

A School of Romanesque Ivory Carving in Amalfi¹

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ALMOST FIFTY YEARS have passed since Adolph Goldschmidt assembled the core of the group of ivory carvings that is the subject of this study. Centered about the series known as the Salerno ivories (Figure 14), some nineteen additional plaques were collected by Goldschmidt, and the origin of the whole group was immediately recognized as south Italian, eleventh century.² In the context of his monumental corpus of ivories Goldschmidt was able to confront only a limited number of the problems connected with these Italian works and never precisely defined the differences evident among the various pieces, nor the nature of their relationships. Furthermore, it has only been in the years since the publication of the corpus that discoveries have been made in terms both of monuments and methodology which allow a great many more facts to be brought to bear on these problems. I hope to reassess the south Italian ivories by integrating what new information we have and by utilizing more recently devel-

oped analytical approaches. Nevertheless, it should be clear from the outset that Goldschmidt's work still provides the foundation for any such research.

The primary idea I should like to introduce is this: Within the large body of ivories there may be distinguished three distinct subgroups, each manifesting a particular artistic character, both stylistically and iconographically. These subgroups represent successive stages in the life of a single workshop, a rather short life at that, but one which I think we will come to recognize as rich and varied in its contacts, associations, and achievements. The appearance of this study in the *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is particularly appropriate since the Metropolitan Museum is one of the two places (the other is the Staatliches Museum in Berlin) where works produced during each of the three stages of the workshop's development may be viewed side by side.

The first stylistic phase is represented by a very small number of survivors, five to be exact.³ The centerpiece

1. The substance of this paper was presented in a lecture delivered at the Metropolitan Museum in January 1973 as part of the annual meeting of the College Art Association of America. Much of the material derives from my unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, *The Salerno Ivories*, Princeton University, 1972, prepared under the direction of Professor Kurt Weitzmann. My work has benefited greatly from Professor Weitzmann's criticisms and from those of Professor Ernst Kitzinger. I am presently preparing for publication a comprehensive treatment of the Salerno ivories and related works.

2. A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen*

Zeit IV (Berlin, 1926) pp. 2-4, 36-42, nos. 127-146, pls. XLII-LII. The four volumes of the corpus will hereafter be referred to as Goldschmidt I, II, III, or IV.

3. Aside from the Farfa Casket, the group includes a plaque in Berlin with the Crucifixion on the front and scenes from Genesis on the rear (Goldschmidt IV, p. 146; H. Kessler, "An Eleventh Century Ivory Plaque from Southern Italy and the Cassinese Revival," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 8 [1966] pp. 67-95); a Crucifixion panel in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 10) (Goldschmidt IV, no. 144); and two fragments from a casket (unpublished) in private collections.

of this collection is a casket about 33 cm. long, 7 cm. wide, and 21 cm. high, not known to Goldschmidt at the time of the publication of the corpus and presently kept in the treasury of the abbey of Farfa, in the Sabine hills not far north of Rome (Figure 1).⁴ The body and lid, made of solid pieces of ivory, rather than of plaques applied to a wooden core as in the famous Byzantine rosette caskets,⁵ are elaborately decorated with scenes of Christ's Infancy (on the lid), his Passion and Resurrection, and the Dormition of the Virgin. This last scene occupies a whole side of the casket's body, the only episode to do so.

The Latin inscription that runs around the sides of the figurative portions identifies the donor of the casket as a certain Maurus, merchant of Amalfi.⁶ Maurus, active as a patron of the arts in the third quarter of the eleventh century, in 1071 took his vows and entered

the monastery at Monte Cassino. The casket has often been associated with that occasion and that center since one of the lines of the inscription—*Iure vocor Maurus quoniam sum nigra secutus*—has been interpreted to refer to Maurus' donning the "black garb" of the

4. P. Toesca, "Un cimelio amalfitano," *Bollettino d'arte* 27 (1933-34) pp. 537-543. The casket, for many years in the possession of the monks of San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome, was returned to Farfa in 1969.

5. Many examples in A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen I* (Berlin, 1936).

6. *Suscipe vas modicum divinis cultib[us] aptum.*

Ac tibi directum devota mente tuorum.

Nomina nostra tibi quesumus sint cognita passim.

Haec tamen hic scribi voluit cautela salubris.

Iure vocor Maurus quoniam sum nigra secutus

Me sequitur proles cum Pantaleone Iohannes

Sergius et Manso Maurus Frater quoque Pardo.

Da scelerum vaniam caelestem prebe coronam.

FIGURE 1

Dormition, Adoration of the Magi, Presentation, and Flight into Egypt. Ivory casket (back view), Farfa, Abbey Treasury (photo: Dom B. Mollari, Rome)





FIGURE 2
Nativity. Detail of Farfa Casket (photo: Mollari)

Benedictines. Herbert Bloch, in his brilliant early study on Monte Cassino,⁷ accepted this then-current theory but has since discovered that the crucial phrase had not assumed that meaning in the eleventh century, but only became used as such by the followers of St. Bernard in the following century as a perjorative reference to their Benedictine rivals. In the present context *sum nigra secutus* has nothing to do with the Benedictines but is simply an admission that Maurus was a sinner, that is, he followed sin.⁸ This discovery serves to sever the traditional connection between the casket and Monte Cassino and, as well, renders the date 1071 practically meaningless. Since one of Maurus' sons was killed in battle in 1072 and all six of his offspring are mentioned in the inscription, we can at least be sure of that date as a *terminus ante quem*. Traditionally, the casket belonged to the abbey of Farfa, probably the most important Cluniac foundation in Italy in the eleventh century.⁹ Since the box

FIGURE 3
Nativity. Byzantine ivory plaque. British Museum



7. H. Bloch, "Monte Cassino, Byzantium and the West in the Earlier Middle Ages," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 3 (1946) pp. 207–212.

8. I am indebted to Professor Bloch for sharing this information with me prior to its publication in his long-awaited book on Monte Cassino.

9. It is recorded as being seen among the possessions of the abbey about 1800 by the abbot Giuseppe di Costanzo (Toesca, "Un cimelio," p. 537).



FIGURE 4
Nativity. Carolingian ivory plaque (detail).
Manchester, John Rylands Library

FIGURE 5
Crucifixion, Anastasis, Ascension. Front view of
Farfa Casket (photo: Mollari)



was clearly a gift (this is evident from the inscription), it seems quite possible that it may have originally been offered to that abbey rather than to Monte Cassino. An occasion for such a donation was provided in the year 1060 by the dedication of the monastery's new basilica, a grand event attended by the Pope and a host of the nobility.¹⁰ The emphasis on the Virgin in the casket's iconography would be particularly fitting for Farfa since she was held in special veneration there. A Byzantinizing fresco of the Dormition, in a fragmentary state, may still be seen at the monastery.¹¹

Although the shape of the casket, with its truncated lid, is similar to a whole genre of Byzantine works, neither its solid ivory structure nor its general iconographic program of Christological and Marianic themes can be paralleled in Byzantine examples.¹² A

10. I. Schuster, *L'Imperiale abbazia di Farfa* (Rome, 1921) p. 197.

11. A. B. Schuchart, "Eine unbekannte Elfenbeinkassette aus dem 11. Jahrhundert," *Römische Quartalschrift* 40 (1932) pl. v.

