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Chapter II

From Prose to Poetry


Part 1

Rearrangement of the Narrative

Syntax in Frieze


Throughout the first four sections of the Odyssey frieze, only the 'tranquil bay' and the fleet of Odysseus are repeated: both are found twice at the beginning and the end of the Laestrygonian cycle. Otherwise, there is no explicit repetition of specific figures and motifs that might serve to indicate the continuity of the whole narrative. Specifically in this respect the narrative construction of the first surviving sections yield curious resemblance to the Archaic frieze with the Troilus scenes. This structural characteristic of the Odyssey Landscape may perhaps confirm our previous assumption that its ultimate iconographical source could be a miniature frieze in the Archaic-Classical tradition of the Epic cycle.

Otherwise, however, the narrative structure of the Odyssey Landscape fundamentally differs from that of the Archaic miniature frieze: this monumental narrative frieze is divided by a number of prominent insertion motifs, rendered in perspective and producing a certain rhythm and a clear sequential order of scenes.

Yet, does the narrative sequence thus visualized really develop without any incongruity with the corresponding text of the *Odyssey*? In fact, we shall soon realize that the visual sequence is not so precisely parallel to the development of the Homeric narrative as one might suppose. Let us now return to

the frieze to closely reexamine the image-text relation from scene to scene. In doing so, we shall discover more subtle functions of the landscape setting in this monumental frieze.

As we have noted at the beginning of last chapter, there are still visible several personifications of the winds in section 2. According to the Homeric text , they must belong to the Aeolus episode (*Odyssey*, X, 1-79) which, in the textual sequence, precedes Odysseus' arrival at the Laestrygonian island (X, 81). Since, however, those personifications are placed just above the Greek fleet anchoring in the bay, the scene contradicts the narrative sequence of the text, as we have already noted.[92] The scene represents actually two events which occur at separated moments in the narrative time against a common landscape background. The chronological relation between the two events are thus deliberately made ambiguous.

Although divided by a huge promontory, the two scenes of the fleet anchoring in the bay and the encounter of the Greek surveyors with the daughter of King Antiphates both well conform to the corresponding Homeric text, which narrates that Odysseus and his crew first landed on the island and then sent out the three surveyors. Accodingly, there is no visible figure aboard on any of the ships on the water. But, this set of scenes can be interpreted in two different ways. Firstly, we may

[92] See 25, *supra*. There has been continuing a debate as to what was originally represented in the lost section 1. We can hardly follow von Blanckenhagen's view ("The Odyssey Frieze," 104, n.13) that the preceding scene must have been the Aeolus story: this episode has no climactic moment other than the shipwreck of Odysseus' fleet caused by the carelessness of his crew. Then the personifications of the winds are undoubtedly the indispensable figures of this happening. Since, however, they are represented in this section 2, there seems to be little chance that the Aeolus scene could be composed in section 1 without their presence. We, therefore, would like to assume that the original scene in the lost first section may well have represented Polyphemus episode, as proposed by B. Andreas, "Der Zyklus der Odysseefresken im Vatikan," *RM*, LXIX (1962) 108, *et al.*

understand them as representing two successive scenes: the landing and the subsequent happening of the encounter with the giant girl. Secondly, we can regard them as two simultaneous events: while the rest of the crew (who are invisible in the picture) are waiting for the return of the surveyors, these happen to meet the King's daughter. Yet, the presence of the promontory between the two scenes suggests that the first interpretation is more likely. Still, the chronological relation between the two scenes is indefinite.

The sequential order of the encounter scene and the next pastoral scene is not parallel to that of the epic text: while the Homeric narrative of the peculiar pastoral life of the Laestyrgonians precedes the encounter scene, the picture represents them in a reversed order, or at least, turns the former narrative into the description of the circumstances of the latter. This was possible for the artist who invented this frieze, since the narrative of the pastoral life of the giants has actually little to do with the chronological development of the story itself.

The composition of the massacre of the Greeks by the giants has no hint at the chronological development of the dreadful episode as narrated in the relevant Homeric text. In the text, the story is narrated in a close consecutive order: first, the king gives the fearful order from his residence(v.118), then, the giants gather for the massacre (vv.118-120). These are followed by the destruction of the ships (vv. 121-123) and finally the actual slaughter (vv.123-124). The picture, however, describes all these phases as if occurring at the same time, though the artist skillfully composed these scenes simultaneous so that this might cause little contradiction. As the result of this conflation, we can realize clearly that all these dreadful deeds are instigated and carried out by the king's order.

Section 5 presents a rather complex instance: the figure of a

giant killing the Greek at his feet is obviously the continuation of the slaughter scene in the preceding section 4. Although the flight of Odysseus' boat is narrated after the massacre in the Homeric text, the two scenes are deliberately overlapped here, probably to inform us that Odysseus could escape from the scene, while the slaughter was still going on.

But, more important is that the island of Circe (and perhaps the landing of the Greeks, too) is already represented in the same picture. If we may call the figures of the winds in section 2 a sort of *analepsis*, recollecting a past incidence, this description of the charmed island is a *prolepsis*, anticipating a future event.

Before concluding our examination of the text-image relation in the first sections, we must remember our previous note of the special function of the landscape in the distant background throughout these scenes: the distant hills are an index of the continuity of narrative, leading the viewer's eye smoothly from scene to scene without being interrupted by the insertion motifs in the fore- and middle ground. In other words, the landscape motifs in the deep background play their roles which are opposite to many of the insertion motifs : uniting the scenes as opposed to separating them. If we may describe the relation between the three picture planes - fore-, middle-, and background - with the same metaphor as we used before, it may be likened to an interplay of the different voice in a polyphonic music.

Our short investigation of the text-image relation in the first four sections has already revealed that the frieze is not simply divided mechanically following the chronological development of narrative. Quite often multiple motifs or scenes at separated times in the narrative are deliberately fused or overlapped together against a common landscape background. The result is

by no means the literal representation of the content in the exact accordance with its textual syntax: the syntactic order of two consecutive events are often made ambiguous, or even 'simultaneous'[93]; Events and their circumstances are spatially intermingled. In short, the syntax of the original Homeric text is transformed in a very subtle manner, producing an ambiguous but delicate impression of continuity.

We may perhaps say that the events and motifs in this frieze represent what are contemplated through the mind's eye, or imagination.[94] The mind's eye does not physiologically look at events as they occur one after another. Its regard is always permeated by recollections of the past and expectations of the future. Frequently a mind's eye overlaps present experience with that in the past or in the future. This is possible only for a human mind's eye and impossible for a camera lens or a computerized monitoring system. It is only in this manner that various experiences can be differently evaluated and given different meanings, intellectual or emotional.

Thus we may explain why a variety of 'simultaneous' representations occur in this pictorial cycle, and why proleptic motifs are inserted here and there. When an event is seen through our mind's eye, it is always through the layers of our recollections and expectations, which are more often

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[93] In this regard, the method of visual narrative of the Odyssey Landscape fundamentally differs from that of column picture as proposed by Weitzmann: a series of column pictures which are inserted into text columns puctuate the flow of narrative in precise correspondence with the textual syntax. Quite contrary to this, the method of narrative landscape tend to fuse the total narrative sequence in a melodious flow.

