

Volume 6 / 1972

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# METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL

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The *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is published twice a year by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street, New York, New York 10028. The price is \$10.00 per issue. Correspondence regarding manuscripts should be directed to the Editorial Board.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 68-28799

Designed by Peter Oldenburg. Composition by

Press of A. Colish, Inc.; printed by The Meriden Gravure

Company; bound by A. Horowitz & Son

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# Old Kingdom Cylinder Seals for the Lower Classes

HENRY G. FISCHER

*Lila Acheson Wallace Curator in Egyptology, The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

IT HAS LONG been apparent that, in addition to the usual type of Old Kingdom cylinder seal, the surface of which was completely covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions, a second type of cylinder seal came into use before the end of the Sixth Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> This type shows figures that may, in some cases, resemble hieroglyphs but are employed decoratively; they are often combined in pairs that more usually face inward than outward, and in such cases may be either partly fused (*trompe l'oeil*) or else reversed head to foot (*tête bêche*).

The clearest evidence for the dating of the Old Kingdom examples is the presence of a royal name accompanying the design. Since only two examples, both naming Pepy I, have heretofore been published, one of which presents some problems, it seems worthwhile to exhibit three more that have come to light—especially since they extend the chronological range.

1. The principal discussions are: P. Newberry, *Scarabs* (London, 1906) pp. 49–50; H. Frankfort, *Studies in Early Pottery of the Near East, I, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt and Their Earliest Interrelations* (London, 1924) pp. 132–135; H. Frankfort, "Egypt and Syria in the First Intermediate Period," *JEA* 12 (1926) p. 88; H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939) pp. 296–297; A. Scharff, "Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen auf Siegelbildern aus dem späten Alten Reich und der ersten Zwischenzeit," *ÄZ* 67 (1931) pp. 95–102; H. Junker, "Zwei Schein-Rollsiegel aus dem Alten Reich," *Mélanges Maspero*, I, fasc. 1, *Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut*

The total of five examples will be presented chronologically.

1. The earliest and most interesting of these royal seals (Figures 1, 2) is from the collection of Georges Michailides, who has kindly permitted me to include it.<sup>2</sup> Its material appears to be a reddish crystalline limestone; the height is 5 cm., the width 2.3 cm., and the hole measures 1.7–1.8 cm. in diameter. The surface of the seal is slightly concave. It is said to have been found at Abusir. Beside the Horus name of Djedkare (Isesy), and separated from it by a pair of vertical notched dividers, two dogs and two crocodiles are symmetrically arranged in *tête-bêche* pairs. The decoration bears a close resemblance to that of a limestone cylinder seal excavated below the floor level of the Old Kingdom temple at Abydos (Figure 3), which not only has a

*stitut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*, no. 66 (Cairo, 1935–1938) pp. 267–271; P. Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* (Wiesbaden, 1963) I, p. 45, II, pp. 677–678.

2. I am also indebted to him and to Edward Wente for the impression shown in Figure 2. After this article was submitted, I was informed by Peter Kaplony that he plans to include the Michailides cylinder in a forthcoming monograph on Old Kingdom seals, to be published by the Fondation Égyptologique Reine Elisabeth in Brussels.

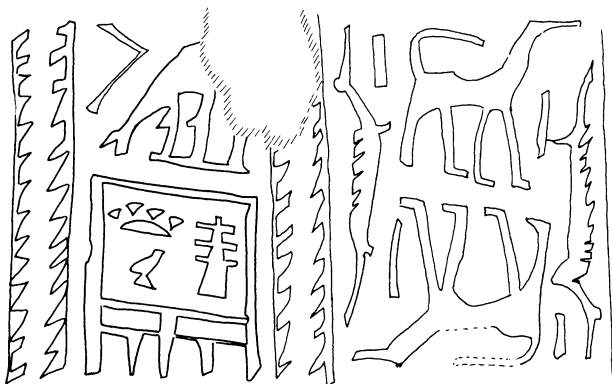


FIGURE 1  
Cylinder seal (example 1). Michailides Collection, Cairo. This and subsequent reproductions of cylinder seals are approximately the same size as the originals



FIGURE 2  
Impression of the seal shown in Figure 1

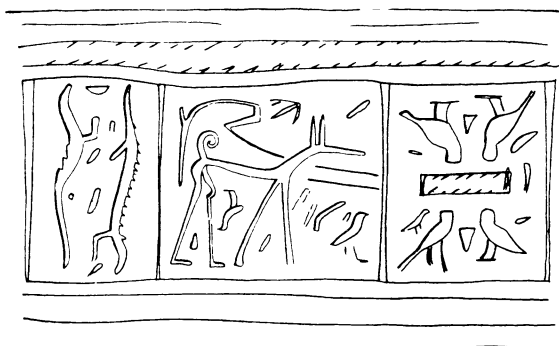


FIGURE 3  
Cylinder seal from Abydos. After Petrie

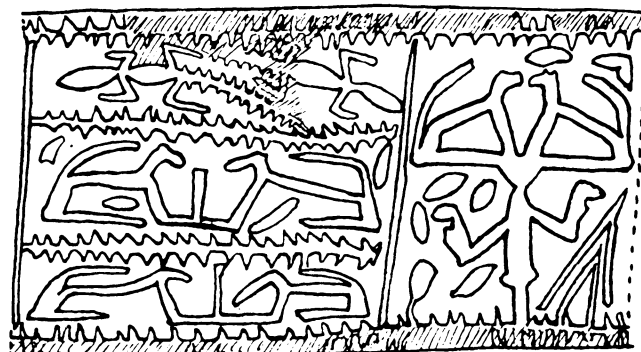


FIGURE 4  
Seal from Abusir. Staatliche Museen, Berlin, 15600. After Scharff

similar dog and a tête-bêche pair of crocodiles, but also shows notched borders at the top and bottom.<sup>3</sup> A wooden seal from Abusir, excavated at the pyramid temple of Neferir-kare, the third king of the Fifth Dynasty (Figure 4), also shows some similarities; it has

tête-bêche crocodiles and recumbent animals, with notched horizontal dividers and borders.<sup>4</sup>

2. Alexander Scharff has published a limestone cylinder seal (Figure 5) on which the Horus name of

3. W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, II (London, 1903) p. 29, pls. 12 (276), 16 (12). Kaplony, *Inschriften*, II, p. 678, implies that this is protodynastic since it was found at a First Dynasty level, and he compares a steatite seal in Z. Saad, *Royal Excavations at Saqqara and Helwan (1941-1945)* (Cairo, 1947) p. 166; the latter is different in material, however, and does not show a tête-bêche arrangement or any other detail that specifically relates it to the series under

discussion. On the other hand the Abydos seal has some details in common (material, figures of owls and crocodiles) with W. M. F. Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders* (London, 1917) pl. 7 (163), which Kaplony (*Inschriften*, I, p. 44, III, fig. 634) assigns to the Old Kingdom prior to the end of the Fifth Dynasty.

4. Berlin 15600; Scharff, "Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen," *AZ* 67 (1931) pp. 96-97, fig. b.

Pepy I is preceded (or followed) by figures representing cattle, cuts of meat, fish, and a bee.<sup>5</sup> The bee might be thought to signify “honey,” in an enumeration of offerings, but other seals (e.g., Figure 7) display the same sign in contexts that cannot be explained in this manner.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, as Scharff notes, the bee appears as an isolated motif on a number of button seals.

3. A second seal of Pepy I, formerly in the Spencer Churchill Collection, has twice been illustrated by Henri Frankfort on the basis of a drawing by Percy Newberry (Figure 6).<sup>7</sup> It is now in the British Museum (66808), and thanks to the kindness of T. G. H. James, the following data may be supplied: Its material is steatite and it measures 7.5 cm. in height, 1.9 cm. in diameter. The Horus name *Mry-twy*, followed by *Mry-R*, is flanked by two columns of inscription, which give the titles and epithets of an official: “Liegeman of the Great House, who does what his lord orders,” and “Noble of the King, Companion of the House, who does what his lord orders.” Beside this is a much longer column of signs representing pairs of opposed apes and men with staves, along with groups of curved and straight lines that apparently serve only to fill space. Frankfort concluded that the apes, and so on, were added subsequently to the rest. James has written me that he does not believe that this part of the decoration was cut at the same time, but would not suggest priority. If Frankfort is right, it is curious that the inscription referring to the king is so much shorter than the full height of the cylinder; from this circumstance one might argue that the column with the apes was earlier, and that the other columns were reduced in scale so as to adapt the inscriptions to the remaining space. As will be pointed out later, however, the choice of material favors the priority of the inscription, as does the selection of titles. While the amount of margin at the top and bottom is unparalleled, other cases may be cited in which the inscription does not fill the entire circumference of the seal.<sup>8</sup>

5. Berlin 16431; Scharff, “Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen,” *ÄZ* 67 (1931) p. 99, fig. e; Scharff notes that the cuts of meat might possibly represent a bird net. The height is 5 cm.

6. For cylinder seals see also Scharff’s fig. c (“Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen,” *ÄZ* 67 [1931] p. 97) and Cairo Cat. 14518 (J. E. Quibell, *Archaic Objects, Catalogue général des antiquités*

4. The upper part of a brown limestone seal from the Nash Collection, bearing the Horus name of the same king, is published here with the further assistance

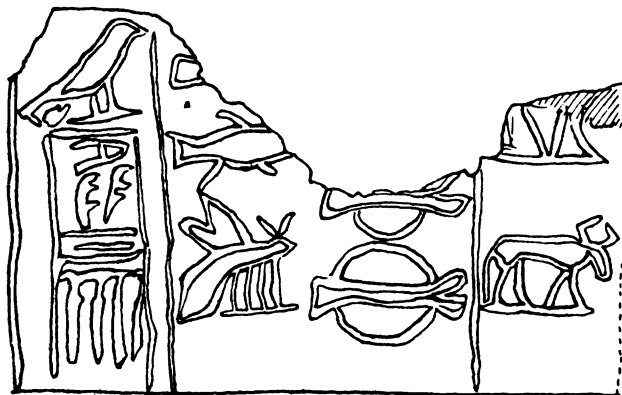


FIGURE 5  
Cylinder seal (example 2). Staatliche Museen, Berlin, 16431. After Scharff



FIGURE 6  
Cylinder seal (example 3). British Museum, 66808. After Newberry

*égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* [Cairo, 1905] pl. 59).

7. Frankfort, “Egypt and Syria,” *JEA* 12 (1926) p. 88; Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, pp. 296–297.

8. E. g., H. R. Hall, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, etc., in the British Museum* (London, 1913) no. 2602 (British Museum 25422). Cf. also the next example (no. 4).

of T. G. H. James, who has supplied a vinagel impression and the essential data (Figures 7, 8).<sup>9</sup> The surviving portion is 2.8 cm. high and 2.6 cm. in diameter, and the diameter of the hole is 1.4 cm. The titles “King of Upper and Lower Egypt” and “Two Ladies” are followed by a column containing the title and epithet of an official who is a funerary priest and “one who does [what is praised]” or “who does [what his lord commands].”<sup>10</sup> Between this and the Horus name *Mry-tswy*, which brings up the rear, there is a column of emblematic or decorative figures: a bee, an ape, and a space filler that resembles a branch. In view of the position of the ape, this figure may have been complemented by a tête-bêche companion, but the traces do not confirm this possibility with any certainty. The sequence of columns is suggested by the fact that a half column’s width of space has been left between the apparent beginning and end. The amount of the seal that is lost is at least half the original height, to judge from the fact that most variants of the epithets beginning with  $\overline{\text{S}}$  require scarcely more than two quadrants of space (Figure 9).<sup>11</sup> If so, the “Two Ladies” title may

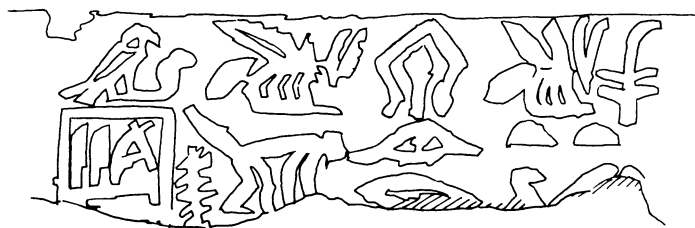


FIGURE 7  
Cylinder seal (example 4). British Museum, 65855

FIGURE 8  
Impression of the seal shown in Figure 7



9. British Museum 65855. Mentioned by Kaplony, *Inskriften*, II, bottom of p. 677. The material has previously been catalogued as “brown quartzite,” but James agrees that it is a softer material, and that limestone is probably the correct designation.

10. For the title, cf. the accompanying bone seal, Cairo Journal d’Entrée 72625 (height 4.7 cm., diameter 2.4 cm.). This is apparently the one indistinctly reproduced by J. E. Quibell and A. G. K. Hayter, *Teti Pyramid, North Side* (Cairo, 1927) p. 19, which was found in the tomb of *K3.i-m-hst*. The title *hm-k3* also occurs on a bronze seal of Shepsekare, Cairo J. d’E. 45041 (height 5 cm.), G. Daressy, “Cylindre en bronze,” *ASAE* 15 (1915) p. 94.

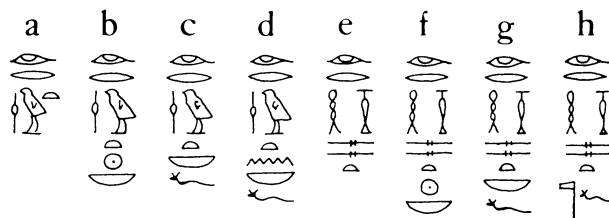


FIGURE 9  
Epithets on cylinder seals (see note 11)

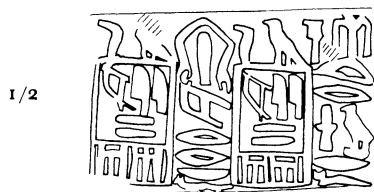
19, feminine  $\Delta$  lacking); Brooklyn 44.123.32; probably Metropolitan 17.5 (with  $\overline{\text{S}}$  restored); also horizontally: British Museum 51083 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 301, no. 2865, with  $\overline{\text{S}}$  restored). Earlier (Sahure): Junker, *Giza*, VII (Leipzig and Vienna, 1944) fig. 96b, p. 235. Later (Pepy II): Brooklyn 49.50.

d. Pepy I: British Museum 29061 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 264, no. 2604; cf.  $\overline{\text{S}}$   $\overline{\text{S}}$   $\overline{\text{S}}$  (a son of Neferirkare, Junker, *Giza*, VII, fig. 97, p. 237).

e. Pepy I: British Museum 29061 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 264, no. 2604); British Museum 5495 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 264, no. 2605); Metropolitan 07.228.95; Metropolitan 26.7.10 (P. Newberry, *The Timins Collection* [London, 1907] pl. 21 [15]). Later (Pepy II): Brooklyn 49.50.

f. Pepy I: only attested in a horizontal line: Metropolitan 07.228.95.

g. Pepy I: British Museum 51083 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 301,



11. The sources of the epithets in Figure 9 are as follows:

- a. Pepy I: British Museum 5495 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 264, no. 2605); Metropolitan 35.9.6 (different grouping of signs).
- b. Pepy I: Metropolitan 07.228.95; cf. H. Schäfer, *Ägyptische Goldschmiedearbeiten* (Berlin, 1910) p. 15 (7) (different grouping, name of Mycerinus).
- c. Pepy I: Figure 6; *PSBA* 21 (1899) p. 170; Newberry, *Scarabs*, p. 55, fig. 31; Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 10 (4); Brussels E 7311 (*Chronique d’Égypte* 31 [1956] p. 89); Cairo J. d’E. 72625 (Quibell and Hayter, *Teti Pyramid, North Side*, p.

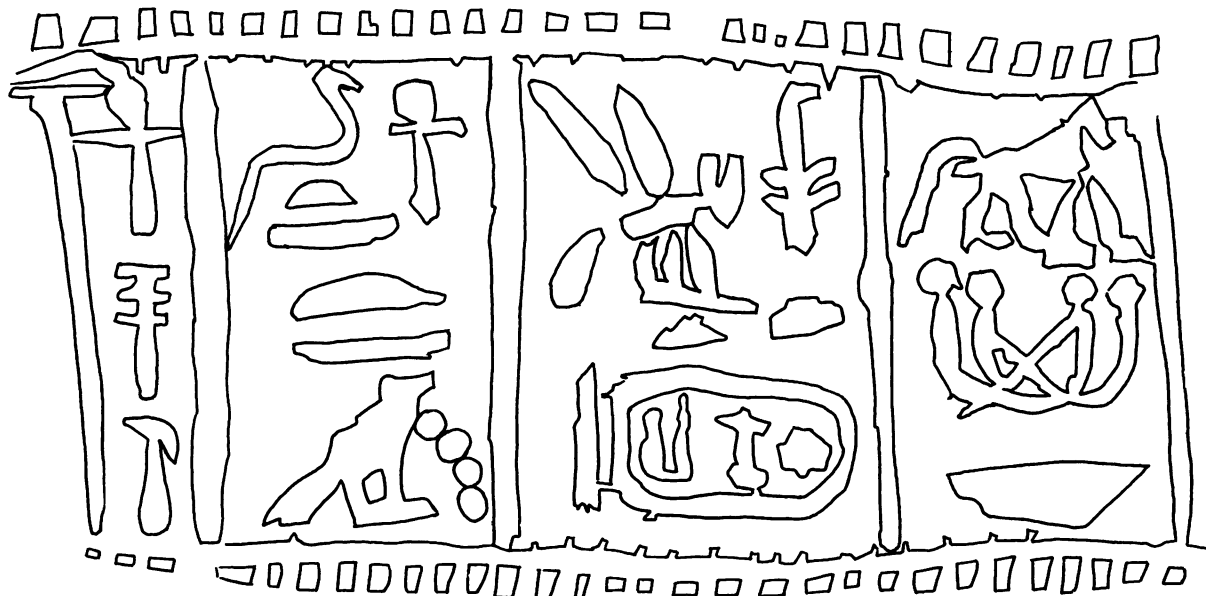


FIGURE 10 Cylinder seal (example 5). University Museum, Philadelphia, E 621

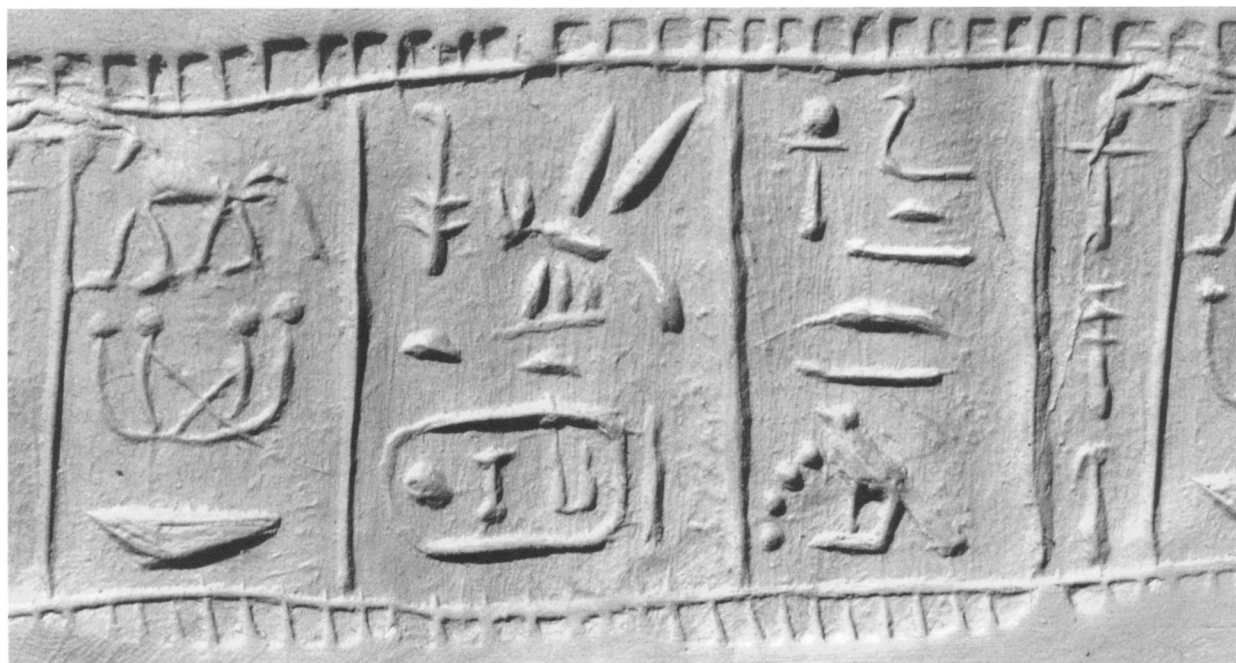
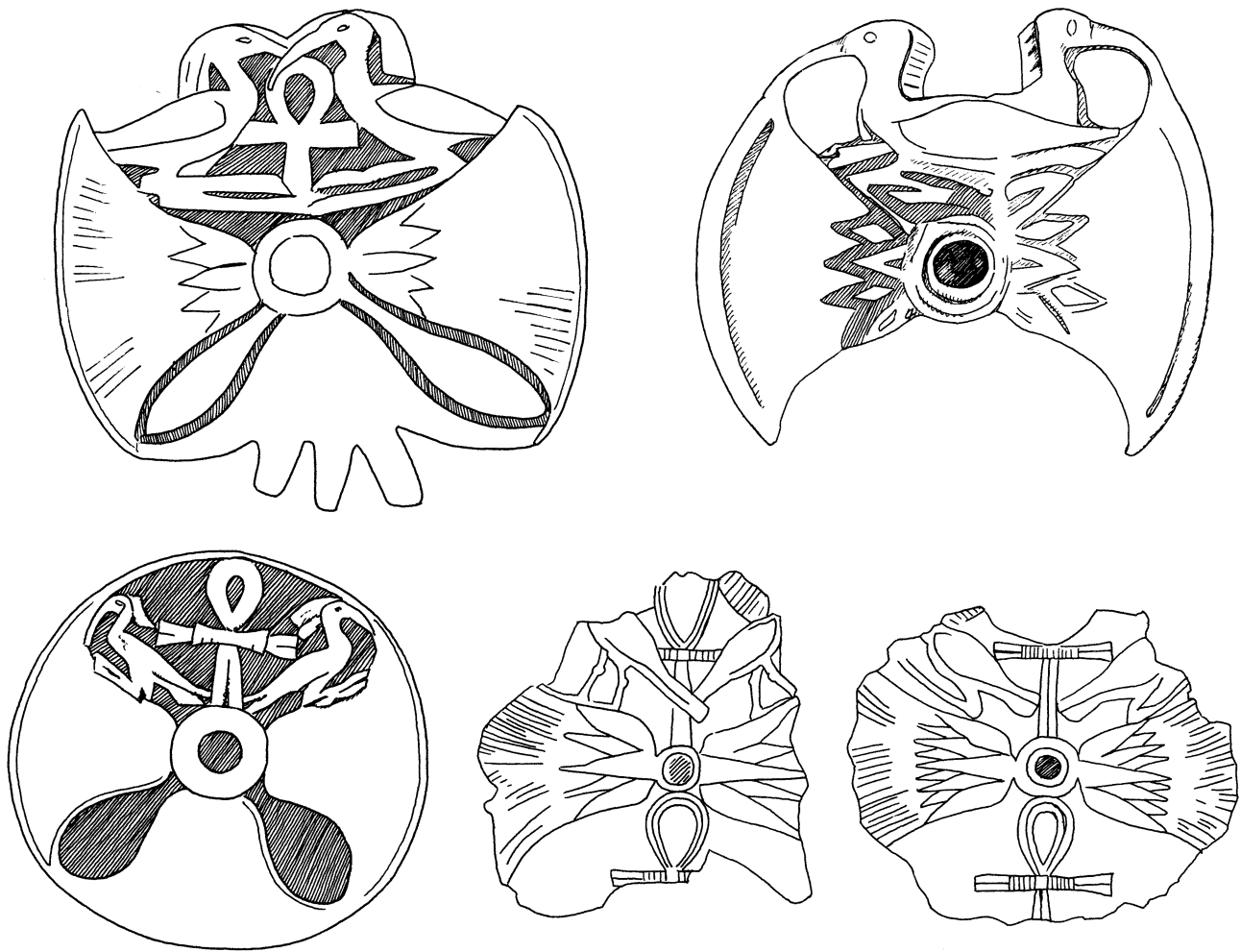


FIGURE 11 Impression of the seal shown in Figure 10

no. 2865); Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 10 [5]; Brooklyn 44.123.32. Earlier (Weserkare): Cairo J. d'E. 45041/45495 (*ASAE* 15 [1915] p. 94, lacks feminine  $\ominus$ ). Later (Merenre and Pepy II): *Rec. trav.* 32 (1910) p. 41, fig. 2 (the sign  $\searrow$  is to be restored).

h. Pepy I: British Museum 25422 (Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 263, no. 2602; also arranged horizontally: Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 10 [5]; Louvre 13441 (*ÄZ* 86 [1961] 23).

For similar epithets from other sources see J. Janssen, *De Traditioneele Egyptische Autobiografie*, I (Leiden, 1946) pp. 46–47, nos. 120, 123, 141, 142, 144–146.



FIGURES 12-15 Old Kingdom diadems

be completed by the name *Mry-ht*. The omission of a cartouche after  $\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{1}{2}$  is unusual, although the same situation occurs on a cylinder seal of Mycerinus, where *Nswt-bity Nbtj* is again followed by the *Nbtj*-name alone.<sup>12</sup> The Horus name *Mry-tswy* might well have been followed by the missing praenomen *Mry-R'* or the nomen *Ppy*, both of which are attested as the second element within the *srh*-enclosure.<sup>13</sup> This would provide

one of the two names that customarily appear in a cartouche, but hardly compensates for the aforementioned omission.

5. The latest of the series (Figures 10, 11) is a cylinder seal of Pepy II that was bought in 1891 by Mrs. John Harrison on the advice of Emil Brugsch and was subsequently donated to the University Museum, Phila-

12. Cairo J. d'E. 36262, G. Legrain, "Achats à Louqsor," *ASAE* 4 (1903) p. 134. Cf. also J. Černý et al., *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, part II (London, 1955) inscription 16, where these two titles are followed by the *Nbtj*-name *Mry-ht* and the cartouche *Mry-R'*, in that order.

13. Addition of *Mry-R'*: Figure 6 above; also Metropolitan 26.7.10 (Timins Coll.); Metropolitan 17.5; Brooklyn 44.123.32;

Newberry, *Scarabs*, figs. 21, 31; Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 10 (4); Hall, *Scarabs*, no. 2602 (British Museum 25422). Addition of *Ppy*: Hall, *Scarabs*, no. 2603 (British Museum 47460), 2865 (British Museum 51083, followed by  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Louvre 13441, H. G. Fischer, "Three Old Kingdom Palimpsests," *AZ* 86 (1961) p. 23; W. L. Nash, "Cylinder of Pepi 1st," *PSBA* 21 (1899) p. 170. At least nine examples can be cited where these additions do not occur.

delphia.<sup>14</sup> It is made of limestone and measures 7.8 cm. in height and 5.3 cm. in diameter, with a hole that varies from 0.7 to 0.8 cm. in maximum width. A toothed border somewhat like that of example 1 appears at the top and bottom, and plain vertical lines divide the field into three wide compartments. A narrower compartment, containing the signs  $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆑}$ , “life, stability, and prosperity,” may represent leftover space, as in the case of example 4. The name of “the King of Upper and Lower Egypt,” *Nfr-k3-R*, appears at the center and continues with “living forever and ever.” The remaining compartment contains a baboon and, above the sign  $\text{𓆎}$ , a figure that is difficult to identify. Possibly this represents an extremely stylized pair of monkeys facing one another, i.e.,  $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆑}$ . An almost equally schematic tête-bêche group appears on a cylinder in University College, London:  $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆑}$ .<sup>15</sup>

Thus the curious type of seal decoration is not only

14. E 621. I am indebted to David O'Connor for assistance in making the impression illustrated here, as well as for his permission to publish it.

15. Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. vi (147). The drawing is taken from A. Evans, *Scripta Minoa*, I (Oxford, 1909) fig. 55, p. 122.

FIGURE 16

Seal impression. After Jéquier

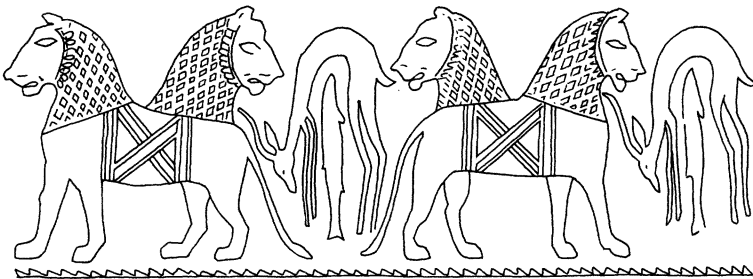
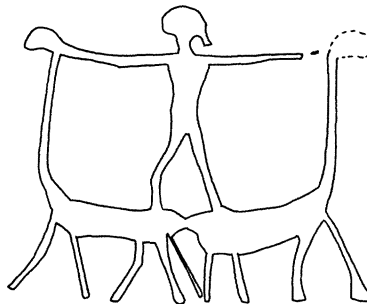


FIGURE 17  
Emblem of  
Cusae. After  
Blackman



attested throughout the Sixth Dynasty, but as early as the penultimate reign of the preceding dynasty, at which time it already shows the tête-bêche arrangement of confronted pairs. Even the simpler type of confronted pair does not otherwise seem to have been popular in the Old Kingdom, although it must be admitted that there is very little evidence on which to base a comparison. Three out of four examples of Old Kingdom diadems with the crested ibis motif show the outward orientation as opposed to one that has the birds facing inward (Figures 12–15).<sup>16</sup> In one of the three cases the pair is overlapped; a seal impression shows lions arranged in the same manner (Figure 16).<sup>17</sup> And while pairs of serpo-felines on protodynastic palettes address each other, those that appear in the Old Kingdom emblem of Cusae are again turned outward (Figure 17).<sup>18</sup> The same outward orientation is displayed by a pair of seated lions on the painted pectoral of an Old Kingdom statue.<sup>19</sup> The greater popularity of

16. D. Dunham, “An Egyptian Diadem of the Old Kingdom,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston) 44 (1946) pp. 24–25, figs. 1–4, and A. Abu-Bakr, *Excavations at Giza 1949–1950* (Cairo, 1953) fig. 69, p. 84 (Figure 15 above). The exception, Boston 37.606A (Figure 12), is the principal subject of Dunham’s article. Figure 13 is drawn from Dunham’s fig. 7 (Leipzig), Figure 14 from photographs corresponding to his fig. 8 (Cairo).

17. G. Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepi II, III* (Cairo, 1940) fig. 68, p. 67; for the halters, cf. G. Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit* (Cairo, 1933) pl. 5. As these examples show, crossed animals are not so rare in ancient Egyptian art as Frankfort indicates in his *Studies*, p. 121; he cites the cranes of *M3-nfr* (H. Fecheimer, *Die Plastik der Ägypter* [Berlin, 1923] p. 129) as an exception, but they occur in other cases: e.g., H. Junker, *Giza*, VI (Vienna and Leipzig, 1943) figs. 14, 16; Metropolitan 08.201.1; R. F. E. Paget and A. A. Pirie, *The Tomb of Ptah-hotep* (London, 1898) pl. 31. Cf. also the caged birds, Paget and Pirie, *Ptah-hotep*, pl. 32; J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah*, II (Brussels, 1907) pl. 84, among other examples; and the hieroglyph for  $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆑}$  in Jéquier, *Monument funéraire Pepi II, III*, pl. 4.

18. See W. S. Smith, *History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (London, 1946) fig. 33, p. 118, and for the emblem of Cusae in the Old Kingdom, cf. Jéquier, *Monument funéraire Pepi II, III*, pl. 21, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, IV (London, 1924) pls. 4, 4A, 6, 11. The reorientation of the motif is a further indication of its Mesopotamian origin, which was independently recognized by L. Heuzey, “Égypte ou Chaldée?”, *Comptes rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 27 (1899) p. 66, and A. E. P. Weigall citing P. Newberry in “Miscellaneous Notes,” *ASAE* 11 (1910) pp. 170–171, and further discussed by G. A. Wainwright, “El Hibah and Esh Shurafa,” *ASAE* 27 (1927) pp. 97–101, and by Frankfort, *Studies*, pp. 119–121, where there are some further comments on the “antithetical group.”

19. L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten*, I, *Catalogue général des antiquités du Musée du Caire* (Berlin, 1911) p. 103 (Cairo Cat. 139).

the confronted pair during the Middle Kingdom, as evidenced by Twelfth Dynasty pectorals,<sup>20</sup> may be the result of the same influence that favored this orientation on the cylinder seals. But cylinder seals and button seals are the only vehicle for the more extreme form of confrontation—the tête-bêche arrangement. This is not attested in the protodynastic period either,<sup>21</sup> and Scharff and Frankfort are probably correct in attributing it to foreign influence from the East.

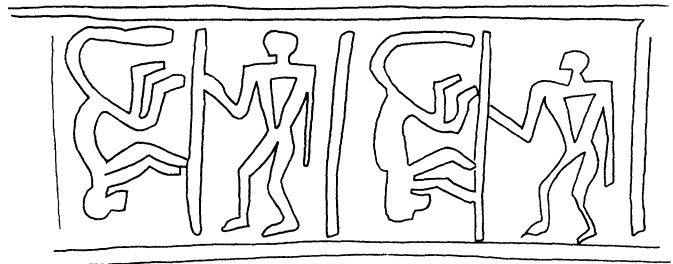
Another feature that merits further consideration is the choice of material. Like many inscribed Old Kingdom cylinder seals of the normal variety, a few of the type under consideration are made of wood (Figure 4) or steatite (Figure 6).<sup>22</sup> Limestone is much more usual, however, and its use is almost entirely confined to this class of cylinders.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the four with royal names (examples 1, 2, 4, 5; Figures 1, 5, 7, 10) and the one from Abydos (Figure 3), there are several other limestone examples that clearly belong to the Old Kingdom: the two seals published by H. Junker in *Mélanges Maspero*, I (Figures 19, 20),<sup>24</sup> Berlin 16433

20. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten*, II (Berlin, 1925) p. 2 (Cairo Cat. 381, 382); R. Engelbach, *Riqqeh and Memphis*, VI (London, 1915) pl. 1; J. De Morgan, *Fouilles à Dahchour Mars-Juin 1894* (Vienna, 1895) pls. 15–16 and cf. 19–20; H. E. Winlock, *Treasure of El Lahun* (New York, 1934) pls. 5–6; Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Ancient Egyptian Art* (London, 1922) pl. 50 (no. 10). Similarly the axe blade of *Hunís* (sic) in William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, II (New York, 1959) fig. 126, p. 213 (Metropolitan 26.7.834), as opposed to another Middle Kingdom axe blade (H. Ranke, “The Egyptian Collections,” *University Museum Bulletin* [University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia] 15, nos. 2–3 [November 1950] p. 74), which shows apes turned inward, but with heads looking outward; cf. E. Kühnert-Eggebrecht, *Die Axt als Waffe und Werkzeug im alten Ägypten* (Berlin, 1969) pls. 20 (1 [outward], 2 [inward]), 22 (outward), 24 (1 [reverse of above-mentioned University Museum example, which is also shown here, 3], 2 [inward]).

21. William Ward sees a late predynastic antecedent in a ring that “has four falcons arranged in such a manner that opposite pairs are tête-bêche” (“The Origin of Egyptian Design-Amulets [‘Button Seals’],” *JEA* 56 [1970] p. 73, fig. 3 [c] on p. 72). But it is difficult to believe that the artist intended a diagonal comparison of this kind. In connection with the point made above, in note 18, it is also significant that the disk with confronted birds that Ward exhibits as another antecedent (his fig. 3 [d]) shows a thoroughly Mesopotamian style and technique of inlay; the border of white alabaster diamonds set in black paste (W. B. Emery, *The Tomb of Hemaka* [Cairo, 1938] p. 29 [no. 309]) reduplicates Sumerian inlays of shell and bitumen, and the inlays of two other disks (Emery’s pl. 12 [D, E]) display the same influence. For the similar use of channels for inlay see, for example, E. Heinrich, *Kleinfunde aus den archaischen Tempelschichten in Uruk* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1936)

FIGURE 18

Cylinder seal. Cairo Museum, Journal d’Entrée 72610



p. 27, pl. 26; P. Delougaz et al., *Pre-Sargonic Temples in the Diyala Region*, Oriental Institute Publications, no. 58 (Chicago, 1942) fig. 26.

Ward’s attempt to find an example of “linear fusion” in an Old Kingdom headrest (his fig. 6) is even less convincing. In this headrest a pair of arms replaces the usual central column, with the hands cupped to support the head. Ward’s drawing fails to indicate the division of the arms (cf. R. Engelbach and B. Gunn, *Harageh* [London, 1923] pl. 9 [7–8]), which appears in all the other examples mentioned in his note 1, p. 76, and my own note 20 in “*Varia Aegyptiaca*,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 2 (1963) p. 33, as well as *Illustrated London News*, June 4, 1938, p. 1001 (nos. 1, 3). None of the other five headrests (including Cairo J. d’E. 43059) shows the fluting that, in the Harageh example, is assimilated from the more customary upright in the form of a column. As illustrated in *Journal of the American Research Center* 2 (1963) p. 32, fig. 8, brachiomorphic implements are well known from the Archaic Period through the Old Kingdom and later, and in every case the hand is an ideographic addition, one that has a meaningful connection with the use of the object in question. It is difficult to see how this very concrete sort of hieroglyphic allusion is directly related to patterns in which quite disparate elements are fused so that, for example, the horns of the *bst*-emblem coincide with the forelegs of a pair of lions, as in the case of Figure 4 above.

22. G. A. Reisner, *Mycerinus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931) p. 234 (and pl. 64j); Cairo J. d’E. 72610 (Figure 18; height 3.4 cm., width, 2.3 cm.); G. Brunton, *Mostagedda* (London, 1937) pl. 60 (2, blue glazed); Brooklyn 44.123.33 (brown steatite); Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 7 (157) (“hard green stone” according to the Sotheby catalogue of the Macgregor Collection, June 26–July 6, 1922, p. 61 [488]). The “pierre grise” of G. Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers* (Cairo, 1929) p. 52, might be limestone; cf. note 29 below.

23. The only exceptions known to me are a Fifth Dynasty seal, Brooklyn 44.123.30, which will be described presently, and Berlin 16432 (Scharff, “Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen,” *ÄZ* 67 [1931] fig. f, p. 99).

24. Junker, “Zwei Schein-Rollsiegel,” *Mélanges Maspero*, I, fasc. 1, pp. 267–271; cf. his *Giza*, VII, p. 90. Also reproduced by Kaplony, *Inschriften*, III, fig. 634. According to Junker, the seals name two “sealbearers” called *Wḏsw* and *Mri-ṯw-nḥ* who were in the service of a certain *Tnti*. If so, the sequence of names is exceptional; one would expect “*Tnti* [estate], sealbearer *Wḏsw*.” Cf. Junker, *Giza*, III (Vienna and Leipzig, 1938) p. 159, and the statues of various retainers of *Wr-ir.n.i*, Cairo Cat. 110, 114, 118,

FIGURES 19, 20  
Seals from Giza.  
After Junker

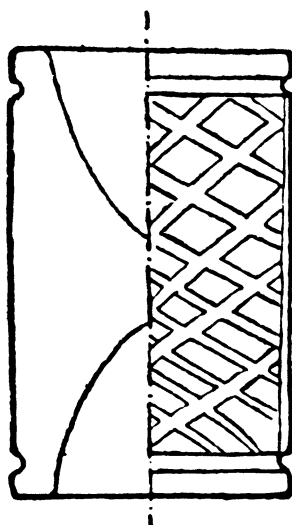
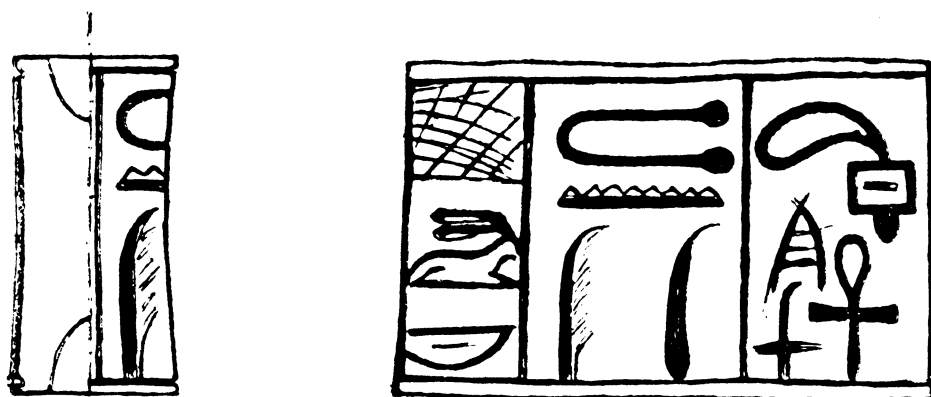
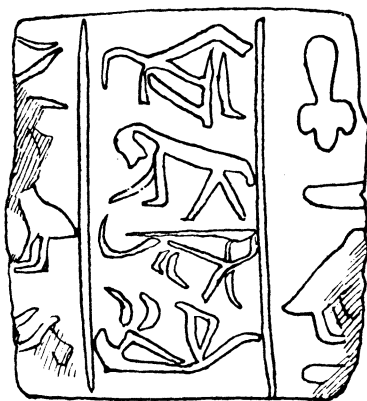


FIGURE 21  
Cylinder seal.  
Staatliche  
Museen, Berlin,  
16433. After  
Scharff



(Figure 21),<sup>25</sup> Berlin 15399,<sup>26</sup> Berlin 18170,<sup>27</sup> University College 11090,<sup>28</sup> Brooklyn 44.123.29 (similar to the

119. It is also possible that one of the seals names the "Sealbearer of the stores [*dsw*—see next note] *Tnty*" and the "Sealbearer of *Mr-šw-nh Tnti*." For the name *Mr-šw-nh*, cf. S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza*, I (Oxford, 1932) pp. 104 ff. Kaplony, *Inschriften*, I, p. 453 (5) reads this *'nh-mrj-njšwt*.

25. Scharff, "Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen," *ÄZ* 67 (1931) fig. g, p. 98; my information concerning the material derives from the notes of Rudolf Anthes, who gives the height as 5.1 cm.

and the diameter as 2.7 cm. The restoration of the hieroglyphs at the left edge remains uncertain. The column at the right is to be read *h̄tm dsw* (Figure 22 a), for which cf. Figure 22 b (Cairo J. d'E. 36262; Legrain, "Achats à Louqsor," *ASAE* 4 [1903] p. 134) and Figure 22 c (note 28). The word *dsw* also occurs in the titles *iry dsw n pr-hd*, "keeper of stores of the treasury" (Figure 22 d: Louvre 251); *iry dsw pr*, "keeper of stores of the domain" (Figure

FIGURE 22 Titles from seals (see note 25)



foregoing),<sup>29</sup> and Cairo Cat. 14518.<sup>30</sup> Besides these, W. M. F. Petrie's *Scarabs and Cylinders* contains at least five other limestone cylinders (the material is often unspecified in this and other publications). One of them (his pl. 7 [156]) shows a sketchy *serekh*, which, as Petrie points out, might possibly contain the Horus name *Mry-tswy*, i.e., Pepy I; another (his pl. 6 [143]) has a complex scroll design that links it with Middle Kingdom scarabs; the rest are of uncertain date.<sup>31</sup>

Limestone is also the material of a crudely inscribed seal that apparently bears the Horus name  $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$ , i.e.,

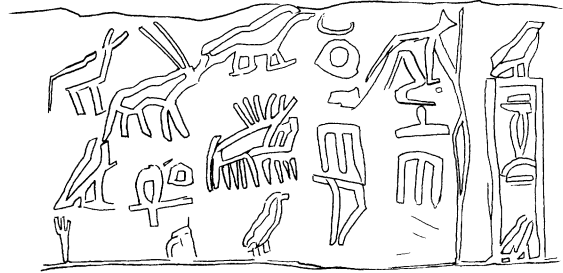


FIGURE 23  
Cylinder seal, Cairo Museum, Journal d'Entrée  
72209

22 e: E. Drioton and J.-Ph. Lauer, "Un groupe de tombes à Saqqarah," *ASAE* 55 [1958] p. 234, pl. 20 d); *iry dsw* (Figure 22 f: unpublished false door of *Htpi*, Saqqara); *imy-r dsw n nbw m prwy pr-ʿ3*, "overseer of the stores of gold in the two domains of the palace" (Figure 22 g: doorway of *K3(i)-tp*; Chicago, Field Museum of Natural History); *imy-r nbw n dsw m prwy pr-ʿ3*, "overseer of gold of the stores of the two domains of the palace" (Figure 22 h: T. G. H. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae*, I, 2nd ed. [London, 1961] pl. 26 [2]); and *[imy?]-r nbw dsw prwy*, "[over]seer (?) of gold of the two storehouses" (Figure 22 i: James, *Hieroglyphic Texts*, I, pl. 26 [2], and A. Mariette, *Les Mastabas de l'ancien Empire* [Paris, 1889] p. 431. The term  $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$  is used in much the same way as  $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$ , another word for "storehouse," but is differentiated from the latter, P. Posener-Kriéger and J. L. De Cenival, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, 5th ser., *The Abu Sir Papyri* (London, 1968) pls. 62 (47) and 63 (c), respectively.

26. Newberry, *Scarabs*, p. 49, fig. 25; A. Scharff, *Allertümer der Vor- und Frühzeit Ägyptens*, II (Berlin, 1929) p. 95, fig. 62.

27. Berlin 18170; Scharff, *Allertümer*, II, p. 97, fig. 64 c.

28. Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 7 (163), and Kaplony, *Inschriften*, III, fig. 634. The entire inscription reads "Sealer of the treasure of the estate, (and specifically) the granary of barley." The other titles of the Keeper of the Treasure *Htpi* (preceding note) similarly refer to the granary, as also in Drioton and Lauer, "Un groupe de tombes," *ASAE* 55 (1958) p. 234.

29. Drawing, from Newberry, in Kaplony, *Inschriften*, III, fig. 635. I owe further information to the kindness of Richard Fazzini, who informs me that the dark gray color of the surface is due to patination, with darker areas caused by mold.

30. Quibell, *Archaic Objects*, p. 279, pl. 59. Quibell describes the material as "soft white limestone," rather than "terre-cuite" or "clay" as stated in J. De Morgan, *Recherches sur les origines de l'Égypte*, II (Paris, 1897) p. 257, fig. 857; Evans, *Scripta Minoa*, I, p. 122, fig. 57.

31. Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 6 (140, 142, 144). Other limestone seals: W. M. F. Petrie, *Koptos* (London, 1896) pl. 24 (42), p. 24; and perhaps Bibliothèque Nationale 515 (Scharff, "Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen," *ÄZ* 67 [1931] p. 97, fig. c; L. Delaporte, *Catalogue des Cylindres Orientaux... de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1910) p. 290, states that no. 515 is "jaspe brun," but the execution of the design shows that it is carved in a much softer material; Edna Russmann, who has examined the seal on my behalf, confirms this point (cf. note 29 above).

32. Cairo J. d'E. 72209. Height 3.5 cm. From Saqqara, near the tomb of *Pth-htp*. Just possibly the name begins with  $\text{𓏏}$ , in

the mid-Fifth Dynasty ruler Re-neferref (Figure 23).<sup>32</sup> As in the case of a few other limestone seals, the rest of the inscription is probably meaningless.<sup>33</sup> If so, this seal provides an early example of the sort represented by no. 2 above (Figure 5).

Junker has described his pair of limestone seals as "Schein-Rollziegel," not intended for actual use, on the grounds that they were made of a softer stone than was generally utilized for cylinders, that they were incompletely pierced and could not accommodate a pin or cord, and that the carved detail of the smaller seal was filled with black pigment, which would have been lost if the surface had been rolled on damp mud or clay. His reasoning is persuasive, and it is supported by two exceptions that seemingly prove his conclusion to be the rule: the two limestone cylinder seals that have completely normal inscriptions, consisting of non-royal titles and the Horus names of kings, also show an incomplete perforation or the absence of any hole whatever, the first mentioning Isesy,<sup>34</sup> the second Neferirkare and Neuserre.<sup>35</sup> In the latter instance the complete

which case it belongs to Isesy, as in the case of no. 1 above (Figure 1). But  $\text{𓏏}$  is much more probable, and this is definitely to be read in the case of Univ. Coll. 11106 (Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 9 [5.8, 1]), which I hope to discuss elsewhere.

33. Among the other examples are Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 7 (161); Reisner, *Mycerinus*, p. 234, pl. 64 k; Cairo J. d'E. 37094, 37096 (from excavations of Barsanti at Zawiyet el Aryan); Berlin 18168, 18169 (Scharff, *Allertümer*, II, pp. 96–97). In the present case one might recognize the unusual title  $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏} \text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$  (cf. H. G. Fischer, "The Butcher *Ph-r-nfr*," *Orientalia* 29 [1960] pp. 169 [d], 178), but the rest is uncertain and so, therefore, is this.

34. Berlin 16432; Scharff, "Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen," *ÄZ* 67 (1931) p. 99, fig. f. This mentions the sun temple of Neuserre, but the Horus name is evidently  $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$ . The height is 4 cm. In Charlottenburg.

35. Brooklyn 44.123.30. Height 7.5, diameter 3.5 cm.

omission of perforation may, however, be explained by the fact that the seal was not finished; there is space for three horizontal lines at the bottom, as in the case of a sealing of Neferirkare shown in Junker, *Giza*, VII, fig. 197, but the first line is incomplete and the space below it is blank. Another unfinished seal, displaying the Horus name of the Fifth Dynasty ruler Men-kau-Hor, and made of "black granite," has only the beginning of a perforation.<sup>36</sup> But it is difficult to explain why the hole is also lacking in the case of two other seals of Neuserre—one described as "terre emailée,"<sup>37</sup> the other, "grey stone."<sup>38</sup> It may or may not be coincidental that this king is associated with all three of the seals of the normal variety that lack any perforation whatever.

While the presence of a hole cannot be confirmed in every case, this detail having been overlooked in most publications, it does in fact appear in most of the limestone cylinder seals under discussion,<sup>39</sup> and I know of only four other cases in which it does not occur. One, bearing illegible inscriptions, is a seal the ends of which are similarly inscribed.<sup>40</sup> In this respect it is comparable to a second example, which has decorative motifs and, in addition, a floral design on either end;<sup>41</sup> Frankfort has cited Asiatic parallels for this usage.<sup>42</sup> The third unperforated seal is the one in Petrie's *Scarabs* (pl. 6 [143]) that has a Middle Kingdom scroll design. The fourth is a seal with illegible inscription that derives

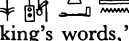


from Barsanti's excavations at Zawiyet el Aryan (Cairo J. d'E. 37094).

It is true that no mud or clay sealings have survived to confirm the functional use of seals of the type that were usually made of limestone,<sup>43</sup> but the surviving number of Old Kingdom sealings is in any case very limited. I know, from personal experience, that it is quite possible to make clear impressions of limestone seals without injuring the surface. Depending on the quality of the limestone, some of these would, of course, more readily show signs of wear than those made of steatite, and at least two limestone cylinder seals do in fact show evidence of use; one is described as "worn,"<sup>44</sup> the other, "badly worn."<sup>45</sup>

To my mind the material and general character of the limestone seals suggest that they were made for persons of relatively lowly station. These individuals, if they had any title at all, were merely funerary attendants and "sealers."<sup>46</sup> Unable to afford costly workmanship<sup>47</sup> and probably, in many cases, incapable of reading an inscription, they were often satisfied with illegible assemblages of signs and motifs.

Conversely, it is difficult to imagine that a thoroughly literate Old Kingdom official would have had much regard for devices on the order of the tête-bêche composition or trompe-l'oeil fusions, such as a *bst*-emblem the horns of which simultaneously represent the forelegs of two lions (Figure 4). Devices of this sort evidently

36. British Museum 48989: Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 263, no. 2601.

37. Cairo J. d'E. 44200. Height 5.2 cm., diameter 2.5 cm. According to the Journal d'Entrée the seal was found by Borchardt at Abusir in 1913, by which time, however, he had concluded his excavations at that site and was excavating at Tell El Amarna. One of the more conspicuous titles is apparently to be read , "Scribe of royal documents of the king's words," but the group  is uncertain. Another is  which is the first explicit evidence for the cult of Hathor as well as Re in this particular sun temple. As these remarks indicate, the inscription is only partly legible and the signs are extremely rudimentary and peculiar. My interpretation of them is based on photographs kindly supplied by Henry Riad. According to Christine Lilyquist, the surface is not glazed, as the Journal d'Entrée states, but the material is uncertain.

38. British Museum 48988: Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 262, no. 2600.

39. Nos. 1 (Figure 1), 2 (Figure 5), 4 (Figure 7), 5 (Figure 10); Cairo Cat. 14518 (Quibell, *Archaic Objects*, pl. 59); Cairo J. d'E. 37096, Reisner, *Mycerinus*, p. 234, pl. 64 k; Brooklyn 44.123.29; Berlin 15399 (Scharff, *Altägypten*, II, p. 95, fig. 62); Berlin 16431, 16433 (Scharff, "Über einige fremdartige Darstellungen," *ÄZ* 67 [1931] p. 99, fig. c, and p. 98, fig. g, respectively); Berlin 18168–18170 (Scharff, *Altägypten*, II, pp. 96–97, fig. 64 a–c). Barbara

Adams informs me that a hole is also present in all but one of the eight cylinder seals in University College, London: Petrie, *Scarabs*, pls. VI (140, 142, 144), VII (156, 161, 162, 163).

40. British Museum 48987: Hall, *Scarabs*, p. 261, no. 2596.



41. Bibliothèque Nationale 515 (see above, note 31).

42. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, p. 298.

43. The impression shown in Figure 16 consists of noninscriptional motifs (cf. note 17 above), but there is otherwise little resemblance to the limestone seals that are under discussion.

44. Petrie, *Abydos*, II, p. 29 (no. 276).

45. Reisner, *Mycerinus*, p. 234, pl. 64 k.

46. For "funerary priest" (*hm-k3*) see Figure 7 above; titles of "sealers" are represented by Figure 20 above, Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 7 (163), and Brooklyn 44.123.29 (cf. notes 28–29). Berlin 15399 (Newberry, *Scarabs*, p. 49, fig. 25) has the titles  and ; the first of these is oriented outward in both directions, as though it were a decorative motif; the second is upside-down in relation to the first; and both are interspersed among noninscriptional motifs, including trompe l'oeil emblems. It does not seem possible that either of these titles is to be taken at face value.

47. The relationship between cheapness of material, poor workmanship, and unintelligibility is further demonstrated by a cylinder seal described as "clay incised wet," Petrie, *Scarabs*, pl. 7 (162).

express a popular taste that is at variance with the scribal sobriety of Egyptian art, in which representations are generally well grounded on a base line, and all the elements are discrete and well defined. An analogous contrast is presented by the household gods eventually known as Taueris and Bes, hybrid fusions of man and beast, as opposed to the hieroglyphic assemblages of forms that constitute the so-called animal-headed gods.<sup>48</sup>

It was only after this article was virtually completed that I read William A. Ward's "The Origin of Egyptian Design-Amulets ('Button Seals')" in *JEA* 56 (1970) pp. 65–80. While I cannot agree with Ward's denial that any foreign influence is to be seen in the Egyptian use of the tête-bêche and trompe-l'oeil devices (cf. note 21 above), my conclusions are otherwise very much in agreement with his views concerning the button seals that continue to display such devices. He emphasizes that what he calls "the design-amulet tradition" be-

longed primarily to the lower classes and that "the popular art of the masses was more readily susceptible to change and could deviate more easily from a classical norm than the more formal art of the conservative upper classes."

#### PERIODICALS ABBREVIATED

*ASAE*—*Annales du Service des Antiquités d'Égypte*.

*ÄZ*—*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*.

*JEA*—*The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*.

*PSBA*—*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the more specific acknowledgments in the preceding pages, I want to thank Steffen Wenig and Joachim Karig for additional data concerning cylinder seals in East Berlin (15399) and Charlottenburg (Berlin 16431–16433, 18168–18170).

48. Cf. H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York, 1948) p. 12, who calls them "pictographs, not portraits," and "ideograms."

# Two Carolingian Ivories from the Morgan Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art

AMY L. VANDERSALL

IN 1917 the Metropolitan Museum received from the Pierpont Morgan Collection two ivory plaques that depict Christ enthroned between the apostles Paul and Peter and the enthroned Virgin and Child acclaimed by angels, in each case surrounded by acanthus borders (Figures 1, 2).<sup>1</sup> The artist of the panels, which were originally intended as book covers, probably for a gospel book, had utilized older ivory carvings. On the back side each of the panels has a cutoff relief, one showing animals and a human figure, the other, birds and plants (Figures 3, 4). Joseph Breck published the pieces in 1919 as mid-ninth-century Carolingian (front) and sixth–seventh century Coptic (back), but then they retreated to the Museum’s vaults and received almost no further recognition in print.<sup>2</sup> Breck pointed out the striking relationship between the Metropolitan’s carvings and two ivories that decorate the Gospels of Noailles in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat.

323; Figures 5, 6). The latter pair, representing Christ handing down the law to the apostles Paul and Peter, and an enthroned Virgin and Child, had been assigned to the mid-ninth century by Adolph Goldschmidt in the first volume of his monumental corpus of medieval ivory carving, which appeared in 1914.<sup>3</sup> The close affinity of the Metropolitan’s ivories with the Noailles carvings and the absence of recognition by the foremost scholar of medieval ivory carving are doubtless the reasons why a suspicion of forgery has lingered about the carvings of the front side for half a century.

For a number of years I have been engaged in research on a selection of ivories from Goldschmidt’s so-called Liuthard Group, and most recently on the ivories of the Noailles Gospels.<sup>4</sup> From both the larger and the more specific contexts of my research, I believe some light can be shed upon the Metropolitan Museum’s ivories.

1. Acc. nos. 17.190.40, 39.

2. J. Breck, “Two Carolingian Ivories,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 2nd ser. 23 (1919) pp. 394–400. He mentioned them again the following year in “Pre-Gothic Ivories in the Pierpont Morgan Collection,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 15 (1920) p. 15. A. M. Friend accepted them as members of Goldschmidt’s Liuthard Group in a paper read before the Archaeological Institute of America at Pittsburgh, December 20, 1919 (see *American Journal of Archaeology* 2nd ser. 24 [1920] p. 81) but did not include them in his later publication “Carolingian Art in the Abbey of St. Denis,” *Art Studies* 1 (1923) pp. 67–75. Walter Cook stated that Friend had considered the ivories to be early examples of the School of St. Denis in a then (and presumably still) unpublished

manuscript (see “The Earliest Painted Panels of Catalonia, II,” *The Art Bulletin* 6 [1923–1924] p. 50, note 2).

3. A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1914–1926) I, no. 71 a, b, p. 37.

4. The study was my Ph.D. dissertation, “The Ivories of the Court School of Charles the Bald,” Yale University, 1965. A full discussion of the ivories of the Gospels of Noailles, including their iconography, will appear along with the dissertation material in a study now being prepared for publication. The material on them that follows deals primarily with artistic sources and affiliations and is limited to matters of concern in a study of the Metropolitan ivories.

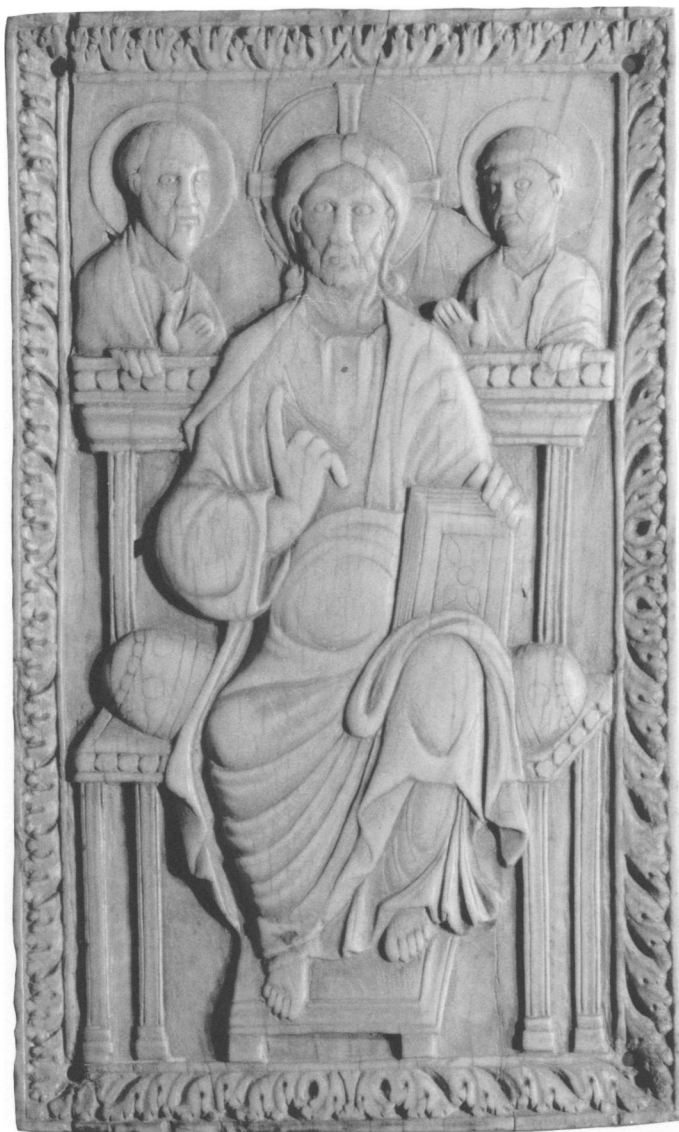


FIGURE 1

Christ enthroned between Paul and Peter. Carolingian ivory. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.40

FIGURE 2

Virgin Theotocos. Carolingian ivory. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.39



The panels are of equivalent size, about  $5\frac{1}{4}$  by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The Virgin panel is slightly canted in on either side toward the bottom, and each panel is a quarter inch in thickness.<sup>5</sup> They are distinctly brown in color, and the surface is frequently uneven and often finely scratched or grooved by toolmarks. Carving on both sides has led to precarious thinness in places with the result that minor vertical cracks have developed and

5. The precise measurements are: Christ enthroned,  $5\frac{1}{16}$  by  $3\frac{3}{16}$  inches (14.5 by 8.8 cm.); Virgin enthroned,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches (14.4 by 9 cm.),  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (0.3 cm.) longer on the right side, and canted in  $\frac{3}{32}$  inch (0.2 cm.) on both sides at the bottom.

6. I.e., to the left of Christ's right arm, below the left side of Paul's halo, to the right of Christ's book, between the halos of Christ and Peter, and to the right of the Virgin's left elbow.



FIGURE 3

Animals and human figure. Coptic ivory. Reverse side of Figure 1

FIGURE 4

Birds and vegetation. Coptic ivory. Reverse side of Figure 2



in a few places the surface has been broken through.<sup>6</sup> Both of the panels have four drilled holes in the corners (in the acanthus of the Christ panel and at the corner angles of the field on the Virgin plaque) that must have been used at some time to attach the ivories to the wooden core of the manuscript binding. Since there are no flanges on the ivories these holes may even have been the original means of attachment.<sup>7</sup> In general the

7. An unexplainable drill hole appears by the left legs of the throne on the Virgin plaque, and a partial additional drill hole in the lower left corner on the Christ panel. A prominent spot of discoloration appears above Christ's right foot. There is also a rectangular indentation on the lower left side of the Virgin relief, which presumably relates to an earlier use of the pieces, probably for the placement of a hinge of a folding diptych.



**FIGURE 5**  
*Traditio legis*. Carolingian ivory.  
 Front cover, Gospels of  
 Noailles. Bibliothèque Nati-  
 onale, Paris, Cod. lat. 323

condition is good, though the panels have been subjected to a certain amount of rubbing and a portion of the left ear of the infant Christ has chipped off.

