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

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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).

1. 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. Breck pointed out the striking relationship between the Metropolitan’s carvings and two ivory panels 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. 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. 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).
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.
The panels are of equivalent size, about 54 by 3½ inches. The Virgin panel is slightly canted in on either side toward the bottom, and each panel is a quarter inch in thickness. 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, 5⅞ by 3¾ inches (14.5 by 8.8 cm.); Virgin enthroned, 5¼ by 3½ inches (14.4 by 9 cm.), ¼ inch (0.3 cm.) longer on the right side, and canted in 3/16 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. 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. 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.
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.8 He points upward with his (i.e., the tunica talaris, later albe or alb, and the dalmatica).

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

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*FIGURE 5*  
*Traditio legis.* Carolingian ivory.  
Front cover, Gospels of Noailles. Bibliothèque Nationale, 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. 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 leaf forms, which tend to merge into one another, and the centers of the leaves are difficult to fix. The corner angle leaves are the only pause in the continuous movement. Drillwork, 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 considerations 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 ricinium, 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. 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.

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. 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 François [Paris, 1947] pp. 40-41).
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. 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). 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
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.15 Through stylistic comparison with other manuscripts, 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."16 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.17

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 Hübsch, ein Kölner Kunstkabinett um 1800, Ausstellung des Hessischen Landesmuseums... im Schnütgen-Museum Köln, August 10–October 18, 1964*, no. 54.


**FIGURE 10**

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 *Tractio 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
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 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).18

The two acanthus motifs found on the borders of the ship between the ivories of the Psalter of Charles the Bald and the Crucifixion ivory, and it is fully demonstrable.

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18. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4452; G. I, 41. Goldschmidt (Elfenbeinskulpturen, I, p. 25) suggested the relation-
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. 19 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 accent 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 it. 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 ubiquity 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). 20

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


This created a simpler image more compatible with the techniques of ivory carving and metalwork. The earliest such figure-eight globe-mandorlas 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). 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. 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. 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). 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


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 Stuttgart Bilderpalast, 2 vols., facsimile and text (Stuttgart, 1965–1968) pp. 15–51, for the analysis by Bernhard Bischoff and Florentine Mütherich 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.

FIGURE 19

FIGURE 21

FIGURE 20

FIGURE 22
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—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).
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. 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, 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. 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. A variant of the theme in which Paul,

**FIGURE 24**
rather than Peter, receives the law is found in Raven- 
nate art of the early fifth century.\textsuperscript{32} 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 \textit{Traditio} representa-
tions 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 symbolis-
m of the four rivers of Paradise. Compare, for example, 
the \textit{Traditio legis} found in the north-ambulatory ase 
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 ase 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.\textsuperscript{33} 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 origi-
nal invention, though a few elements, for example, the 
use of the personification, are quite original in the con-
text of the \textit{Traditio}.

Revival and adaptation of an earlier Christian theme 
with imperial overtones are also found on the compan-
ion Virgin plaque. The representation of the Virgin as 
the Mother of God, Theotocos or \textit{Dei genitrix}, which 
begin after the Council of Ephesus in 431, was possibly 
first seen at S. Maria Maggiore.\textsuperscript{34} There are a large

32. For the Ravennate variant see especially S. Kostof, \textit{The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna} (New Haven, 1965) pp. 68–70.
33. The S. Costanza ase mosaics present considerable archae-
ological and technical problems. Erected as an imperial maus-
oleum in the mid-fourth century, the building was later used as a 
baptistery. Since the north- and south-ambulatory ase 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. Tech-
ically the question is one of incorrect restorations. In the north 
ase 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 ase has sometimes been identified as God giving the tablets 
of the law to Moses. J. Wilpert (\textit{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 (\textit{Die 
Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur 
Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts}, Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und 
and H. Stern (“Les mosaiques de l’égilise de Sainte-Constance à 
34. It would have been in the original ase 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 
(\textit{The Mosaics of Rome from the Third to the Fourteenth Century} [Green-
program and G. A. Wellen (\textit{Theotokos, Eine ikonographische Abhand-
lung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit} [Utrecht, 1960] 
pp. 127–129) and Ihm (\textit{Apsismalerei}, pp. 132–134) concerning the 
reconstruction of the Early Christian ase program.

\textbf{Figure 25}

\textit{Traditio legis}.
Mosaic, north-
ambulatory ase.
S. Costanza, Rome 
(photo: Hirmer)

35
number of such representations in Early Christian art in mosaic, metal, and ivory, 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 acclaim. 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. 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.

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.
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 Baouit and Saqqara.18

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).19 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. 111 and 113, 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.
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.40

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.
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. 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 ish 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., cxxxi), 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 Lombardie’ 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, as is the specific form of the throne. 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 figures 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. The central leaf

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 tulip-like 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 Christogrammimbus," 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 Staatsymbolik, 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, cxv, cxxi, cxx, 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 arched 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 Metzer Schule), and all are dated from the ninth and tenth centuries. Three depict the Crucifixion, and one, King David with his bodyguards.\footnote{44} 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.\footnote{46}

In manuscript illuminations the oblique acanthus is readily recognized as part of the decorative vocabulary with Charles the Bald (see Schramm, Herschaftszichen, III [1956] pp. 694–707).

\footnote{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).

\footnote{45} G. I, 111, 112, 113, 119. Concerning no. 119 see also Steenbock, Prachtbestand, 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.

\footnote{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 context 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 mandonla 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.

\footnote{47} A few Tournon canon-table arms 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.

\footnote{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.