[94] We borrowed the term 'mind's eye' from the title of a chapter in Brilliant's *Visual Narratives,* 53ff. where the author thoroughly discusses the role of rhetorics and *phantasia* - imagination - in creating and reading a series of Roman visual narrative.

unconscious than conscious. Thus, the even flow of time turns into something more dramatic and certainly meaningful for us.

We must be now thoroughly review the tenor of von Blanckenhagen's article . He tries to demonstrate that the first four surviving sections are based on a Hellenistic model, whereas the central section 6 and the following parts are Roman concoctions. His conclusion is mainly based on the fact that there are repetitions of the same figures within one setting, namely a sort of 'simultaneous' representation, in sections 6 and 8.

We, however, have confirmed that a variety of syntactic rearrangement are applied in a subtle manner throughout the scenes preceding section 6, and we should not be surprised to see a similar transformation of syntactic relation - juxtaposition of two consecutive scenes - in section 6, though more conspicuously than in the other scenes. Further, we must understand that the twice appearance of the protagonists in section 6 is not a mere convention of telling a story by image: this is the scene viewed through, and appealing to, our mind's eye.

Nevertheless, we too would like to point out 'Roman' peculiarities in this monumental narrative as von Blanckenhagen did, but in terms quite different from his. We have already noticed a considerable discrepancy in terms of artistic quality between the remaining sections 8 and 9 and the other sections. Hence, we would like to assume that sections 8 and 9 are done by an artist with less originality and skill in perspectival-atmospheric rendering of monumental composition. The fact that the basic compositions in the early part of the narrative are repeated in the later part seems to prove this point.[95] Although we have tentatively attributed

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[95] See our previous discussion in 55-56ff, *supra.*

these two parts of the frieze to different hands, it is equally possible that the artist/artists could consult a Hellenistic model only for sections 2 to 6, and reused the compositional patterns they found in it for the subsequent parts

In the preceding chapter we reached the conclusion that the master of the Odyssey Landscape may possibly have found his iconographical source in one of those *tabulae* with Odyssey scenes. He adapted the iconography but boldly integrated it to a grand landscape setting, fully utilizing his familiarity with the panel paintings in monumental compositions. This tradition of monumental painting must have belonged to the Hellenistic tradition, while the iconographical model the master consulted had already been 'Romanized' as seen in some of *Tabulae Iliacae*. This 'Romanization' included the rearrangement of the textual syntax as seen in the central panel of those tablets. But his accomplishment is far from the prosaic and conventional representations in the Roman popular art. He blended the whole syntax into something more delicate and melodious, and, importantly, the rearrangement of the syntax does not so much disturb the master to achieve his artistic aim as open up a new phase in the long tradition of visual narrative in the Classical antiquity: a painting like poetry.

## Part 2
## The Roman Mythological
## Landscape Paintings

In the course of our previous observations, it has been revealed that a frieze is the best format for a continuous visual narrative, since its lateral extension directs the viewer's eye constantly from one place to another, thus producing an uninterrupted flow of time. This explains why the Troilus frieze can be regarded as a consecutive cycle, though there is neither repetition of figures nor any insertion motif in the frieze which might articulate the sequence of the narrative. Further, this is also the reason why, despite various types of syntactic transformation, the fundamental continuous structure of the Odyssey Landscape is kept intact.

Then, what would happen if a pictorial narrative cycle consisting of a series of scenes separated in time were transferred from a frieze into a rectangular panel? This concerns the essential nature of the group of Roman wall-paintings in panels representing mythological narratives against landscape background, now generally called the Roman mythological landscape paintings.[96]

One of the earliest examples of this particular group of paintings is found in a chamber of the famous Imperial Villa at Boscotrecase: the two panel paintings with the mythological scenes of Polyphemus on the west wall (fig.22) and Andromeda on the east wall (fig.23), thus facing each other. Here we should like to excerpt from von Blanckenhagen's exemplary description of the former picture.[97]

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[96]The basic study is provided by Dawson, *Myth. Landscape Painting;* von Blanckenhagen, *Boscotrecase*; M. L.. Anderson, *Pompeian Frescoes in the Metropolitan Museum* (*MMABulletin*, Winter 1987/88),37-56. The origin and the development of this particular group of paintings is thoroughly discussed again by P. H. von von Blanckenhagen in his *Boscotrecase* esp., 38ff. and "Daedalus and Icarus on Pompeian Walls," *RM* LXXV (1968), 106-143.

"To the right [of the Polyphemus panel] there is water and a stretch of shoreland which is connected by a large rock in the form of a natural bridge with the island or promontory. On the shore, a short column, decorated with fillets, serves as base for a statue. At the foot of the column, on a rock, a black goat, on the 'bridge' a white goat, farther to the left another white goat and a black goat lying down. On a slightly higher level of the promontory two rocks form seat and foot rest for a deeply tanned man. His face, with a single eyebrow and one central eye, identifies him as Polyphemus. Behind him rises a tall column, [which] carries a bronze vessel on its Ionic capital. From behind the column the curved trunk of a tree grows upward. There is no way of telling precisely where column and tree are supposed to rise; it seems to be immediately behind the figure of Polyphemus. The crag itself appears more distant still. To the left a large dolphin, of which only the head is preserved, carries Galatea, who sits in a graceful pose steadying herself with her right hand while the left hold a thin himation so that it billows in the breeze. Alongside the left frame of the panel a large screen of rocks, and, jutting out from behind it, a promontory that seems to extend as far as the tree trunk. On this promontory stands a little prostyle temple. On the right side at the same level we notice a brown figure on the crag striding to the right with raised right arm and a rock in his hand, aiming the rock at a large ship that is just disappearing to the right; we see only its stern with the pilot's cabin, armed men and a bank of oars. The interpretation is obvious: a second Polyphemus, helpless and blinded, vainly tries to destroy Odysseus' departing ship. The rest of the background can still be read: a large mountain range rising diagonally from left to right in two slopes, one behind the other.

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[97]Von Blanckenhagen, *Boscotrecase*, 38ff. These two panels now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, have been recently restored.

Between them a waterfall must have gushed down into the sea; a few brush-strokes indicating it are still discernible."

We now would like to examine the interpretation of this picture, both art historical and structural, by von Blanckenhagen. After the description of the painting he continues:

"The ancient spectator was familiar with sequences of panels each of which pictured a distinct episode of a continuous story; he also knew friezes in which the same persons reappear within a continuous setting - he had never before seen a single panel composition in which one person was shown twice within the same seting. This must have struck him as impossible, just as it would strike a naive spectator of today. It would indeed be impossible if the setting were what the representation of all details pretends to be, the realistic rendering of a fixed view of a defined landscape. We have seen that such is not the case. The setting is neither defined nor definable - it is ambiguous."

From the above comments on the Polyphemus picture by von Blanckenhagen it becomes clear first of all that the author still adheres to the traditional view that, even as late as at the end of the Hellenism, Greek painting strictly observed the accordance of time with place. Namely, its narrative representation generally relied upon what Wickhoff called 'distinguishing method,' or, at best, what the same author defined as 'continuous method' with an intermittent repetition of one and the same figure.

Interestingly enough, it is also revealed here that such a

rational narrative representation, as conceived by von Blanckenhagen, did demand that the pictorial space should be constructed in an exact accordance with the rule of ancient perspective. As the result, the figures and objects represented in the picture space were seen from a fixed view-point and all the settings were rationally defined.