The ivory that most probably formed the front cover of the manuscript depicts Christ, long-haired and bearded and with a crossed nimbus, seated frontally on

a high-backed throne with bolster, his feet resting on a footstool (Figure 1). He wears the pallium over the loose-sleeved dalmatica, and beneath the latter a long undergarment, probably the early sleeveless tunica talaris, which appears from under the shorter dalmatica (and pallium) at his feet.<sup>8</sup> He points upward with his

8. The identification of Christ's garments and those of the Virgin (below) is based primarily on the analysis of clothing forms and the history of costume changes in the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine world by Hubert Morris, *Costume and Fashion* (London, 1924) I. Christ's undergarments are the traditional clerical garb

(i.e., the tunica talaris, later albe or alb, and the dalmatica). Strictly speaking, however, in clerical garb the pallium, originally worn contabulatum around the neck over the paenula (later chasuble or cope), developed into the more commonly known symbolic form of a narrow circular strip of cloth with streamers.

**FIGURE 6**  
 Virgin Theotocos. Carolingian  
 ivory. Back cover, Gospels of  
 Noailles. Bibliothèque Nati-  
 onale, Paris, Cod. lat. 323



right hand and steadies a codex on his knee with his left. The apostles Paul and Peter, easily identified by their usual features, balding head and pointed beard for Paul and short hair and rounded beard for Peter, each grasp the back of the throne with one hand and raise the other in the traditional gesture of acclamation. The throne has spindly pilasterlike legs, ambiguously arranged with reference to normal perspective procedure. Constructed of two thin pilaster supports capped by a relatively generous cornice, the back appears to be an open frame, although the bodies of the apostles are not

visible through it. The structure is decorated by simple grooving and pearl ornament. A rather fleshy acanthus border, enclosed on both sides by fillets, frames the plaque. Its leaves flow out obliquely from a full three-part leaf placed perpendicular to the field at the center of each side, ending with an angle leaf at the corner.

The Virgin and Child plaque is similar in its composition (Figure 2). Seated frontally on a high-backed throne with bolster and footstool, the Virgin supports the Christ Child slightly to her left side. He carries a scroll in his left hand and points upward with his right

in a gesture identical with that of the enthroned Christ on the other panel. She wears the long stola with tight sleeves known as the *camisia*, covered by the *dalmatica*, whose sleeves are not visible since the *palla*, which is thrown over her head and hangs down to the thighs like a long cape, is draped around her shoulders and arms. The *palla* covers all but the roll of her close-fitting cap, familiar to us from fifth-century female costume and sixth-century imperial female dress.<sup>9</sup> Above and behind the throne, half figures of two angels with hairpin-shaped wings acclaim with one hand and point upward with the other. The Virgin's throne is in all major respects similar to that of Christ, though the decoration is considerably more elaborate in its substitution of pearls and acanthus motifs for simple moldings. The border, again utilizing the acanthus leaf, is composed of a continuous series of three-part leafforms, which tend to merge into one another, and the centers of the leaves are difficult to fix. The corner angle leaves are the only pauses in the continuous movement. Drill-work, while noticeable in the lower portion of the Christ panel, is very prominent in the detailing of the acanthus of the Virgin panel.

The enthroned Christ is slightly larger than the Virgin; his halo reaches to the edge of the border and his feet nearly to the lower frame. Apostles and angels are executed in accordance with the slightly different scales of the main figures. Thus the representation of Christ between the apostles seems to project forward, while that of the Virgin and Child recedes slightly by comparison. This dissimilarity is enhanced by the somewhat more simplified treatment of the drapery and ornament on the Christ and apostles plaque.

Characteristic of the style is the strict symmetry, readily appreciated in the acclamation of Paul and Peter and of the angels by left and right hands according to the figures' placement rather than, appropriately, by their right. A desire for symmetry also seems to account for the treatment of the legs of each throne, where the parallelism of the supports overrides consid-

erations of perspective. As the eye moves up from the ground level to the seat, considerable ambiguity results. Characteristic too is the proportional system that brings the scene as close as possible to the viewer as well as the flattening of the obviously seated figures so that they appear almost as standing. In a sense the figures are bodiless, linear composites akin to two- rather than three-dimensional forms. Figures and forms are set off wherever possible with a maximum of unencumbered surrounding space, a stylistic trait that may account for the apostles and angels being truncated rather than logically extended down behind the thrones to stand beside the seated figures. Each ensemble is held together compositionally by its simple symmetry, and all is strictly confined within the frame of the border.

The ivories of the Gospels of Noailles appear far more original in their iconographic invention (Figures 5, 6). One panel depicts Christ enthroned on the globe of the heavens and surrounded by a mandorla that intersects the globe to produce a figure-eight, both globe and mandorla being similarly decorated with pearl and acanthus ornament. Shown with long hair, beard, and a crossed nimbus, Christ extends a codex in his right hand and a cross and keys in his left as gifts to the apostles Paul and Peter respectively, who are seen standing on tiptoe below holding up cloths on which to receive the objects. Standing angels with long crossed staffs reach out to touch the mandorla in the upper corners of the panel while a seminude water personification immediately below Christ, between the apostles, twists round to get a view. This figure is bearded and horned, with a snake entwined around one arm and a rudder under the other. He pours water from an urn in one hand and grasps a fish in the other. A border of two alternating acanthus-leaf forms frames the panel. The scene is a dynamic version of the so-called *Traditio legis*.

The second Noailles ivory depicts the Virgin Theotocos seated on a high-backed throne whose seat is decorated with pearling, fluting, and lions' heads and whose back displays arcades framed by plain molding with leaf finials on top. The Virgin sits on a large bolster with her feet resting on a footstool flanked by two treelike plants, each with three stylized rosette flowers. Angels holding long crossed staffs appear above and behind the throne bowing and gesturing in acclamation. A series of acanthus leaves, with large, prominent

9. The tail of drapery falling down over the Virgin's right shoulder may indicate that her head is covered by a short veil, the *maphorion* or *ricinum*, which was worn as early as the third century. But since the *maphorion* was generally worn loose and Theotocos images most consistently show the *palla* over the head, I have considered this detail as a minor misunderstanding by the artist.

drill holes separating them at the base, frames the plaque.

From a comparison of the Metropolitan's ivories and those of the Noailles Gospels, it is evident that iconographic differences exist between the two scenes of the enthroned Christ although the major personages, Christ and the apostles Paul and Peter, are the same. The Metropolitan's panel shows an imperial image of Christ as the teacher with his codex, the apostles acclaiming him, while the Noailles panel depicts him in a more apocalyptic setting in the process of giving the gifts to the apostles, the *Traditio*, signifying the establishment of the Church Universal. In line with the cosmic overtones of the Noailles representation are the angels added at the top and the personification added at the bottom of the plaque. The Virgin panels are more comparable iconographically, for both represent the Virgin Theotocos on a high-backed throne, the imperial *solium*, flanked by angels and supporting the Christ Child seen in a three-quarter pose and placed slightly to her left side. Generally speaking, the Noailles panel is richer because of the added details of the lions' heads on the throne and the pair of flowering plants. The gesture of the infant Christ is also different, the palm being upraised on the Noailles ivory and the index finger pointing upward on the Metropolitan ivory. Despite differences in detail, and especially in emphasis on the Christ panels, however, the iconographic parallels are strong.

Significant as well are the formal relationships. Both pairs of ivories utilize acanthus-leaf frames enclosed by narrow fillets, and both employ a prominent large personage flanked by smaller, mirror-image figures. Stylistic parallels are observable in the drapery patterns. Each uses plain spherical forms over bodily protrusions such as knees, stomach, and elbows. The Noailles artist commonly sets off his figures by means of well-defined and undercut pieces of drapery falling down their backs and protruding from their sides, and this device is also seen to an extent in the lower portions of the draperies of the major figures on the Metropolitan ivories. But some details in the pairs are so similar, for example, the loop of drapery over Christ's left knee or the handling of the Virgin's veil, that a relationship between the Metropolitan and Noailles ivories cannot be denied given the other correspondences. In this respect the fact that the relative scale of the two Christs

and the two Virgins is the same is highly indicative. In each pair Christ's halo extends to the very edge of the border, and there is a space between the halo of the Virgin and the frame.

Yet equally as interesting as the obvious similarities between the two pairs are the differences. Most striking is the greater movement, indeed boldness, found in the Noailles ivories. It can be seen most clearly in the manner in which the figures break out of the confining frames with garment tails and angel wings fluttering over the acanthus borders. The angels of the Noailles *Traditio legis* plaque reach out to touch the mandorla, seeming even to step forward, with one in fact tilting the crossed staff toward the glory. Peter and Paul reach and stretch on tiptoe to receive the gifts almost as if imbued with a kind of supernatural levitation, and the personification twists around into a most uncomfortable position to get a glimpse of the heavenly drama. Part of the animation is, of course, attributable to the more dynamic subject, but not all of it. Even where the subject remains essentially the same, on the Virgin plaques, action is introduced in the Noailles ivory by having the angels bow to the Virgin and Child seated below them. If the drapery and decorative details are compared, it can be seen that there too the treatment in the Metropolitan Museum's ivories is more tense and taut, or less bold and free, than in the Noailles plaques. On the Metropolitan Museum ivory the folds around the knees of the Virgin are executed in two prominent ovoid spheres, and the garments over the lower legs are shown as two in number. These knee ovals provide a sharp focus, which is then broken as the dalmatica ends abruptly to reveal the stola beneath it. On the Noailles plaque a single robe is depicted, and the ovoid knee forms are extended down the legs from the knees like inverted tears, while the forms of the legs are integrated with those of the upper arms, forming a simple diamond rather than a counterpoint arrangement between knees and elbows, as in the Metropolitan Museum's Virgin. Given the observable relationship between the two pairs of ivories, the difference in the number of garments most probably represents a conscious choice on the part of each artist in line with his conception of formal composition. The Noailles artist seems more daring in his choice of forms and displays more fluidity in his compositional rhythms, whereas the Metropolitan artist appears to have been inclined to a more static

interpretation and to staccato jumps. This is also observed in their interpretations of the border acanthus. The Noailles artist consistently employed simplified and generalized forms, while the Metropolitan artist executed his acanthus leaves with great attention to detail. The difference is not only that of a more geometricized interpretation as opposed to a more naturalistic one but rather betrays in the latter case a kind of monkish attention to minutiae that is opposed to the freer, more daring propensities of the Noailles artist, whose subject matter is also more unusual and innovative.

It is extremely difficult if not impossible on the basis of internal evidence alone to determine the precise relationship between the two sets of ivories. In view of their stylistic differences it seems unwise to conclude, as Joseph Breck did in 1920, that they are by the same hand, or even that they are from the same atelier.<sup>10</sup> It is within the realm of possibility that an artist could develop from careful conservatism to relatively bold innovation in both style and iconography given greater experience or a different environment, but we have little or no evidence upon which to judge the matter of an artist's maturation in the early Middle Ages. In any case, such a conclusion would mean that the Metropolitan ivories were certainly the earlier of the two pairs. It seems to me that the least likely hypothesis to explain the relationship between the two sets is that one artist copied from the other and that the most probable explanation is that both utilized the same models.

Fortunately there is another approach to the study of the ivories by which it is possible to complement the internal comparative evidence, specifically, an examination of them within the larger body of Carolingian artistic production. This is important to gain an attribution for the Metropolitan Museum ivories independent of the Noailles ivories and to dispel any doubts as to their authenticity.<sup>11</sup>

Before I embark upon such a comparative inquiry, a brief summary of the methodological problems is in

order because of the special difficulties involved in the study of ivory carving in the Carolingian period. Ever since the publication of Adolph Goldschmidt's corpus, in particular, volume I, which treats the ninth-century ivory carvings, it has been customary to view Carolingian ivory production in three broad stylistic categories, namely, Goldschmidt's Ada, Liuthard, and Metz groups, as well as in some smaller and generally less coherent style groups that he called *Kleine Gruppen*. Since Goldschmidt's work, a tour de force of connoisseurship and scholarship, the study of Carolingian manuscript production has made one fact increasingly apparent. The Goldschmidt style groups, as Goldschmidt himself knew, correspond only in a broad sense to the historical and geographic realities of Carolingian ateliers, and his method of stylistic association of ivories gives in most cases only broad dates and affiliations, though the groupings rendered the immense service of bringing order into the chaotic conditions that prevailed in the field at the beginning of this century.

Although normal procedures of attribution are thwarted with reference to Carolingian ivory carving by the lack of dated sculpture for comparison, there is a very specific relationship between the carvings and manuscript illuminations since most of the reliefs are book covers. This leads directly to the hypotheses stated by Louis Grodecki: first, that it is possible to assume that the ivories were carved at the same time that the manuscript they were destined to decorate was painted; second, that the same models often served for both manuscript and ivory; and third, that the painter possibly acted as sculptor as well.<sup>12</sup> This situation too was understood by Goldschmidt, and he often made telling comparisons between the two media, winning thereby historical footholds in the uncertain terrain of Carolingian ivory attributions. Possibly the major drawback in the method is the difficulty of comparison between the two media, for it is impossible accurately to equate line and mass. Yet interchanges of motifs can be charted, and similarities in conception

10. "They are from the same hand . . ." ("Pre-Gothic Ivories," p. 15), or, more cautiously, "I have no doubt that both the Paris and the Morgan plaques come from the same atelier, if not from the same hand" ("Two Carolingian Ivories," p. 396).

11. That the reliefs are carved on the back of preexistent carvings speaks strongly in favor of their authenticity, for this is not uncommon in Carolingian work, doubtless because of the scarcity of fresh material.

12. "Une très grande majorité d'ivoires carolingiens a servi d'ornement pour les plats de reliure de manuscrits; ces plaquettes étaient sculptées, sans doute en même temps, dans les mêmes ateliers monastiques, où étaient enluminés les manuscrits qu'elles devaient accompagner. On doit supposer que, dans bien des cas, le sculpteur et le miniaturiste s'inspiraient des mêmes modèles; peut-être même, quelquefois, le miniaturiste se faisait-il aussi sculpteur" (L. Grodecki, *Ivoires français* [Paris, 1947] pp. 40-41).

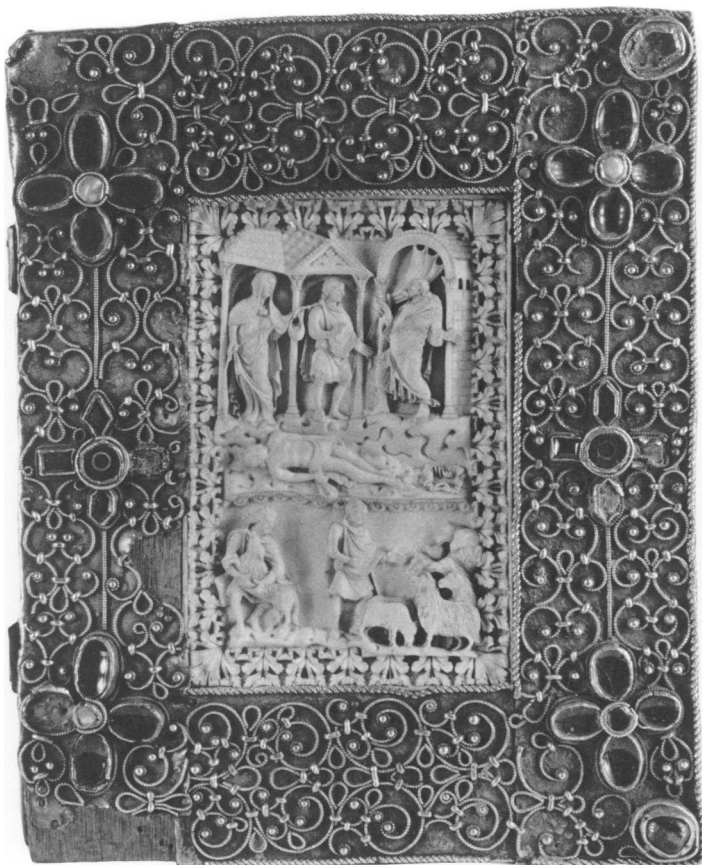


FIGURE 7

Illustration of Psalm 50, David upbraided by Nathan. Carolingian ivory. Front cover, Psalter of Charles the Bald. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 1152



FIGURE 8

Illustration of Psalm 56. Carolingian ivory. Back cover, Psalter of Charles the Bald. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 1152

can be seen, for example, in compositional arrangement.

Since the ivories of the Gospels of Noailles are certainly related to the Metropolitan Museum ivories, it seems appropriate to deal with them first in order to establish insofar as is possible the nature of their sources and, conversely, the extent and nature of their invention, as well as their approximate date. For the most part they have remained unstudied since Goldschmidt's corpus.<sup>13</sup> His attribution is still valid, though now more specific data can be brought to bear on the problem because of our increased knowledge of manuscript production. He designated them as belonging to an *Abzweigung* of the Liuthard Group, indicating thereby

that their style was a deviant branch or bifurcation from the style of the Liuthard Group proper as found in the primary pieces of the group, the ivories of the Psalter of Charles the Bald (Figures 7, 8).<sup>14</sup> Essentially it can be shown that the Noailles ivories are products of Charles the Bald's court atelier although sculpted by a different artist than the ivories of the psalter and possibly at an earlier time.

Goldschmidt's consideration of the ivories of the

13. J. Beckwith, "Some Anglo-Saxon Carvings in Ivory," *Connoisseur* 146 (1961) pp. 241-246, considered them, on insufficient evidence in my opinion, to be English work of the late tenth century.

14. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 1152; G. I, 40 a-b.

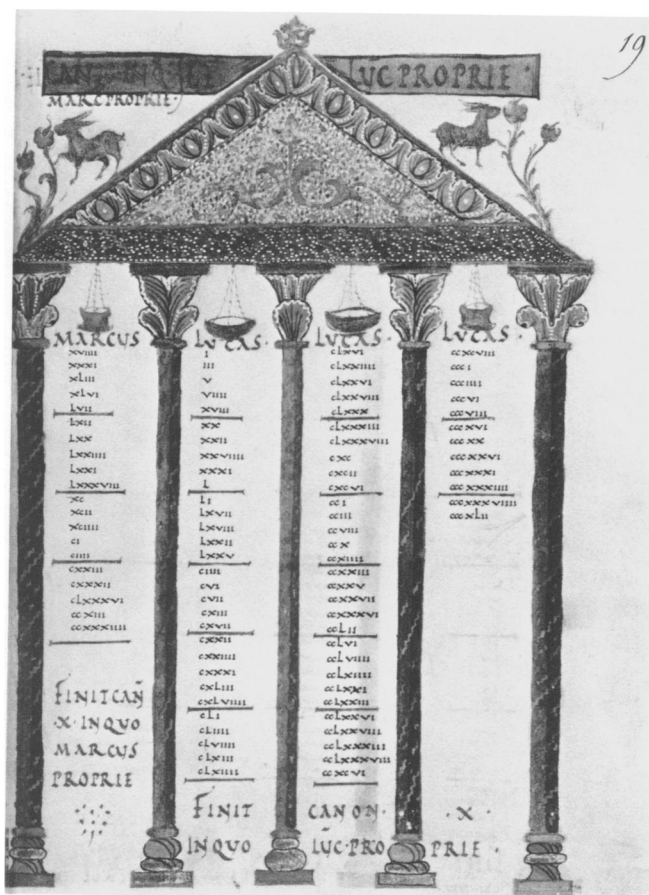


FIGURE 9  
Canon table. Gospels of Noailles. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 323, fol. 19

Gospels of Noailles as belonging to an *Abzweigung* of the Liuthard Group was based on the close stylistic association between the ivories and the illuminations in the gospels themselves. The manuscript displays the eclecticism found in the court production of Charles the Bald. In addition to a series of canon tables related to Tours work (Figure 9) there are three evangelist portraits using the illusionistic landscape setting common in Reims manuscripts (Figure 10), a *Maiestas* miniature (Figure 11), and a decorated incipit page for each gospel.<sup>15</sup> Through stylistic comparison with other man-

15. For description and critical analysis of the manuscript see Bibliothèque Nationale, *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins*, ed. Ph. Lauer (Paris, 1939) I, no. 323; A. Boeckler, *Abendländische Miniaturen* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1930) p. 38; and J. Gaehde, "The Bible of San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome: Its Date and Its Relation to Charles the Bald," *Gesta* 5 (1966) p. 12.

uscripts, several of which contain the signature of the scribe or painter Liuthard, the Gospels of Noailles are now clearly documented as part of the court production of Charles the Bald from c. 842 to 869, and their style designated as "early Liuthard."<sup>16</sup> The style is characterized by Joachim Gaehde as showing soft, incoherent bodies, chinless heads, large hands, carelessly sketched hair and beards, broadly applied washes, and sketchy brushstrokes.<sup>17</sup>

16. The dates are those of Queen Hermintrude, mentioned in one of the manuscripts. See especially Gaehde, "Bible of San Paolo," p. 12. The style of the evangelist portraits is related to that found in the Gospels of Colbert (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 324) and the Darmstadt Gospels (Landesbibliothek, Ms. 146). The latter manuscript was found by Bernhard Bischoff to have been signed in Tironian notes by the scribe Liuthard, who signed the Psalter of Charles the Bald and, in 870, the Codex Aureus (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 14000). See the catalogue entry in *Die Sammlungen Baron von Hüpsch, ein Kölner Kunstkabinett um 1800, Ausstellung des Hessischen Landesmuseums . . . im Schnütgen-Museum Köln*, August 10–October 18, 1964, no. 54.

17. Gaehde, "Bible of San Paolo," p. 12.

FIGURE 10  
Evangelist John. Gospels of Noailles. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 323, fol. 150





FIGURE 11  
*Maiestas*. Gospels of Noailles. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 323, fol. 13 verso

Even a summary comparison of the ivories of the Gospels of Noailles and the miniatures of the manuscript is sufficient to demonstrate their general stylistic relationship. The *Maiestas* miniature, for example, shows the same strict symmetry, mirror imagery, and unencumbered background from which the figures appear to detach themselves as silhouettes (cf. Figure 11 with Figures 5, 6). In both the *Traditio legis* ivory and the *Maiestas* of the manuscript the globe and mandorla take the form of the figure eight, a motif that is relatively rare and to which I will return later. The

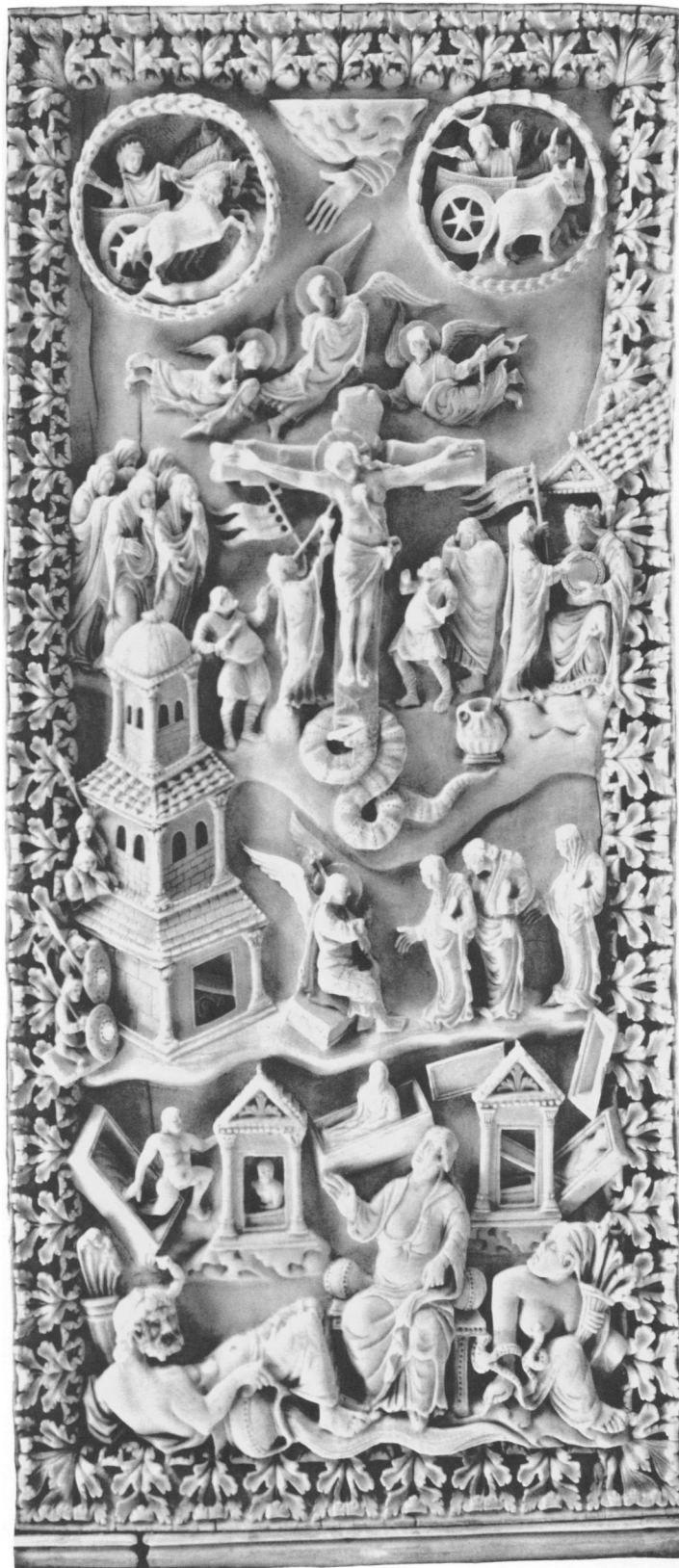


FIGURE 12  
Crucifixion. Carolingian ivory. Front cover, Book of Pericopes of Henry II. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm. 4452



FIGURE 13  
Transfiguration. Carolingian ivory. Victoria and  
Albert Museum, London. Crown Copyright

loose and fluid composition of the draperies is best seen by a comparison with one of the evangelist portraits, where there is another motif, the arched footstool and throne back, that has a counterpart on the Virgin's throne (cf. Figures 10 and 6).

Beyond these general stylistic affinities between the ivories and the manuscript there are a number of elements that can be traced to the milieu of Charles the Bald production. The activity of the subsidiary figures and most specifically the overlapping of the borders by



FIGURE 14  
Ascension. Carolingian ivory. Victoria and Al-  
bert Museum, London. Crown Copyright

angel wings and garment tails are a prominent and unusual characteristic of the artist of the ivories of the Psalter of Charles the Bald, a manuscript signed by Liuthard (Figures 7, 8). The acanthus motif used on the globe-mandorla, as Goldschmidt noted, is the same, though bolder, as that employed for the medallions of Sol and Luna on the Munich Crucifixion ivory, another work by the artist of the ivories of this psalter (Figure 12).<sup>18</sup>

The two acanthus motifs found on the borders of the

18. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4452; G. I, 41. Goldschmidt (*Elfenbeinskulpturen*, I, p. 25) suggested the relation-

ship between the ivories of the Psalter of Charles the Bald and the Crucifixion ivory, and it is fully demonstrable.

Noailles ivories, as Goldschmidt also first observed, repeat the two motifs on a pair of Liuthard ivories depicting the Transfiguration and Ascension now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figures 13, 14). Little is known about them, however, since they have not been thoroughly studied.<sup>19</sup> Both of the Noailles border motifs—a motif of a major three-part leaf arching over a smaller leaf composed of one or three parts (Christ) and a series of single three-part leaves accented by a prominent circular form between the bases of the leaves (Virgin)—are relatively common in Carolingian ornament, and they are very important in the circle of Charles the Bald production. A variant of the latter motif may be observed in the canon-table decoration of the Gospels of Noailles on folio 19 (Figure 9), although the former motif, that of the *Traditio legis* panel, does not seem to have been used in them. It would be tedious to list all examples of these motifs that appear in Carolingian manuscripts and probably fruitless as well because of their constant mutation. Possibly because of their intrinsic simplicity, both motifs were ingeniously elaborated upon, utilizing various geometric devices, throughout the Carolingian (and Ottonian) periods, providing the basis for some of the most amazing and beautiful acanthus borders invented by artists for both manuscripts and ivories. Certain generalizations can, however, be made. The motif of the *Traditio legis* border is less common than that of the Virgin plaque, which is one of the most common designs in the decorative vocabulary of Touronian manuscripts. But examples of both can be found in Charles the Bald as well as Tours manuscripts. A cursory glance through volume I of Goldschmidt's corpus will also reveal a number of variants in ivory carvings. It is interesting, despite the ubiquitousness of the motifs, that the motif of the *Traditio legis* plaque is used on the ivory of the back cover of the Psalter of Charles the Bald, though there the interpretation is significantly different (cf. Figures 8 and 5). And a decided variant is used as decoration on the platforms for the larger gems on the jeweled cover of the Munich Codex Aureus (Figure 16). The

leaf motifs used for gem settings on the Codex Aureus's cover also relate to the decoration on the Noailles ivories. One type is paralleled by the border motif of the Virgin plaque, where the prominent drill holes at the base of the leaves are highly reminiscent of the punchwork used to admit light under the gems in the metal settings (Figure 17). Another type of setting on the Codex Aureus relates to the leaf finials on the back of the Virgin's throne on the Noailles ivory (Figure 16). It should be noticed also that the arcades of the Virgin's footstool as well as the back of the throne are reminiscent of the arcade motif of the tiny platforms upon which the gems are raised on the Codex Aureus (Figure 18) and that the prominent use of decorative pearling on the Noailles ivories evokes the very common beading found in metalwork of the Codex Aureus as well as other Carolingian pieces (cf. Figures 5, 6 with Figures 15–18).<sup>20</sup>

All this seems to indicate a very specific relationship between the three-dimensional media of ivory carving and metalwork, and such a supposition is clearly supported in the case of the motif that most convincingly demonstrates the affiliation of the Noailles ivories to the circle of Charles the Bald, that is, the globe-mandorla in the form of a figure eight. The form doubtless originated in the Carolingian practice of surrounding Christ and the globe of the heavens upon which he is seated with a mandorla. This is a common feature in the Utrecht Psalter, and there the globe of the heavens is totally and logically contained within the mandorla form. The combination of the globe and mandorla is also frequent in Tours *Maiestas* illustrations, but what is interesting is that through the increasing decorative elaboration of these *Maiestas* scenes, a number of concentric bands of color were added to the mandorla, so that the original relationship of the two elements, the globe and mandorla, was obscured in the wealth of decorative detail. From this it was only a short step to the figure-eight type of globe-mandorla through the excerpting of one of the inner color bands of the mandorla, which then became the upper lobe of

19. G. I, 69, 70. These ivories, along with the ivories of the Gospels of Noailles, were also attributed by J. Beckwith, "Some Anglo-Saxon Carvings," pp. 241–246, to tenth-century England—again, in my estimation, incorrectly.

20. Concerning the settings of the Codex Aureus's jeweled cover and the origins of their motifs see O. K. Werckmeister, *Der Deckel des Codex Aureus von St. Emmeram*, Studium zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte, no. 332 (Baden-Baden and Strasbourg, 1963) pl. 12, pp. 17, 18.

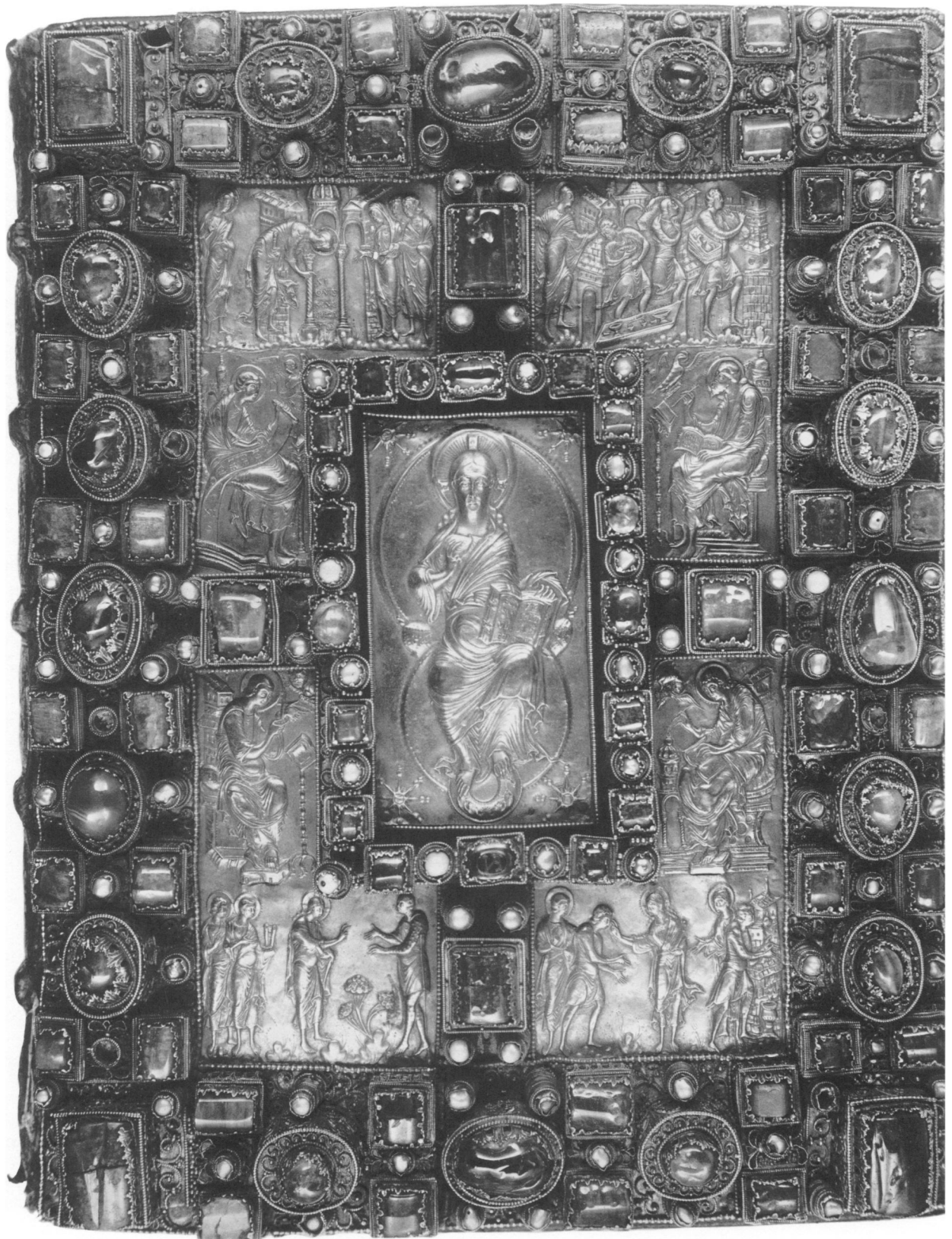
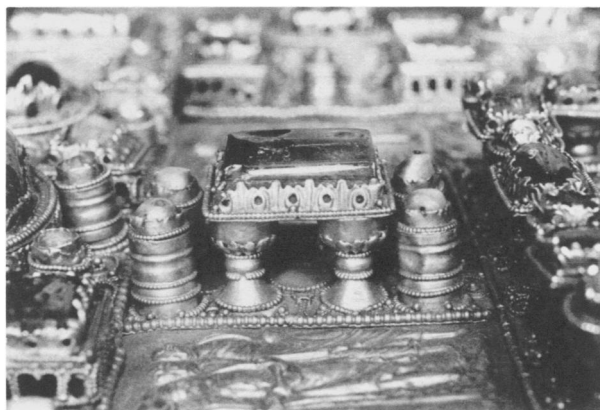


FIGURE 15

Codex Aureus. Front cover. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm. 14,000



FIGURES 16–18

Details of gem settings from the Codex Aureus. (photos: O. K. Werckmeister, *Der Deckel des Codex Aureus von St. Emmeram*, Baden-Baden and Strasbourg, 1963)

the figure.<sup>21</sup> This created a simpler image more compatible with the techniques of ivory carving and metalwork. The earliest such figure-eight globe-mandorlas<sup>22</sup> seem to be in the Stuttgart Psalter (Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Bibl. folio 23, fols. 22 verso and 127 verso), a work now localized at Saint-Germain-des-Prés and dated to 820–830 (Figures 19, 20).<sup>23</sup> There is, however, some question as to whether the representations in the psalter should more properly be interpreted as a globe combined with a *clipeus*, rather than a mandorla, giving thereby a somewhat different meaning.<sup>24</sup> There are in Carolingian art three works that clearly display the figure-eight globe-mandorla apart from the *Traditio legis* ivory of the Gospels of Noailles, and all three are undisputed as from Charles the Bald's atelier.<sup>25</sup> The works are: the *Maiestas* miniature in the Gospels of Noailles (Figure 11); the cover of the Codex Aureus (Figure 15); and the metal retable from Saint-Denis known from a fifteenth-century painting by the Master of St. Giles, which is now in the National Gallery, London (Figure 21).<sup>26</sup> Of these three examples it is on the two metal ensembles that the proportions of the forms found on the Noailles ivory are most closely

21. For an analysis of the globe-mandorla in Carolingian art see W. Cook, "The Earliest Painted Panels of Catalonia, II," *The Art Bulletin* 6 (1923–1924) pp. 38–46, and Werckmeister, *Codex Aureus*, p. 48. The process is easily appreciated by comparing the Tours *Maiestas* miniatures reproduced in vol. I of W. Koehler, *Die karolingischen Miniaturen* (Berlin, 1933) and the *Maiestas* illustrations of the Codex Aureus and the San Paolo Bible reproduced by Gaehde, "Bible of San Paolo," figs. 2, 3.

22. There is in Berlin (Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Staatliche Museen) an ivory *Maiestas* with a globe-mandorla in the figure-eight form that belongs to Goldschmidt's Ada Group (G. I, 23) and was dated by him to the ninth-tenth century. It seems most probable, however, that it is a later piece since it has stylistic parallels to tenth-century work (see *Karl der Grosse*, catalogue of the *Tenth Council of Europe Exhibition*, Aachen, 1965, no. 537).

23. See *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter*, 2 vols., facsimile and text (Stuttgart, 1965–1968) pp. 15–51, for the analysis by Bernhard Bischoff and Florentine Mutherich localizing and dating the manuscript on the basis of paleography and study of ornament.

24. This is especially true for fol. 22 (Figure 19), where the circle is supported by angels in the traditional Early Christian manner. See Werckmeister, *Codex Aureus*, p. 48.

25. I have not included the globe-mandorla of the Victoria and Albert Transfiguration panel (Figure 13) in this group since there Christ is standing and the globe is not used as a throne.

26. Concerning the retable see P. E. Schramm and F. Mutherich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser* (Munich, 1962) p. 132, where the older bibliography appears.

FIGURE 19

Illustration of Psalm 18. Stuttgart Psalter. Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Bibl. folio 23, fol. 22 verso (photo: Marburg)



FIGURE 21

Altar retable from Saint-Denis. Carolingian gold repoussé and gems. Detail of The Mass of St. Giles, painting by the Master of St. Giles, c. 1495. The National Gallery, London. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees



FIGURE 22

*Translatio legis*. Fresco, north apse. Johanneskirche, Müstair (photo: L'Univers des Formes—La Photothèque. From *L'Empire Carolingien*, Editions Gallimard, Paris, George Braziller, Inc., New York

FIGURE 20

Illustration of Psalm 109. Stuttgart Psalter. Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Bibl. folio 23, fol. 127 verso (photo: Marburg)

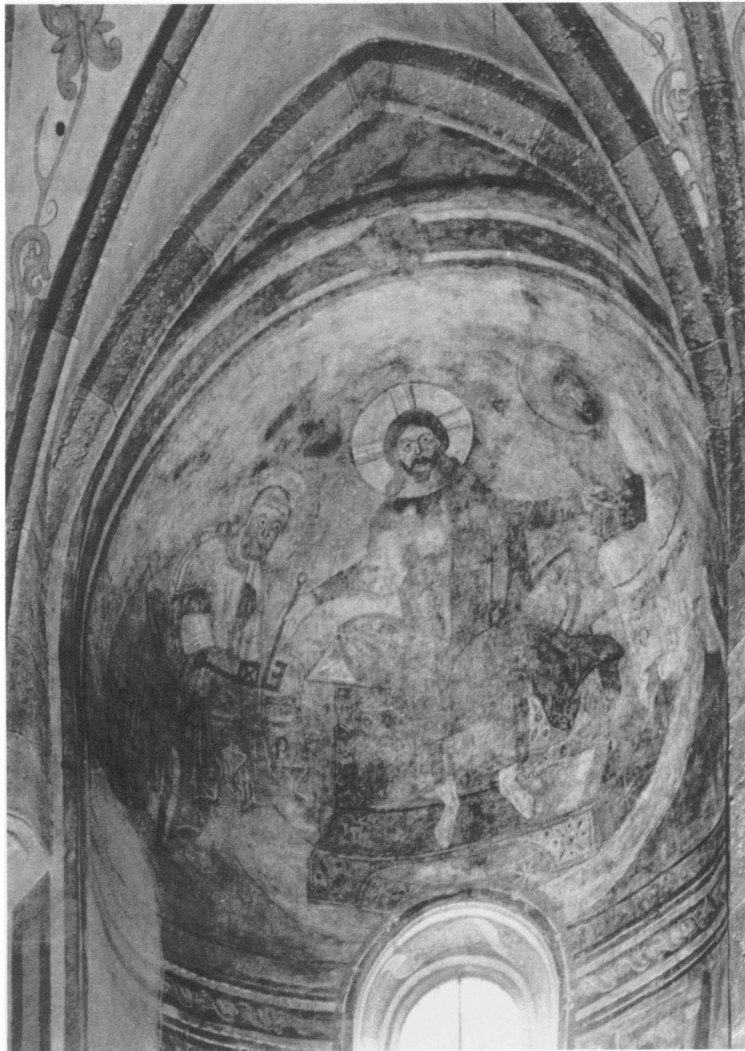
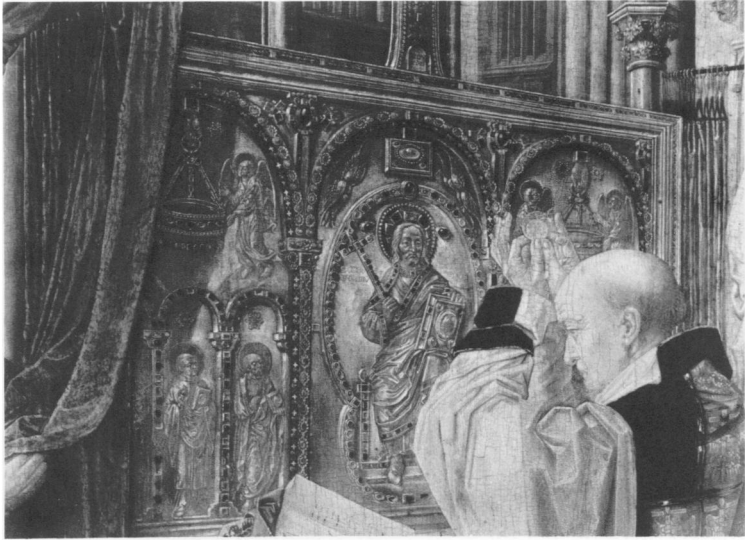


FIGURE 23

Illustration for Psalm 88. Stuttgart Psalter.  
Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart,  
Bibl. folio 23; fol. 103 verso (photo: Marburg)

paralleled, suggesting again a relationship between metal and ivory sculpture.

From all this evidence there can be little doubt of the close affinity between the Noailles ivories and the court production of Charles the Bald. Because of the stylistic association of the ivories with the manuscript it can be assumed that they were carved at the time the manuscript was written and illuminated, sometime between 842 and 869. The latter date could be extended somewhat because of the associations with the Munich Codex Aureus, which Liuthard signed in 870.

The *Traditio legis*, especially the dynamic composition depicting the handing down of the keys and scroll, is rare in Carolingian art. Of the three certain examples<sup>27</sup>—the north apse fresco at Müstair, Switzerland, early ninth century (Figure 22); the Stuttgart Psalter, Psalm 88, fol. 103 (Figure 23); and the silver cross-reliquary box of Pope Paschal I (817–824) from the Sancta Sanctorum, the Vatican (Figure 24)—only one exhibits the act itself as found on the Noailles ivory,

27. Another variant is possibly the scene of Christ enthroned between two figures who carry scrolls in the letter Q at fol. 124 in the Gospels of Saint Medard of Soissons (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 8850; K. I, 86).



FIGURE 24

Christ enthroned with the apostles Peter and Paul. Lid of the silver cross-reliquary box of Pope Paschal I (817–824). Museo Sacro, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

none utilizes the globe as throne, and all reverse the positions of Peter and Paul as seen on the Noailles ivory. The Müstair fresco shows the enthroned, long-haired, and bearded Christ with his arms outstretched handing the keys to Peter on his right and a codex to Paul on his left.<sup>28</sup> In the Stuttgart Psalter Peter and Paul stand to

the right and left of the enthroned and long-haired but beardless Christ carrying the gifts they receive on the Noailles ivory—the keys and crossed staff (*crux hastata*) and a codex. They are seen in the company of another standing figure who carries a scroll,<sup>29</sup> and all three gesture toward the enthroned Christ, who points upward and holds a codex balanced on his knee. In the third and final parallel representation, on the lid of the Paschal reliquary box, the scene harks back directly to Early Christian tradition, for Christ is enthroned above the four rivers of Paradise.<sup>30</sup> The meaning of this bears a relationship to the water personification below Christ on the Noailles ivory. Christ holds a book and blesses while Peter and Paul acclaim, one carrying again the *crux hastata* and keys and the other a codex. Busts of acclaiming angels carrying staffs appear in medallions above. Though lacking the dynamic act of giving found in the Müstair fresco, the Paschal reliquary box with its acclaiming angels and water symbolism displays possibly the closest parallel to the Noailles representation.

Whether or not the Paschal reliquary box indicates an immediate Roman or Italian source for the Noailles representation is difficult to say. It is true, however, that the ultimate source for the *Traditio legis* scene is Christian art of Rome in the second half of the fourth century, where the form was derived directly from the imperial *Largitio*, as seen, for example, on the Arch of Constantine.<sup>31</sup> A variant of the theme in which Paul,

28. Concerning the cycle at Müstair see especially Linus Birchler, "Zur karolingischen Architektur und Malerei in Münster-Müstair," *Frühmittelalterliche Kunst in den Alpenländern*, Akten zum III. Internationalen Kongress für Frühmittelalterforschung (Lausanne, 1954) pp. 167–252.

29. E. T. De Wald (*The Stuttgart Psalter* [Princeton, 1930] p. 77) identifies the third figure as a saint on the authority of verse 8 of Psalm 88: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of saints . . .," whereas the authors of the more recent facsimile edition of the psalter (*Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter* [Stuttgart, 1965–1968] II, p. 119) identify the figure as another apostle. Given the attribute of the scroll, the latter seems more logical.

30. Concerning the Paschal reliquary box see Leonard von Matt, *Art Treasures of the Vatican Library* (New York, c. 1970) for

bibliography and illustrations. W. F. Volbach treated the reliquary in his *Guide to the "Museo Sacro," Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Vatican City, 1944). The standard study is still H. Grisar, *Die römische Kapelle Sancta Sanctorum und ihr Schatz* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1908).

31. There is an immense bibliography on the subject of the *Traditio legis* in Early Christian art. The reader is referred to C. Davis-Weyer ("Das Traditio-Legis-Bild und seine Nachfolge," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3rd ser. 12 [1961] pp. 7–45), where the major bibliography is given. Especially useful is the work of Johannes Kollwitz ("Christus als Lehrer und die Gesetzübergabe an Petrus in der konstantinischen Kunst Roms," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 44 [1936] pp. 45–66).

rather than Peter, receives the law is found in Ravennate art of the early fifth century.<sup>32</sup> It was a subject confined to sepulchral monuments and baptistries and appears to have lost importance in the course of the fifth century. The Early Christian *Traditio* representations are interesting with reference to the Noailles ivories, since they include not only the aspect of the handing down, but also the use of the globe of the heavens as the throne, and frequently the symbolism of the four rivers of Paradise. Compare, for example, the *Traditio legis* found in the north-ambulatory apse mosaic of S. Costanza, where Peter receives in covered hands the open scroll handed down by Christ (Figure 25). And in the mosaic of the south-ambulatory apse a figure who can probably be identified as Peter receives

a gift, probably the keys, from Christ, there seated on the globe of the heavens.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the Noailles depiction, while lacking a precise prototype in Carolingian or Early Christian art, does appear to be based quite extensively on earlier forms and should be seen more as a revival of the earlier iconography than as an original invention, though a few elements, for example, the use of the personification, are quite original in the context of the *Traditio*.

Revival and adaptation of an earlier Christian theme with imperial overtones are also found on the companion Virgin plaque. The representation of the Virgin as the Mother of God, Theotocos or *Dei genitrix*, which began after the Council of Ephesus in 431, was possibly first seen at S. Maria Maggiore.<sup>34</sup> There are a large

32. For the Ravennate variant see especially S. Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistry of Ravenna* (New Haven, 1965) pp. 68–70.

33. The S. Costanza apse mosaics present considerable archaeological and technical problems. Erected as an imperial mausoleum in the mid-fourth century, the building was later used as a baptistery. Since the north- and south-ambulatory apse mosaics differ in style from the other mosaics of the building, it is possible (although it has not been proven) that they relate to the later function of the building. Their precise date is still disputed. Technically the question is one of incorrect restorations. In the north apse the inscription on the scroll should read “Dominus legem dat,” not “Dominus pacem dat,” and there is evidence that Christ was originally bearded, although his whole head including the nimbus is now a restoration. Also because of restorations the mosaic of the south apse has sometimes been identified as God giving the tablets of the law to Moses. J. Wilpert (*Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien* [Freiburg im Breisgau, 1916] p. 293) and others, however, have

identified the gift as keys and hence the figure as Peter. Concerning all these problems see especially the summary by C. Ihm (*Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts*, *Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie*, no. 4 [Wiesbaden, 1960] pp. 127–130) and H. Stern (“Les mosaïques de l’église de Sainte-Constance à Rome,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 [1958] pp. 159–218).

34. It would have been in the original apse mosaic, which is now lost and was replaced in part in the thirteenth century by Jacopo Torriti’s Coronation of the Virgin. The supposition is based on an inscription at the other end of the church. See W. Oakeshott (*The Mosaics of Rome from the Third to the Fourteenth Century* [Greenwich, Connecticut, 1967] pp. 313 ff.) for an account of the medieval program and G. A. Wellen (*Theotokos, Eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit* [Utrecht, 1960] pp. 127–129) and Ihm (*Apsismalerei*, pp. 132–134) concerning the reconstruction of the Early Christian apse program.



FIGURE 25  
*Traditio legis*.  
Mosaic, north-  
ambulatory apse.  
S. Costanza, Rome  
(photo: Hirmer)

FIGURE 26

Christ enthroned with Peter and Paul and other scenes. Early Christian five-part ivory diptych from Etschmiadzin. The Matenadaran, Mashtotz Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Erivan, Armenia



number of such representations in Early Christian art in mosaic, metal, and ivory,<sup>35</sup> but it seems that the most likely source for the Noailles artist was an ivory carving. A number of five-part ivory diptychs and fragments thereof dating from the late fifth and sixth centuries depict as their central image the enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by acclaiming angels on one panel and, on the other, Christ enthroned, blessing, holding a book, and accompanied by Peter and Paul who ac-

claim.<sup>36</sup> Around the central panels the additional four pieces of these diptychs display angels carrying the *clipeus* at the top and scenes from the infancy and ministry of Christ at the sides and bottom. Though they are covers of gospel books, their five-part form relates to the antique imperial five-part diptych.<sup>37</sup> The Etschmiadzin Diptych is illustrated here because it gives a version of the Theotocos that is most similar to the one found on the Noailles (and Metropolitan) ivories (Fig-

35. The best survey of the material is Wellen, *Theotokos*.

36. Most conveniently illustrated with full bibliography in catalogue form by F. Steenbock, *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin, 1965) nos. 8–11, ills. 10–17.

37. See W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum zu Mainz, Katalog 7 (Mainz, 1952) no. 48, and R. Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler*, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte, no. 2 (Berlin, 1929) p. 188.



FIGURE 27

Virgin *Theotocos* and other scenes. Early Christian five-part ivory diptych from Etschmiadzin. The Matenadaran, Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Erivan, Armenia

ures 26, 27). The Christ Child is seen in a three-quarter view and supported to the Virgin's left, a form that appears to be a Coptic or Near Eastern version of the more usual representation where the Child is shown frontally and symmetrically on the Virgin's lap. This variant can be documented by reference to the frescoes of Baouît and Saqqara.<sup>38</sup>

Such diptychs must have been available to Carolingian artists, since the well-known covers of the Lorsch

Gospels, now in Rome and London, reproduce their five-part form and at least a part of their imagery (Figures 28, 29; G. I, 13–14).<sup>39</sup> These ivories from the Ada Group, associated with Charlemagne's court, are especially interesting here with reference to the surviving Early Christian diptychs. The artist probably modified the central image of the enthroned Christ acclaimed by Peter and Paul in favor of the standing figure of Christ under an elaborate arch trampling the

38. Concerning this variant see especially Wellen, *Theotokos*, pp. 157–158, where the critical bibliography on the Egyptian frescoes is found in the notes. A useful summary of the Egyptian material is found in Ihm, *Apsismalerei*, nos. LII and LIII, pp. 198–209.

39. Another ivory in Oxford (Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 176; G. I, 5), from the Ada Group, like these, imitates the five-part form, though it is considerably smaller in size and is carved from a single piece of ivory.

FIGURE 28

Christ trampling the beasts of Psalm 90 and other scenes. Carolingian five-part ivory diptych. Front cover of the Lorsch Gospels. Museo Sacro, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana



four beasts, the symbols of evil mentioned in verse 13 of Psalm 90—an image with strong imperial overtones. In place of the flanking biblical vignettes arranged in square boxes found on the Early Christian diptychs, standing figures are utilized on both the Christ and Virgin plaques of the Lorsch diptych, and the seated

Virgin Theotocos is so elongated in form as to cause no disruption in the vertical accents of the standing figures in the central portions of the diptych.<sup>40</sup>

The situation, that is, the change in the iconography of the Christ panel, is similar in the Noailles ivories vis-à-vis surviving Early Christian work, although of

40. The Lorsch ivories have received considerable attention from scholars. Bibliography since Goldschmidt's corpus is found in Steenbock, *Prachteinband*, no. 14. Much of the discussion about them concerns their date, construction, and style, but most interesting with reference to our problem here is the work of Thomas P. F. Hoving in his Ph.D. dissertation "The Sources of the Ivories

of the Ada School," Princeton University, 1960, pp. 106–149. Hoving is rightfully cautious with regard to the probability of multiple models, but the evidence he presents makes in my estimation a strong case for selective adaptation from a number of sources. See also the discussion by H. Schnitzler in *Karl der Grosse*, pp. 314–315, 254–256.



FIGURE 29

Virgin Theotocos and other scenes. Carolingian five-part ivory diptych. Back cover of the Lorsch Gospels. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Crown Copyright

course the five-part form is not utilized, indicating either a conscious choice on the artist's part or that he was influenced by fragments only. There can be little doubt that the acanthus border that effectively finishes and contains the scene on both panels as well as the

globe-mandorla are Carolingian contributions. And it is equally demonstrable that the personification at the bottom of the *Traditio legis* panel is also a Carolingian invention most probably meant to symbolize all the waters of the earth.<sup>41</sup> The two plants with their triple

41. Upon first examination the personification seems quite enigmatic, especially in view of the fact that Oceanus, when paired with Terra on the Munich Crucifixion ivory (Figure 12), is shown horned and bearded while pouring water from an urn, whereas it is Terra who has a serpent entwined around her arm. The fish is a normal attribute for Oceanus, as can be seen in the miniature of the Coronation Sacramentary (Paris, Bibliothèque

Nationale, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 6; B., cxxxiii), where again he is paired with Terra. Possibly the best clarification of the attributes can be gained from a silver plate from Parabiago dating from the late fourth century (see especially A. Alföldi, "Die Spätantike in der Ausstellung 'Kunstschätze der Lombardei' in Zürich," *Atlantis* 21 [1949] pp. 69–72). The posture, drapery, and urn attribute of the Noailles figure match those of the river god on the silver plate,

rosette flowers below the throne on the Theotocos panel also seem to be Carolingian additions,<sup>42</sup> as is the specific form of the throne.<sup>43</sup> In summary, then, the Noailles ivories reflect considerable invention, reviving in part earlier, seemingly somewhat moribund iconography and adding some unusual details. They are by no means servile copies of an earlier prototype.

Returning at last to the Morgan ivories in the Metropolitan, it becomes apparent that they take over almost verbatim the central imagery of the earlier Christian five-part diptychs, adding nothing that essentially changes the content. This is, of course, not to deny the fact of metamorphosis in meaning resulting from the omission of the context. Though the format, specifically the frame that contains each scene, and the arrangement of parts, particularly the relation of subsidiary figures to the throne, were somewhat altered, the Metropolitan ivories must be understood, iconographically at least, as a nearly literal copy of the Christian works of the sixth century. Specific medieval traits of style can easily be noted, for example, when we compare them with the Etzschmiadzin diptych. There is the tendency to eliminate what vestiges of antique illusionism still remained in the Early Christian works by isolating the figures behind the throne and illogically truncating them, as well as by increasing the scale discrepancy between the central enthroned fig-

ures and the flanking figures who acclaim them. When the Metropolitan Museum ivories are considered against the Early Christian work on the one hand and the Noailles ivories on the other hand, little seems to remain that attests to originality on the part of the artist. They seem, therefore, based on the evidence adduced so far, quite clearly to be relatively faithful copies. Only the probable source or models for the representations have been identified, however. Further evidence independent of either the Noailles ivories or the Early Christian works must be utilized in order to determine their attribution.

A few of the motifs found on the Metropolitan ivories cannot be accounted for by reference to either the Noailles ivories or Early Christian five-part diptychs, and it is these that are of great importance for documenting the milieu from which the Morgan ivories may have originated. Foremost among these motifs are the acanthus designs of the frames of both plaques and the hairpin form of the angels' wings. In addition, the pointing gesture of the angels and of the Christ is unusual and should be examined.

The border of the relief depicting Christ enthroned is very unusual. The acanthus is for the most part arranged obliquely with respect to the central field, moving outward toward the corners from a full leaf situated at the center of each side.<sup>44</sup> The central leaf

while the horns, beard, fish, and paddle belong to Oceanus. Except for the snake, an attribute of Terra on the Parabiago plate as in the Carolingian examples, every attribute can be accounted for as belonging to Oceanus or the river god. Thus the personification appears to be a fusion of ocean and river—water symbolism in the broadest sense. The snake is the only attribute that seems inconsistent. The logical solution would seem to be a sea serpent, and such a reading is borne out by a number of Carolingian representations that show Oceanus, paired with Terra, riding a sea monster (the hippocamp) with a fleur-de-lis tail—though one more vegetal in form than the geometric one on the ivory (cf. the Liuthard ivory G. I, 44; the Later Metz ivories, G. I, 83, 85, 88; the Coronation Sacramentary of Charles the Bald, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 6; and the Utrecht Psalter, fols. 18 verso, 56 verso). Still more conclusive is the fact that on fol. 56 verso of the Utrecht Psalter there are, in the water Oceanus pours from his urn, writhing serpents that are visually very similar to the one on the ivory. Access to the Utrecht Psalter by Charles's artists is proven by the ivories of the Psalter of Charles the Bald (Figures 7, 8).

42. I have found only one instance in Early Christian Theotocos representation where a plant occurs below the Virgin's throne. It is on the lid of the sixth-century reliquary from Grado. There the tuliplike flower should most probably be identified as a lily through

comparison with the flowers in sixth-century Ravenna mosaics. Concerning the reliquary see G. Brusin and P. L. Zovatto, *Monumenta paleo-cristiani di Aquileia e di Grado* (Udine, 1957) pp. 530–534, and E. Weigand, "Zum Denkmälerkreis des Christogrammnimbus," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 32 (1932) pp. 63–81; the flower is not discussed, however. The general rosette form of the Noailles plants is paralleled in Carolingian manuscripts from Tours and from Charles the Bald's circle.

43. The high, square-backed throne on the Noailles ivory is easily identified as the antique imperial *solium* (see P. E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, Schriften, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, no. 13, I [Stuttgart, 1954] pp. 316 ff.), and it is found frequently in Early Christian Theotocos representations. In Carolingian art it appears most frequently in Charles the Bald manuscripts for the thrones of Charles, Solomon, and Gregory and (found only in the Codex Aureus) for the thrones of the evangelists (see B., cxiv, cxv, cxxv, cxxi, and cxvii). The lions' heads have precedents in the benchlike *sella curulis* (e.g., on the consular diptychs) and most probably make reference to the Throne of Solomon. It has remained unnoticed heretofore that the throne representation is unique in Carolingian art in having an arcaded back paralleling that of the Cathedra Petri, a throne associated

spreads out in three parts and has a prominent inverted V-form at its base, while the tip of the central frond is turned over. The leaves are somewhat fleshy, having been executed with numerous tiny rounded indentations at their edges, and the drill was used, especially on the lower portion of the frame, to separate the intersecting fronds. The forms, their composition, and their execution differ significantly from the border of the Noailles *Traditio legis* and, by extension, from that of the Victoria and Albert Transfiguration plaque, which the Noailles artist may have copied.

Among Carolingian ivories there are four pieces that parallel this composition for their borders. All belong to Goldschmidt's Later Metz Group (*Jüngere Metzger Schule*), and all are dated from the ninth and tenth centuries. Three depict the Crucifixion, and one, King David with his bodyguards.<sup>45</sup> On all of them the treatment of the leaves is, however, distinctly different. The diagonal acanthus is sharp and dry, in fact geometrized, and consists of full rather than half leaves. Although the composition is similar, the style is not comparable, and in any case, until we know more about these pieces, which appear to be later in date, we can only note the correspondence of composition and difference in style.<sup>46</sup>

In manuscript illuminations the oblique acanthus is readily recognized as part of the decorative vocabulary

of Reims work, utilized prominently, for example, on the borders of the evangelist portraits and canon tables in the Ebbo Gospels (Épernay, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 1; 816–835).<sup>47</sup> There too it is a spiky full leaf, and the central focal leaf found on the Metropolitan ivory is absent. The actual composition of the ivory's border is, however, extremely prominent in a later Reims manuscript from the period of Archbishop Hincmar (845–882), the Gospels from Saint-Remi now in the Pierpont Morgan Library (M. 728).<sup>48</sup> Not only is it found as the frame of two of the evangelist portraits, Mark and John (Figures 30, 31), but it also appears seven other times in the arches of the canon tables (see Figure 32) and on the incipit page to the Gospel of John.<sup>49</sup> It is true that the border composition of the evangelist portraits in Morgan 728 displays leaves that are far more stylized than those of the ivory, but they swing out from the central focal leaf in the same direction, and the inverted V-form is utilized at the base of the central leaf on the frame for the portrait of John. One must, of course, bear in mind the difference in medium and the greater amount of decoration to be painted in a manuscript. Even so, in some of the canon-table pediments there are more naturalistic leaves with multiple scallops on the edges as well as the turned-over tip of the central focal leaf (cf. lower border Figure 1 and Figure 32).

with Charles the Bald (see Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*, III [1956] pp. 694–707).

44. It is interesting in light of the relationship between the Metropolitan ivories and the Early Christian five-part diptychs that a number of the diptychs display central focuses on the borders of their central panels (see Figures 26, 27).

45. G. I, 111, 112, 113, 119. Concerning no. 119 see also Steenbock, *Prachteinband*, no. 37. One ivory from the Liuthard Group dated by Goldschmidt to the tenth century has a related border composition, although its general appearance is quite unusual. It is the ivory depicting the baptism of St. Remi, now in Amiens (G. I, 57). The acanthus is diagonal, is highly elaborate in form, and in addition to central leaf accents on the sides, utilizes rosettes and squares inset with glass paste to accent the corners and to accent the points of intersection of the borders with the horizontal fillets that divide the representation into three zones.