12. Not one of the many caskets illustrated in Goldschmidt and Weitzmann I displays such subject matter.



FIGURE 6
Ascension. Carolingian ivory plaque. Minden,
Cathedral Treasury

detailed analysis of the iconography will not be given here, but it is necessary to indicate at least its general nature so as to have some idea of the casket's sources. In fact, this iconography is quite mixed. On the whole it is notable for its Western (non-Byzantine) aspects, such as the Nativity (Figure 2), which, instead of reflecting the complex type of mid-Byzantine scheme, which includes the bath of the Child and usually the announcement of the birth to the shepherds (Figure 3),¹³ here takes on the much more simplified form that was part of the Western European tradition at least as far back as Carolingian times (Figure 4).¹⁴ Similarly, the Ascension (Figure 5), where Christ is shown being pulled up and to the side by the hand of God in the sky, adheres to a very old Western version (Figure 6)¹⁵

13. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 26, no. 5, pl. II.
14. Goldschmidt I, pp. 18–19, no. 27, pl. XIV.
15. Goldschmidt I, pp. 34–35, no. 65, pl. XXVII.

that differs from the almost equally venerable Byzantine type (Figure 7).¹⁶ This is not to say that there is no impact of the mid-Byzantine iconographic tradition. In fact, the Dormition is clearly inspired by Byzantine prototypes (Figure 31),¹⁷ although not rigidly adhered to, and the particular type of the Washing of the Feet, although it may already be found in Ottonian manuscripts, is a specifically post-iconoclastic Byzantine invention.¹⁸

On the whole, though, the iconography of the Farfa Casket is connected with earlier Western traditions, and the same is true, to an even greater extent, of the style. It is evident that the casket is the product of more than one hand and that its different scenes are stylistic-

16. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 42, no. 58, pl. XXIII.
17. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 70, no. 174, pl. LIX.
18. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 28, no. 13, pl. IV. Compare H. Giess, *Die Darstellung der Fusswaschung Christi in den Kunstwerken des 4.-12. Jahrhunderts* (Rome, 1962) p. 107, no. 51. On the meaning of the various gestures and of the scene in general see E. Kantorowicz, "The Baptism of the Apostles," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9–10 (1956) esp. p. 234 ff.

FIGURE 7
Ascension. Byzantine ivory plaque. Florence,
Museo Nazionale





FIGURE 8
Christ in Majesty. Altar of Duke Ratchis. Cividale, Museo del Duomo



FIGURE 9
St. John the Evangelist. Fresco. Calvi, Grotta dei Santi (photo: Frick Art Reference Library)

ally heterogeneous.¹⁹ Nevertheless, all stylistic indicators point generally in the same direction.

The somewhat awkward figures who populate the Dormition appear to speak a language different from the sophisticated, classically inspired one of much of early Christian and Byzantine art. Indeed, in certain passages one gets the feeling that we are dealing with carvers to whom the problem of the human figure represents a relatively new concern. The figures of the angels in the sky, for instance, are unusually formed of

19. Toesca, "Un cimelio," pp. 539–540, assigns to one artist the Dormition, Adoration of the Magi, Presentation, and Flight into Egypt; to a second the Crucifixion, Anastasis, Ascension, Visitation, Nativity, and Pentecost. A follower of this second master would have executed the Washing of the Feet while "lesser artists" would have been responsible for the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Baptism. Although I would agree with Toesca's attributions in general, it seems to me that there are but two hands at work: the Annunciation to the Shepherds appears to be by the Dormition Master while the Washing of the Feet and the Baptism I would ascribe to the Crucifixion Master. It seems unlikely that more than two carvers may have worked on such a relatively small commission.

almost independent horizontal and vertical portions joined to create almost a right angle. This same tendency, in an even more outspoken form, is present in numerous works emanating from the Lombard artistic milieu.²⁰ This tradition provided the dominant stylistic mode, a basically nonfigurative one, for pre-Romanesque Italian sculpture, not only in the north but also in the south of the peninsula where the Lombard princes had established colonies in the early Middle Ages.²¹ The altar of Duke Ratchis in Cividale

20. The literature on Lombard art remains sparse. See A. Haseloff, *Pre-Romanesque Sculpture in Italy* (Florence, 1930); N. Gray, "Dark Age Sculpture in Italy," *Burlington Magazine* 107 (1935) pp. 191–202; E. Shaffran, *Die Kunst der Langobarden in Italien* (Jena, 1941); H. Fillitz, "Die Spätphase des 'langobardischen' Stiles," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, new series 18 (1958) pp. 7–72; H. Belting, "Beobachtungen an vorromanischen Figurenreliefs aus Stein," *Kolloquium über frühmittelalterliche Skulptur, Vortragstexte 1968* (Mainz, 1969) pp. 47–63.

21. On the Lombards in the South see, most recently, N. Cilento, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (Milan, 1966).

(in the north), especially in its *Maiestas Domini* panel (Figure 8),²² provides types comparable to those in the Farfa Dormition. A basically flat and rigid form predominates, whose surface is defined by a host of parallel or semi-parallel lines. The long, vertical drapery sections, stiff and repetitive, that define the lower portions of the angels' tunics in the Ratchis altar are reminiscent of those found on the Apostle figures of the Farfa Dormition. In this regard, perhaps even closer to the figures on the casket is the fresco of St. John the Evangelist in the Grotto of the Saints at Calvi (Figure 9), an important south Italian site.²³ Although the work might date toward the end of the eleventh century, it maintains much older stylistic traditions native to the region. The simplified planes of the faces, general stiffness of form, and, of course, especially the drapery type in the lower body with the repetitious parallel lines separated into rectangular sections, all serve to relate the fresco to the style of the Farfa Dormition. Significant connections have been recognized, then, between this part of the casket and the native traditions of Italian (Lombard) art.

In fact, though, this style is limited to the Dormition scene and one or two other small scenes of the casket. Virtually all the other figures, for example those in the Crucifixion (Figure 5), show stockier proportions and drapery of a very different type. As opposed to the network of parallel lines in the garments of the Apostles in the Dormition, we find a far simpler articulation of drapery, employing what might even be characterized as a sparing use of line. This second style may be seen as well, and perhaps to even better advantage, on a related plaque in the Metropolitan Museum depicting the Crucifixion (Figure 10), which must have originally formed the central panel of a small triptych.²⁴ This piece is so close in style to the Crucifixion on the Farfa Casket that one is almost tempted to see the same hand at work. The style of these pieces also shows remarkable affinities with earlier Italian works. The

22. M. Brozzi and A. Tagliaferri, *Arte Longobarda* (Cividale, 1961) pp. 27–34, pl. II. The basic source for the Ratchis altar remains C. Cecchelli, *Arte barbarica cividalese*, pt. I (Udine, 1917) pp. 1–28 (originally published in *Memoire storiche forogiuliesi* XIII [1917]).

23. Hans Belting, *Studien zur beneventanischen Malerei* (Wiesbaden, 1968) pp. 105–111, figs. 120–122.

24. Goldschmidt IV, 42, no. 144, pl. LI.

general outline of the composition and the smooth torso of Christ are foreshadowed in the ninth-century Rambona Diptych (Figure 11), an ivory made for a north Italian foundation but perhaps of Roman workmanship, whose connection with the Lombard tradition is obvious.²⁵ Far more intriguing, however, is the relationship between our second style and works that are more surely localized in ninth-century Rome. Cen-

25. Goldschmidt I, pp. 86–87, no. 181, pl. LXXXIV; C. R. Morey, *Catalogo del Museo Sacro Vaticano: Gli oggetti di avorio e di osso* (Vatican City, 1936) pp. 60–62, no. A62, pl. 9. A similarity between the Crucifixions on the Farfa Casket and the Rambona Diptych was already recognized by Kessler, "An Eleventh Century Ivory," pp. 73–74.

FIGURE 10

Crucifixion. Ivory plaque. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.37



