similarities between Natoire's *Diana and her Nymphs* for Marly and the scene on the base of the box. In both cases Diana is pictured resting after the hunt, with no direct allusion to the Aetean myth. Both goddesses are essentially shown alone, with their eyes closed, with hunting nymphs depicted only in

the background. Yet again there are differences: the goddess's pose on the box is reversed relative to the painting and they do not correspond exactly. Natoire's Diana, moreover, unlike the figure on the box, has one breast exposed.

Natoire's paintings probably remained at Marly until the 1760s. There was a chronic shortage of space there, so the layout and arrangement of the palace were altered almost constantly. Some ten years after their conception Natoire's paintings had apparently

Fig. 13

CHARLES-JOSEPH NATAIRE, *Diana and her Nymphs*, 1745. Oil on canvas, 151 x 158 cm. Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, property of the French state. Photo RMN (Château de Versailles).





Fig. 14
Detail of fig. 1.
Signature and date.

been moved from the king's dining room to the apartments of Princess Marie Adélaïde of France, one of Louis xv's daughters, where they were described in 1755.³⁴ They were probably still there in 1759, when the decorations were applied to the box. The paintings were most likely removed from Marly when Louis xv's daughters' apartments were remodelled in 1764.³⁵

The similarity between the two paintings and the images on the box imply, a connection, if only indirectly. Above all, the various pictorial quotations point to a rich and complex iconography that has borrowed from both contemporary and older sources in a highly original way, while the composition as a whole is an invention of the enamel painter. It reveals an ambitious iconography, unusual for enamel paintings but typical of Bourgoïn's work on snuff boxes.

François-Joseph Bourgoïn

Bourgoïn's artistic aspirations are underlined by the fact that he signed and dated his work, something that is quite unusual for decorations on snuff boxes (fig. 14).³⁶ The great majority of enamel paintings are anonymous.³⁷ Although goldsmiths were permitted to use enamel, we know of only a few

capable of producing high-quality enamel paintings.³⁸ Most goldsmiths outsourced specialist methods of decoration, but the names of these subcontractors have seldom survived.³⁹ They are usually concealed behind the goldsmith whose mark is on the boxes or the *marchand-mercier* who sold them.⁴⁰ For this and other reasons, the enamel painters are a rather elusive group in the production of gold boxes. When a signature is present, this is no guarantee that anything is known about the artist. Conversely, where names of enamel painters have survived in primary sources, it is often not possible to attribute an oeuvre to them. This fragmented picture of the profession applies not just to Paris, but to other centres of production, too.⁴¹

His prominent signature notwithstanding, the biography of François-Joseph Bourgoïn largely remains shrouded in uncertainty.⁴² Bourgoïn was a member of the *Communauté des Maîtres Peintres et Sculpteurs*, the Parisian Guild of St Luke. In the *livret* of the Salon of the Académie of the Guild of St Luke for 1764 he is listed as an *aggrégé* (qualified) member.⁴³ However, he did not exhibit any snuff boxes there; he showed a *Nativity* in enamel and various portraits in both enamel and miniature.⁴⁴ A few years later we find him working as *adjoint à professeur* at the same Académie de St Luc, and he is listed as such in the *Almanach Historique* that was published in 1776.⁴⁵ Significantly, Bourgoïn is classified with the history painters, not the enamellers, although there is a note by his name that reads 'he also paints superiorly in enamel'.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, decorating snuff boxes must have accounted for a significant proportion of Bourgoïn's early output. The box in the Rijksmuseum's collection can be placed in a group of both stylistically and iconographically related snuff boxes he decorated in the first half of the 1760s. Like most of the enamel painters by whom signed



Fig. 15
Illustration of the lid of the second box by Ducrollay with decorations in enamel by François Joseph Bourgoïn, from the catalogue A. Prachoff, *Album de l'exposition rétrospective d'objets d'art de 1907 à St. Petersburg*, St Petersburg 1904, p. 219. Present whereabouts unknown.

work is known, Bourgoïn did not work exclusively for one goldsmith. As well as the box in the Rijksmuseum, he decorated at least one other box for the goldsmith Ducrollay. This is very closely akin to the Rijksmuseum box in terms of both design and iconography. The second box does not have the flower garlands and the frame on the base does not have a gadrooned motif, but otherwise the boxes are

very similar.⁴⁷ This box also has an *émail peint* frieze all round the sides and large images on the base and lid. Putti on the side are preparing for a Bacchanal. On the base is a scene of *Marsyas Teaching Olympus to Play the Flute*.⁴⁸ The picture on the lid is also of a Bacchanal, where a nymph pours wine for a satyr with a flute (fig. 15). The iconography and style are again akin to the work of Natoire, while the sleeping putto in the foreground, who also figures on the box in the Rijksmuseum, is based on a work by Duquesnoy. The scene on the lid is signed 'f. Bourgoïn inv.'. The similarities between the boxes, in shape, style and iconography, are so great that it is not impossible that they were conceived as a pair.⁴⁹

Soon after the box in the Rijksmuseum was created, Bourgoïn decorated two very similar boxes made by the goldsmith Jean Formey (active 1741-91). The first was sold by Sotheby's in London in 2002 and can be dated to 1760-61 (fig. 16).⁵⁰ The box is elaborately decorated in Louis xv style. There is a picture of *Orpheus and Eurydice* on the lid. The design on the base is of



Fig. 16
JEAN FORMEY,
Snuff box with decorations in enamel by François Joseph Bourgoïn, 1760. Gold and enamel. Present whereabouts unknown (cf. Sotheby's London, 6 June 2002, lot 67). Photo Sotheby's Picture Library.