But, we must ask, was the eye of the Roman beholders in the late Augustan period so exclusively bound to such a 'traditional' method of narrative representation? Had a Roman at that time never really seen a 'simultaneous' representation and an irrational, 'ambiguous' space construction such as seen in the Polyphemus picture?

We can hardly follow von Blanckenhagen's assumption as such: first of all, we all agree that the Odyssey Landscape precedes the Boscotrecase paintings, probably two or three decades. Then, the Polyphemus master must have had a chance to study at least one example of the visual narrative on *Odyssey*, which is, as is well-known, alluded to by Vitruvius in his famous passage regarding the subject matters of the wall-decoration of Roman house. [98] As long as the Polyphemus master was familiar with the Odyssey frieze based on the Hellenistic tradition, he must have known those various narrative devices which we have studied in detail in the preceding chapter - devices to make the sequential relationship among scenes deliberately ambiguous by means of subtle syntactic transformation.

More than that: whether the simultaneous representation of the Circe episode in section 6 of the Odyssey Landscape should

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[98] See our following discussion in 86ff. seq.

be a Roman concoction, or should belong to the Hellenistic tradition, the master at Boscotrecase must have known that, though deviating from the rational notion of the accordance of time with place, such a syntactic rearrangement could be done, regardless of the kind of space construction he had to follow. In fact, as we have already seen, the landscape and architecture in the background of section 6 are executed in a perfect accordance with the rule of ancient perspective.

Thus, we cannot follow von Blanckenhagen's interpretation of the art historical significance of the Boscotrecase paintings. Nevertheless, we thoroughly agree with his comments specifically on their unique 'textual' character. He states on the Polyphemus painting:

"Our acquaintance with the numerous instances of 'continuous narrative' in works of Roman art from the first century A. D. onwards might persuade us to read the panel as one such representation of continuous narrative, that is, as depicting two stages of one coherent story. Such a reading, however, would miss the point entirely. The beholder after having contemplated the cyclops on his rocky seat wooing little Galatea will then be reminded of Polyphemus's eventual fate and will recall how brutish he was and how cruelly he was punished."

Here the author correctly points out that, in reading such a mythological painting on panel, the reader must constantly overlap the past, present, and future of the narrative. It is totally unlike the naive reading of a prose in chronological order. As we have already discussed extensively, such is the result of the deliberate syntactic rearrangement of the narrative sequence. It is possible only for a mind's eye. A

mere physiological vision has nothing to do with this poetical experience.

In concluding his observations of the Boscotrecase paintings, von Blanckenhagen concentrates his discussion upon the problem of the so-called 'bird's eye view' perspective, trying to postulate the origin and development of this particular method of space construction through the history of Roman art. We now would like to examine the issue.

The author describes the development in the following four different - theoretical as well as historical - stages. The very first premise for this particular space construction is the fact that the normal, realistic perspective once practiced by the Greeks was transformed by the Romans into an irrational, abstract setting - bird's- eye view.[99] This peculiar way of representing events and matters conceived - rather than actually seen - was invented by the Romans as not so much an artistic medium as an information medium, aimed at public communication.

Then, at the second stage, bird's-eye view finds its best application not only in Roman public paintings of essentially documentary natrue but also in Roman cartography, according to von Blanckenhagen. The tradition continues late into the

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[99] Such an observation on the Roman narrative is expressed by von Blanckenhagen for the first time in English at the symposium on the narration in ancient art in Chicago, 1957., and then published in *AJA*, LXI,1 (Jan. 1957), 78-83. Later, his notion of bird's-eye view is explained more concretely in von Blanckenhagen, *Boscotrecase*, 54-58, from where our seubsequent quotations are made.

last phase of Classical Antiquity.

At the next stage, thirdly, the cartographic painting is adapted by the Roman frescoists to decorate the walls of Roman houses. Von Blanckenhagen believes that "the Nile mosaic in Palestrina is the prime example. Agrippa's huge map of the world in the Porticus Vipsania may have been another adaptation," and the tradition is reflected in many other Roman wall-paintings in Pompeii and Boscoreale.

Finally, at the fourth stage, the conventional method of representation in bird's-eye view and cartography are applied for artistic purposes. This has been achieved, according to von Blanckenhagen, nowhere else but in Boscotrecase. The great master of the paintings in the Imperial Villa at Boscotrecase "detected the inherent potentialities of the Roman form; he saw in the perspective incongruity and the pictorial variety of his [Roman] predecessors the latent possibility of a new concept of landscape painting," thus attaining the exquisite poetical expression. Von Blanckenhagen concludes his notion of the historical development as following: "The road from cartographic chorographies to the painted dreams of Boscotrecase is a long, but a straight one; it begins with visually conveyed information and leads to works of art."

Von Blanckenhagen's theory of the origin of the unique space construction in Boscotrecase, however convincing it might seem at first, deserves a careful criticism. First of all, our impression of the beautiful dream-like space construction of the Boscotrecase paintings is so unique and overwhelming that

it is almost impossible to associate them with the tradition of the conventional, schematic representations which culminates in Late Antiquity. In fact, it is far more natural for us to find an immediate artistic predecessor of the Boscotrecase piantings in the Odyssey Landscape, especially in terms of spatial depth and remarkable diminution of the size of figures and motifs, which are totally absent in the Late Antique represen-tations.

The greater our admiration for the Boscotrecase paintings grows, the more reluctant we become to associate them with such a typically Roman public painting as the famous riot scene in the Pompeian arena, which we have already seen. Certainly, we must insist, the crucial point in von Blanckenhagen's historical view is that he has made no distinction between a *view from altitude*, which could be represented in a fine, illustionistic rendering with sufficient perspectival depth, on the one hand, and a *bird's eye view*, that is, the representation of figures and motifs in abstract space, which are to be conceived rather than visually appreciated, on the other. The Odyssey Landscape is the typical example of the former, whereas the latter is represented by the riot scene just mentioned above, or a number of similar instances from Late Antiquity.

This distinction of a view from altitude from the so-called bird's eye view was not fully understood in 1967, when Richard Brilliant made a careful analysis of the relief panels on the Severan Arch in Rome. In discussing the making process of these unique narrative panels, he legitimately called our attention to the method of narrative representation in *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*.[100] According to Brilliant, the particular construction of the narrative reliefs on the Severan Arch is the result of the amalgamation of the two different modes of representation found side by side on the Iliac Tablet: in the miniature reliefs on the tablet the narrative is given the unilateral direction of movement from left to right. In the central panel, on the other hand, the narrative of the Fall of Troy develops in a few registers, which, in their turn, are set in a scenery represented in a sort of bird's eye view.

What the artist of the second century A.D. did was to pile up the short narrative friezes depicting the Severus' campagn against the Parthians in layers so that the temporal uniqueness of each scene could be extended to the ascending order of their legible succession.