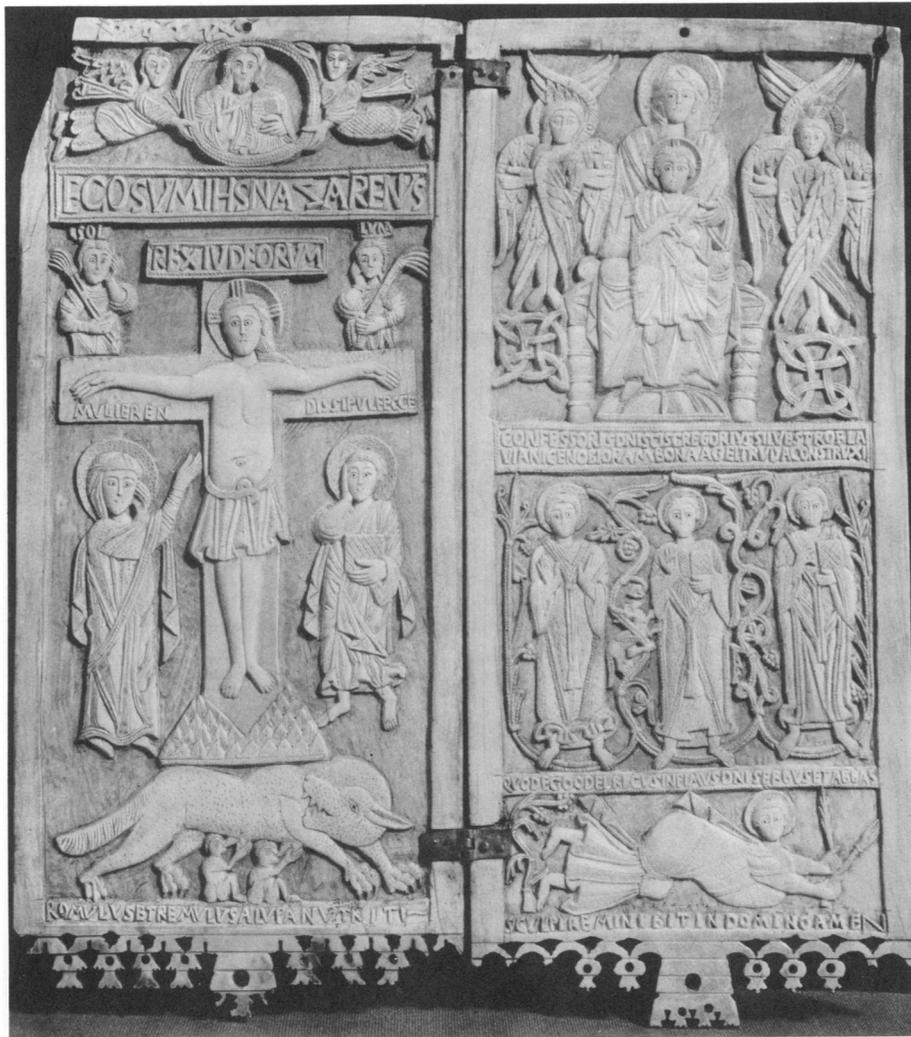


FIGURE 11
Crucifixion, Virgin
Enthroned, and Saints. The
Rambona Diptych. Ivory.
Rome, Vatican, Museo
Cristiano (photo: Alinari)

tral among these is the silver and gilt casket, now in the Vatican, that was probably made for Paschal I at the beginning of the century.²⁶ It represents scenes concerned with Christ's appearance before and after the Resurrection. The characteristically simplified hair of Christ in the Metropolitan Museum's Crucifixion—several curving, deeply cut incisions—is closely paralleled in the silver casket (Figure 12). The proportions of the figures in the two works, where they appear with rather small heads and stocky bodies, is strikingly similar. Most significant, however, is the drapery style. In

26. C. Cecchelli, "Il Tesoro del Laterano," *Dedalo* 7 (1936–37) pp. 155–160. A color reproduction of the casket (general view) is in L. von Matt, *Art Treasures of the Vatican Library* (New York, n.d. [1971]).

each case the bottom hemline of the tunics, a straight one, is defined by two parallel lines. The drapery folds in general are rather sketchily delineated and are often articulated by what might be called a "double-stroke motif": two short, parallel strokes, usually slightly curving, used to indicate folds and creases. These are generally found on the arms and legs of the figures so as to indicate the pull of the garment caused by the motion of the body. The Virgin in the Metropolitan Museum's plaque and the woman at the front in the scene of the Women Meeting the Apostles on the Paschal Casket (Figure 13) illustrate this relationship.

All this is not to say that our ivories look exactly like this ninth-century Roman work. On the contrary, other artistic traditions have contributed to their style.

Although Byzantine forms have not had a tremendous influence on this first group of ivories, nonetheless some sign of their effect may perhaps be detected in details such as the caplike coiffures of certain figures in the Farfa Casket.²⁷ In addition, I would suggest that the art of a group of Islamic ivory carvers active in south Italy at just about this time was not without its impact on these Christian works.²⁸ In the final analysis, though, as I have already suggested, this first series of ivories appears most strongly to reflect iconographic and stylistic traditions that we can discover in the West

27. Compare Goldschmidt and Weitzmann I, pp. 31–32, no. 21, pls. ix–x. The curly-haired types in the Veroli Casket were compared to figures on the Berlin Crucifixion-Genesis plaque (see note 3) by Kessler, “An Eleventh Century Ivory,” p. 74.

28. There are certain similarities in the spindly figure style of the Farfa Casket and some of the Islamic pieces attributed to eleventh-century southern Italy, particularly a rectangular casket now in Berlin (E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen* [Berlin, 1971] p. 63, no. 82, pls. LXXXII–LXXXIV).

FIGURE 12

Christological scenes. Silver casket of Pope Paschal I. Rome, Vatican, Museo Cristiano



FIGURE 13

The Women Meeting the Apostles. Detail, casket of Paschal I

and, to a great extent, in earlier Italian art, in the so-called Lombard tradition and in the art of “Carolingian” Rome. The relationship of the Farfa Casket to the dedication of that monastery’s new basilica suggests a date about 1060 for the group.

A rather different situation exists when we turn to the second phase in our workshop’s production, the phase that produced the Salerno ivories themselves. These panels, preserved for the most part in the museum of the Cathedral of Salerno, constitute the largest unified series of carvings in ivory that survives from the pre-Gothic Middle Ages.²⁹ The more than forty major figurative plaques—originally there were more—represent cycles of the Old Testament from the Creation to Moses Receiving the Law and of the Life of Christ from the Incarnation to the Pentecost (Figure 14).

The nature of the iconographic program as a whole, in its juxtaposition of these particular cycles, is in itself an important indication of particular new directions being pursued by the workshop, for it is exactly such a scheme that was revived in fresco in the atrium of the

29. Goldschmidt IV, pp. 36–39, no. 126, pls. XLII–XLVIII; A. Carucci, *Gli avori salernitani del secolo XII* (Salerno, 1965; second edition, 1971).

