

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
POSTCARDS, Series 5. 1

BYZANTINE AND MEDIAEVAL
IVORIES

(6 SUBJECTS)

THE six subjects of this series, chosen from the ivories in the Pierpont Morgan Collection, are representative examples of ivory carving in the Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic periods. In Byzantine art, figure sculpture was rare except in the form of ivory carving. These minor sculptures, widely disseminated, were one of the principal means through which Byzantium influenced the development of Western European art in the Carolingian and Romanesque periods. Ivory carving flourished in the succeeding Gothic period, especially in the fourteenth cen-

tury, after which it declined in popularity.

1. Consular diptych of Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Justinianus (516-521 A. D.). It was customary for consuls, upon taking office, to present to the Emperor and other important personages such "folding-tables" in ivory. The ornament of this diptych is particularly fine in execution and design.

2. Ivory plaque, probably from a book cover, with a symbolic Crucifixion. The cross is represented as the Tree of Life springing from the bowels of Adam; on either side are the Virgin and St. John; below the feet of Christ, the rending of His garments. In style, it is characteristic of the highly sophisticated Byzantine art of the eleventh century.

3. Leaf of a diptych, representing the Journey to Emmaus and the *Noli me tangere*, a remarkable example of Spanish work of the twelfth century. The

jerky animation of the figures and the decorative arrangement of the drapery folds are typical of the Romanesque style.

4. More tenderly human than in the earlier periods, but free from the affectations of the more developed Gothic style, this exquisite Virgin and Child exemplifies the gracious quality of French sculpture in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

5. This central portion of a folding shrine affords another example of the refinement and delicate sentiment which mark the transition from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century.

6. A French casket of the fourteenth century, decorated with scenes from romances. On the front of the box, as here shown, may be recognized the subjects of Aristotle and Campaspe and of the Fountain of Youth.