Vertumnus and Pomona. Four cartouches on the side of the box are filled with putti with flower garlands and small landscapes with animals. The enamel decorations are signed on the base and the lid 'f.B.inv.'. The second box, which can be dated slightly later, is in the collection of the Walters Art Museum and prompted an article by Marvin Ross, published in 1947, in which he first focused attention on Bourgoïn's work.⁵¹ The chasing with C-volutes and flower motifs is virtually identical to the previous box (fig. 17). Ross attributed the box to Jean Frémin (1714-1786), but the maker's mark actually belongs to Formey.⁵² The decorations on this box are signed 'Bourgoïn inv.' on the lid. The depiction of the background is a particularly striking element of the enamel decorations on this box. It is quite dark in relation to the figures, as if Bourgoïn was aiming for a *sfumato* effect. The scenes are *Venus Asking Vulcan for Weapons for Aeneas* on the lid and *Zephyr and Flora* on the base. The design of Venus and Vulcan bears a resemblance to contemporary paintings of the same subject by both Charles-Joseph Natoire and Antoine Coypel.⁵³ The four cartouches on the side contain two landscapes and two scenes with putti. The design in the cartouche on the front shows a putto dressed as Apollo placing a laurel wreath on the head of a boy holding a lyre.

The composition of this group occurs elsewhere in Bourgoïn's work. It is related to the group of putti with flower garlands on the front of the other box by Formey, and to the putto dressed as Bacchus at the centre of the frieze of the box in the Rijksmuseum. A putto in the guise of Bacchus in the same pose also appears on a small medallion painted by Bourgoïn (fig. 18).⁵⁴ The medallion is a rarity. We know of few enamel miniatures of mythological subjects that have survived as works in their own right.



The decorations on a third box by Jean Formey, which can be dated to 1767, are not signed, but have been attributed to Bourgoïn in the past.⁵⁵ The picture on the base is of *Zeus and Hera on Mount Ida*; on the lid depicts *Neptune Calming the Winds*.⁵⁶ The design on the lid, however, is more obviously derived from a single specific source than the other works discussed. The scene is taken virtually wholesale from an engraving by François Boucher.⁵⁷ The monumentality of the scene, which was the reason for the attribution to Bourgoïn, is thus based primarily on the print and not on the enamel painter's invention. The attribution to Bourgoïn is consequently uncertain.



Fig. 17
JEAN FORMEY,
Snuff box with
decorations in enamel
by François Joseph
Bourgoïn, 1762-63.
Gold and enamel,
3.5 x 5.4 cm.
Baltimore, Walters
Art Museum, 57.153.

Fig. 18
ATTRIBUTED TO
FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH
BOURGOÏN,
Medallion with
three putti, c. 1760.
Enamel on a
metal support,
diameter 4.3 cm.
Present whereabouts
unknown, formerly
David-Weill Collection
(cf. Sotheby's London
17 March 1986, lot 142).

Technical Aspirations

The box in the Rijksmuseum's collection and its pendant stand out not only as the earliest works in the group under discussion, they are also the most daring technically.

Applying enamel paintings to gold boxes brings a number of technical challenges in its wake. In *email peint*, enamel paints composed of powdered glass, pigments made of metal oxides and a binding medium are applied to a white base layer or ground of enamel and fired in a kiln at a high temperature. Because of the heat and the forces exerted on the support when the glass mass and the metal cool at different rates, there is a significant risk that the support will deform or the enamel will break. In order to prevent this, a layer of enamel – known as the counter enamel – is often applied to the back of the surface to be decorated. However, this is not possible in the case of gold boxes, where the enamel is applied to an object that is already partially constructed. Deformation of the support can therefore only be prevented by applying the enamel in very thin layers and tailoring the composition of the enamel very accurately to the gold alloy.⁵⁸

The greatest technical challenge in the manufacture of the box in the Rijksmuseum was without doubt applying the continuous layer of enamel on the side. Even when the white enamel powder of the base layer is bonded with a medium, the risk that the pastose glass layer would prolapse when it was heated or break as it cooled was very great. X-radiographs reveal that measures were taken to prevent this. Covering the whole of the side of the box there is a latticework of cross-hatching designed to improve the adhesion of the enamel to the gold (fig. 19).

Just how complicated this technique was is evident from the fact that, aside from the two boxes by Bourgoïn we have discussed, there is only one other box with a similar continuous enamel



Fig. 19
X-radiograph of a
detail of fig. 1.

frieze on the side. This box, which dates from 1765-66 and has decorations signed 'De Mailly f.', bears the maker's mark of Louis-Philippe Demay and is in the Louvre's collection (fig. 20).⁵⁹ There is no consensus about the identity of the enamel painter whose signature this is.⁶⁰ Although these enamel decorations are technically very akin to the boxes by Bourgoïn, the iconography is quite different. The scenes on the box in the Louvre are much more decorative in approach. The oval border is ornamented all round with designs of flower garlands hanging from blue ribbons on a grey ground. They are interrupted by two vases with putti and dolphins in grisaille. Aside from the considerable technical achievement, their quality lies chiefly in the *trompe l'oeil* effect of the flowers and the marble.⁶¹ Bourgoïn's work, in contrast, is much more autonomous in relation to the shape of its support.

The attraction of enamelled boxes was largely dependent on the quality of the decorations. The painter had to have mastered the extremely complex medium and be an accomplished artist. Painting in enamels leaves absolutely

no margin for error in either the composition or the palette. Many pigments change colour when they are fired and the enamel painter has to be constantly aware of this. In his article on enamel in his *Encyclopédie*, Diderot describes how the painter has as it were to have two palettes – one in front of his eyes and the other (the colours after firing) in his head. Every stroke he paints has to tally with both palettes.⁶² Added to this, some oxides – which determine the colour of the enamel – are more vulnerable than others. If the colours are applied in the wrong order, the more delicate oxides can burn or discolour as a result of repeated firings in the kiln, and the design will be ruined.⁶³

The artist also has to paint the composition with great precision and assurance. Once a shape or colour has been fired, it cannot be changed. Diderot compares working in enamel with fresco painting in this respect.⁶⁴ He therefore advises the enamel painter to begin with an underdrawing in a reddish-brown. This pigment – *Rouge de Mars* or Mars red – is so light that

other colours can easily be applied over it.⁶⁵ We know that Bourgoïn employed this method, for the underdrawing is still visible in places in the composition on the box in the Rijksmuseum as a red line around a field that has been coloured in (fig. 21). The design was then applied using a *pointillé* technique that is also used for miniature paintings in other media.

