Ivory panel (part of a book binding) - The Four Evangelists -plaque for book cover

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	18860
Date of production:	ca. 1030
Place of production:	Cologne (presumably);
Inscription:	nincs
Materials:	ivory
Techniques:	carved
Dimensions:	height: 13,8 cm width: 6,7-6,8 cm thickness: 0,6 cm

This ivory panel has been reconstructed from fragments. It shows the four Evangelists, John, Matthew, Mark and Luke sitting at a lectern, and has a foliate-motif border. Upon the lectern, which has finely turned legs, are writing instruments with which the Evangelists are writing on long scrolls. The panel, to judge from its size and visual programme, must have been made for the binding of a codex, probably for liturgical use, which included the New Testament text. The worn surface of the relief bears the traces of long use, but the degradation cannot hide its excellent qualities, the proportions of the composition, the relaxed postures of the figures and the very high standard of workmanship in the details. The elegance of the setting of the figures, showing an affinity to Carolingian miniature painting, and the classic tendencies of the drapery come from the art of Charlemagne's court. This style, well exemplified by the Harrach Diptych of around 800 (in the Schnutgen Museum in Cologne, on deposit from the Ludwig Collection), lived on during the 9th century at the court of Charles II the Bald (875–877), and came to prominence again towards the end of the Otto Era at the end of the millennium, on the patterns of the art of the Carolingian court, especially its workshops in the Rhine country and Liege (Theophanu- Evangeliarium, Essen St. Maria Lyskirchen Evangelium, Cologne). Art history research finds that the Museum of Applied Arts' Evangelists ivory carving belongs to this historical and artistic environment, although stylistic differences from the above items leave other possibilities open.

Literature

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