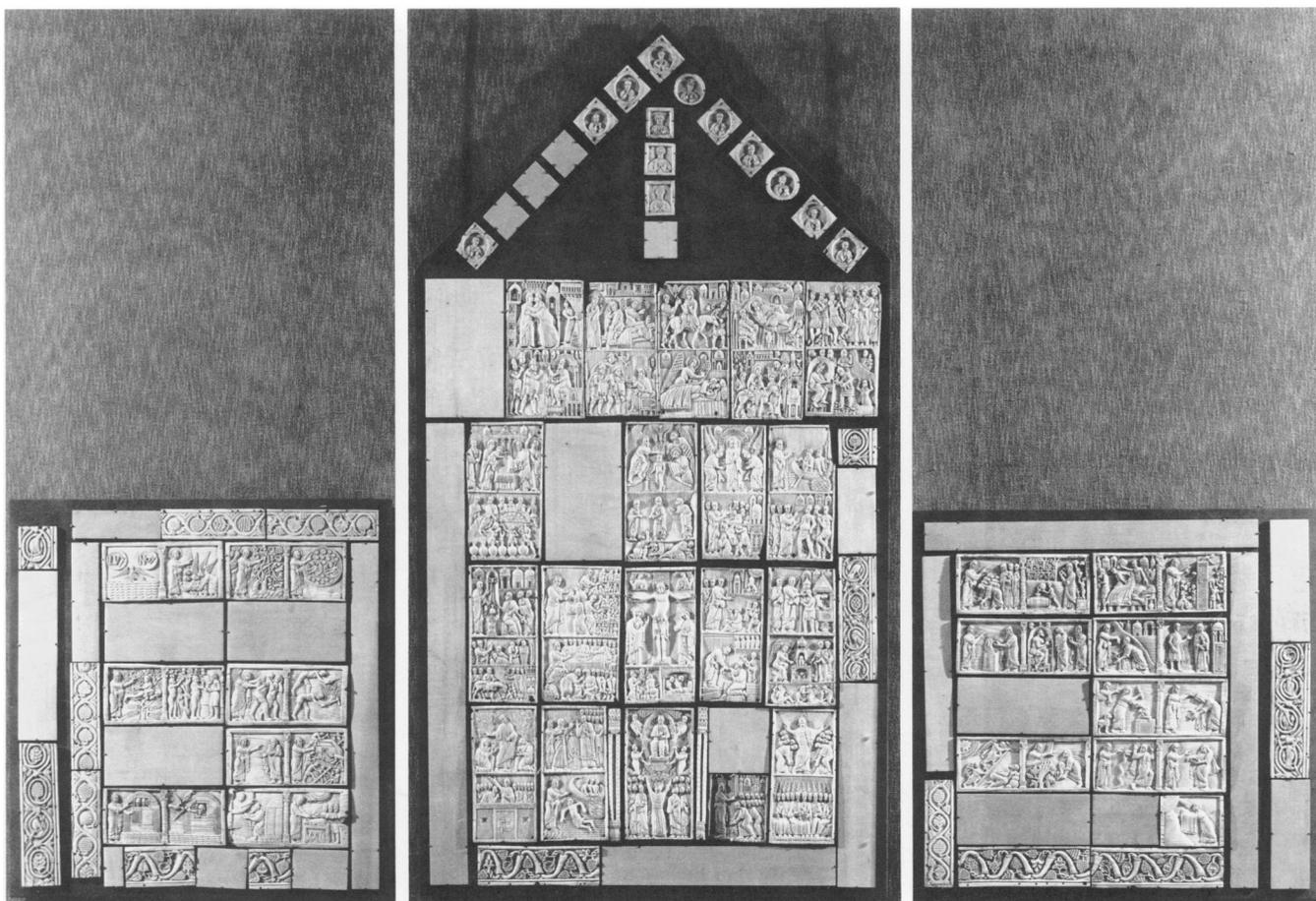


FIGURE 14
The Salerno ivories (ensemble). Salerno, Museo del Duomo (photo: Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome)

new basilica of St. Benedict built by the abbot Desiderius at Monte Cassino and dedicated in 1071.³⁰ Although these frescoes have long been destroyed—we know of them only through literary testimony—the little church of Sant’Angelo in Formis near Capua, owned by Monte Cassino and redecorated by Desiderius after 1072, preserves a similar program in its

nave (New Testament) and side aisles.³¹ There can be little doubt that the overall design of this scheme derived ultimately from an early Christian model such as the fresco cycles (often dated in the fifth century) that decorated the nave of Old St. Peter’s in Rome, the very church on whose architectural form Desiderius’ basilica was conspicuously modeled.³² The extent

30. Leo Ostiensis, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, III, 28 (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, 173, col. 750; *MGH, Scriptores*, VII, 719; O. Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Schriftquellen zur Kunstgeschichte des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts für Deutschland, Lothringen und Italien* [Berlin, 1938] p. 479): “Vestibulum autem ecclesiae desuper quidem fecit musivo pulcherrimo cum superlimineis arcubus decorari; abinde vero usque ad imum pavimenti, totum basilicae faciem gipso vestiri. Arcus etiam eiusdem vestibuli deforis musivo nicholominus vestiens versus inibi Marci poetae aureis litteris scripsit. Reliquas vero tres atrii partes, diversis tam veteris quam novi testamenti historiis abintus ac deforis depingi praeciptions, marmoreo totum in giro pavimento constravit . . .”

31. Among the several more recent publications on Sant’Angelo in Formis see J. Wettstein, *Sant’Angelo in Formis et la peinture médiévale en Campanie* (Geneva, 1960); O. Morisani, *Gli affreschi di S. Angelo in Formis* (Cava dei Tirreni, 1962).

32. The scheme of the nave decoration in Old St. Peter’s is preserved in some seventeenth-century drawings in the Vatican (Archivio della basilica vaticana, Album; Vat. Lib., Barb. Lat. 2733, drawings by J. Grimaldi). The most important of these are illustrated in S. Waetzoldt, *Die Kopien des 17. Jahrhunderts nach Mosaiken und Wandmalereien in Rom* (Vienna, 1964) figs. 484–486. For the relationship between the architecture of Desiderius’ church and Old St. Peter’s, see H. M. Willard and K. J. Conant,

FIGURE 15

Creation of the Animals. From the Salerno ivories. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.156

and nature of the renaissance of early Christian, specifically Roman, art at Desiderian Monte Cassino and within its sphere of influence remains to be thoroughly explored.³³

We may recognize the overall program at Salerno as part of this revival of early Christian formulae that occurred at Desiderian Monte Cassino. The impact of such an early source may probably still be recognized in certain specifics of the iconography, at least in the Old Testament cycle, for much, if not all, of this cycle appears to relate to a tradition that can be traced back to early Christian times. The Creation of the Animals, for instance, on a fragment preserved in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 15),³⁴ is remarkably similar to the mosaic of the same subject in the narthex of San Marco in Venice (Figure 16), part of a Genesis cycle



FIGURE 16

Creation of the Animals. Mosaic. Venice, San Marco



“A Project for the Graphic Reconstruction of the Romanesque Abbey at Monte Cassino,” *Speculum* 10 (1935) pp. 144–146; Bloch, “Monte Casino, Byzantium and the West,” p. 196; K. J. Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture 800–1200* (second edition) (Baltimore, 1966) pp. 222–223.

33. The probability that the lost mosaics of Monte Cassino were derived from early Christian prototypes was already suggested by E. Bertaux, *L'art dans l'Italie méridionale* (Paris, 1904) p. 188 ff. A most fruitful means of approach to the whole problem, and one that will surely be most influential in the future, is that offered by Ernst Kitzinger, “The Gregorian Reform and the

Visual Arts: A Problem of Method,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* fifth series, 22 (1972) pp. 87–102. A second recent study by Kitzinger analyzes one of the most important monuments of the revival (“The First Mosaic Decoration of Salerno Cathedral,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 21 (1972) [Festschrift Otto Demus] pp. 149–162. On the subsequent revival (continuation?) of early Christian forms in Rome itself see H. Toubert, “Le renouveau paléochrétien à Rome au début du XII^e siècle,” *Cahiers archéologique* 20 (1970) pp. 99–154.

34. Goldschmidt IV, p. 38, no. 126(6), pl. XLII.

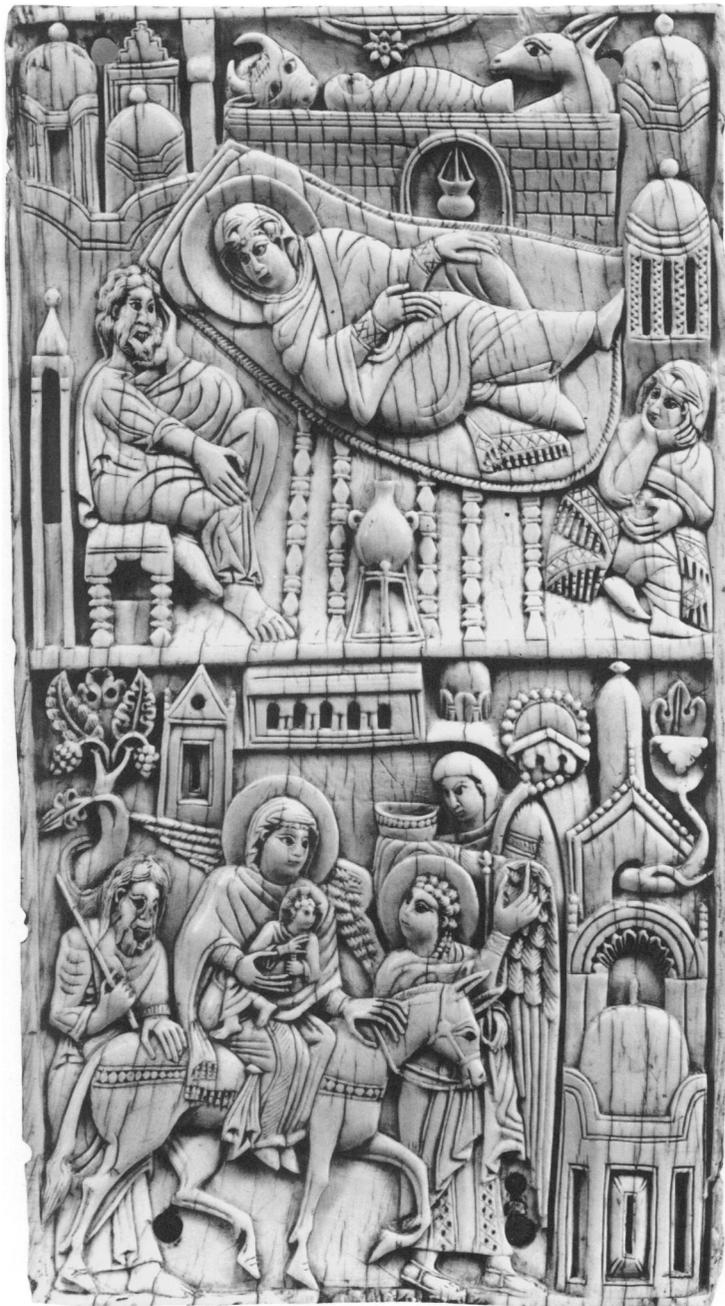


FIGURE 18
Nativity. Syro-Palestinian ivory plaque. Wash-
ington, Dumbarton Oaks Collection

FIGURE 19
Raising of Lazarus. The Salerno ivories (detail).
Salerno (photo: GFN)

known to have been copied after a fifth- or sixth-century manuscript model.³⁵ In fact, the cycles at Salerno and San Marco, though far from being identical, seem to represent variant strains of a single tradition. For the present, however, it will suffice simply to have indicated the early origins of the Old Testament scenes.