A Royal Commission

The complex iconography, technical accomplishment and signature all testify to a level of ambition that would seem unusual for enamel decorations. Given the limited information about enamel painters, however, it is seldom possible to establish a picture of the context in which these works were created. An unusual source about enamel copies of a royal portrait allows us a complete image of Bourgoïn's commissions. The source moreover gives us a rare insight into the status and position of the enamel painters in Paris in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Aside from



Fig. 20
LOUIS-PHILIPPE
DEMAY, Snuff box
with decorations
in enamel signed
'De Mailly P', 1766-67.
Gold and enamel,
4 x 8.4 x 6.1 cm.
Paris, Musée du
Louvre, OA 676g.
Photo RMN.

decorating snuff boxes, where the enamel was applied directly on to the body of the box, one of the most important and profitable activities of enamel painters was painting miniature portraits. These portraits, either loose or mounted on snuff boxes, were a popular gift. In 1760 Bourgoïn and fellow enamel painter Pierre-Louis Durand were commissioned to make, by way of a trial, a portrait miniature of King Louis xv after a painting by the court painter Louis-Michel van Loo (1707-1771).⁶⁶ More revealing than the royal commission itself, though, is the correspondence about it between the court painter and royal administrator for the arts Charles Nicolas Cochin (1715-1790) and the Marquis de Marigny (Abel-François Poisson de Vandières 1727-1781), Directeur-Général du Bâtiments du Roi, who was responsible for the king's entire artistic programme. In his letters to Marigny, Cochin gives an assessment of the portraits and of the status and position of the enamel painters.

A striking aspect of Cochin's opinion of the portraits themselves is that he judged the painters first and foremost on how faithful they remained to Van Loo's portrait; the licence Bourgoïn permitted himself in the use of colour was consequently not appreciated.⁶⁷ In this respect, the way the portrait commissions were regarded differed from the views on other decorations on gold boxes, where the bright colours were seen as an especially attractive feature. One particular category of enamel paintings on boxes was valued precisely for the inventiveness of the painter and the way he handled grand scenes on the tiny surface on which he worked. Decorations of this type, a category to which Bourgoïn's work certainly belongs, were not copies of paintings or prints, but conceived as miniature history paintings in their own right. In his article on enamel in his *Encyclopédie*, Diderot described the design of a *Hercules and Omphale*



Fig. 21
Detail of fig. 1.
The underdrawing
in red-brown can
be seen around the
shoulder and fingers.

for a gentleman's snuff box by Durand, dwelling at length on stylistic and iconographic details and going on to say that the beauty of the painting can be studied even better with a magnifying glass. 'Seen with the naked eye this piece gives great pleasure, but viewed through a loupe it is a different thing altogether; one is enchanted by it.'⁶⁸

As well as an assessment of the work of the two enamel painters, the correspondence also gives a classification of the artists. Cochin wrote that Durand was probably the best enameller of the day and that Bourgoïn could acquire a comparable reputation, which would indicate that Bourgoïn was the less experienced of the two. Cochin then urged Marigny to give both painters a commission. In his view they were both good artists whose talents could be developed still further with more practice. 'Let them both enjoy success, and time and the response of the public will decide the matter.'⁶⁹ Two months later there was a disagreement about the price paid for the two trial portraits. Cochin's justification of what Marigny claimed was too high a price reflects his great concern about the survival of the craft of the enamel portrait.⁷⁰ 'When it comes to portraits the talent of enamelling is being abandoned in France, because all those who practise it (and all the young people who take

it up) are swiftly discouraged by its difficulties and the little benefit it brings.⁷¹ The fact that the two artists had less experience than the previous court enameller André Rouquet (1701-1758), who had just died, argued Cochin, was every reason to pay them more, not less. The complicated medium had a huge margin of error for the artists, and if the financial leeway was not great enough Cochin feared that they would turn to other professions.⁷² He went on to explain that the price was intended not just to encourage the artists themselves, but also as a means of setting the price in the private market. 'The price agreed with them on this occasion will more or less establish what they can get from private individuals.'⁷³ In other words, paying a high price was a deliberate policy on Cochin's part to foster the genre. Bourgoïn's trial piece led to a number of royal commissions for enamel portraits. In 1763 he submitted a bill for two portraits to the *Menus-Plaisirs*, the department responsible for the 'lesser pleasures of the king'. And he was indeed paid for works, produced in 1762 and 1763, in accordance with Cochin's wishes.⁷⁴

The Académie de Saint Luc

Cochin's concern about the future of the craft of enamel portraiture and his explicit attempt to stimulate the genre by driving up the price paint a picture of a trade in trouble. This is remarkable, given that the popularity of snuff during the reign of Louis xv must surely have boosted the demand for enamel paintings on snuff boxes. The market for miniature paintings must have been highly competitive, however. The countless, usually anonymous enamel painters had to vie with one another for the public's notice.

