

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Casket: Heads of the Caesars within Wreaths

Colin Nouailher (French, act. ca. 1541–ca. 1588)

Date ca. 1545

Medium Enamel on copper with gilt-metal frame

Dimensions 4 3/16 × 6 3/4 × 4 7/16 in. (10.6 × 17.1 × 11.3 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1916.4.15

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 14, Enamels Room

Commentary In Renaissance France, a fascination with the Twelve Caesars—reflected in collections of ancient Roman sculpture—inspired carved decorations and terracotta facade ornaments. Copied from engravings by the Italian printmaker Marcantonio Raimondi, these enameled portraits of stern emperors are circled by laurel wreaths held by variously posed putti. Eight plaques center on a single image of an emperor, and double portraits occupy either end. Two scenes of a putto leaning on a skull beneath the motto MEMENTO. MORI. DICO (Remember that you must die, I say) remind us that all men, however famous, are mortal. The gold letters identifying each Caesar have mostly faded except on three identical images of VICELLIO (Vitellius), which replaced the originals, probably during a nineteenth-century restoration. Source: Wardropper, Ian and Julia Day. *Limoges Enamels at The Frick Collection*. New York: The Frick Collection/D Giles Limited, 2015.

Collection History Soltykoff sale, April 8–May 1, 1861, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Lot 350. George Attenborough, London. Frédéric Spitzer, Paris. His sale, April 17–June 16, 1893, 33 rue de Villejust, Paris, Lot 461. Sir Thomas D. Gibson Carmichael, Salisbury. His sale, May 12, 1902, Christie's, Lot 75, sold to Durlacher for £700. J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York. Duveen. Frick, 1916. Source: *Enamels, Rugs and Silver in The Frick Collection*. Volume VIII. New York: The Frick Collection, 1977.