The New Testament cycle, on the other hand, relates to rather different sources, and widely divergent ones at that. It is an unusual but happy circumstance that in the case of several of the Salerno panels we can point not just to some general tradition to which they might

35. The relationship between the San Marco mosaics and the Cotton Genesis manuscript is most succinctly discussed in K. Weitzmann, "Observations on the Cotton Genesis fragments," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955) pp. 112-131 (the connection between these works and the Salerno series is also discussed). These relationships were first recognized by J. J. Tikkanen, "Die Genesismosaiken von San Marco in Venedig und ihr Verhältnis zu den Miniaturen der Cotton-Bibel," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae* XVII (1889) p. 99 ff.

FIGURE 17
Nativity and Flight into Egypt. The Salerno
ivories. Salerno (photo: GFN)



relate, but to the actual models the carvers must have held before their eyes. The Nativity (Figure 17), for example, is cast in a unique form, most of the details of which—such as the characteristic figures of Joseph and Salome, or the bottle beneath the bed—cannot be found elsewhere. Nowhere, that is, except in a plaque with the Nativity at Dumbarton Oaks (Figure 18),³⁶ one of a series of panels known as the Grado Chair ivories, most recently ascribed to a Syrian atelier working in the seventh-eighth century.³⁷ Although the vast stylistic changes between model and copy, involving the shift from a lingering late antique to an emerging Romanesque aesthetic, are evident, equally clear is the direct correspondence between the general and specific iconography of the two works. The only other scene derived from this source that we shall consider is the Raising of Lazarus (Figure 19), the Grado Chair version of which is found in the British Museum (Figure 20).³⁸ In this case the unique aspect of Christ shown with a staff instead of a roll and accompanied by a single Apostle is clearly related in the two versions. But the figures of the women and of the attendant at Salerno are obviously taken from some second source. Although these figures may be found in any number of places, perhaps it is in mid-Byzantine examples that we can find the closest parallel, for example, in a tenth-century ivory in Berlin (Figure 21).³⁹ Although there

36. Goldschmidt IV, p. 35, no. 124, pl. xli; K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection III: Ivories and Steatites* (Washington, 1972) pp. 37–42, no. 20, colorplate 3.

37. K. Weitzmann, "The Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972) especially pp. 73–85. The date and localization of these panels has been a controversial subject over the years and has ranged from Alexandria, about 600 (H. Graeven, "Der heilige Markus in Rom und in der Pentapolis," *Römische Quartalschrift* 13 (1899) p. 109 ff.; Goldschmidt IV, 3) to Italy, eleventh-twelfth century (A. Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana II* [Milan, 1902] p. 615 ff.; W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* [Mainz, 1952] p. 251).

38. Goldschmidt IV, p. 34, no. 118, pl. xl. The third scene with a parallel in the Grado Chair series is the Miracle at Cana. The lower portion of the Salerno version is very close to a fragment in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Goldschmidt IV, no. 312, pl. lxxix; M. Longhurst, *Victoria and Albert Museum, Catalogue of Carvings in Ivory* [London, 1927] p. 33). The Salerno carver combined this model with a Middle Byzantine source much as he did in the case of the Raising of Lazarus. The relationships between the Salerno scenes and their models in the Grado Chair series are analyzed in some detail in Weitzmann, "The Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair," pp. 58–63.

39. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 28, no. 14, pl. iv.



FIGURE 20 Raising of Lazarus. Syro-Palestinian ivory plaque. British Museum. Crown copyright

FIGURE 21 Raising of Lazarus, Byzantine ivory plaque. Berlin, Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturenabteilung (photo: W. Steinkopf, Berlin)



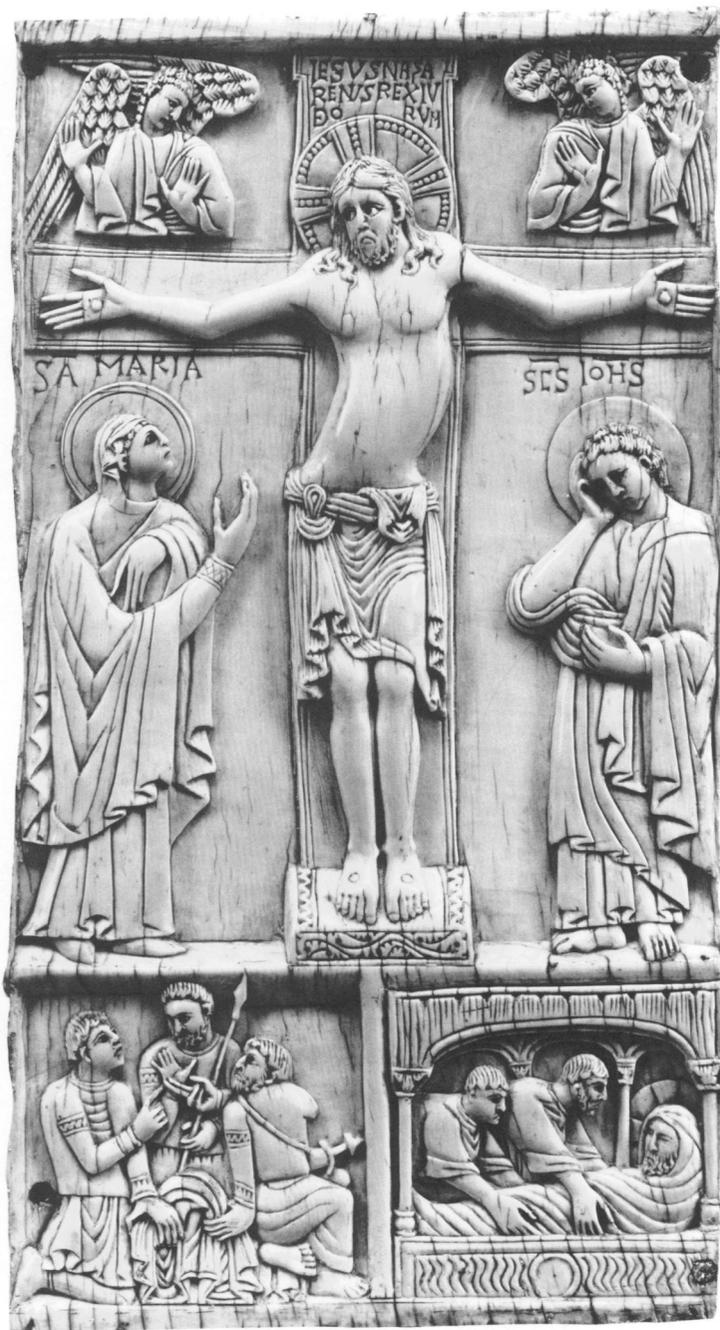


FIGURE 22
Crucifixion and Entombment. The Salerno
ivories. Salerno (photo: GFN)

are only three extant panels from the Grado group that may be compared with scenes at Salerno, we can be sure, for various reasons, that the impact of these early Eastern ivories was far greater than in just these instances. Surely other scenes now lost in the Grado series were copied as well, and the characteristic domical architecture of the backgrounds can be seen to have infiltrated into most parts of the Salerno ivories.

