

The Moses' Picture in Chicago, University Library, Codex 965

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Today I am very much honored by an unexpected announcement of Prof. Tomoyuki Masuda that the present seminar of the Institute for the Mediterranean Study of Waseda University is to be dedicated to my contribution for the study of manuscript illustration in Japan. I am not so sure whether or not my past accomplishment might deserve such an honor. However, it is true that I was exclusively engaged in the study of Byzantine manuscript illustration during my graduate school years. Later, when my colleagues in Princeton organized an exhibition of the illuminated manuscripts in the United States in 1973 in honor of Kurt Weitzmann, I was invited to contribute an essay on the illustration of Byzantine lectionary for the catalogue.¹

Still, my research on the Byzantine manuscript illustration was not terminated with this essay. To the short list of my publication that is kindly prepared by the Society for the present occasion, I may perhaps add one more article which I wrote for the *Festschrift* for Kurt Weitzmann in 1995,² There I discussed the iconography of the Gospel scenes on the attic wall of the hypogeum of Clodius Hermes under the church of S. Sebastiano in Rome. Although the paper apparently dealt with the Early Christian iconography, my ultimate purpose was to prove that the major recension of the Middle Byzantine Gospel illustration had been created in the East Mediterranean world prior to the mid-third century. Thus, I believe, I gave the final conclusion to my Ph.D. thesis, in which my teacher, Kurt Weitzmann, in his last days, was very much pleased, giving full consent to the result of my research.

Meanwhile, I should admit that, by the end of 1970s, the study of pictorial recension, which was virtually created by Kurt Weitzmann and promoted by his followers, had ceased to be the focal point of manuscript study. The younger generations of scholars began to search for new directions of study. In 1976 I organized an international colloquium on the narrative illustration in the East

¹ G. Vikan (ed.), *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections*, (Princeton, 1973), 34-39.

² Sh. Tsuji, "The Attic Decoration of the Hypogeum of Clodius Hermes," D. Mouriki et al. (ed.), *Byzantine East and Latin West: Festschrift for Kurt Weitzmann*, (Princeton, N. J., 1995), 447-463.

and the West at Osaka University. Soon afterwards, I invited my colleagues to contribute their papers to the first volumes of the series of the study of art history published in Japan.³ Then, the central subject of the publication project I proposed was not manuscript illustration proper but the monumental narrative representation.

Following my proposal, my colleagues kindly sent me their invaluable papers. Especially, Prof. Herbert L. Kessler gave us his excellent treatise on the iconography of the Old St. Peter's in Rome, thus inaugurating the long series of his important contributions on the monumental narrative through the medieval period. I, in my turn, turned my attention to a particular kind of narrative representation: 'Roman mythological landscape'. The Romans produced a unique type of landscape painting often called 'Roman mythological landscape'. There, a set of narrative scenes are distributed against a single landscape background that is rendered in beautiful atmospheric perspective. Due to its square picture format, it is not so easy to follow the sequence of the narrative in Roman mythological painting. To wit, in the case of the narrative representation in frieze (e.g. the *Odyssey Landscape* in Vatican) or on scroll (e.g. the *Joshua Roll*); the viewer's gaze is automatically guided by the horizontal format, thus easily grasping the development of the story.⁴ To read the visual narrative set in a square format, one needs assistance of verbal discourse or written text from outside of the picture.

My research on this specific type of narrative representation gave me further opportunities to look into the origin of the Byzantine narrative icon from the eleventh and twelfth century,⁵ on the one hand. On the other hand, the pictorial narrative in the similar format in Japanese medieval paintings such as *Engi-e* (Pictorial narrative on 'the Origin of the Holy Place') or the representation of the four seasons, as seen in the famous *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang*, emerged as the most intriguing subject of my research.⁶

³ *Studia Artium Orientalis et Occidentalis*, I~III, (Osaka, 1977~)

⁴ Sh. Tsuji, *Polyphonia Visibilis, I: the Study of Narrative Landscape*, (=Memoir of the Faculty of Letters, Osaka University, 29) (Osaka, 1984).