46. The comb of Archbishop Heribert of Cologne (G. I, 92), also attributed to the ninth-tenth century by Goldschmidt, although to the Metz Group proper, is very interesting in this context. It uses the spiky diagonal acanthus leaf, the alternating major and minor leaf motif related to the dessicated version found on the Noailles *Traditio legis*, and a version of the consecutive single leaf motif of the Noailles Virgin panel. Even more striking in this con-

text is the appearance of a spiky version of the overlapping tripartite leaves arranged consecutively along a common central axis—a form similar to that used on the mandorla of Christ on the *Traditio legis* relief. Clearly we need to know more about the Metz ivories in order to chart their affiliation with the Liuthard Group.

47. A few Tournian canon-table arches from the period of the abbots Adalhard and Vivian (834–851) exhibit diagonal acanthus-leaf decoration. It is found occasionally too in manuscripts associated with Charles the Bald (e.g., the pediments of the Charles the Bald and Jerome portraits in the Psalter of Charles the Bald). These examples were probably influenced by Reims work.

48. Concerning the manuscript see especially The Pierpont Morgan Library, *Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts Held at the New York Public Library Nov. 1933–April 1934*, catalogue by Belle da Costa Green and Meta P. Harrsen, no. 5, and The Pierpont Morgan Library, *A Review of the Growth, Development and Activities of the Library During the Period . . . 1924–1929* (New York, 1930) pp. 16–17. The most recent and only comprehensive coverage of the manuscript, the work of Meta Harrsen in 1950, is found at the library in the unpublished preliminary catalogue of the Morgan manuscripts.

49. Fol. 6, 6 verso, 7 verso, 9 verso, 10 verso, 63 verso, 141 verso, 142.



FIGURE 30  
Evangelist Mark. Gospels from Saint-Remi. The  
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 728,  
fol. 63 verso

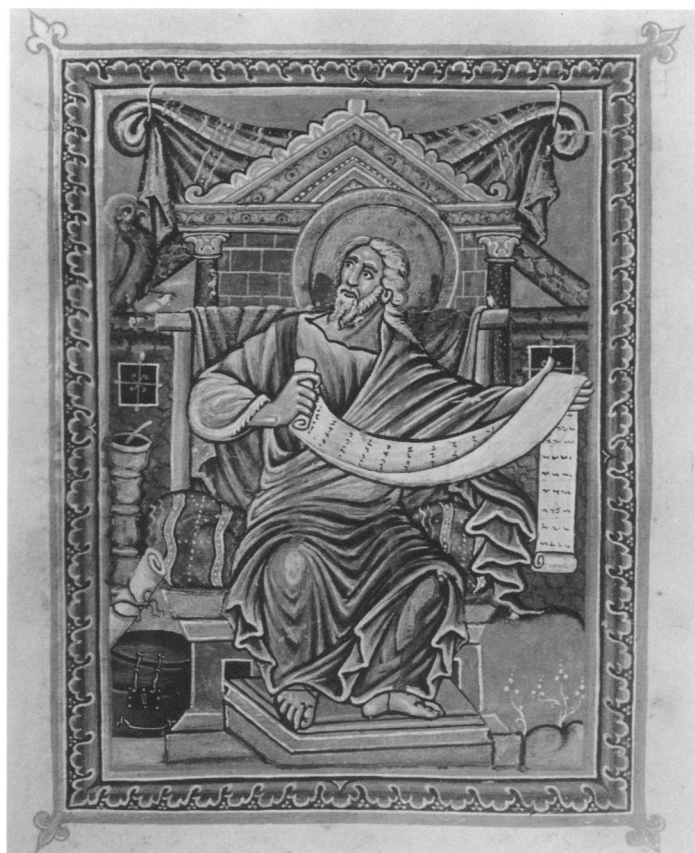


FIGURE 31  
Evangelist John. Gospels from Saint-Remi. The  
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 728,  
fol. 141 verso

In metalwork the oblique acanthus leaf can be seen on three of the gables of the portable altar ciborium of Emperor Arnulf, West French work often assigned to Reims or the circle of Charles the Bald.<sup>50</sup> The leaves there have rounded tips giving a naturalistic appearance in keeping with the spirit of the Metropolitan ivory's border. But by far the closest to the leafwork on

the ivory in style—considered separately from composition—are the acanthus-leaf fillers between the gems on the front cover of the so-called Ashburnham, or Lindau, Gospels now in the Pierpont Morgan Library (M. 1), another work associated with Reims or Charles the Bald (Figure 33).<sup>51</sup> On the golden cover two leaves, very often half leaves, are joined together forming

50. Concerning the ciborium see especially Schramm and Mutherich, *Denkmale*, no. 61.

51. A full study of the front cover of the Lindau Gospels is overdue. The present consensus of opinion concerning its provenance and date seems to be Reims, c. 870, as first formulated at the turn of the century by Georg Swarzenski ("Die karolingische Malerei und Plastik in Reims," *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 23 [1902] pp. 81 ff.) and supported very forcefully by the work of J. Reil (*Christus am Kreuz*, Studien über Christliche Denkmäler, no. 21 [Leipzig, 1930] pp. 55–63) and Hanns Swarzenski ("The 'Dowry Cross' of Henry II," *Late Classical and Medieval*

*Studies in Honor of A. M. Friend* [Princeton, 1955] pp. 301–304). The Saint-Denis thesis of A. M. Friend ("Carolingian Art in the Abbey of St. Denis," *Art Studies*, I [Princeton, 1923] pp. 67–75) and the proposal of St. Gall by Meta Harrsen (*Central European Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* [New York, 1958] pp. 6 ff.)—if that is what she intends by the statement, "The upper gold cover of the binding is contemporary with and was executed for this manuscript"—are less satisfactory in my opinion. See Steenbock, *Prachteinband*, no. 21, for the most recent comprehensive bibliography.

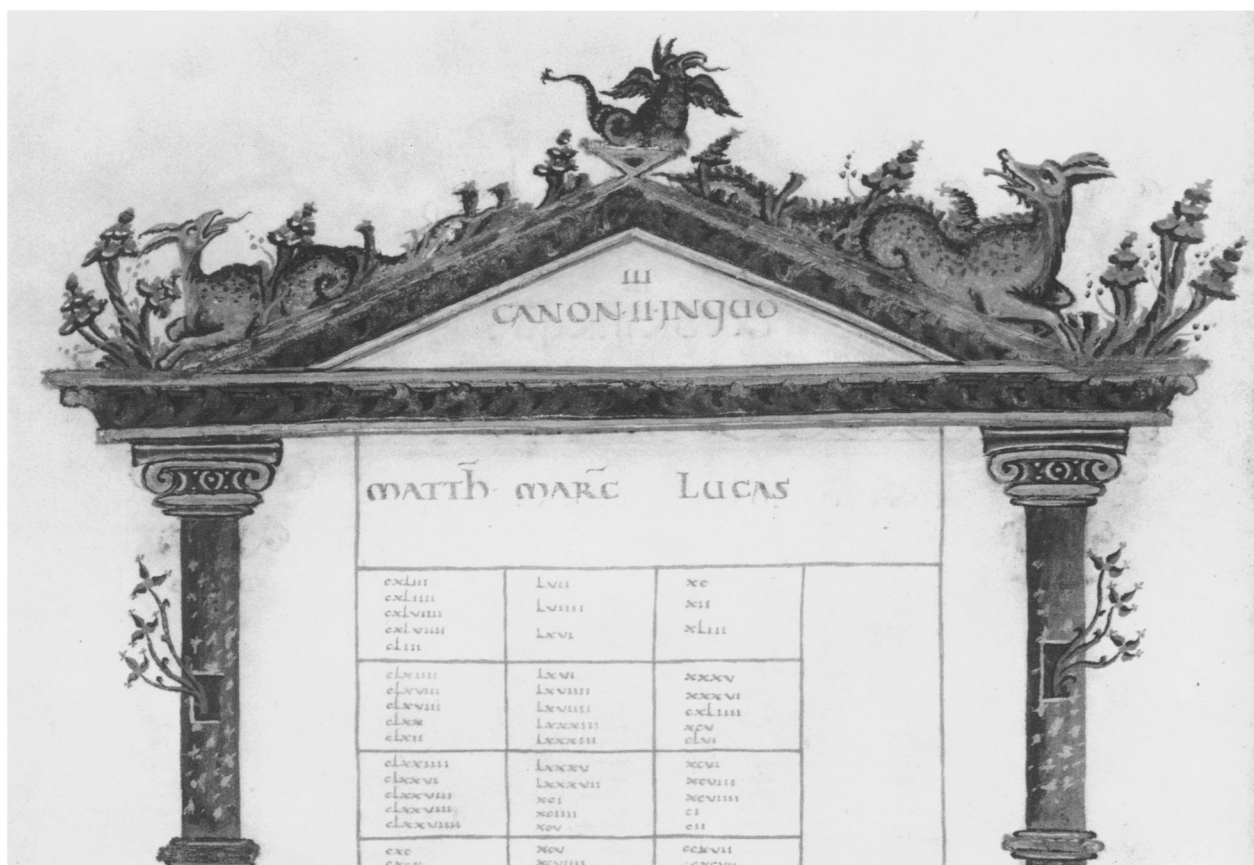


FIGURE 32

Canon table, detail. Gospels from Saint-Remi. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 728, fol. 7 verso

something that resembles a lacy butterfly, while the punch is used generously to provide accents between the dainty scalloped edges. Once again metal and ivory techniques approach one another, which is not surprising given their three-dimensionality and equivalent relationship to the manuscripts.

The Metropolitan's Theotocos panel employs essentially the same decorative vocabulary as that found on the border of the Noailles Virgin plaque—a sequence of three-part leaves placed side by side. The major difference lies in the method by which the foliage is articulated and the units separated from one another. The Noailles artist utilized a large, prominent drill hole between the leaves at their base, while the artist of the Metropolitan relief placed two small holes between the fronds of the leaves and a slightly larger one between the leaves, although this larger one is smaller and situated higher up from the base of the leaf than on the

Noailles ivory. Then, too, he marked the center of each leaf with an incised, inverted V-form. Such detailing gives an overlying scalloped pattern that joins the leaves together as opposed to the clear separation of the units on the Noailles frame. Continuity is a quality of both interpretations of the form, but the locking together of the leaves in the border of the Metropolitan ivory is achieved by two complementary visual systems—the larger drill hole lies in the center of the cup formed by the inverted V-forms, and the inverted V-form is in the center of the leaf defined by the larger drill holes. Such dynamic systems result from the confluence of the syntaxes of geometry and nature.

As stated above with reference to the Noailles ivories, the ubiquitousness of the basic motif makes a search for parallels both tedious and unrewarding. Nevertheless, it is possible and meaningful to search for the underlying concepts of the interpretation—in other words,

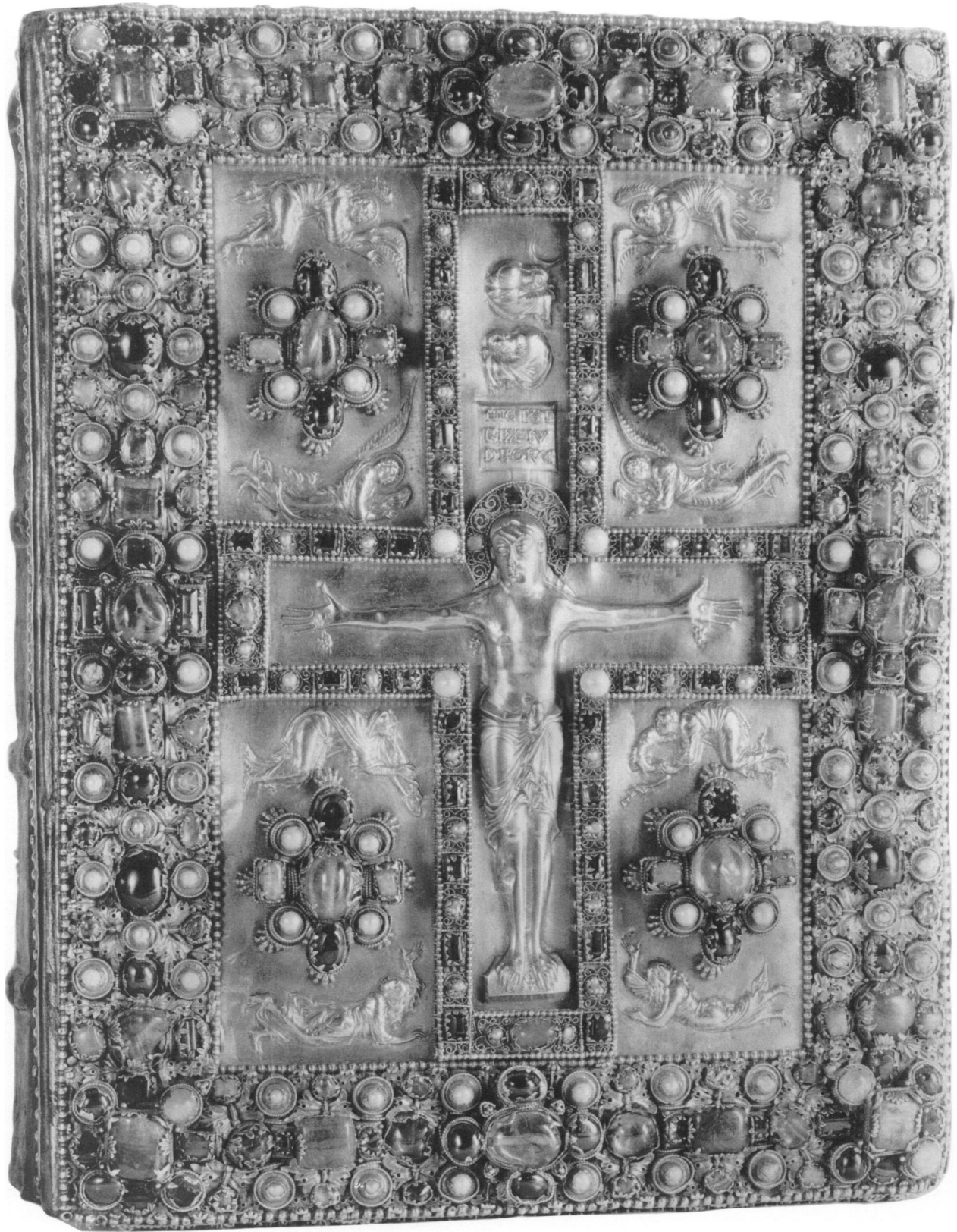


FIGURE 33

Crucifixion. Carolingian gold repoussé and gems.  
Front cover, the Lindau (Ashburnham) Gospels.  
The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 1

the style of the execution. One aspect of the interpretation is easily discovered in the Victoria and Albert Ascension ivory, one of the pieces that seems to have provided the inspiration for the borders of the Noailles ivories (cf. Figures 2, 6, and 14). Although the actual leaf shape in the Ascension panel relates more to the Noailles border, the character of the drillwork is precisely that of the Metropolitan ivory—two small drill holes separating the fronds and a somewhat larger one between the leaves placed slightly above the base line. This is an extremely interesting coincidence, all the more so because it appears to be unique to these two ivories. Such evidence makes it difficult to deny the actual historical association of the ivories, given the other correspondences involved. It seems undeniable that the Victoria and Albert ivories were available to the Metropolitan Museum artist as well as to the Noailles sculptor, each making slightly different use of the material. Further confirmation of the relationship lies in the similarity between the acanthus motif of the Virgin's throne on the Metropolitan plaque and that around the outside of the mandorla of the ascending Christ on the Victoria and Albert relief.

Since the motif of a series of three-part leaves is so common in manuscript borders, even a statistical study would not necessarily be useful, if, indeed, it could be carried out. As, however, the inverted V-form of the Metropolitan motif is not included in the Victoria and Albert Ascension ivory and as, also, the form of the leaf is somewhat different, it is helpful to search in manuscript decoration for similar interpretations of this acanthus motif. Furthermore, the Victoria and Albert ivories are not yet localized.

The inverted V-form is found in the motif as it is used in the canon-table pediments of the Noailles Gospels at fol. 19 (Figure 9), and there too, as in the

Metropolitan relief, each V-form and its neighbor together take the shape of an incomplete cup. Some close parallels to the general character of the border of the Metropolitan's Theotocos are found in the decoration of Tours manuscripts. Generally speaking, when the motif is used in Reims decoration, it tends to be much bolder and more geometricized. In the manuscripts of Charles the Bald it runs a very freewheeling course, sliced into segments and piled up vertically or even placed in double rows base to base with a large star inserted in the diamond shape that results from the opposition of the V-forms of the two sequences, and almost invariably it takes on larger proportions with reference to the field it frames.<sup>52</sup> In Tournian decoration the motif is more restrained, being more soft-spoken by virtue of its relative size and its geometric details. This is easily appreciated by comparing the decoration of the canon tables of the Noailles Gospels and the Arnaldus Gospels (Nancy, Cathedral Treasury, fol. 9 verso), executed c. 834–843 (Figure 34). With reference to the Metropolitan ivory's border, the inverted V-form and the articulation of the leaves by dots as well as the general proportions of the frames of the Arnaldus Gospels are comparable. A careful study of the illustrations of Tours manuscripts in Wilhelm Koehler's corpus of Carolingian manuscripts<sup>53</sup> reveals that the prominent circle is a nearly constant feature

52. See, for example, in Reims work the border of the Douce Psalter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 59; B., LXXVIII) and in Charles the Bald manuscripts the Codex Aureus (G. Leidinger, *Der Codex Aureus der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München* [Munich, c. 1921–1925] II, p. 86 and passim) or the San Paolo Bible (Rome, San Paolo fuori le mura; Gaehde, "Bible of San Paolo," fig. 12; also B., cxxx a).

53. Koehler, *Die karolingischen Miniaturen*, I, plates.

FIGURE 34

Canon table, detail. The Arnaldus Gospels from  
Tours. Trésor de la Cathédrale, Nancy, fol. 9  
verso (photo: Gilbert Mangin)

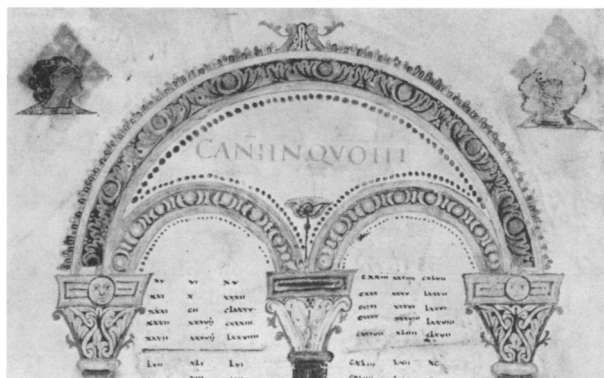




FIGURE 35  
Evangelist Matthew. Gospels from Saint-Remi.  
The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M.  
728, fol. 14 verso

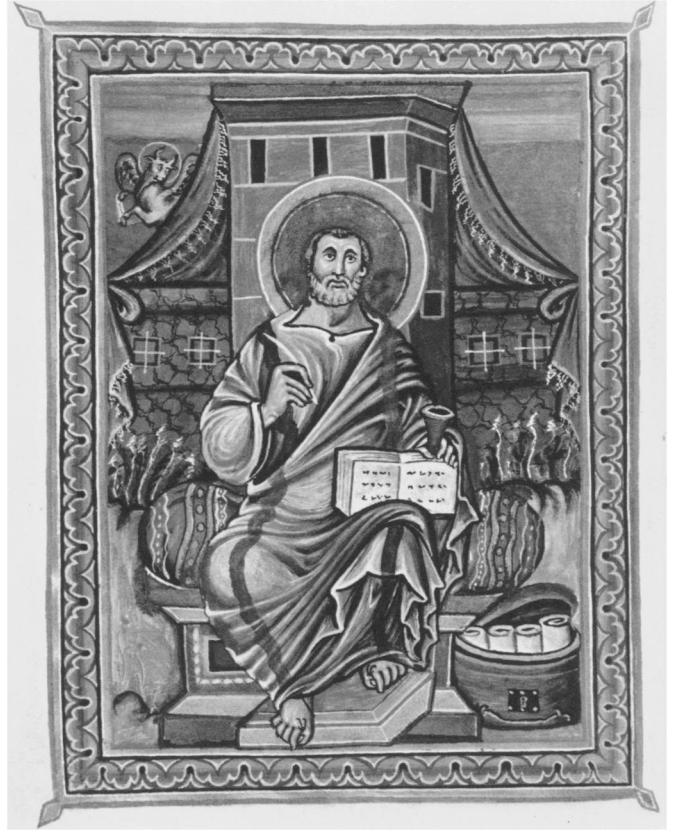


FIGURE 36  
Evangelist Luke. Gospels from Saint-Remi. The  
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M. 728,  
fol. 94 verso

of the motif and that the inverted V-form appears in a majority of instances. The delicate detailing utilizing dots as seen in the Arnaldus Gospels is much less frequent in the illustrations and is confined for the most part to the period between 834 and 843, with only a couple of exceptions, which most probably lie close on either side of these dates.<sup>54</sup>

With regard to the above observations about the border of the Metropolitan's Christ and apostles panel, it is very significant that the border motif of the Virgin plaque also figures prominently in the Morgan Gospels (M. 728). It is utilized for the frames of the remaining two evangelist portraits, Matthew and Luke, and in the latter includes the inverted V-form (Figures 35, 36). Also striking is the fact that the artist distinguished the different motifs by color; the leaves of the borders of

Matthew and Luke are painted a deep red, and those of Mark and John a rich blue. The motif of the Virgin plaque is also seen five other times in the manuscript's decoration.<sup>55</sup> This means that out of twenty possibilities (four evangelist portraits, twelve canon tables, and four incipit pages—the only decoration), in sixteen instances one of the motifs found on the Metropolitan Museum ivories was chosen. It is difficult to deny some relationship between Morgan 728 and the Metropolitan reliefs in the face of this evidence. I pointed out in my comparison of the borders of the Christ panel with

54. The illustrations in Koehler upon which I have based the last observation are K. I, 25 c, d, f, 27 f, 30 d, e, g, 39 b (Figure 34 in this study), 47, 48 b, 63 a.

55. Seven times in all at fols. 7, 8, 8 verso, 11 verso, 14 verso (Matthew), 15, 94 verso (Luke).

the appropriate evangelist portrait frames in Morgan 728 that the acanthus leaves in the latter are more stylized, and the same holds true with regard to the Virgin panel. However, elsewhere in the manuscript more naturalistic forms are seen, for example, at fol. 15, the incipit to Matthew's Gospel (Figure 37). The upper left-hand portion of the border is especially striking for its delicately rounded leaf edges. Little loops in the detailing of the edges of the leaves give an effect very similar to that of the drillwork in the ivory's borders.

The question thus arises as to whether any other aspects of the Morgan manuscript relate to the Metro-

politan Museum ivories. It is interesting that all the evangelists sit on bolsters decorated with circles and bands of pearling in some form. This is the ornament utilized on the bolsters of both the Metropolitan Museum and Noailles ivories. Pearling is used on the base of Luke's throne in Morgan 728, and moldings and acanthus decoration are found on the gable above John's throne. John also sits on a high-backed *solium* similar in its open-backed form to those on the Metropolitan ivories though less ornate and draped with a pallium.<sup>56</sup> Finally, one wing of Luke's symbol has a looped form like that of the angels on the Metro-

56. This is unusual for an evangelist, unless the artist has simply turned the curved back of the bishop's *cathedra*, as in the evangelists' thrones in the Ada manuscripts, into a square back. Generally evangelists sit on a simple *sella* (a bench), a faldstool, a *cathedra*, or a lyre throne, when seen in profile. They do sit on square high-backed thrones in the Codex Aureus, but the open-backed form,

which certainly goes back to Early Christian precedent (see the throne on the Twelve Apostles Sarcophagus at S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna), is specifically indicated only for Charles the Bald's throne in his psalter (fol. 3 verso), as can be appreciated from a color illustration found in J. Hubert, J. Porcher, and W. F. Volbach, *The Carolingian Renaissance* (New York, 1970) pl. 135.



FIGURE 37  
Incipit to Matthew. Gospels  
from Saint-Remi. The Pierpont  
Morgan Library, New York,  
M. 728, fol. 15

The unusual hairpin-shaped wings of the angels of the Theotocos panel will now be examined. They are probably best understood as wings in repose, folded up, so to speak, like those of a bird at rest. Despite their stylized appearance on the ivory, the form must certainly derive from naturalistic logic rather than abstract principles. The proof of this, if needed, can be found, for example, in the Rabbula Gospels (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. I, 56, fol. 13 verso), where in the Ascension miniature the four angels flying around the ascending Christ have sweeping open wings while those on the ground flanking Mary and speaking

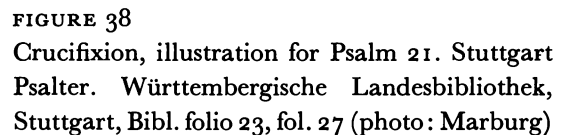


FIGURE 38  
Crucifixion, illustration for Psalm 21. Stuttgart  
Psalter. Württembergische Landesbibliothek,  
Stuttgart, Bibl. folio 23, fol. 27 (photo: Marburg)

59. For illustrations and discussion of the Cotton Genesis see K. Weitzmann, "Observations on the Cotton Genesis Fragments," *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of A. M. Friend* (Princeton, 1955) pp. 112-131, figs. 1, 21.

the form. There are a number of examples where one wing is folded and one is open, but few in which both are folded symmetrically.

Dual, folded, hairpin wings can be found occasionally in Carolingian ivories and manuscripts of the late eighth and early ninth century. Of these turn-of-the-century examples, most of which are found on Ada ivories and associated manuscripts of Charlemagne's court school, it is those of the evangelist symbols of Matthew in the Lorsch Gospels (Alba Iulia, Rumania, p. 26) and the Gospels of Saint-Médard of Soissons (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 8850, fol. 17 verso) that most resemble the angel wings on the Metropolitan ivory, though in these two manuscripts they have considerably larger and bolder proportions.<sup>60</sup>

Closer in form are the wings of the angels above the arms of the cross in the Crucifixion miniature of the Stuttgart Psalter (Figure 38). A heavy roll extends

around the top of the wing, and there is a simplified clarity to the ends of the feathers. It may be coincidence, but the angels in the Crucifixion miniature are cut off by the arms of the cross in a manner comparable to the truncation of the angels' and apostles' bodies by the thrones in the ivories.<sup>61</sup> Also, in both the ivory and the psalter illustration two folds are utilized in the neckline of the garment of the angel at the left and one on those of the angel at the right. Then, too, the form of the cross within Christ's halo is similar to that of the enthroned Christ figure, though this, of course, is not an especially distinctive characteristic. Striking too in comparison with the Metropolitan ivories are the pointing gestures of the soldiers below the cross, but this subject will be discussed below. It is sufficient to note here that more than just the folded wings seems to relate the psalter illustration and the ivories.<sup>62</sup>

Some prominent examples of the folded wings can be

60. K. II, 104, 81. Other examples are: ivories, G. I, 1, 2, 18, 19, 27; manuscripts, B., CLIV, CLV (Trier and Cambrai apocalypses), K. II, 1 (Godescalc Gospels). In the last the wings clearly relate to the feather form found on the Genoels-Elderen ivories (G. I, 1, 2). Also interesting is the appearance of the hairpin wings on the eighth-ninth century representation of the Last Judgment that is carved on the back side of the Victoria and Albert Transfiguration panel (see G. I, 178).

61. Similar truncation by the arms of the cross can be found in

the crucifixion scene on the Milan Paliotto, now in the church of Sant'Ambrogio.

62. Another set of hairpin wings very similar in form to those of the Stuttgart Psalter is found on the evangelist symbol of Matthew in a related manuscript in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 11959, fol. 19 verso). Carl Nordenfalk (review of *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter* in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 32 [1969] p. 168, fig. 4) localizes the gospels in the Paris region at Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.



FIGURE 39

Genesis frontispiece, detail. Grandval Bible. British Museum, London, Add. 10546, fol. 5 verso. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

found in Tours manuscripts. Quite frequently a figure can be seen with one folded and one outspread wing, but the dual folded wings are found only in a couple of evangelist symbols in two manuscripts from the period of Abbot Fridugisus (807–834) and in the Grandval Bible from the period of Abbot Adalhard (834–843).<sup>63</sup> In the Apocalypse miniature of the Grandval Bible all four evangelist symbols, gathered around the throne and shown frontally in bust form, have folded wings, as do the two orant angels overlooking the enlivening of Adam in the Genesis miniature (Figure 39). The feathery detailing of the wings in these instances is less comparable to the rendering on the Metropolitan ivory than that found in the Stuttgart Psalter, but the gesture of the angel at the left in the Genesis miniature and the handling of the garment around it, dipping below in concentric circles, does parallel what is seen in the angel at the left on the ivory. It is also significant to note that bust figures are frequent in Touronian miniatures. The common decoration of the fields by broad color bands means that frequently figures are seen to arise like cutout vaudeville props through imaginary slits between the color zones.

Finally, instances of the dual folded wings are found occasionally in the manuscripts of Charles the Bald's court school, for example, worn by three angels in the lower zone of the *Maiestas* miniature in the Coronation Sacramentary (Figure 40) and in a few cases in the canon tables of the San Paolo Bible.<sup>64</sup>

Though rare in Carolingian art, the hairpin angel wings occur in a number of artistic milieus, and it is interesting that they are found in contexts already brought forward with reference to other aspects of the ivories. However that may be, this type of evidence is somewhat different from that provided by the borders of the ivories, since it seems highly likely that we are dealing with a relatively complex situation of direct or indirect influence from Early Christian models, most probably those related to the Cotton Genesis recension. This is certainly a very immediate consideration for the Stuttgart Psalter<sup>65</sup> as well as for the Grandval and San Paolo Bibles.<sup>66</sup> With respect to the visual aspects of the evidence, the major consideration is whether or not the affinities of the ivories with the Stuttgart Psalter are indicative of a one-to-one connection or model-copy relationship.

Before final summation there is one further aspect

of the Metropolitan ivories that deserves attention, though it is, properly speaking, an iconographic matter. It is the pointing gesture utilized by the figure of Christ on both panels and by the angels on the Virgin plaque. Especially perplexing is the fact that in Early Christian representations of Christ enthroned between Peter and Paul and in Theotocos scenes Christ's gesture is almost invariably either the so-called Latin blessing—the thumb and the index and middle fingers extended with the ring and little fingers bent in toward the palm—or, in other cases, what is known as the Greek blessing—the ring finger and thumb brought together and the other fingers extended. As H. P. L'Orange and others have pointed out, the Latin blessing is in reality the late-antique speaking gesture, the sign of thought and of the Logos, which more and more took on the meaning of blessing for the Middle Ages.<sup>67</sup>

The pointing gesture on the Metropolitan ivories should first of all be seen in relation to the gesture of the Christ Child on the Noailles Theotocos, where the artist also departed from the normal Early Christian speaking or blessing gesture, substituting instead the raised right hand. Although this resembles the traditional gesture of acclamation or applause—that used by the apostles and angels on the Metropolitan ivories—it should more probably be identified as an older imperial gesture, the sign of power and salvation, the gesture of the Christ Pantocrator.<sup>68</sup>

That the artists of both the Noailles and the Metropolitan ivories changed the speaking-blessing gesture that, based on surviving comparative material, was most probably found on their model indicates not only

63. Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, II, 40; London, British Museum, Add. 11848 and Add. 11546 (K. I, 21, 25, 50, 53).

64. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 5 (B., cxxxiii), and Rome, San Paolo fuori le Mura, fol. 254 (B., cxxvi).

65. See the discussion of the sources of the Stuttgart Psalter by F. Mutherich in *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter*, II, pp. 151 ff. There are also relationships between the ornament of the psalter and Touronian ornament that Mutherich (pp. 49–51) sees as reflecting common influence from court production.

66. See especially H. Kessler, "Hic Homo Formatur: The Genesis Frontispieces of the Carolingian Bibles," *The Art Bulletin* 53 (1971) pp. 143–160.

67. H. P. L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo, 1953) pp. 170–197.

68. L'Orange, *Cosmic Kingship*, pp. 139–170 (cf. Figure 24 in this article).



FIGURE 40  
*Maiestas*. Coronation Sacramentary. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 5

a degree of invention on their part but also the weight given to gestural language in Carolingian art. This latter point is amply documented in Carolingian manuscript illumination. Recently Ernst Kitzinger pointed to the “drastic and emphatic elaboration of gestures . . .” in the Stuttgart Psalter, stating that the association of text with miniature is of “immense importance for an enquiry into the meaning of the gestures.”<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the Stuttgart Psalter does provide the requisite material for an understanding of the pointing gesture on the Metropolitan ivories. Pointing with the index finger is found so frequently in the Stuttgart Psalter that its authenticity cannot be doubted in a Carolingian context. Checking a number of examples against the text of the psalms they illustrate shows the gesture to be fundamentally demonstrative. Just as in daily life the extended index finger is used to identify an object of interest, whatever the range of accompanying emotion, so too in the dumb show of art it indicates the source of the emotion and may also be a substitute for audible expression. The soldiers pointing to the crucified Christ at fol. 27 are an example of such a use of the gesture (Figure 38). There are also numerous instances in the psalter where the psalmist points to an object that literally illustrates a word from the text, for example, a hart (fol. 53 verso) or a wineskin (fol. 137 verso), in an attempt to make clear the unrepresented implications of the metaphorical image. In other instances the gesture appears to be an actual sign for speech, as

in the illustration of Psalm 109 at fol. 127 verso (Figure 20), where God the Father points to God the Son. The text reads: “The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Although such a use is a logical extension of the gesture’s purpose, it is interesting that Karl Sittl in his study of Greek and Roman gestures has identified the outstretched thumb and index finger as the early speaking gesture of the Greeks and Romans.<sup>70</sup> The extension of the first two fingers (the so-called Latin blessing) seen commonly in Early Christian art is merely a late-antique version of the same. Judging from the Stuttgart Psalter and other manuscripts the Carolingian artists appear to have utilized both speaking gestures interchangeably.<sup>71</sup>

There are seven illustrations in the Stuttgart Psalter in which Christ is depicted in a frontal position, generally enthroned, holding a book, and pointing upward.<sup>72</sup> In all instances the text implies that he is making reference to the heavens or God above. Of special interest is the *Traditio* scene illustrating Psalm 88 at fol. 103 verso (Figure 23), which has already been cited as an iconographic parallel for one of the Noailles ivories. The relevant Psalm verses read: “Confitebuntur caeli mirabilia tua, Domine; / Etenim veritatem tuam in ecclesia sanctorum./ Quoniam quis in nubibus aequabitur Domino,/ Similis erit Deo in filiis Dei? / Deus, qui glorificatur in consilio sanctorum,/ Magnus et terribilis super omnes qui in circuitu eius sunt” (vv.

69. E. Kitzinger, review of *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter* in *The Art Bulletin* 51 (1969) p. 40. The language of gesture, chironomia, has been of considerably more interest to scholars of antique art than to students of the medieval period, possibly because of Quintilian’s handbook *Institutio Oratoria*, which describes appropriate oratorical gestures. For bibliography on gesture in antique art see R. Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art*, Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, no. 14 (New Haven, 1963). There is one extremely important study of the pointing gesture that does utilize Carolingian material, J. J. Tikkanen’s *Zwei Gebärden mit dem Zeigefinger*, Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae 43, II (Helsinki, 1913). Tikkanen treats the subject in its broad aesthetic and chronological dimensions. He divides the material into two categories, the more specific indication of silence or thought denoted by the raising of the index finger to the lips or chin and the expressive or demonstrative gesture with which we are concerned here. Although Tikkanen cites numerous examples from Carolingian art (most frequently, the Utrecht and Stuttgart Psalters, the Terence manuscripts, and the San Paolo Bible), his primary purpose is to define the range of meanings, incidence, and

use of the index-finger gesture from antiquity through the Renaissance. While the meanings of the pointing gesture here derived from analysis of the Stuttgart Psalter are treated by Tikkanen in his study, the understanding of its precise intentions in the Metropolitan ivory must be derived from analysis of Carolingian material.

70. K. Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer* (Leipzig, 1890) p. 285.

71. In particular the Carolingian Terence manuscripts, where text and image are explicitly related. L. W. Jones and C. R. Morey (*The Miniatures of the Manuscripts of Terence* [Princeton, 1931] pp. 206 ff.) also consider both of the gestures as indicating speech. The findings are also borne out by gestures in the Touronian Genesis illustrations (see Kessler, “*Hic Homo Formatur*,” pp. 143–160). Noteworthy too is the fact that Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologia* considers the index finger to have a pointing or demonstrative function—“Secundus salutaris, seu demonstratorius, quia eo fere salutamus, atque ostendimus” (J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* [Paris, 1844–1865] LXXXII, col. 406).

72. Fols. 16, 21 verso, 77, 103 verso, 107, 111, 162.

6–8). The meaning of “the heavens” (*caeli*) for the apostles is commonly recognized in patristic exegesis.<sup>73</sup> For example, St. Augustine makes it abundantly clear in his explanation of Psalm 88 that the text refers to the mercy and truth of the Lord, which through the offices of the apostles are responsible for the salvation of the Jews and Gentiles.<sup>74</sup> Thus, patristic exegesis explains not only the choice of the *Traditio* scene for the illustration of the text but also the meaning of the pointing gesture of the enthroned Christ. In this case the gesture makes reference to something not depicted and expands thereby the capacity of the visual to render an interpretation of the text.

Although the scene on the Metropolitan ivory lacks the full complement of *Traditio* elements, there is a high degree of probability, considering its close association with the Noailles ivory, where the *Traditio* is fully depicted, that the pointing gesture of Christ is a similar direct reference to salvation.

In addition, the use of the gesture by the infant Christ and the angels on the Metropolitan’s Virgin plaque appears to stress the promise of salvation commonly embodied in the Theotocos image. In his commentary on verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 88, where the psalmist speaks of the covenant sworn to David that his seed should be established for all generations, St. Augustine says: “Sic ergo hic accipiamus, fratres: Usque in aeternum praeparabo semen tuum, non tantum illam carnem Christi natam ex uirgine Maria, sed etiam nos omnes credentes in Christum. . . .”<sup>75</sup> Thus, although reproducing quite faithfully a fragment of an Early Christian composition, the artist seems to make explicit the promise of salvation in a new way by having the Christ child and angels indicate the heavens above.

Since the pointing gesture is so compatible with the meaning of both scenes, its authenticity is proven to a greater degree, but the gesture should also be understood as imparting to the traditional representations a specific didactic and exegetical overtone that makes of it the most fundamental Carolingian iconographic element to be discovered in the Metropolitan’s ivories.

Beyond the iconographic explanation there is one important formal observation that may be made about the gesture as it appears on the Metropolitan ivories. When the pointing gesture is used by Christ in the Stuttgart Psalter to indicate the heavens, the hand is invariably depicted with the palm turned toward the viewer (cf. Figure 23), whereas on the Metropolitan ivories the back of the hand is shown in every case. Obviously, the position of the hand on the ivories is technically more desirable for sculpture, since it permits a more massive and compact form. However, given the associations of the Metropolitan ivories with Charles the Bald’s monuments, it may be quite significant that in the Coronation Sacramentary, made for Charles the Bald c. 870, the hand of the king who points upward to the hand of God lowering a crown onto his haloed head is shown with its back facing the viewer (Figure 41).<sup>76</sup>

In spite of the seemingly disparate evidence gleaned from the examination of the Metropolitan’s ivories, one fact is certain—they are authentic Carolingian pieces. All their characteristics and especially their most unusual aspects, including those not paralleled in the Noailles ivories, can be accounted for within Carolingian production of the middle half of the ninth century. Iconographically they belong to a small group of Carolingian works stemming from Early Christian five-part diptychs. Within this group they are possibly the most faithful works in copying the traditional Early Christian imagery, at least for the fragmentary portion of the diptychs they reproduce. Conversely, they document the relatively greater originality and inventiveness of such ensembles as the Lorsch five-part diptych on the one hand and the Noailles reliefs on the other, both of which are works clearly associated with court production—that of Charlemagne and Charles the Bald respectively.

The question as to the date and provenance of the Metropolitan ivories seems far more difficult to answer, since the affiliations range over the whole of the mid-ninth century and implicate a number of workshops.

73. See the commentary on the illustration by J. Eschweiler et al. in *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter*, II p. 119.

74. *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, XXXIX, pp. 1223 ff.).

75. *Enarrationes*, pp. 1222–1223.

76. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 2 verso. It should also be noted that the pointing gesture is very frequent in the San Paolo Bible.

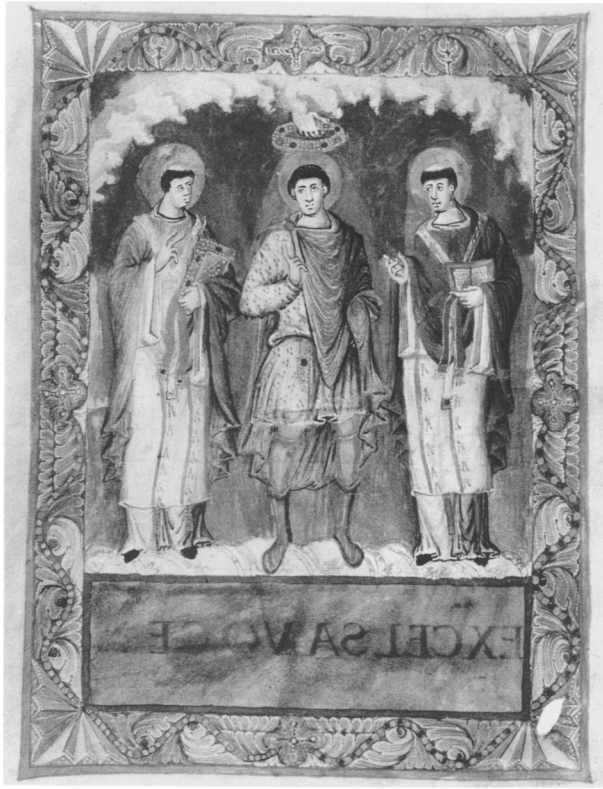


FIGURE 41

King and clerics. Coronation Sacramentary. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 2 verso

However, a review of the evidence makes it clear that some portions of it, namely, those concerning style rather than simple repetition of motif, are of greater importance. The majority of such distinguishing evidence relates to the borders of the ivories.

Viewed as a whole, the primary and most unequivocal evidence for a date and localization of the Metropolitan ivories is their affiliation with Morgan 728. The parallels involve not only choice of acanthus vocabulary and style of execution, but also, and more important, the rarity of the composition of the border of the Christ panel in conjunction with its preponderant importance in Morgan 728 and the presence of each ivory's border motif in the frames of two evangelist portraits, surely not a matter of simple coincidence. The general stylization in the manuscript's ornament is not especially disturbing for two reasons, first, because of the difference in medium, and second, because there are some passages of acanthus in the manuscript that are comparable in execution to the leaves on the ivories.

Beyond this it seems more than probable that the

Metropolitan ivories were, in fact, once part of the original cover of Morgan 728. They have a symmetrical relationship with the gospels (see Figure 42). The manuscript measures  $12 \frac{1}{8}$  by  $10 \frac{1}{8}$  inches and, judging from its generous margins, does not appear to have been cut down when it was rebound in the late eighteenth century.<sup>77</sup> If the Metropolitan ivories are placed upon the manuscript, the discrepancy between the width of the top or bottom and the side metal borders is  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch—a difference virtually imperceptible given the fact that the metal and jeweled frame would be relatively wide, measuring  $3 \frac{1}{2}$  inches at the top or bottom and  $3 \frac{11}{16}$  inches at the sides, using for measurement the regular Christ and apostles panel rather than the irregular Virgin plaque. If this association of the Metropolitan ivories with Morgan 728 is correct, then the provenance and date of the ivories is most probably that of the manuscript—that is, Reims between 845 and 882, the period of Archbishop Hincmar's tenure. When the Reims manuscripts are fully studied and we gain, hopefully, a more precise date for the manuscript, we will have one for the ivories.

Let us examine this hypothesis further, first with reference to the other comparative material, and second with regard to what is known about Morgan 728, in order to determine if and to what extent the evidence is in accord with such a localization. For convenience I will use a rough chronological order: (1) Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the Stuttgart Psalter, (2) Tours, (3) Charles the Bald, and (4) Reims. It is unfortunate that the Victoria and Albert ivories, of critical importance in relation to the Metropolitan ivories, have not been studied in detail and therefore must be omitted from this discussion.

The question of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, specifically, the Stuttgart Psalter, seems at the most to involve a model-copy relationship either with the psalter it-

77. I am grateful to William Voelkle, Acting Curator of Manuscripts, The Pierpont Morgan Library, for these precise measurements.

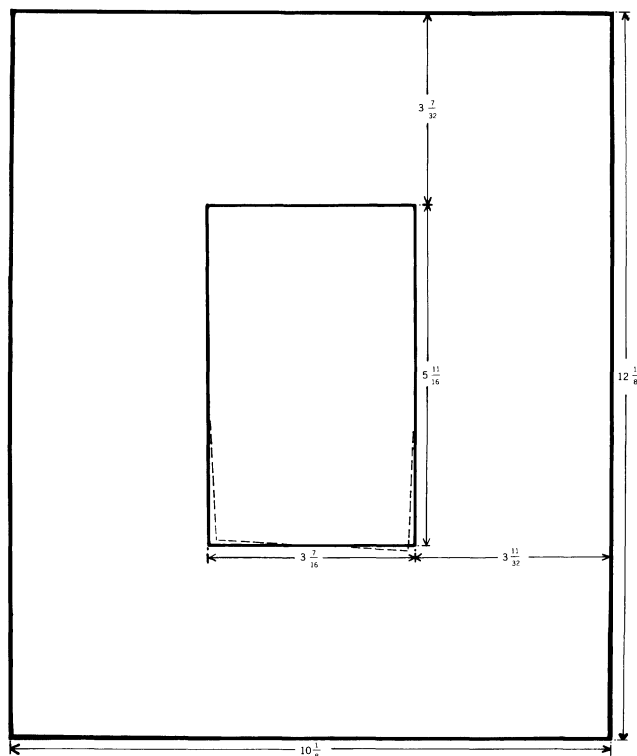
self or material related to it. Not only are the truncated angels and their hairpin wings similar, but also the quite specific and unusual iconographic detail of the pointing gesture. Carl Nordenfalk, who believes the psalter exhibits more original invention than do the authors of its recent facsimile edition, sees the illustrations as evocative of the court milieu and direction from the highest Carolingian quarters.<sup>78</sup> He points out that Hilduin, abbot of Saint-Denis and high chancellor at the court of Louis the Pious, presided over Saint-Germain-des-Prés from 824 to the time of his exile in 831 and was probably the driving force, so to speak, behind the fabrication of the psalter. Now, at this time Hincmar not only resided at the abbey of Saint-Denis, having been raised and educated there, but also as a young man in his twenties and a beloved disciple of Abbot Hilduin spent time at the court with him. Hincmar followed his master into exile in Corvey and by 834 officially had entered the service of Louis the Pious. After Louis's death in 840 (Hilduin died the following year) Hincmar attached his unswerving loyalty to Charles the Bald, and he became archbishop of Reims in 845. Two things are significant—first, Hincmar doubtless knew of and possibly witnessed in part the making of the Stuttgart Psalter, and second, his connection with the royal court would have placed the psalter well within his orbit even if it did remain at Saint-Germain in Paris. Saint-Germain-des-Prés, a royal abbey founded by Childebert in the sixth century, received considerable royal patronage. Gozlin, abbot from the 850s until 885 when he became bishop of Paris (except for a time when he was held captive by the Normans), was an uncle of Charles the Bald, as well as high chancellor at court. Thus the Stuttgart Psalter, though its specific influence on other Carolingian art is as yet little known, belongs to the courtly milieu. It is also well to remember that the abbey was raided and burned by the Normans some three times while Charles the Bald reigned, causing the monks to flee with their relics and, presumably, with their library. In any case, access to the psalter or materials related to it is at least historically possible in a Hincmarian context.

78. Nordenfalk, in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 32 (1969) pp. 165 ff., 170.

The border motifs show certain relationships with Touronian work. They are negligible for the border of the Christ and apostles panel, which has an unusual motif, and strong for the Virgin panel, which exhibits one of the most common motifs. In addition, the comparison of hairpin angel wings is less convincing for Touronian work than it is for the Stuttgart Psalter. Minimal relationships with Touronian work are not incompatible with a Hincmarian date and Reims provenance for the ivories, since the severity of the Norman raids up the Loire caused effective production to cease at Tours in the 850s. It is possible to assume that artists fled Tours and found refuge in other monasteries. But influence of Touronian work on the court production of Charles the Bald is documented by the Noailles Gospels and numerous other manuscripts, and the Vivian Bible (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 1) was made at Tours for Charles. Even more

FIGURE 42

Line drawing by the author illustrating the superimposition of the Metropolitan ivories and Morgan 728. Broken lines denote the Virgin plaque. All measurements are in inches



to the point, the text and other aspects of Morgan 728 are based on a Tours prototype.<sup>79</sup>

The links of the Metropolitan ivories with Charles the Bald's circle are so strong that, were it not for the evidence of Morgan 728, one would be tempted to see the reliefs as products of the court atelier, wherever it may have been. However, the formal differences between the Noailles and Metropolitan ivories, in particular, the bold activity of the former and the greater containment of the latter, makes a different provenance (or time) acceptable for the Metropolitan carvings. The similarity of the form of the pointing gesture with that of the king in the Metz Sacramentary might be an indication of date for the Metropolitan ivories. It should be noted, however, that a composition involving a number of fingers facing outward, seen commonly in the Stuttgart Psalter, scarcely lends itself to the medium of sculpture.

Other than in Morgan 728, the major piece of stylistic evidence is the leaf form found on the Lindau Gospels. This, in contradistinction to the situation as regards the borders of the Victoria and Albert ivories, for example, seems to be a matter of style rather than influence of a model. Although we cannot say with certainty until the golden repoussé and gem ensemble is fully studied, it does seem most likely that the Lindau cover was made at Reims when Hincmar was archbishop. If so, then nothing prohibits a direct attribution of the Metropolitan ivories to one of the Reims ateliers. Saint-Remi is the logical choice, since Morgan 728 came from there. But Hincmar was abbot of both Saint-Remi and Saint-Thierry, and until the Reims

manuscripts are carefully studied, we have no way to decide. Parenthetically it should be noted that the iconography of the Metropolitan pieces, infrequent as it is in the Carolingian context, is comfortably accommodated by Hincmar's interests and activities as revealed by Flodoard in his *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae* and in Hincmar's writings, especially his poetry. This matter, however, is too complex to explore here and must be postponed for treatment in conjunction with the Noailles ivories in my forthcoming study of the Liuthard ivories.

We have no records of when or where Morgan acquired the pair of ivories he gave to the Museum. We do know that the manuscript came from Saint-Remi, since its eighteenth-century red morocco binding bears the arms of the abbey.<sup>80</sup> Probably the gospels were among the 248 manuscripts taken from the monastery by the revolutionary authorities in April 1790.<sup>81</sup> On January 15, 1774, the abbey was destroyed by fire, and a witness to the event, Dom Chastelain, attests that 50 or 60 manuscripts were thrown from the windows by some monks despite the flames that surrounded them. Nearly everything burned except the church, but much was pillaged by "des gens malveillans."<sup>82</sup> It is possible that this tragic and chaotic event led both to the rebinding of Morgan 728 and to the alienation of its ivory decoration. One fact about the condition of the ivories, their brown color, may substantiate such a hypothesis. A recent technical study of the effect of heat on the color and chemical composition of ivory reveals that the brown color could have been produced by a temperature low enough to have permitted a hasty

79. Meta Harrsen, from the unpublished catalogue at the Morgan Library (see note 48).

80. Robert S. Holford acquired the manuscript in 1830 from J. L. Bourdillon, and presumably it had been at Saint-Remi as late as 1790 (see especially The Pierpont Morgan Library, *A Review of the Growth . . . 1924-1929*, and *Treasures from the Pierpont Morgan Library, Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition*, 1957).

81. "Inventaire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Remi 28, 29 et 30 Avril 1790," *Travaux de l'Académie nationale de Reims* 133, part 1 (1913-1914) p. 378.

82. "Les plus hardis religieux, avec quelques séculiers, entrèrent dans la bibliothèque, et, malgré les flammes qui les environnoient, ils jettèrent par les fenêtres environ 50 à 60 manuscrits d'environ 1000 manuscrits riches et anciens, et environ 1500 vol-

umes de livres imprimés, tristes restes de plus de 25000 à 28000 imprimés de plus rares et plus belles éditions; presque tous les meubles, lits, linges, armoires et effets furent consumés, et quantité enlevée par des gens malveillans qui emportèrent jusqu'aux provisions de beurre, fromage, pommes, poires, et même les choux du jardin. Plusieurs burent de l'encre, croyant que c'étoit des liqueurs. En un mot, tout a été comme au pillage. . ." (H. Jadart, ed., "Journal de Dom Pierre Chastelain, bénédictin remois [1709-1782]," *Travaux de l'Académie nationale de Reims* 110, part 2 [1900-1901] p. 132). Concerning the manuscripts see especially F. M. Carey, "The Scriptorium of Reims during the Archbishopric of Hincmar (845-882)," *Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Edward Kennard Rand* (New York, 1938) pp. 41-60.

rescue of the artifact from the fire.<sup>83</sup> However, this observation will have to be considered further by scientists before this speculation can be supported.

How ironic if Morgan acquired and gave away in 1917 the ivory plaques belonging to a manuscript he came to possess ten years later. Ironic, too, that the cover of M. 1, a manuscript he procured in 1899, provides one of the major pieces of evidence for the association of those ivory panels and that manuscript.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research and writing of this study were made possible by a semester's sabbatical leave from Smith College in the spring of 1971. I owe thanks to Sumner McKnight Crosby, Kurt Weitzmann, Helen Chillman, and Pamela Blum for

their criticism of the study, to John Davis for his expert editing of the draft, and to Erna Huber for typing the manuscript.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

Reference to catalogue entries and illustrations in the following *corpora* is made by using the first initial of the author's name followed by the volume number in Roman numerals, if appropriate, and then the plate number as designated in the work, i.e., B., cxvii; G. I, 71; and K. III, 86.

Amédée Boinet, *La miniature carolingienne*, plate volume (Paris, 1913).

Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1914–1926).

Wilhelm Koehler, *Die karolingischen Miniaturen*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1930–1960).

83. N. S. Baer, N. Indictor, J. H. Frantz, and B. Appelbaum, "The Effect of High Temperature on Ivory," *Studies in Conservation* 16 (1971) pp. 1–8. The study used samples of fresh elephant ivory heated for one hour. Temperature increases produced colorations that progressed from cream to yellow to brown to gray blue and finally to white. Brown was produced in fresh ivory heated for one hour at a temperature of 260° C. (500° F.). The authors also report observation of samples heated at lower temperatures for longer periods and state that "color changes are produced similar to those already noted but occur generally at lower temperatures . . ." (p. 6—report on this research in press, *IIC-AG Bulletin*). I wish to express my thanks to Andrew Petryn, Consultant in Restoration, Yale University Art Gallery, for this reference.

# A Theory about the Early History of the Cloisters Apocalypse

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IN A RECENT PUBLICATION the Metropolitan Museum reproduced in facsimile, together with an explanatory volume, an early fourteenth-century manuscript, the so-called Cloisters Apocalypse (acc. no. 68.174). The illustrations in this manuscript show a startling relationship to the three miniatures by the Master of the Third Addition in the Manesse Codex, the Great Minnesinger Manuscript produced in Zurich about 1320–1330 and now in the Universitätsbibliothek in Heidelberg. By interpretation of the heraldry contained in the illustrations it was established that the Cloisters Apocalypse was painted in Normandy, c. 1320, in all probability in Coutances, and that it came to Switzerland, apparently to the collegiate abbey of Zofingen, in the canton of Aargau, before 1386.<sup>1</sup>

The deduction of this presumed early history went as follows: on folio 9 verso (Figure 1) six armorial shields appear as decoration on the border of an altar cloth. Three of them can be identified as the arms of Jehan de Tilly, Richart de Carbonnel, and Suart de Pirou, Norman knights who lived within a radius of thirty-five miles from Coutances.<sup>2</sup> The three others are more ambiguous, but they can be tentatively attributed to Rychart de Viliers, to Jehan de Bigars, and possibly to members of the de Saint-Brice or the de Beaumont family.<sup>3</sup> On folio 38 verso (Figure 4) the donors—evidently husband and wife—are kneeling in front of their patron saints. There are traces of armorial shields visible next to the donors and at the bottom of the frame. Though these shields were erased at an early date, two

1. Florens Deuchler, Jeffrey M. Hoffeld, and Helmut Nickel, *The Cloisters Apocalypse*, 2 vols. (New York, 1971). The questions of origin and migrations are treated in the chapter "The Heraldry in the Manuscript," II, pp. 18–26. The heraldic evidence of the Cloisters Apocalypse, slight and fragmentary as it is, seems to be the only direct proof for a connection between these two schools of book illumination that are so widely separated in space. The archives of the Département de la Manche in Saint-Lô were destroyed during World War II, and nothing remains of the old collegiate abbey's library in Zofingen. For this information and kind cooperation in research I want to thank M. de Saint-Jorre, Président du Cercle littéraire et archéologique, Coutances; Yves Nedelec, Directeur des Services d'archives de la Manche, Saint-Lô; G. Boner, Staatsarchivar des Kantons Aargau, Aarau; and Peter F. Kopp, Historisches Museum, Basel.

2. Paul Adam-Even and Léon Jéquier, "Un armorial français du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: L'Armorial Wijnberghen," *Archives Héraldiques Suisse* 65–68 (1951–1954) cat. no. 333; or, a fleur-de-lys gules (Jehan de Tilly); cat. no. 394: azure, a chief gules, three roundels argent over all (Richart de Carbonnel); cat. no. 462: vert, a bend cottised argent (Suart de Pirou).

3. Adam-Even and Jéquier, "L'Armorial Wijnberghen," cat. no. 391: or, fretty of azure (Rychart de Viliers); cat. no. 384: argent two bars gules (Jehan de Bigars); cat. no. 430: paly of or and gules (Gilbert de Saint-Brice); cat. no. 481: paly of or and gules (Guillaume de Saint-Brice). Henri Jouglar de Morenas, *Grand Armorial de France*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1834–1852) no. 3678: paly of six, or and gules (Beaumont, Brittany). A Jeanne de Beaumont was the wife of Jehan de Tilly.

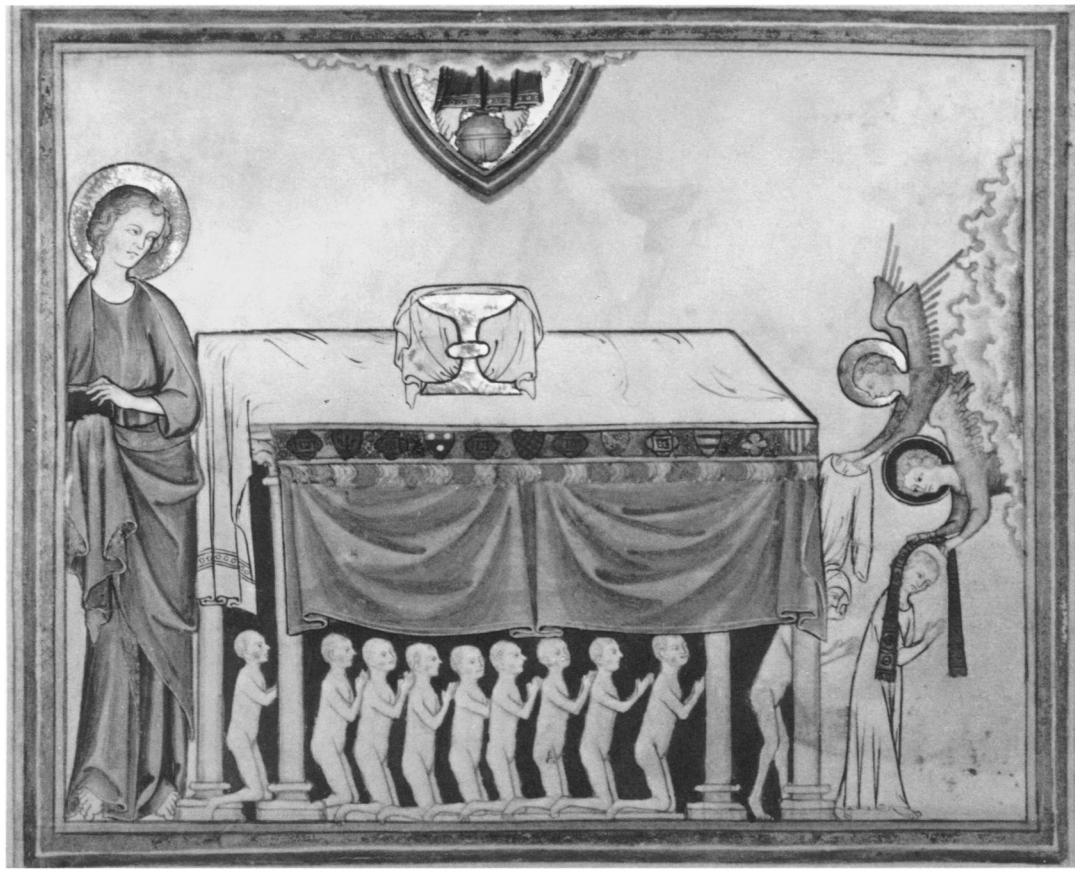


FIGURE 1 Folio 9 verso of the Cloisters Apocalypse. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cloisters Collection, purchase, 68.174. The shields on the border of the altar cloth are, from left to right: or, a fleur-de-lys gules (Jehan de Tilly), azure, a chief gules, three roundels argent over all (Richart de Carbonnel), or, fretty of azure (Rychart de Viliers?), vert, a bend cottised argent (Suart de Pirou), or, two bars gules (Jehan de Bigars?), and an unfinished drawing of a coat paly

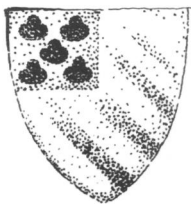


FIGURE 2

Drawing of the arms of the lady as they appear under ultraviolet light

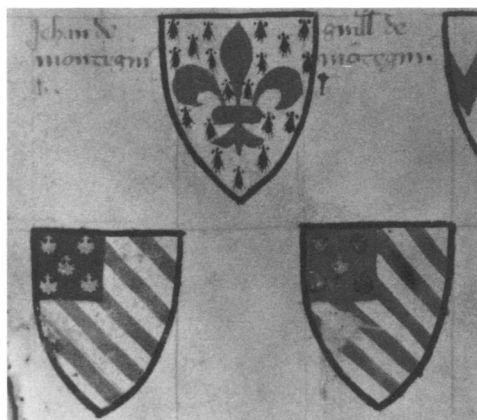


FIGURE 3

Arms of Jehan de Montigny in the Armorial Wijnberghen

FIGURE 4

Folio 38 verso of the Cloisters Apocalypse. The scrape marks of the eradicated donors' shields are visible between the backs of the kneeling donors and the frame; traces of the shields added later are visible at the bottom of the frame







FIGURE 6 Opening page of the pontifical of Guillaume de Thiéville

of them are still recognizable under ultraviolet light, and enough is left of two others to venture a guess as to their identity. The husband's shield is completely effaced with the exception of a few specks of paint that show that the shield once was black; since there are no visible discoloration marks characteristic for oxidation of silver, it can be conjectured that its charge was of gold. The lady's shield displays the arms of the family de Montigny in the form or, five bendlets gules, a canton azure charged with five (2,1,2) scallop shells argent (Figures 2, 3). These arms are documented for Jehan de Montigny, a Norman knight who is recorded in the later thirteenth century,<sup>4</sup> and therefore it is reasonable to assume that this lady is his daughter. Unfortunately, it has not been possible yet to find out her full name and that of her husband. The manuscript's probable origin at Coutances is corroborated by a pontifical of about 1315, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms. Lat. 973, that, as the style of the marginal decoration shows, apparently came from the same workshop and bears the arms of Guillaume de Thiéville, bishop of Coutances from 1315 to 1347 (Figures 5, 6).<sup>5</sup>

The three shields at the bottom of the frame must have been added later, at a time when the book was already bound, because there are faint mirror images on the opposite page that were produced when the volume was carelessly closed before the paint was completely dry. The first of these shields shows the arms of the von Büttikon family, bendy of six, gules and vair (Figure 7), who played an important role during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in what is now the Swiss canton of Aargau.<sup>6</sup> The second shield must have been gold, charged—as the mirror image shows—with a red figure that contained small blue elements. The third shield was red; again judging from the absence of silver oxidation, it can be deduced that its charges must have been of gold. Evidently these three later shields indicate ownership, and among the members of the von Büttikon family the most likely owner is Johans VI von Büttikon (1286–1360), a very important prelate, who was not only prior of the collegiate abbey of Zofingen

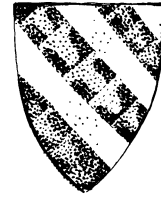


FIGURE 7

Drawing of the first shield of the set added later to folio 38 verso of the Cloisters Apocalypse as it appears under ultraviolet light

(from 1323), but canon at Beromünster (from 1311), *Domherr* at Constance (from 1325), prior of the abbey of Schönenwerd (from 1336), and rector at Sur and Aarau (from 1351). He was succeeded as prior of the abbey in Zofingen by his nephew Johans XIII, who held the post until 1387. Therefore it seems possible that the central shield bore the arms of the abbey of Zofingen, which were identical with the town's arms, or, a lion gules, armed azure, and the third shield could have once shown those of Beromünster, gules, a bend or, above it a lion or, or those of the abbey's patron, Saint Maurice, gules, a cross trilobée or. These arms of Zofingen were actually the family arms of the Habsburgs, who were the town's overlords from 1295 to 1386, when Duke Leopold III lost his life fighting against the rebellious Swiss in the disastrous battle of Sempach. After Sempach the town of Zofingen adopted a new coat-of-arms based upon the design of its battle flag: barry of four, gules and argent.<sup>7</sup> It is an intriguing thought that the shields on the donors' page might have been eradicated out of a democratic zeal that could not tolerate any vestiges of the tyrant, no matter in what form. The innocent French arms probably became victims of this same blind zeal.