Bourgoïn seems to have been able to stand out from his peers – not least because of the guild of which he was a member. Most enamellers belonged to the guild of the *Marchands-Orfèvres-*

Joilliers (goldsmiths and jewellers)⁷⁵ or the *Patenotriers et boutonnières en émail* (rosary and button makers).⁷⁶ Bourgoïn, though, occupied an exceptional position in the Parisian Guild of St Luke. Of the more than four thousand artists who can be associated with this guild in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some forty are known to have worked as miniaturists.⁷⁷ There were probably other miniaturists who were also capable of working in enamel, but in only nine cases, including Bourgoïn's, is this medium explicitly listed. Although we know that snuff boxes could serve as the masterpiece for admission to the guild, we do not know whether Bourgoïn gained his membership in this way.⁷⁸

In the 1720s, the Guild of St Luke was granted official permission to establish a school under the name of *Académie de St Luc*, whose members received free instruction in drawing from a model, anatomy, geometry, architecture and perspective. The training provided by the *Académie de St Luc* focused more explicitly on artistic drawing skills than was customary in the guild system. Bourgoïn's inventiveness and originality in the composition of his decorations on boxes might possibly be linked to this training. His chosen medium would also have helped him to stand out from his colleagues at St Luc, for instance at the *Salons* that the *Académie* staged from 1751 onwards, in emulation of the ones organized by the *Académie Royale*.⁷⁹ Unlike the works at the *Académie Royale*, the pieces at these exhibitions were not vetted in advance. Members simply paid a fee to take part. The *Salons* were of great commercial importance to smaller artists and craftsmen precisely because of this unrestricted access. It meant that they could present themselves and their work to the public unhindered. The *Salons* were well attended and could actually compete with the official *Salons*.⁸⁰ At the 1764 *Salon*, Bourgoïn was the only artist showing enamel

paintings.⁸¹ Bourgoïn's exceptional position is confirmed by the way he is listed in the *Almanach Historique* – as a history painter, not an enameller. History painting was traditionally regarded as the highest rank in the hierarchy of painting. The manner in which Bourgoïn signed and dated his decorations on snuff boxes – like a painter – is in line with this image of a special status.

All the same, Cochin's fears about the disappearance of the genre, in respect of Bourgoïn, too, seem to have been realized. At present we are unable to identify any work by Bourgoïn later than the boxes we have described, but other sources indicate that at around this time he turned to painting ordinary miniatures and abandoned enamelling. When Bourgoïn was listed again in the *Almanach Historique* the following year, the reference to enamelling had vanished.⁸² In the accounts of the *Menus-Plaisirs*, in which Bourgoïn appears one more time, in 1776, he is described as a painter of miniature portraits, but not in enamel.⁸³ A third point of reference for this change in his activities is found in a change of address notice that Bourgoïn placed in the *Journal de Paris* in 1778:

'M. Bourgoïn, painter of miniatures, formerly of rue Saint-Thomas du Louvre, now resides in rue de Clery, before the third door on the right going down towards the Boulevards, house of M. Carton.'⁸⁴ Again, there is no mention of enamelling.

It is remarkable that Bourgoïn advertised so openly.⁸⁵ The *Journal de Paris* was a sort of cross between a calendar of events and an almanac with one main article every day. The people who advertised in the paper were a very mixed bunch – from dentists and notaries to landlords and writers.⁸⁶ The fact that Bourgoïn associated himself with this group has been interpreted as unworthy of an artist, but precisely because of this it is an indication of the harsh economic circumstances

that forced him to give up enamelling. Bourgoïn's switch to painting miniatures also coincides with the closure of the Académie de St Luc in 1776. Although this measure was designed to create a freer market, it cost artists like Bourgoïn both their position in the Académie and the opportunity to exhibit their work commercially.

In Conclusion

Francois-Joseph Bourgoïn's early decorations on gold boxes and Cochin's assessment of his skill as an artist indicate the start of a promising career as an enamel painter. There is, however, no known oeuvre after his admission to the Académie de St Luc. There is no trace of the portraits of Louis xv or the work he showed at the Salon of the Académie de St Luc in 1764, nor of any of his later miniatures. A box with a portrait of a woman by him is known only from a description in a nineteenth-century catalogue.⁸⁷ It is to be hoped that the stylistic and iconographic descriptions of his work and the fragmented sketch of his career will result in the identification of more work in the future, so that a more complete picture of his oeuvre can be built up. Only then will it be possible to tell whether the autonomy expressed by the compositions on the boxes at the start of Bourgoïn's career was continued in his later work. For now, the integral study of iconographic, technical and biographical aspects serves primarily to provide a context for Bourgoïn's extraordinary enamel paintings on the box in the Rijksmuseum's collection. The image that emerges is that of an artist who presented himself as a painter rather than an enameller. In 1759 Bourgoïn was at the beginning of his career. He appears to have made his mark with the box in the Rijksmuseum. This makes the object the earliest in the career of this enameller, whose ambition reached far beyond the confines of the boxes he decorated.