\footnote{49} Fol. 6, 6 verso, 7 verso, 9 verso, 10 verso, 63 verso, 141 verso, 142.
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.\textsuperscript{50} 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).\textsuperscript{51} On the golden cover two leaves, very often half leaves, are joined together forming

\textsuperscript{50} Concerning the ciborium see especially Schramm and M\"utherich, \textit{Denkmale}, no. 61.

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,
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. In Touronian 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 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., lxxxvii) and in Charles the Bald manuscripts the Codex Aureus (G. Leidinger, Der Codex Aureus der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München [Munich, c. 921–925] 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).

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.54

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.55 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 Metropolitan 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.56 Finally, one wing of Luke’s symbol has a looped form like that of the angels on the Metropolitan Museum ivories.

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
tan’s Virgin panel. Unfortunately, the other one is cut off by draperies, making it impossible to determine whether or not it would have had a similar hairpin shape. These are, to be sure, small details, but they support the idea of affinity between the Metropolitan’s ivories and the Morgan manuscript suggested by the border motifs.

To summarize, the relatively unusual composition of the borders of the Christ panel is found in ivories of the Later Metz Group, possibly work that is later and derivative, although this cannot be asserted without reservations until the pieces are fully studied. The composition and, to a certain extent, the style are specifically paralleled in Morgan 728, a Reims manuscript dating from the time of Hincmar (845–882). The style of the leaves, however, is most similar to metalwork associated with Reims or Charles the Bald, specifically, to the leaf decoration on the Lindau Gospels in the Morgan Library. The relatively common acanthus motif of the borders of the Virgin panel is found on the Noailles Theotocos, in the Noailles Gospels, in Touronian manuscripts, and frequently in Morgan 728. The style of the leaves relates to aspects of the border of the unlocalized Victoria and Albert Ascension ivory, to Touronian manuscript decoration, and to some of the acanthus decoration in Morgan 728.

The evidence points to a date somewhere between the 840s and the 880s for the Metropolitan Morgan ivories, with Reims affiliations being the strongest. In any case, one question mark has been erased. These ivories are authentic Carolingian carvings. No forger could possibly have been clever enough to invent acanthus motifs so specifically mid-ninth-century Carolingian, and there were none precisely the same available for him to copy.

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 to the apostles are shown with folded wings similar to those on the ivory. The existence of such folded wings in Early Christian art, especially in the Cotton Genesis fragments (London, British Museum, Otho. B. vi), a manuscript with a provenance—fifth–sixth-century Alexandria—similar to that of the presumed model for the Metropolitan ivories, means that it is quite possible that the artist of the ivories simply derived the folded wings from the Early Christian model before him. Nevertheless, since Carolingian artists generally used the open wing even for figures at rest, as seen in the Noailles ivories, it is useful to examine the incidence of

57. An examination of the parchment page against the light did not reveal any underpainting. Presumably the drapery was done first, and the artist did not have to consider the complete form of the second wing.


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.60

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 coinci-
dence, 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.61 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.62

Some prominent examples of the folded wings can be

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60. K. II, 104, 81. Other examples are: ivories, G. I, 1, 2, 18,
19, 27; manuscripts, B., cliv, clv (Trier and Cambrai apoca-
lapses), 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 Trans-
figuration 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
168, fig. 4) localizes the gospels in the Paris region at Saint-Maur-
des-Fossés.

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**Figure 39**

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). 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.

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 as well as for the Grandval and San Paolo Bibles. 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.

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.

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

64. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. lat. 1141, fol. 5 (B., cxxxvi), 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 Bildpsalter, 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.
68. L’Orange, Cosmic Kingship, pp. 139–170 (cf. Figure 24 in this article).
FIGURE 40
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 manu-
script illumination. Recently Ernst Kitzinger pointed
to the “drastic and emphatic elaboration of gestures
. . .” in the Stuttgart Psalter, stating that the associ-
ation of text with miniature is of “immense importance
for an enquiry into the meaning of the gestures.”
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 Carolin-
gian 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 emo-
tion, 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 cruci-
fied 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 exam-
ple, a hart (fol. 53 verso) or a wineskin (fol. 137 verso),
in an attempt to make clear the unrepresented impli-
cations 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 (Fig-
ure 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. 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 speak-
gestures interchangeably.

There are seven illustrations in the Stuttgart Psalter
in which Christ is depicted in a frontal position, gen-
erally enthroned, holding a book, and pointing upward.
In all instances the text implies that he is making refer-
ce 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 aqua-
bitur Domino,/ Similis erit Deo in filiis Dei? / Deus,
qui glorificatur in consilio sanctorum,/ Magnus et
teribilis 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. Bril-
liant, 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 (Hel-
sinki, 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 con-
cerned 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 Renais-
sance. 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 Metro-
politan ivories 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
206 ff.) also consider both of the gestures as indicating speech. The
findings are also borne out by gestures in the Touronian Genesis
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

72. Fols. 16, 21 verso, 77, 103 verso, 107, 111, 162.
The meaning of “the heavens” (caeli) for the apostles is commonly recognized in patristic exegesis. 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. 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 urigine Maria, sed etiam nos omnes credentes in Christum...” 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 Stuttgarter 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).

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 relief 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. a verso. It should also be noted that the pointing gesture is very frequent in the San Paolo Bible.
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 ¾ by 10 ¼ inches and, judging from its generous margins, does not appear to have been cut down when it was rebound in the late eighteenth century. 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 ¼ inch—a difference virtually imperceptible given the fact that the metal and jeweled frame would be relatively wide, measuring 3½ inches at the top or bottom and 3½ 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-

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

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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. 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.

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.

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

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.80 Probably the gospels were among the 248 manuscripts taken from the monastery by the revolutionary authorities in April 1790.81 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.”82 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 Harmsen, 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).
rescue of the artifact from the fire. 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).


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.