An illustrated manuscript imported from faraway Normandy to Zofingen could well have attracted the attention of a painter in Zurich, only about thirty miles away as the crow flies, and thus influenced his style in

4. Adam-Even and Jéquier, "L'Armorial Wijnberghen," cat. no. 490. According to information kindly provided by MM. de Saint-Jorre and Nedelec, Saint-Lô, there are no records left concerning Jehan de Montigny or his family.

5. Deuchler, Hoffeld, and Nickel, *Cloisters Apocalypse*, II, pp. 10–12, fig. 3; p. 18, fig. 9; p. 20.

6. Walther Merz, "Die Herren von Büttikon," in *Genealogisches Handbuch zur Schweizer Geschichte*, 3 vols. (Zurich, 1908–1916) III, p. 360–401, pls. 20, 21.

7. Walther Merz, "Die Gemeindewappen des Kantons Aargau. X. Der Bezirk Zofingen," *Archives Héraldiques Suisses* 29 (1915) pp. 127–128.

**FIGURE 8**  
Herr Otto vom Turne. Manesse  
Codex, folio 194



the final three miniatures he added to the huge compilation of the Manesse Codex.

The three miniatures contributed by the Master of the Third Addition are those of Herr Otto vom Turne, Herr Gösli von Ehenheim, and Graf Werner von Homberg. One of the remarkable facts about this selection is that the knights in this group were still alive, or only very recently dead, at the time these miniatures must have been painted.

Otto vom Turne (Figure 8) was from the canton of

Aargau and in the service of the dukes of Austria. He is documented from 1275 to 1330, and his arms are recorded in the well-known *Wappenrolle von Zürich*, a roll of arms of around 1340.<sup>8</sup> The connection with the dukes of Austria is of interest because the von Büttikons were attached to the Habsburgs too; one of them, Johans X

8. Walther Merz, *Die Wappenrolle von Zürich* (Zurich and Leipzig, 1930) no. 320, p. 126. Karl Zangemeister, *Die Wappen, Helmschmuck und Standarten der Grossen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift (Manesse Codex)* (Görlitz and Heidelberg, 1892) p. 13, pl. 32.



**FIGURE 9**  
Herr Gösli von Ehenheim (left) attacking unidentified knights, one of them with arms similar to Figure 7.  
Manesse Codex, folio 197 verso

von Büttikon, surnamed *der Hofmeister*, was *Landvogt* of Aargau for the dukes of Austria from 1353 to 1361.

Gösli (Gossmar) von Ehenheim's family came from Oberehnheim (Obernai) near Strasbourg (Figure 9).<sup>9</sup> In his miniature the most remarkable feature—in our context—is the coat-of-arms displayed on the horse trappings of the first of his opponents. It bears bendy of gules and vair, the gules semé with stars or, a charge that is conspicuously similar to the bendy of six, gules and vair, of the von Büttikons. Though it is not known that any of the von Büttikons bore stars for difference, several of them used stars—a highly unusual feature—as space fillers on their seals.<sup>10</sup>

Graf Werner von Homberg (died 1320) came from a cadet branch of the counts of Froburg, one of the great dynastic families in Aargau and the country south of Basel (Figure 10).<sup>11</sup> He was one of the leaders in the expedition to Rome of 1311, undertaken by Emperor Henry VII to secure his confirmation and coronation by the pope, Clement V (reigned 1304–1314). Before his election Emperor Henry VII was the count of

Luxembourg, and the host of three thousand knights that he took with him on this Italian venture came mostly from the western, French-speaking parts of the empire. However, the knights following Graf Werner in his miniature, which quite definitely shows an event from the Rome expedition, are identifiable by their crests and the armorial bearings on their surcoats as noblemen from Aargau and the lands around Basel. These nobles all are to be found in the *Wappenrolle von Zürich*,<sup>12</sup> with the exception of the knight in a surcoat paly of or and gules, who rides directly next to Graf Werner himself. This knight had puzzled me during the research done for the commentary volume for the *Cloisters Apocalypse* publication, and only recently did I succeed in finding an explanation for his alien-looking (for Aargau and Basel) coat-of-arms: it must be the armorial bearings of the de Vuippens family from the Pays de Vaud.<sup>13</sup> Girard de Vuippens—or, as the German version of his name would be, Gerhart von Wippingen—was bishop of Basel from 1309 till 1325, and he participated in the expedition to Rome in 1311.<sup>14</sup>

9. Zangemeister, *Wappen, Helmzierden und Standarten*, pp. 13–14, pl. 33.

10. Among the hundreds of Swiss seals of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, I found only eleven specimens that have stars as space fillers; among them are five of members of the von Büttikon family (Ulrich I v. B., 1254; Walther I v. B., 1286, and his wife, Elisabeth von Wediswil, 1301; Ulrich V *der Lieblose* v. B., 1320, and Rudolf I v. B., 1347, sons of Walther I and brothers of Johans VI, the prior of Zofingen), two of the von Wediswil family (Walther III v. W., 1302, and his brother Arnold II v. W., 1292, both cousins to Elisabeth v. W.), and a town seal of Zofingen.

11. Merz, *Wappenrolle*, no. 44, p. 25. Zangemeister, *Wappen, Helmzierden und Standarten*, p. 4, pl. 10.

12. The arms of the von Heidegg family were: per pale, or and sable; crest: a pair of hunting horns, one or and one sable, with strings gules. In the miniature only the golden horn is visible. Merz, *Wappenrolle*, no. 402, p. 153. Merz, "Die Herren von Heidegg," *Genealogisches Handbuch*, III, pp. 309–345, pl. 19. The arms of the von Rappoltstein family were: argent, three (2, 1) shields gules. Their crest varied; it could be a human figure, either female or male, clad in either red or white, usually with a red cap. In the early fourteenth century the crest depended much upon the whim of the bearer; furthermore it was used as a mark of difference between members of the same family. Two members of the von Rappoltstein family, Anshelm II and Heinrich IV, are known to have participated in the expedition to Rome. Merz, *Wappenrolle*, no. 182, pp. 82–83. The arms of the von Eptingen family were: or, an eagle sable, poised fesswise. There were more than thirty different crests used in the von Eptingen family, but one of the most frequently found is: a plume of black rooster's feathers spangled with silver linden leaves, issuant from a gold crown, as shown in the

miniature. Merz, *Wappenrolle*, no. 503, p. 187. The arms of the von Randegg family were: argent, a lion's head gules; crest: a lion's head gules. Merz, *Wappenrolle*, no. 202, p. 89. Finally, the arms of the von Steinegg family were: azure, a fesse wavy or; crest: a blue conical hat charged with the wavy golden band and surmounted with a plume of black rooster's feathers. Though the rooster's feathers have been replaced by a peacock plume, there can be little doubt that the crest illustrated in the miniature is supposed to be that of the von Steinegg. Merz, *Wappenrolle*, no. 135, p. 63.

13. The arms of the de Vuippens family were: paly of six, argent and gules; crest: a pillow gules, surmounted by three ostrich feathers, argent, gules, argent; or a plume of ten ostrich feathers; or a plume of peacock feathers. Hubert de Vevey-L'Hardy, "Armorial de la noblesse féodale du Pays romand de Fribourg," *Archives Héraldiques Suisses* 58 (1944) pp. 61–63. A. de Mandrot *Armorial historique du Pays de Vaud* (Lausanne, 1880) pl. 30. However, there is no definite proof about the colors as borne in the fourteenth century; a sixteenth-century source gave them as: paly of six, or and gules. Robert Genevay, "Les preuves de noblesse de Claude de Franchet d'Estavayer," *Archives Héraldiques Suisses* 75 (1961) pp. 16–18, ill.

14. For detailed information concerning the bishops of Basel I wish to thank Brigitte Degler-Spengler, acting for Albert Bruckner, Helvetia Sacra, Basel, and Peter F. Kopp, Historisches Museum, Basel. Girard de Vuippens, after a career in England (subdeacon at St. Leonard outside Stamford, 1284; rector of Waddington, 1286; canon at York, 1286; archdeacon at Richmond, 1290, among other positions) was sent on several diplomatic missions in 1300–1302. In 1302 he became bishop of Lausanne, and in 1309, bishop of Basel.

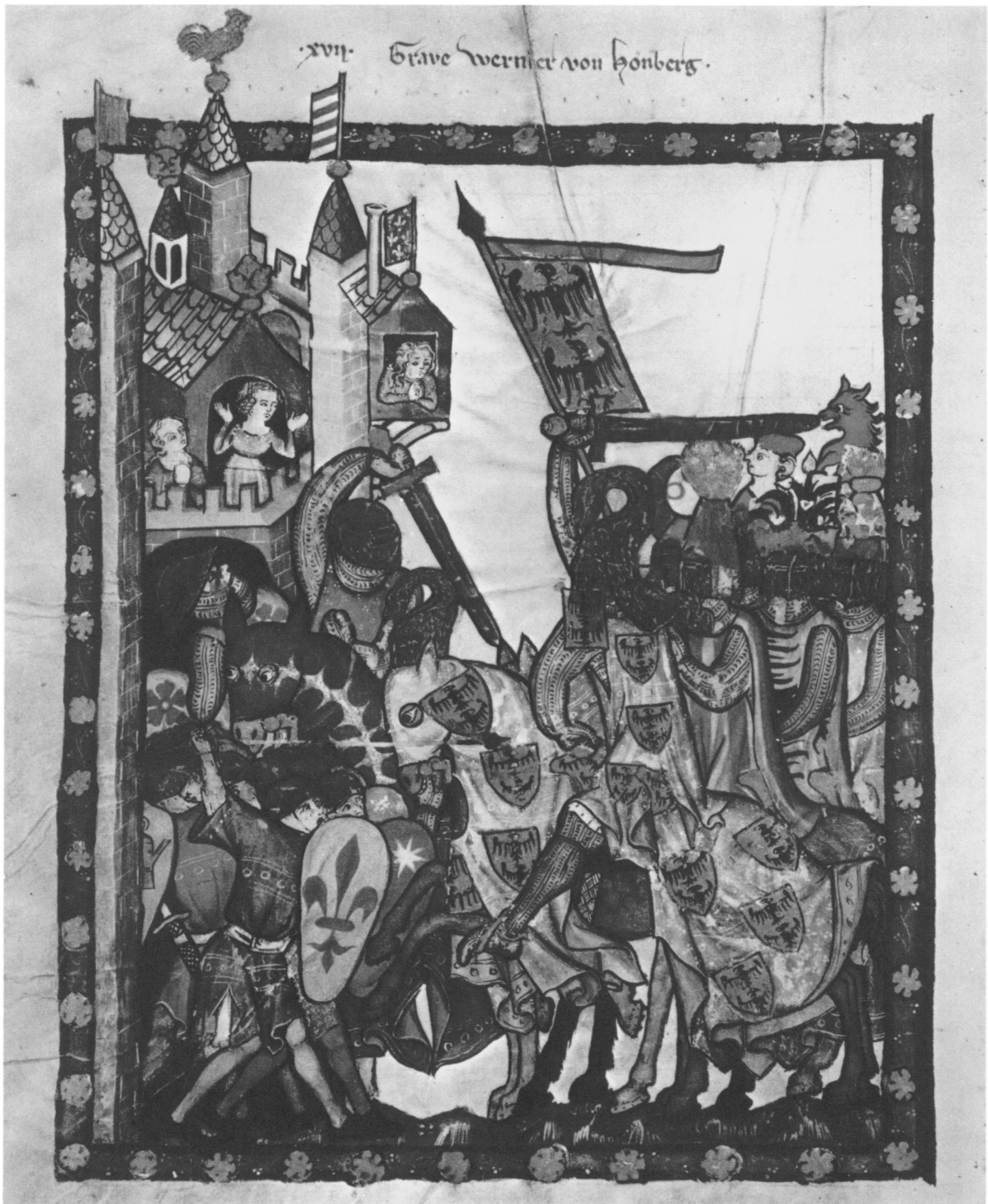


FIGURE 10

Graf Werner von Homberg attacking an Italian town during the campaign of 1311. Following Graf Werner are knights wearing the crests and surcoats of several families: (front row, left to right) de Vuippens, von Eptingen, von Steinegg; (back row) von Heidegg, von Rappoltstein, von Randegg. Manesse Codex, folio 43 verso

His predecessor as bishop of Basel was his cousin Otho de Grandson, who held the position from 1305 to 1309, and both men owed their positions to the influence of their famous uncle, the far-traveled diplomat and knight, Sir Otho de Grandson (1238–1328).<sup>15</sup>

I wish to thank my friend and colleague Roger F. Gardiner, Art Librarian at the University of Ontario, London, Ontario, for drawing my attention to and even supplying me with a copy of a biography of Sir Otho de Grandson, published not many years ago,<sup>16</sup> which seems to contain an intriguing possibility that may shed light on the early history of the Cloisters manuscript.

Otho de Grandson was one of the most fascinating characters of the colorful age between the downfall of the Hohenstaufen and the beginning of the Hundred Years War. He was the trusted friend and adviser of two English kings and three popes, not to mention various emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, the king of Cyprus, and the king of Armenia; he went on Crusade twice, went on diplomatic missions all over Europe, and became a member of the English Parliament. The thumbnail sketch of the career of the “verray parfit gentil knyght” in the *Canterbury Tales* follows the details of Sir Otho’s life so closely as to rule out the possibility of coincidence,<sup>17</sup> especially when we consider that Chaucer knew and greatly admired Sir Otho’s great-great-nephew, Otho III de Grandson, whom he held to be the flower of French poets.

Otho de Grandson was born in 1238 at Grandson, the still well-preserved castle on the northern shore of the Lake of Neuchâtel in the Pays de Vaud, which is now the seat of the Institut Suisse d’Armes Anciennes and Burgundermuseum in memory of the spectacular

victory won by the Swiss pikemen over Charles the Bold of Burgundy in 1476. At an early age, probably as a page in the household of Pierre of Savoy, he came to England, and there he grew up together with his lifelong friend, the later King Edward I (reigned 1272–1307), who was himself born in 1239. In 1267 he appears as a knight of Edward’s household, and he followed the king to Tunis in Saint Louis’s Crusade of 1270. The English contingent arrived shortly after the death of Saint Louis and sailed on to relieve the besieged Saint-Jean-d’Acre. Sir Otho must have distinguished himself significantly, because there exists a version of the anecdote of the wounding of Edward by the poisoned dagger of an assassin sent by the Old Man of the Mountain in which it is not Eleanor of Castile who sucks the poison from her husband’s wound, but the faithful knight Sir Otho. In any case, King Edward held him in high esteem as a trusted servant and loyal friend and sent him on difficult missions all over Europe, be it to the curia in Avignon or Rome, to the emperor, or to the rebellious lords of Gascony.

In 1277 he was appointed warden of the Channel Islands as a reward for his merits and a compensation for the vast expenses he incurred in the service of the king. However, due to his manifold duties as ambassador-at-large for Edward I and his successor Edward II (reigned 1307–1327), and his obligations as a Christian knight—he went on another Crusade in 1291, managing to get out literally on the last galley at the fall of Acre (May 18, 1291), and took the cross a third time in 1319, though he had to have himself absolved of the vow for reason of temporarily failing health—he did not manage to visit these islands until 1323. A bitter quarrel had broken out between the islanders and Sir

15. Bishop Otho de Grandson was the son of Sir Otho’s brother Jacques; Bishop Girard de Vuippens was the son of Ulrich de Vuippens and Sir Otho’s sister Agnès.

16. Esther Rowland Clifford, *A Knight of Great Renown: The Life and Times of Othon de Grandson* (Chicago, 1961). All details about Sir Otho’s life are taken from this work, unless otherwise mentioned. The spelling of his name varied greatly; his first name is recorded as Octolino, Othonin, Othon, Otho, Otes, Otis, and Otto, and his family name as Grançon, Grandson, Grandison, Grandisson, Granson, and Grauntzon.

17. The only real difference is that Chaucer’s Knight is accompanied by his son, who serves him as a squire. Sir Otho was never married and therefore took one of his nephews, Pierre de Vuippens, a brother of Bishop Girard, as a squire in 1291 on his second Cru-

sade. Pierre de Vuippens was killed in the final street fighting at the fall of Acre. However, in the “Great Roll of Arms” (1337–1375) there appears a “Monsire de Granson,” who bears as arms: azure, a bend argent, charged with three scallop shells gules. The arms of the English branch of the Grandsons, descendants of Sir Otho’s brother Guillaume or William, from his marriage to Sibyl Tregoz, were paly of six, argent and azure, a bend gules overall, charged with three eaglets or, differing from Sir Otho’s paly of six, argent and azure, a bend gules overall, charged with three scallop shells or. The scallop shells in the mysterious “Monsire de Granson’s” arms make it likely that he was a bastard son of Sir Otho. D. L. Galbreath, “Les Grandsons d’Angleterre,” *Archives Héraldiques Suisses* 41 (1927) pp. 56–69, fig. 84.

Otho's subwarden, his nephew Girard d'Oron,<sup>18</sup> as well as the bishop of Coutances, Guillaume de Thiéville. In the face of this vicious triangle, what was apparently needed was the diplomatic finesse of Sir Otho himself; the extraordinary situation was that the islands were under the English crown but ecclesiastically belonged to the diocese of Coutances. The difficulties settled, Girard d'Oron—who apparently found it expedient to leave the islands for a spell until things had calmed down a little—was sent to the empire on a special mission by King Edward II, though his diplomatic skill had proven demonstrably inferior to that of his uncle.

Sir Otho, however, we find in July 1324 at a summit conference at Bar-sur-Aube, where he negotiated on behalf of Duke Edouard of Savoy, his liege lord for his holdings in the Pays de Vaud. This conference came at a crucial point in the history of the Holy Roman Empire, and its repercussions were felt all over Europe. After the interregnum (1254–1273) following the downfall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, Rudolf of Habsburg (reigned 1273–1291) had stabilized the drifting ship of state for a while, but soon civil strife set in again. His elected successor, Adolf of Nassau (reigned 1292–1298), was killed in battle, to be followed by Rudolf's son Albrecht, who was assassinated in 1308, an event that, incidentally, features in the story of William Tell. Albrecht's successor, Henry, count of Luxembourg, was to pick up the pieces as Emperor Henry VII, as already mentioned, and he raised an army of three thousand

knights for an expedition to Rome to obtain his confirmation and be crowned by Pope Clement V. Pope Clement hoped that the intervention of the emperor could make an end to the internecine fighting between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. Already in 1310 Sir Otho had served as negotiator between him and the emperor—it has to be kept in mind that the Pays de Vaud, where the lordship of Grandson was situated, was part of the Duchy of Savoy, which in turn belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. A severe illness prevented Sir Otho from participating in the expedition to Rome, but one of his nephews, the already mentioned Bishop Girard de Vuippens of Basel, was with the imperial host in his stead. Sir Otho, however, was one of the arbiters of the resulting Treaty of Cremona (1311). The high hopes set on this enterprise came to naught; the emperor had to fight his way to Rome through the rebellious Guelph cities of northern Italy, and died all too soon (1313), the instrument of death being, according to rumor, a poisoned wafer given to him by a treacherous priest in Holy Communion. The next emperor was the duke of Bavaria, Louis the Bavarian (reigned 1314–1347). He struggled bravely on through plot and counterplot; in 1322 he managed to capture and imprison his rival, Frederick the Handsome of Habsburg, who had been pretender since 1314. The son of Emperor Henry VII, King John of Bohemia, now saw a possibility to snatch up the imperial crown for himself; he had promised to Charles IV of France an outlying part of the empire, the kingdom of Arles, if he would

18. For detailed information about the subwardens of the Channel Islands I wish to thank Joan Stevens, President of the Société Jersiaise, St. Hélier, Jersey, and S. Anthony Standen, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, as well as my colleague Edith Standen, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. For important information about Girard d'Oron I wish to thank Olivier Dessemontet, Directeur des Archives Cantonales Vaudaises, Lausanne, J.-P. Chapuisat, Archiviste Cantonal, Société d'Histoire de la Suisse Romande, Lausanne, and my friend Eugen Heer, Directeur-Intendant, Institut Suisse d'Armes Anciennes, Château de Grandson. Though Girard d'Oron appears repeatedly in contemporary sources as "neveu" to Sir Otho de Grandson, their relationship is not entirely clear. Girard d'Oron was the eldest son of Rodolphe d'Oron, a knight of the Pays de Vaud, and his wife Antonie, whose family name is not known. However, she is most likely Sir Otho's eldest sister, Antonie. The arms of the family d'Oron were: sable, an eagle or. Several members of the family, but apparently not our Girard, differentiated the eagle by adding one, two, or three fleurs-de-lys or. D. L. Galbreath, "Les armoiries

des Sires d'Oron," *Archives Héraldiques Suisses* 38 (1924) pp. 60–64. Black shields without any silver charges are extremely rare in Normandy (in the entire section of the arms of Normandy in the Armorial Wijnberghen there are only two examples); therefore Girard d'Oron qualifies as one of three possible candidates for the mysterious black shield without traces of silver charges on the donors' page of the Cloisters Apocalypse. Because Girard was a very common name in the family d'Oron, our Girard was known as Girard l'Anglais in the Pays de Vaud, whence he returned after 1328. It is known that he had a daughter Marguerite, who married Jean, coseigneur of Aubonne, apparently early in the year 1338. Unfortunately, the name of Girard l'Anglais's wife is nowhere mentioned; this leaves us with the tantalizing speculation that she might have been a foreigner—after all, if their daughter was of marriageable age in 1338, it would be in keeping with the customs of the period to assume that the parents' marriage took place c. 1320, just the time when Girard d'Oron was active in Normandy (1319–1328).

support his claim. King Charles, however, had ambitions of his own, and had tried to secure Austrian support by promising Duke Leopold to hand him ten free cities of the empire—among them Basel, Constance, and Zurich—to be added to the evergrowing *Hausmacht* of the Habsburgs, if he would help him, Charles, to gain the crown. Either project would have gravely endangered the Duchy of Savoy, and the young duke, Edouard, who just a few months before had taken over the reins of government after the death of his father, Amedée the Great, was anxious to have his most skilled diplomat present at the meeting between King Charles and Duke Leopold in July 1324. Fortunately for Savoy, neither of these projects materialized, and one might wonder whether this might have been due to a monkey wrench dropped into the gears by the masterhand of Sir Otho.

The remaining years of his life were rather quiet by comparison. Though he met his death 1328 not at his home in Grandson, but at nearby Aigle—since Aigle is on the road to Italy, it looks as if he had been on the road once more, perhaps this time on a pilgrimage—he seems to have spent most of his time engaged in pious works, and even in quiet study. The latter is indicated by a most interesting letter written in 1328 by still another nephew, John Grandison, the well-known bishop of Exeter, in which he asks the bishop of Lausanne to inquire discreetly whether the rumors about Sir Otho's death might be true, and at the same time begs his col-

league to help him see that the books he, Bishop John, had lent to his uncle were returned to England.<sup>19</sup>

From this rather complex background story can be gathered a temptingly straightforward as well as interwoven chain of hands and events through which a book might have passed from Coutances to Zofingen.

In 1323 Sir Otho de Grandson was in Coutances on business and met Bishop Guillaume de Thiéville, whose pontifical of c. 1315 is the only other book from the workshop that produced the Cloisters Apocalypse with a known ownership. Immediately afterward, Sir Otho traveled to a meeting at Bar-sur-Aube, where the negotiations involved the cities of Basel, Constance, and Zurich. The bishop of Basel—who was the secular lord of the bishopric too—was Sir Otho's nephew, Girard de Vuippens. The added shields in the Apocalypse are that of the von Büttikon family and two more possibly connected with Zofingen. Unfortunately for the purpose of establishing that there existed a direct contact between Basel and Zofingen, Magister Johans von Büttikon, who was custos of St. Peter's in Basel from 1323 to 1336, is not the same person as Johans VI von Büttikon, prior of the collegiate abbey at Zofingen, and no transfers of books from Basel to Zofingen are traceable.<sup>20</sup> However, in the work of the Master of the Third Addition of the Manesse Codex, which is so closely related stylistically to our Apocalypse, we find arms resembling those of de Vuippens and von Büttikon. Finally, the letter by Bishop John Grandison of

19. "Litera missa Domino Episcopo Lausanensis (Jean de Roussillon, 1324–1341). Venerabili in Christo Patri, etc.—Quoniam, aperiente nobis Domina Regina Anglie, matre videlicet Domini Regis nostri moderni, de transitu (April 2, 1328) Domini Otonis de Grandissono, patruis nostri, tristicie nobis rumor innotuit, per quod nos absque dubio intollerabiliter usque in cordis intima vulneramur, cum in hoc casu corona capitis nostri deciderit, uti nostis; eademque Regina nobis addendo retulit quod concessionem huic bone memorie Domini Edwardi, Regis illustrissimi, qua dicto Domino Otoni, patruo nostro, Insulas de Gernese ad vitam dederat, et, preter hoc, quod duobus fratribus nostris, post ejus obitum, per quinquennium remaneret, factum quoddam in Curia Regis contrarium invenitur, per quod eisdem fratribus nostris de quicquam ex eisdem Insulis petendo via precluditur, ut timemus; Dilectionem vestram fiducialiter imploramus quatinus, cum et dicti Domini nostri hereditaria terrarum divisio et legatorum administratio vestris, ut clare intelleximus, et jurisdictioni et dominio sint subjecta, Domino Otoni, fratri nostro, cui Dominus pater noster, et nos alii fratres, concessimus in patrimonio partes nostras, in ipsius hereditatis adeptione pacifica sitis, amore dicti

Domini ac nostro, favorabilis Dominus et pater; et si qua inventa fuerint, immo quia, aliquae preciosa de suis que pertinent ad Capellam, et presertim Libros de Uso Anglicano, nostro, si placet, usui reservetis nobis eadem cum presenti nuncio transmittentes. Nec velitis, ut satis confidamus, amicales inter nos abolimur noticias oblivisci, eo maxime quod spem solidissimam gerimus—ut novis secreta loquamur—quod ad partes illas propinquius cum Dei adiutorio Sedes Apostolica nos reducet—ut Ecclesie Dei et vestris proficiatis in gracia, in eterne premeritum glorie, vobis concedat Omnipotens tempora longiora!—Scripta, etc. (1328)." Rev. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1327–1369)* 3 vols. (London, 1894–1899) I, pp. 173–174, private letter no. 33.

20. For this information I wish to thank Anne-Marie Dubler and Guy Marchal, Staatsarchiv, Basel. In an earlier publication (Merz, "Die Herren von Büttikon," *Genealogisches Handbuch*, III, p. 369) it was indicated that Magister Johans and Johans VI were the same person, and therefore a direct contact between Basel and Zofingen was suggested.

Exeter about the return of his books shows that Sir Otho loved books enough to take them on his travels clear across the continent. Therefore Sir Otho de Grandison and his nephew, the bishop of Basel, seem to be logical stages by which the journey of the Cloisters Apocalypse could have been accomplished.<sup>21</sup>

21. The earliest owner's entry in the Cloisters Apocalypse names Sir Robert Pecham, an English knight, who bequeathed the book to Thomas Darell, a doctor of theology, in 1569. It is tempting to speculate whether the Apocalypse manuscript returned to England in the course of the efforts by the bishop of Exeter to recover his books lent to Sir Otho. In any case, on the last page following the donors' page there is a practically eradicated early signature that seems to read "W lytyll . . ." It might be of interest to add that in Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *Register*, I, p. 571, there is a memorandum about a payment made in 1330 by Bishop Grandison to Magister Willelmus de Lytteltone, "procurator Magistri Thome de Cherleton." Thomas de Cherleton was appointed successor to the vacant see of Exeter by the king in 1327, while at the same time and unknowingly the pope appointed John Grandison. The confusion was apparently amiably solved by a compromise; Grandison became bishop of Exeter, while Cherleton became bishop of Hereford. Both traveled together to the papal court at Avignon and were consecrated on the same day, October 18, 1327.

FIGURE 11

Detail of folio 30 recto in the Armorial Wijnberghen. The arms of Sir Otho de Grandison



# Two Riddles of the Queen of Sheba

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THE TAPESTRY known as the Morgan Solomon and Sheba (Figure 1), recently purchased for The Cloisters, is not a newcomer to the Metropolitan Museum. It was exhibited here from 1912 to 1916 as part of the magnificent loan of the Collection of J. Pierpont Morgan. As early as 1906, it was shown in London in the Burlington Fine Arts Club's *Exhibition of Early German Art*, and, after this, it remained for some years on view in the Victoria and Albert (South-Kensington) Museum. When the tariff on the importation of works of art had been lifted, Morgan's collection was brought to the United States, and a great part of it came as a loan to the Metropolitan Museum.

After Morgan died, most of his collection was given by his son to the Museum, while a certain part of the loan was revoked and sold. Solomon and Sheba was among the forty tapestries acquired at that time by the firm of French and Company for the sum of \$2 million. Some of the tapestries included in this sale passed later to such collectors as Joseph Widener (the Mazarin tap-

estry, now in the National Gallery, Washington) and William R. Hearst (the Credo, in the Metropolitan Museum since 1960), while the Solomon and Sheba went to W. Hinckle Smith of Philadelphia, in whose house it remained until his death in 1970. It is mentioned in practically every important publication on tapestries.<sup>1</sup> Although it is possible to follow closely its displacements from 1906 on, its provenance and earlier history have yet to be established.

The tapestry is German, Upper Rhenish, probably Alsatian, and is datable in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, possibly toward its end. Like most of the German tapestries of the period, it is rather small in size. But its design, its colors, certain technical details, and its iconography make it a most welcome and interesting addition to the Museum's already comprehensive collection of medieval tapestries. It is 40 by 31½ inches in size and is woven in wool over a bast-fiber warp, with wool rug pile in Ghiordes (Turkish) knot technique used for part of the clothing, curtains,

1. Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of Early German Art* (London, 1906) p. 189, no. 11, pl. LXVIII. W. G. Thomson, *A History of Tapestry* (London, 1906) p. 149. Friedrich von der Leyen, "Zu den Rätseln der Königin von Saba," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* 175 (1907), states that he saw the tapestry in London and thought that "the raised velvet-like pile has been chewed up by moths." Gaston Migeon, *Les Arts du Tissue* (Paris, 1909) pp. 261–263, ill. George Leland Hunter, *Tapestries—Their Origin, History, and Renaissance*, large ed. (New York and London, 1913) p. 226. Pringsheim, report in "Sitzungsberichte der Kunstwissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft," *Münchener Jahrbuch* 9 (1914–1915) p. 246. Hermann Schmitz, *Bildteppiche* (Berlin, 1919) pp. 97–98. Rudolf F. Burck-

hardt, *Gewirkte Bildteppiche des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts im Historischen Museum zu Basel* (Leipzig, 1923) p. 51, note 10, fig. 61. George Leland Hunter, *The Practical Book of Tapestries* (Philadelphia and London, 1925) p. 209. Betty Kurth, *Die deutschen Bildteppiche des Mittelalters*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1926) I, pp. 133–135; II, p. 242, III, pl. 153, calls it: Alsatian, 1470–1490. Eleanor B. Saxe, "Gothic Pile Fabric," *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 1 (1928–1929) pp. 67–70. Heinrich Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, part 3, *Die Germanischen und Slawischen Länder*, I, *Deutschland, . . . Schweiz und Elsass . . .* (Berlin, 1933) pp. 100–101, 193, fig. 76. Betty Kurth, "The Riddles of the Queen of Sheba in Swiss and Alsatian Tapestries," *The Connoisseur* 106 (1940–1941) pp. 234–237, 266, fig. 1.

and Solomon's hair, and with gold and silver threads in crowns and certain other details. (See Technical Notes by Nobuko Kajitani on pages 97–103.) The condition of the tapestry, despite some fading of colors and minor repairs, can be considered excellent.

The subject represented is the visit of the Queen of

Sheba to King Solomon, or more precisely, the moment when she tries the king "with hard questions" (3 Kings 10:1 and 2 Par. 9:1), in this case, riddles, which will be discussed later.

The event takes place in a garden setting, rich in flowers, framed on the sides by rocky landscapes with



FIGURE 1

Two Riddles of the Queen of Sheba. Tapestry, wool, silk, gold and silver threads, German, Upper Rhenish, probably Alsatian (Strasbourg?), last quarter or end of the xv century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, purchase, 1971.43

a castle on one of the mountains, and above by a sky with light clouds. The throne on which King Solomon is seated, to the left, is surmounted by a baldachin with curtains drawn aside; a brocade or damask hanging falls from its back down over the steps of the throne. Solomon is shown as a young man with long curly hair, on which rests a jeweled crown. In his left hand he holds a cruciferous scepter; the fingers of his right hand are composed in a speaking gesture, or, it has been suggested, point to a flying bee. He wears, in the manner of the mid-fifteenth century, a short, dark blue, cut-voided velvet jacket, crimson hose, and blue pointed shoes. To the right, the Queen of Sheba stands before the king. She wears a ceremonial trailing red dress with blue sleeves, also of cut-voided velvet, with a pomegranate or pine-cone pattern, similar to that on the king's jacket. There is ermine fur at the hem of her dress, and long strips of the same fur fall from her shoulders to the ground (these strips are believed by some to be borders of a sleeveless mantle).<sup>2</sup> The queen's blond hair is held by gold threads in regular waves, possibly meant to represent tresses arranged according to a fifteenth-century German fashion. The points of her crown bear stylized fleurs-de-lis. A bee is approaching two identical red roses that the queen holds in her right hand. With her left hand, she points to two small children, both apparently of the same age, dressed and looking alike, who are gathering apples at her feet. Behind them, in the background, stands a large tree covered with flowers and fruit. According to the inscriptions on two intertwined scrolls in the upper part of the tapestry, the queen asks the king to distinguish between the real and the artificial flower, and to guess the sex of each child: "Bescheyd mich kunig ob blumen und kind Glich an art oder ungleich sind" ("Tell me, king, if flowers and children are like, or unlike in their kind"). To this Solomon replies: "Die bine ein guote blum nit spart das knuwen zoigt die wiplich art" ("The bee does not miss a real flower. Kneeling shows the female sex.") Woven borders define the left and right edges of the tapestry.

The style and the dialect (medieval Alemannic) of the inscriptions indicate the Upper Rhenish provenance of the tapestry, while certain details, such as the fluid and delicate design, and the painterly quality of the representation, are more characteristic of the region of Alsace than of Basel. Several tapestries related in

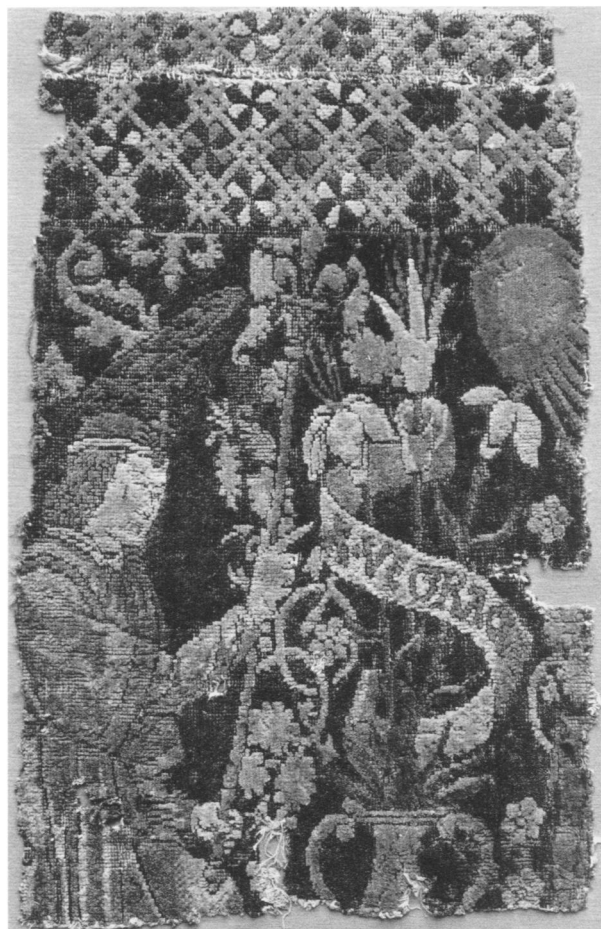


FIGURE 2

Angel Gabriel, part of the scene of the Annunciation to the Virgin. Tapestry fragment, wool, probably German, about 1500 (upper border now reset). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 28.15

style bear coats-of-arms of Alsatian families. The extensive use of Ghiordes knot technique also suggests Strasbourg as the place of manufacture.<sup>3</sup> The use of rug-pile technique in German tapestries of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries is infrequent, but not unique. A fragment of a German hanging of c. 1500 with the angel of an Annunciation in the Metropolitan Museum (Fig-

2. Alwin Schultz, *Deutsches Leben im XIV. und XV. Jahrhundert*, Volksausgabe (Vienna, 1892) II, p. 247, ill., I, pl. vi, fig. 5. He quotes from the "Tractatus" of Thomas Šitný, c. 1374, Ms. in Prague.

3. Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, p. 100.

ure 2) and a slightly later hanging of Pyramus and Thisbe in the Victoria and Albert Museum<sup>4</sup> are worked entirely in this technique, while several other tapestries of the region contain small details in Ghiordes knots, including a black sheep in the Nativity scene on the Life of the Virgin tapestry at The Cloisters, probably made in Basel.<sup>5</sup>

In the design of the tapestry one finds many details related to the engravings of Master E. S., such as the refined design of the hands, the elegance of the figure of the Queen of Sheba, and the many varieties of plants, while the figure of the seated king appears to be an almost exact copy of Solomon in the Judgment of Solomon print by Master E. S. (L.7), of c. 1467 (Figure 3).<sup>6</sup> The dependence of this figure on the print seems unquestionable, unless one should prefer to look for a common prototype known in southern Germany at that time, because the same figure of an enthroned king was repeated by several late-fifteenth-century artists in this region. The best-known copies (in reverse) were used to illustrate the second printed edition of the *Hungarian Chronicle* by Johann Thwroc (Johannes de Turoczy, or Thuróczy), printed by E. Ratdolt in Augsburg in 1488 (Hain 15518),<sup>7</sup> and served as hypothetical portraits of the Hungarian kings Louis the Great, son of Charles-Robert of Anjou, and Ladislaus V Posthumus on the occasions of their coronations, in 1340 and 1440 respectively. The Master of the Banderoles copied the same figure in his print *The Wheel of Fortune*, and the throne in *The Seventh Day [of Creation]*. The fig-



FIGURE 3  
The Judgment of Solomon. Engraving by Master E. S. (L.7), German, Upper Rhenish, about 1467

4. Saxe, "Gothic Pile Fabric," pp. 67–70. Julius Lessing and Max Creutz, *Wandteppiche und Decken des Mittelalters in Deutschland* (Berlin, n.d.) pp. 4–5, says that the Quedlinburg tapestry shows two kinds of knots: over two and over one warp. (The Quedlinburg "tapestry," of c. 1200, is worked entirely in rug-pile technique, but of a somewhat different variety.) A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Tapestries, Victoria and Albert Museum*, (London, 1924) p. 59, no. 55, pl. xxvii (ill. of one of three fragments). C. F. Wingfield Digby, Keeper of the Department of Textiles, kindly supplied the information that the Ghiordes knots on the Victoria and Albert tapestry are made in wool over two white wool warps, with two shoots of red wool weft. Kurt Erdmann. "Orientalische Tierteppiche auf Bildern des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 50 (1929) p. 266, note 2.

5. Acc. no. 57.126, The Cloisters Collection. German (Swiss), Upper Rhenish, probably Basel, third quarter of the fifteenth century. Betty Kurth, *Die deutschen Bildteppiche*, calls it Swabian, last quarter of the fifteenth century. Vera K. Ostoia, "A Tapestry Altar Frontal with Scenes from the Life of the Virgin," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* N.S. 24 (1965–1966) pp. 287–303.

6. Max Lehrs, *Geschichte und kritischer Katalog des deutschen, niederländischen und französischen Kupferstiches im XV. Jhdt.*, II (Vienna, 1910) text, "Der Meister E.S.," no. 7, pp. 50–52. Max Geisberg, *Die Anfänge des deutschen Kupferstiches und der Meister E. S.*, Meister der Graphik, II (Leipzig, n.d.) p. 84, pl. 34. Max Geisberg, *Die Kupferstiche des Meisters E. S.* (Berlin, 1924) pl. 8, no. 51 (L.7, Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett). Alan Shestack, *Master E. S.: 500th Anniversary Exhibition*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1967, no. 3, Judgment of Solomon (L.7), lent by the British Museum, London.

7. Josef Fitz, "Die Ausgaben der Thuroczy-Chronik aus dem Jahre 1488," *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* 12 (1937) pp. 97 ff., 106: The so-called short edition, prepared for sale in Germany, leaves out the Austrian coat-of-arms, and the title as Duke of Austria for Matthias Corvinus.

ure appears again in a round stained-glass panel in the ducal palace of the House of Oettingen-Wallerstein, at Maihingen, near Nördlingen, and in a simplified drawing after it of 1647. On the other hand, the structure of the composition, with the Queen of Sheba standing before the king, is quite close to a simpler one in a woodcut, showing the scene in reverse, used to illustrate her visit to Solomon in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, printed by Peter Drach in Speyer, c. 1478 (fol. CLVIII), where it is accompanied by the text: “Die Künig von Saba kam zu Salomon das sie sine herrschafft sehe” (“The Queen of Sheba came to Solomon to see his dominion”) (Figure 4).<sup>8</sup> Here the scene serves as an antetype to the Last Judgment, as the vision of the Kingdom of Heaven, of the Lord of the Kings (as King Solomon was also sometimes called), and as the “rejoicing of the Blessed.” King Solomon is shown young and not unlike the king on the print by Master E. S. and on the tapestry. Since the composition of this print, attributed to the Master of the Hausbuch (active in the last quarter of the fifteenth century) could hardly depend on the tapestry, a common prototype for both might be considered.

The text of the Bible does not disclose the contents of the “hard questions” with which the queen tried Solomon. But the images of King Solomon and of the Queen of Sheba, the Queen of the South (of the land of Sheba, or Saba, in southwestern Arabia), created by the text of the Bible,<sup>9</sup> greatly fascinated its readers and worked on their imagination. In the Orient, where legends, fables, and riddles abounded, and were in great favor, both with the Jews and with the Arabs, and where the solving of riddles was regarded as proof of great sagacity, numerous legends were woven around their names, and the subject of the riddles elaborately developed. The legends probably began as folkloric tales built on older myths of the Near East and went orally to and from the Syrian and Yemenite Jews, from them to the Arabs, and back to the Jews again, from people to people, and from country to country, often beginning with the words “it is told,” so that their exact movements are hard to trace, though Babylonian and

Persian roots for some of them are believed to exist. The legends as well as the queen’s riddles underwent changes to suit the tastes of various peoples.<sup>10</sup>

For Islam, Solomon the Peaceful (Shalom or Salem, meaning “peace” in Hebrew), became Suleiman, Soliman, or Selim, a prophet of Allah and forerunner of Muhammad. He is included in the Koran among the prophets. The queen, at a later date, under the name of Bilqis, was sometimes known as a sorceress, the legends acquiring a fairy-tale quality.<sup>11</sup>

10. S. Schechter, “The Riddles of Solomon in Rabbinic Literature,” *Folk-Lore* 1 (1890) pp. 349–358. August Wünsche, *Die Rätselweisheit bei den Hebräern* (Leipzig, 1883) pp. 15–17. Von der Leyen, “Zu den Rätseln,” pp. 5 ff. Georg Salzberger, *Die Salomo-Sage in der semitischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1907) p. 28.

11. Koran, Sura XXVII. Gustav Rösch, “Die Königin von Saba als Königin Bilqis,” *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie* 6 (1880) pp. 524–572. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Rosenöl*, I (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1813) chap. 6, “Suleimanne,” pp. 147–177.

FIGURE 4

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Attributed to the Master of the Hausbuch, German, active in the last quarter of the xv century. From *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, printed by Peter Drach, Speyer, c. 1478, fol. CLVIII



8. Hans Neumann, *Die Holzschnitte des Meisters von Amsterdamer Kabinett zum Spiegel menschlicher Behaltis*, Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte, no. 126 (Strasbourg, 1910) pl. 201.

9. 3 Kings; 2 Par.; Psalm 71, “on Solomon”; Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31.



FIGURE 5

The Queen of Sheba bringing gifts to King Solomon. Enamel plaque from the Klosterneuburg altar, by Nicholas of Verdun, Mosan, 1181. Klosterneuburg, Austria (photo: Bildarchiv der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek)

The Hebrews stressed Solomon's great wisdom and success in ruling his land, and his building of the Temple. Their writers, who in the beginning objected to certain aspects of the legends as unworthy of Solomon's greatness, especially the story of his romantic involvement with the Queen of Sheba, still took up some of them with slight variations.

The magnificence and splendor of Solomon's court, his riches, and the prosperity of the land under his rule, were examples to be emulated by any king. The emperor Justinian, moved by his own accomplishments in building the Church of Haghia Sophia in Constantinople, more beautiful than the Temple, exclaimed: "I have surpassed you, Solomon!"

The Christians accepted Solomon not only as a prophet and ancestor of Christ, as he appears on west façades of great churches, but also as a symbolic image of Christ, while the Queen of Sheba became the symbol of the Christian Church, the Ecclesia. Herrad of Landsberg, in her *Hortus Deliciarum*, written in Alsace in

the last third of the twelfth century, says: "Regina Austri Ecclesiam gentium significat" and "Regina Austri id est ecclesia venit audire sapientiam veri Salomonis Jesu Christi" ("The Queen of the South symbolizes the Church" and "The Queen of the South, i.e., the Church, came to hear the wisdom of the true Solomon, Jesus Christ"). The Queen of Sheba was identified with the bride in the Canticle of Canticles (attributed to Solomon) and the Bride of Christ, and was occasionally represented as a black queen, because the bride says: "I am black, but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem" (Cant. 1:4). She can be seen thus in "Bellifortis," by Conrad Kyeser, of 1405,<sup>12</sup> where she also stresses her beauty: "Sum regina Sabba. . . Pulchra sum et casta" ("I am the Queen of Sheba. . . I am beautiful and chaste [or pious]") and is shown as a richly attired queen, with long blond hair, but with the face of an Ethiopian. On the Klosterneuburg enamel plaque by Nicholas of Verdun, of 1181 (Figure 5), she is also shown as a black queen bringing gifts to King Solomon, the scene being an antetype of the Adoration of the Magi. The same parallel is usually stressed in the *Biblia Pauperum*. She was considered to be the ancestress of one of the Three Magi, "Reges Tharsis, Arabum et Sabà" ("Kings of Tharsis, of the Arabians, and of Sheba") (Psalm 71:10, "Deus, iudicium tuum"),<sup>13</sup> and one of them, either Caspar or Balthasar, the Sabaeen, was represented as black in the later Middle Ages. But the most outstanding characteristics of the Queen of Sheba were that she was beautiful, rich, and wise.

In Byzantine writings, she was referred to as Nicaula the Sibyl, a prophetess who recognized the Tree, or the Wood from which the Cross of Christ's Crucifixion was to be made, and foretold the Redemption of Man. This legend, believed to have originated in the fourth or fifth century in Alexandria, or possibly in Syria, is included in Byzantine chronicles, which usually start with the Creation of the World, repeating earlier traditions. In these chronicles she is referred to as "the

12. Conrad Kyeser of Eichstätt, "Bellifortis," fol. 122. Göttingen University Library, Ms. philos. 63. Facsimile ed. (Düsseldorf, 1967).

13. André Chastel, "La légende de la Reine de Saba," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 120 (1939) p. 164, inscription on a lintel at Notre Dame du Port: "Tres dant tria dona Sabai." André Chastel, "La Rencontre de Salomon et de la Reine de Saba dans l'iconographie médiévale," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 6th period 35 (1949) pp. 102-104.



**FIGURE 6**  
Solomon, his vizier, and the Queen of Sheba.  
Miniature in a Persian manuscript, Safavid,  
mid-xv century. Collection Henri Vever

Queen of Sheba, who was called Sibyl by the Greeks.” Therefore she was sometimes confused with the Tiburtine Sibyl.

The Ethiopian Kings claimed that they descended from the son of the Queen of Sheba (whom they called Makeda) and Solomon, and that they thus were heirs

to the greatness of the Kingdom of Israel. “Kebra-Negast” (“Glory of the Kings”), a royal Abyssinian manuscript written in ancient Geez dialect, probably in the thirteenth century (translated into French by Hugues Le Roux in 1904), says that this young Ethiopian king “was crowned as if he were King David,” and he is referred to as Baina-Hekem (“Son of the Wise”). The confusion of the land of Saba (Sheba in Hebrew), in southwestern Arabia, with Ethiopia (Kush) or Abyssinia, on the opposite shore of the Red Sea, is old. The apocryphal book *The Wisdom of Solomon* (7:20) says: “Sabaei natio sunt Aethiopica . . . eorum regina fuit admirabilis ille Sibylla . . .” (“Sabaeans are an Ethiopian nation . . . their queen was that admirable Sibyl . . .”).

Islamic miniatures show the queen’s visit to Solomon in a sumptuous oriental setting. The king and the queen are usually seated together on a throne, surrounded by jinnis, over whom Solomon ruled, and animals and birds, whose language he understood. Solomon, as occasionally also Bilqis, has the flame halo of a prophet, and is attended by his grand vizier Asaf (Figure 6). There is no reference to the riddles.

The oriental splendor of the queen’s procession, bearing gifts on the way to meet Solomon, appealed to Italians. On the Door of Paradise to the Baptistry in Florence, Ghiberti used restraint in representing the meeting of the king and the queen. But on fifteenth-century cassoni, the magnificent processions show the influence of the Orient (Figure 7), probably transmit-

**FIGURE 7**  
Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. Panel  
from a cassone. Tempera on wood, Workshop of  
the Virgil Master, Italian, Florentine school,  
about 1450. Yale University Art Gallery, New  
Haven, Connecticut, James Jackson Jarves Col-  
lection, acc. no. 1871.36 (photo: courtesy of  
Yale University Art Gallery)

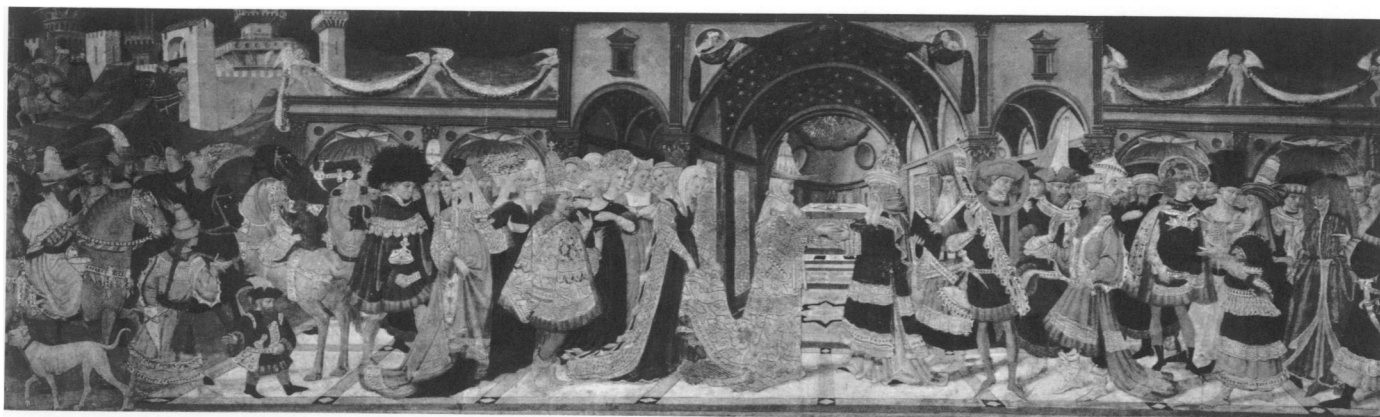


FIGURE 8

The Queen of Sheba and Solomon. Tapestry, wool and silk, German, Upper Rhenish, Alsatian, dated 1561. Historisches Museum, Basel, acc. no. 1870.999 (photo: courtesy of the Historisches Museum, Basel)



ted through Byzantium, as well as national taste. The young people of the riddle of sexes might be among the Queen's retinue.

The subject of the riddles seemed to attract the attention of the German artists, along with that of the Judgment of Solomon, the latter found especially suitable to decorate town halls and other buildings or places used for the administration of justice.

Six German tapestries, and possibly a fragment of a seventh, are known to depict the same subject of the two riddles propounded by the Queen of Sheba; all of them date from the late fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries. These tapestries differ little, mostly in details, in the number of attendants, in costumes influenced by the changes in fashions from one century to the other, and in slight variations in the text of the inscriptions. The Cloisters tapestry, of the late fifteenth century, is the earliest of all.

A tapestry, known only by description (whereabouts unknown), with the date 1506 on a scroll, was seen by Carl Becker in 1878 in the Boasberg Antiquarian Museum in Amsterdam, as reported in 1879 by Müllen-

hoff.<sup>14</sup> It has been said that it passed later to the former Collection Spitzer in Paris, but there is nothing to substantiate this. The size is given as "about one meter square," and the description notes a female attendant behind the queen, and two children "plucking flowers"—which must be a misunderstanding of Becker. The scroll "winds through a large rose tree." The inscription differs from that of the Cloisters tapestry in that it has "rechte blum" instead of "guote blüm," and "diser kind zeigt" instead of "das Knuwen zoigt" ("right flower" instead of "good flower," and "this child shows" instead of "the kneeling shows"). It is also stated that the question and answer are "given in wrong sequence."

Pringsheim reported in 1915 that he had a tapestry

14. Müllenhoff, "Notiz des Herrn Karl Becker," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 23 (1879) p. 48. Wilhelm Hertz, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Friedrich von der Leyen (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1905) pp. 413-455. Franz Julius Delitzsch, *Iris: Studies in Colour and Talks about Flowers*, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburgh, 1889), pp. 156-157: "The flower-riddle of the Queen of Sheba." Pringsheim, in "Sitzungsberichte," p. 246.

with riddles, with the date 1541, formerly owned by Prince Arenberg. Sometime between 1915 and 1940 it was in the Collection Nemecs, in Munich.<sup>15</sup> The composition here is closely related to that of the other tapestries of the sixteenth century and includes an attendant behind the queen, and a parrot on the arm of the king's throne.<sup>16</sup>

The tapestry in the Historisches Museum, Basel (Figure 8), bears the date 1561. The queen here too has a female attendant, and there are several male attendants behind the king's throne, one of whom, kneeling, holds a bowl of fruit. The king's crown is placed over a turban, in "à la turque" fashion.<sup>17</sup> Much silk was used in the weaving; the size is 80 by 100 cm. (32 by 40 inches). The inscriptions show the same variations as those on the 1506 piece, with slight changes in spelling. The tapestry was found in 1868, in Klein-Basel, but

Rudolf Burckhardt was of the opinion that, though Upper Rhenish, it is not Basel work. And indeed one of the coats-of-arms on the tapestry belongs to an Alsatian family (the other was not identified).

Another tapestry came to the princes of Reuss, J. L., in Schleiz, from the parish church at Kirschkau, where it served originally as an altar cloth (*Altardecke*). It is dated 1566. The scene here is reversed, with the king sitting to the right. There are two male attendants behind the throne, and three female ones behind the queen, one of them carrying the queen's train. Various animals and birds have been added to the usual garden setting, including a parrot (see note 16) on the arm of the throne. The inscriptions read like those on the three preceding tapestries, but they are restored.<sup>18</sup>

The last complete tapestry (Figure 9) is in a New York collection. It is of almost the same size as the one

15. Pringsheim, in "Sitzungsberichte," p. 246. Kurth, "The Riddles," pp. 236-237, no. LV, ill., reads the date as 1544 and says: "formerly in the Collection Nemecs, Munich; much restored."

16. The parrot may represent the hoopoe, the bird that was, according to legend, in service to King Solomon and was the first to tell the king about the land of Sheba and its queen.

17. Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, III, p. 183, fig. 152: "Basel 1590." Burchardt, *Gewirkte Bildteppiche*, p. 49, fig. 60. Pringsheim, in "Sitzungsberichte," p. 246. Kurth, "The Riddles," p. 235, no. II, ill. For oriental influence in costume, see note 22.

18. P. Lehfeldt, *Fürstentum Reuss jüngere Linie*, I, *Bezirk Gera*, Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler Thüringens (Jena, 1896) pp. 11, 83-85, ill., says, "Lower Rhenish, after Flemish cartoon, or Flemish." Kurth, *Die deutschen Bildteppiche*, I, p. 135, fig. 60, reads the date as 1560. Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, III, p. 184, fig. 156, reads the date as 1560 and says that it was "formerly owned by Reuss." Pringsheim, in "Sitzungsberichte," p. 246. Delitzsch, *Iris*, pp. 157-159, reads the date as "1560 or 1566" and gives the inscriptions. Hertz, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, p. 450. Kurth, "The Riddles," p. 235, no. III, ill.

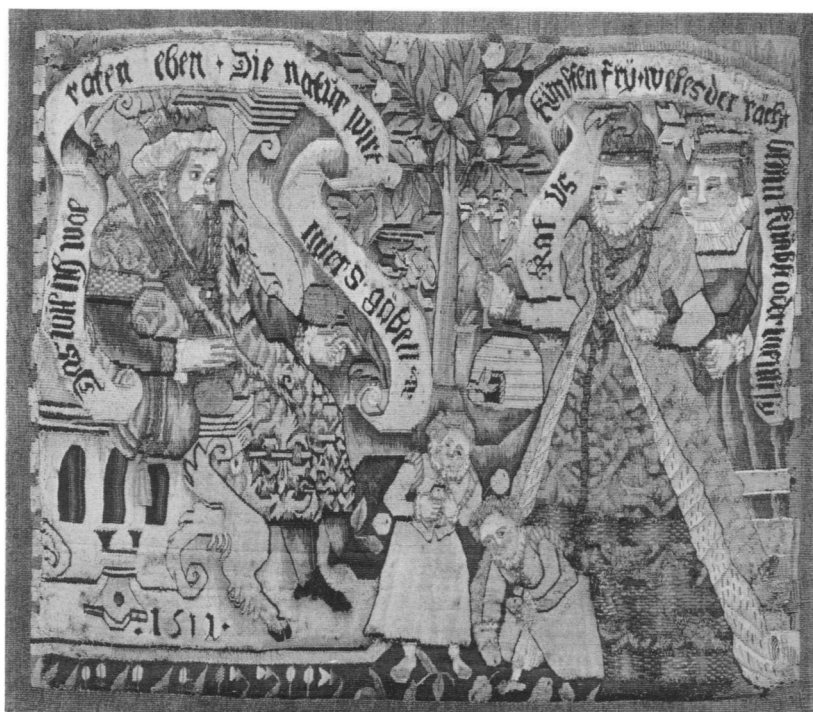


FIGURE 9  
King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Tapestry, wool, German, late XVI or early XVII century. New York collection



FIGURE 10

The Queen of Sheba before Solomon. Engraving after a wall painting by Johann Mathias Kager, Augsburg, about 1612. François Collignon, French (Nancy), 1631. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 62.602.656

seen in Amsterdam by Becker. It shows several repairs, including a poorly restored date on the scroll, which has been variously read and could be 1611, the last number being not original. By style it could be late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup> The inscriptions on the scrolls are unusual. They read: “Rat us Künsten fry weles der rächt blüm Knäbli oder meitli sy” (“Guess freely out of your arts which one might be the right flower, and which boy or girl”); and “Das wil ich wol raten eben. Die natur wirt miers gäben” (“Surely this I will guess well. The nature [of things] will give it to me”). Whether the last part is a paraphrase from Prov. 2:8 (attributed to Solomon), “Because the Lord giveth wisdom,” is anybody’s guess. I thank Helmut Nickel for his assistance in deciphering the text. If it were not for the difference in the inscriptions and the location of the scrolls, which here do not “wind through a large rose tree,” one could think that this was the tapestry seen in Amsterdam in 1878.

Heinrich Göbel published a tapestry fragment of the second quarter of the sixteenth century on which only the two children remain. He saw it at a Berlin antique dealer’s.<sup>20</sup>

A sixteenth-century automaton, which represented the meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, was to be seen in the old Labyrinth (Doolhof) in Amsterdam, destroyed in 1850. Automata were fashionable in the sixteenth century, as they were in the fourteenth,<sup>21</sup> and this one included the riddle of the chil-

dren’s sexes. A text of 1850, known to me only in a quotation and not available for verification, gives the explanation of the riddle performed and its solution by Solomon: He had water brought in for washing and the boys washed their faces “like men without more ado,” but the girls, “with characteristic prudery, scarcely touched the water with the tips of their fingers.” This is a solution different from that seen on the tapestries. The number of children is also evidently more than two, but the question must have been the same.

Besides the tapestries and the automaton, there are some wall paintings of the seventeenth century dealing with the same riddles.

The meeting of the king and the queen, painted by

19. Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, III, p. 183, fig. 151 b. Kurth, “The Riddles,” p. 236, no. v, ill.

20. Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, III, p. 193, fig. 182.