⁵ K. Weitzmann, "Byzantine Miniature and Icon Paintings in the Eleventh Century," *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Ed. by H. L. Kessler), (Chicago and London, 1971), 271ff.; Sh. Tsuji, "The so-called Frame Group of Byzantine Ivory: its Style and Iconography," (Unpublished graduate seminar paper, Princeton, 1963).

⁶ 辻 成史「イコロジーその後 —那智熊野参詣曼荼羅をめぐる」『日本美術工芸』vol.647 (1992.8), pp.7-21.

Further, it seems that my long commitment to the series of archaeological expeditions to the Byzantine sites in Ölüdeniz on the Mediterranean coast of ancient Lycia, which began at the end of 1980s, once alienated me from manuscript studies.⁷ To be honest, my bibliographical resource for manuscript study has not yet been completely updated since that time. Lately, however, even before I received an invitation to this symposium, I had begun to think that the time was up for resuming my research on manuscript illustration. It is my hope that, in this short report, I can reflect certain results of my recent experience in the archaeological undertaking upon my freshly started research on the study of manuscript illumination, namely, the *topographical* background of the creation of new pictorial cycle.

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The object of my discussion today is the famous manuscript of the New Testament with Psalter, Chicago University Library, Codex 965.⁸ To make short my discussion within limited time, I would like to call your attention to a few iconographical peculiarities found in the miniature rather than the much discussed issues on the style, date, and the attribution to a certain 'provincial' production center.⁹

Although a large number of the narrative scenes in the Gospels in the manuscript maintain their close correspondence to the text, there are a few anomalies: for an instance, the opening passage of the Gospel of John is illustrated with the *Anastasis*, to which the Gospel text does not refer. As Willoughby has already pointed out, the scene is inserted here according to the

⁷ Sh. Tsuji (ed.), *The Survey of Early Byzantine Sites in Ölüdeniz Area (Lycia, Turkey): the First Preliminary Paper*, (=Memoir of the Faculty of Letters, Osaka University, 35), (Osaka, 1995).

⁸ The complete facsimile of the manuscript and the thorough description of the miniatures are found in: E. J. Goodspeed-D. W. Riddle-H. R. Willoughby (ed.), *The Rockefeller McCormick New Testament*, 3vols., (Chicago, 1932)

⁹ Annemarie Weyl Carr has done a thorough investigation on the style of the miniatures as well as their palaeographical aspects in her doctoral dissertation: *The Rockefeller McCormick New Testament: Studies toward the Reattribution of Chicago, University Library, MS.965*, (The University of Michigan, Ph. D., 1973) (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan). However, her research is concentrated on the New Testament scenes and the Evangelists' portraits, having little to do with the Old Testament scenes that are apparently derived from the Psalter part of the manuscript.

lectionary system, where the pertinent passage of John I, 1 is read in the Easter Sunday. A similar *Anastasis* scene is found in correspondence to the same Gospel passage in several other lectionary illustrations.¹⁰ Here I quote just one example of the headpiece of the Gospel of John in New York, Morgan Lib. ms. 639. fol.1r. (fig.1)¹¹

Aside from other deviations due to the underlying liturgical notion, the most intriguing feature of the Chicago manuscript is the purple dyed leaf with the full-page picture of Moses receiving the Law on the reverse page (fol.8^v). (fig.2) This leaf immediately follows the series of Canon Tables, while the original folios 7 and 8 are obviously missing, or, it seems, even torn off from the original binding. Consequently, the Matthew Nativity story proper in Chapter II begins from fol.9^r. There is little doubt that the two leaves now missing contained the initial part of the Gospel of Matthew.¹² They could have contained the Genealogy of Christ and the following Nativity narratives.