NOTES

- 1 This research was undertaken as part of the work on the catalogue of Parisian Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum's collection, which is scheduled for publication in 2013. My thanks to Reinier Baarsen, Sarah Greange, Joosje van Bennekom, Alicia Weisberg-Roberts, Daren Bloomquist and Jenny Reynaerts.
- 2 The box came to the Rijksmuseum by way of the Mannheimer Collection. In his catalogue of this collection, Von Falke lists as the previous provenance the Hermitage, St Petersburg, which did indeed auction off several pieces in the 1930s. However, the reference to Rosenberg's *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeigen*, vol. III, Berlin 1928 (no. 6702) Von Falke gives for this is incorrect and refers to another box, which was indeed part of the Hermitage collection (see notes 48 and 49). The provenance of the box in the Rijksmuseum's collection is consequently uncertain. O. von Falke, *Katalog der Sammlung Frits Mannheimer* vol. 1, s.n. 1939, p. 73.
- 3 The single most important exception to this is R. Savill's article (note 6), but it concentrates solely on tracing print (and other) sources for these designs.
- 4 In 1761 the Ducrollay brothers sold their workshop to the goldsmith Jean-Marie Tiron. A. Bastien, 'Les Ducrollay. De prestigieux orfèvres parisiens au XVIII^e siècle', *L'Estampille|L'objet d'Art* 415 (2006), pp. 60-69.
- 5 F. Watson, C. Dauterman, *The Wrightsman Collection, vol. III, Furniture, Gold Boxes*, New York (Metropolitan Museum) 1970, p. 99.
- 6 R. Savill, 'Six enamelled snuff-boxes in the Wallace Collection. Some newly identified sources of decoration', *Apollo* 111 (1980), p. 304.
- 7 For the prints after Teniers see V. Atwater, *A Catalogue and Analysis of Eighteenth-Century French Prints after Netherlandish Baroque Paintings*, vol. IV, Ann Arbor 1988, nos. 1587 and 1598. (RP-P-OB-69.010, BN 385 and RP-P-OB-69.075, BN 397) For the prints after Boucher: P. Jean Richard, *L'œuvre gravé de François Boucher dans la collection Edmond de Rothschild*, Paris (Musée du Louvre) 1978, cat. 1153.
- 8 C. Demsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, London 2001, p. 66.
- 9 Virgil, *Georgics* II, taken from www.gutenberg.org/files/232/232-h/232-h.htm, viewed on 21-07-2010.
- 10 Demsey, op. cit. (note 8), p. 67.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Boudon-Machuel, *François Duquesnoy 1597-1643*, Paris 2005, cat. 64 and variants.
- 13 As well as in Duquesnoy's work, a number of putti can be traced back to Jacques Stella's set of prints *Les jeux d'enfants*. Julia Dabbs, 'Not mere child's play, Jacques Stella's Jeux et plaisirs de l'enfance', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 125, 1516/1517 (1995), pp. 303-12.
- 14 Ibid., cat. nos. 78 and 69.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid., p. 209.
- 17 Ibid., p. 200.
- 18 The print later became known as *Jupiter and Antiopé*, but in the eighteenth century it was called *Vénus endormie*. We have used the contemporary title. N. Garnier-Pelle, *Antoine Coyppel (1661-1722)*, Paris 1989, cat. 104, fig. 297.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Titian and Giorgione in particular pictured the love goddess Venus stretched out in a resting pose similar to the way Diana is positioned on the box. Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, (Gallerie d'Uffizi, Florence); Giorgione, *The Sleeping Venus*, c. 1510 (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden). Bellini and Titian used a reclining female figure as a *repossoir* in depictions of Bacchanalia. Bellini, *The Feast of the Gods*, 1514-29 (NGA, Washington); Titian, *Bacchanal on Andros*, 1523-25 (Museo del Prado Madrid); for an iconographical study and more depictions of Venus see among others exh. cat., *Faszination Venus: Bilde reiner Göttin von Cranach bis Cabanel*, M. Ekkehard (ed.), Cologne (Wallraff-Richard Museum), Munich (Alte Pinacothek), Antwerp (Museum voor Schone Kunsten) 2001.
- 21 Levine, 'To See Or Not To See. The Myth of Diana and Actaeon in the Eighteenth Century' in exh. cat. *The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David*, C. Bailey (ed.), Fort Worth (Kimbell Art Museum), Philadelphia (Museum of Art), Paris (Réunion des Musées Nationaux), New York 1992, p. 75. Marie-Adélaïde de Savoye (1685-1712), the mother of Louis xv, had herself portrayed as Diana in the year her son was born – 1710 – by the sculptor Antoine Coysevox (1640-1720). Likewise at the court of Louis xv, two of his mistresses, the Comtesse de Mailly and Madame de Pompadour, as well as his daughter Marie-Adélaïde of France, had themselves immortalized as Diana by the court painter Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766) in 1743, 1746 and 1745 respectively.

- 22 Ibid., pp. 73-95.
- 23 Pictures of Diana were also increasingly to be seen at the Salons. Of the almost eighty times she appeared at the Salons between 1673 and 1799, there was a connection with bathing and resting in twenty cases. Ibid., p. 74.
- 24 Ibid., p. 78.
- 25 Earlier examples of similar compositions are Simon Vouet's resting Diana of 1638 at Hampton Court Palace and Pietro da Cortona's figure in one of the lunettes of the Sala di Giove in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence (1642-44).
- 26 One, dated 1763-64, was made by the Parisian goldsmith Jean-Marie Tiron. On the lid of this box there is a nude Diana at the water's edge, based on a print by Jean Oувrier after François Boucher. The other images on this box are also based on works by Boucher. S. Grandjean, *Gold Boxes and Miniatures of the Eighteenth Century; the James A. de Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor*, London 1975, no. 84; Jean Richard, op. cit. (note 7), cat. 1438. The other is by Louis Roucel and is dated 1766-67. This shows a clothed Diana whose sandal is being removed by a nymph. The source of this image is unknown. On the bottom there is a nymph with a broken water jug. C. le Corbeiller, *European and American Snuff Boxes 1730-1930*, London 1966, plate II-d. This box was with Philips Ltd., London, in March 2010.
- 27 L. Seelig, *Golddosen des 18. Jahrhunderts aus dem Besitz der Fürsten von Thurn und Taxis: die Sammlung des Bayerischen Nationalmuseums im Thurn und Taxis-Museum Regensburg*, Munich 2007, cat. 7.
- 28 This became even better known than the Latin version. P. Joannides, *Titian to 1518: The Assumption of Genius*, New Haven and London 2001, p. 199.
- 29 Ibid., p. 200.
- 30 The painting, which was known in the 17th century as an allegory of the Three Ages of Man, was purchased by Philippe II, Duc d'Orléans (1674-1723) in 1720, and remained in the Orléans collection until 1791. The identification with Daphnis and Chloe was more recently made by Joannides. Ibid., pp. 199-201.
- 31 A.S. Kline (trans.), Ovid, *The Art of Love*, 2001, consulted online at www.poetryintranslation.com, 3 September 2011.
- 32 On Marly see V. Maroteaux, *Marly. L'autre palais du Roy*, Geneva 2002; S. Castelluccio, 'Madame de Pompadour au château de Marly' in exh. cat., *Madame de Pompadour et les Arts*, X. Salmon (ed.), Versailles (Musée National de Château de Versailles et de Trianon), Munich (Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung), London (National Gallery) 2002; and S. Castelluccio, *Le château de Marly sous le règne de Louis XVI*, Paris 1991.
- 33 The others were *Venus and Neptune and Apollo and the Muses*. Exh. cat. Charles-Joseph Natoire, Troyes (Musée des Beaux-Arts), Nîmes (Musée des Beaux-Arts), Rome (Villa Medici) 1977, pp. 75-76.
- 34 This means that the paintings were taken out of the king's apartments before the renovation of 1757. The king's dining room, for which the paintings were made, had been used by Madame de Pompadour as a private sitting room until that time. When the king reclaimed the room, it underwent a major renovation. The paintings, however, had already been moved to another part of the castle. A.-N. Dézallier d'Argenville, *Voyage Pittoresque des environs de Paris*, Paris 1755, p. 173.
- 35 There is no record of where the paintings were taken. The two surviving paintings, *Bacchus and Ariadne* and *Diana* eventually resurfaced in the Petit Trianon in the 19th century. The other two works are lost. Exh. cat. Natoire, op. cit. (note 33), pp. 75-76.
- 36 Most dated enamels and miniatures are portraits; in these cases the date is first and foremost an indication of the age of the sitter.
- 37 C. Truman, 'The Production of Gold Boxes in the Eighteenth Century' in A. Somers Coocks and C. Truman, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection. Renaissance Jewels, Gold Boxes and Objets de Vertu*, London 1984, pp. 30-31.
- 38 As well as enamelled plaques for boxes, the inventory compiled on the death of the goldsmith and enameller Louis-François Aubert (1721-1755) also lists several unfinished loose lids by other goldsmiths which he had been commissioned to paint; *ibid.*, pp. 31-32. Aubert was best known for his enamelled flowers. He is one of the few enamel painters to be mentioned by name in contemporary sale catalogues.
- 39 Truman, op. cit. (note 37), pp. 30-31.
- 40 For a list of known names see e.g. C. Truman, 'Parisian Enamellers on Gold Boxes' in K. Snowman, *Eighteenth Century Gold Boxes of Europe*, Woodbridge 1990, pp. 477-48. For the phenomenon of the *marchand-mercier*, see e.g. C. Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets*, London 1996.
- 41 Lectures by Julia Clarke, Lorenz Seelig and Alexander von Solodkoff at the symposium *Going for Gold*, V&A and Wallace Collection, London, 26-27 November 2010.
- 42 Bourgoïn's son, François-Jules Bourgoïn, became a painter and showed a number of