21. Delitzsch, *Iris*, pp. 161–169. Hertz, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, p. 440. Another automaton, with scenes of the Nativity and the Passion, using wooden figures with mechanical movement, is described by Cristobal de Villalón, “Comparacion entre los Sabios Antiquos y Presentes, en la qual se disputa quando uno mas en todas las sciencias y artes . . .,” Ms., written in 1539, British Museum, published by Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles (Madrid, 1898) pp. 174–175: “Y que cosa pueda ser mas subtil que un retablo que trayan unos estrangeros el año pasado en el qual, siendo todas las ymages de madera se representavan por arteificio de un reloj marevillosamente . . . tal al natural que parecia ver lo que passó.” N. D. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage* (Oxford, 1967) p. 39, refers to the same manuscript of 1539.

Mattheus Kager c. 1610–1612 on the wall of the prison behind the Town Hall of Augsburg (destroyed) is recorded in an engraving of 1631 by François Collignon (Figure 10). The sumptuous scene does include young children, but it is not clear whether it contained the riddle of the children. The inscription, “For wisdom is better than all the most precious things, and whatsoever may be desired cannot be compared to it” (Prov. 8:11), does not refer to riddles.

The subject of the flower riddle alone is found in a wall painting by Franz Geiger, of about 1679, in the so-called throne room of the Castle Trausnitz, near Landshut. It is the Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (Figure 11). The caption says: “Sapiens oculator Argo” (“The wise can see more than Argus”). In the center, Solomon sits on his throne flanked by

lions, under a baldachin bearing a shield with blue and white diamonds of the Bavarian coat-of-arms. His courtier wears a Turkish kaftan and a turban.<sup>22</sup> To the right kneels the queen, while a young girl behind her

22. Hermann Goetz, “Oriental Types and Scenes in Renaissance and Baroque paintings,” *Burlington Magazine* 73 (1938) part I, pp. 50 ff., and part II, pp. 105 ff. Trade and political relations promoted oriental influence in Western Europe, from Ottoman Turkey directly, or through Byzantium; the Turkish danger to Constantinople, and its fall, caused refugees to flee westward; Prince Djem, brother of Sultan Bajazet II, fled Turkey, and spent 1481–1489 in France, Austria, and Italy. Voyagers to the East, like Breydenbach, author of *Iter in terram sanctam* (Utrecht, 1484), and Gentile Bellini, who worked for the sultan, brought oriental fashions to the West. Invasions of Ottoman Turks in Europe provided knowledge of oriental costumes. The Jewish Old Testament figures, seen as heathens like Muhammedans, were given the same costumes.

FIGURE 11

The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. Wall painting by Fritz Geiger, about 1679 (destroyed). Castle Trausnitz, near Landshut (photo: Bayerische Verwaltung der staatl. Schlösser, Gärten und Seen, Munich)



holds up the queen's train. Attendants carry gifts. Solomon holds in his left hand a bunch of fake flowers, which the queen brought to him in order to see whether he would be induced into smelling them. But Solomon orders bees let out of beehives into the hall, and their lack of interest shows him that the flowers are artificial. In a manuscript of 1761, J. B. Fassmann describes the scene only as the Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon. E. Bassermann-Jordan says that this painting, and another with the scene of the Judgment of Solomon on the opposite wall (both now destroyed?), were made to replace tapestries previously hanging there. Speaking of some smaller, unrelated wall paintings in another room of the castle, he says that they show scenes from Italian comedies actually performed by Italian actors at Trausnitz.<sup>23</sup>

Both riddles are represented in the chapter house of the Benedictine abbey at Kremsmünster, Austria, in two small wall paintings of 1685 by the Italian painter Antonio Galliardi. One of them shows "the two children," the other, "the real and the artificial roses." King Solomon here wears classical armor.<sup>24</sup>

The old text, which would have served as a direct source for the flower riddle propounded by the Queen of Sheba, cannot be located, although it is quoted by the French poet Clément Marot in his "Prologue" to the *Roman de la Rose*, written in defense of the morality of this thirteenth-century poem for its revised edition of 1527.<sup>25</sup>

The rose in the Romance can be compared . . . to that which the noble Queen of Sheba, the Ethiopian, presented to the wise King Solomon, as we read in the

book of problems, riddles, and questions she asked him to try his wisdom. . . . She took two roses, one of which came from a rosebush . . . and the other was an imitation, made by her to resemble the natural rose. . . . Here, said she, are two roses . . . tell me, Sire, which is the natural rose. . . . Solomon ordered some bees brought in . . . deducing from his knowledge of nature that the bees will go to the real rose. . . . Thus he pointed out to the queen the true rose . . . different from the other, with fake fragrance. . . .

Marot spurns those who take the poem's meaning literally, and explains that the real rose may, mystically, represent the true, heavenly, glory, as compared with the worldly glory, which is not real.

A somewhat related text exists in Pliny's *Natural History*, 11.8., where it is said that the bees "do not settle even on dead flowers," and although Pliny speaks of dead, and not artificial flowers, there might be some connection between the two. A similar statement exists in the *Buch der Natur* by Konrad von Megenberg, printed in Augsburg in 1475. In *Horus Apollo*, a bee collecting nectar and making honey is compared to a just king who rules well, and to the subjects who obey their king.<sup>26</sup>

The riddle of the children's sexes, on the other hand, is encountered in many writings, which can be divided into two groups by the manner in which Solomon solves it: the Islamic version, in which Solomon guesses the sex of the children (or young people) by the way in which they use water in washing their hands and faces; and the Hebrew, in which Solomon guesses their sex by the way they gather delicacies thrown to them.

William Hertz<sup>27</sup> says that the oldest Arabic text on riddles is found in the writings by a Jew, Wahb ibn Munabbih, converted to Islam in the first century A.H. In the Koran (Sura XXVII) there is only a general mention of gifts the queen sent ahead with her ambassadors to Solomon. But various commentaries on the Koran explain that these presents included "five hundred young slaves of each sex, all dressed in the same manner," or that "Bilqîs, to try whether Solomon was a prophet or not," dressed boys like girls, and girls like boys, and that "Solomon distinguished the boys from

23. Felix Mader, *Stadt Landshut mit Einschluss der Trausnitz, Kunstdenkmäler von Bayern*, part 4, Regierungsbezirk Niederbayern, XVI (Munich, 1923) p. 352, refers to Fassmann's description: "Beschreibung deren in dem Churfürstlichen Residenz-Schloss zu Trausnitz ob Landshut verhandenen Gemälden und Plafonds-, dann fresco-gemalten Zimmern, wie solche anno 1761 befunden worden seind," Staatsarchiv München, HR 279/17a, fols. 5-5 verso. E. Von Bassermann-Jordan, *Die dekorative Malerei der Renaissance am Bayerischen Hof* (Munich, 1900) p. 75, including note 3, and p. 165.

24. Theodor Ehrenstein, *Das Alte Testament im Bilde* (Vienna, 1923) p. 265, figs. 27, 28.

25. Guillaume de Lorris and Jehan de Meung, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Clément Marot, new ed., I (Paris, 1814) pp. 44-45. Alexander N. Veselovskiy, *Collected Works*, VIII, *Legends of the Talmud* (Petrograd, 1921) p. 382, esp. p. 383, note 1, and pp. 387-388 (in Russian).

26. *Horus Apollo de Aegypte, de la signification des notes hieroglyphiques des Aegyptiens . . .*, I (Paris, 1543) fol. ciiii verso. Delitzsch, *Iris*, pp. 153-167.

27. Hertz, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 422-423.

the girls by the different manner of their taking water” brought to them for washing their hands and faces, “the boys lifting the hand onto which the water had been poured immediately to their faces, whereas the girls first filled the right hand with the water falling on the left, and then washed the face with both hands at once.” In another Muslim version “the girls received the water in the palm, the boys on the back of their hands.”<sup>28</sup>

In still another version, in the Abyssinian legend “Tigre,”<sup>29</sup> it is the queen herself and several of her female attendants who are disguised by clothing. And elsewhere it says that all her attendants wore female dress.

It is believed that the core of the riddle, with the switching of clothing, is based on myths about Semiramis, the queen of Babylon, and that the earliest Arabic-Persian versions depend on Jewish sources. The number of boys and girls thus transvested varies, but it always remains high.

The Byzantine chroniclers Georgios Monachos, Hamartolos (tenth century), Georgios Cedrenos (mid-eleventh century), and Michael Glykas (mid-twelfth century) tell about the riddle with the solution in which Solomon tests the boys’ and girls’ manner of washing their faces and hands.<sup>30</sup> From which earlier sources they copied this legend has not been established.

This riddle is also mentioned in certain Rabbinic writings.<sup>31</sup> While it does not appear in the Book of Esther, it does, without solution, appear among three other riddles in the *Second Targum* (“Aramaic paraphrase”) of the *Book of Esther* (probably tenth century): the queen sent six thousand boys and girls, all born in the same year, month, and date, and all dressed in

purple. It is believed that, originally, the story was included in the Book of Esther, too, in the part of the text that is lost. But in the *Midrasch Mischle* (“exposition,” or “allegorical commentary”) on the *Proverbs of Solomon*, possibly written in the tenth or eleventh century in southern Italy, and later in the *Yalkut* (“gleaning”) *Schimoni on the First Book of Chronicles*, variously dated from the fourth to thirteenth century, it is told that the queen sent a hundred boys and a hundred girls, all of the same appearance and size, and dressed alike, and asked Solomon to distinguish the males from the females. Solomon beckoned to his servants, and they brought nuts and confections, which he distributed among the children. The boys stuffed them into their pockets without hesitation, but the girls modestly put them in their kerchiefs. Those, exclaimed Solomon, are the males and these, the females. Another author says that “the boys removed their cloaks, spread them out, and filled them with the delicacies. . . .” The *Yemen Midrasch*, in which various sections begin with: “Rabbi Ishmael related” or “Rabbi Jeremiah said,” and which contains nineteen riddles of the queen, the third riddle is that of the children. Solomon makes a sign to the eunuchs, who bring him a quantity of nuts and roasted ears of corn (or roasted grains, or cakes). The *Yemen Midrasch*, by Yachya Ben Suleiman, in Berlin, is dated 1430. None of the Hebrew texts speaks of only two children present.

But an anonymous Latin manuscript, “*Tractatus de Diversis Historiis Romanorum et Quibusdam Aliis*,” written in Bologna in 1326 (Herzog-August Library, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Gudianus 200), includes among other stories taken from various sources the following version of the riddle (Figure 12) (repeated here in a

28. Von Hammer-Purgstall, *Rosenöl*, I, pp. 159–160.

29. Enno Littman, ed., *The Legend of the Queen of Sheba in the Tradition of Axum*, Bibliotheca Abessinica, I (Princeton, 1904) p. 33.

30. J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, CX: Georgios Monachos, *Chronicon Breve*, book 2, chap. 42 (“De Regis Salomonis”), chap. 43 (“De Regina Aethiopia Sibylla”). Migne, *PG*, CXXI: Georgios Cedrenos, *Compendium Historiarum a mundo condito . . . ex diversis libris collectum*, chaps. 166–168. Migne, *PG*, CLVIII: Michael Glykas, *Annalium Pars II*, cols. 351–352, “Sabaei natio sunt Aethiopica. Eorum regina fuit admiranda illa Sibylla.”

31. Paul Cassel, *Das Buch Esther* (Berlin, 1878) pp. 240–252, mentions three other riddles only. But in the supplement—a translation of the *Second Targum*, or *Targum Scheni*—one finds the story of six thousand boys and girls, all born in the same year, month, day, and hour, looking alike and all dressed in purple, sent by the

queen to Solomon. The story is told in connection with the statement that Ahasuerus was seated on Solomon’s throne. Schechter, “The Riddles of Solomon,” pp. 351–357. Delitzsch, *Iris*, pp. 156–167. Hertz, *Abhandlungen* pp. 416–417. Max Grünbaum, *Neue Beiträge zur Semitischen Sagenkunde* (Leiden, 1893) pp. 217–221. Louis Ginsberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, IV (Philadelphia, 1947) pp. 125 ff., Solomon; pp. 142 ff., Queen of Sheba. August Wünsche, *Die Rätselweisheit bei den Hebräern* (Leipzig, 1883) pp. 15–24. Samuel Krauss, “Die Königin von Saba in den Byzantinischen Chroniken,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 11 (1902) pp. 129–130. *Midrasch Mischle on the Proverbs of Solomon*, Bibliotheca Rabbinica, XII (Leipzig, 1885). “Yemen Midrasch” (Hachepez), Ms. Or. 2382, British Museum. “Yachya Ben Suleiman, “Yemen Midrasch,” Ms. 1430, Berlin. *Yalkut Schimoni*, ed Simon von Kahira.

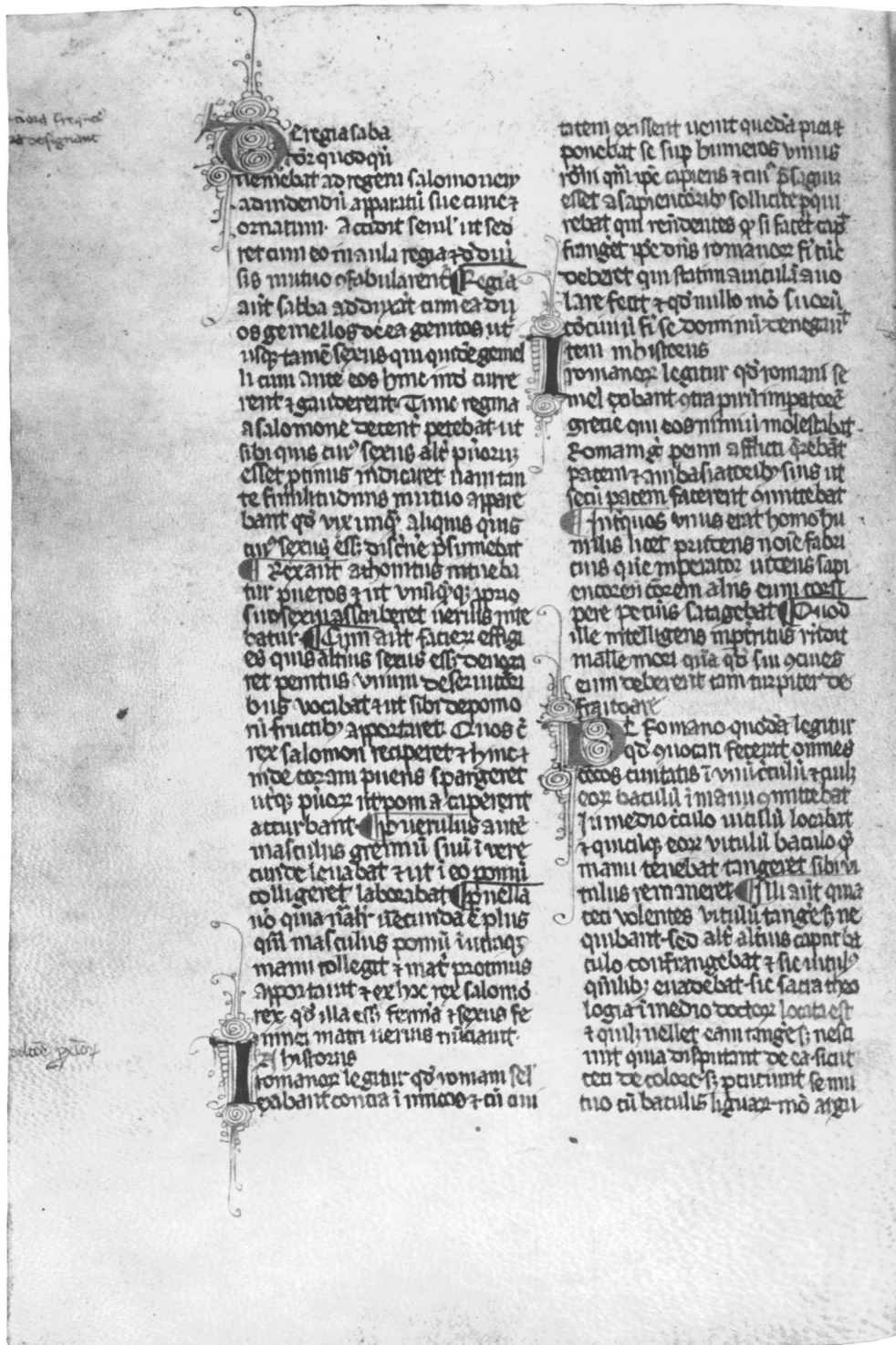


FIGURE 12

"De Regia Saba." From "Tractatus de Diversis Historiis Romanorum et Quibusdam Allis," fol. 184 verso, Bologna, 1326. Herzog-August Library, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Gudianus 200 (photo: courtesy of Herzog-August Library)

summary translation): It has been said about the Queen of Sheba that when she came to Solomon to see his palace [or kingdom], they sat together in the *Aula Regia* and discussed various matters. With her the queen brought two twins of different sexes born to her; and while these twins ran and played before them, she asked Solomon to tell her the sex of each child. But they looked too much alike for Solomon to guess. Then he called one of his servants and gave orders to bring apples to him. When this was done, Solomon threw the apples to the children and called them to pick these up. The boy lifted the skirt of his dress and placed the apples into it, while the girl, being more modest, collected the apples in her hands and immediately proffered them to her mother. Thus Solomon was able to point out to the queen which of the two was of female sex.<sup>32</sup>

In the above story one finds the two children and the apples seen on the tapestry at The Cloisters, and Solomon points out the behavior characteristic of the female child. The servant bringing fruit in a bowl appears on the tapestry in Basel. One is inclined to believe that this, or a related text, could be the source for the iconography of the riddle of the children on German tapestries. But even if this were so, it is not the final solution, because one does not know from where the writer of the "Tractatus" borrowed this particular legend. Some of the stories in his compendium correspond to those found in the *Gesta Romanorum* (where one finds the story of Esther [tale 177], but not the story of the Queen of Sheba), others to those in the "Liber Philosophorum," another medieval collection of edifying and moralizing stories.

The "Liber Philosophorum" itself is believed to have been written in Greek, possibly not as a single volume, and was translated into Arabic in the eleventh century, on orders of the Arab emir Abul Wefa; from Arabic it was translated into Spanish in the thirteenth century, and became known as "Bocados de Oro" ("Golden

Sayings"); from Spanish it was translated into Latin in the second half of the thirteenth century by John of Procida, an Italian born in Salerno, who, after spending almost thirty years at the court of the Hohenstaufen in Palermo as the medic and adviser of Emperor Frederick II, went in 1268 to the court of the kings of Aragon in Spain. There he made the Latin translation (with some changes) of the "Bocados de Oro." Several other sources have been considered for the "Tractatus" of 1326, but only one tentative suggestion for a direct derivation of the story of the Queen of Sheba from a Rabbinic text of a *Midrash* has been made.<sup>33</sup> The slight differences—in the number of children and in having apples replace nuts and confections—would not necessarily contradict such a suggestion.

The choice of a Hebrew, rather than an Arabic version of the legend for the iconography of the tapestry's riddle can be explained by the fact that it was the Crusaders returning from the East, and not the Arabs settled in Spain, who brought to Western Europe the taste of the Solomonic legends. Another consideration is that in the Middle Ages, especially in the thirteenth century, many Jews, proficient both in Hebrew and in Arabic, as well as in other languages, were employed at royal and ducal courts as counselors and translators. In Apulia, the son of Frederick II Hohenstaufen, Manfred, himself knew Hebrew. The philosopher Jehuda ben Salomon Cohen, from Toledo, was attached to the court of Frederick II on the invitation of the emperor after a lengthy correspondence between the two men on philosophical and other matters. At the same time, Walter von der Vogelweide stayed for several years in Frederick's service, doubtlessly meeting several Jewish scholars and acquiring knowledge of various Hebrew writings. Duke Frederick II the Quarrelsome (1211–1246) of Austria, the last of the House of Babenberg, had at his court two Jewish brothers as financial advisers on whom he conferred the title of *Kammergrafen*.<sup>34</sup>

32. Salomon Herzstein, ed., "Tractatus de Diversis Historiis Romanorum and Quibusdam Aliis, Codex Gudianus Lat. 200, Herzog-August Library, Wolfenbüttel," *Erlanger Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie und Vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* 14 (1893) pp. xi–xiii, 32–33, chap. 65, "De Regina Saba," and p. 58.

33. Remigio Sabbadini, "Il traduttore Latino del Liber Philosophorum," *Atti del Real Istituto Veneto di scienza, lettere et arti* 92, part 2 (1932–1933).

34. Otto Hartwig, "Die Übersetzungsliteratur Unteritaliens," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 3 (1886) pp. 178–189. Arthur-Ernest

Cowley, "Hebrew Literature," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., XIII (Cambridge, 1910) pp. 169–175. Siegmund Gelbhaus, *Mittelhochdeutsche Dichtung in ihrer Beziehung zur biblisch-rabbinischen Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main, 1893), pp. 1–73, discusses the influence of Rabbinic writings on German medieval poets, with references; on p. 13, he quotes Freidank's "Bescheidenheit" and also finds parallels between the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and an episode in *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. M. Steinschreiber, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin, 1895) p. 935.



FIGURE 13  
Esther before King  
Ahasuerus. Tapestry,  
German, 1590. Cluny  
Museum, Paris (photo:  
Musées Nationaux,  
France)

In the Middle Ages, cultural relations between German Christian scholars and theologians and their Jewish counterparts were close. Although they did disagree with the rabbis in religious matters and in the interpretation of the Old Testament, Christian theologians often sought advice from their Jewish colleagues, who had the advantage of being able to read the Scriptures in the original Hebrew. In fact, St. Augustine as early as c. 400 advised students of the Bible to learn Hebrew. Thus, German artists of the fifteenth century could feel that the Hebrew version of the Solomonic legends, accepted as historical facts, was more reliable than the Islamic.

The reason why the subject of the queen's riddles became popular for tapestries in southern Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century, taking its place among the more usual representations of royal couples (often very similar in composition), such as David and Bathsheba, or Ahasuerus and Esther (Figure 13), or the queen's visit to Solomon,<sup>35</sup> without the riddles, could be manifold. The interest could have been aroused by a text, or a successful sermon with exempla and moralities, possibly in Latin or medieval Upper

Rhenish dialect (*Mittelhochdeutsch*), or a mystery play or pageant performed on some special occasion, such as a visit of an important person, or some festivities, possibly in connection with a marriage, most likely royal. Documented performances of this kind *did* take place in various countries around this time, some even featuring King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, but none is recorded as having included the queen's riddles.<sup>36</sup>

One hypothesis regarding a suitable occasion for a pageant including Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

35. A. Pigler, *Barockthemen*, I (Budapest and Berlin, 1950) pp. 158–159, 165, 190.

36. Gustave Cohen, *Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Theatre Religieux français du moyen âge* (Paris, 1926); he speaks on p. 120 of the entry of Anne of Brittany into Tours in 1491, where the *Mystery of the Sibyls* was performed; he thinks (p. 118) that the print of the Virgin of Einsiedeln, by Master E. S. (1466) was inspired by mysteries. Laura Hibbard-Loomis, "Secular Dramatics in the Royal Palace in Paris 1378, 1389 . . ." *Speculum* 33 (1958) frontispiece, *The First Crusade*, enacted in 1378, in Paris, Royal Palace ("Chronique de Charles V," Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fr. 2813, fol. 472 verso); 1445, entry into London of Margaret, queen of Henry VI of England, great pageant; mid-fifteenth century, Glorification of Charles VII (1422–1461), performance of the *History of Troy*,

could be put forth. Festivities and pageants might have taken place, or been planned, at the time of the engagement of the young Hungarian king Ladislaus Posthumus to Madeleine, daughter of King Charles VII of France, even though existing records only confirm the fact that an embassy was sent to Paris to ask for the hand of the French princess. It was the most splendid embassy ever seen in France, and the count of Foix gave a magnificent reception.<sup>37</sup> A pageant or play might have been planned for the wedding, but the marriage never took place because of the sudden death of the young king.

In favor of this hypothesis it could be said that Solomon on the print (L.7) by the Master E. S. and on the tapestry at The Cloisters, as well as the kings' portraits in the *Hungarian Chronicle*, shows features related to those of Ladislaus on the double portrait of him and his promised bride, a painting of c. 1500 by an Austrian artist (National Museum, Budapest). The latter, in turn, is dependent on the young king's portrait by an Austrian, or a Nuremberg, artist, made about 1457 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).<sup>38</sup>

It is possible that Master E. S. was either asked to do designs for a pageant, or that he made sketches after having seen an actual pageant, and repeated the subject later in engravings. This would explain the heraldry on his Judgment of Solomon print: the lilies for Madeleine of France; the Austrian shield as a reflection of the wish of Emperor Frederick III of Austria to secure for his ward Ladislaus the Austrian throne; and the lion (in reverse) as a possible reference to the pre-

with the name of Charles VII rising on the Wheel of Fortune (the French kings claimed descent from the kings of Troy). Bamber Gascoigne, *World Theatre* (London, 1968) pp. 84–89, pl. xi. N. D. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, p. 127, refers to the celebration of the fourteenth birthday of Prince Alfonso, brother of Henry IV of Castille, at Arévalo, Spain, in 1467, with a play in which his sister, the future Isabel the Catholic, took part. Joseph Chartrou, *Les Entrées solennelles et triomphales à la Renaissance (1484–1551)* (Paris, 1928) pp. 22–24. In 1485, at Rouen, at the “Unction de rois,” Charles VIII represented King Solomon, whom King David crowned; at the reception in 1486 in Paris of the new queen, Anne of Brittany, the marriage of Solomon and the judgment of Solomon were performed; when King Louis XII, after the death of Queen Anne, married Mary of England, the sister of Henry VIII, “Solomon coming to meet the Queen of Sheba” was represented at her reception in Paris.

37. Asztrik Gabriel, *Les rapports dynastiques franco-hongrois au Moyen-Age* (Budapest, 1944) pp. 72–75.

38. Ernst Buchner, *Das deutsche Bildnis der Spätgotik und der frühen Dürerzeit* (Berlin, 1953) fig. 202, cat. no. 203, p. 220, and

heraldic emblem—a black lion on a yellow ground—of the House of the Arpads, whose blood Ladislaus had in his veins. If pageants or plays were planned for his wedding, the choice of Solomon to personify Ladislaus could be easily explained. The Hungarian kings claimed their descent from the kings of the Old Testament; the two sons of King Andrew the White (mid-eleventh century) were named David and Solomon. The *Hungarian Chronicle* begins with a quotation from the Proverbs of Solomon (8:15): “By me Kings reign, says the Lord God by the mouth of the wise Solomon,” and continues, “and thus shall reign the Kings of the Hungarians.” There is also a parallel in the lives of the two kings, Solomon and Ladislaus. Just as Solomon, the youngest son of King David, was crowned at the age of twelve through the efforts of his mother, Bathsheba, so also Ladislaus Posthumus received the Holy Crown of Hungary on the insistence of his widowed mother, despite his tender age of four months and the opposition of an older pretender. The choice of the Queen of Sheba, praised for her riches, beauty, and wisdom, in which she was second only to King Solomon, to represent the princess, would be only natural.

Master E. S.'s interest in a pageant or play seems to be proven by the existence of a copy after his lost engraving, made by his pupil and follower Israel van Meckenem, usually referred to as the Cantic of Canticles, the Feast of Flowers, or the Feast of Roses. The only known colored print of this copy was found in Schwäbisch-Hall (Collection of Edmond de Rothschild, Louvre, Paris).<sup>39</sup> Both its composition and the

fig. 124, cat. no. 123, p. 205. *Ausstellung Friedrich III, Kaiserresidenz Wiener-Neustadt*, 1966, cat. no. 61, p. 327, fig. 29, and cat. no. 62, p. 328; Hanna Dornik here attributes to Meister von Maria am Gestade (?), c. 1460, both paintings (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Inv. No. 1739, and Historische Bildergalerie im Museum der Bildenden Künste, Budapest, No. 6960). Clément Marot, *Oeuvres*, II (Paris, n.d.) pp. 76–78, in the poem “A la royne de Hongrie venue en France,” addresses her as “Saba, Royne prudente & meure, Qui a laissé ton peuple . . . Pour venir voir . . . Le Salomon de France, nostre Roy. . . .”

39. Lehrs, *Geschichte und Kritischer Katalog*, IX (Vienna, 1934) plates, p. 251, no. 599, text, pp. 6 ff., item 7: “Das Hohelied Salomons,” copy by Israel van Meckenem of an engraving by Master E. S.; found by O. Weigel in Schwäbisch-Hall; colored in red, blue, cobalt, yellow, green, and brown. J. D. Passavant, *Le Peintre-Graveur*, II (Leipzig, 1860) p. 97, no. 77: “La Fête de Fleurs.” Max Geisberg, *Die Kupferstiche des Meisters E. S.* (Berlin, 1924) pl. 237, fig. 10 a: copy after a lost engraving of Master E. S. by Israel van Meckenem, “Das Rosenfest,” coll. von Rothschild, Paris. T. O. Weigel and Ad. Zestermann, *Die Anfänge der Druck-*

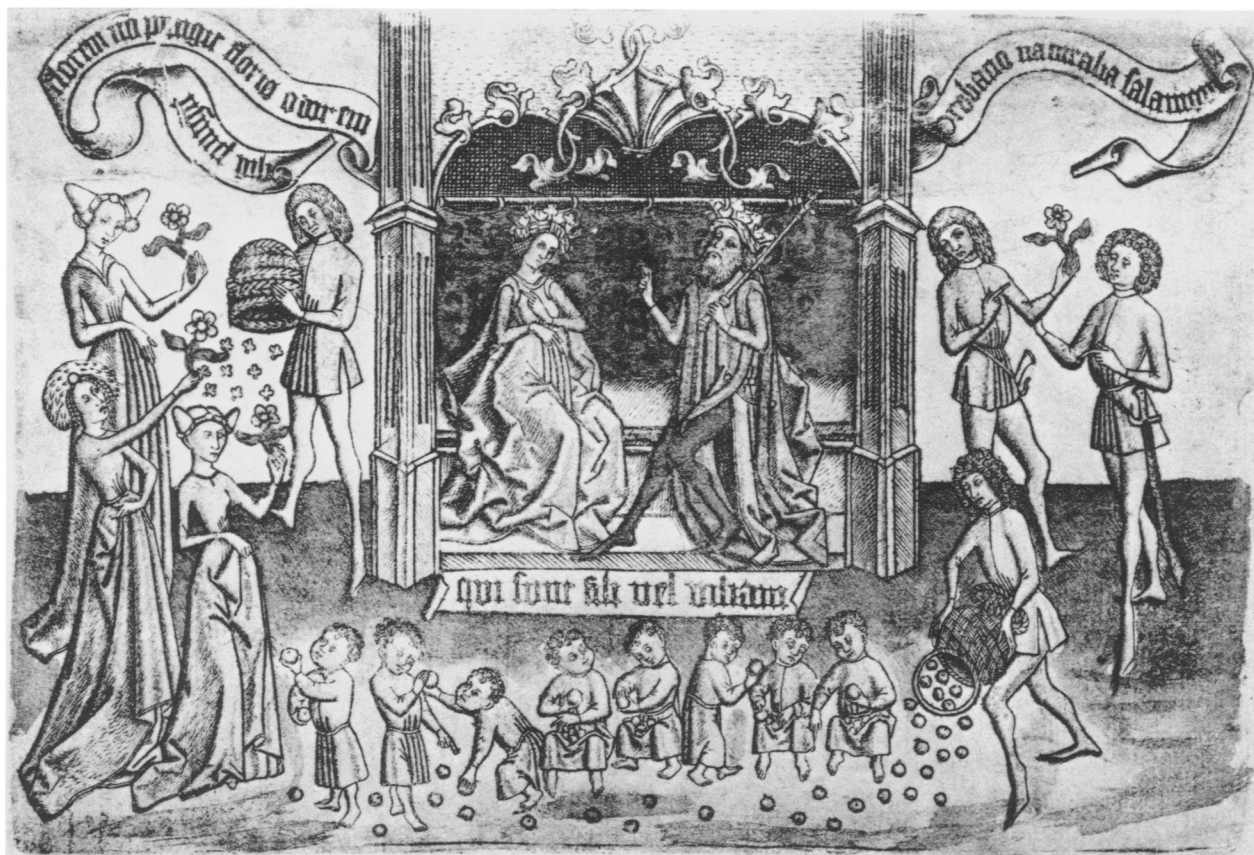


FIGURE 14

Two Riddles of the Queen of Sheba. Engraving, colored, by Israhel van Meckenem, copy after Master E. S., German, late xv century. Original in the Collection Edmond de Rothschild, Musée du Louvre, Paris

inscriptions reveal that it represents the Two Riddles of the Queen of Sheba (Figure 14). A king and a queen are seated on a wide throne. To the right are two guards or courtiers with swords at their sides and a flower, while a third attendant shakes apples out of a basket, and eight children, sitting or standing in the center front, gather and carry them in various ways. To the left, a male servant shakes bees out of a beehive that he holds upside down. The bees swarm over the flowers held by two female attendants nearby. Three banderoles bear Latin inscriptions. On the right: “*Probatio naturalia Salomonis*” (“Test of Solomon’s natural gifts,” i.e., wisdom). On the left: “*Qui pingit florem non pingit floris odorem*” (“He who painted the flower did not paint the flower’s fragrance”). Under the throne, above the children: “*Qui sunt filii vel viliam* [probably for *filiae*]” (“These are boys or girls”). The king and the queen, similarly seated on a wide throne

and attended by a military guard with a sword drawn, are seen in Herrad of Landsberg’s *Hortus Deliciarum* (Figure 15);<sup>40</sup> the general arrangement of the stage setting reminds one of that used for plays in Spain, where the actors performed on a podium facing the enthroned royal patrons, while the audience looked on from below the podium.<sup>41</sup>

*kunst in Bild und Schrift . . . in der Weigelschen Sammlung*, II (Leipzig, 1886) no. 423, engraving of 1460–1470, pp. 352–355, suggest that it is in the style of Berthold Furthmeyer, Swabian, second half of the fifteenth century. Anni Warburg, *Israel van Meckenem, sein Leben und seine Bedeutung für die Kunst des ausgehenden XV. Jhdts.* (Bonn, 1930), especially pp. 66–78.

40. Herrad von Landsberg, *Hortus Deliciarum*, ed. A. Straub and G. Keller, Alsatian Ms. written in the last quarter of the twelfth century (Strasbourg, 1901) pl. LII bis: Solomon conversing with the Queen of Sheba (Queen of Sheba as Ecclesia, King Solomon as Christ).

41. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, pp. 452–478, uses information recorded by Antoine de Brumel in 1655.

The text quoted by Clément Marot in 1527 could be used easily to describe the representation of the flower riddle on the print, as well as on the wall painting at Trausnitz, while the text of the children's riddle in the 1326 manuscript includes the apples found on the print, as well as on the series of tapestries discussed in this article. Although the garden setting of the tapestries is missing in the print and is not mentioned in the manuscript, there probably would have been potted trees and plants in the *Aula Regia* in the Orient. It is difficult at this point to decide whether the Latin text of the manuscript and the quotation in French by Marot depend on a common source.

One must add that the flower riddle is found in two *Autos Sacramentales* (morality plays) by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, in one of which the Queen of Sheba appears under the name of Sibyl. In *La Sibila del Oriente*, "whose correct name should be not the Queen of Sheba, but Nicaula Maqueda,"<sup>42</sup> Solomon answers the question as to how he could distinguish the artificial flower from a real one by saying: "Because a bee that circled it never settled on it, it must be artificial . . . it does not appeal to the bee, and is of no use to her. . . ." And in the play *El Árbol de mejor fruto*, to the question "tell me which . . . of the flowers you see from afar are real and which artificial" Solomon answers, "Proficient

bees fly above these flowers in loving circles, while above those others, only dirty flies; the first from beautiful calyxes collect nectar of which they make honey by their great art, while the flies only dirty the other flowers."

Although it is said often that Calderón based many of his plays on the writings of Johannes de Pineda, such as the treatise *Salomon praeuius, id est de Rebus Salomonis Regis*, there is no flower riddle in Pineda's writings, and Pineda's riddle of the children, based on the version by the Byzantine chronicler Georgios Cedrenos, does not appear in Calderón's plays. In *La Sibila del Oriente* he speaks of flowers in a picture ("de este quadro"), while the text on the print with the two riddles, copied by Israel van Meckenem from Master E. S., reads, "Who painted the flowers did not paint their fragrance" (a saying found in a number of medieval manuscripts), and in Marot's quotation one finds a mention of "fake fragrance." All versions, though not identical, are related and must have a common root.

Calderón, in the seventeenth century, must have taken his subject from a source known in Germany to Master E. S. and the Alsatian tapestry weavers in the second half of the fifteenth century, to Marot in France in the early sixteenth, and to the painters Franz Geiger and Antonio Galliardi in the seventeenth. The lost text possibly spoke of the "lush garden setting" mentioned by Calderón and found in every one of the tapestries. The two riddles, known in all probability before the second half of the fifteenth century, could have been used in a play or pageant planned for the marriage of Ladislaus and Madeleine.

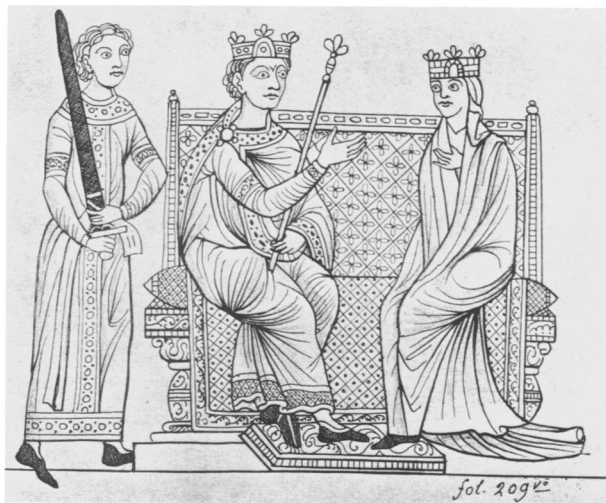
To end the complicated listing of possibilities for the derivation of the iconography of the riddles on the tapestry at The Cloisters, there exists an irresistible temptation to bring in a much later story. The interest in the problem of the riddles shown by the scholars in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the first of the tapestries with this subject were published, must have spread among the general public. The following event is reported in the *Folk-Lore Journal* of 1889:<sup>43</sup> An

42. Edward Glaser, "Calderón de la Barca's 'La Sibila del Oriente y Gran Reina de Saba,'" *Romanische Forschungen* 72 (1960) p. 400; Solomon is asked to tell which of the two seemingly identical flowers is merely an imitation; to which the King answers: "De criar es de criador / No de criatura" ("To create can only the Creator, not the creature").

43. *Folk-Lore Journal* 7 (1889) pp. 315-316.

FIGURE 15

King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. *Hortus Deliciarum*, by Herrad of Landsberg, fol. 209 verso, ed. A. Straub and J. Keller, Strasbourg, 1901, pl. LII bis



English soldier, in Derbyshire, was taken before the mayor of the town for handling some playing cards in church during the divine service. The soldier pleaded his case by stating that the cards suggested to him “serious thoughts”: “When I see the queen, I am reminded of the Queen of Sheba, who came to hear the wisdom of King Solomon. She brought fifty boys and fifty girls, all clothed in boys’ apparel, for him to

see which were boys and which—girls.” Solomon called for water. The girls washed up to their elbows, and the boys only up to their wrists.

*Postscript:* Edmond Fleg, *Salomon raconté par les peuples* (Paris, 1959) pp. 125–126, gives another version for the Riddle of the Flowers. The Queen of Sheba, opening “a coffret containing an emerald, two bouquets, and a cup,” says “One [bouquet] is made of false, the other of real flowers.” However, Fleg notes in his introduction that he is freely interpreting various legends.

## Appendix: More about Solomon and Sheba



FIGURE 16

King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (?). Clasp, gilt bronze, Mosan, about 1200. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 47.101.48

THE MATERIAL presented here, concerning a gilt-bronze clasp, is only indirectly connected with the iconography of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon seen on the tapestry with the queen’s riddles. Nevertheless, the representation on the clasp, possibly based also on the legends woven around these fascinating Old

Testament personages, is related, and of sufficient interest to be discussed in connection with the tapestry.

Among the numerous objects purchased for The Cloisters in 1947 from the estate of Joseph Brummer, there is a gilt-bronze clasp of Mosan workmanship of about 1200, attributed to a follower of Nicholas of

Verdun (Figure 16).<sup>1</sup> On the clasp two seated figures are represented in high relief: a bearded man wearing a crown, evidently a king, and, to his right, a woman whose head is covered with a long scarf. The feet of the king rest on a lion, those of the woman, on a basilisk. The king holds in his left hand an unidentified rounded object; his right hand rests firmly on his right knee. The woman's hands are empty, unless there is something in her left hand hidden under the end of her scarf. Her right hand is pressed to her chest, expressing emotion. The king is facing his companion, but the woman, with a trace of a smile on her face, looks into the distance. Two smaller figures accompany the seated pair: a bearded man close to the king places his right hand on the latter's shoulder, as if trying to attract his attention, while a young girl crouches at the elbow of the woman.

Scholars are more or less in agreement on the dating and attribution of the piece, but not on the subject represented. At the time of the acquisition of the clasp, the late James J. Rorimer suggested, orally, that the seated figures might represent King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, an idea accepted by Erich Steingraber and, conditionally, by Hanns Swarzenski.<sup>2</sup> Alternate suggestions submitted at various times will not be discussed here, because the present note serves only to refute an objection to Rorimer's idea. In the text of the catalogue for the exhibition *The Year 1200*, by Konrad Hoffmann, one reads: "The absence of a crown on the female figure prevents the identification of the couple as Solomon and the Queen of Sheba."<sup>3</sup> Such a categorical "negative" statement challenges an answer: The absence of a crown on the head of the seated woman does *not* prevent her identification as the Queen of Sheba. She is shown not wearing her crown in at



FIGURE 17

King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, illustration from the Bible from Sant Pere de Roda, Catalonian, late x–late xi century, fol. 129 verso. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Lat. 6

least two other medieval representations of approximately the same period.

The first of these can be seen in the Bible of Roda, (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Lat. 6) (Figure 17).<sup>4</sup> The Queen of Sheba is greeted by the enthroned Solomon. In his left hand the king holds a scepter; with his right hand he grasps the raised left hand of the approaching queen, as if trying to lift her to his throne. The head and the shoulders of the queen are swathed in a scarf, while her crown is carried by one of her

1. Acc. no. 47.101.48. 2 by 3 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, purchase.

2. *Arts of the Middle Ages, 1000–1400*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1940, no. 218. James J. Rorimer, "A Treasury at The Cloisters," *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* N.S. 6 (1947–1948) p. 239, ill. on p. 238: "In the style of Nicholas of Verdun, from the region of the Meuse, about 1200." Hanns Swarzenski, *Monuments of Romanesque Art* (London, 1953) no. 235, fig. 536: Buckle, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (?), 54 by 76 mm. Bronze gilt ajouré, Lorraine, early thirteenth century. Erich Steingraber, *Alter Schmuck* (Munich, 1956) p. 32, fig. 28: "belt buckle, King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Lotharingian, beginning of the thirteenth century: owes its style to the monumental sculpture of North French cathedrals, and to the

contemporary art of Nicholas of Verdun." Jean Evans, *A History of Jewellery* (New York and London, 1953) p. 45, pl. 4 a. James J. Rorimer, *The Cloisters: The Building and the Collection of Medieval Art in Fort Tryon Park* (New York, 1963) p. 144, fig. 72: "made in the region of the Meuse about 1200. . . . The clasp may reflect the text, 'Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet' (Psalm 91:13)."

3. Konrad Hoffmann, *The Year 1200: A Centennial Exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1970) cat. no. 102: Mosan, workshop of Nicholas of Verdun, around 1210.

4. Wilhelm Neuss, *Die katalanischen Bibelillustration um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends und die Spanische Buchmalerei* (Bonn and Leipzig, 1922) pp. 10–15, pl. 25, fig. 83.



FIGURE 18  
King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Stone,  
French, about 1230. Amiens Cathedral, west  
façade, Portal of the Virgin, north side (photo:  
Marburg)

attendants behind her. The queen and her three attendants bring presents for the king. The date of the Bible of Roda is given variously as from late tenth to late eleventh century.

The second representation of the Queen of Sheba with her crown removed before King Solomon appears on the north side of the portal of the Virgin on the west façade of Amiens Cathedral (Figure 18). The queen, standing next to King Solomon, holds her crown in her right hand, while Solomon, to judge from his gesture, is proving something to her. The artist evidently had a purpose in representing her bareheaded, because in one of the small reliefs below the statues, the queen, listening to Solomon's explanations, does wear her crown. The date of the Amiens Cathedral sculptures is about 1230.

Thus, the queen does not wear a crown on two works of art, one somewhat earlier, the other slightly later, than the bronze clasp, even if in both cases the crown remains in evidence. The queen had removed her crown to acknowledge the presence of a greater and mightier ruler. There could have been no doubt in the minds of medieval artists that the greater of the two rulers was King Solomon, about whom it is said in the Scriptures, "And King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches, and wisdom" (3 Kings 10:23), and who was included among the ancestors of Christ.

The wearing of a crown had a deep symbolic meaning in the Middle Ages,<sup>5</sup> and removing it before a mightier king was understandable behavior. Thus, in the scene of the Adoration of the Magi on the Klosterneuburg altar (1181), the oldest of the Three Kings is shown with his crown taken off, as he kneels before the Virgin and Child.

A description of similar procedures can be found in the *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, written in the tenth century.<sup>6</sup> In codifying the established ceremonial, based on older traditions of the court of Constantinople, he describes the custom of having sovereigns remove their crowns or diadems before entering from the narthex the nave of the church (Hagia Sophia). An emperor could not display his omnipotence—implied by his crown—in the House of the True King, *rex regum et dominum dominantium*.<sup>7</sup> It is further stated that the emperor always remains "bareheaded" and "without a crown" while in the church. Similar statements had been made at the time of the Council of Ephesus (431) by the emperors Theodosius II and Valentinianus III: "when entering a church . . . we take off the diadem [crown]."

Johann Jakob Reiske, in his commentary (1751) to the *De Cerimoniis*, quoted by Migne (note 26, cols. 151–152) states that since early times there existed the custom of a person of inferior rank baring his head in the presence of a more worthy and illustrious (*dignior ac*

5. Percy Ernst Schramm, "Vom Kronenbrauch des Mittelalters," *Festschrift für Will-Erich Peuckert* (Berlin and Munich, 1955) pp. 68–78. Percy Ernst Schramm, "Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik," *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae historica*, no. 13, III, (Stuttgart, 1956) pp. 909–919, especially pp. 916–918.

6. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, CXII, Constantini Porphyrogeniti, *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, 9, cols. 151–155 and note 26; 11, col. 167 and note 48.

7. Schramm, "Vom Kronenbrauch," p. 78.

*illustrior*) one, in order to demonstrate his humility and his respect. Reiske also refers to the text of Nicetas Choniates, who relates in his history *De Isaacio Angelo* (1180–1206), Book I: “The emperor, seated on a golden throne, and clothed in bejeweled purple . . . ordered the captive dukes [commanders of the army] of Sicily, Baldwin and Richard, to be brought before him. These, having removed their caps (*pileis depositis*), demonstrated in a humble manner their respect before the emperor.”<sup>8</sup>

A similar idea of “homage” is expressed in several medieval illustrations to the text of the Apocalypse, (4:4, 10): “the four and twenty ancients . . . on their heads crowns of gold . . . adored Him [the Saviour] and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour, and power.” One finds this scene represented, for example, in the mosaic in S. Paolo Fuori le Mura (mid-fifth century), in the Codex Aureus from St. Emmeram, of the eleventh–twelfth century, and in what used to be the mosaic decoration in the dome of the Münster in Aix-la-Chapelle, of the early ninth century.<sup>9</sup>

Should Solomon and the Queen of Sheba actually be represented on the clasp, what specific event is shown still would remain a problem. A somewhat similar composition is seen on a Persian lacquer-painted box of about 1816. The family group of the then reigning shah of Persia, Fath 'Alt Shah Qajar (1797–1834), surrounded by courtiers, is framed by a series of Persian historical subjects. One of these, in the space above the shah's head, represents King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Figure 19).<sup>10</sup> (The author of the description of this box, Hammer-Purgstall, was living at the time the box was decorated and had every opportunity to identify the scene correctly.) Occupying two adjoining hexagonal seats, that of the crowned Solomon definitely a throne with a high back, they are surrounded by numerous servants, jinnis, birds, and animals—their

usual following in Islamic paintings. Grand Vizier Asaf, a constant adviser to Solomon in the Islamic tradition, is at the king's side, and a maid is visible behind the queen, both very much like the two smaller figures on the clasp; the posture of the king, with his hand resting on his knee, is also comparable. The queen (the Islamic Bilqis) does not wear a crown, but she holds in her left hand a beaker.

The presence of the beaker brings to mind a Coptic folktale. Its Coptic text, known only in fragments,<sup>11</sup> has been interpreted as follows: King Solomon took a beaker with wine, dropped his magic ring into it, and



FIGURE 19

King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Detail of the decoration on a lacquer-painted box, Persian, c. 1816. Present location unknown

offered it to the Queen of Sheba. The queen said to the king: “If I should drink the wine from this beaker, oh Solomon, my Lord the King, then I will humble myself before you [submit to you].”

This tale corresponds to the general trend of the legends about Solomon's surreptitious strategies to overcome the queen's resistance to his advances, and is in accordance with the Ethiopian tradition about the

8. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, CXXXIX, Nicetae Choniatae, *De Isaacio Angelo*, book 1, col. 726 C.

9. Paul Clemen, *Die Romanische Monumentalmalerei in den Rheinlanden* (Düsseldorf, 1916) pp. 59–69 and fig. 45, with bibliography.

10. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, “Beschreibung der merkwürdigen Gemälde auf einer persischen Schachtel im Besitze seiner Durchlaucht des Herrn Fürsten von Metternich,” *Fundgruben des Orients*, V (Vienna, 1816) pp. 103–108, ill. facing p. 108.

11. Adolf Ermann, “Bruchstücke koptischer Volksliteratur,” part 2, *Abhandlungen der königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1897) pp. 23–26, especially p. 25. Oskar von Lemm, “Bemerkungen zu Ermanns ‘Bruchstücke koptischer Volksliteratur,’ 2. Ein Märchen von Salomo,” *Kleine Koptische Studien*, I, (St. Petersburg, 1907) pp. 128–135, especially pp. 129–131.

descent of their ruling house from the son of Solomon and of the Queen of Sheba (named here Makêda).

Whether in the twelfth century there existed any illustrations of this legend cannot be said at this time. The Spaniard Don Luis de Urreta, a Dominican, said in his writings about his travels in the Near East (published in 1610) that he had seen in Ethiopia a painting showing two magnificent royal thrones, with King Solomon seated majestically on one of them and the Queen of Sheba on the other.<sup>12</sup> But the travel descriptions of this author are sometimes considered unreliable, and no such painting seems to exist in Ethiopia at present.

To decide whether any specific event is illustrated

on the clasp is beside the point here. The above information is intended only to suggest a possible source from the Near East (Islamic?, Coptic?, Ethiopian?) for the composition on the clasp. If the crowned King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba wearing no crown should be meant to be represented on it, one wonders whether the object held by the king on the clasp might not be a covered cup. The text of the Psalm 91, quoted by Rorimer in the 1963 publication (see note 2), would explain the presence of the lion and the basilisk under the feet of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who, in homiletic writings, are often identified symbolically with Christ and his Bride, the Ecclesia.

12. Glaser, "Calderón de la Barca's 'La Sibila del Oriente y Gran Reina de Saba,'" pp. 381-403, especially pp. 388-390.

# Technical Notes

NOBUKO KAJITANI

*Senior Restorer, The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

CONSIDERING ITS AGE, the Cloisters tapestry (acc. no. 1971.43) is in good condition. It seems to have been repaired just once and has never been subjected to a cleaning medium. The areas of repair appear mostly around the edges, though a few are in the center. Done with an unquestionably different kind of worsted yarn, which is seemingly dyed with synthetic dyes, the repaired areas are a minor part of the design and do not interfere with the study of the object. In spite of its small size as a conventional wall hanging in *tapestry weave*, measuring 80 cm. by 102 cm., the depth of the picture space and the rendering of minute details reveal the technical ingenuity of the weaver.

Analysis reveals the construction of the tapestry to be as follows, with the design in its natural position (Figure 1): warps run horizontally with the original selvages at both top and bottom. Wefts run vertically with the original heading at the right and the finishing at the left.

The following structural analysis is recorded with the warp in the vertical direction, as the tapestry was woven, having the top to the right.

The warps were set under considerable tension, possibly in an upright position, in order to weave a weft-faced structure and to knot piles.

Following the weaving procedure, there is first a row of chaining (Figure 2)—a *simple looping stitch*—still intact at the bottom. The chaining, with two warps held in each loop to maintain the constant intervals between warps at the outset of weaving on a loom without a reed, indicates the starting point of the weaving. That this end is the starting point is confirmed by the direction of the knotted pile in the weaving, which will be discussed later. According to common working procedure, the chaining must have been done from right to

left from the wrong side of the tapestry, the side the weaver faces to work *tapestry weave*. Next, there is a heading about 0.5 cm. wide of *weft-faced plain weave* with weft of bast-fiber yarn.

*Tapestry weave*, in this case *plain weave with discontinuous wefts*, and so-called Ghiordes knotting are the two techniques used in this tapestry. The *plain weave* is *weft-faced*, and *discontinuous wefts* leave *slit* (Figure 3), *dovetailing* (Figure 4), and *double interlocking* (Figure 5) at turning points, the location depending on working procedures and the design. Color change done with *slit* spans only two to eight wefts so that there is no sewing on the back. All the longer straight lines of color change in the warp direction are done with *double interlocking*. Hatching (Figure 6) appears in certain areas to show shading. Because of the small scale of the tapestry the hatching is sometimes actually *dovetailing*. In addition, to complete the shading in larger areas, the effect of varied color orders of wefts in *weft-faced plain weave* (Figure 7) was used, to change from a lighter color to a darker color or vice versa. There are *non-horizontal wefts* (Figure 8) woven at many angles, which emphasize curved designs and shading. In creating the shading and forms of the design, the weaver ingeniously mixed these techniques together with color effects produced by the use of a single weft instead of groups of wefts.

Knotted pile on a flat *weft-faced plain weave* surface creates a texture or a third dimension and is used to emphasize the queen's and Solomon's garments, Solomon's hair, the cushion on the throne, and the drapery of the canopy. The rows of Ghiordes knots, with pile direction toward the right when the tapestry is in its natural position, alternate with four or five wefts of *weft-faced plain weave* (Figure 9). The Ghiordes knots are worked on two adjacent warps, as is commonly

done, but to follow the curve of the design, the pair of warps selected are offset from row to row. Following the sequence of offset pairs of warps, some knots at the ends of rows overlap the adjacent knot. The *weft-faced plain weave* ground together with pile is purposefully used to indicate that the material draped on the canopy and worn by the figures is voided velvet. When knotting or other piling techniques are worked on a fabric, it has to be done with the weaver facing the right side. Therefore, one row of Ghiordes knots must have been worked from the right side of the tapestry, and then one unit of rows of *weft-faced plain weave* for the ground between rows of Ghiordes knots must have been woven from the wrong side. This was repeated and meticulously carried out throughout the areas where the pile appears in horizontal rows. This is proven by the fact that the adjacent *discontinuous wefts* are *double interlocked* with the ground wefts for the knotted areas. So-called lazy lines appear in the *plain weave* for the ground wherever convenient, and this must have somewhat relieved the tedium for the weaver.

Upon completion, the weaver again employed *weft-faced plain weave* for finishing, as he had done for the heading at the bottom. After the tapestry was cut off from the loom, both heading, including chaining, and finishing were secured with *overcast stitch* with bast-fiber yarn the same as the weft of the heading.

The warp, woven under heavy tension, in the count of 15 per 2.5 cm., and the weft, woven under loose tension, in the count of 80 to 85 per 2.5 cm., make the weave *weft-faced*. The warp is a very irregularly spun bast fiber, made up of two Z-spun yarns plied into S and undyed. Very often they were broken during the weaving, and there are many places that show how the weaver struggled to repair it by knotting two ends of the slippery material under heavy tension. Selvages at both edges are of one warp doubled.

The wefts are wool, silk, and metal-wrapped yarns. The wool covers almost all the areas, silk covers only the eyes of the four figures, and the metallic yarn covers small areas emphasizing significant objects belonging to the two main figures.

The colors of wool are natural, blue, yellow, green, red, wine red, brown, gray, purple, and black, all in several shades. Black, brown, and gray shades are natural wool colors, and therefore none of the yarns in these colors show deterioration. The wine red in both dark

and light shades used on Solomon's throne cover and light red in the queen's robe are so drastically faded that it is almost impossible to imagine their original color from the right side. The lighter shade of wine red is the only color that was dyed very unevenly. As usual, the yellow is faded, which now makes the green bluer than it was originally. The makeup of the wool is again two Z-spun yarns plied into S (for the knots, they are doubled), and the thickness of it varies from yarn to yarn and from color to color. They are spun tightly so that the plied yarns are harsh and ribbed. For some reason or other all the yarns have been knotted in many places. Some shades of brown, blue, orange, and purple are spun from blends of several colors of dyed fleece, producing complex variations in color. These yarns are used mainly in the sky and distant landscape so that their subtle gradations of color aid in suggesting distance, as a substitute for other complicated patterning. Overall, in spite of unskilled spinning, the dyeing shows matured skill by its richness and variety even if some colors have faded.

The silk is used only for the eyes of the four figures. All colors—natural, three shades of brown, and light blue—are made up of two combined silk filaments twisted into Z and plied into S.

Finally, the metallic yarn is made up of two Z-spun bast fibers plied into S, on which a strip of membrane laid with gold or silver is wound in S direction. It was wound well so that the core yarn is not exposed at all. Pure gold is used in the crown, part of the scepter, Solomon's belt, and the queen's garment; almost pure silver, which is now tarnished, is used in Solomon's crown and a part of his scepter and in the finial on top of the canopy, and is at times used as shading for the gold.

#### REFERENCE

Irene Emery, *Primary Structures of Fabrics*, Washington, D.C., 1966.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On this occasion I wish to thank the following people for assistance in the study of fabric structure through unreserved discussion from time to time: Charles Grant Ellis, Research Associate, Textile Museum; Irene Emery, Curator of Technical Studies, Textile Museum; Milton Sondag, Curator of Textiles, Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, Smithsonian Institution.



**FIGURE 1**  
Relationship of the design and weaving procedure. The numbers indicate the position of areas shown in Figures 2–9

DETAILS OF THE TAPESTRY. See Figure 1 for original positions of details.