Fig.1. New York, Morgan Lib. ms.639. fol.1r.
Headpiece of the Gospel of John



Fig.2. Chicago, Univ. Lib. cod. 965, fol.6^v.
Moses Receiving the Law

¹⁰ Willoughby, 196ff.

¹¹ K. Weitzmann, "The Constantinopolitan Lectionary, Morgan 639", D. Miner, (ed.) , *Studies in Art and Literature for Belle de Costa Greene*, (Princeton 1954), 358-373.

¹² Weyl Carr, *op. cit.*, 322.

As Willoughby correctly states, there are more New Testament -Psalter manuscripts, which comprise the image of Moses receiving the Law before the beginning of the Gospel text. He surmises that the image may have formed a part of the preface, and rightly quotes the poem in a tenth-century lectionary, Paris, Bibl. Nat. gr. 278, which explains the relation between the old Law given through Moses and the new Law through the sacrificial death of Christ.¹³ Willoughby further suggests that the text line inscribed above the Moses scene in the Chicago New Testament-Psalter manuscript is derived from John I, 17 rather than a relevant Old Testament passage.

Still, questions remain, especially with regard to the present place of the Moses' scene in the manuscript. The space left by the lost two folia seems just enough to contain the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew which is now missing. There seems to be no more space left that might allow another kind of text to intrude there. Fortuitously, there remained, at the very end of the Chicago manuscript, a single folio (206^v) which contains a full-page miniature of the portrait of King David. (fig.3)¹⁴



Fig.3. Chicago, Univ. Lib. cod. 965, fol. 206^v.
King David on the Throne

Although very much mutilated, one can still trace most part of the picture: David is represented on the throne in majestic frontal position, holding a large lyre in his left arm. He seems flanked from both sides by Psalm singers. Willoughby carefully compared the McCormick Rockefeller manuscript with another New Testament-Psalter manuscript, Paris, Bibl. Nat. Suppl. Gr. 1335,

¹³ Willoughby quotes Paris, Bibl. Nat. Suppl. Gr. 1335 with the same Moses scene as the frontispiece. *Id.*, "Codex 2400 and its Miniatures", *AB*, XV, no.1 (1933) 3-74, esp. 27-28; *Idem.*, . 11, pl.II.

¹⁴ Willoughby, *op. cit.*, 333-336.

with regard to the selection of the images for the Psalter part, and concluded that the portrait of David in the former was the very first miniature of the lost Psalter at the end of the manuscript. Juxtaposition of the Moses' scene with the mutilated David's portrait reveals that the size of the miniatures and their proportion to the entire page space are almost identical. Further, though very faint, the trace of the purple line framing the David's portrait, especially that of the upper frame, still remains recognizable.

Different from the Moses' page, the leaf with the royal portrait is no longer dyed in purple. Thus, there is little doubt that the Moses' picture at the beginning of the Gospel text derived from the series of the liturgical Psalter illustration that represent the composers of the Odes. At present, it is impossible to decide whether the Moses' leaf was dyed in its original state, or at the time of the transfer to its present position in the codex.

It is more than likely that the insertion of the Psalter illustration with Moses between the Canon Table and the Matthew Nativity narrative occurred only after the coherence of the whole pages collapsed. The disintegration was particularly worse in the last part of the manuscript that contained the Psalter. When the remaining leaves were rebound, only a single leaf of the Psalter part was saved intact.

A strong emphasis on the scene of Moses Receiving the Law in the illustration of the Chicago manuscript can be attested by another miniature based on the same iconography, while this time the composition has been changed and set into a small freeze format. (fol. 86^r) It illustrates most likely John, I, 7: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. " While the correspondence between the text and the image is normal, the insertion of the Mosaic scene with regard to this particular passage of the Gospel of John is, it seems to me, exceptional rather than a rule.