Then, Brillitant further advances his observations to Late Antiquity and concludes that such a unique construction of the narrative panels brought forth a decisive change of the essential character of pictorial space itself:

"The superposition of registers,..., are characteristics both of the African mosaics and of the Severan panels. This progressive neutralization of the ground...is a phenomenon of late Roman art and seems to follow the objective of presenting figures at more or less eye level, while locating them and the actions they perform within a landscape perceived from above. Although changing concepts of perspective also affected this development of the unified field in panel composition, the new emphasis on the ambiguous picture surface as a

[100]Brilliant," The Arch of Septimius Severus" (See our note 20, *supra*), esp.223ff.

physical entity and as the visualized platform supporting figures in scenes necessarily took a special turn when applied to relief sculpture."[101]

Brilliant's conclusion is correct in general terms, but we must be a little more specific in defining the method of space construction, especially in the Augustan period. Namely, in *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*, we must not fail to recognize that, while the human figures are seen at eye-level and their sizes do not vary so conspicuously from one local to another, the whole architectural setting as well as the seashore and the Greek vessels thereby are rendered in the manner of typical ancient perspective: they are all seen from above and there is even a gradual diminution of the size of the boats into depth. Such a perspectival method is only to be ignored by the Severan artist of Late Antiquity.[102]

The crucial issue concerning 'bird's-eye view' has been thoroughly discussed more recently by Gisela Wataghin Cantino.[103] She distinguishes, quite correctly in our opinion, the *view from altitude,* which is generally practiced, at latest, from the late Hellenism through the early second century, from

the *scene in bird's-eye view* widely practiced in Late Antique art. Obviously the former tradition is far more conscious of the representation of distance and spatial depth, whereas the latter primarily concerns the conceptual representation of the content.

When Cantino's distinction between the two methods of space construction is taken into consideration, the difference between the Nilotic landscape mosaics from Palestrina and the famous mosaic panel from Carthage depicting the life in a country villa becomes suddenly evident.[104] The inconsistency in the perspectival rendering in Boscotrecase painting is by no means due to the abstract rendering of space necessitated by narrative convention. In this regard, von Blanckenhagen's art historical interpretation of the space construction of the Boscotrecase paintings seems still based on the same generalized historical notion as Brilliant's in 1967.

Our second criticism about von Blanckenhagen's thesis concerns a few passages from art historical literature: in explaining the origin of the cartographic landscape painting, he

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[101]*Ibid*, 226-227.

[102]We must note that the equally subtle perspectival treatment is observable even in the miniature friezes on the Capitoline Tablet, possibly reflecting the same space rendering in the contemporaneous monumental Ilias cycles, such as seen in the House of Cryptoporticus. Cf. our previous discussion on the monumental friezes in 36ff. , supra.

[103]G.Wataghin Cantino,"Veduta dall'alto e scena a volo d'ucello," *Rivista dell' Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Studia dell'Arte*, ? (1977), 30-107.

[104]R. Bianchi Bancinelli, *Rome, le fin de l'art antique* (Paris, 1970), 223-224, fig.208. That the traditional ancient perspective was still practiced in North Africa side by side with the Late Antique bird's-eye view is demonstrable so convincingly by the mosaic panel with the miracle scene of Dionysios from Dougga (*Ibid.*, 231, fig.213), where the Dionysiac scene is represented in a perfect perspectival rendering in both deminution and atmosphere, whereas, the marine fauna in its background are represented in quite an abstract manner. This becomes all the more interesting due to the fact that the mythological scene harks back to the description in the *Imagines* of Philostratus, as Bianchi Bandinelli points out, suggesting its earlier origin.

refers to the well-known passage from Ptolemy about a certain Demetrius Topographos, who came to Rome from Alexandria and exhibited in 174 B. C. a painting showing the form of the island of Sardinia and the battles fought there.[105] He concludes: "Whatever the relation between Demetrius and this painting may have been, the formal affinity between chorographic topography and Roman [public] pictorial records is obvious. Both were necessarily combinations of bird's eye and normal view, symbolic rather than realistic renderings of events and objects in specific settings. Both were informative and useful, neither was in the realm of art."

Now we must ask: how can we know that the depiction of the island of Sardinia by Demetrius should lack any aesthetic quality? In the face of the fact that the Boscotrecase paintings attain such a high artistic level due to their unique spatio-temporal structure and consequent lyrical mood, why shouldn't we expect from a Greek painter who came from Alexandria a certain artistic accomplishment as seen in the Odyssey Landscape or the Polyphemus painting? All the evidence regarding the ancient Greek paintings indicates the contrary. The Vergina hunting fresco we have quoted above does permit us further to conjecture what Philoxenos' original monumental painting of the Alexander mosaic in Pompeii was like. Then, why should Demetrius' paintings remain still out of 'the realm of art'?

This leads us to our third criticism about von

[105]Von Blanckenhagen, *Boscotrecase*, 56.

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Blanckenhagen's thesis. He legitimately quotes the well-known passage from Vitruvius, 7,5,1-3, which enumerates various motifs derived from specific localities to decorate a long corridor of a Roman house : they are 'harbors, promontories, cliffs, streams, fountains, straits, sanctuaries, groves, hills, cattle and shepherds (*ambulationibus vero propter spatia longitudinis varietatibus topiorum ornarent ab vertis locorum proprietatibus imagines exprimentes*).' Then, von Blanckenhagen believes that these motifs must have belonged to the cartographical tradition, and that Vitruvius' other allusion to *Ulixis errationes per topia* concerns a completely different tradition of the representation of the Greek legends.[106]

First of all, however, his argument that the Vitruvian list of 'topographical' motifs has nothing to do with the landscape description of the Odyssey Landscape is hard to accept in the face of the fact that almost all of the motifs are actually present in the fresco-frieze.[107] Secondly, he admits that the two types of painting in question here, namely the 'topographical painting' and the representation of the Greek legend, both originate in the Greek tradition to be adapted later by the Romans to decorate their walls. Then, how can we assume that these two types of Greek painting should belong to

[106]The author discusses the same issue in further details in "The Odyssey Frieze," 132-134.

[107]Von Blanckenhagen, *Ibid.*, believes that only 'strait' is absent from the Odyssey Landscape. The motif, however, is very likely present in section 5 (and perhaps less conspicuously in section 2, too), which seems to correspond to the Homeric description of the Laestrygonian harbor: 'When we had come thither into the goodly harbour, about which *on both sides a sheer cliff runs continuously*...(Odyssey, X, 87ff).

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two different stylistic traditions, the one in a very abstract and conventional, and the other in a realistic and illusionistic style? Our current knowledge about the Hellenistic paintings may not provide any evidence to support such a pluralistic view.

Despite von Blanckenhagen's sharp distinction between the 'Greek realism' and the 'Roman abstraction'. all the evidence he presents seem to point to the fact, firstly, that a cartographic painting was practiced at latest in the late Hellenistic period by Greek artists such as a certain Demetrius of Alexandria. Since the tradition of the cartographic art belongs to the Hellenistic tradition, it is more than likely that it must have been done in typical Hellenistic illusionism, which is alien to the conventional style which became popular in Late Antiquity. Thirdly, we believe that the Odyssey Landscape must reflect, even partially, this *Hellenistic* tradition of cartographic painting; the Vitruvian list of landscape motifs seem to endorse our observation. Our last, but not least important, criticism about von Blanckenhagen's proposition is that the Boscotrecase paintings owe their unique artistic quality to none other than such a Hellenistic narrative landscape like the Odyssey Landscape, especially in terms of the transformation of the basically chronological order of the epic narrative into something more aesthetic.

