

## Topic Page: [Enamel](#)

Definition: **enamel** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Decorative or protective glazed coating produced on metal surfaces, or a type of paint. Ceramic enamels are made from powdered glass and calx, with metal oxides to add colour. Enamel paints consist of zinc oxide, lithopone, and high-grade varnish. The finish is hard, glossy, and highly durable.

Summary Article: **enamel**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Vitrified (glasslike) coating of various colours used for decorative purposes on a metallic or porcelain surface. In cloisonné the various sections of the design are separated by thin metal wires or strips. In champlevé the enamel is poured into engraved cavities in the metal surface.

The ancient art of enamelling is believed to be of Middle Eastern origin and spread gradually through the Roman Empire. Byzantium, the Rhine valley in Germany, and Limoges in France were medieval centres of enamelling. Techniques of painting enamels were developed from the 15th century.

**Ancient and medieval enamel** Examples of cloisonné enamel have been found in a Mycenaean tomb in Cyprus of the 13th century BC. The champlevé technique was used by Celtic artisans of the pre-Christian era (see Celtic art). The ancient Egyptians and Greeks enamelled their jewellery. Enamels were made in the northern provinces of the Roman Empire and reappear in the 6th century AD in Anglo-Saxon England. A great revival of cloisonné enamel began in Constantinople in the 10th century; a great masterpiece of this Byzantine enamel is the *Pala d'Oro* altarpiece in St Mark's, Venice. Byzantine work was emulated in Europe, particularly in Saxony, Brunswick, and in the Rhine valley. German enamellers were later employed in France.

**Medieval developments** During the Middle Ages the demand for church ornaments, decorated reliquaries, crosses, and so on, encouraged a number of technical developments. The Rhine and Meuse valleys, Limoges in France, and northern Spain were centres of a new style of champlevé enamel from the 12th century. During the 13th and 14th centuries the art was introduced into China. In the 15th century, in northern Italy and Limoges, **painted enamels** were first made, applied by brush, spatula, or point, over a design scratched in outline on the baseplate. Masters of this form of art were Nardon and Jean Penicaud, Pierre Raymond, and Leonard Limousin. A later development in the 17th century was the miniature painted enamel, in which the colours were applied after the enamel was fired and fused, as practised by the Toutin family in Paris. In England, Stubbs produced enamel paintings.

### **APA**

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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