A question still remains: we must ask why the Moses' picture had to be relocated at the present position. Whoever engaged in knitting these leaves together might be, he may have had a thorough knowledge of the theological/liturgical role specifically assigned to Moses as stated in the prefatory text quoted above. Further, such a unique approach to the Gospel illustration may have been possible only under particular circumstances, *e.g.*, a long tradition of commemorating a specific *locus*.

Here I should like to look back into my own thesis I wrote more than thirty years ago.¹⁵ Through my observations and analyses of the so-called 'Lucan genealogy picture' in Paris, cod. gr.74 (fig.4), I confirmed that the unusual eschatological picture on folio 112^v of the codex does not illustrate the text of the Lucan genealogy of Christ that precedes the illustration. But, it is introduced here in association with the commemoration of the Temptation of Christ that is narrated at the beginning of the next Chapter IV.



Fig.4. Paris, cod. gr. 74, fol.112^v.
Illustration to Luke, II, 1ff.

It is of no use to reinstate here the complicated process with which I managed to reach my conclusion at that time. However, two issues I raised in my previous discussion must be reviewed freshly: first, I still assert on my prior observation that the unusual iconography with Moses, Aaron, and Holy Priests in the upper register and King David flanked by the royal figures of the subsequent generations in the lower register were created altogether after the model of a Psalter illustration such as seen in Vat. Cod. Gr. 752, fol.42^v.

Second point of my argument is that such a prominent iconographical device was firmly based on a particular liturgical tradition that may have preceded the famous *typikon* of the Great Church. Especially, it must be noted here that, as I have already discussed in my previous article, it is in accordance with a provincial *typikon* that the Temptation of Christ is commemorated on the

¹⁵ Sh. Tsuji, "The Headpiece Miniatures and Genealogy Pictures in Paris.Gr.74," *Dumbarton*

same day of the commemoration of Moses and Aaron. Such a unique liturgical tradition must have been rooted in a monastic institution in the Syro-Palestinian region, and continued by the Studites as late as in the eleventh century. A consideration on the history of monasticism as well as the topography of the region strongly suggests that the monastery of Mar Saba is one of the likeliest places of origin of the liturgical custom that would steadily observe a special commemoration of Moses.

As Willoughby and others already observed, the narrative Gospel cycle in the Chicago manuscript clearly reflects the eleventh~twelfth century Gospel illustration as exemplified by the two famous manuscripts, Florence, Laur. Plut. VI, 23 and Paris, gr. 74. May we here remember G. Millet's old thesis that the pictorial cycle in the latter manuscript reflects a Syro-Palestinian tradition? Then, it would be no longer surprising that, when the Chicago codex was rebound with a few surviving Psalter pictures, the monastic craftsman, who had a certain Palestinian monastic background, immediately thought of using the Moses picture for the preface illustration.

As an appendix to my presentation today, I would like to mention that the special emphasis on the liturgical function endowed to Moses is not only in close connection with the Syro-Palestinian monasteries but also the pilgrimage to the Mosaic sacred *topi*. The monastery of Mar Saba is a part of the great pilgrimage from Jerusalem to Sinai in Late Antiquity. I would like to conclude the present report with my hope that one day we may have more insight into the regional *landscape* of manuscript production in Late Antiquity and Byzantium.¹⁶

Oaks Papers 29 (1975), pp.165-203., esp. 197ff.

¹⁶ The localization of the production center of the 'cluster' of the illuminated manuscripts represented by Chicago ms. 965 is still debatable. As for the so-called 'Cypro-Palestinian' workshop, see: A. Weyl Carr, *Byzantine Illumination 1150-1250, the Study of a Provincial Tradition*, (Chicago 1987). Regarding the subsequent development of the research, see, e.g.: A. Saminsky, "Georgian and Greek Illuminated Manuscripts from Antioch", K. Ciggaar-M. Mecaff (ed.), *East and West in the Medieval Western Mediterranean, I*, (Leuven 2006), 17-32, with rich illustrations.