As long as von Blanckenhagen thus makes his efforts to associate the unique poetical quality with the abstract, conventional method practiced by the Romans, he inevitably falls into self-contradiction. In a footnote in his article on the Odyssey Landscape, he makes a few statements which are

logically quite inconsistent.[108] First, he notes the peculiar combination of the figures seen in 'straight-on' views and the background in a 'bird's eye view' in the central panel of the Capitoline Iliac Tablet. He correctly insists that "we are not supposed to 'read' the relief simply but to interpret it symbolically." But, he states at the same time that "the aim of such relief is to produce complete visual information," and that "the result is not so much a picture as it is a record or an illustration in the literal sense of the term."

But, how can the symbolic quality of the relief coincide with the typically Roman documentary picture - an illustration in the literal sense of the term? He, therefore, has to make an excuse in haste in the same footnote that "as opposite as record and dream may seem to be they have something in common. Neither record nor dream transforms reality into one image of inherent consistency, both record and dream allude to reality by means of images." Apparently his statement is least persuasive.

Further, von Blanckenhagen suffers from his own logical inconsistency in his interpretation of the problematic section 6 of the Odyssey Landscape: "Circe episodes, represented in the frieze and in the tabula, illustrate the differences with respect to form, to content, and to purpose between the Greek and the Roman way of representing a legend." But, wasn't section 6 already distinguished from the preceding sections 2 to 5 mainly due to the repetition of persons within a single picture, which, in turn, was regarded by him as a typically Roman transformation of the original syntax of the Greek model?[109]

[108] Von Blanckenhagen, "The Odyssey Frieze," note 94.

[109] In addition to our preceding discussion, see von Blanckenhagen's

How can he suddenly change his previous view and attribute section 6 to the Hellenistic tradition?

Our lengthy review of von Blanckenhagen's interpretation of the Polyphemus painting in Boscotrecase justifiably leads us to a conclusion that the earliest and most remarkable example of the Roman mythological painting is not a product of the Roman tradition of asbstract and conventional method of representation, which must have been invented for the public art in the Republican period, and then widely practiced in Late Antiquity. Instead, the immediate forerunner of the Boscotrecase painting is to be sought in the Odyssey Landscape, where the genuine Hellenistic tradition of space representation - by means of atmospheric perspective, gradual diminution of the size of figures and motifs, and the view from altitude, etc. - is fortuitously combined with continuous narrative, which also originated in the Greek tradition of the miniature frieze based on the Homeric Epics.

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It, however, is true that the highly sophisticated quality of the Boscotrecase paintings attracted the Romans, and was soon to be imitated in a great quantity mostly by the Roman artists. Then, the most sensitive quality of the Boscotrecase paintings became contaminated by what we can legitimately call a Roman convention.[110]

another reference to the problem of section 6 in "The Odyssey Frieze," 125.

[110]We suspect that the clientele of most of the mythological landscape paintings may well have belonged to the same 'new rich' class as those who

Such a process of vulgarization is discussed in greater detail by von Blanckenhagen in 1968 in his lengthy article on the Icarus paintings in the Roman mythological paintings.[111] The author does not alter his basic assertion, or rather, becomes more acute than before. He sums up the results of his investigation in a kind of genealogical table, where ten examples of the Icarus paintings in Pompeii are primarily classified into two distinctive groups, the one descending from a Hellenistic model and the other from a Roman model.

In fact, however, we learn two things from von Blanckenhagen's elaborate thesis. On the one hand, it is hard to determine what could actually be the Roman prototype of the Roman mythological painting, not to mention specifically its place of origin. On the other hand, the relation between the Hellenistic models and their Roman versions seems to be so close that we must surmise that the role of the Romans could often be limited exclusively to the iconographical manipulation of the original Hellenistic models: the synchronization of the multiple moments of narrative which were separated in time. All the other essential features of the Roman mythological landscape must have been, if we carefully read von Blanckenhagen's discussion, already extant in the Hellenistic models.

The best instance which illustrates this point is probably the Actaeon paintings discussed by von Blanckenhagen, which represent two successive moments of the narrative - Actaeon peeping on the bathing Artemis and the inevitable punishment

ordered the number of *Tabulae Iliacae*. See Horsefall's excellent discussion in his "Stesichorus at Bovilae?" (See our note 56, *supra*.)

[111]P. H. von Blanckenhagen, "Daedalus and Icarus ," 106-143.

- in a single panel.[112]    He concludes that "the dependence of the [Roman] continuous narrative group [of the Actaeon story] upon the Hellenizing one is too close to allow us to assume the existence of a separate Roman original.    Rather, there might have been another Greek painting, a figural composition with landscape elements, representing the punishment of Actaeon."[113]  In other words, the Pompeian artist directly referred to his Greek model which consisted of multiple panels, each with a single scene represented against a rich landscape background.

Although such is an exceptional case rather than a rule, according to von Blanckenhagen, it indicates that the transformation of the Greek model, especially the syntactic rearrangement of narrative, could occur in a cultural milieu very close to the tradition of the Hellenistic narrative landscapes.    Hence, von Blanckenhagen concludes that the Greek original of the Icarus paintings in Pompeii takes its place next to the original Odyssey frieze, while the Roman original may be compared with the Boscotrecase paintings.[114] But, if our previous observations on the Boscotrecase paintings are correct, they must be direct descendants of the Hellenistic narrative landscape, such as the Odyssey Landscape, rather than a product of the Roman tradition of cartographic painting and the public art.

Because of the extreme paucity of the actual visual evidence at our disposal at present, our criticism of von Blanckenhagen's

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[112]*Ibid.*, 135ff.
[113]*Ibid.*, 136.
[114]*Ibid.*, 135.

thesis on the Roman mythological paintings can only be limited and superficial.    We should like to conclude our provisory review with a few more comments and postpone the presentation of our final criiticism to another opportunity.

It is interesting to see the changing attitude of von Blanckenhagen with regard to the perennial issue of the history of Roman art: Hellenism *versus* Rome.  Curiously, the more he emphasizes the distinction between these two traditions, the more obscure it becomes in terms of historical details, especially the historical context of the formation of the Roman mythological paintings.

For example,  von Blanckenhagen strongly supports Kyle M. Phillips, Jr.'s comprehensive study of the iconography of Perseus and Andromeda, which was published at the same time as the former's study of the Icarus paintings.  Phillips' study in its turn follows closely von Blanckenhagen's previous view about the Hellenistic origin of the Odyssey Landscape.  Phillips, however, has come to ignore, at least partly, the sharp distinction made by von Blanckenhagen between the first and the second part of the Odyssey Landscape, namely between the group of sections 1 to 5 and that of sections 6 to the end. Phillips specifically discusses the grotto motif in  Andromeda picture, which appears for the first time in his third series of vase paintings from the fourth century B. C., attributed to South Italy, or more specifically, to Terentum.  Then, he refers to von Blanckenhagen's interpretation of the Odyssey Landscape, saying: "One final monument confirms the idea [of the South Italian origin of the grotto motif].  Odysseus ...has also passed through such an arch on [*sic*.] the Odyssey

Landscapes, which Blanckenhagen convincingly demonstrated are copied from a Greek original which he places in Magna Grecia."[115]   But, section 8 of the Odyssey Landscape which contains this grotto motif has already been attributed to a Roman concoction by von Blanckenhagen.