- paintings of mythological and marine subjects at the Paris Salons from 1796 to 1812. Bénézit, *op. cit.* (note 87), p. 674. He is sometimes confused with his enamel artist father.
- 43 Boyer connects Bourgoïn not with the French Académie de St Luc, but with the Roman Academia di San Lucca. He suggests that Bourgoïn was one of the French entrants in the Concorsi Clementini in 1754. Although this idea is a tempting one in the light of the Renaissance references in the paintings on the box, it is unclear what basis Boyer has for his identification of an artist by the name of Bourgoïn as the enameller. F. Boyer, 'Les Artistes Français Lauréats ou membres de l'Académie Romaine de Saint-Luc dans la Seconde Moitié du XVIIIe Siècle', *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'Art Français, année 1957* (1958), pp. 277-78.
- 44 J. Guiffrey, 'Histoire de l'académie de Saint-Luc', *Archives de l'Art Français 9* (nouvelle période) (1915), pp. 202-03.
- 45 A number of compilers of biographical works have inferred from this that he was appointed as a teacher in 1776. This is not certain, however; his appointment took place at some time between 1764 and 1776. See e.g. N. Lemoine-Bouchard, *Les peintres en miniature actifs en France 1650-1850*, Paris 2008, p. 121.
- 46 'il peint aussi superieurement en email'. J.-B. Lebrun, *Almanach Historique et Raisonné des architectes, peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, ciseleurs*, Paris (1776) Geneva 1972.
- 47 The gadrooned border is also found in one of the designs in the Ducrollay album in the Victoria & Albert Museum (E.897:363-1988, no. 144). The album contains a large group of designs for jewels and snuff boxes associated with the Ducrollay workshop. For the album see P. Fuhring, 'A newly discovered album of goldsmith's designs' in *An Exhibition of Ornamental Drawings 1550-1900*, New York 1987 (unpaged).
- 48 The current whereabouts of the box are unknown but in 1904 it was in the Yussupov Collection. There is an illustration of the lid in A. Prachoff, *Album de l'exposition rétrospective d'objets d'art de 1907 à St. Petersbourg*, St Petersburg 1904, p. 219.
- 49 *Ibid.* The signature is also described by Rosenberg. M. Rosenberg, *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen*, vol. IV, Frankfurt 1925, p. 286. Von Falke erroneously concluded that this box was the one now in the Rijksmuseum. The description of the signature indicates, however, that Rosenberg was in fact describing the Yussupov box. See note 2 for the confusion about the two boxes.
- 50 Cf. Sotheby's London, 6 June 2002, lot 67. The box bears the year letter v for 1760-61 and Eloy Richard's charge mark (1756-62).
- 51 M. Ross, 'A Snuffbox with Enamels by François-Joseph Bourgoïn', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 10 (1947), pp. 98-100.
- 52 With no knowledge of the existence of the second box, Ross's mistake was easily made, since the makers' marks are very similar. Both marks consist of a crowned fleur de lis and the letters J F. Formey's mark, however, has a cloverleaf at the bottom, whereas Frémin's has an eagle's head. The box in the Walters Art Museum has the year letter v for 1762-63 and Jean Prévost's charge and discharge marks (1762-68). Nocq, *Le poinçon de Paris*, vol. II, Paris 1926-28, pp. 183 and 194.
- 53 For Venus's pose by Natoire see Bailey, *op. cit.* (note 21), p. 246, no. 38 (Musée Fabre, Montpellier, 1734) and for Vulcan's pose by Coypel see N. Garnier-Pelle, *op. cit.* (note 18), fig. 267 (Paris, Musée du Louvre 1703-05).
- 54 The medallion belonged to the David-Weill Collection, which was sold as part of the Clore Collection. Cf. Sotheby's London, 17 March 1986, lot 142. See also L. Gillet, C. Jeannerat and H. Clouzot, *Miniatures and Enamels from the D. David-Weill Collection*, Paris 1957.
- 55 K. Snowman, *Eighteenth Century Gold Boxes of Paris. A Catalogue of the J. Ortiz-Patiño Collection*, London 1974, p. 93. Present whereabouts unknown.
- 56 Prachoff, *op. cit.* (note 48), p. 219; cf. 'Kostbare Goldemaidosen Französisches Silber des 18. Jahrhunderts' Berlin, Ball und Graupe 22-24 September 1930, lot no. 97.
- 57 K. Snowman, *Eighteenth Century Gold Boxes of Europe*, Woodbridge 1990, p. 207; P. Jean-Richard, *op. cit.* (note 7), no. 195.
- 58 With thanks to Christine van Reede. For a clear description of this process, see e.g. S. Coffin, B. Hofstetter, *The Gilbert Collection. Portrait Miniatures in Enamel*, London 2000, pp. 9-10.
- 59 S. Grandjean, *Catalogue des tabatières boîtes en étuis des XVIIIe et XIX siècles du musée du Louvre*, Paris 1981, cat. 77. The signature is on a plaque of 'L'Amor sacrificiant à l'Amitie'. This is based on an engraved gemstone by Jacques Guay that Boucher produced as a print. D. Posner, 'Madame de Pompadour as a Patron of the Visual Arts', *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990), pp. 74 ff.
- 60 Both Barnabé-Augustin de Mailly and Charles-Jacques de Mailly were active as enamellers in Paris in this period and later worked at the court of Catharine the Great.