Iconography associated with a specifically Italian tradition may also be recognized as having had a significant impact in the Salerno New Testament cycle. Of the several examples that might be discussed in this regard I shall cite but one, the Entombment. At Salerno the scene (Figure 22), appended to the Crucifixion, takes place under a baldachin where Christ is seen being lowered into a sarcophagus by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. The composition is significantly different from the traditional Byzantine version where Christ is shown being pushed into a cave.⁴⁰ The type with the sarcophagus is a specifically Western version and may be found as early as the late tenth century in the *Codex Egberti* (Figure 23).⁴¹ Although here we do find the two figures lowering the body into a sarcophagus, the scene is not situated under a canopy nor is the sarcophagus of the particular strigilated type seen in the ivory. Exactly such details may be found, however, not only in the Entombment fresco in Sant'Angelo in Formis (Figure 24),⁴² but also in the illustration for the chapter *De Sepulchro* in the *De Universo* of Hrabanus Maurus illuminated at Monte Cassino in 1023 (Figure 25).⁴³ It becomes clear, then, that these details are indigenous to Italy, really to southern Italy, and indicate a traditional local aspect of the iconography at Salerno. The fact that these monu-

40. Compare, for example, the illustration in the eleventh-century Psalter in the British Museum (S. der Nersessian, *L'Illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen age II: London, Add. 19.352* [Paris, 1970] fig. 192) and see in general K. Weitzmann, "The Origin of the Threnos," *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. M. Meiss (New York, 1961) pp. 476-450.

41. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, cod. 24, fol. 85v (H. Schiel, *Codex Egberti der Stadtbibliothek Trier* [Basel, 1960] facsimile volume, fol. 85v).

42. Morisani, *Gli affreschi di S. Angelo in Formis*, pp. 46-47, fig. 48.

43. Monte Cassino, Library, Ms. 132, p. 367. A. Amelli, *Miniature sacre e profane dell'anno 1023 illustranti l'enciclopedia medioevale di Rabano Mauro* (Monte Cassino, 1896) pl. xcvi. See F. Saxl, "Illustrated Mediaeval Encyclopedias 1," in *Lectures* (London, 1957) pp. 228-241.

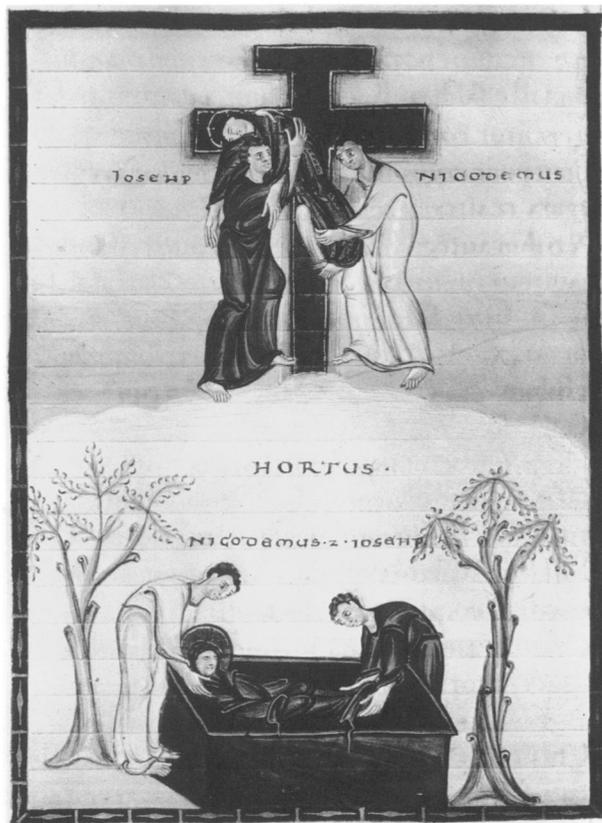


FIGURE 23
Deposition and Entombment. From the *Codex Egberti*. Trier, Staatsbibliothek, cod. 24, fol. 85 verso

FIGURE 25
De sepulchro. From Hrabanus Maurus' *De Universo*. Monte Cassino, Library, Ms. 132, p. 367

ments which best compare with Salerno come from the orbit of Monte Cassino is neither accidental nor unimportant. We have already seen that the program of the ivories in general seems to have been inspired from that source, and we shall see shortly that other, intimate connections exist between the abbey and the Salerno group.

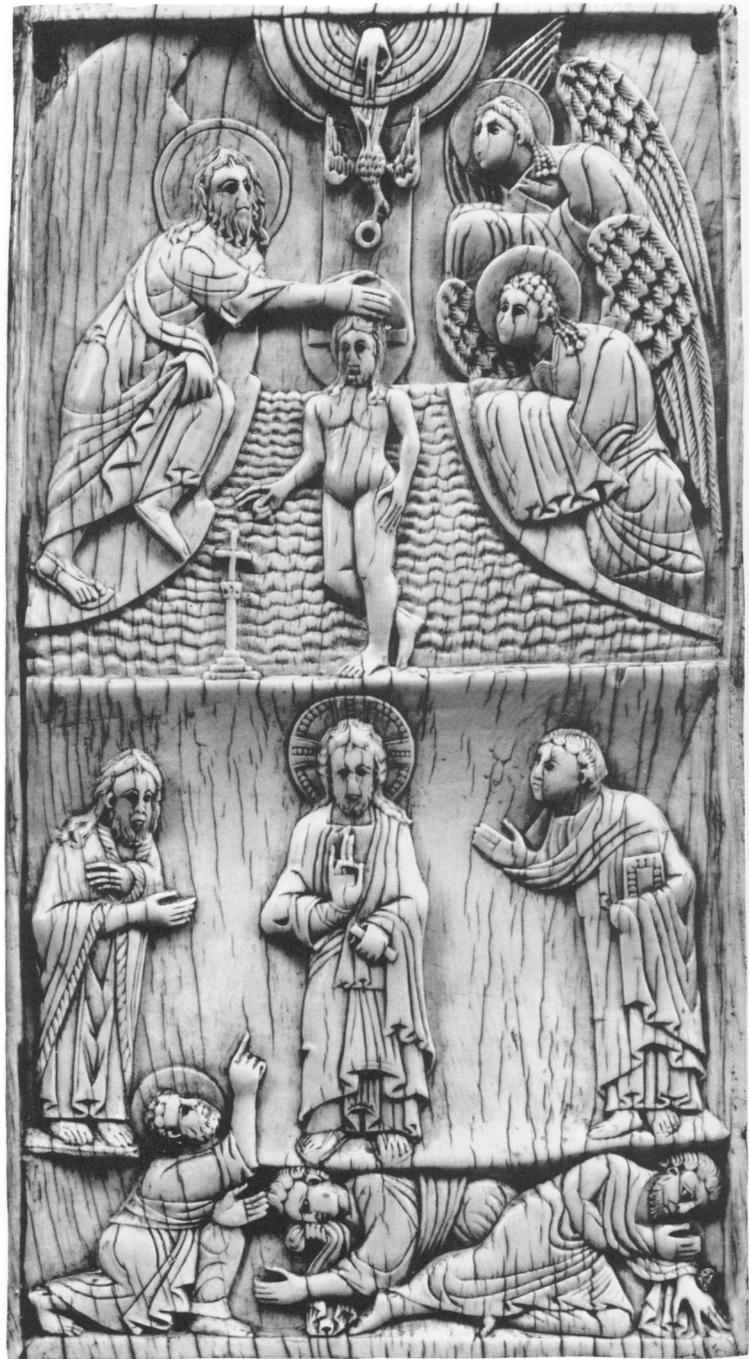
In many ways, however, the most profound influence on the Salerno ivories came from neither of these sources but from Middle Byzantine art. As representative examples we might consider the scenes of the Baptism and Transfiguration (Figure 26), which con-

FIGURE 24
Entombment. Fresco. Sant'Angelo in Formis (photo: Anderson)



veniently share the same plaque. The iconography of the Baptism is rather standard and follows a general form known since early Christian times. However, the details of the cross in the water and, especially, of Christ blessing the waters, cannot be found before the tenth century. In fact, the earliest examples of the coming together of both of these devices date in the eleventh century, at about the same time as the representation in a lectionary manuscript on Mount Athos (Figure 27).⁴⁴ The version here is very similar save for the narrative addition of the two Apostles in the background. Another difference is that at Salerno we find the dove descending with a crown or wreath in his beak, something absent in the Byzantine manuscript. In fact, this little detail, a rare one, is never found in middle Byzantine art but may be seen more than once in examples generally associated with early Christian art in Syria-Palestine.⁴⁵ It could be that the Grado Chair ivories had a Baptism scene from which this element was taken over and combined with an up-to-date Byzantine version. After all, we have already seen our carvers making exactly this type of amalgamation.