In effect, von Blanckenhagen also argues Sicily  as the place of origin of the Hellenistic models of the Roman mythological paintings, concluding, interestingly, with a note that Sicily was, after all, the home of Theocritus.[116]

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We must return to the fundamental problem which we have proposed at the outset of this part of our thesis: what are the results of transferring  a cyclic narrative  representation from a frieze into a panel with square a format? What, then, results from the syntactic rearrangement of the narrative sequence? As has been pointed out by many authors, frieze format guides the viewer's eye unilaterally, seldom harking back to the distanced point of departure of the narrative.   To wit, the textual syntax of the visual narrative is automatically determined by the format and made easily legible for the viewer/reader.

When transferred into a square panel, the narrative loses almost entirely such a unilateral direction as well as the legibility enforced by the previous format.   As a consequence, however, the viewer/reader gains much more liberty to revise the original narrative, or even create a new text.   In other words, there results a greater chance of creating a discourse on the side of the viewer/reader, or further, the content of the narrative can be determined by the intensive regard of the viewer/reader, unless the picture is provided with any kinds of guide, visual or textual, which indicates the syntactic order of the narrative.   A specific example of such a freedom of discourse will be studied in a later part of our thesis.

One of the most immediate and interesting results of such a syntactic rearrangement of narrative, especially in ancient and medieval painting, is the emergence of poetical reinterpretation of the chronological, often prosaic, narrative in the original cycle.   We have already examined some relevant observations made by von Blanckenhagen.   Probably the most interesting case proposed by the scholar is the certain analogy between the Polyphemus painting at Boscotrecase and the poetical version of the Polyphemus myth by Theocritus.[117] Von Blanckenhagen points to the close relation between the painting and every line of the poet's *Eleventh Idyll* and concludes that "there can hardly be any doubt that the background scene is the pictorial adaptation of this line of Theocritos [*sic.*].   Scene and verse are included for the same reasons."

Such an observation on the reinterpretation of the original text due to the rearrangement of the original syntax can find a strong theoretical ground in the modern theory of poetics.   In analyzing the syntactic structure of Cummings' poems, Irene R. Fairley states:

"In the following poem, ...there are no typographical tricks, no newly

[115]K. M. Phillips, Jr., "Perseus and Andromeda," *AJA* LXXII (1968), 10-12.

[116]Von Blanckenhagen, "Daedalus and Icarus,"137.

[117]Von Blanckenhagen, *Boscotrecase*, 42-43.

created words,...characteristics usually associated with Cummings' poetry. The main device is instead a striking rearrangement of syntactic units."[118] Then, she concludes her analysis: "Cummings' artful deviations force the reader to consciously search for meaningful interpretation, to reconstruct in the process analogous well-formed sentences. His innovations call for a reader of unusual flexibility, one who is willing to suspend not only customary attitudes and associations, but with them linguistic conventions."

It is not incidental at all that von Blanckenhagen's words concluding his observations on the Polyphemus picture in Boscotrecase reflect almost like a mirror image of the linguist's conclusion:

"The beholder lets his glance wander into this pretty country that seemed so like what he had seen and loved in nature. But soon he found himself in a different world where nothing happened but everything seemed possible. Released from the rules of his own experience he followed the signposts of a new order. So guided he did not lose his way but willingly and confidently entered a dreamland,..."[119]

[118]I. R. Fairley, "Syntax as Style: an Analysis of Three Cummings' Poems," *Tributes to Roman Jakobson*, ( ? ), 105 - 111.

[119]Von Blanckenhagen, *Boscotrecase*, 43.

## PART 3

## BYZANTINE PROBLEMS

Our foregoing observations on various types of narrative representation in Roman art will shed some new light upon a few crucial problems of the Byzantine art from the Macedonian era.

### 1. The Joshua Rotulus, Cod. Vat. Pal. 431.

The famous painted scroll in the Vatican which extensively illustrates Chapters 2 to 10 of the Book of Joshua in Septuagint has been the object of vigorous discussion since the last century (fig.24).[120] The debate has been concerned mainly with the historical place to be assigned to this unusual example of book illustration in the entire history of Roman and Byzantine art, and it has always involved the relation of the scroll with the famous Roman narrative art of the relief on the triumphal column of Trajan in Rome.

The traditional notion, as stipulated by Th. Birt in 1907, was that the long narrative frieze on the triumphal column should be based on a lost illustrated scroll of *Bellum Dacica,* which was allegedly dictated by the Emperor Trajan and profusedly illustrated already at that time.[121] This traditional view itself was based on a then prevailing assumption that the archetypal

[120]In the present state the total length of the parchment scroll is 10.638 m, and it contained the first twelve chapters of the Book of Joshua, plus two initial scenes from the end of Deuteronomy. Cf. K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll* (Princeton 1948), 99.

[121]Th. Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst* (Leipzig, 1907).

form of Roman book illustration should have been a long continuous picture frieze, and that the Joshua Rotulus should be the sole surviving example which still maintains the ancient method of book illustration.

This last view was fostered enthusiastically by Franz Wickhoff at the end of the last century. Acoording to him, the Joshua Rotulus was a product of Early Byzantine art, which faithfully followed the Roman method of continuous narrative combined with illusionistic landscape.[122] Such a combination of continuous narrative with landscape was - the focal point of his whole discussion - one of the most remarkable accomplishments of Roman art, later to be inherited and practiced by the Early Byzantine artists.

These traditional notions came to be fundamentally reviewed by Kurt Weitzmann shortly after the Second World War. First of all, he challenged the traditional view that the archetypal form of ancient book illustration should have been a continuous narrative frieze as seen in the Joshua Rotulus.[123] After careful investigation of the surviving examples of illustrated papyri from the Hellenistic and Roman periods as well as the relevant materials from other periods and in different media, he concluded that the prototypal form of ancient book illustration must be not a long continuous picture frieze but a long series of independent small pictures which were irregularly distributed within text columns, so that they might maintain the physical relationship between text and illustration as closely as possible. He called such a method of illustration

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[122]F. Wickhoff, *Wiener Genesis*, 59ff.

[123]K. Weitzmann, *Roll and Codex*, 53-57 *et passim*.

*column picture* as opposed to a continuous picture frieze.[124]

On the basis of his own notion of the method of ancient book illustration as such, Weitzmann thoroughly reexamined the iconography and compositions of the Joshua Rotulus and reached a conclusion which essentially turned away from the general assumption held since the nineteenth century. He now believed that the long pictorial frieze in the Joshua Rotulus was neither a product of the Early Byzantine period based on the ancient tradition of continuous narrative frieze nor did it reflect the archetypal form of ancient book illustration as had long been surmised. Instead, Weitzmann demonstrated, quite convincingly in our opinion, that the pictorial frieze of the Joshua Rotulus is a creation of an artist of the Macedonian Renaissance in the tenth century, when the artist took up the series of column pictures illustrating the Byzantine Octateuchs, such as Vatican, cod. gr. 747, and then skillfully joined the independent isolated pictures into the form of a continuous frieze. The ultimate purpose of the Macedonian artist then was, according to Weitzmann, to recast the Old Testament illustration in the form of the celebrated truimphal monuments from the Roman and Early Byzantine periods, thus visually propagating the imperial ideology of the Byzantine rulers at that time. It therefore is quite natural, according to Weitzmann, that the figures of the protagonist Joshua, his

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[124]It must be noted that Weitzman would not completely deny the existence of a long picture frieze in ancient book illustration. His theory is based on the fact that the majority of surviving fragments of ancient illustrated scrolls and their direct copies in the Byzantine and Early Medieval periods follow the method of column picture. Concerning the possibility of continuous picture frieze in ancient book illustration, see *Roll and Codex*, .

troops and enemies were represented, in both their attires and gestures, just like Trajan and his troops and his enemies on the Roman triumphal column.

