

Medieval art history museum visitation report

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



Medieval Art History Museum Visitation Report One of the most familiar events of British medieval history was the murder of Thomas Becket of the Archbishop of Canterbury in Cathedral on December 29th, 1170 by four knights under the orders of King Henry II. It provoked indignation throughout Europe, and the tomb that Becket's body was laid became a focal spot of pilgrimage in the days of his death (Frazer 38). After his body was canonized in 1173, his holy place became the most celebrated in the world of Christianity. Immediately after his death, relics related with the saint were widely disseminated in the years that followed. These relics were integrated into uniquely made caskets by the enamel workshops of Limoges, this being one of the most outstanding pieces.

Since it was a precious casket made of silver, it was created to bear a relic of Thomas Becket. The casket's one side, rectangular lower panel, depicts the knights assaulting Becket while he is standing picking up something on the altar on his left. The knight to his right is wearing a short tunic savagely beheads the Archbishop with a long sword, while the other knights draw their swords too. Two priests are standing on the left side of the altar with their hands raised in fear; the background is made up of dark blue enamel decorated in green, dark blue, red, light enamel (Frazer 39). On the triangular lid above, he tries to show an angel gives blessing to Becket over the occurring events. Therefore, the murder of Becket is clearly shown by the chase, his burial, and the rise of his soul to heaven. Cardinal Virtue is represented by the figure at the back of the chasse. The opening for the door decorated with a round headed curve with a turret surmounting it on the right hand side. The door panel that is now missing at one end may have

showed or represented St Peter. Nearly at the shrine itself, episodes of Becket's martyrdom were made well known by their delineation in the stained window glass of the Trinity Chapel.

In a more elaborate manner, the chasse can be said to be rectangular crowned by horizontal crest gilt copper, which is in four sections by interchanging blue enameled medallions and cabochon crystal-like rock with each section having three key holes kind openings (Frazer 38). The crest's center is surmounted by a protruding orb. Several elements are comprised in the casket body. The oak core is mounted with six panels of enameled copper gilt, each having a border of trefoil. The trefoil head motif is in darkness, light blue and red enamel.

The rectangular front top of the casket lays the dead body of Becket on a cerement supported at both ends by two priests. There are more priests and a Bishop performs the final rites of a funeral around the body of Becket, while on their left is a separate scene shows two angels escorting St Thomas's soul to heaven (Frazer 41).

In a submission, one can say that the use of relics by Christians was more than for the reminder of the past, but they believed in the power of relics. These are the physical remains of a holy person. In the New Testament, they are mentioned as the healing power of visible entities that the apostles of Christ or he had touched (Frazer 54). Therefore, it is clear to many the importance of Chasse with the Martyrdom and Entombment of St. Thomas Becket. The grace that remained in Becket was an immeasurable treasure for the holy Christian believers as it created a link between life and death.

Work Cited

<https://assignbuster.com/medieval-art-history-museum-visitation-report/>

Frazer Margaret, " Medieval Church Treasuries." The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Winter, 1985-86); 36 – 56.