- For the debate about their identity see e.g. C. Truman, *The Gilbert Collection of Gold Boxes*, Los Angeles (LACMA), pp. 60-62.
- 61 This composition is in turn similar to a design for the side of a snuff box in the Ducrollay album (no. 149) (see note 47). The existence of the design indicates that Ducrollay made other boxes with enamel decorations around the side of a round or oval box besides the two examples with decorations by Bourgoïn discussed here.
- 62 D. Diderot, J. d'Alembert (ed.), 'Enamel' in *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, Paris 1782, vol. XII, p. 174.
- 63 The knowledge about the preparation and use of colours was recorded in a number of publications. The most important of these are Antonio Neri's *L'arte vetraria* (Florence 1612) and Johannes Kunckel's *Ars vitraria experimentalis* (Jena 1679). These sources primarily describe the general technique and the composition of various colours. Truman, op. cit. (note 60), p. 18.
- 64 Diderot, op. cit. (note 62), p. 175.
- 65 Ibid. A reddish-brown pigment was also used for the underdrawing in miniature portraits on ivory. K. Schaffer-Bodenhausen, 'Portrait Miniatures and Miniature Portraits', in K. Schaffer-Bodenhausen and M. Tiethoff-Spiethoff, *The Portrait Miniatures in the Collections of the House of Orange-Nassau*, Zwolle 1993, p. 25.
- 66 The commission was a test following the death of the court enameller André Rouquet. Some years before, Madame de Pompadour had had a separate copy of an official portrait of Louis xv made for enamellers and miniaturists to copy. M. Furcy-Raynaud, 'Correspondance de M. de Marigny avec Coypel, Lépicié et Cochin', *Nouvelles Archives de l'art Français*, third series, 19 (1903), p. 4. Poisson de Vandières wrote to Cochin telling him to encourage Van Loo to do his best on the work, which was a partial copy of his 1748 state portrait of the king. H. Maumené, L. D'Harcourt, 'Iconographie des rois de France', *Archives de l'art français, nouvelle période* 16 (1931), p. 334.
- 67 Cochin thought that Van Loo's colours were true to life. Furcy-Raynaud, op. cit. (note 66), p. 182.
- 68 'Ce morceau vû à l'oeil nud fait un grand plaisir; mais regardé à la loupe, c'est toute autre chose encore; on en est enchanté.' Diderot, op. cit. (note 62), p. 169.
- 69 'Ils se flatteront tous deux du succès, et le temps, joint au cri public, en décidera.' Furcy-Raynaud, op. cit. (note 66), p. 183.
- 70 Ibid., pp. 185-87.
- 71 'Le talent de l'émail quant aux portraits est abandonné en France, parce que tous ceux qui l'entreprennent (et tous les jeunes gens commencent par là) sont bientôt rebutés de ses difficultés et du peu d'avantage qu'il procure.' Ibid., p. 186.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 'Le prix qui leur sera accordé dans cette occasion établira à peu près celui qu'ils pourront obtenir des particuliers.' Ibid., p. 187. If the higher price was paid, said Cochin, there was absolutely no need to pay promptly. 'They will wait, and I believe that this wait will be of much less consequence to them than the establishment of a price that will determine their future.' ('Ils attendront, et je crois cette attente de bien moindre conséquence pour eux que l'établissement d'un prix qui déterminera leur avenir.') Ibid.
- 74 He asked eighteen Louis for the portraits and a further Louis for the gold base. A. Maze-Sencier, *Livre des Collectionneurs ...*, Paris 1885, p. 493. The statement of account records that Bourgoïn had delivered the portraits to Denis-Pierre-Jean Papillon de la Ferté (1727-1794). Maze-Sencier, *ibid.* He was the controller of the Menus-Plaisirs and an important figure in the Parisian art world. See also E. Boyssé (ed.), *Journal de Papillon de la Ferté: intendant et contrôleur de l'argenterie, menus-plaisirs et affaires de la chambre du Roi, 1756-1780*, Paris 1887. The sum invoiced is confirmed in the account book of the Menus-Plaisirs for 1762: 'Paid to Mr Bourgoïn, Painter, the sum of nine hundred and twelve for two portraits of the King painted in enamel on gold, the price comprising four hundred and thirty livres each, and twenty-four livres for each gold plaque, being 912.' AN O12887 Hotel des Menus Plaisirs, Etats au net des dépenses, 1762, book 13 'jewels and portraits'. ('A Mr. Bourgoïn. Peindre, la somme de neuf cent douze pour deux portraits du Roy peints en email sur or prix fut une quatre cent trente livre chacun, et vingt quatre livres pour chaque plaque d'or cy 912.' (With thanks to Darin Bloomquist and Alice Bleuzen for this source.) The receipt describes one portrait of 1763, whereas the Menus-Plaisirs expenditure accounts cover the year 1762. It is therefore not entirely certain whether the two documents refer to the same portraits or to two separate commissions. Aside from a small arithmetical error in the Menus list (the amounts add up to 908 and not 912 livres), the sums in the two references do correspond.