Aside from sporadic criticisms, the art historical interpretation of the Joshua Rotulus proposed by Weitzmann has generally been accepted since the time of the publication of his monograph on the celebrated scroll. We, therefore, follow his observations regarding most of the issues of the making process of this unique example of the Byzantine Renaissance. Here we would like to examine specfically how Wickhoff and Weitzmann dealt with the problems concerning the landscape motifs in the Joshua Rotulus.

Wickhoff's notion of the creation of continuous narrative was closely connected with the creation of illusionistic landscape. For him, the complementary method is essentially 'Asiatic,' whereas the distinguishing method is typically Hellenistic. Then, the continuous method was made possible as late as the second century, at the height of Roman Imperial art and culture, only when illusionistic landscape was, as he believed, also created by the Romans.[125] We have already pointed out that such an old view about the origin of landscape painting must be critically reviewed.

For Wickhoff, the primary importance of the Joshua Rotulus was that, as he believed, it was the best instance of the Roman form of continuous narrative representation. According to him, the Roman artist had already had at his disposal a series of short narrative cycles, which were based on Homeric Epics and

other literature, lacking, however, any significant artistic embellishment. The terracotta reliefs on *Iliad* episodes on the so-called Megarian bowls are the typical examples. Then, the Roman artist adapted the illusionistic landscape setting which was developed for the first time after the first century, A. D. upon these mini-cycles. The artist jointed them one by one, and eventually completed a long monumental narrative frieze with landscape background such as seen in the Odyssey Landscape.[126] Thus, Wickhoff came to believe that the Joshua Rotulus represented the crucial moment of the history of ancient art, when the short excerpted cycles in sober, Hellenistic style were provided for the first time by the Romans with full aesthetic quality as they were combined with illusionistic landscape.

Wickhoff's explanation of the making process of Roman narrative landscape appears in a later part of his intorduction to the *Vienna Genesis*, and it is specifically in this paragraph that we must note a few interesting points in his approach to the problem. Our first remark is that, for the first time in his lengthy introduction, Wickhoff refers to the existence of a short Homeric cycle without background setting. Although his explanation that those mini-cycles were invented for the sake of school education is not convincing, it does not seriously contradicts Horsefall's recent observation that *Tabulae Iliacae* were invented for a clientile belonging to the class of new rich during the Augustan period, who were pretentious of their

[125]Wickhoff, *Wiener Genesis*, 9ff.

[126]*Ibid.* 59ff. Wickhoff however thought that the sources of the landscape setting of the Roman continuous narrative were those mythological landscape paintings, which we have already discussed extensively *Ibid.* 81.

false education and eager to show up their dubious connoisseurship about Greek art and literature.

Naturally, we do not follow Wickhoff's notion that these short narrative cycles were invented, whatever the purpose might be, as late as in the Hellenistic period. As we have discussed in detail, such short cycles had already existed long before the Greeks and Romans had their own method of narrative representation, even in illustrated Egyptian papyri, and our conclusion was that the archetypal illustration of Homeric Epics contained, together with a number of miniatures with a single scene, a number of friezes in miniature, reflecting the age-honored Archaic tradition.

Following our own theory, we must note another intriguing point in Wickhoff's explanation of the making process of Roman narrative landscape. Namely, the very process of jointing these mini-cycles one by one and adapting them to a monumental landscape setting is almost identical with what Weitzmann realized as the making process of the Joshua Rotulus. Specifically in this regard, the only difference between the theories of Wickhoff and Weitzmann is in that for the latter the iconographical source of the Joshua Rotulus was, theoretically at least, a long series of column pictures as seen in Vat.747. But, it is more than likely, in our opinion, that the late Classical or early Byzantine model of Vat. 747 already contained a number of miniature friezes, some of which are still observable in the Octateuch in the Vatican.

After all, however, the importance of the Joshua Rotulus for Wickhoff was due to its historical place between the Roman and Byzantine periods. Hence, Wickhoff in *Der Wiener Genesis* did not intend to investigate further in detail how the landscape motifs in the Joshua Rotulus served to visually articulate the narrative. One of the few instances where Wickhoff referred to the narrative function of landscape setting was the scene of Circe's mansion in the Odyssey Landscape. He pointed out how in this picture the 'continuous' representation, consisting of two narrative moments separated in time, was made an integral part of the landscape (architectural, in fact) background. According to the author, the landscape setting does serve to connect plural scenes separate in time into a coninuous cycle. We would rather like to say that the common background, whether consisting of landscape or architectural motifs, confirms the unchanging identity of the event, thus visualizing the temporal consistency of the narrative.[127]

Weitzmann's approach toward the issue of the landscape motifs in the Joshua Rotulus is quite different from Wickhoff's. First of all, Weitzmann is discreet enough to point out a fundamental difference in the structure of pictorial space and landscape setting between the Joshua Rotulus and the relief frieze on the column of Trajan.[128]

In fact, Wickhoff, being too much occupied with postulating his grand scheme of the entire history of Roman art, overlooked the obvious structural differences between these two representatives of continuous narrative friezes. In the Roman relief, the landscape motifs serve as mere filling motifs rather than as inserted motifs which articulate the progress of

[127]See our previous discussion in the introduction, 29ff. *supra*.
[128]Weitzmann, *Joshua Roll*, 51-53.

the narrative, as seen in the Joshua Rotulus.

Weitzmann, following his basic premise that the direct model of the Joshua Rotulus must be the column pictures in the Byzantine Octateuch illustration, distinguishes two groups of inserted motifs in the painted scroll, each with different origin and function. The first group contains landscape motifs which were already extant in the model picture, such as seen in Vat. 747, and carried into the continuous frieze through the process of copying. The second group of landscape and architectural motifs was invented, or borrowed from different sources, for the purpose of connecting neighboring scenes, which were originally separated, column pictures as they were, in the model cycle.

Aside from the motifs of mountain slopes and promontories, many of the inserted motifs in the Joshua Rotulus, such as personifications, rustic houses, and sacred groves, are introduced there, as Weitzmann believes, in order to embellish the original Septuagint cycle in the Byzantine Octateuchs in the manner *alla antiqua*. Many of these classicizing motifs have their pictorial sources in the Classical Roman paintings in Pompeii, Bosoreale, and *al. loc.*

Considering, however, the wide range of the Classical sources of these inserted motifs in the Joshua Rotulus to which Weitzmann referred, it is rather striking that he would not take up the Odyssey Landscape not only as one of the ultimate sources of classicizing insertion motifs but also as an important example of narrative landscape from Classical Antiquity. As we have studied in detail, the landscape motifs in the fresco-frieze are given important functions in articulating or intercepting the flow of narrative. Especially the frequent use of promontories which are surmounted by personifications - symbols of various *topoi* - in the Joshua Rotulus must have their remote origins in the narrative landscapes from the Hellenistic period. Our conjecture as such becomes more justifiable if we note the fine *chiaroscuro* work applied upon the promontories in the Joshua Rotulus, which still reflect the stylistic treatment of the motif in the Classical period. Nor is it accidental that the trees here also serve as important inserted motifs as in the Odyssey Landscape.