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RIGHT SIDE of the tapestry. Only Ghiordes knots (Figure 9) must have been worked with this side facing the weaver

FIGURE 2  
Chaining at the edge  
of heading



FIGURE 3  
*Slit in the tapestry weave*

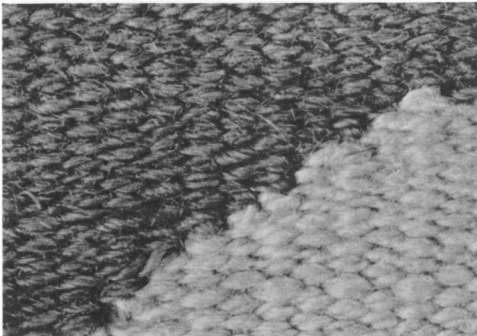


FIGURE 4  
*Dovetailing in the  
tapestry weave*

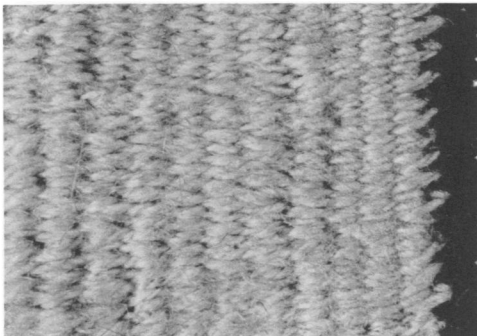
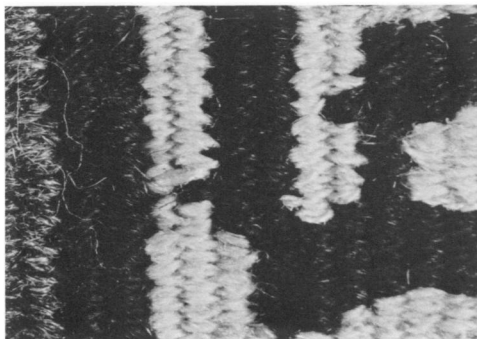
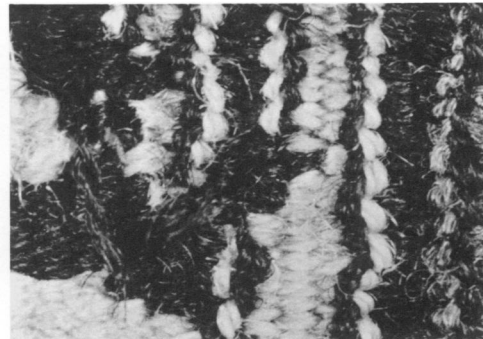
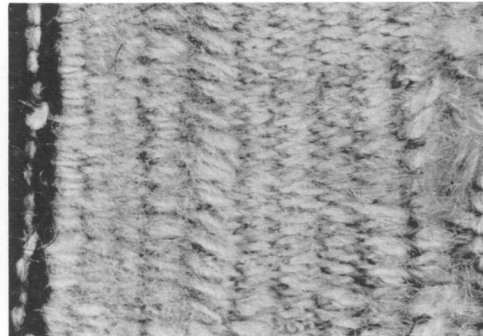
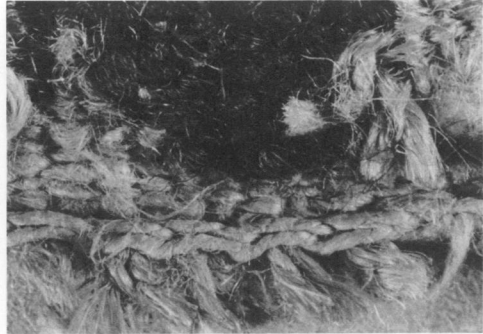


FIGURE 5  
*Double interlocking in  
the tapestry weave*



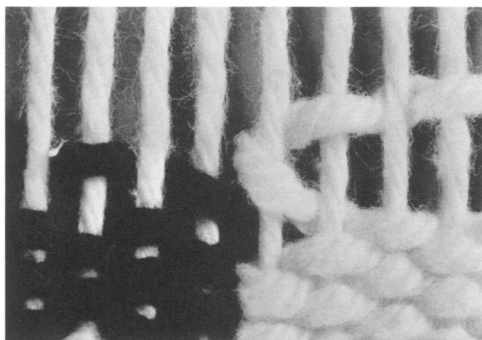
WRONG SIDE (turning right to left) of the tapestry. Except for Ghiordes knots (Figure 9) all must have been woven with this side facing the weaver



Diagrammatic reconstruction of the areas shown at  
left

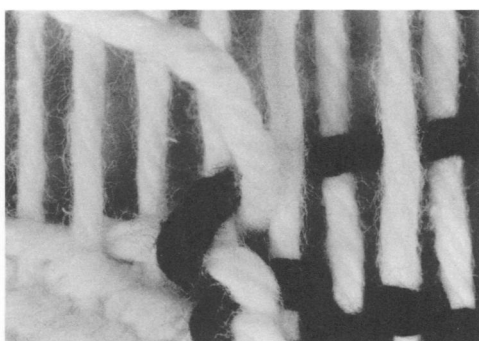
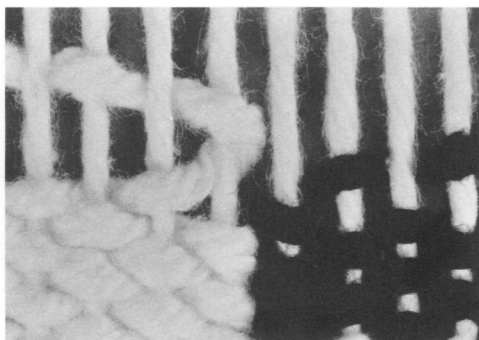
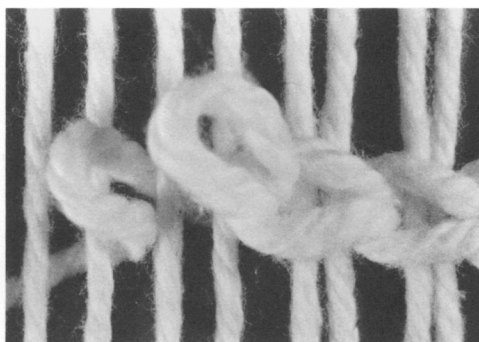
RIGHT SIDE

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WRONG SIDE  
(turning right to left)

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## DETAILS OF THE TAPESTRY—*continued*

RIGHT SIDE of the tapestry. Only Ghiordes knots (Figure 9) must have been worked with this side facing the weaver

WRONG SIDE (turning right to left) of the tapestry. Except for Ghiordes knots (Figure 9) all must have been woven with this side facing the weaver

FIGURE 6  
Hatching done with  
*slit*

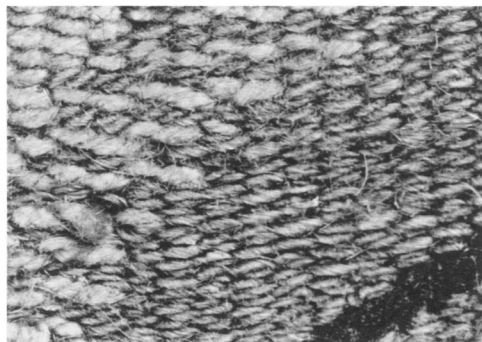


FIGURE 7  
Hatching done with  
varied color orders  
of wefts

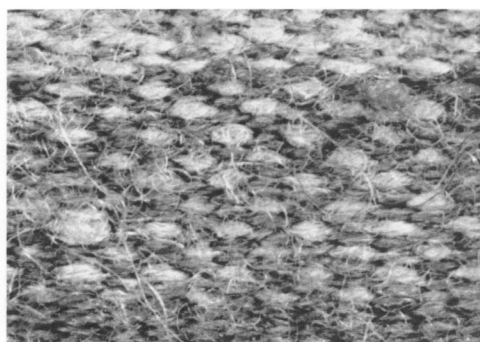
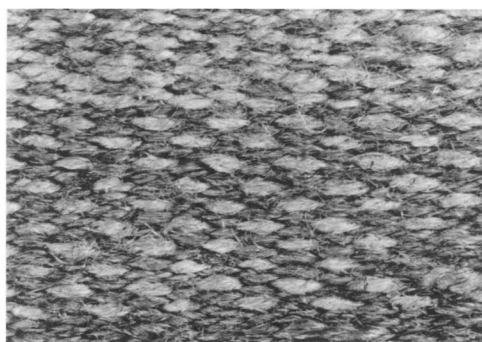


FIGURE 8  
*Non-horizontal wefts*  
in the tapestry weave

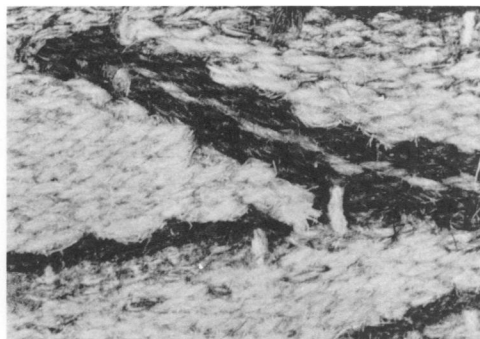
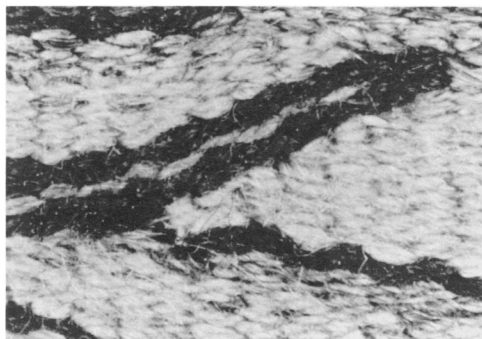
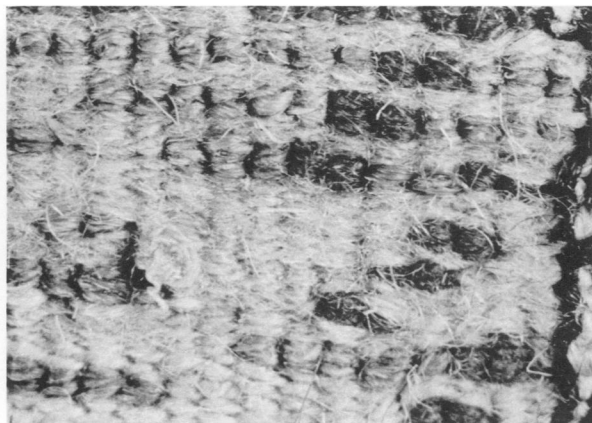
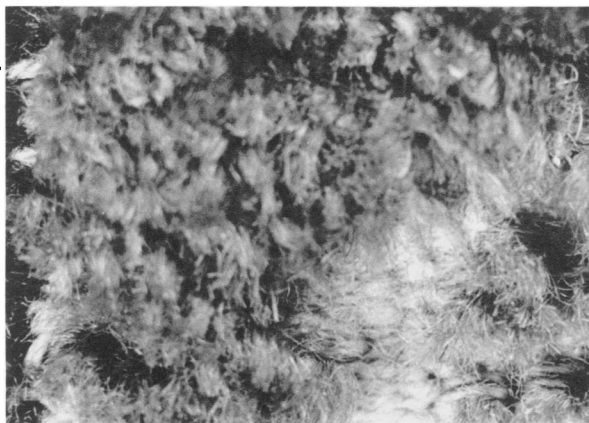


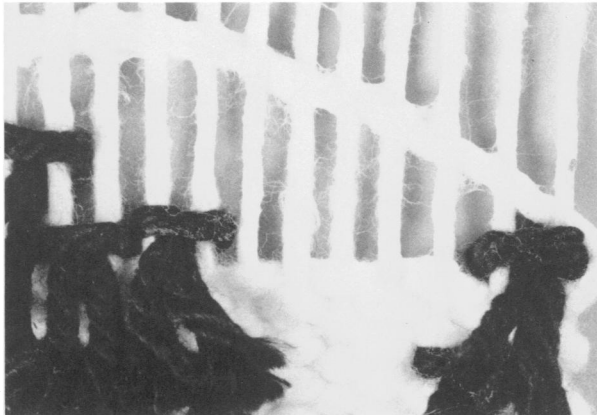
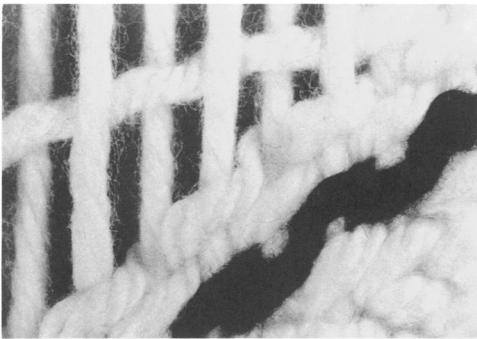
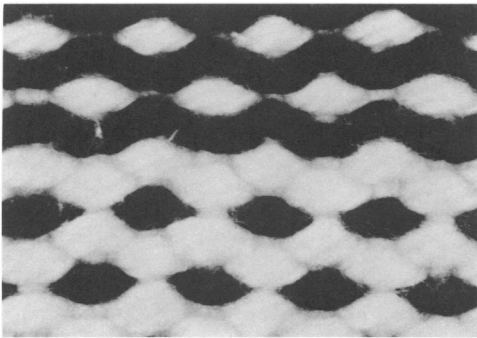
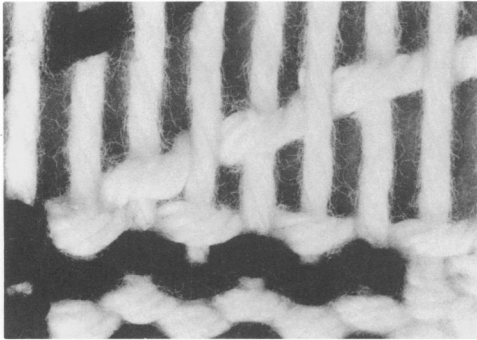
FIGURE 9  
Ghiordes knots alter-  
nated with four or  
five wefts of *weft-*  
*faced plain weave*



Diagrammatic reconstruction of the areas shown at  
left

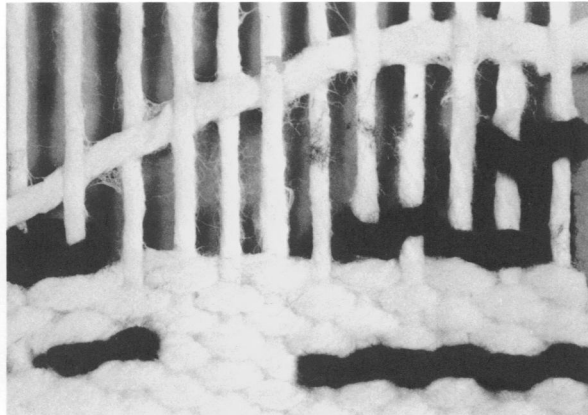
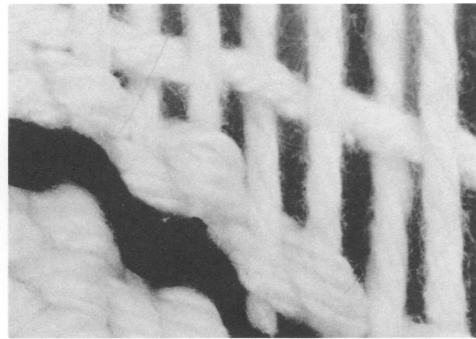
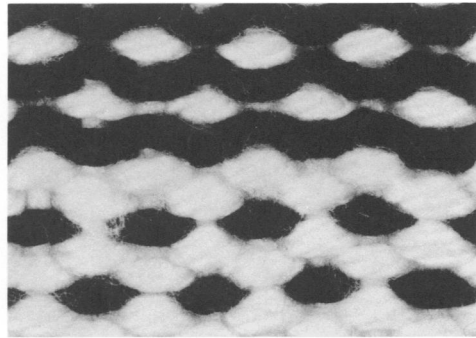
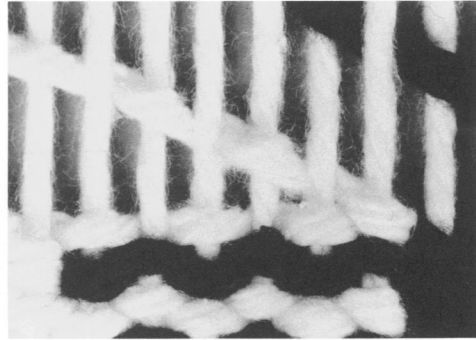
RIGHT SIDE

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WRONG SIDE  
(turning right to left)

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# The Earliest Dated Painting

## by Nicolaes Maes

JOHN WALSH, JR.

*Curator, Department of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

In memory of H. van de Waal (1910 - 1972)

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ago, in the course of a long article on the story of the dismissal of Hagar in the work of Rembrandt and his pupils, Richard Hamann published a painting of the subject by Nicolaes Maes.<sup>1</sup> Not having seen the original, Hamann confined himself to a brief discussion of the composition and of related drawings; his information about the location of the picture was mistaken, and he made no note of a signature or a date. Even from Hamann's poor reproduction it was evident that the painting was one of considerable strength and originality, and that if the attribution to

Maes were correct, the picture must be one of the very few biblical paintings by one of Rembrandt's most talented pupils.

Last year the picture came to light in a private collection in Fall River, Massachusetts, and it was subsequently presented to the Metropolitan Museum by its owner, the late Annie Hare Powel Brayton (Figure 1). In Rhode Island since 1811<sup>2</sup> and never exhibited, it appears not to have been seen by scholars in the original. As a result an important point has escaped notice: the painting is signed in full and dated 1653,

1. Richard Hamann, "Hagars Abschied bei Rembrandt und im Rembrandtkreis," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 8-9 (1936) p. 538, fig. 94; the location given was a private collection in New York.

2. The painting was bought in Europe by John Hare Powel between about 1807 and 1811, during which time Powel served as secretary of the United States Legation in London. For Powel's life see Henry Simpson, *Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, Now Deceased* (Philadelphia, 1859) pp. 5-16. A Byronic portrait of Powel by Sir Thomas Lawrence, dated 1810, is in the collection of Mrs. T. I. Hare Powel (Henri Marceau, "The Portrait of Colonel John Hare Powel by Sir Thomas Lawrence," *The Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin* 27 [1931-1932] pp. 157-158; also Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence* [London, 1954] p. 55). Together with eleven other works and various copies the Maes was given to John Hare Powel, Jr., by a deed of 1855. The list of pictures in the deed includes a "Holy Family of Coregio," "Steinwick's Deliverance of St. Peter," "An Interior by Ostade," "Smaller Ruysdale a Land-

scape," "St. Cecelia by Guido," "St. Anthony at his devotions by Tenier," "The Virgin by Sassaferato," "Bathing Scene by Loudovico Carrachi," and "St. Francis by Murillo." The Maes descended to Pemberton Hare Powel, son of Mr. Powel, Jr., and afterward to the late Annie Hare Powel Brayton, Pemberton Powel's daughter, who kindly provided the author with the 1855 deed and other information about the family. The pictures by Sassoferrato and Steenwijk mentioned in the deed were still in Mrs. Brayton's possession in 1971; some of the paintings are owned by other Powel descendants (for the Steenwijk see Anna O. Cavina, *Carlo Saraceni* [Milan, 1968] pp. 41-42, fig. 23). The presence in Mrs. Brayton's collection of a few additional paintings said to have been bought by John Hare Powel but not mentioned in the deed of 1855 suggests that this pioneer American collection of European paintings may have been still larger. For other collections in America at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth see W. G. Constable, *Art Collecting in the United States of America* (London, 1964) pp. 10-30.



FIGURE 1

Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael, by Nicolaes Maes, 1653. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Annie Hare Powell Brayton, 1971.73

the year the nineteen-year-old artist left Amsterdam after being trained by Rembrandt. It is thus the earliest known work by Maes that bears a date.<sup>3</sup>

The text for the scene of Hagar's dismissal is Genesis 21:14. The events preceding the scene are as follows: Abraham's wife Sarah was barren, and at Sarah's suggestion the patriarch took as his concubine Hagar, his wife's Egyptian maid. After Hagar became pregnant, she began to behave contemptuously toward Sarah; angered, Sarah drove her maid away. Hagar returned to bear Abraham a son, Ishmael. Later, God announced to Abraham that despite their old age he and Sarah would have a natural son, to be called Isaac, and that Isaac would be heir to the covenant made between God and Abraham. After Isaac's birth, Sarah demanded that Abraham cast out his concubine and illegitimate son; God told Abraham that he should indeed do so but promised to make a nation out of Ishmael's descendants. Abraham faced a task made painful by a conflict of loyalty and emotion: to reject his first-born son, whose growth he had watched joyfully, and to cast out his concubine, because God demanded it. "Abraham was forced into yet another sorrowful farewell, as so often had happened during his life."<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE 2

Signature and date of Maes's Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael. Detail of Figure 1

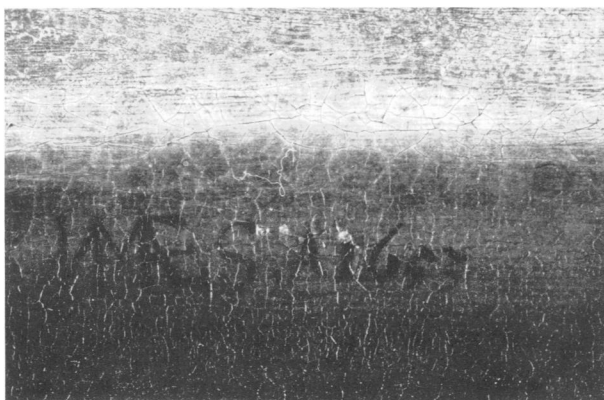


FIGURE 3

Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael, by Nicolaes Maes. Red chalk on paper. Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin-Dahlem (photo: Walter Steinkopf)

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a skin of water, and gave it unto Hagar putting it on her shoulder, and gave her the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.<sup>5</sup>

3. The painting is on canvas and measures 34½ by 27½ inches (87.6 by 69.9 cm.). The signature and date appear on the edge of the step, center (Figure 2). The paint is reasonably well preserved; there are losses by abrasion in many areas, including a thinning of the shadows in Hagar's face. Repaint over scattered losses in the sky has darkened. Ishmael's left hand has been restored clumsily. Some notes on the colors may be useful: Abraham wears a brown turban with a multicolored wrapping and a velvet robe of an intense red. Hagar wears a hat of the same red; her blouse is white, and her skirt is blue. Ishmael wears a white headband with brown stripes, a robe with brown and tan stripes, and a red cloth around his waist. The sky is various shades of grayish blue, with clouds that have taken on an orange yellow tint in the light of the rising sun.

4. Hans-Martin Rotermund, *Rembrandts Handzeichnungen und Radierungen zur Bibel* (Stuttgart, 1963) p. 14: "Wie so oft schon im Leben Abrahams wird ein schmerzlicher Abschied gefordert."

5. Genesis 21:14, King James Version (original edition, 1611). The Statenbijbel (first published in Leiden by Paulus Aertsz. van Ravestijn, 1637), like the Louvain Bible of 1553, translates the

The challenge of expressing the emotions of the three actors, especially the inner conflict of Abraham, was taken up on several occasions by Maes's teacher Rembrandt, as it had been earlier by Rembrandt's teacher Pieter Lastman. More important, perhaps, was the challenge the subject posed for a large number of Rembrandt's pupils.<sup>6</sup> Within the "private academy" Rembrandt operated in Amsterdam pupils continued the old practice of making drawings after their teacher's works, so as to absorb his style completely;<sup>7</sup> they also invented new compositions for subjects that Rembrandt himself had treated, perhaps because from time to time the master gave them these subjects, like the dismissal of Hagar, as assignments to exercise their powers of expression and composition.<sup>8</sup> Our painting is based on a drawing, now in Berlin,<sup>9</sup> which Maes may have made while he was still in Rembrandt's studio, and which is fascinating evidence of the relation of master and pupil (Figure 3).

expression for Hagar's water container as "bottle," and thus it is represented by Dutch artists: "Doe stont Abraham 's morgens vroeck op / ende nam broot / ende eene flessche waters / ende gafse aen Hagar / die leggende op haren schouder; oock [gaf hy haer] het kint / ende sont haer wech: ende sy ginck voort / ende dwaelde in de woestijne Berseba."

6. Hamann ("Hagars Abschied") identified four versions of this subject by Rembrandt and at least sixty-eight by his pupils. H. van de Waal raised the question of the exceptional popularity of Hagar's story in Rembrandt's time. He doubted that the reasons were theological; at most, scenes involving Hagar and Sarah might have recalled the tradition of regarding the two women as symbolic of the old covenant and the new, a tradition that goes back to St. Paul (Galatians 4:21–31) and is analogous to the use of the personifications of Synagogue and Ecclesia. Van de Waal pointed out the increased interest in psychological content in scenes of the dismissal of Hagar. H. van de Waal, "'Hagar in de Woestijn' door Rembrandt en zijn school," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 1 (1947) pp. 149–150.

7. In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue *Rembrandt after Three Hundred Years* (Chicago, 1969) pp. 21–30, Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann discusses the nature of Rembrandt's instruction, including its unconventional aspects. See also Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, "Rembrandts Onderwijs aan zijn Leerlingen," *Feestbundel Dr. Abraham Bredius* . . . (Amsterdam, 1915) pp. 79–94.

8. Hamann speaks of a "Werkstattkonkurrenz," and there may indeed have been an element of contest in the way the pupils produced their own versions of a given subject ("Hagars Abschied," p. 537).

9. Red chalk, 7 by 6½ inches. Elfried Bock and Jakob Rosenberg, *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Die Zeichnungen alter Meister, Die Niederländischen Meister* (Berlin, 1931) I, p. 183, no. 4246; II, pl. 124. The drawing was attributed to Maes by Wilhelm Valentiner, *Nicolaes Maes* (Stuttgart, 1924) p. 32, fig. 7. See also Hamann, "Hagars Abschied," pp. 536–537, fig. 92.



FIGURE 4

Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael, by Rembrandt. Pen and wash, heightened with white, on paper. British Museum, London

FIGURE 5

Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael, by Rembrandt. Pen and wash on paper. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam



In the Berlin drawing Maes used a composition that Rembrandt had developed in several earlier works, including a drawing evidently of the early 1640s (Figure 4)<sup>10</sup> and another of about a decade later (Figure 5).<sup>11</sup> In Rembrandt's versions Abraham stands at the doorway between Hagar and Ishmael. He looks at the weeping Hagar and places his right hand on the head of his son, whose face we cannot see, in the traditional gesture of blessing. The double assault on Abraham's emotions is emphasized by the staging, in which he is placed between the distraught girl and his departing son. Maes adopted Rembrandt's *mis-en-scène*, evidently choosing details from both of his master's drawings: Maes has Abraham reach out toward Hagar with his left hand, as Rembrandt had in the earlier drawing (Figure 4);<sup>12</sup> he has Abraham raise his hand above Ishmael's head, rather than touching it, and has the boy already descending a stair, as Rembrandt had in the later drawing (Figure 5). Like Rembrandt, Maes gives a prominent place to Ishmael's bow and quiver, attributes of the desert-dwelling bowman Ishmael later became, and reminders of the angel's earlier prophesy to Hagar in the desert:

He shall be a wild colt of a man,  
His hand against everyone,  
And everyone's hand against him;  
And in the face of all his kin shall he camp.<sup>13</sup>

In choosing an upright format for the Berlin drawing, Maes probably had yet another version of the subject in mind, Rembrandt's etching of 1637 (Figure 6),<sup>14</sup> in which, incidentally, Rembrandt first introduced the enormously effective device of showing Ishmael with his back to the spectator, not deterred by any emotional farewell, but already moving off.

If the Berlin drawing shows Maes borrowing liberally from his teacher, it also shows him trying out some



FIGURE 6  
Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael, by  
Rembrandt, 1637. Etching. Rijksprentenkabinet,  
Amsterdam

ideas of his own, the most striking of which is a new way for Hagar to play the scene. Unlike other representations of the dismissal by Rembrandt and his pupils, nearly all of which show Hagar wiping the tears from her eyes with a cloth, this one shows Hagar

10. British Museum, London; pen and wash, heightened with white, 7 $\frac{1}{16}$  by 9 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Abraham is drawn on an inserted piece of paper. Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt, A Critical and Chronological Catalogue* (London, 1954–1957) III, no. 524.

11. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam; pen and wash, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  by 8 $\frac{13}{16}$  inches. On the verso is the head of a female, possibly Hagar. Benesch, *Drawings*, V, no. 916.

12. Hamann interpreted this gesture as barring the way ("wegversperrend"; "Hagars Abschied," pp. 536–537), but it

seems plainly intended as a futile attempt to reach out and comfort Hagar.

13. Genesis 16:12. The translation is by E. A. Speiser; *The Anchor Bible: Genesis*, translated and annotated by E. A. Speiser (New York, 1962) p. 117. In the Statenbijbel of 1637 the passage is: "Ende hy sal een wout-ezel [van een] mensche zijn: sijn hant sal tegen allen zijn / ende de hant van alle tegens hem: ende hy sal woonen voor het aengesicht aller sijner broederen."

14. Arthur M. Hind, *Rembrandt's Etchings* (London, 1912) no. 149.

dry eyed, turning her head away from Abraham and rejecting his attempt to comfort her. Another invention is the profile view of Ishmael's face. Originally Maes had drawn the twisting figure of the boy in the same light, somewhat hesitant manner in which the rest of the composition is handled and had shown Ishmael looking toward Abraham. The figure was strengthened and changed in heavier chalk by a more decisive hand; the alterations recall the emphatic corrections made on pupils' drawings by Rembrandt himself. It is tempting to look for Rembrandt's hand here, but the evidence favors an afterthought by Maes.<sup>15</sup> The result of the corrections was a dramatic device that emphasizes the psychology of the scene: Ishmael, like his mother, turns away from Abraham, making their estrangement and Abraham's helplessness graphically evident. Maes does not show old Sarah watching from the house, as had most other artists who treated the scene, including Rembrandt; he probably felt that, although it would have been textually correct to include Sarah, she was extraneous to the emotional plight of Abraham at this moment, and her presence would have diluted the strength of the composition.

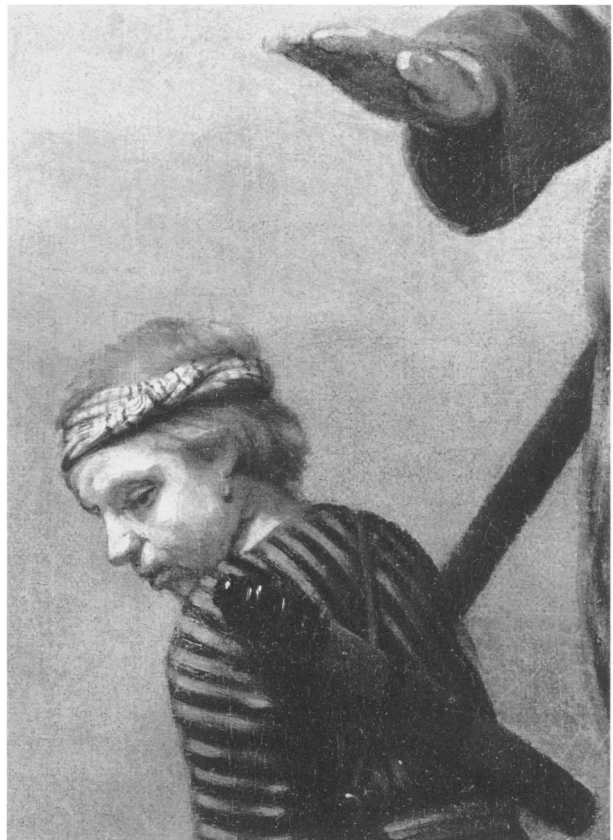
When he came to paint Ishmael (Figure 7), Maes again showed him in near profile, evidently telling his dog to follow; our attention is not drawn to this anecdotal touch, however, as much as to the face itself, a face of unconventional maturity, whose shadowed eye sockets and furrowed brow suggest that Ishmael is both

saddened and aware of the significance of what is going on. In the painting Abraham assumes an expression of doting anxiety, while Hagar, whose downturned mouth in the drawing made her unhappiness obvious, is given a thick-featured face with a gently inconsolable expression (Figure 8).

The painting is full of other improvements over the preparatory drawing. In the drawing both Ishmael and Hagar were moving forward, while Abraham was turned slightly in the direction of the stairs; in the painting only the boy moves off, while Hagar stands still and Abraham turns toward her, advancing one leg to parallel the gesture of his hand. The result is a more obvious contrast, that of the painful impasse between the adults, who belong to the past, and the active role of the child Ishmael, who is going toward an eventful future. The architecture, too, was changed in order to strengthen the composition. The powerful stasis of the

FIGURE 7

The head of Ishmael in Maes's *Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael*. Detail of Figure 1



15. Hamann wondered whether the Berlin sheet might have been corrected in the studio by Rembrandt, or whether instead the drawing was an independent later work ("Hagars Abschied," p. 537). It must date from 1653 or earlier, when Maes may indeed still have been with Rembrandt, but the corrections look like Maes's own. Compare Maes's red chalk drawing of the Adoration of the Shepherds in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, which has important changes and additions in heavier chalk; these corrections, while certainly stronger than the rest of the drawing, have little more descriptive power than the corrections of the Berlin drawing. See Valentiner, *Nicolaes Maes*, fig. 18; also Peter Schatborn, "A Work of Touching Simplicity," *M: A Quarterly Review of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts* 2 (1970) p. 13. The surviving drawings with corrections by Rembrandt that have so far been identified date from the early 1650s. All the corrections were made in pen. See Benesch, *Drawings*, VI, nos. 1370–1384; Gustav Falck, "Ueber einige von Rembrandt übergegangene Schülerzeichnungen," *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 45 (1924) pp. 191–200; and Werner Sumowski, "Eine Renaissance-Zeichnung mit Rembrandt Korrekturen," *Pantheon* 23 (1965) pp. 246–256.



FIGURE 8

The heads of Abraham and Hagar in Maes's *Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael*. Detail of Figure 1

scene between Hagar and Abraham is emphasized by the step they stand on, which was raised and turned parallel to the plane of the picture. The network of diagonals and orthogonals is arranged to converge on the face of Abraham. And by giving the railing behind the steps a steep, unbroken downward pitch and a curve at one end, Maes created a visual metaphor for casting out. Abraham's gesture, vague in the drawing, has taken shape: it is as though he has just bestowed the traditional blessing by putting his hand on Ishmael's head (compare Rembrandt's treatment in Figure 5) and has turned to Hagar, unaware that Ishmael has already moved down and away from his outstretched

hand. The hand may have been extended for benediction, but as it hangs in the air it seems to imply both banishment and hesitation as well.

Instead of the shorter garment he wore in the drawing, Abraham is given a heavy robe whose long curving folds descend to his feet and a turban whose wrapping falls in a curve across his chest, stressing the reaching gesture of his left hand. Hagar's broad, floppy hat, seen from above in the drawing, has become rounded in the painting, a foreshortened disk seen from below. Its regular curves, together with those of the hat string, accord well with the smooth ovoid shape of Hagar's face. The hat, incidentally, is a Gypsy *bern*, one of sev-

eral headdresses familiar from depictions of Gypsies since the sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The legend, invented by the Gypsies themselves, that they were the descendants of a wandering tribe of Egyptians was still alive in the seventeenth century, and thus they were known in the Netherlands as *Egyptenaren* ("Egyptians") as well as *heidens* ("heathens").<sup>17</sup> Maes had a perfectly good reason to think that the Gypsy *bern* might be an appropriate headdress for an Egyptian woman.

In the painting there is a peacock on the wall above Abraham and Hagar observing the scene below. It is not likely that Maes included the bird merely for the sake of naturalism or for visual interest. As a common symbol of pride, the peacock is evidently there to remind us that Hagar's troubles were at least partly of her own making.<sup>18</sup> Years before, when Sarah was barren, she gave Hagar to Abraham, but no sooner was Hagar pregnant that she "looked upon her mistress with contempt." Hagar's act, tactless at best and

prideful at worst, provoked Sarah to drive her out of the household. In the painting Hagar is again being expelled at Sarah's command, this time not for forgetting her station, but because Sarah wanted her and Ishmael out of the way so as to remove all chance that the inheritance of her own son, Isaac, might be jeopardized.<sup>19</sup> Had Maes included Sarah and Isaac as witnesses, as did most artists, they would have brought to mind the immediate cause of Hagar's dismissal, the recent conflict over the inheritance. Instead the witness is a peacock, whose presence seems meant to recall Hagar's old offense against her mistress, and that pride goes before a fall.

Until now Nicolaes Maes's earliest years as a painter have been obscure. Born in Dordrecht in January 1634,<sup>20</sup> he is supposed to have studied drawing with a master of average ability and then to have learned painting from Rembrandt.<sup>21</sup> We assume that he went to Rembrandt around 1650; we know that he returned

16. See, for example, a drawing of Gypsies on horseback, evidently a copy after Hans Burgkmair, in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, reproduced and discussed by Peter Halm, "Hans Burgkmair als Zeichner," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 13 (1962) pp. 118–121. See also a woodcut illustrating the chapter on Gypsies in Sebastian Munster, *La Cosmographie universelle de tout le monde* . . . (Paris, 1565) II, col. 879, and the woodcut *L'egyptienne* in François Desprez, *Recueil de la diversité des habits* (Paris, 1567) p. 99, both reproduced in François de Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes dans L'Ancienne France* (Paris, 1961) figs. 1, 10. Callot's etching of Gypsies on the road, published in 1621, shows a woman wearing a *bern* (J. Lieure, *Jacques Callot* [Paris, 1924–1927] no. 374). For Gypsy costume see H. T. Crofton, "The Former Costume of the Gypsies," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 2nd ser. 2 (1908–1909) pp. 207–231. Maes was not the only Dutch artist to give Hagar a Gypsy hat; Eeckhout and several still anonymous Rembrandt followers also did so (see Hamann, "Hagars Abschied," figs. 24, 25, 51, 88). I am indebted to Helmut Nickel for suggesting to me the significance of the hat in Maes's painting.

17. The English word *Gypsy* is of course derived from *Egyptian*. It was not until 1783 that linguistic research demonstrated that the Gypsies must instead have come from India (H. M. G. Grellmann, *Die Zigeuner, Ein historischer Versuch* . . . [Dessau and Leipzig, 1783]). Although the Egyptian origin of the Gypsies was widely accepted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were evidently competing legends—some fostered by the Gypsies themselves—tracing them to Israel. One legend claimed them as the legitimate descendants of Abraham and Sarah, another as the accursed race sired by Ham (Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes*, pp. 40–42; see also O. van Kappen, *Geschiedenis der Zigeuners in Nederland* [Assen, 1965] pp. 24–58). That such legends were still current in the second half of the seventeenth century is clear, for example, from John Dryden's poem "A Gypsy Prophetess," in which the Gypsy is called a Jew. From time to time artists of the sixteenth century, evidently persuaded that Gypsy costume was appropriate

for the representation of Israelites, gave the Gypsy *bern* to women in Old Testament scenes: for instance, Lucas van Leyden's *Moses Striking the Rock* of 1527 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) and several of Hans Holbein's celebrated Old Testament woodcuts, especially the scene of Isaac blessing Jacob (Holbein's *Historiarum Veteris Instrumenti Icones* was published by the firm of Treschel in Lyons in 1538; see Philip Hofer, "Holbein's Old Testament Woodcuts," *The New Colophon* 1 [1948] pp. 160–174).

18. For peacock symbolism see the illustrations in Robert Payne, *Hubris, A Study of Pride* (New York, 1960). For a discussion, see J. A. Emmens, *Rembrandt en de regels van de kunst* (Utrecht, 1968) p. 166; Ingvar Bergström, "Rembrandt och fåfångligheten," *Kunst og Kultur* (Oslo, 1960) pp. 109, 111; and Ingvar Bergström, "Rembrandt's double-portrait of himself and Saskia at the Dresden Gallery, a tradition transformed," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 17 (1966) pp. 157–159. Peacocks are included in a few other Dutch representations of the dismissal of Hagar (but none by Rembrandt), most notably in a painting attributed to Eeckhout in the van Gelder Collection, Uccle (Belgium), where Sarah is included in the scene, and the peacock's pose and accusing stare pointedly resemble those of the old woman. For a reproduction, see Hamann, "Hagars Abschied," fig. 90.

19. The parallelism of the two expulsions of Hagar has long puzzled biblical scholars. Recent commentaries have explained this peculiarity by assuming that the narrative in its present form combines two rather different versions of the episode. See van de Waal, "Hagar in de Woestijn," p. 148, note 4; also *The Anchor Bible: Genesis*, pp. 116–121, 153–157.

20. Willem Martin, *De Hollandsche Schilderkunst in de Zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1942) II, p. 512, note 325, where the archivist of Dordrecht is credited with finding the correct date; first published in *Musée Royal de Tableaux, Mauritshuis à La Haye, Catalogue raisonné des tableaux et sculptures* (The Hague, 1935) p. 183.

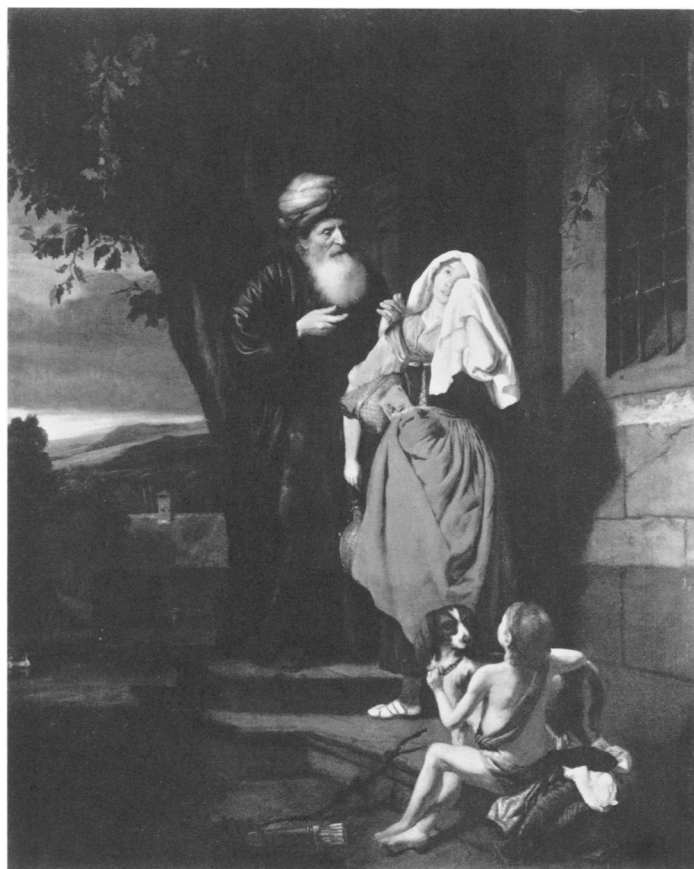
21. Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1719) II, pp. 273–274.

FIGURE 9

Abraham Dismissing Hagar, by Nicolaes Maes.  
Oil on canvas. Formerly Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin (destroyed)

from Amsterdam to Dordrecht at the end of 1653 and remained there for about twenty years.<sup>22</sup> With the exception of our painting there is no certain work before 1655, the year in which Maes dated no fewer than six pictures, all gentle domestic genre scenes of the sort for which he is well known. All demonstrate Maes's considerable independence from Rembrandt, both in style and subject matter.<sup>23</sup> The Metropolitan's painting shows that two years earlier, probably while he was still in Amsterdam, Maes had grown entirely competent as a painter and developed into a skillful composer of biblical scenes. At nineteen he was able not only to assimilate Rembrandt's solutions to the problem of representing a challenging subject, but to rework them into a solution that in some respects is richer and more perceptive than those of his master—no small feat.

The Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael should help resolve the difficult questions posed by three relatively large Rembrandtesque paintings of biblical subjects that have been attributed to Maes and assumed to date from the early 1650s, Christ Blessing the Children in the National Gallery, London, Christ before Pilate in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, and The Mocking of Christ in the Hermitage, Leningrad. In the light of the Metropolitan's painting it is difficult indeed to see the hand of Maes in the London picture, which is much more freely executed, and it is only a



little easier to imagine Maes as the painter of the Budapest and Leningrad works.<sup>24</sup>

One other biblical painting of clear authenticity by Maes is known, a rather different version of Abraham Dismissing Hagar, which had been in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin and was destroyed during

22. G. H. Veth, "Aanteekeningen omtrent eenige Dordrechtse schilders. XXVIII. Nicolaes Maes," *Oud-Holland* 8 (1890) pp. 125–142; Abraham Bredius, "Bijdragen tot een biografie van Nicolaes Maes," *Oud-Holland* 41 (1923–1924) pp. 207–214.

23. The Prayer Before the Meal in the Louvre, signed and dated 1648, is hard to accept as the work of a fourteen-year-old; it is more probably by Brekelenkam. (Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, VI [London, 1916] no. 115. This publication is hereinafter cited as HdG.) The date of the Adoration of the Shepherds in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (HdG 6) was thought to be 1653, but Schatborn has corrected this reading to 1658 (*Rembrandt and his Pupils*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, 1969, no. 94; Schatborn, "A Work of Touching Simplicity," pp. 13–14). Maes's works of 1655 are the Mother Asleep at the Cradle in the collection of the Earl of Northbrook (HdG 101); The Lace-Maker in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (HdG 67); the Woman Scraping Parsnips in the National

Gallery, London (HdG 29); the Sewer in a private collection, Pittsburgh (HdG 66); the Woman Seated, Plucking a Duck formerly in the Breitmeyer Collection (HdG 49); and the Interior with a Sleeping Maid in the National Gallery, London (HdG 100).

24. For a summary of literature on the problem see David van Fossen, "Aert de Gelder: An Attribution for the *Christ Blessing the Children* in London," *Art Quarterly* 33 (1970) pp. 134–146, where the London painting is given to de Gelder and the suggestion is made that the Leningrad and Budapest pictures are by the same hand. Van Fossen's arguments against Maes as the author of the Christ Blessing the Children seem to me persuasive, even without the added evidence of the Metropolitan's picture. However, the attribution on stylistic grounds to de Gelder, who was born in 1645 and did not enter Rembrandt's studio until the 1660s, must be considered debatable. The Budapest painting is reproduced in Valentiner, *Nicolaes Maes*, pl. 2; the Leningrad painting in V. I. Kuznetsov, *Dutch Painting of the Seventeenth Century in Russian Museums* (Moscow, 1959) pl. 75, as "N. Maes (?)."



FIGURE 10

A Woman Scraping Parsnips, by Nicolaes Maes, 1655. Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London

time it would have been a curious exercise in baroque rhetoric and composition for an artist who, by then, was painting tranquil genre subjects.

Despite its air of theatricality, the Metropolitan's Abraham Dismissing Hagar and Ishmael anticipates Maes's more familiar later works in several telling ways. The peculiar colors, dominated by an intense red and a clear blue, which do not make a very agreeable impression on eyes accustomed to Rembrandt, announce Maes's independence as a colorist. The changes we noted from the preparatory drawing to the painting, resulting in more static figures and a more rectilinear organization, betray Maes's instincts, even at nineteen. Most revealing is Hagar, whose disconsolate face reminds us of so many of the young women with smooth, rounded features and downcast eyes who were soon to populate Maes's pictures: women doing household chores (Figure 10), making lace, or dreaming at a window. Ironically these women, who seem to have embodied for Maes and his contemporaries an ideal of blameless domesticity, have a slightly older sister in Maes's own Hagar, the Egyptian concubine who was abused and who will not be comforted.

the bombings of World War II (Figure 9).<sup>25</sup> Here the technique is a little tighter than that of the Metropolitan picture, and the scene is staged very differently. Hagar mops her eyes and Abraham expostulates, while little Ishmael sits on a step and observes. For all the originality of the composition, the conception of the subject is conventional, especially Hagar's role. It is doubtful that the picture was painted before 1653, and therefore it seems more satisfactory to place it several years later; nevertheless it must be admitted that at the

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The late Annie Hare Powel Brayton (Mrs. Edward Brayton) and Mr. Brayton were hospitable and generous with information, for which I am most grateful. I was glad to have advice of various sorts from Hubert von Sonnenburg, Elizabeth E. Gardner, Helmut Nickel, Franklin W. Robinson, Leendert Couprie, and Peter Schatborn.

25. HdG 1; *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Gemälde im Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum* (Berlin, 1931) no. 819d. See also Valentiner, *Nicolaes Maes*, pp. 12, 22–23, pl. 3. Valentiner publishes a drawing of Abraham and Hagar in the collection of A. Strölin, Lausanne, which is related to the Berlin painting, although it cannot be considered a preparatory drawing (*Nicolaes Maes*, p. 7, fig. 8). Hamann discusses both the painting and the drawing but does not attempt to date them ("Hagars Abschied," pp. 537–538).

# Vermeer's Girl Asleep

## A Moral Emblem

MADLYN MILLNER KAHN

I. Meagerly recognized in his lifetime, virtually dropped out of history for almost two centuries after his death in 1675, Jan Vermeer of Delft has more recently been exalted by praise as unreserved as it is belated. In the course of the last hundred years he has been glorified as a master on a par with the greatest. His paintings had only to wait for observers ready to esteem them.

It was certainly not by chance that the person who “rediscovered” Vermeer was French, that he was an art critic and friend of some of the advanced painters of his time, and that the year in which he published the essays that established Vermeer’s place in art history was 1866. Interest in the specific effects of daylight, the visual rather than conceptual approach to form, the subordination of subject matter to picture making—revolutionary features that were at the time establishing the leadership of French painting in drastically new trends in art—these were the distinctive characteristics of the paintings that prepared the eyes that could appreciate Vermeer. The content of the Delft master’s paintings may also have been persuasive in recommending them to Théophile Thoré, who advertised his political sympathies by publishing as “W. Bürger” (and thus took his place in art history under the name

of Bürger-Thoré or Thoré-Bürger); like his radical artist friends, he preferred an apparently casual slice of bourgeois life to a grandiose theme.<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with the sensibility of the times, through the periods of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting Vermeer’s art found ever greater appreciation, always based—when it was analyzed at all—on the splendor of his style. At a time when pure painting was exalted as such, Vermeer gave ample grounds for praise in the fashionable terms of the day. Proust recorded for posterity the extravagance to which this trend could be carried when he wrote of the critic who extolled the View of Delft for “un petit pan de mur jaune . . . si bien peint, qu’il était, si on le regardait seul, comme une précieuse oeuvre d’art chinoise, d’une beauté qui se suffirait à elle-même,” and of Bergotte, whose motto might have been: “See Vermeer and die.”<sup>2</sup>

Though Vermeer’s paintings feature the clear light of day, many of those who acclaimed them, including Proust, sensed something inscrutable in them. Admirers sought to explain the mystery in terms of their own emotional response, often through metaphors borrowed from music. Terms such as “silence,” “rhythm,” and “harmony” were repeatedly invoked to describe

1. Thoré-Bürger mentioned three paintings by Vermeer in the first volume of his *Musées de la Hollande* (Paris, 1858). In the second volume (Paris, 1860) he attributed a dozen paintings to him (not correctly in some cases, in the light of modern scholarship). His major publication on “Van der Meer de Delft” (which later appeared in book form) was a study in three parts in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 21 (1866) pp. 297–330, 458–470, and 542–575.

2. Marcel Proust, *La Prisonnière* (Paris, 1954) pp. 198 ff. (1st

edition, Paris, 1923). Proust visited the exhibition of Dutch painting at the Jeu de Paume in May 1921, to which the quoted passage refers, in the company of the critic Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, who had recently written several articles on Vermeer. On Vaudoyer’s influence on Proust, who had already seen the View of Delft on a visit to Holland almost twenty years earlier, see Hélène Adhémar, “La Vision de Vermeer par Proust, à travers Vaudoyer,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 68 (1966) pp. 291–302.

the allure of these works. Their subject matter was assumed to be merely incidental to the effect. Artists and art lovers who despised the “literary” content of nineteenth-century kitsch were little inclined to concede the possibility that pictures they admired had meaning other than the purely aesthetic. The fact that increasing esteem for Vermeer coincided with rising enthusiasm for the Impressionists and their followers and rested on the same grounds retarded recognition of the differences between the seventeenth-century Delft painter and the nineteenth-century French ones.

In Vermeer’s time, subject matter was the first consideration in most European paintings. In this respect Dutch painters and buyers of paintings were no exception. The artists’ technical skills were valued only insofar as they served well in the representational tasks to which they were devoted. Lacking religious and royal commissions, which dominated art in other nations, Dutch painters tended to become specialists in any one of an ample range of subjects. They produced portraits, independent still lifes, landscapes, and genre scenes unprecedented in variety as well as in quantity. It has been thought by some that this bumper crop of paintings merely reflects the pride of Dutch artists and their customers in their country and their material possessions. Such pride, along with a reverence for visible things as a part of God’s world, doubtless contributed both to the choice of subject matter and to the treatment of it in some paintings. But it would be an oversimplification to see “Dutch realism” as the overriding motive in the painting of the seventeenth century in the northern Netherlands. Literary and religious references abound, and art-historical research, taking into account the interests of the society that produced them, has revealed many instances of paintings with meanings beyond what is immediately evident.

This different kind of looking has already begun to perceive a different picture of the artist whom Thoré-

Bürger called “the Sphinx.” The known documents about Vermeer’s life tell us almost nothing about his intentions with regard to his art, but some of the works themselves attest to his concern with intellectual content. Among his relatively few paintings that have come down to us,<sup>3</sup> two of the earliest portray familiar narrative subjects and draw on prior works of art in doing so: *Diana and Her Companions* (The Hague, Mauritshuis) and *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland). The first of his two dated paintings, *The Procuress* (1656, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), deals overtly with the brothel theme that the Utrecht Caravaggists had popularized in the 1620s. Two pictures are allegorical; the first of these, *The Art of Painting* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), is a masterpiece of Vermeer’s full maturity,<sup>4</sup> while the second, *Allegory of the Christian Faith* (New York, Metropolitan Museum), is a late work. Thus, from the beginning to the end of his career, Vermeer undertook compositions whose goal was the communication of a message. It should not come as a surprise that some of his paintings that have been mistaken for pure genre can be shown to embody meanings that his contemporaries would have understood, though they are esoteric to modern observers.

**II.** Vermeer’s *Girl Asleep at a Table* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Figure 1) has been the focus of numerous attempts at interpretation, but until now no explanation has been proposed that takes into account all of its features.

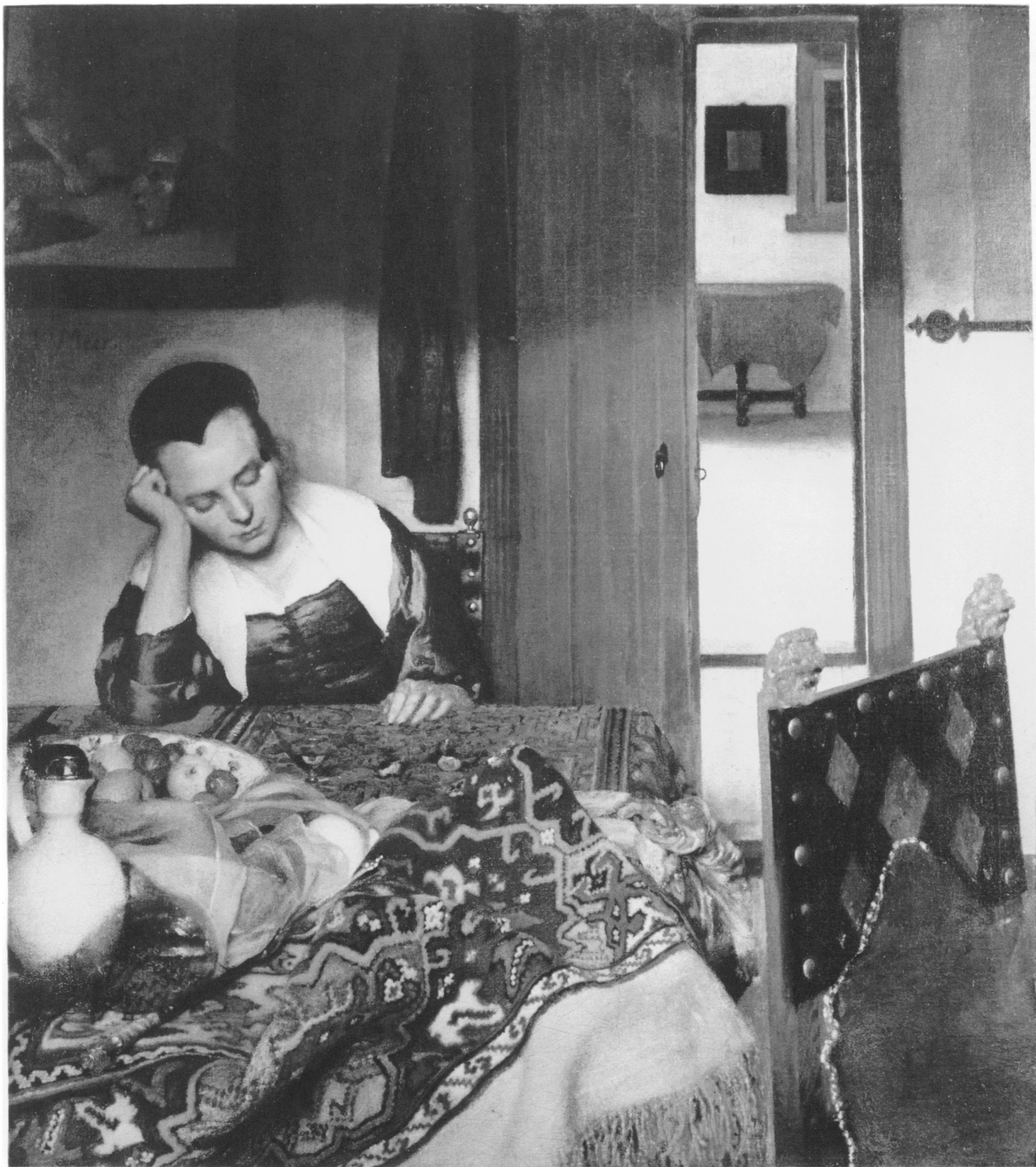
It has been rather widely assumed that this is the painting listed as number 8, “Een dronke slapende meyd aen een tafel,” in the anonymous sale in Amsterdam on May 16, 1696, in which twenty-one paintings by Vermeer were sold (along with pictures by other masters). The provenance of the Museum’s painting is certain, however, only from the time of the John W. Wilson sale in Paris, March 14–16, 1881, in which it

3. About thirty-five paintings are accepted by most scholars as autograph works by Vermeer.

4. That this painting was known as *The Art of Painting* in Vermeer’s lifetime is implied by the fact that a deposition made by his widow on February 24, 1676, only two months after his death, referred to a painting by her husband as “de Schilderconst.” The full text is published by A. Bredius, “Iets over Johannes Vermeer (‘De Delftsche Vermeer’),” *Oud Holland* 3 (1885) p. 220.

FIGURE 1

*Girl Asleep*, by Jan Vermeer. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, bequest of Benjamin Altman, 14.40.611



was number 116, titled “La Servante endormie.” “A Drunken Girl, Sleeping at a Table” and “The Sleeping Maidservant” could, of course, designate the same picture. But it must be borne in mind that both designations appeared as descriptions of a painting rather than explanatory titles. They are designed to identify images, not to reveal intended content.<sup>5</sup> Apparently even so soon as twenty-one years after Vermeer’s death, when the Amsterdam auction took place, either the Girl Asleep was not known to have an intrinsic meaning, or such meaning as was attached to it was considered unimportant in the context of a sale. At the time when the painting was made, however, the meaning would have constituted a large factor in the value of the picture, if not its *raison d’être*.

A search for meaning must start with what immediately meets the eye, and indeed must never stray too far from “the thing itself as it really is.” A solitary human figure is depicted in the Museum’s painting, a rosy-cheeked young woman seated at a table. She wears a brown satin dress with a white collar open at the throat, a black “widow’s peak” cap,<sup>6</sup> and large pear-shaped pearl earrings. Her eyelids are lowered. Her right elbow rests on the table, and her right hand, with fingers curled, supports her head. Her left hand also rests on the table before her. The table is covered with a Turkish carpet, mainly reds, blues, and ocher, with ocher kilim and fringe. At the edge of the table nearer the beholder the carpet is pushed up to form a large triangular fold; here the pattern is vastly enlarged as compared with the part of the carpet that is flat on the table toward the side where the young woman sits, thus emphasizing the spatial recession (Figure 2).<sup>7</sup> The

5. This is indisputably the case with every one of the paintings by Vermeer listed in the 1696 sale. Gerard Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen* . . . (The Hague, 1752) I, p. 34. Thoré-Bürger published the list in French, “Van der Meer,” pp. 542–543.

6. This style of cap, though known as a “widow’s peak,” was not worn exclusively by widows.

7. The design on the farther side of the table is not recognizably related to the rug whose pattern and texture are depicted in intensely vivid closeup view in the foreground. In fact it is not recognizably a rug pattern at all. The part adjacent to the girl’s elbow is even more summary than the rest. Comparison with other paintings makes it seem highly probable, however, that Vermeer meant to show a single rug on the table, exaggerating the appearance of both the near and the more distant areas in order to stress the perspective recession. The same rug appears to be depicted in his painting of Christ in the House of Martha and Mary.

table holds a white pottery jug with a silvery metal cap, a dish containing russet and yellow fruit, and a white pitcher lying on its side, partly enveloped in a cream-colored transparent cloth, which is also seen in twists falling from the right edge of the table. Partially concealed by this cloth are two gleaming, long, slender objects, one or both of which may be silver-handled spoons. An amber-colored *roemer* lying in the foreground of the still-life grouping on the table is badly abraded; the condition of this item, an anomaly in the otherwise better-preserved surface, suggests the possibility that it was not a part of the original paint film. X-ray evidence (Figure 3) supports the suspicion that this drinking goblet may have been added later, conforming to the line of the shadow on the right side of the white jug. The X-ray reveals that another object, apparently a small bowl lying on its side with its base visible, was originally at the right of the jug, where the *roemer* now appears. It seems that the highlights of the object originally represented here were incorporated in the image of the *roemer*. Behind this is a pottery bowl, seen through the transparent cloth. Finally, there is a wine glass with a little wine in it, located closer to the still-life elements than to the seated girl.

In the right foreground is seen a chair back, which, like the bunched-up carpet, stresses the close viewpoint and at the same time creates a strong diagonal leading in from the picture plane. The chair has lion-head finials, blackish-brown leather upholstery tooled in lozenge shapes, and bright brass nailheads. On it is a brown cushion, very similar in color to both the wood and the lighter parts of the leather back; it is edged in brilliant gold-colored beading. The chair on which the girl is seated has similar brass nailheads and a brass ball finial. Behind the girl a dark cloth (a cloak?) of indefinite color and shape hangs on the wall, next to a half-open door. At the right of the doorjamb can be seen part of the lower roller and the left edge of a hanging (judging from other paintings by Vermeer and his contemporaries, undoubtedly a map). Above the girl’s head, a simple dark frame encloses the lower right corner of a picture, which shows in the foreground a mask on the ground at the right and a poorly defined object, perhaps a pear, at the left, with the nude bent left leg of a child between them.

Through the open door there is a glimpse of the brightly lighted floor of a corridor or narrow room, and

then, beyond a second threshold and doorframe, the floor and wall of another room. The farther room, whose floor is likewise brilliantly illuminated, has a table covered with a nondescript brownish cloth against the far wall, and above the table a mirror in a wide black frame. To the right of the mirror, the left side of a window frame and a darkened window echo the horizontals and verticals of the architectural elements and furnishings of the room in the foreground.

The calculated interrelationships that combine to form a three-dimensional geometrical organization provide the basic ingredients of the exquisite sense of balance, of enduring stability, that is characteristic of Vermeer. He succeeded in giving substance to space itself inside this solid framework. The eccentric shapes he placed within the strict pattern of straight lines and right angles are captive to their geometrical environment, with its cubic chunks of space. This is the earliest painting in which Vermeer disclosed this aspect of his art, which was to remain a distinctive feature of his designs. After this experiment, however, so far as we can judge from the surviving paintings, he never again undertook this particular type of composition, which opens to view another room beyond that in which the scene is set.<sup>8</sup>

The colors of the *Girl Asleep* are those of Vermeer's early palette. The picture shares its reds, yellows, and blacks especially with the *Dresden Procuress*, which is dated 1656. The modeling of forms is essentially similar in the two paintings, and the same young woman appears in both. Though the *Girl Asleep* betrays some awkwardness in the representation of spatial relations, it is superior to the *Procuress* in this important regard, as well as in the sureness of modeling, and therefore would take its place after the *Dresden* painting in the chronology of Vermeer's oeuvre.<sup>9</sup>

8. The earlier painting *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* had a less fully realized view through a doorway. The 1696 sale included a painting by Vermeer described as "A gentleman washing his hands in a room with a view through, with pictures, artistic and original" (no. 5). As we have no further information about this painting, there is no way to know whether it actually showed a view into an adjoining room or what its place in Vermeer's chronology might have been.

9. Most scholars are in general agreement that the *Girl Asleep* dates from about 1656. Exceptions: W. R. Valentiner, "Zum 300. Geburtstag Jan Vermeers, Oktober 1932," *Pantheon* 10 (1932) p.

III. A number of the elements of the *Girl Asleep* were commonplaces of the painting of Vermeer's time. But to acknowledge this is not to deny that they might have made a specific contribution to the meaning of each painting in which they appeared. Each component must be studied in its context.

The posture of the girl, with head leaning on hand and elbow as underpinning, is a motif that has come down from antiquity. By long tradition, a figure in that pose, with eyes closed, represents sleep. The original function of the pose must have been to distinguish between the twin children of "La Notte, nutrice di la Morte e il Sonno."<sup>10</sup> For, while it may not be the most practical arrangement for sleeping (as anyone who has tried it on a long flight can attest), it is an impossible position for a corpse. The reclining figure with elbow resting on the ground (or couch) and head on hand is necessarily alive; a perennially living effigy of the defunct in this pose strikes an optimistic note on a good many Greek and Etruscan sarcophagi. In these representations it was usual to show the eyes open. A figure in the same pose with eyes *closed* became identified with mythological characters whose state of sleep was essential to the role they played in the narrative depicted. Thus Endymion was frequently shown in this pose, from classical times right into the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup>

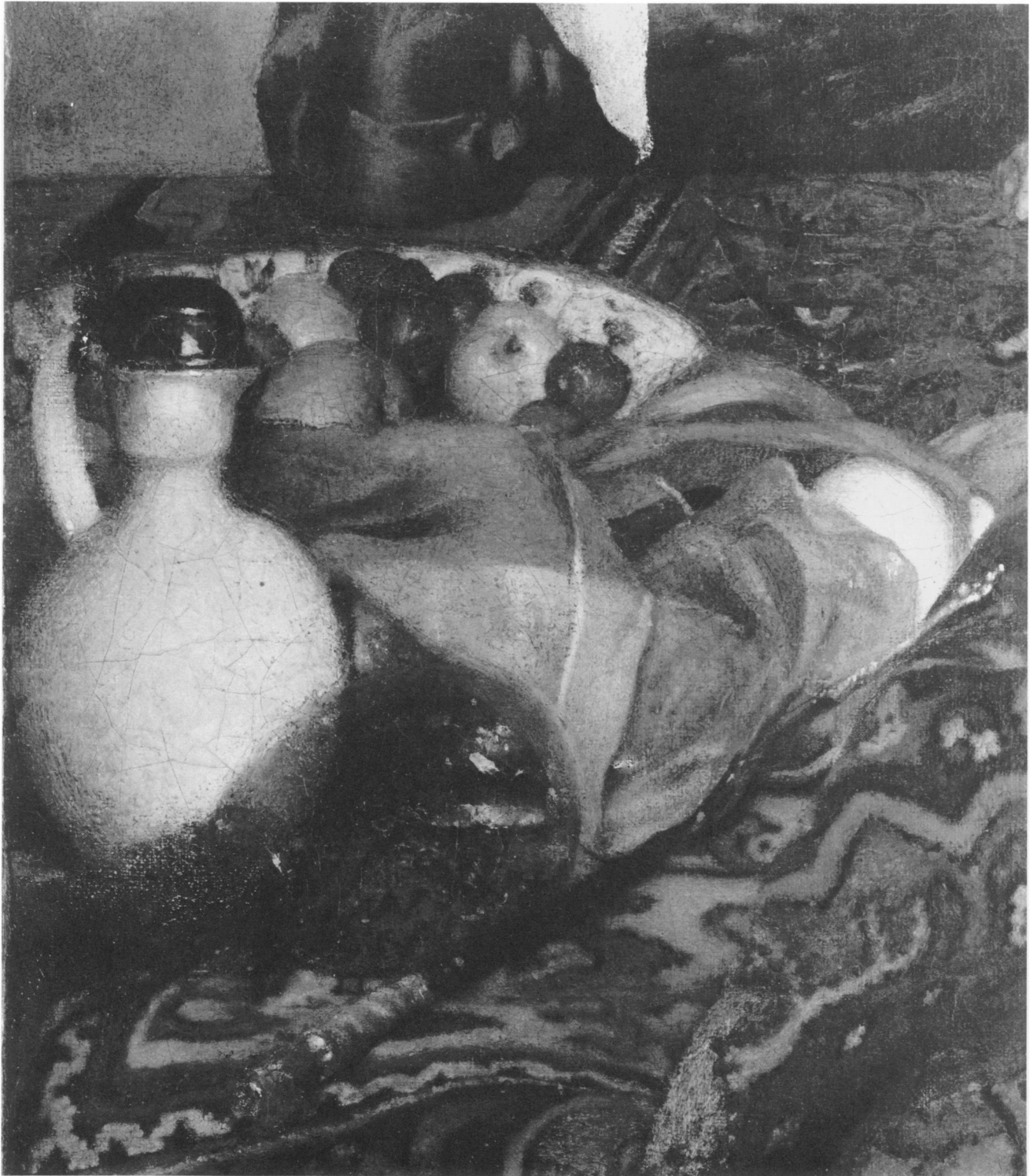
In Roman painting and sculpture the sleeper with head on hand was familiar as a representation of the sleeping Ariadne.<sup>12</sup> It was probably through reliefs showing scenes from the story of Ariadne that the motif became known to Renaissance artists. Its wide dissemination was assured by the woodcut of the fountain of the nymph in Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Figure 4), which, as Fritz Saxl was the first to note, "more-or-less faithfully reproduced" an antique relief representing the discovery of Ariadne by

319, dated it 1655; Vitale Bloch, *Tutta la Pittura di Vermeer de Delft* (Milan, 1954) p. 30, placed it between 1655 and 1660.

10. Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagini delli Dei de gl'Antichi* (Venice, 1647) p. 174.

11. The pose was taken over from mythological to religious subjects; it was used, for instance, to show Adam sleeping while God creates Eve in the Winchester Bible, c. 1170.

12. The classical model for these may have been the famous painting in the sanctuary of Dionysus in Athens, which Pausanias described (1. 20. 3): "Ariadne asleep, Theseus putting out to sea, and Dionysus on his arrival to carry off Ariadne."



**FIGURE 2**  
Detail of the still life and carpet in the *Girl Asleep*

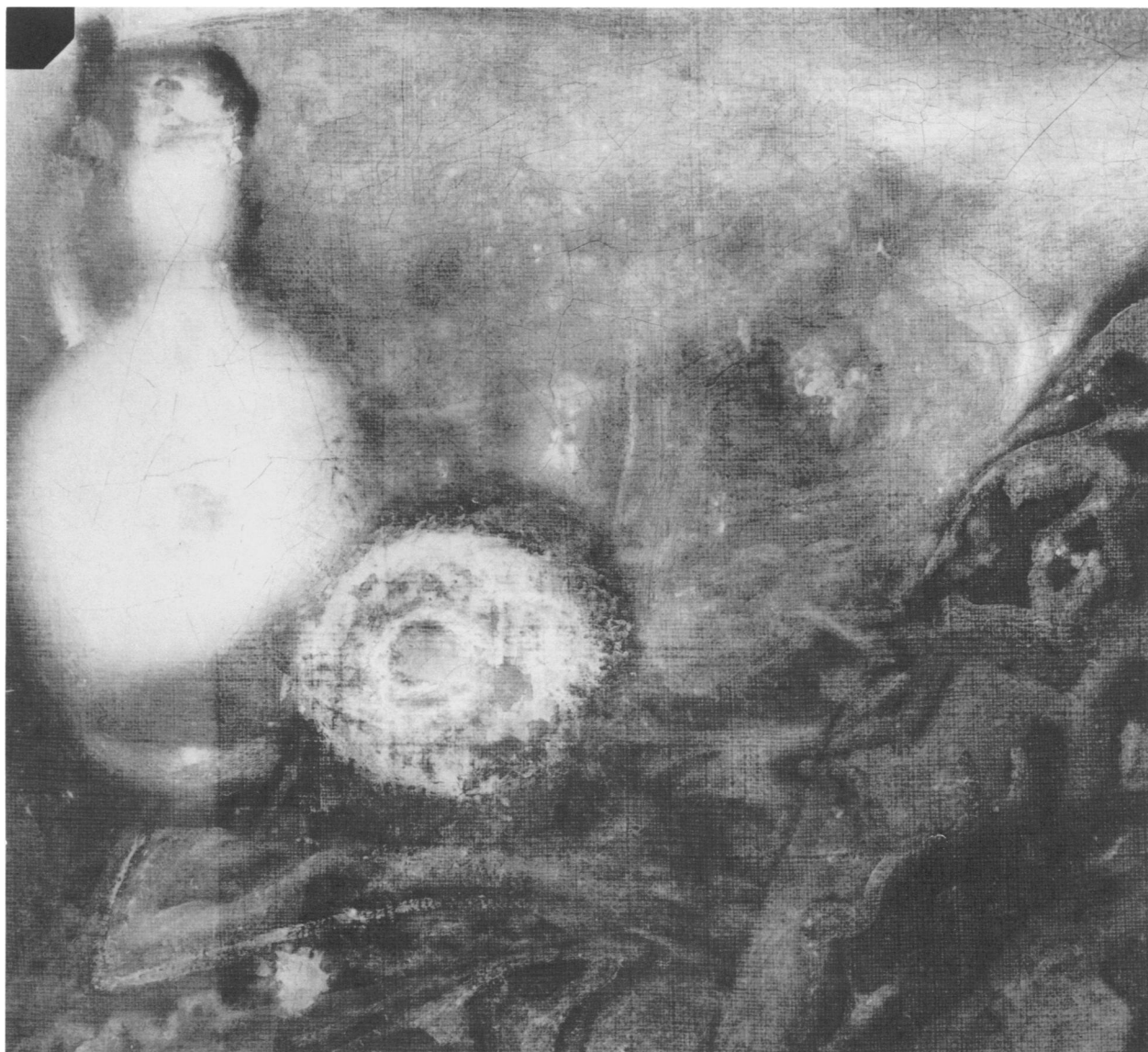


FIGURE 3  
X-ray of a detail of the *Girl Asleep*

Bacchus.<sup>13</sup> The first edition of this book, published in Venice in December 1499 by the great Aldus Manutius, is justly regarded as one of the most beautiful of incunabula. Giorgione and Titian certainly knew the book,<sup>14</sup>

13. Fritz Saxl, "Titian and Pietro Aretino" (dated May 1935), *Lectures* (London, 1957) I, pp. 162–163.

14. See Madlyn Kahr, "Titian, the 'Hypnerotomachia Poliphili' Woodcuts, and Antiquity," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 68 (1966) pp. 119–127.

and it is reasonable to suppose that other sixteenth-century artists were familiar with it. Its text as well as its illustrations provided vital links in the chain of literary and artistic developments that culminated in the emblem books that, as we are coming increasingly to understand, made a considerable contribution to Dutch art of the seventeenth century.

The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, which was in effect a love letter to antiquity in the guise of fiction, was

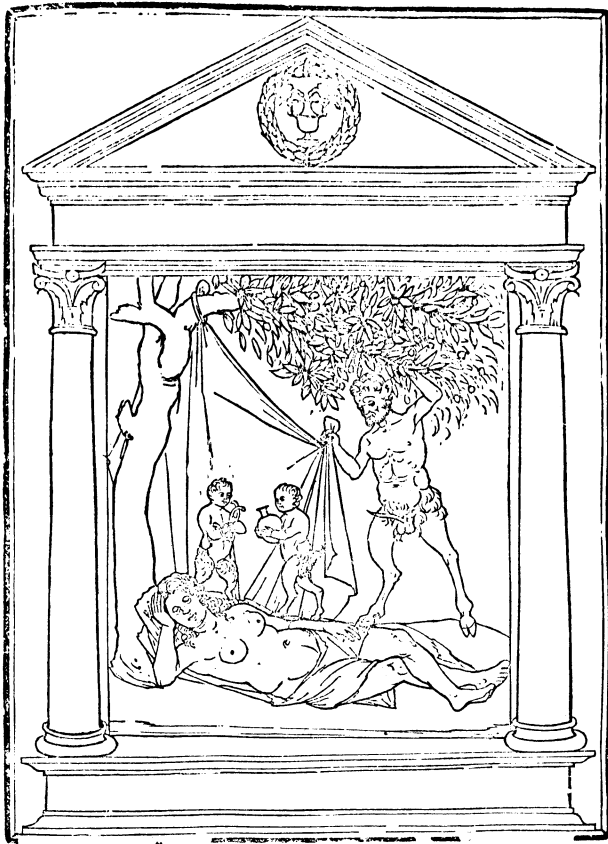


FIGURE 4

The fountain of the nymph. Woodcut from Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Venice, 1499, signature e i recto. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. P. Morgan, 23.73.1

thought by its sponsor to encompass all the wisdom of the ancients and even “the secrets of nature itself.” Such knowledge, he explained, was not intended to be easy of access; it should be available only to those with sufficient learning and determination.<sup>15</sup> It was in order to help such scholarly readers understand difficult points that he commissioned illustrations for the book. This explains why the *Hypnerotomachia*, alone among Aldine publications, is lavishly illustrated. Like the text of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, emblems were intended as intellectual puzzles. They deliberately required a modicum of both wit and learning for their deciphering.

An emblem strictly speaking combines a caption and a picture, whose connection is not obvious, along with verses or prose texts, often quotations from Greek and Roman literature, that make the meaning clear. The

meaning is characteristically a moral. The joy of discovery of the concealed significance presumably removes some of the sting from the didactic intention. If we must reserve the title of direct lineal forebear of the authors of seventeenth-century emblem books for such writers as Horapollo, Andrea Alciati, Vincenzo Cartari, Pierio Valeriano, and Cesare Ripa, we can credit Francesco Colonna with having been a much-loved great-uncle with a persuasive personality. His approach has much in common with the mode of thinking of the seventeenth-century Dutch writers and artists who were attracted to emblems.

The woodcuts illustrating the free French translation of the *Hypnerotomachia* published in Paris in 1546 by Jacques Kerver, with the title *Discours du Songe de Poliphile*, followed fairly closely those of the original edition. These cuts were used again for the French edition of 1600 and thus were the version most likely to have been available to seventeenth-century Northern artists. The woodcut depicting the marvelous sleeping-nymph fountain follows in most of its details the description of this monument in the text, including the specification that the nymph lay on her side, with her hand placed under her cheek to support her head (Figure 5). The transformation of the slumbering Ariadne of ancient art into a Renaissance fountain figure appears to follow naturally from Ariadne’s association with the god of wine.

In the seventeenth century, Dutch artists used the traditional head-on-hand pose to indicate that seated figures were sleeping. Vermeer’s *Girl Asleep* is in this respect in the company of Terbrugghen’s *Sleeping Mars* (Utrecht, Centraal Museum) and Nicolaes Maes’s *Idle Servant* (London, National Gallery). By their time, however, the symbolic pose of sleep no longer merely served for purposes of identification. Moralistic implications had become attached to it, implications that bear on the meanings of all three of these paintings and others related to them. Mars and the sleeping girl, as well as the idle servant, are exposed

15. Leonardo Crasso, juriconsult of Verona, who commissioned the publication, wrote in his dedication that the author had deliberately concealed from the vulgar his “elixir of philosophical sustenance drawn from the fonts of the Muses.”

FIGURE 5

The fountain of the nymph. Woodcut from Francesco Colonna, *Discours du Songe de Poliphile*, Paris, 1546, p. 23. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 26.77

as lazy. Sleep had come to be equated with the vice of sloth.<sup>16</sup>

As Erwin Panofsky pointed out in discussing Dürer's engraving traditionally known as *Dream of the Doctor* (Pan. 183), in medieval moralizing literature and art Sloth was personified by a sleeping figure.<sup>17</sup> Panofsky proposed the title "Temptation of the Idler" for the Dürer print, which he interpreted as "an allegory of laziness." Its message is that "laziness is the root of all sin." The sleeper is to be castigated not only for allowing sleep to keep him from useful activities, but even more for permitting himself to be prey to temptation. Dürer's sleeping man, who rests his head luxuriously on a cushion and not on his hand, is wickedly enjoying an erotic dream, as the Devil conjures up for him a classical Venus. "A pillow alone is sufficient to indicate the sin of laziness."

Bruegel's *Desidia*, one of his series *The Seven Deadly Sins*, published by Hieronymus Cock in 1558 (Figure 6),<sup>18</sup> represents the vice of Sloth as a woman sleeping in the traditional head-on-hand pose. She is surrounded by all the horrors that only the fertile imagination of Bruegel could envisage as resulting from idleness. Her couch is a sleeping ass,<sup>19</sup> and a demon provides a pillow



for her. A nude woman seated at the right, with her elbow on a table and her head supported by her hand, in a pose much like that of Vermeer's *Girl Asleep*, also has a monstrous attendant who brings her a large cushion. The cushion prominently visible on the chair in

16. These two pictures have previously been compared with the *Girl Asleep* because of the obvious similarity of the motif. Benedict Nicolson, *Hendrick Terbrugghen* (London, 1958) p. 103, recognizing that "from what we know of Terbrugghen as a moralist, it would be wrong to suppose that this figure [Mars] held nothing but the literal meaning of a soldier asleep," interpreted the Sleeping Mars in a pacifist sense. I would suggest that there might have been instead a militaristic intention. Painted not long after the Twelve Years' Truce ended in 1621, the picture may have represented a call for vigilance and action, warning that the laziness of Mars could lead to military defeat. A similar ironic interpretation would apply to the Mars Velázquez painted almost twenty years later, who is clearly a ridiculous figure, awake but unprepared and indolent. I deal with this question more fully in an article now in preparation.

The Idle Servant is, of course, frankly related to the theme of reprehensible idleness. Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* identified sloth with servants; I quote the London edition of 1570, fols. 195,

195 verso: "The sinne of slouth all mankinde doth oppres, / But namely servauntes them selves thereto apply, / Despising Labour, sleping continually. . . ." Whether Vermeer's *Girl Asleep* is to be identified as a servant is problematic. Her costume and setting both argue against it.

17. Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, 1955) p. 71. Panofsky first dealt with this material in "Zwei Dürerprobleme," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* N.F. 8 (1931) pp. 1-8.

18. Bruegel's original drawing, dated 1557, is in Vienna, Albertina. The plate was engraved by Petrus a Merica.

19. This is explained by an alternative description of *Accidia*, which Ripa attributes to Pierio Valeriano: "Een Vrouwe die op der aerde leyt met een Esel by haer. Dit Dier plaghten de Egypten-aers te gebruycken, om de afweesigheyt van des Menschen gedachten, tot Godlijcke en heylige saeken uyt to drucken, zijnde steets besigh met vuyle en schandige gepeinsen, gelijk *Pierius* verhaelt." (*Iconologia*, trans. Dirck Pietersz. Pers [Amsterdam, 1644] p. 519).



FIGURE 6

Desidia. Engraving after a drawing by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 26.72.34

the foreground of the Vermeer composition would carry the same implications as the cushions in the prints by Dürer and Bruegel: sleep means sloth, and sloth means lustful dreams.

The nymph in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* woodcut of 1545, sleeping with her head on her hand, is a close counterpart of a figure in an emblem-book illustration first published in 1540, likewise in Paris (Figure 7). The book was the *Hecatographie*, by Gilles Corrozet, published by Denis Janot. It was so popular that other editions came out in 1541, 1543, and 1548. In this woodcut the sleeping woman is fully clothed as she

sleeps, like the nymph, under a tree. Her right arm is in a different position from that of the nymph, and she has different companions. A large-winged Cupid, also fully clothed, arrives at the right, holding his bow in his lowered right hand and two leafy branches aloft in his left. Four large bees buzz around the tree and the woman who sleeps beneath it.

The emblem in the *Hecatographie* comprises a caption, a woodcut, and a quizzical quatrain, all within an elaborate border, and explanatory verses on the facing page. It provides a key to the meaning of Vermeer's *Girl Asleep*.

The emblem is titled "Against the weakness of Lovers." The quatrain beneath the woodcut, freely translated, reads:

If Cupid shoots his darts at me,  
Flings his great torch and burning charge  
While I am deep in torpid sleep,  
What will he do when I awake?

This question, along with the caption and the picture, constitutes a puzzle, the deciphering of which is the goal of the emblem game. The verses on the opposite page reveal the solution (Figure 8):

FIGURE 7

Woodcut from Gilles Corrozet, *Hecatongraphie*, Paris, 1543, signature C i verso. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 25.69 (photo: Philip Evola)



Those who are stung by love's pain always find some excuse, saying: "One cannot protect oneself against Love, who persuades one's heart through his cunning tricks," and, like that lady, blame Cupid, who importunes her to love, thus making an excuse for their weakness. But it is too cowardly to allow oneself to yield on that score. It is well known that the will, which ought to function freely, either is in command or is not. To claim, "Cupid stung me and inflamed my heart with passion" is to lack courage. Love does not come to one who is asleep, if it is not a dream or a fantasy that a foolish lover could have who craves the affection of a lady he has chosen. A woman is in no wise seized by love, whether asleep or awake, unless she consents to it.

FIGURE 8

Page from the *Hecatongraphie* facing the one in Figure 7, signature Cii recto (photo: Philip Evola)

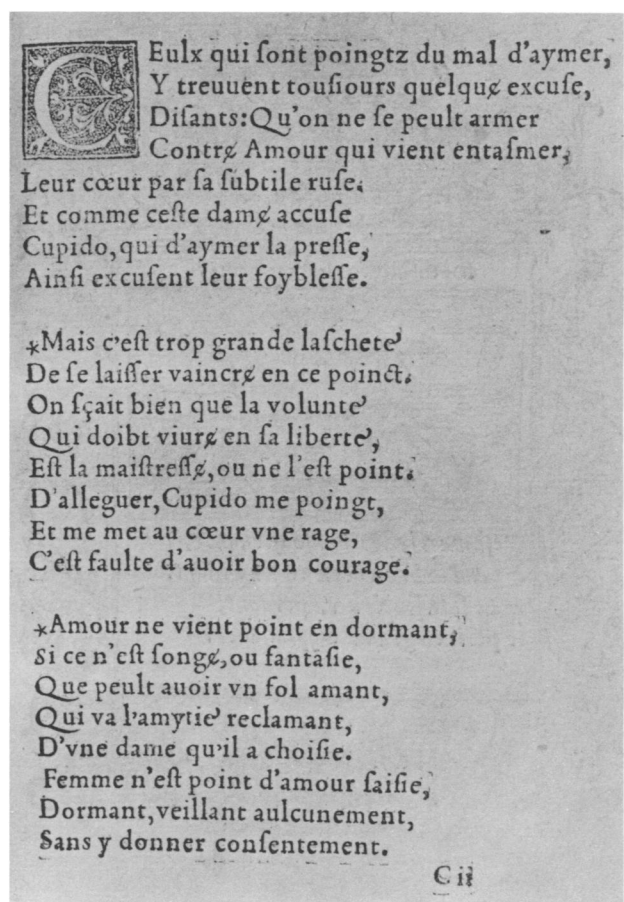


FIGURE 9

Accidia. Woodcut from Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, Amsterdam, 1644, p. 518 (photo: Philip Evola)

In short, a person has free will and must accept responsibility for his dreams and fantasies,<sup>20</sup> as well as for his actions. Idleness, that is to say, sloth, leads to the other vices. To be indolent, to sleep, to dream, is to be tempted. "The Devil makes work for idle hands."

As is often the case, the whole of the emblem is greater than the sum of its parts, and its significance is far weightier than its amusing and light-hearted manner would imply. The sleeping lady in the woodcut is the image of Desidia. Bruegel recognized her as such, and apparently used her as the model for the chief figure in the drawing he made in 1557 for the aforementioned engraving of Sloth in *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The correspondence between the two figures is extraordinarily close, even as to the arrangement of the garments.

The opposite pole from the slothful sleeping lady is represented by the wide-awake Cupid. The bees are traditional companions of Cupid, representing the pains or sorrows of love.<sup>21</sup> But in this case they have an additional meaning. The branches that Cupid flourishes represent thyme, the bitter herb from which the bees by their industriousness make sweet honey. Ripa gave the attributes of bees and thyme to Diligenza. Thus the woodcut represents indolence along with its opposite, diligence.

Ripa comes forward once more as a possible direct source for Vermeer's *Girl Asleep*. The woodcut illustrating his description of Accidia (Figure 9) is from the Dutch translation made by Dirck Pietersz. Pers and



published by him in Amsterdam in 1644. There can be little doubt that Dutch painters, some of whom had used earlier editions of the *Iconologia*, would have welcomed this edition in their own language.<sup>22</sup> Its woodcut illustrations by Christoph Jegher were based on those in previous editions. Ripa's specifications for the personification of *Vadsigheyt* (Indolence, Sloth) called for a seated old woman with her hand under her left cheek,<sup>23</sup>

20. For a more recent discussion of this question, see Sigmund Freud, "Moral Responsibility for the Content of Dreams," *Standard Edition*, XIX (London, 1961) pp. 131-134.

21. Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum Libellus* (Paris, 1542) emblem LXXXIX.

22. *Iconologia*, 1st ed., Rome, 1593; 1st ill. ed., Rome, 1603. Followed by Padua, 1611 and 1618, and numerous other editions and translations into various languages.

23. Melancholia is also frequently represented by a figure whose bowed head is supported on her hand, as in Dürer's great engraving. But, unlike the traditionally sleeping figures of Sloth, they customarily have their eyes clearly open (though there are some exceptions). A seated figure that appears to be open-eyed, with elbow on knee and head on hand, identified as A Mourning Maid-servant from a tomb in Attica, fourth century B.C. (Berlin Museum), was adduced by Ludwig Goldscheider as "a personification

of grief." He believed that in Vermeer's *Girl Asleep* the pose "symbolizes the sorrows of love" (*Jan Vermeer* [London, 1958] p. 24, fig. 11).

"The cheek on the hand . . . [a] conventional formula for mourning and melancholy, was used in Greek, Roman and Byzantine art and occurs in texts from the time of St. Cyprian in the third century," according to André Chastel, "Melancholia in the Sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 (1945) p. 62. Ripa, however, indicates that *Malinconia* should have both elbows on her knees and both hands under her chin (Amsterdam, 1644, p. 499). The vice associated with melancholy, *Tristitia* (excessive sadness), which has sometimes been combined or confused with Sloth, may account for the borrowing of the pose identified with Sloth for figures representing Melancholia. See also Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (London, 1964).

holding a scroll with the inscription “Torpet iners. De traege Mensch is vedsigh.” (“The idle person grows slothful.”) Her elbow is on her knee, her head inclined and covered with a black cloth, and in her right hand she holds a torpedo fish. (The idea that the body grows numb [*torpescere*] at the touch of the electric ray or crampfish, whence the fish was called *torpedo*, goes back to Pliny.)

Vermeer exchanged Ripa’s old woman for a young one, had her support her head with her right hand instead of her left, and omitted both the scroll and the fish. None of these changes is surprising in a painting of this time and especially this master. The black cap his *Girl Asleep* wears may hark back to the “black cloth” of Ripa’s description; in any case, it does not appear in any of Vermeer’s other known works, though such a cap is worn by women in many paintings by his contemporaries.

The young woman personifies Sloth, the vice that opens the gate to all the other vices, symbols of which surround her. All the objects that seem to be normal furnishings of an ordinary middle-class household serve as the instruments of a complex symbolism. What appears to be a glimpse of a private moment in a lived-in room is in fact a highly contrived composition in which every element was deliberately selected and arranged with regard to its significance as a part of the meaning of the whole.

The apples on the table are attributes of Aphrodite,

goddess of love, as are the pearl earrings the girl wears. The apples refer also to the Fall of Man and Original Sin. Fruits, as well as handsome pottery, glassware, and silver utensils, are typical symbols of the vanity of worldly satisfactions.

The mirror on the far wall likewise indicates the transience of all earthly things, a long-familiar reference that accounts for the inclusion of a mirror in many Dutch Vanitas still lifes. Though in terms of space representation the mirror is as far from the young woman as it could be, in the most distant background, it is a focal point for the observer. Its effectiveness rests in part on the fact that it is the only *complete* geometric form in the painting. In addition, the fact that it is a square, a form set off by its inherent regularity and inner consistency, endows it with special authority. The contrast of the heavy, dark mass of the mirror frame against the light wall also helps to make it a magnet for the eyes of the observer. The way it functions in the composition, “framed” in the doorway and emphasized by other strong horizontals and verticals, gives some idea of the care with which the artist chose and placed this apparently minor element in his picture. What appears to be a casual decoration is in fact a central core of meaning, as it is of composition. Something of the deliberation that went into this portion of the composition is revealed by X-ray evidence of changes that Vermeer made here (Figure 10). The head and shoulders of a man wearing a hat originally occupied the



FIGURE 10  
X-ray of a detail of  
the *Girl Asleep*

space in which we now see the mirror. In fact, it appears that two different hats were tried out before this image was abandoned in favor of the potent symbol of the looking glass, whose shifting reflections provide an optical equivalent to the concept of the transitoriness of the material world. Through long association the mirror also refers to the vice of pride, Superbia.

The jug and wine glass on the table, staple accessories of so many Dutch genre scenes, here contribute to the emblematic content. Wine often accompanies the vices of intemperance, gluttony, and lechery. And this brings up the question of whether the sleeping young woman is drunk.

Seymour Slive not long ago proposed that the painting represents and should be called “Een dronke slapende meyd aen een tafel,” which is presumably the earliest title for it that is known to us.<sup>24</sup> As evidence that the young woman is represented as in a drunken state he cited “an empty glass lying on its side,” “a nearly empty wine glass . . . on the table in front of the sleeping woman,” and the collar that she wears, which is not closed as it would properly be. Depictions of drunkenness are not rare in Dutch seventeenth-century

24. Seymour Slive, “‘Een dronke slapende meyd aen een tafel’ by Jan Vermeer,” *Festschrift Ulrich Middeldorf*, ed. Antje Kosegarten and Peter Tigler (Berlin, 1968) pp. 452–459; the phrases quoted are on p. 457. The identification of the *Girl Asleep* with the item that appeared under this listing in the Amsterdam sale of 1696 was made by Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, “A Newly Discovered Picture by Vermeer of Delft,” *Burlington Magazine* 18 (1910–1911) p. 133.

25. Among the women in Metsu’s paintings who were certainly not intended to be represented as drunken, and whose white collars are similarly open at the throat, are the following: the dignified customer in *The Poultry Dealer* (Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen); the old woman who has fallen asleep with a large book on her lap in *An Old Woman Asleep, with a Maid* (London, Wallace Collection); *An Old Woman Selling Fish* (London, Wallace Collection); and *The Market Woman* (Mertoun, St. Boswell’s, Roxburghshire, Coll. Duke of Sutherland). Interestingly, these examples and others that could be cited in works by Metsu and other contemporary painters show unfastened collars of this sort on women who can usually be identified as lower class and who are going about their daily tasks. Whether this has significance with regard to Vermeer’s young woman, in her satin dress, is uncertain. Vermeer did not paint such a collar on his own representations of servants or of women engaged in household tasks.

Franklin W. Robinson, in his Ph.D. diss., “Gabriel Metsu, 1629–1667,” Harvard University, 1970, no. 93, fig. 129, reproduces a painting attributed to Metsu that was on the art market in Berlin in 1933 (and mentions a copy that was in Paris, Coll. Schloss; p. 211, note 83). He thinks this picture may have the same theme as Vermeer’s *Girl Asleep* (p. 113); with regard to this theme he refers (note 83) to Seymour Slive’s article. “In fact, so many

painting, and in all the examples known to me, including those cited by Slive, the inebriated person is shown in a far more uncontrolled posture and a far more disheveled condition than Vermeer’s girl. Their surroundings are also customarily shown in great disorder. It is not impossible that, as Slive suggests, Vermeer’s temperament would have dictated a very different treatment of such a scene from that invented by any other artist. But this would make it difficult to prove the point through parallels with other paintings or prints, as Slive attempts to do. The open collar of Vermeer’s young woman, which according to Slive “is a sign of her inebriation,” was certainly not associated exclusively with drunkenness. This can be proved by reference to numerous paintings by Vermeer’s contemporaries. Gabriel Metsu, for instance, whose works parallel those of Vermeer in many ways, shows a collar worn in a similar open fashion in some situations in which the woman wearing it might be drunk and also in a number of others in which she is clearly sober.<sup>25</sup>

Slive’s argument betrays a more fundamental weakness when it requires him to discount the picture on the wall above the girl’s head.<sup>26</sup> As Lawrence Gowing

details are similar to the Vermeer—the inebriated girl, the white jug, the half-filled glass, the Turkey carpet on the table, and even the collar undone—that perhaps this is one of the few cases when we can speak of Vermeer’s direct influence on a contemporary artist outside Delft.” On the basis of a photograph of the Berlin painting, which Robinson very kindly sent me, as well as one of the Paris copy (Frick Art Reference Library), my impression is that there is no reason to posit a direct relationship between the Metsu and the Vermeer. The Metsu composition lacks any resemblance to Vermeer’s complex composition, which penetrates deep into the picture space. It does show a sleeping woman with an unfastened collar, but she is much older than Vermeer’s model, has her workbasket before her, and does not rest her elbow on a table and her head on her hand in the traditional pose, but has her hands clasped before her. The table beside—not behind—which she sits holds only a carpet, a jug, and a glass, such as may be found in innumerable paintings that have nothing to do with Vermeer. Since the Metsu (if such it is) cannot be firmly dated, it would in any case not be possible to ascertain in which direction influence had occurred, even if there were reason to believe that one of these pictures depended on the other. Robinson may have been closer to the mark in his alternative suggestion about the painting attributed to Metsu: “Perhaps the artist is returning here in one painting to the theme of his two pendants in the Louvre, the life of pleasure and that of duty.”

26. After summarizing the diverse interpretations of the *Girl Asleep* by four scholars (P. T. A. Swillens, Lawrence Gowing, Ludwig Goldscheider, and A. P. de Mirimonde) who took into account the picture on the wall, Slive wrote (“‘Een dronke slapende meyd,’” p. 456): “I would like to offer a fifth interpretation. It does not accept the picture of Cupid within the painting

pointed out, "it is clear that lacking this passage the meaning of the whole picture would be different."<sup>27</sup> Pictures within the paintings have thus far provided the most productive clues to intrinsic meanings in Vermeer's works. Even Thoré-Bürger recognized that the paintings hanging on the walls were very significant, though he interpreted them in anecdotal ways, in the belief that Vermeer had no emblematic intentions.<sup>28</sup> The Lady Weighing Pearls (Washington, National Gallery) and the Metropolitan Museum's Allegory of the Catholic Faith have pictures in the background that have an indisputable bearing on the meaning of the whole.<sup>29</sup> The painting of The Procuress by Dirck van Baburen that hangs on the rear wall of both The Music Lesson (London, Buckingham Palace) and The Concert (Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) has been shown to imply commercial overtones that one would hardly suspect in the apparently decorous social situations Vermeer pictured.<sup>30</sup> The picture in the background of the Girl Interrupted at her Music (New York, Frick Collection) and A Young Woman Standing at a Virginal (London, National Gallery), which

had been conjecturally attributed to Caesar van Everdingen,<sup>31</sup> has been convincingly associated with an emblem in Otho Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata*, published in Antwerp in 1608.<sup>32</sup>

A. P. de Mirimonde, who was the first to suggest this relationship,<sup>33</sup> also tentatively proposed that another emblem in the same book (Figure 11) might bear some relation to Vermeer's Girl Asleep. The caption of the emblem, in its English version, is: "Dissimulation is loves wisdom." The accompanying verses are:

Not to deceive his love doth love the visard use,  
Although disguys'd hee seem his mistris need not  
feare,  
It is those to deceive, thar secret malice beare,  
Thereby to be secure from evill tounge abuse.

Since the point of this emblem, that Cupid is concealing his face, is not in accord with the fragment of picture in the Girl Asleep, in which the mask is on the ground, de Mirimonde sought, but without success, to reconcile the differences.<sup>34</sup>

Still another example in Vaenius's book of emblems

as its key, and it takes as a principle the idea that some pictures within seventeenth-century Dutch pictures have less meaning than others. This one has less."

27. Lawrence Gowing, *Vermeer* (New York, 1953) pp. 50 ff.

28. Thoré-Bürger, "Van der Meer," p. 460.

29. The significance of the Last Judgment in the background of the Lady Weighing Pearls was recognized by Thoré-Bürger ("Van der Meer," p. 460); Herbert Rudolph, "Vanitas," in *Festschrift Wilhelm Pinder* (Leipzig, 1938) p. 431; and A. P. de Mirimonde, "Les Sujets Musicaux chez Vermeer de Delft," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 57 (1961) p. 39.

30. The painting by van Baburen that was Vermeer's model in these two paintings was identified by H. Voss, "Vermeer van Delft und die Utrechter Schule," *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* 5 (1912) pp. 79-83. Its relevance to the meaning of the Gardner Museum picture was suggested by Gowing, *Vermeer*, p. 52, and more fully explained by de Mirimonde, "Les Sujets Musicaux," pp. 42-43.

31. Gustav Delbanco, *Der Maler Abraham Bloemaert* (Strasbourg, 1928) p. 64, note 39; followed by Vitale Bloch, "Pro Caesar Boetius van Everdingen," *Oud Holland* 53 (1936) p. 262. A. B. de Vries (*Jan Vermeer de Delft* [Paris, 1948; 1st ed., Amsterdam, 1939] pp. ix, xix) thought Vermeer's model might have been a painting by van Everdingen or by Jan van Bronckhorst. Goldscheider refers to a painting attributed to Otto van Veen, "Venus und Amor," in which there is "a similar mask thrown away at the feet of the God of Love" (*Jan Vermeer*, p. 24, note 31; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Gemälde* [Berlin, 1931] p. 634, no. 652).

When I inquired at the Berlin-Dahlem Gemäldegalerie in August 1972, this painting was no longer there, but I was able to

examine a photograph of it, thanks to the courtesy of Reinald Grosshans. Its only resemblance to the painting on the wall in Vermeer's Girl Asleep is the presence of a mask in the lower right corner. This mask, however, lies flat on the floor and is seen frontally, rather than in profile as in the Vermeer. The amorous embrace (more likely a depiction of Cupid and Psyche rather than of Venus and Amor) that is the main subject has nothing to do with the Vermeer. Cornelius Müller Hofstede has very kindly informed me that the painting is now in the Wilhelm Bode Museum in East Berlin.

32. This outstandingly popular emblem book by Rubens's teacher, Otto van Veen, was issued with verses in various combinations of three languages, including one in Latin, Dutch, and French. The emblem mentioned here is on pp. 2-3. The English verses quoted below are from the edition that also includes Latin and Italian. See Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (Rome, 1964) pp. 524-525.

33. De Mirimonde, "Les Sujets Musicaux," pp. 39-40 and note 24. A Young Woman Standing at a Virginal has been convincingly interpreted in the light of the emblem on Vaenius's pp. 2 and 3 by E. de Jongh, *Zinne- en Minnebeelden in de Schilderkunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw* (n.p., 1967) pp. 49-50 and note 70, apparently without knowledge of de Mirimonde's prior finding.

34. De Mirimonde, "Les Sujets Musicaux," p. 51, note 25, refers to the emblem in Vaenius, pp. 220-221. "Faut-il comprendre, dans le tableau de Vermeer, que l'Amour—ou son représentant—ayant imprudemment laissé tomber son masque à terre, a été espéré en vain et que, lasse d'attendre le visiteur, la femme s'est endormie près du pichet de vin et de la coupe de fruits, restés inutiles?"

of love would offer a closer parallel, as it shows Cupid standing in a landscape, treading with one foot on a mask that lies on the ground (Figure 12). The caption is: "Love requyres sinceritie."

Love in what ere hee doth, doth not disguise his face,  
His harte lyes on his tounge, unseen hee never goes,  
Hee weares no Giges ring,<sup>35</sup> hee is not one of those,  
Hee doth uncloze his thoghts, to gayn unfayned grace.<sup>36</sup>

This disparagement of falseness and hypocrisy, applicable not only to love, would enhance the meanings we have already discerned in the *Girl Asleep*. The hypocrisy of pretending to be the innocent victim of Cupid, brought out by Corrozet's emblem, finds a counterpart in Vaenius.

But the mask means still more.<sup>37</sup> To refer once again to "the artist's handbook," Ripa says that "the mask thrown on the ground serves to represent contempt for deceit and duplicity of heart."<sup>38</sup> In another context, he describes Contritione (*Berow, Gebrokenheyt des herten*) as a beautiful woman treading on a mask. The mask under

35. Gyges, King of Lydia, had a ring that gave him the power to render himself invisible.

36. De Jongh, *Zinne- en Minnebeelden*, p. 95, note 69, tentatively suggests that this emblem might help in the "solution" of the *Girl Asleep*.

37. The view has been widely expressed that Vermeer based the picture on the wall in the *Girl Asleep* and the Cupid in the background of the *Girl Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Young Woman Standing at a Virginal* on a single forerunner (de Vries, *Jan Vermeer de Delft*, p. v; P. T. A. Swillens, *Johannes Vermeer* [Utrecht and Brussels, 1950] p. 104; Gowing, *Vermeer*, p. 91; Goldscheider, *Jan Vermeer*, p. 24, note 30; Slive, "'Een dronke slapende meyd,'" p. 458, notes 13, 14). My view is that Vermeer drew on two different emblems of Vaenius (as suggested by de Mirimonde and de Jongh). As can be seen from the Frick and London examples, he felt free to make alterations in the emblem illustrations he used as models. This is also the case with the *Girl Asleep*.

It should be borne in mind that in the painting on the wall in the *Girl Asleep* the mask is the only complete and clearly identifiable object. The picture differs from the cited emblems of Vaenius in that it omits Cupid's bow, which is present in both of the engravings in a position that would make it visible to the right of Cupid's leg in Vermeer's fragmentary painting on the wall. Also, the pear-shaped object in this fragment is not to be found in either of Vaenius's engravings. If it represents a pear—and one cannot be certain that it does—this attribute of Aphrodite could well accompany her son Cupid in this complex reference to the hazards of amorous involvement.

38. Ripa, *Iconologia* (Amsterdam, 1644) p. 357, s.v. "Lealtà." For Contritione see Ripa, p. 135.



FIGURE 11  
Engraving from Otho Vaenius, *Amorum Emblemata*, Antwerp, 1608, p. 221. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 38.95 (photo: Philip Evola)

FIGURE 12  
Engraving from *Amorum Emblemata*, p. 55 (photo: Philip Evola)



her feet means contempt for worldly things that appear beautiful to our eyes, weaken us, deceive us, and obstruct us from true knowledge.<sup>39</sup>

IV. Vermeer has been misunderstood by those who have assumed that he was detached from human concerns. In the *Girl Asleep* he went to great pains to present a moral lesson. With the art that conceals art, he created a composition that seems both natural and inevitable, within which he accommodated a compendium of symbolic elements. A complex emblem is embodied in what appear to be the ordinary contents of a bourgeois interior. Unlike such a contemporary painter as Willem Kalf, who piled riches on riches to represent worldly values, Vermeer introduced the multifarious gratifications of the senses in forms that are at home in their setting. They do not call attention to themselves. The painting seems to be a commonplace scene of daily life. With exquisite subtlety the anecdotal and narrative elements are committed to the exhortative intention.

The message of the painting is: Let us be alert to avoid the snares of sensual pleasures. All worldly satisfactions are but vanity. The freedom of our will makes each of us responsible for renouncing the earthly in favor of divine truth.

Vermeer's paintings convey an impression of a reality beyond that which we see around us because they represent not ordinary everyday life, but eternal verities.

All the figures seem to have been transplanted from ordinary existence into a clear and harmonious setting where words have no sound and thoughts no form. Their actions are steeped in mystery, as those of figures we see in a dream. The word realism seems completely out of place here. Everything is of unrivalled poetic intensity. If we look carefully, we see that Vermeer's figures are not so much Dutchwomen from the sixteenth century as figures from an elegiacal world, peaceful and calm.<sup>40</sup>

This statement by the sensitive and scholarly historian of seventeenth-century Dutch culture, J. H. Huizinga, expresses what many of Vermeer's admirers have felt.

What has not been recognized is that the impression Vermeer gives of outreaching time and space is a part of the meaning of the painting. Doubtless the clarity, order, and structural balance that characterize Vermeer's paintings respond to his inner needs for control.

It is not without significance that his mature style is marked by an enamellike paint surface that betrays nothing of the hand of the artist. This change from the rougher, grainy quality of the *Girl Asleep* must be seen as an advance in his mastery of his expressive means. The same is true of the increasing simplification that marks the way toward the most successful works of his maturity. The personality of the artist finds expression in both the formal means and the conceptual content, which come into being together, like the body and mind of a person.

By the same token, Vermeer's preeminence in the use of light, related as it is to interests that were prevalent in the culture in which he lived, has special significance. It may be understood as the light of Revelation, once one recognizes that Vermeer's goal was the communication of Christian truth.

Observed reality frequently appeared in Dutch prints and paintings not for its own sake, but in the service of a moral communication.<sup>41</sup> The appeal to the senses in the guise of a warning against them, as in the *Girl Asleep*, was typical of the time. But Vermeer embodied in this painting an exceptionally elaborate program. Many of his references, alien to the modern mind, would have been instantly recognized by his contemporaries. Other points he raises would have required more thought and study, even in his own time. The people of the United Provinces were remarkably literate. Their devotion to emblem books and other

39. Gowing (*Vermeer*, p. 51) correctly sensed the psychological overtones of the picture on the wall in relation to the sleeper: "Sleep is revealed as the dropping of a mask, uncovering the fantasy which is the sleeper's secret, a fantasy, as we may guess, of Love." He also wrote (p. 92, note 30): "Perhaps here it has a hardly deliberate double reference; sleep is also the discarding of a mask." To Goldscheider (*Jan Vermeer*, p. 24), who sees the sleeping young woman as a personification of grief, the picture within the picture refers to "the sorrows of love." Swillens (*Johannes Vermeer*, pp. 104-105) describes the girl as not asleep, but only "completely absorbed in herself" as she "is sorrowing over a disappointment in love."

40. J. H. Huizinga, *Dutch Civilisation in the 17th Century and Other Essays* (London, 1968) pp. 84 ff.

41. This practice followed a long tradition, going back to what Erwin Panofsky called "disguised symbolism" in fifteenth-century Netherlandish painting. (*Early Netherlandish Painting* [Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953] chap. 5, "Reality and Symbol in Early Flemish Painting: 'Spiritualia sub Metaphoris Corporalium,'" pp. 131-148.)

moralizing literature was both broader and deeper than observers of later periods would suppose. This must be taken into account when we attempt to understand their art.

The *Girl Asleep* is a crucial painting in the development of the great Delft master. It marks the beginning of a new stage in his art, in which highly evolved content calls forth the stylistic advances for which he was later to become famous. The objects he depicts are quintessentially what they are, but they are also something more. They represent changeless ideas. He transforms surface into volume, incorporating persons and things in a pattern that is an image of the eternal. He is dealing not with the surface of things, but with a deeper truth.

Doubtless some admirers of Vermeer will continue to prefer to enjoy his color and composition, his "poetry" and "magic," without concerning themselves with questions about meaning. Those who seek more profound insight into the intentions of the artist, however, will wish to take into account the many levels of meaning that can be discerned in the *Girl Asleep*.

This painting is in itself a kind of emblem without words. The sleeping young woman represents the illustration, the picture within the painting takes the place of the caption, and all the other details of composition and content fulfill the role of the text that comments on the first two constituents in a true emblem. What should it be called? "Young Woman Asleep: A Moral Emblem."<sup>42</sup>

42. This article is a token of my gratitude for the J. Clawson Mills Fellowship at The Metropolitan Museum of Art that from November 1966 to August 1967 gave me the opportunity to do the research on which it is based.

# The 1688 *Paradise Lost* and Dr. Aldrich

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JOHN MILTON's *Paradise Lost*, published in 1667, first appeared in an illustrated edition twenty-one years later. This was the fourth edition, in folio, put forth by Jacob Tonson in 1688. Tonson had taken the precaution of getting subscribers to the book before undertaking the expense of an illustrated publication; their five hundred names, listed at the end of the book, comprise most of the prominent literary and political figures of the time. The practice of getting subscribers to pay for books, which was to be important in English publishing from that time on, was just beginning, and this was the first time Tonson had used it. The venture was a success, and Tonson followed it with many others, but when later he had his portrait painted for the Kitkat Club, he chose to have himself shown holding a copy of the 1688 *Paradise Lost* (Figure 1). This book, then, was published in an edition of at least five hundred copies; the Metropolitan Museum purchased a copy in 1966.

The illustrations are twelve copperplate engravings, frontispieces for the twelve books into which the epic is divided. Seven are signed by J. B. de Medina as designer, and one by Bernard Lens, while four have no designer's signature. All were engraved by Michael Burghers, or Burgesse, except for the Lens design, engraved by P. P. Bouche. The illustrations have been treated in some detail by various writers,<sup>1</sup> who have discussed especially the relationship between illustrations and text, and so that subject will not be treated here. It is, rather, the authorship of the unsigned illustrations that will be discussed, for the various writers have all assumed that, since Medina signed the majority of the engravings, he was also the creator of the four unsigned ones. This, however, is not the case.

FIGURE 1

Jacob Tonson, by Godfrey Kneller, 1717. National Portrait Gallery, London



1. C. H. Collins-Baker, "Some Illustrators of Milton's *Paradise Lost*," *The Library* 5th ser. 3 (1948–1949) pp. 1–21; Helen Gardner, "Milton's First Illustrator," *Essays and Studies* 1956, pp. 27–38; Leonard Kimbrell, "The Illustrations of *Paradise Lost* in England 1688–1802," Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1965; Marcia R. Pointon, *Milton & English Art* (Manchester, 1970).





**FIGURE 3**  
Satan, Sin, and Death at the gate of Hell, frontispiece to Book II. Engraving by Burghers, in part after Mantegna's *Descent into Limbo*

**FIGURE 2 (left)**  
Satan and his angels; the infernal peers sit in council in Pandemonium, frontispiece to Book I of *Paradise Lost*, London, 1688. Engraving by Michael Burghers (fl. 1676–1720) after an unknown source. The Burghers engravings in *Paradise Lost* are all about 11 by 7¼ inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 66.558.1

**FIGURE 4**  
*The Descent into Limbo*. Engraving by Andrea Mantegna. From the Aldrich collection, The Picture Gallery, Christ Church College, Oxford



Stylistic comparison shows that three of the unsigned illustrations—the first, second, and twelfth—differ greatly from the nine others. The first (Figure 2) is the best of the entire series, with a strong central figure dramatically lit from below, and turbulent heads, wings, arms, and flames in the foreground balanced by the horizontals of the architecture and pits of flame behind.

The second (Figure 3) and twelfth (Figure 5) are less powerful but nonetheless unlike the ones by Medina, in both style of drawing and style of composition. In the illustrations by Medina the focus is softer; the figures do not stand out clearly from the background, and

everything—figures, drapery, clouds, trees—seems to be made of the same light, wispy substance. All but one of the illustrations signed by Medina show more than a single moment or episode, creating compositions that are disunified and diffuse, whereas the three unsigned ones mentioned show a single scene, with relatively large figures that dominate the composition. (The one exception among the illustrations Medina signed is that for Book VII [Figure 17]; here the style of drawing is Medina's but the style of composition is not. Interestingly enough, this is the only one signed "Medina delin.," not "inven."—or "inv." or "invenit"—as the others are; this point will be returned to below.)

The stylistic argument need not be pressed, for the evidence of the engravings themselves is corroborated in conclusive manner—by the existence, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, of the drawings by Medina after which the engravings were made. These are accompanied by a sort of title page, made after the artist's death by Francesco Pellegrino, which states categorically: "Original drawings, Eight in number, Being All that were ever Designed for Mr. Milton's Poem of Paradise Lost, by St John Baptist of Medina" (Figure 7). The drawings have not been published before and thus are not widely known. They came to the Victoria and Albert in the bequest of the Reverend



FIGURE 5

The Expulsion from Paradise, frontispiece to Book XII. Engraving by Burghers after Raphael's Expulsion

FIGURE 6

The Expulsion. Engraving by Nicholas Chapron after Raphael's Expulsion. From the Aldrich collection, The Picture Gallery, Christ Church College, Oxford



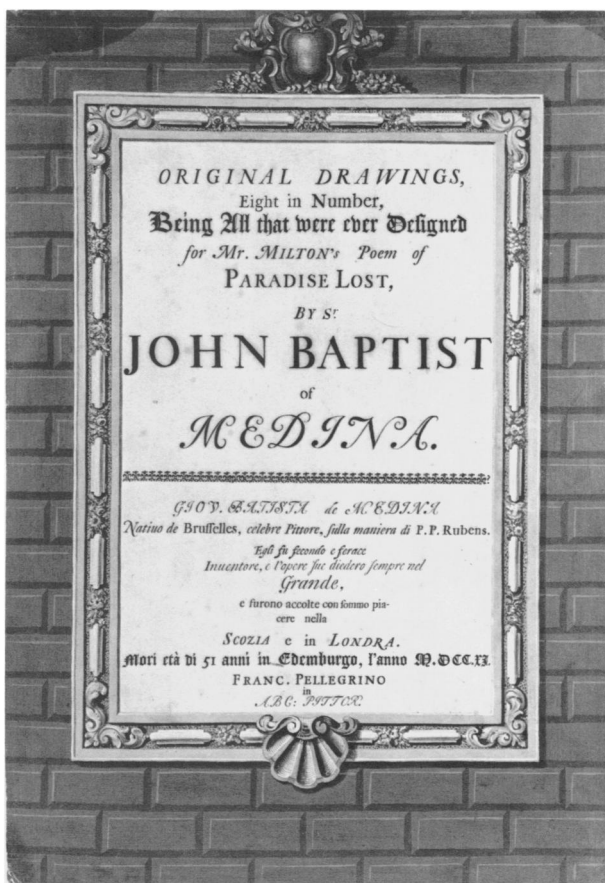


FIGURE 7

Title page for Medina's drawings for *Paradise Lost*, by Francesco Pellegrino. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Alexander Dyce, a scholar of English literature, who died in 1869. The Dyce bequest also included a copy of the book.<sup>2</sup>

The son of a Spaniard who lived in Brussels, Medina had arrived in London in 1686, when he was about twenty-seven. As far as anyone knows, he had never illustrated a book before. According to George Vertue, he made designs for an Ovid, but these were never published. Vertue's impression was that Medina "would have made a good history Painter had he liv'd were suitable encouragement was to be mett with."<sup>3</sup> In 1688

2. South Kensington Museum, *Dyce Collection, A Catalogue* . . . (London, 1874) items 548–556 (drawings), 2160–2170 and 2313 (engravings in the book).

3. George Vertue, *Notebooks*, II, Walpole Society Publications, no. 20 (Oxford, 1932) p. 133.



FIGURE 8

Self-Portrait, by Medina, 1708. The Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh

he went to Edinburgh, where he became the most sought-after portrait painter in the city and had a lucrative, if not artistically notable, career until his death in 1711. The self-portrait shown in Figure 8 was painted a few years before his death.

Medina's drawings correspond to the engravings for Books III and V–XI (Figures 9, 10, 13–26), in other words, those with his signature along with that for Book VIII, which by its style can be seen to be by the same hand. A comparison of drawings and engravings shows that the engraver was faithful to the rather limp quality of the work he was reproducing. One of the drawings, that for Book IX, was reversed in the engraving, possibly a mistake but more probably a conscious decision by designer or engraver that the composition would look better that way (Figures 21, 22). The draw-



FIGURE 9

Christ adored by angels; Satan alighted upon the world; Satan's passage to the sun; Satan alights on Mount Niphates; Adam and Eve in Paradise, frontispiece to Book III. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina



FIGURE 10

Drawing by John Baptist de Medina (1659–1711) for Book III of *Paradise Lost*. The Medina drawings are pen and bistre, all about 11¼ by 7¼ inches. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

ings as a group are bland and have little aesthetic interest; they are competent drawings of the period, but their chief interest here is in establishing that Medina did not create the illustrations for Books I, II, and XII.

The question then is: who did? A glance at the work of Bernard Lens (Figure 11) rules out any thought that these three might have been designed by him. But again, evidence toward an answer exists, and not far from the Medina drawings. On the flyleaf of the 1688 *Paradise Lost* in the Dyce collection is a handwritten inscription by an earlier owner, Joseph Warton:

This was the first edition of the *Paradise Lost* in Folio, undertaken by Tonson, at the desire of Mr Somers, afterwards Lord Somers. For this edition, Medina, an artist then in Vogue designed the Prints, all except *Two*: that for the 4 Book & the 12. Book. The former was designed by B. Lens senior, the latter, as Mr Harte informed me, by Dr. Aldrich. The fine circumstance of Adam's hiding his face is obviously copied from Timanthe's Iphigenia, so celebrated by all Antiquity. Dr Metcalf had the original drawings by Medina. For this Edition Dryden wrote the famous six lines placed under Milton's Portrait. To this Edition most of the Men of Genius & Learning in the Kingdom



FIGURE 11

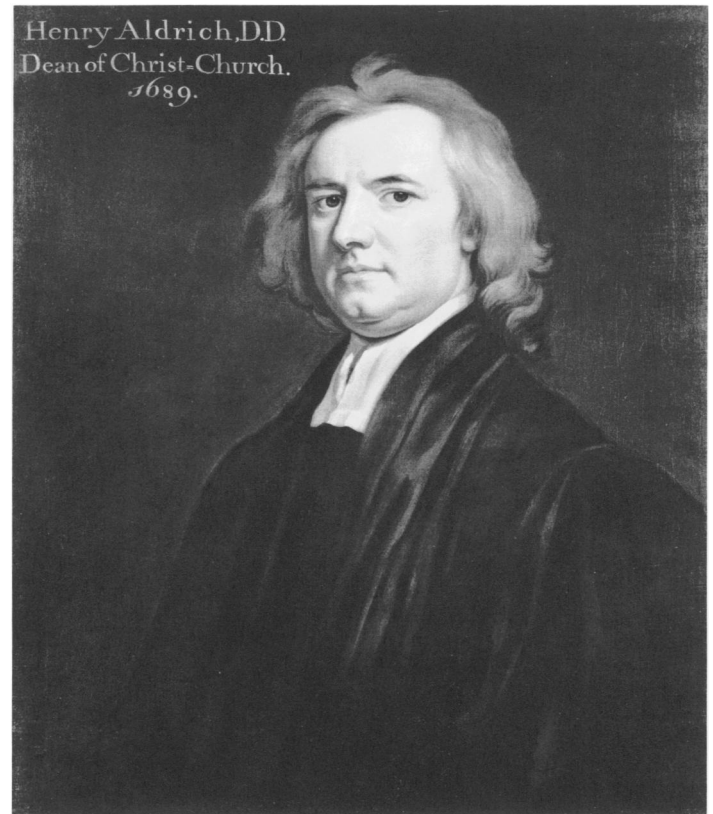
Uriel, descending, warns Gabriel; the evening worship of Adam and Eve; two angels guarding Adam's bower find the Evil Spirit tempting Eve, frontispiece to Book IV. Engraving by Peter Paul Bouche (born 1646) after a drawing by Bernard Lens the Elder (1659–1725). 10½ by 7 inches

subscribed. Milton died 1674— The 1. Edition was in small Quarto. 1667. The 2<sup>d</sup> Edition Octavo. 1674. The 3<sup>d</sup> Edition Octavo also 1678.

Oddly enough, the copy of the book in The New York Public Library has almost exactly the same inscription. This was Horace Walpole's copy, and Warton and Walpole were friends. The Metropolitan's copy does not have the inscription, nor do ten other copies I have seen or inquired about. The writer of the inscription,

FIGURE 12

Henry Aldrich, by Godfrey Kneller, 1689. Christ Church College, Oxford



of course, ascribes only the plate for the twelfth book to another hand, still assuming that Medina had designed those for the first two. But since we know that Medina did not design these, and since these have certain similarities to the twelfth, we may hope to have found the artist for all three.

Who, then, was Dr. Aldrich?

The Dr. Aldrich in the 1680s was Henry Aldrich, canon of Christ Church College, Oxford, and its dean from 1689 to his death in 1710. It seems at first glance unlikely that this Oxford scholar, of whom it is said by one writer that he "threw in his lot with the High Church Tories,"<sup>4</sup> would have had anything to do with the republication, in London, of a work of the "regicide" Puritan poet. But the first glance is deceptive.

4. E. F. A. Suttle, "Henry Aldrich, Dean of Christ Church," *Oxoniensia* 5 (1940) p. 118.



**FIGURE 13**  
Adam and Eve's morning hymn; Raphael comes down to Paradise; Adam entertains Raphael, frontispiece to Book V. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina

It seems to have been at the urging of the lawyer John Somers (later Lord Somers, lord chancellor under William and Mary), as mentioned in the handwritten inscription, and also with the encouragement of Dryden, that the young Jacob Tonson decided to publish the illustrated edition. The name of Francis Atterbury is also mentioned in connection with it. Atterbury was then in his twenties, a tutor at Christ Church; after Aldrich's death he became dean of Christ Church and later bishop of Rochester. A letter from Atterbury to Tonson, dated November 15, 1687, shows that Atterbury was involved in the project from the start:



**FIGURE 14**  
Drawing by Medina for Book V. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Mr. Creech assur'd me on Saturday that ye last Cutt was not convey'd, & therefore I thought I might stay a post longer than the time you fix'd. This I chose the rather to do, because having been in ye country some time, I have not had lately ye opportunity of rememb'ring some people of their promises to subscribe. The truth is severall people putt in their names, who did not immediately deposit their mony, so that I was willing before I sent you any thing to make ye subscribers' & my account even. I have receiv'd about 5 pound 8 in Crowns. . . . The thinness of ye University, particularly our house, and ye expectations people are in of greater affairs [William of Orange had landed at Torbay ten days earlier, and rebels were joining him at



FIGURE 15

Messiah with his chariot and thunder drives into the midst of his enemies; they leap into the place of punishment, frontispiece to Book VI. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina



FIGURE 16

Drawing by Medina for Book VI. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Exeter] have been ye cause that this thing has not gone forward so well as it would have done at another time; especially if you had gone on immediately with it upon ye first proposal, all people were then strangely fond of it.<sup>5</sup>

In a letter to his father in 1690, Atterbury wrote: "... and I am forced to be useful to the Dean in a thousand particulars; so that I have very little time."<sup>6</sup> It is not unlikely that in 1687 he already worked closely with Aldrich. In any case, the edition definitely had a connection with Christ Church.

The edition is connected with Oxford in another

respect, most germane to this discussion: the man who made the copperplates was the engraver for the Oxford University Press. Arriving in England after Louis XIV took Utrecht, Michael Burghers seems to have gone straight to Oxford, and he did most of the engravings in the press's illustrated books and for the famous Ox-

5. Quoted in Hale Sturges, "The Publishing Career of Jacob Tonson, the Elder, 1678-1720," Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1936, microfilm no. 66-10592, pp. 65-66.

6. Francis Atterbury, *The Epistolary Correspondence...*, ed. J. Nichols (London, 1783) I, p. 10.

ford almanacs over a period of almost fifty years. In fact, he has been credited by some writers with the invention or choosing of the designs for these. But the provision of designs for the almanacs, rather than being done by Burghers, seems to have been the work of Henry Aldrich. The late W. G. Hiscock, in his short biography of Aldrich,<sup>7</sup> brought this fact back to light—for it was known to Aldrich's contemporaries. Furthermore, Hiscock writes that it was Aldrich who supervised much of the engraving at the Oxford Press.

7. W. G. Hiscock, *Henry Aldrich of Christ Church, 1648–1710* (Oxford, 1960).

In fact, he states that Aldrich possessed proof copies of the plates for the *Paradise Lost*;<sup>8</sup> presumably these were in existence in Christ Church when Hiscock wrote, but, unfortunately, they can no longer be found there.

Aldrich, whose portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller (Figure 12) was painted a year or so after the publication of the illustrated *Paradise Lost*, was distinguished in so many areas that those who know of him in one field are surprised to learn how accomplished he was in others. The eighteenth-century author and printer John

8. Hiscock, *Henry Aldrich*, p. 11.

FIGURE 17

Raphael relates how the world was created, frontispiece to Book VII. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina



FIGURE 18

Drawing by Medina for Book VII. Victoria and Albert Museum, London





FIGURE 19  
Adam inquires concerning celestial motions;  
Adam relates what he remembers since his own  
creation, frontispiece to Book VIII. Engraving  
by Burghers after a drawing by Medina



FIGURE 20  
Drawing by Medina for Book VIII. Victoria and  
Albert Museum, London

Nichols calls him “that universal master of human science.”<sup>9</sup> Architecture and musicology are probably his best-known pursuits. He designed the Peckwater quadrangle in his own college of Christ Church, and All Saints Church on High Street. His collection of musical manuscripts and editions was the best in England of the day and still ranks among the top. In addition, he wrote a highly respected treatise on grammar and a book on logic. He was also known for his genial sociable spirit, his constant smoking, and his

9. John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes* (London, 1812–1816) II, p. 233.

composition of glees and catches. The well-known translation of a Latin poem, said to have been written by Jean Sirmond, listing reasons to drink is but one small product of his engaging mind:

If all be true that I do think,  
There are five reasons we should drink,  
Good wine, a friend, or being dry,  
Or lest we should be by and by,  
Or any other reason why.

In sum, his was a mind that was analytical and discern-



FIGURE 21

Adam and Eve go forth; Eve urges her going apart; the Serpent induces Eve to eat the forbidden fruit; Adam eats of the fruit; they cover their nakedness, frontispiece to Book IX. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina

ing, but more wide-ranging than concentrated, more facile than deeply creative.

One other trait of Aldrich's should be mentioned: modesty, reflected in a desire for privacy, which caused him to shun publicity for his many achievements during his lifetime and to request that his letters and papers be destroyed after his death. The request was carried out, and thus knowledge of his activities remains more speculative than it might otherwise have been.

Less well known than Aldrich's collection of music is his collection of engravings. These number some two thousand, many apparently acquired during an exten-



FIGURE 22

Drawing by Medina for Book IX. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

sive trip to the Continent. Among the collection, still together in the Christ Church Gallery, Italian engravings form the largest group, many of them by Marcantonio and his school, including several sets by different artists after Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican. There are also a good number of French, some English, and a few Dutch and German works.<sup>10</sup> It is this collection that supports the thesis that Aldrich was intimately associated with Oxford engraving, for many of the figures in the prints are found again, unmistakably, in

10. See Campbell Dodgson, "The Aldrich Collection in Christ Church Library," *The Print Collector's Quarterly* 28 (1941) pp. 57-83; and W. G. Hiscock, "The Aldrich Engravings in Christ Church Library, Oxford," *The Connoisseur* 114 (1944) pp. 92-98.



FIGURE 23

The Guardian Angels forsake Paradise; Sin and Death, having paved a bridge over Chaos, meet Satan; Satan at Pandemonium; the devils, turned into serpents, see a vision of the forbidden tree; Adam bewails his condition and rejects the condolence of Eve, frontispiece to Book X. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina

the almanacs and books published by the press during his tenure.

His contemporaries were aware of a connection; Thomas Rymer gives clear evidence that Aldrich's role in the production of the almanacs was then known, at least among those seventeenth-century literati who spent so much time waging their tireless and elaborate battles of the printed page. Referring satirically to Aldrich, Rymer wrote:



FIGURE 24

Drawing by Medina for Book X. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Those who nowadays set up for universal scholars, are commonly men but of rambling Pedantical Learning. . . . They may be so well versed in Astronomy, too . . . to furnish out an Almanack every year, (set off and adorned with Curious Italian Sculptures, whereby it becomes not only useful, to find out the Day of the Month, but at the same time serves instead of a Picture in a Closet, and by Consequence is never out of Date).<sup>11</sup>

The Oxford antiquarian Thomas Hearne wrote in his notebooks, under the date April 6, 1712:

They have printed Caesar's Comm[entaries] at London, in a very large Folio. . . . This is the book that the

11. Quoted in Suttle, "Henry Aldrich," p. 125, from Thomas Rymer, *Vindication of an Essay of Curious and Critical Learning*.