In the case of the Transfiguration, the Dionysiou manuscript again may serve for comparison (Figure 28).⁴⁶ The type of composition that divides the scene into an upper level with Christ flanked by Moses and Elias and a lower zone with Peter, James, and John has no parallel in pre-iconoclastic art but becomes almost canonical from the ninth century on. Not only the general composition but even the specific postures of the three figures below are clearly related in the two works: Peter kneels on one knee and points to the three figures above as he looks toward them; John, curled up



in the center, looks down toward the ground; James, rising on one knee, faces to the right and down. The suggestion has been made that this compositional type had its origin in the post-iconoclastic monumental decoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, of which a description exists in the twelfth-

44. K. Weitzmann, "Byzantine Miniature and Icon Painting in the Eleventh Century," *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 1966) p. 209, pl. 3 (reprinted in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, edited by H. Kessler [Chicago, 1971] p. 274, fig. 263).

45. Compare the fifth-century ivory in the British Museum (W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, p. 70, no. 141, pl. 46) and the sixth-century gold medallion in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, II: Jewelry, Enamels and Art of the Migration Period* [Washington, 1965] pp. 35-37, no. 37, pl. xxx). On the motif's meaning see K. Hoffmann, *Taufsymbolik in mittelalterlichen Herrscherbildern* (Düsseldorf, 1968) p. 11.

46. See K. Weitzmann, "A Metamorphosis Icon or Miniature on Mt. Sinai," *Starinar* 20 (1969) (*Mélanges Djurdje Böković*) p. 420, fig. 4 (fol. 161v).

FIGURE 26

Baptism and Transfiguration. The Salerno ivories. Salerno (photo: GFN)

century *ekphrasis* of Nicholas Mesarites.⁴⁷ Whether or not this is the ultimate source of the type, we can be sure that the Transfiguration at Salerno represents a Middle Byzantine invention that became the fixed formula for centuries to come.

It is more than coincidental that the scenes we have recognized as related to Middle Byzantine art fall into the category of “feast pictures,” those images which in the Eastern church are associated with the important days in the liturgical calendar, as a rule considered to be twelve in number. It is exactly in this realm of the liturgical cycles that post-iconoclastic Byzantine art made some of its major innovative contributions to pictorial tradition.⁴⁸

If relatively contemporary Byzantine art provided iconographic models for a number of the Salerno panels, it also presented the stylistic ideal to which our ivory carvers aspired. One could go on at length concerning the derivation from Byzantine sources of such details as nimbus types and hair styles,⁴⁹ but here we

47. G. Downey, “Nicolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 47 (1957) especially pp. 871–873. The relationship between this standard Middle Byzantine iconography of the Transfiguration and the representation in the Apostles’ Church was pointed out by K. Weitzmann, “The Narrative and Liturgical Gospel Illustrations,” in *New Testament Studies*, edited by M. Parvis and A. Wikgren (Chicago, 1950) p. 164 (reprinted in *Studies*, pp. 260–261).

48. A thorough study of the effect of the twelve-feast cycle on Byzantine art has yet to be written. The subject has been treated by G. Millet, *Recherches sur l’iconographie de l’Evangile* (Paris, 1916) p. 16 ff.; O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration* (Boston, 1955) pp. 22–26; K. Weitzmann, “Narrative and Liturgical,” *passim*; K. Weitzmann, “A 10th-Century Lectionary. A Lost Masterpiece of the Macedonian Renaissance,” *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, (1971) pp. 617–640.

49. With regard to the hair types, compare those of the Apostles in the Salerno Doubting of Thomas with that of the figure of St. John on a tenth-century Byzantine ivory Crucifixion (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 55, no. 99, pl. xxxviii). Both works render the hair almost as a cap composed of several rounded sections, each composed of a number of incised lines used to indicate separate waves. The cross-nimbus with a pearl border around its periphery and with a row of pearls extending down the center of each of the cross arms, the normal type in the Salerno series, may be paralleled in a number of Byzantine examples (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 70, nos. 175, 176, 177, pl. LIX).



FIGURE 27

Baptism. From a Byzantine lectionary. Mount Athos, Dionysiou, Ms. 587, fol. 141 verso

FIGURE 28

Transfiguration. Ms. 587, fol. 161 verso



will restrict ourselves to a consideration of the problem in the broadest fashion. In comparing the figure of Christ from the Mission of the Apostles at Salerno (Figure 29) with his counterpart in the same scene in a tenth-century Byzantine ivory of the Nicephorus



FIGURE 29
Mission of the Apostles and Pentecost. The
Salerno ivories. Salerno (photo: GFN)

group (Figure 30),⁵⁰ it becomes clear immediately that the tradition which produced the latter is the source for the drapery types at Salerno, types different from those found in the Farfa Casket and its relatives. Not only is the classically inspired dress similar in type, but even such details as the rendering of the folds between the legs as a series of V-shaped lines may be found in both examples. Although the plastic rendering of the folds in the Byzantine example differs from the incised lines of the Salerno version, even this aspect of the Salerno drapery can be paralleled in Byzantine ivory carving, particularly in examples from the Triptych group where the surface is enlivened with similar incisions (Figure 31).⁵¹

This Byzantinizing style, it will be noticed, is not restricted to scenes derived from Byzantine iconographic models but is spread throughout the series. There can be no doubt that the south Italian carvers, despite other stylistic tendencies in their work and despite their variety of models, intended to cast their entire series of ivories in a deliberately Byzantinizing style.

The fact of the preponderant influence of Middle Byzantine art on the Salerno ivories can fortunately be placed in some sort of historical context. The *Chronicle of Monte Cassino* written by Leo of Ostia toward the end of the eleventh century records how Desiderius imported artists from Constantinople at the time of his rebuilding of Monte Cassino. Aside from the mosaicists to adorn the basilica he must have imported a whole corps of artisans not only to work but to teach, for the *Chronicle* continues: "And the most eager artists selected from his monks he trained not only in these arts but in all the arts which employ silver, bronze, iron, glass, ivory, wood, alabaster, and stone."⁵² We have here a

50. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 55, no. 100, pl. xxxviii.

51. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann II, p. 70, no. 174, pl. lxx. Weitzmann, "The Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair," already pointed to the relationship between the Salerno style and the Triptych group.

52. Leo Ostiensis, *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, III, 27 (see footnote 30): "Legatos interea Constantinopolim ad locandos artifices destinat, peritos utique in arte musiarum et quadratarum, ex quibus videlicet alii absidem et arcum atque vestibulum maioris basilicæ musivo comerent, alii vero totius ecclesiae pavementum diversorum lapidum varietate consternerent . . . Non tamen de his tantum, sed et de omnibus artificibus quaecumque ex auro vel argento, aere, ferro, vitro, ebore, ligno, gipso, vel lapide patrari possunt, studiosissimos prorsus artifices de suis sibi paravit."

forthright statement to the effect that ivory carving was taught to Italian artists by Byzantine masters at Monte Cassino between 1066 and 1071. It is my contention that the Salerno ivories, which I would date around the time of the consecration of the Cathedral of Salerno in 1084, reflect the impact of this education and were carved by artists closely associated with the Byzantine lessons taught at Monte Cassino. Considering the various relationships we can point to between the ivories and art emanating from the circle of the great abbey, this revelation should come as no surprise.

The arrival of Byzantine artists at Monte Cassino, then, emerges as an important event in our considera-

tions, since it provides some historical rationale for the transformation from the early group with its strong associations with older Italian traditions to the Salerno series with its Byzantine connections. In fact, this same development may be paralleled in fresco painting where the style that produced the Calvi frescoes (Figure 9) gives way to that seen in Sant'Angelo in Formis (Figure 32), and in manuscript illumination where one can see the Byzantinizing style of the Desiderian period (Figure 33)⁵³ against the backdrop of such

53. Rome, Vatican Library ms. lat. 1202, fol. 2r. P. Baldass, "Disegni della scuola cassinese del tempo di Desiderio," *Bollettino d'arte* 37 (1952) pp. 102-114.