- 75 Truman, op. cit. (note 60), p. 31, P. Le Roy, P. Micio, *Statuts et privilèges du Corps des marchands orfèvres-joyailliers de la ville de Paris: An 18th-Century Compendium of the Laws Governing Silversmithing in Paris*, Los Angeles (1759) 2003, pp. 131-32.
- 76 This guild was part of the *Verriers-Fayenciers* (glassworkers and potters). Originally it, too, had been part of the goldsmiths' guild, but it broke away in 1718 and allied itself with the gold-beaters, the *batteurs d'or*. This guild remained independent until the abolition of the guilds. H. Bouilhet, *L'Orfèvrerie Française aux XVIIIe XIXe siècles*, Paris 1908, pp. 111-12 see also D. Diderot, J. d'Alembert (eds.), 'Emailleur' in *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisoné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, Paris 1782, vol. XII, p. 183.
- 77 Taken from J. Guiffrey, 'Histoire de l'académie de Saint-Luc', in *Archives de l'Art Français* 9 (nouvelle période) (1915), pp. 161-484. Among them there was also one *vernisseur de tabatieres* (snuff box varnisher) by the name of Berneron. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
- 78 In the inventory of the guildhall drawn up in 1776 we find among other things 'fourteen enamelled snuff boxes and two enamelled toilette boxes, on which are different subjects, which were presented as masterpieces by the candidates for membership' ('quatorze tabatières et deux boettes de toilette vernies, sur lesquelles sont différents sujets qui ont été donnés par des aspirants à la maîtrise pour chefs-d'œuvres', Guiffrey, op. cit. (note 44), p. 102. Various old enamelling tools whose provenance was obscure were also found. *Ibid.*, p. 103. There were also materials for making enamelled clock faces. At least one member of the Académie de Saint Luc, Antoine-Nicolas Martinière, specialized in these dials.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- 80 G. Valerius, 'Die Académie de Saint-Luc als Rivalin der Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 73 (2010), p. 125. The exhibitions at the Académie de St Luc were held less regularly than those staged by the Académie Royale, and this made it more difficult to build up and keep a faithful public. *Ibid.*
- 81 Two other members, M. Garand and Raphael Bacchi, did, though, show miniatures. J. Guiffrey, *Livrets des expositions de l'Académie de Saint-Luc à Paris ...*, Paris 1872, pp. 127 and 129.
- 82 J.-B. Lebrun, *Almanach Historique et Raisoné des architectes, peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, ciseleurs*, Paris 1777 (reprint, Geneva 1972), p. 95. Bourgoïn is listed here under the free artists since the guilds had been abolished the year before.
- 83 Maze-Sencier, op. cit. (note 74), p. 208.
- 84 'M. Bourgoïn, peintre en Mignature, ci-devant rue Saint-Thomas du Louvre, demeure actuellement rue de Cléry, l'avant dernière porte à droite en descendant aux Boulevards, maison de M. Carton', 'Changement de Domicile', *Journal de Paris*, no. 38, 1778 (Saturday 7 February), p. 151. See also P. Mantz, 'les miniaturistes du XVIIIe siècle', *L'Artiste*, 3 (new series) 1858, p. 128. Rue de Cléry is in the *Bonne Nouvelle* district and is the continuation of rue du Mail, which starts at Place de Victoire. The street ended at the Port de St Denis in the old city wall. At the end of the 18th century, the street was known for the furniture makers and allied trades, such as sculptors and carpet makers. See e.g. C. Legrand, 'Les Gourdin menuisiers du XVIIIe siècle', *Estampille/L'objet d'Art* 390 (2004), pp. 72-85 and P. Lemonnier 'Pulvinet & Meunier; deux dynasties de maîtres menuisiers en sièges', *Estampille/L'objet d'Art* 268, (1993), pp. 68 ff. Bourgoïn's previous workshop in rue St Thomas du Louvre was opposite the Hotel de Longueville. It was a stone's throw from the Seine and the old Louvre, and from rue St Honoré, where the Académie de St Luc held its exhibitions and where most of the goldsmiths were.
- 85 H. Bouchot, *La Miniature en France 1750-1825*, Paris 1910, p. 34, and Mantz, who described the notice in 1858. Mantz, op. cit. (note 83), p. 128. The information Bouchot gives about Bourgoïn also explains the assertion, which appears in Ross's article, op. cit. (note 51), that Diderot criticized Bourgoïn's work. Although Diderot did indeed criticize miniaturists, this was aimed in the first place at Bourgoïn's colleague, Garand, who painted a striking likeness of the author, but whom Diderot dismissed as a 'poor devil, who took me in, since he made me look like a fool making a witty remark' ('pauvre diable, qui m'attrapa, comme, il ariva a un sot qui fit un bon mot'). Maze-Sencier, op. cit. (note 74), p. 518.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 Cf. Drouot, Paris, 21 May 1898, lot 4. E. Bénézit also mentions an *Apotheosis of Louis XVI* by him. The work was supposedly in the collection of an Edouard Kahn or Kann. This collection has thus far not been traced. E. Bénézit (ed.), *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs de tous les temps et de tous les pays*, vol. 1, Paris 1999, p. 674.

