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POLYPHONIA VISIBILIS, I

THE STUDY OF NARRATIVE LANDSCAPE

BY SHIGEBUMI TSUJI

**TOYONAKA, OSAKA
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PREFACE

It was Franz Wickhoff, the great Viennese art historian, who for the first time called our attention to the importance of the landscape motifs in narrative representation. In fact, however, he was too busy with his very broad scheme of the history of Roman art in general, and did not investigate the narrative function of landscape specifically. Since then, the problem of landscape and landscape motifs has often emerged as an important issue of the study of narrative representation. For G. Millet, the presence or absence of landscape setting in Gospel illustration was regarded as a key factor to ascribe it to a specific recension of the Byzantine Gospel illustration.

Actually, the first application of the term 'narrative landscape' is found to my present knowledge in John Lane's catalogue of the exhibition of the works of Stuart Davis in the Brooklyn Museum, New York, in 1978. The term is used specifically with regard to one of the important works from the artist's early period, *Multiple Views*, 1918. Since the last part of the present study will be devoted to the works of S. Davis, it is not surprising that the term is first found in relation to this representative of the twentieth century American art.

The term is found next time in the doctoral thesis by Dr. Shigeki Nagai, *Die erzählende Landschaft in der frühdeutsche Tafelmalerei*, presented to the University of Regensburg in 1981. With his keen insight, he pointed out that at an early stage of the development of German painting in the fifteenth century, landscape played a crucial role in visualizing a narrative sequence. In this respect his work certainly anticipated the direction of my present study, though the dissertation was published and made available for me considerably after I had started my present research.

It, however, was Kurt Weitzmann's article, "The Narrative and Liturgical Gospel Illustrations (1950)," that first indicated to me the fundamental approach to the present issue. This article was in fact one of Weitzmann's works which I found for the first time, when I was still a graduate student in Japan. Since my return to Japan after finishing my graduate study in the United States, and especially since I moved to Osaka to teach at the Department of

the Science of Arts, Osaka University, I have been constantly provided great opportunities to enjoy the traditional Japanese art, its scholarship, and its environment. This research grew out undoubtedly from this dramatic meeting of the poles of the two far distanced cultural traditions.

The present study has been materialized through years of lively discussions with a number of my colleagues in Osaka University. I am especially grateful to my former graduate students and I do not hesitate to admit that important ideas and concepts in this study owe their sources of inspiration to these young colleagues. Their roles will be specifically referred to in the final publication of this present project, and presently the names of only a few of them are to be mentioned here: Akinori Mutobe, Reiko Tomii, Shin'ichiro Ozaki, and Toshie Kihara.

I am also much obliged to the staffs of the administration office of the Faculty of Letters, Osaka University, especially for their warm patience with which they looked after my research until it finally hatched.

Because of the incomplete shape of the present publication I deliberately refrained from adding any dedicatory phrase at the beginning, which I would like to reserve until this paper is published in its complete form. It is my most pleasant duty indeed to express my deep gratitude to my two fathers -the father of my scholarship, Kurt Weitzmann, Professor Emeritus of Princeton University, and my father in flesh, the late Shoichi Tsuji, Professor Emeritus of Rikkyo (St. Paul's) University.

To the former, I owe everything that I have accomplished in the past as a scholar. His most serious and enthusiastic involvement in educating and encouraging his first, and only student from the Far East was literally a rare and often self-sacrificing devotion. Then, since twenty-seven years ago, his scholarly guidance and affection have been bestowed on me uninterruptedly. I, therefore, can hardly publish even this provisory publication without modest expression of my deep gratitude and affection to him.

To the latter, I only regret that I could not dedicate this study to him before his death at the age of ninety-two in 1987. He not only gave birth to me but also raised me with all his parental

affection appropriately combined with love for art and scholarship. It was with bread and J. S. Bach that he nourished me from my childhood. The title of the present study, *Polyphonia Visibilis*, is due not only to the memory of his paternal love but also to the most important thing he taught me: to love art.

1989, at Pine Shade,
Takarazuka
Shigebumi Tsuji

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POLYPHONIA VISIBILIS, I