Reverend Dr. Aldrich several Years agoe propos'd to do with noble Cutts of his own Contriving. . . . But this Design being stopp'd I know not for what reasons, it was done at London, by Dr. Clarke of St. James's. . . . I have seen specimens of Dr. Aldrich's Design in several Sheets.<sup>12</sup>

Twentieth-century writers on the subject of the Oxford almanacs, with no realization of Aldrich's role, have remarked the presence there of figures taken from

12. Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and Collections*, III, Oxford Historical Society Publications, no. 13 (Oxford, 1889) p. 329.

FIGURE 25

Michael announces that Adam and Eve must leave Paradise; Eve sleeps while Michael leads Adam to a high hill and relates what shall happen until the Flood, frontispiece to Book XI. Engraving by Burghers after a drawing by Medina



well-known paintings. F. Madan said that "some of the figures are reminiscent of Raphael and other Italian masters."<sup>13</sup> C. F. Bell wrote—assuming that Burghers had made the designs—"The subjects are in many instances *pasticci*, figures being borrowed from various pictures by the old masters. . . ."<sup>14</sup> He mentioned specifically works by Raphael—the School of Athens, a sibyl from Santa Maria della Pace, and the cartoons for the tapestries of the Lives of Saints Peter and Paul—as sources for figures in the almanacs. These are all

13. F. Madan, *Oxford Books* (Oxford, 1835–1931) III, item 3297, note.

14. C. F. Bell, "The Oxford Almanacks," *The Art Journal* 1904, p. 241.

FIGURE 26

Drawing by Medina for Book XI. Victoria and Albert Museum, London





FIGURE 27  
Socrates accosting Xenophon, frontispiece to *Xenophon*, Oxford, 1691. Engraving by Burghers after figures from Raphael's *School of Athens*. From a copy in the Library, Christ Church College, Oxford

copied so directly that they are simple to spot, and Aldrich had prints of all of these. In fact, some drawings for the almanacs, presumably by Aldrich, which are copies of these prints, are still extant at Christ Church.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned above, it was Hiscock who brought out that Aldrich supplied designs for Burghers to engrave, not only for the almanacs but also for many of the books. He goes on to specify instances of designs

15. H. M. Petter, of Kingsbridge, Devon, is preparing a book on the Oxford almanacs, in which she will discuss Aldrich's connection with them.



FIGURE 28  
Drawing for the 1689 Oxford Almanac, by Henry Aldrich, after Raphael's *School of Athens*. The Picture Gallery, Christ Church College. The figures of Socrates and Xenophon are to the left of the central group

that are copies of engravings in Aldrich's collection, for example, the frontispiece of Richard Allestree's *The Art of Contentment* (1675), based on Vaillant's *Jacob's Dream*, and the frontispiece of the *Letters of Phalaris*, edited by Charles Boyle (1695), in which the source was P. Woeiriot's engraving of the subject.

If, therefore, Aldrich provided the illustrations for Books I, II, and XII in *Paradise Lost* for Burghers to engrave, we would expect to find models for them in his collection of prints. And indeed, for Book XII (Figure 5), the design named as Aldrich's in Warton's



FIGURE 29  
Aristaeus bringing the roll of the law to Alexandria, frontispiece to *Aristaeae Historiae*, Oxford, 1692. Engraving by Burghers after the figure of Minerva from *Minerva and the Muses* by Andrea Meldolla or Falcone. From a copy at Columbia University, New York

and Walpole's copies of the edition, the source is easily recognizable as Raphael's *Expulsion*, in the Vatican. Several engravings of this fresco were in the collection (Figure 6).

Much of the design for Book II (Figure 3) also has a source in Aldrich's collection. It is unmistakably Mantegna's *Descent into Limbo* (Figure 4), from which the original central figures were taken away and Satan, Sin, and Death added. The positions of two of the demonic monsters in the air were switched, and the complexity of the rocky background simplified. The Mantegna print is among the more striking in Aldrich's collection.



FIGURE 30  
Minerva and the Muses. Engraving attributed to Andrea Meldolla or Falcone. 8¼ by 6⅞ inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 27.78.2, p. 40

It only remains to find among Aldrich's engravings a source for the powerful illustration to Book I. Alas, this task is not that simple. A search through the collection of prints and through the library at Christ Church revealed no print or book illustration that could be identified as the prototype for this design.

Hiscock, in his biography, suggested one possible answer: he hoped to claim more for Aldrich than the role of intermediary. He wrote: "It would be highly creditable to Aldrich if we could be certain that he designed the striking first plate . . . in the *Paradise Lost*."<sup>16</sup> Indeed it would, but it seems, on the contrary,

16. Hiscock, *Henry Aldrich*, p. 12.

that we can be quite sure he did not. Hiscock mentioned two other illustrations he thought Aldrich might have created: "The frontispiece of Socrates accosting Xenophon in the 1691 *Xenophon*—partly edited by Aldrich—is probably the latter's own design. In his edition of *Aristeas*, 1692, the frontispiece of Aristeas bringing the Roll of the Law to Alexandria is also in his style."<sup>17</sup> But these suggestions are those of a wishful biographer: Hiscock did not recognize that the figures of Socrates and Xenophon (Figure 27) were simply lifted from Raphael's *School of Athens*—as, indeed, Aldrich lifted the entire composition (with some substitutions of figures, some groups left out, and Raphael's central figures moved to niches below) for the Oxford almanac of 1689. His drawing for this is shown here (Figure 28). The *Aristeas* (Figure 29) was taken directly from an engraving of *Minerva and the Muses*, attributed to Meldolla or Falcone (Figure 30).

It seems likely that the illustration for Book I of *Paradise Lost* was similarly copied. The print of *Minerva and the Muses*, from which the figure of Aristeas was taken, is not now in the Christ Church collection, and yet the connection with Aldrich is very clear, since he edited the 1692 *Aristeae Historiae*. Even the proof prints for the *Paradise Lost*, recently stated (by Hiscock) to be there, cannot now be found. Clearly, the source for the first *Paradise Lost* illustration could have passed through Aldrich's hands, even though it is no longer at Christ Church.

Leonard Kimbrell, in his unpublished dissertation on the illustrations for *Paradise Lost*, mentions (with no cognizance of Aldrich's connection with it) that this design seems perhaps to have derived from Raphael's *St. Michael and the Devil* (Figure 31) or perhaps the painting of the same subject by Reni.<sup>18</sup> An engraving after the Raphael is part of the Aldrich collection, and it is similar, but it is not the unmistakable source the others are. Having seen how closely Aldrich copied the *Expulsion*, the *Descent into Limbo*, the *School of Athens*, the *Minerva*, and many others, one is virtually forced to believe that there must have been, here too, an obvious prototype.

The iconographic type of the figure is indeed that of a St. Michael—a winged figure with spear vanquishing a devil, often accompanied by his hosts. All that would

have had to be done here is to make the ears pointed and to add the small horns sprouting from the forehead. It is possible that the source was an illustrated French book of the late sixteenth or the seventeenth century. In these are found compositions like that for Book I, their style akin to mannerism, with a large foreground figure, and small figures and often some elegant architecture in the background. An illustrated Bible, Apocalypse, or book of saints would be a likely source for such a St. Michael. The design could also have been copied from an engraving after a painting of St. Michael, now obscure or lost. It would be most satisfying to recover the source, to be able to credit the originator of this most handsome work.

But if Aldrich supplied these three illustrations, why did he not do the rest? (Medina must have come on the scene last, since otherwise it is difficult to explain his having done designs for Books III and V–XI.) Two possible reasons come to mind: one is that Aldrich might have got too involved in his many other projects.



FIGURE 31

St. Michael and the Devil, by Raphael. Musée du Louvre, Paris

17. Hiscock, *Henry Aldrich*, p. 10.

18. Kimbrell, "Illustrations of *Paradise Lost*," p. 22.

A man of “rambling Pedantical Learning,” with many diverse interests, is not likely to produce as quickly as a businessman impatient to get a return on his investment thinks he should. The almanac used a single design each year, and most other books for which Aldrich provided designs had a single frontispiece; he may have found the sustained effort of producing twelve more difficult than he had imagined. Another possibility is that Tonson, as soon as he realized that Aldrich was not producing original designs, decided he ought to hire someone who would do so.

One other thing Aldrich probably did, however, was to suggest—to Burghers, or Tonson, or Medina, if he had already been hired—that Book VII, in which the archangel Raphael relates to Adam and Eve the story of Creation, could be represented by a combination of figures from Raphael. This is the design upon which Medina put only that he “delin.,” not that he “inven.”

The roundels showing scenes from Creation parallel the four by Raphael in the Loggie. The convention of roundels against the sky illustrating what the figure is saying is used exactly as in Raphael’s Story of Joseph, and Medina’s figure of Eve is very similar to that of Joseph. Kimbrell suggested that Medina had taken the figure of the archangel from Raphael’s Justice in the Stanza della Segnatura,<sup>19</sup> but that figure seems even

more like an angel from Santa Maria della Pace.<sup>20</sup> Medina was different from Aldrich, however, in that he made some effort to change the figures, and he unified the composition by rendering it in his own style.

Perhaps Lens was hired, then fired when the quality of his work was seen. With eight designs still to be made, the newly arrived Medina was found, and he agreed to take on the job. He did the eight, and he has since been widely credited with eleven; it is time for the error of the attribution to be known and for the interesting association of Aldrich with these—and with other illustrations—to be brought into a stronger light.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank John Gordon-Christian and John Wing of Christ Church College, Oxford, for the great help and courtesy they extended to me; the Victoria and Albert Museum, for their kind permission to publish the drawings by Medina; Elizabeth Roth, of the New York Public Library, and Colin Eisler, Donald Posner, and Gert Schiff, of the New York University Institute of Fine Arts, for their attention and suggestions; Anne Chalmers, Logan Cowgill, Philip Hofer, and Ben Weinreb, for their time and interest; and, most especially, John J. McKendry, for having suggested research on these illustrations and continued his encouragement throughout the writing of this article.

19. Kimbrell, “Illustrations of Paradise Lost,” p. 52.

20. These are all illustrated in Luitpold Dussler, *Raphael, A Critical Catalogue of His Pictures, Wall-Paintings and Tapestries* (London and New York, 1971). The Creation, pl. 146; the Story of Joseph, pl. 150 (Joseph, pl. 150 a, roundels, pl. 150 a, b); Justice, pl. 119; angel in Santa Maria della Pace, pl. 154 b, on top of the arch, to the left.

## NOTES

### Sunshades of the Marketplace\*

HENRY G. FISCHER

*Lila Acheson Wallace Curator in Egyptology, The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

IN HER *Fellahin of Upper Egypt* (London, 1927) p. 168, Winifred Blackman writes: "When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter from the heat." I noticed dozens of these umbrellas during a drive through the eastern Delta in the summer of 1968, and was struck by the fact that they are identical in construction to a type of sunshade that was represented in ancient Egyptian reliefs and paintings over a period of five centuries, from the early Fifth Dynasty down to the beginning of the Twelfth (c. 2450–1950 B.C.). The only significant difference is that the present-day sunshades are planted firmly in the ground (Figure 1), whereas those shown in the ancient scenes are always portable.

At least twenty-seven sources may be cited for the ancient use of such shades; nearly all of them, like the one illustrated, show a cloth stretched over a pair of sticks that are crisscrossed diagonally, these in turn being supported by a pole that is attached at the point of intersection; and nearly all show the end of the cloth

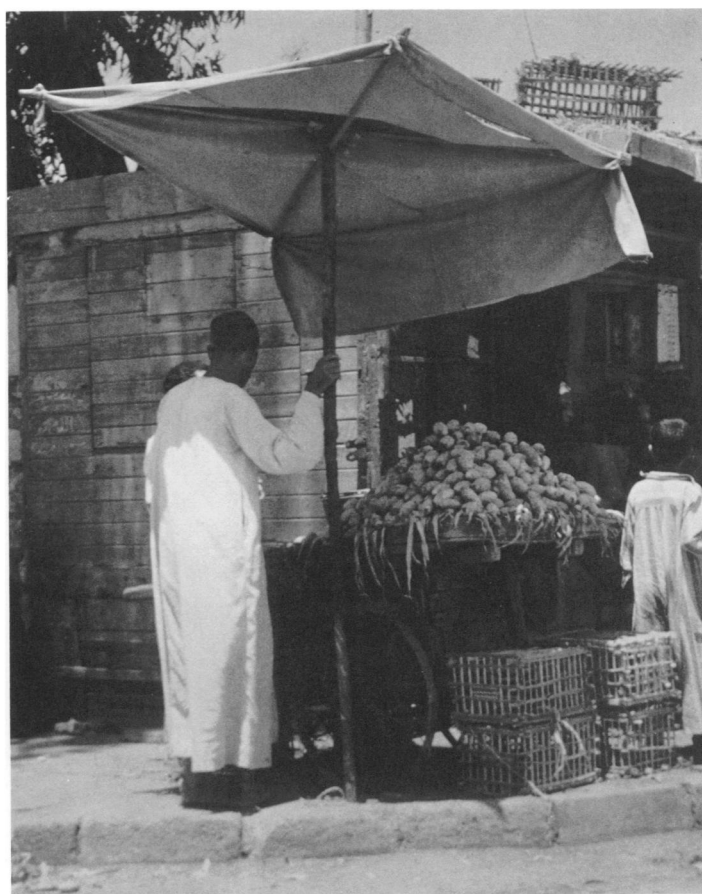


FIGURE 1

Country market vendor in the Egyptian Delta

\*Were this note of sufficient length to warrant a dedication, it might be offered to the memory of Victor Baltard's iron parasols of Paris, which sheltered Les Halles from 1859 to 1969; it seems

doubly ironic that these seemingly impervious descendants of the ancient sunshades should have survived no longer than the ideal life-span of the ancient Egyptians—110 years.

hanging freely on one side. The sources, listed in approximately chronological order, are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

#### Dyn. V

1. C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, II (Berlin, n.d.) pl. 9 (also A. Mariette, *Les Mastabas de l'Ancien Empire* [Paris, 1889] p. 570).
2. H. T. Mohr, *The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti* (Leiden, 1943) fig. 44, p. 79.
3. S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza*, II (Cairo, 1936) fig. 240, opposite p. 220.
4. N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Saïd* (London, 1901) pl. 5.
5. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler*, II, pl. 78b.
6. H. Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti*, fasc. 3, *Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*, no. 65 (Cairo, 1966) pl. 150 (also G. Steindorff, *Das Grab des Ti* [Leipzig, 1913] pl. 122).<sup>2</sup>

#### Dyn. VI

7. F. W. von Bissing, *Die Mastaba des Gem-ni-kai*, I (Leipzig, n. d.) pl. 22 (also W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, III [Leipzig, 1936] pl. 9).
- 8a. *Mrr-w(i)-k3(.i)*, Oriental Institute Sakkarah Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka*, II (Chicago, 1938) pls. 167–168.
- 8b. Wife of *Mrr-w(i)-k3(.i)*, Wreszinski, *Atlas*, III, pl. 11.
9. *Nhbw* (records of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, G 2381).
10. A. M. Blackman and M. R. Apton, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, V (London, 1953) pl. 31.
11. N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Deir el Gebrāwi*, II (London, 1902) pl. 8.
12. Davies, *Deir el Gebrāwi*, I (London, 1902) pls. 8, 9.
13. *Snfrw-hr-ist.f*, H. de Morgan, *Fouilles à Dahchour en 1894–1895* (Vienna, 1903) pl. 20.
14. H. Junker, *Giza*, V (Vienna and Leipzig, 1941) fig. 20, p. 84.
15. L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des alten Reiches*, *Catalogue général du Musée du Caire* (Berlin, 1937) no. 1536B.

1. Several of these are also cited and illustrated by J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, IV (Paris, 1964) especially pp. 337–339, in connection with scenes showing carrying-chairs.

2. This closely resembles a further example on an unpublished block of relief in the Cairo Museum, Journal d'Entrée 39864, which was noticed too late to include in the present list. The sunshade is

#### Dyn. VIII

16. Davies, *Deir el Gebrāwi*, II, pl. 18.

#### Dyns. IX–X

17. J. Vandier, *Mo'alla* (Cairo, 1950) fig. 4, p. 53.
18. Tomb of *St-k3* (Aswan).

#### Dyn. XI

19. Dendera shrine of *Nb-ht-R<sup>c</sup>* Mentuhotep (L. Habachi, "King Nebhepetre Mentuhotep," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 19 [1963] fig. 7, p. 24, pl. 6).
20. Tomb of Queen *Nfrw* (e.g., G. Steindorff, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery* [Baltimore, 1946] no. 239; H. G. Fischer, "Eleventh Dynasty Relief Fragments from Deir el Bahri," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 24, no. 2 [October, 1958] fig. 1, p. 28).
21. Tomb of Queen *Nfrw*, burial chamber (Figure 5 below; H. E. Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el Bahri 1911–1931* [New York, 1942] pl. 13).
22. Wooden coffin of *'3šyt* (Cairo Journal d'Entrée 47355).
23. Louvre stela C15 (E. Drioton, "Une figuration cryptographique sur une stèle du Moyen Empire," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 1 [1933] pl. 9).
24. Tomb of *Sbk-htp* (Kom Ombo; S. Wenig, "Eine Grabkammer des mittleren Reiches aus Kom Ombo," *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: Forschungen und Berichte* 10 [1968] pl. iv [at end of volume] and color pl. 6).
25. P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, II (London, 1893) pl. 31.<sup>3</sup>

#### Dyn. XII

26. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, II, pl. 16.
27. N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker* (London, 1920) pl. 3

In six of these occurrences (7, 8a and b, 13, 19, 25) the shade itself is missing, but its former existence can be determined from the way the support is held, as well as by the general context. In three other cases a portion of the shade is missing: 4 (supporting structure), 9 (flap at side), 27 (top).

similarly carried horizontally in a procession of offering bearers and the crosspieces show the same attachments, but no flap is visible.

3. For the date of this (tomb 29) and the following example from Beni Hasan (tomb 17) see W. Schenkel, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien* (Bonn, 1962) pp. 83 (j) and 81.

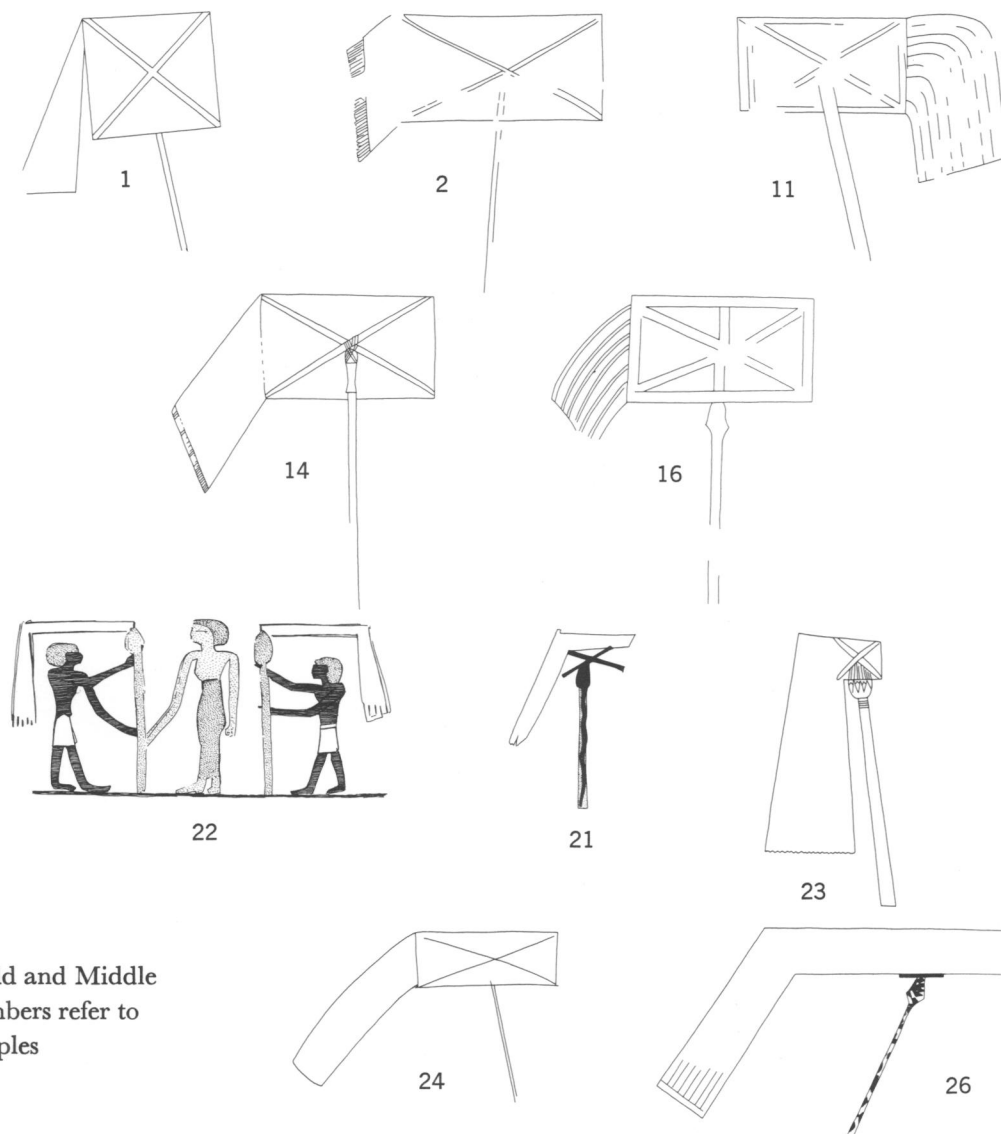


FIGURE 2  
Sunshades of the Old and Middle  
Kingdom. The numbers refer to  
the tabulated examples

Some of the variations may be explained on stylistic grounds: after the Old Kingdom the crisscrossed sticks are much less frequently displayed (they appear in 21, 23, and 24 only) and the pole is generally terminated at the lower edge of the cloth. This is also true of the earliest and latest Old Kingdom examples (1 and 16). One Eleventh Dynasty example (23) shows the pole joined to the crosspieces, as does another (21) of the same period, but in the last case the entire supporting structure is placed below the cloth.

Other variations are more difficult to interpret. In no. 16, for example, there are three crosspieces; but the third is vertical, continuing the line of the pole

beneath it, and it may have been added because the top of the pole terminates at the edge of the shade, as has just been described. Three examples—two at Deir el Gebrawi (11, 16) and one from Giza (5)—show a frame or border around the crosspieces; this might be taken to represent the edges of the cloth, these having been rolled inward when the four corners were tied, as shown by the present-day example. There is no reason, however, to assume that the ancient sunshades were so crudely assembled, and in at least one case (no. 6; Figure 3) it is clear that the cloth was attached by eight bands—four at the ends of the crosspieces and four more midway between the ends and intersections.

The other variations primarily concern the pendant flaps. The flap is omitted in one case only (10); it is generally longer than that of the modern example, but no. 2 is quite comparable in this respect. Sometimes the flap shows a series of parallel lines that may represent reinforcement, or the seams of strips sewn together; in the case of nos. 11 and 15 the lines more probably indicate divisions, i.e., a long fringe, but this explanation does not seem to fit no. 16, where double lines run down to a continuous edge, or no. 26, where evenly spaced lines run down to a continuous plain border. Other examples (2, 6, 14, 22) show a fringe at the very edge of the flap. The most exceptional case is that of no. 1, in which a cloth hangs down from a single corner rather than from the length of one side of the sunshade. This may represent the usual flap, as seen from a different point of view, but it is reminiscent of the pennant that is carried in the early Fourth Dynasty tomb paintings of Nefer-Maat.<sup>4</sup> An even closer resemblance to a pennant occurs in the case of nos. 20 and 27; while these seem to bear at least some kinship to the type of sunshade that is under discussion, there is no indication of the flat portion that is the essential element in most of the other examples, and the implements are carried over the shoulder. The flat portion, complete with supporting structure, is reduced to negligible proportions in the case of a contemporary Eleventh Dynasty example (23), however, and there is no reason, in principle, why a sunshade should not be carried over one shoulder (as it is in no. 6). But it is nonetheless true that most of the later examples where the shade is held by women seem more hieratic than functional (17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27).

In all of these cases, as noted earlier, the sunshade is portable. In the examples from the Fifth Dynasty (1-4) and one from the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty (8a), it is held beside, or over, a standing person, and this usage is more common in the examples of later date (Eighth-Twelfth Dynasties, nos. 16, 19, 25, 26, 27). During the intervening period the sunshades accompanied a man (or woman) in a carrying chair: once at the end of the Fifth Dynasty (5) and more commonly during the Sixth Dynasty (7, 8b, 9-15). Again at the end of the Fifth Dynasty (6) and more frequently in examples later than the Old Kingdom (17, 18, 20, 24,

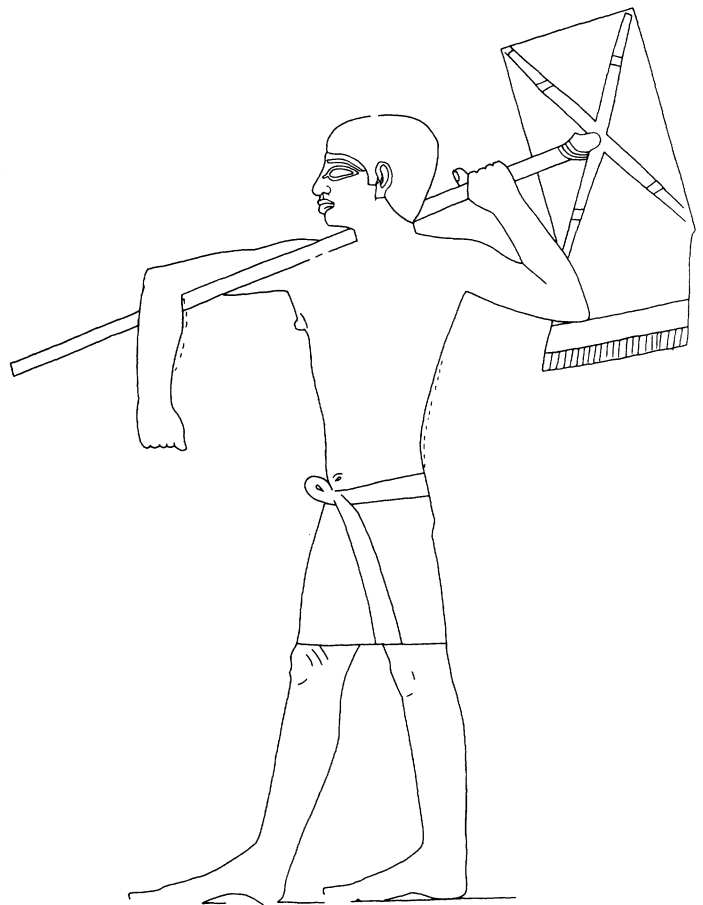


FIGURE 3  
Example 6. After Wild

27) the object is simply carried, and in such cases it seems to be presented to the tomb owner as a piece of equipment; that is certainly true of nos. 6 and 24, as also no. 23, where the pole is not carried but is steadied, with the butt placed on the ground. Similarly no. 21 shows the pole on the ground without any figure whatever, since it belongs to a frieze of offerings. Sometimes the bearer holds the shade over himself (or more properly herself: 17, 18, 22, 24). An Eleventh Dynasty example (22) shows a pair of attendants steadying sunshades as described above, while the pole of one of the shades is also held by a woman who stands between them, and for whom the shade is intended.

The more usual type of portable sunshade, throughout the Pharaonic Period, was the lighter and far more manageable implement that is represented by the

4. W. M. F. Petrie, *Medum* (London, 1892) pl. 28.

hieroglyph  $\text{𓂏}$ .<sup>5</sup> It seems probable that its more unwieldy counterpart was most frequently used as a fixed awning even during the five hundred years when it was shown in the hands of attendants. The markets that are pictured in Old Kingdom scenes of daily life must have been provided with some sort of shade, as are the present ones. A fixed awning is not likely, however, to have been represented in such cases, and the Old Kingdom scenes showing barter are as devoid of any local setting as are most representations of other occupations;<sup>6</sup> the same is true of the very meager evidence of this subject in later tombs.<sup>7</sup> Nor is the textual evidence of much help. If any credence could be given the proposal by Montet that  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ , for which he claims an Old Kingdom occurrence, is the same as the New Kingdom term  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ , “merchant,”<sup>8</sup> one might interpret the latter as a *nisba*-formation based on  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$  (later  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ ), “shade.” But the reading of the crucial initial sign of Montet’s Old Kingdom example is no more than a guess, and there does not seem to be any other occurrence of *šwyty* that antedates the New Kingdom. Moreover a caption in the burial chamber of Queen Neferu (no. 21; Figures 2, 5) clearly indicates that the type of sunshade under discussion was called  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ , “star,”<sup>9</sup> and this in turn provides the meaning of a hitherto unexplained caption above the head of the missing attendant who held the sunshade in no. 3 (Figure 4); he is  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ , “the parasol bearer.”

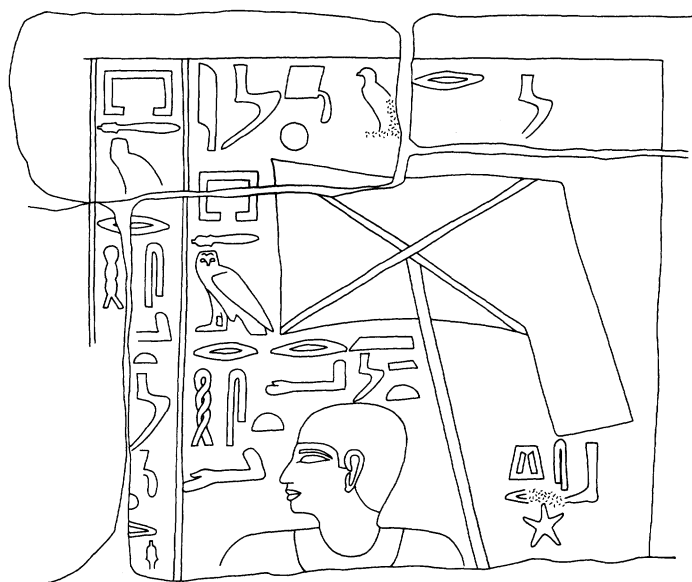


FIGURE 4  
Example 3. After Hassan

The name of the parasol is readily explained by the crisscrossed supports beneath the cloth, which, in combination with the support on which they rest, resembles the tapering points of the five-pointed star (𓂏) as represented by the ancient Egyptians.<sup>10</sup>

5. G. Jéquier, *Les frises d'objets, Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*, no. 47 (Cairo, 1921) pp. 254–255; W. Needler, “Three Relief Sculptures of the Early Pyramid Age from Lisht,” *Royal Ontario Museum Annual* 1959, pp. 35–36.

6. For the Old Kingdom scenes see L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs des alten Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1915) p. 116; also *Pth-špš* (B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, III [Oxford, 1931] p. 79 [8]) and reliefs from the Unis causeway (S. Hassan, “Excavations at Saqqara 1937–1938,” *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 38 [1938] p. 520, pl. 96; S. Hassan, “The Causeway of Unis at Sakkarā,” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 80 [1955] pl. 13 [fig. 2]). For the “scanty treatment of architectural forms” in such scenes, cf. W. S. Smith, *History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (London, 1946) p. 349.

7. N. de G. Davies, *Two Ramesside Tombs at Thebes* (New York, 1927) p. 57, pl. 30.

8. P. Montet, *Scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire* (Strasbourg, 1925) p. 320; cf. M. Megally, *Études sur le Papyrus E 3226 du Louvre*, II (Paris, 1969) p. 368.

9. The following objects are represented on the block that is illustrated in Figure 5:

$\text{𓂏}$ , *h' (k)*, “razor” (cf. Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, p. 126).

$\text{𓂏}$ , *hry-*, “holder” (cf. Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, p. 128; for

the determinative, cf. Posener-Kriéger and Cenival, *Abusir Papyri* (London, 1958) pal. pl. 12).

$\text{𓂏}$ , *ikmw*, “shields” (the half-effaced sign following this word cannot be related to the puzzling addition cited by Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, p. 231; it looks like  $\text{𓂏}$ ).

$\text{𓂏}$ , *šbs*, “sunshade.”

$\text{𓂏}$ , *ht 'n (y)*, “writing tablet of wood” (cf. Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, p. 266. The tablet bears the epistolary formula  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ , “Thy condition is like (that of) one who lives a million times”; cf. T. G. H. James, *Hekanakhte Papers*, [New York, 1962] pp. 120–122).

$\text{𓂏}$ , *ht g štī*, “scribe’s palette of wood” (cf. Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, p. 266).

$\text{𓂏}$ , *nfy*, “fan” (for fire; cf. Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, p. 297).

$\text{𓂏}$ , *hs-jars*.

10. There does not appear to be any indication that this image was considered less literally, and that the night sky was regarded as a sunshade supported by stars. Nor does such an idea suit the hieroglyph for night ( $\text{𓂏}$ ) as explained by M. Chatelet, “Une des causes de l’obscurité nocturne,” *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 18 (1921) p. 21.

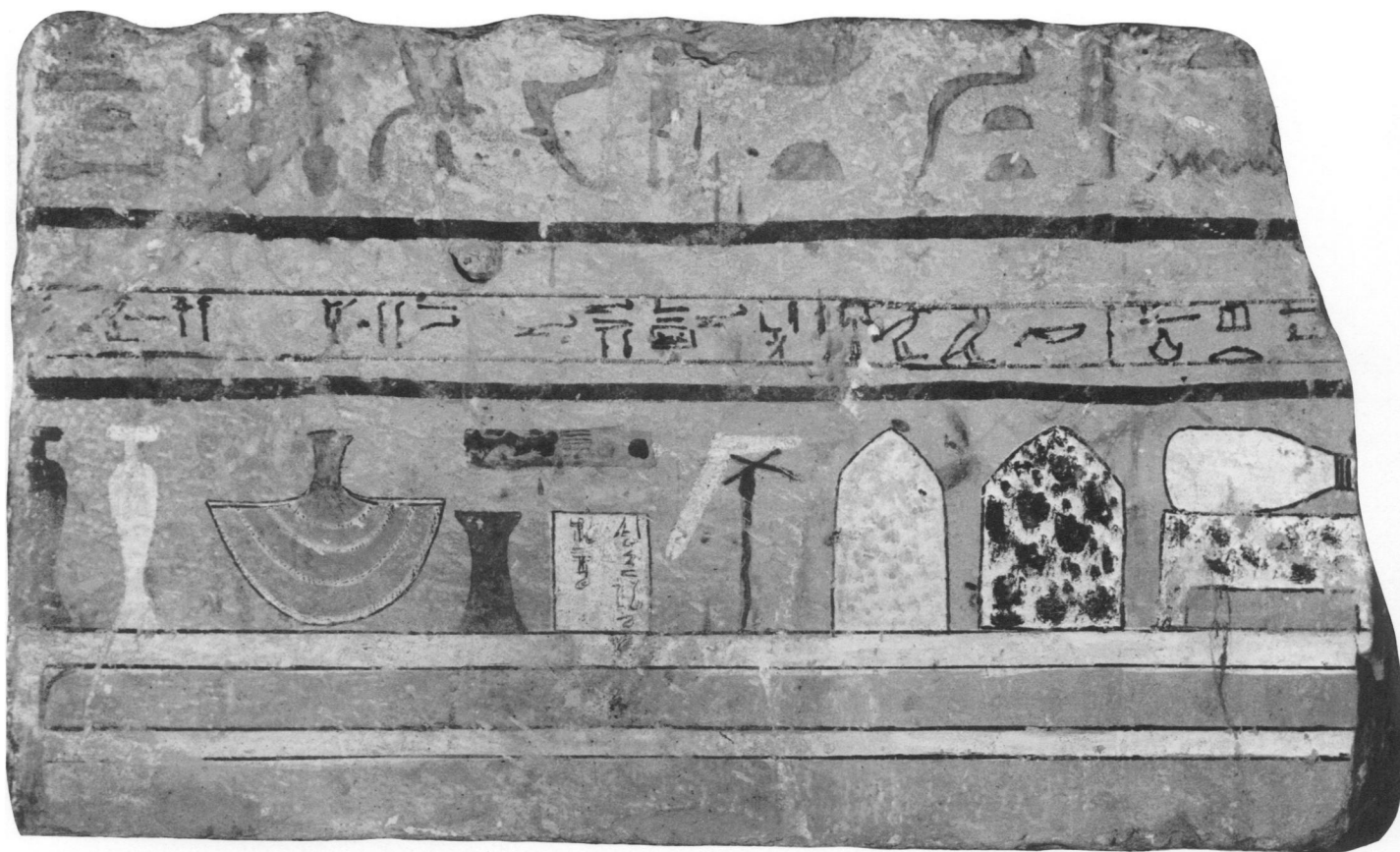


FIGURE 5

Section of frieze of offerings, burial chamber of Queen *Nfrw*: Example 21

In short, despite the absence of any evidence for it much beyond 2000 B.C., the rectangular sunshade in its contemporary form is nonetheless so similar to its ancient counterpart that it probably represents the continuation of an uninterrupted tradition.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore its present use—though totally unattested from ancient times—may very well be the one for which it was originally contrived. One must conclude on a final note of caution, however, for it is just possible that so

simple a device might have been reinvented, or that it might have been used beyond the borders of Egypt and have been reintroduced from a neighboring area after its use had been discontinued in the Nile Valley. Although I know of no evidence for this type of sunshade in the ancient Orient, it has been observed in Jordan and Mecca,<sup>12</sup> and a more rudimentary version, lacking the pendant flap, is currently used in regions as far afield as Colombia and Ecuador.<sup>13</sup>

11. One may compare the evidence for the revolving fan, which is only occasionally attested in the Old and Middle Kingdom (e.g., the Fourth Dynasty chapel of Meresankh III at Giza; also C. M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* [Cairo, 1926] fig. 99, p. 260) but continues in use in various parts of the Middle East, and is known from some actual examples of Egyptian origin

dating to the Roman period (Jéquier, *Frises d'objets*, pp. 253–254, referring to H. Schäfer, *Priestergräber vom Totentempel des Ne-user-Ré* [Leipzig, 1908] p. 51).

12. By Yehya Aboubakr, the Egyptian director of the Arab Information Agency in Canada.

13. As reported by M. L. Bristol, of Sherman, Connecticut.

# L'Angelo del Metropolitan Museum di New York e qualche nuovo contributo a Piero Tedesco

GIULIA BRUNETTI

L'“ANGELO ADORANTE” del Metropolitan Museum<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2–4) fa parte, com'è noto, di una serie di otto statue di quel soggetto eseguite da Piero di Giovanni Tedesco alla fine del Trecento per collocarle a due a due a fianco dei santi Stefano, Lorenzo, Vittorio e Barnaba sulla facciata di S. Maria del Fiore. In quella collocazione esse rimasero fino alla demolizione della facciata stessa, avvenuta nel 1587. Nel disegno della facciata, eseguito appunto in occasione della demolizione, esse sono visibili, con i rispettivi Santi, nel secondo ordine, ai lati del portale maggiore.

Nel giugno del 1390 Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, che aveva da poco terminato la serie di statuette di Santi per gli sganci di quel portale, riceveva 25 fiorini d'oro

“pro una figura unius angeli marmorea per eum facta”. Una seconda figura risulta già fatta da lui nel novembre dello stesso anno, col compenso, al solito, di 25 fiorini. Si tratta presumibilmente della coppia per il Santo Stefano, che fu, a quanto pare, la prima eseguita delle statue dei quattro Santi: vi lavorava nel luglio del 1391 lo stesso Piero.

Nel gennaio–aprile di quell'anno e nei primi mesi del 1394 lo scultore lavorava ad altri due Angeli, con ogni probabilità quelli destinati al San Lorenzo, che sappiamo già collocato al suo posto sulla facciata nel marzo del 1394.<sup>2</sup>

Uno degli Angeli adoranti ora al Museo dell'Opera del Duomo a Firenze, volto verso destra, tiene nella

1. Marmo; alt. m. 1,180, largh. 0,345, spess. 0,270; questo corrisponde alla veduta frontale della figura, che è volta di profilo verso sinistra. La testa è stata riattaccata e c'è qualche piccola abrasione qua e là, ma, in complesso, la statua è ben conservata. Nel tergo, come le sue compagne, ha quattro cavità destinate alla applicazione delle ali, che, come era uso molto frequente, dovevano essere di metallo. Una ampia, accurata “scheda” (della cui utilissima segnalazione ringrazio Olga Raggio) è stata dedicata recentemente alla statua di New York da Vera K. Ostoya in occasione della sua esposizione nei musei di Los Angeles e di Chicago (*The Middle Ages, Treasures from The Cloisters and The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, January 18–March 29, 1970; The Art Institute of Chicago, May 16–July 5, 1970; pp. 174, 259, no. 80). A proposito dello stato di conservazione della statua essa dice fra l'altro che “the surface of the face may have been reworked”. Non sono in grado, a molti anni di distanza dalla visione diretta dell'opera, di pronunziarmi con sicurezza su questo punto. In seguito alla dispersione delle statue della vecchia facciata, questo e l'Angelo ora a Francoforte erano pervenuti in proprietà privata (cfr. G. Poggi,

*Il Duomo di Firenze* [Berlino, 1909] p. xxxix). La statua del Metropolitan Museum vi si trova dal 1917 come dono di J. Pierpont Morgan (cfr. Ostoya, *Middle Ages*, pp. 174, 259, no. 80).

2. Per la documentazione delle statue dei quattro santi e dei relativi Angeli si veda l'opera del Poggi (cit. alla nota precedente) alle pp. xxxviii segg. (con i richiami ai vari documenti relativi ivi pubblicati e con le relative riproduzioni). Si veda inoltre l'importante studio di H. Kauffmann, “Florentinische Domplastik”, in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 47 (1926) pp. 141–167 e 216–237; e *Il Museo dell'Opera del Duomo a Firenze*, a cura di L. Becherucci e G. Brunetti, Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze (1969) pp. 250 segg.

L'origine dello scultore nordico—forse pervenuto a Firenze dal cantiere del Duomo milanese, dove lavorava un maestro Giovanni di Piero Tedesco—non è determinabile con esattezza. Nei documenti fiorentini è detto “Todescho”, ma per lo più “Teutonico” (con varia grafia); appellativo a cui una volta è aggiunto “vel de Bramantia”. In un paio di casi è detto semplicemente “de Bramantia”. A Orvieto, dove si trasferì nel 1402, è detto “Teotonichus” e “de Fierinburgo” (L. Fumi, *Il Duomo d'Orvieto* [Roma, 1891]



**FIGURA 1**  
Piero di Giovanni  
Tedesco, Angelo  
adorante.  
Firenze, Museo  
dell'Opera del  
Duomo (foto  
Bruno Balestrini  
—Electa,  
Milano)



**FIGURA 2**  
Piero di Giovanni  
Tedesco, Angelo  
adorante. New  
York, The  
Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
gift of J. Pierpont  
Morgan,  
17.190.752



**FIGURA 3**  
L'Angelo del Metropolitan Museum: veduta frontale



**FIGURA 4**  
L'Angelo del Metropolitan Museum: particolare

mano destra un sasso, attributo di S. Stefano, e si può quindi identificare con una delle prime due statue eseguite della serie.<sup>3</sup> Una acconciatura simile dei capelli, ricadenti lisci sul tergo, si ritrova in altri tre degli adoranti: uno, ora al Liebighaus di Francoforte, è volto verso sinistra e nelle mani ora libere teneva probabilmente in origine un attributo; gli altri due, conservati nel Museo dell'Opera, sono volti uno verso destra e uno verso sinistra e tengono le braccia conserte. Quello volto verso destra è stato proposto—giustamente, mi sembra—come pendant dell'Angelo di Francoforte;<sup>4</sup> l'altro può quindi essere accoppiato con quello che tiene il sasso. Cosicché i due Santi martiri Stefano e Lorenzo, che erano rappresentati in modo fra loro molto simile e distinguibili solo attraverso gli attributi del martirio, venivano ad avere, sulla facciata di S. Maria del Fiore, anche un simile trattamento relativamente ai loro adoranti.<sup>5</sup>

Agli altri quattro Angeli—per il S. Barnaba e il S. Vittorio—Piero lavorava certamente fra il settembre del 1395 e l'aprile del 1396. Il 22 novembre di quest'anno si deliberava di collocare ai loro posti le statue dei due santi “cum eorum angelis ex utraque parte iuxta dictas figuras”. Costituiscono le due coppie i rimanenti Angeli del Museo di Firenze e del Museo di New York.



FIGURA 5  
Piero di Giovanni  
Tedesco, Profeta.  
Firenze, Duomo  
(foto Soprinten-  
denza alle Gal-  
lerie, Firenze)

pp. 312, 327 seg.); per cui la identificazione del maestro attivo a Firenze con quello attivo a Orvieto è messa in dubbio da H. Siebenhüner (*Deutsche Künstler am Mailänder Dom* [Monaco, 1944] p. 64). Il dubbio è fondato, ma si deve anche rilevare che proprio al lavoro orvietano a cui lo vediamo impegnato, il fonte battesimale, troviamo impegnati in quegli anni per l'appunto anche altri maestri che avevano lavorato col Tedesco a S. Maria del Fiore a Firenze: Luca di Giovanni da Siena e Jacopo di Piero Guidi. A nostro parere la questione rimarrà allo stesso punto fintanto che non saranno letti per intero i documenti orvietani, pubblicati solo parzialmente dal Fumi, nei quali compare anche un Cristoforo Tedesco collaboratore di Piero, e non saranno eseguite buone fotografie dei particolari della pila del fonte, il cui materiale—marmo rosso—comporta, per di più, un diverso effetto dell'intaglio.

Nel repertorio della scultura oltremontana, i quattro Angel adoranti del Museo di Bourges, provenienti da Notre Dame La Blanche, per quel che si può giudicare da modeste riproduzioni (G. Troescher, *Die Burgundische Plastik des ausgehenden Mittelalters und ihre Wirkungen auf die europäische Kunst* [Frankfurt a. Main, 1940] tavv. VIII-X) sono le figure che presentano le maggiori affinità con gli adoranti del Tedesco, come ha notato il Kauffmann (“Florentinische Domplastik”, p. 157, n. 1) che, per la sua origine, pensa anche alla Francia orientale o ai Paesi Bassi. Così, più o meno, il Troescher (*Die Burgundische Plastik*, p. 153: “Aus den Rheinlanden

oder den benachbarten Niederlanden. . .”; v. anche P. Toesca, *Il Trecento* [Milano, 1951] p. 350, n. 101).

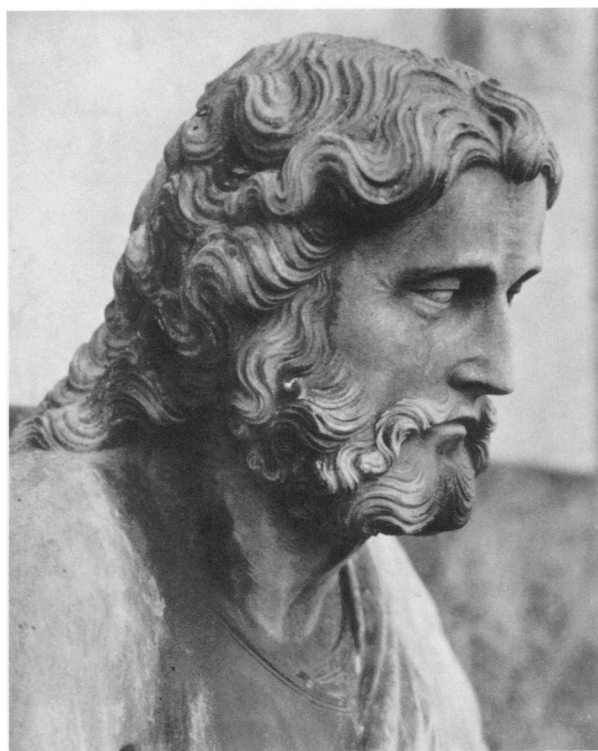
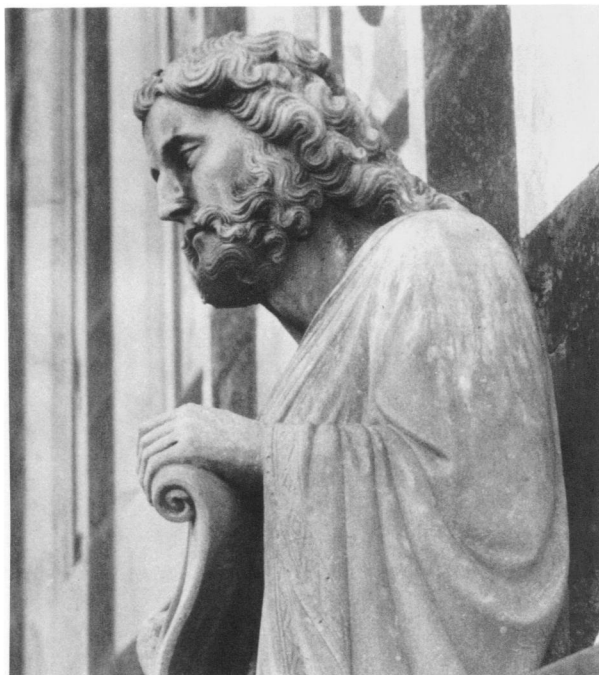
3. Cfr. Poggi, *Il Duomo di Firenze*, p. xxxix, e Kauffmann, “Florentinische Domplastik”, p. 149.

4. Da H. Keller, “Ein Engel von der Florentiner Domfassade im Frankfurter Liebighaus”, in *Festschrift für Herbert von Einem* (Berlino, 1965) pp. 117-122.

5. Le figure di S. Stefano e di S. Lorenzo sono state identificate dal Kauffmann (“Florentinische Domplastik”, pp. 158 segg.) con le due statue in abito diaconale, ora al Museo del Louvre (con le teste sostituite). La identificazione sembrerebbe persuasiva, a parte l'incertezza degli attributi delle due figure (definibile solo il libro nella sinistra del supposto S. Lorenzo). Per la questione del S. Barnaba e del S. Vittorio, di cui è stata proposta l'identificazione con due delle statue portate al Museo dell'Opera dal cortile del Palazzo Riccardi, v. le schede relative nel citato catalogo Beccherucci e Brunetti, pp. 245 seg., 250 segg., nn. 74, 81-83. A proposito della identificazione di statue già sulla antica facciata di S. Maria del Fiore è opportuno ripetere che con ogni probabilità—almeno a nostro parere—non tutte le statue che dai magazzini del Duomo, dove furono poste in seguito alla demolizione della facciata, andarono a decorare giardini e palazzi di Firenze, provenivano originariamente dalla facciata stessa. In quei magazzini, è noto, erano già accantonate molte altre statue che possono avere seguito la sorte di quelle già sulla facciata.



**FIGURA 6**  
Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, Profeta: veduta  
frontale (foto Brogi)



**FIGURE 7, 8**  
Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, Profeta: particolari  
(foto Soprintendenza alle Gallerie, Firenze)

Essi sono un po' diversi da quelli fin qui considerati, sia per l'acconciatura dei capelli, a doppia fila di grossi riccioli tutto intorno al capo, sia per l'atteggiamento, incrociando, invece delle braccia, le mani. Due di essi sono in abito diaconale e tengono le braccia leggermente più stese per non interferire con l'incrociatura delle mani in quella della stola che orna il loro petto di una grande X decorata. Ulteriore distinzione, quindi, di una terza coppia, che si ritiene deputata, per l'abito, ad onorare la dignità papale di S. Vittorio.<sup>6</sup>

Ed eccoci finalmente all'ultima coppia, destinata al S. Barnaba, della quale fa parte l'Angelo del Metropolitan Museum, che ha dato lo spunto a questa breve rassegna.

La posizione delle mani, la pettinatura, l'abbigliamento, col bel fermaglio appuntato sul davanti, lo indicano come compagno del sesto Angelo adorante del Museo del Duomo (Figura 1), anche indipendentemente dai vari argomenti che, per esclusione, implicitamente ci avevano portati a questo abbinamento. Trascurabili ci sembrano infatti le lievi diversità che si potranno riscontrare nelle due figure: come nella foggia del fermaglio, o nella sistemazione dei capelli sotto al diadema, che quello di Firenze ha simile ai due diaconi; o nella rifinitura del bordo del manto, segnato da due semplici righe parallele nella statua di New York, mentre in quella di Firenze lungo le due rigature corre un motivo di centine e triangolini; o nel drappaggio del manto stesso, che forma come un'ampia manica su tutt'e due le braccia a Firenze, mentre a New York il motivo si trova sul solo braccio destro, proprio quello destinato ad essere addossato alla parete. Più interessante ci sembra, se mai, rilevare nelle due figure una certa differenza nel trattamento, mostrando l'Angelo di Firenze rispetto a quello di New York, come del resto più o meno anche rispetto alle altre figure della serie, un modellato più morbido e più ricco di trapassi, che lo riavvicina alle due prime figure a noi note dello scultore straniero a Firenze: l'Angelo col liuto e l'Angelo con l'organo portativo, ora

al Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, eseguite una decina di anni prima. E calza forse a questo proposito una semplice osservazione di carattere generico sulla sua attività fiorentina: che egli si sia, cioè, valso di una larga collaborazione di bottega. Infatti, in un giro di anni, per quel che ci risulta, relativamente breve (1386-1400), tale attività fu, com'è noto, copiosissima, anche volendosi attenere strettamente a quanto ci dicono i documenti del Duomo. E tanto più se, come credo, gli si debbano assegnare anche un paio di opere delle quali non troviamo cenno nei documenti che lo riguardano.

Si tratta della statua di Profeta situata sull'estremo pinnacolo della Porta della Mandorla (Figure 5-8) e di una testa di Re ora nella sala del Trecento al Museo del Bargello (Figura 9). Con la prima possiamo mettere in rapporto una deliberazione degli operai di S. Maria del Fiore del 2 settembre 1423<sup>7</sup> con cui si disponeva di collocare in cima alla porta "per quam itur a' Servi" una statua di Profeta che si trovava nel magazzino esistente al piano terreno del campanile; evidentemente da non meno di una venticinquina di anni se, com'è presumibile, si tratta della statua che effettivamente si trova tuttora in cima alla porta. Essa infatti mi sembra in tutto corrispondente, per lo stile, a lavori documentati di Piero Tedesco, dei quali cito, in particolare, una delle statuette di Santi per la porta principale della facciata e il rilievo col Padre Eterno benedicente al centro dell'architrave della Porta della Mandorla.<sup>8</sup> Gli stessi confronti mi pare che valgano per la testa coronata del Bargello,<sup>9</sup> a parte le lievi differenze determinate da quel tanto di maggiore effetto decorativo dovuto alla iconografia stessa e, pur nella sua frammentarietà, alla migliore conservazione della superficie, che mostra ancora nitidi vari segni di quella minuta ricerca naturalistica, cara all'artista nordico, non più apprezzabile ormai che "per sommi capi" nelle dilavate e corrose figure del Museo del Duomo e nel Profeta in cima alla porta.

Se per quest'ultimo e per il Santo Re del Bargello non abbiamo possibilità di riferimenti a documenti

6. Kauffmann, "Florentinische Domplastik", p. 149.

7. Poggi, *Il Duomo di Firenze*, pp. LXXII, 72, no. 395. La statua, di marmo, è alta m. 1,52 compresa la base che fa parte dello stesso blocco.

8. Kauffmann, "Florentinische Domplastik", p. 159, fig. 14, p. 220, fig. 4 (Foto Brogi nn. 8003 e 4947).

9. Marmo; alt. m. 0,35, largh. 0,235, spess. 0,26. Naso di

restauro; no. inv. 323. Esposto come di "arte fiorentina sec. XIV". Passato al Bargello dall'Opificio delle pietre dure, dove non mi è stato possibile rintracciare una precedente ubicazione. Anche questo pezzo, come la statua di profeta, non è stato finora, che io sappia, studiato: vi è solo un accenno di M. Salmi ("Arnolfiana", in *Rivista d'Arte* 22 [1940] pp. 133-177) che ne rileva il "carattere francesizzante" (p. 159, n. 1).



FIGURA 9

Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, Un Santo Re (frammento di statua). Firenze, Museo del Bargello (foto Soprintendenza alle Gallerie, Firenze)

10. In "Osservazioni sulla porta dei canonici", in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 8 (1957) pp. 1-12, alla p. 9, n. 14. A una provenienza di questa Madonna dal Duomo già pensò il Kauffmann ("Florentinische Domplastik", p. 227, n. 5). Si potrebbe obiettare che, di tutti i tabernacoli delle Arti a Orsanmichele, per l'appunto solo quello della Madonna "della rosa" porta fra i suoi ornamenti degli steli di rosa (nei capitelli esterni). Ma tale motivo, da ricollegare con ogni probabilità all'Orcagna, si ritrova anche negli ornati delle arcate della chiesa. E, d'altra parte, una decorazione più complessa e varia è caratteristica di quel tabernacolo rispetto agli altri. L'attribuzione generalmente seguita per questa Madonna è quella del Venturi a Niccolò Lamberti. Ma si veda per le vicende critiche dell'opera: W. e E. Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz*, IV (Frankfurt a. Main, 1952) pp. 493, 527 seg., n. 95, che concludono con l'attribuzione a un ignoto maestro nel 1399 (data del tabernacolo). Alla attribuzione al Lamberti è propenso il Toesca (*Il Trecento*, p. 356, n. 106). G. Seymour ("The Younger Masters of the First Campaign of the Porta della Mandorla 1391-1397," in *The Art Bulletin* 41 [1959] pp. 1-17) sembra propendere invece per Lorenzo di Giovanni d'Ambrogio; attribuzione che dice essergli stata espressa verbalmente da me (p. 15, n. 45). Ma si tratta certamente di un malinteso, dato che non ho mai pensato che la Madonna della Rosa possa essere di quello scultore. L'attribuzione a Piero Tedesco è accettata da G. Marchini, "Ghiberti ante litteram", in *Bollettino d'Arte del*

relativi a Piero l'edesco, un'altra opera sua si può invece, credo, mettere in relazione con alcune note documentarie di S. Maria del Fiore in cui è fatto il suo nome: la grande Madonna della Rosa nel tabernacolo dei medici e speciali all'esterno di Orsanmichele (Figure 10-13). Ritengo probabile infatti che essa si possa identificare con quella "ynmaginem nostre Domine . . ." che gli veniva allogata il primo aprile del 1400. Già in altra sede ne ho proposto l'attribuzione al Tedesco, ma incidentalmente e senza il dovuto rilievo.<sup>10</sup> Colgo perciò l'occasione per ribadirla qui, dato che quest'ultima opera a noi nota di Piero mi sembra senz'altro la sua più importante, e non solo per il migliore stato di conservazione rispetto alle altre grandi statue da lui eseguite per S. Maria del Fiore. C'è una scioltezza nel gruppo di Orsanmichele che, nelle figure precedenti si può, se mai, riscontrare solo nel Santo con la corona di alloro originaria, ora nel Museo del Duomo, ma non certamente, per esempio, nelle due statue del Louvre (v. nota 5).

Nel soggetto stesso, più complesso e narrativo e meglio adatto ad effetti di maestosità e di decorazione, lo scultore ultramontano può aver trovato l'occasione propizia per esprimere il suo più felice momento di fusione della sua educazione nordica con gli apporti fiorentini. Le abbondanti pieghe ostentate nelle vesti

*Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* 50 (1965) p. 185 e figg. 73 e 75. I documenti che penserei poterle riferire sono pubblicati dal Poggi, *Il Duomo di Firenze*: p. 25, no. 141, 1° aprile 1400, deliberazione di allogare a Piero "unam ymagine[m] nostre Domine cum angelis. . ."; 142, 31 maggio 1400, pagamento a Piero di 32 fiorini; e probabilmente anche il 137, 24 luglio 1399, commissione a Piero "pro faciend[o] quendam figuram marmoream. . ." secondo quanto sarà convenuto col capomaestro Lorenzo di Filippo. Mancano le deliberazioni per tutto il secondo semestre del 1400 e il nome del Tedesco non compare poi più nei documenti di S. Maria del Fiore (ma v. alla n. 2); ed è presumibile che, se, come suppongo, egli eseguì la Madonna, non abbia poi eseguito altrimenti le figure degli Angeli che avrebbero dovuto fiancheggiarla. Ai lati del tabernacolo dei medici e speciali in cui essa è collocata e alla cui base è la seguente iscrizione: "opus artis medicorum spectiariorum et merciariorum MCCCIC XIII augusti", sono murate due mensole di marmo di vari decenni più tarde. Forse vi furono aggiunte appunto in occasione della collocazione della Madonna? Noto incidentalmente che la strana attribuzione vasariana di questa a un Simone, che sarebbe stato discepolo del Brunelleschi, potrebbe forse essere messa in qualche modo in relazione con queste due mensole, che nella fine e complessa decorazione che le copre, a cherubini, a scaglie, a foglie, etc., mostrano un gusto ormai situabile nella seconda metà del Quattrocento.





**FIGURA 10**  
 Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, *La Madonna della Rosa*. Firenze, Orsanmichele (foto Soprintendenza alle Gallerie, Firenze)



**FIGURE 11-13**  
 Piero di Giovanni Tedesco, *La Madonna della Rosa*: particolari (foto Soprintendenza alle Gallerie, Firenze)

non hanno, nonostante le consuete siglature della caduta, quel che di un po' meccanico che si riscontra in altre opere del Tedesco (ma vedi a questo proposito l'osservazione di sopra riguardo a eventuale collaborazione); ma mentre danno imponenza alla impostazione del gruppo, rientrano, per il trattamento, in quel particolare amoroso oggettivismo che è stile in tutta l'immagine: nelle lunghe dita nettamente tornite della Vergine, come nei riccioli del Bambino, perseguiti quasi pedantesca­mente in ogni voluta; nell'impeccabile intaglio di tutti gli ornati, da quelli dei bordi delle vesti a quelli del fermaglio e della corona. E si

aggiungano l'uccellino e il rametto di rose canine, i due oggetti che provocano, sotto lo sguardo bonario, quasi di matura casalinga, della Mamma, il riso pieno del Bimbo (Figura 13). Solo di poco più contenuto, si noti, di quello dell'angiolino musicante rannicchiato nell'angolo destro sotto all'architrave della porta della mandorla, pura drôlerie eseguita dallo stesso Tedesco cinque o sei anni prima.

Penso che non si debba sottovalutare la portata di questa "Maestà", apparsa in quel preciso momento e in quel cantiere alla ribalta dell'arte toscana.

## The Angel in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and Some New Attributions to Piero Tedesco

THE "ADORING ANGEL" in the Metropolitan Museum is part of a series of sculptures in marble that belonged originally to the façade of Florence Cathedral, demolished in 1587. The four saints and eight paired angels comprising the series were executed by Piero di Giovanni Tedesco and his workshop in 1391–1396. From 1390 to 1394 Piero di Giovanni carved the four angels flanking the Saints Stephanus and Laurentius (three now in Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo; one in Frankfurt, Liebieghaus), and from 1395 to 1396 the other four angels, flanking the Saints Barnabas and Victor (three in Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo; one in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art). The Museum's angel forms a pair together with one of the angels in Florence and was originally by the side of the St. Barnabas.

The style of these works leads the author to attribute three other sculptures to Piero di Giovanni and his workshop: the figure of a prophet on the top of the Porta della Mandorla of Florence Cathedral, the head of a king in the Museo Nazionale in Florence, and the Madonna della Rosa at Or San Michele. The prophet and the head of the king appear to be closely related in style to documented works by the sculptor, namely, a statuette of a saint from the former façade of the cathedral and the relief representing God the Father on the Porta della Mandorla. Similar stylistic observations concerning the Madonna della Rosa seem to be confirmed by the existence of a document dated April 1, 1400, which records a payment made to Piero di Giovanni for the sculpture of a so far unidentified Madonna.

*Summary by* OLGA RAGGIO