FIGURE 30
Mission of the Apostles. Byzantine ivory plaque.
Paris, Musée du Louvre



FIGURE 31
Dormition. Byzantine ivory plaque. Paris, Musée
de Cluny



FIGURE 32
 Noah Ordered to Build the Ark.
 Fresco. Sant'Angelo in Formis
 (photo: Anderson)

FIGURE 34
 Abbot John Presents the Codex to St.
 Benedict. *Regula St. Benedicti*. Monte Cas-
 sino, Library, Ms. 175, p. 3

FIGURE 33
 Desiderius Presents the Codex to St. Benedict.
Lives of Ss. Benedict, Maurus, and Scholastica. Rome,
 Vatican Library, Ms. lat. 1202, fol. 2 recto



FIGURE 35
Flight into Egypt. Ivory plaque. Bologna, Museo
Civico

earlier Cassinese works as Monte Cassino ms. 175 (Figure 34), created in the Cassinese scriptorium during the period of its exile in Capua in the tenth century.⁵⁴ Although details may vary, the point is clear that major artistic allegiances were changing, and generally in a common direction, in all of these media during the time of Desiderius.

With regard to the third and final phase in our workshop's production we can be brief. Most of the pieces produced are iconographically dependent on a particular source: the Salerno ivories themselves. Thus, the plaque in Bologna with the Flight into Egypt (Figure 35)⁵⁵ shows a composition basically derived from the corresponding scene at Salerno (Figure 17), but incorporating certain details such as the young man leading the ass from the Salerno Journey to Bethlehem (Figure 36). Of course, the relationship between the Bologna plaque and the Salerno scenes is more than simply a matter of general composition, and many minute details may be compared. An equally intimate relationship exists between the Salerno Crucifixion (Figure 22) and the plaque from a triptych in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 37).⁵⁶ Christ's position, his characteristic drapery, the Virgin's stance and drapery, John's drapery, the appended scene of the Entombment below—all clearly show their derivation from the Salerno panel. There are some divergences as well, of course, but in the present context these are less significant than the similarities. In terms of style this latest group is cast in a simplified and schematized manner far more "Romanesque" than the Salerno ivories themselves. Once again we must look to native traditions for correspondences; this time not to a tra-

54. H. Belting, "Der Codex 73 in Monte Cassino und die cassinesische Kunst vor Desiderius," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 25 (1962) p. 203, fig. 10, p. 3.

55. Goldschmidt IV, p. 41, no. 133, pl. XLIX.

56. Goldschmidt IV, p. 42, no. 143, pl. LI.

FIGURE 36
Journey to Bethlehem. The Salerno ivories
(detail). Salerno (photo: GFN)



FIGURE 37

Crucifixion and Entombment. Ivory plaque. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.43

dition of the past but to the emerging Romanesque style of the beginning of the twelfth century. Although sculpture of this period is difficult to find in southern Italy, the figure of a prophet from the Cathedral of Modena in the north (Figure 38), executed about 1100,⁵⁷ offers similar kinds of compressed and repetitious drapery folds that appear in the St. John on the Metropolitan Museum's plaque. In both, the "parallel-line" method of rendering certain details of the mantle is also in evidence.

In addition, the tendency to create static and almost symmetrical compositions, so evident in this late group, is exactly the trend that comes to the fore in the following century. A similar kind of "hardening" of a Byzantine inspired style may be seen in the frescoes of Rome and the surrounding area, about 1100, that are the successors of Sant'Angelo in Formis.⁵⁸ It is to these years soon after 1100 that I would date this final phase of our workshop's creative life.

The question still remains as to the location of the workshop. Everything seems to point toward a single answer: Amalfi. Among all the active commercial republics of Italy only Amalfi always remained on good terms with the Arabs, the source of ivory as well as of silk and spices.⁵⁹ More importantly, the identification of Maurus as the donor of the Farfa Casket further places Amalfi in the forefront of consideration. While the casket was still associated with Maurus' entry into Monte Cassino in 1071 there was always the opinion which held that he had the work made there. However, with the separation of the casket from any connection with Monte Cassino it becomes more likely that Maurus would have had his donation made at home, in Amalfi, and taken perhaps to Farfa at the appropri-



57. See R. Salvini, *Wiligelmo e le origine della scultura romanica* (Milan, 1956) pp. 66–68.

58. For example, Santa Pudenziana Rome, and Castel Sant'Elia (C. R. Dodwell, *Painting in Europe 800–1200* [Baltimore, 1971] figs. 156–158).

59. A. O. Citarella, "The Relations of Amalfi with the Arab World Before the Crusades," *Speculum* 42 (1967) p. 312.

ate time. That ivory carving was practiced in Amalfi around this time is indicated by an unusual object in the Metropolitan Museum, a casket for writing implements, decorated with animals of the type found on numerous Islamic works that have been attributed to southern Italy (Figure 39).⁶⁰ Ernst Kühnel, who published the piece, ascribes the whole group to Amalfi. On the ends of the casket (Figure 40) are the letters of an inscription, an abbreviated form of Taurus Filius Mansonis. Can it be coincidental that the Mansone family, after that of Maurus himself, was the most prominent noble family of Amalfi in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and that we can even find points of contact between this genre of Islamic carving and certain details in the Farfa Casket itself?⁶¹ I think not. In addition, the Salerno ivories offer yet further corroborative evidence for an Amalfitan origin. Among the Grado Chair ivories, which we saw being copied by the Salerno carvers, the only panel for which there is any hint of a provenance is the one in the British Museum (Figure 20). There is eighteenth-century



FIGURE 38
The Prophet Micah. Detail of the façade.
Modena, Cathedral

60. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, p. 67, no. 86, pl. xci.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 18–19.

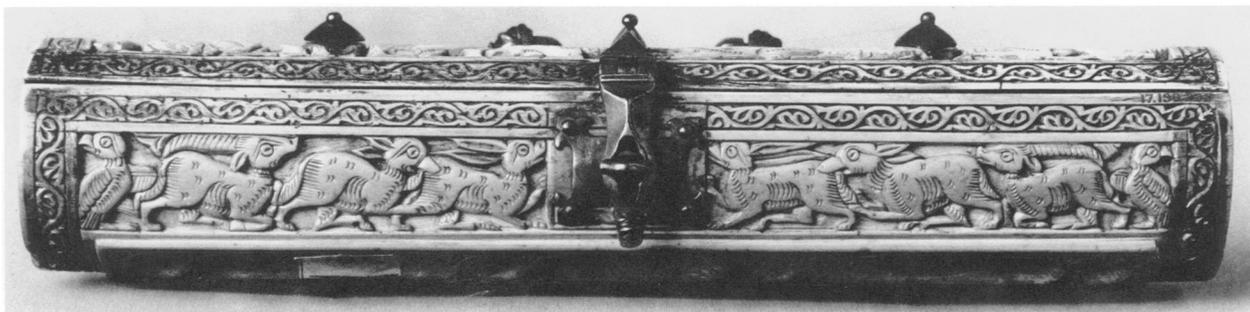


FIGURE 39
The Tauro Casket. Islamic ivory. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.236



FIGURE 40
Endpieces of the Tauro Casket

testimony to the effect that it had come from the Chiesa di Sant'Andrea (that is, the Duomo) at Amalfi.⁶² Furthermore, it is worth noting that in representations of the Apostles in the Salerno series only one man besides Peter and Paul is singled out by the inclusion of his attribute: Andrew, patron saint of Amalfi. He is shown holding the cross both in the series of Apostle busts (Figure 41), and, as well, in the scene of the Pentecost (Figure 29). It is in just such a small way

that the carvers of the Salerno panels may have chosen to leave some mark indicative of their place of origin. According to ibn-Hawqal, a merchant of Baghdad who visited the city in 972, Amalfi was "the most prosperous city of Langobardia, the noblest, the most illustriously situated, the most commodious, and richest."⁶³ To this description of Amalfi I think we might add, at least for the eleventh century, "and possessing a workshop most accomplished in the art of carving in ivory."

62. A Gori, *Thesaurus veterum diptychorum* (Florence, 1759) III, p. 110.

63. As quoted by Citarella, "The Relations of Amalfi," p. 299

FIGURE 41
Apostle busts. The Salerno ivories. Salerno (photo: GFN)