Although we have very few remnants of such narrative landscapes in the Classical manner from the Early Christian and Byzantine period, it seems more than likely that the method was widely spread and practiced where the influence of Hellenistic art reached.[129] It therefore may not be surprising at all that the artist of the Joshua Rotulus had gained some knowledge of the Classical narrative landscape, whether directly from original works or indirectly from their copies.

It, however, must be noted that the landscape setting in Vat. 747 is, despite the apprently naive stylistic features, far more

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[129] In this respect, extremely interesting is the use of promontories surmounted by personifications and deities as insertion motifs in the famous epic cycle in the Sogdian wall-painting in Panjikent VI:41. Since the paintings in Panjikent also includes the typical Roman motifs of Romulus and Remus and other Hellenistic-Roman fables, the use of such insertion motifs was very likely inspired by a Hellnistic-Roman narrative landscape. See G. Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting; The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1981), esp.95-108.

rational and consistent than that in the Joshua Rotulus. Especially, the spatial relation between the landscape backdrops and human figrues is more convincing and compatible with the progress of the narrative. In the Joshua Rotulus, both figures and landscape motifs tend to float in the pictorial space so freely that they even obscure the spatial as well as temporal structure of the narrative.[130]

This seems to point to the fact that the artist of the Joshua Rotulus had perhaps no direct and precise knowledge of a monumental landscape which could have survived from Classical Antiquity. It seems that, for the artist of the Macedonian era, the main source of landscape setting may have been again the illustration of the Byzantine Octateuchs, and he supplemented his insufficient knowledge with his familiarity with the Roman mythological paintings.

## 2. Paris, 510.

Another instance of the manuscript illustration from the Macedonian era, the famous Gregory manuscript of Paris, Bibl. Nat. cod. gr. 510, contains a few interesting miniatures, where short narrative cycles, mainly on the Old and New Testaments, are combined with landscape settings. Probably the most explicit instance is the short cycle of the parable of the Good Samaritan in folio 143[v] (fig.25).[131] This well-known parable is

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represented in a much simpler form, but more faithfully following the Gospel text, in the *Sacra Parallela* manuscript in Paris from the nineth century[132] as well as an eleventh century Gospelbooks in Paris, Bibl. Nat. cod. gr. 74,[133] and Florence, Bibl. Laur. Plut. VI,23.[134]

Compared with these examples, the miniature in Paris, 150, has undergone various iconographical as well as stylistic changes. The illusionism *alla antiqua* has now come to the fore. The entire scene is enveloped in a hazy atmosphere in delicate colors and hues, and on both ends of the short frieze there are two sumptuous city-motifs in the background. The Macedonian artist also changed the iconography: the central figure of the Samaritan who rescues the wounded traveler is now replaced by that of Christ, thus visualizing the Christological interpretation of the parable. Further, it becomes clear through a comparison with the other instances of the representation of the same parable that this central scene is in fact a conflation of two scenes: the traveler rescued and then brought to an inn by the Samaritan.

As the result of these changes, the original cycle is now endowed with a certain monumental axiality, which may be comparable with that in the Roman mythological paintings, of which we shall discuss at the end of this part. The curious altar-like motif at the lower right corner of the composition is

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[130]Concerning the unique method of narrative representation by means of such an irrational space construction, see the recent contribution by S. Goto-Tsuji, "Yoshua-gakann ni kansuru Obo'egaki," (Notes on the Joshua Roll), *Proc. of Nagoya University* 96 (1986), 85-104.

[131]Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs* (Paris, 1929), pl. XXXIII.

[132]K. Weitzmann, The Miniatures of the *Sacra Parallela, Parisinus graecus 923* (Princeton, 1979), 184-186, figs.457a and b.

[133]H. Omont, *Evangiles avec paintures byzantines,* II (Paris, ?), pl.116.

[134]T.Velmans, *Le tétraeangile de la Laurentienne* (Paris, 1971), pl.49, fig.221.

another example of the classicizing motifs unique to the Macedonian art.[135]

Nevertheless, the best example of the influence of Roman mythological painting in Paris, 510 is found in the extensive cycle on the narrative of Jonah in fol. 3$^r$ (fig.26).[136] Compared with the cyclic representation of the same narrative in a later Psalter illustration in Vatopedi 760,[137] the entire composition in Paris, 510 is constructed in a sort of bird's eye view. The story begins with the scene of Jonah's embarkation at the port of Joppa, which is represented quite sumptuously with a city-gate, towers, etc. The enormous size of the figure of the prophet, compared even with his own in the other scenes in the same picture, corresponds, as has recently been noted by Narkiss quite correctly, to the theme of the homily of Gregory which the miniature illustrates.[138]

We, however, must note especially the general resemblance of the entire composition of the miniature with some Roman mythological paintings. A comparison with the Icarus painting in the House of the Priest Amandus reveals that in both compositions the narrative sequence develops in a large circle

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[135] Cf.Weitzmann's interpretation of this 'altar' motif in the Joshua Roll in Weitzmann, *Joshua Roll*, 57-60.

[136] Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens*, pl.XX.

[137] K. Weitzmann, "The Ode Pictures of the Aristocratic Psalter Recension," *DOP* 30 (1976), 64-84.

[138] On our short visit to Dumbarton Oaks last year we learned that Prof. Narkiss had made interesting observations on some narrative scenes in Paris, 510, which seemed similar to what we had done by that time. Till the moment of writing this chapter, however, the most recent issue of *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* has not yet reached us. It, therefore, is my pleasant duty to note that, if both Prof. Narkiss and we have reached the same conclusions, the priority ought to be given to the former.

set in the square picture frame (fig.27).[139] The Icarus narrative begins with one of the two *aktai* who stand by a votive column topped by a vessel at the lower left corner. One of them looks up and points to what is going on in the mid-air. The figure of the flying Daedalus is larger than the other figures. Then, the viewer's eye is led to Apollo's chariot at the top of the composition, and further to the falling Icarus above the city of Knossos. Below the fantastic city-motif hovering above ocean water, there are two boats with people, some of whom, being amazed at the incident above, raise their hands. Our scanning eyes finally reach the fisherman and the youth, now dead and lying on the ground, in the foreground. The second figure of the aktai at the left concludes the narrative, quietly pointing to the tragic consequence.

It is by no means accidental that the Jonah story in the Paris Gregory manuscript also develops in a circle. It begins with the embarkation of the prophet, and then follows the scene of Jonah being thrown into the raging water at the top right of the composition. Thus, we can see two boats in the same composition, as they occur in the Pompeian painting. The particular position of the scene as well as the posture of the prophet carried by the oarmen generally correspond to those of the falling Icarus in the Pompeian painting. The prophet is readily gulped by the sea-monster but vomitted out on the shore at the lower right corner. Though much effaced, the queer shape and posture of the monster do remind us of that in the Andromeda picture in the same Pompeian house and other mythological paintings.

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[139] Von Blanckenhagen, "Daedalus and Icarus," 100 *et seq.*

The Jonah cycle concludes with the scenes of the prophet's arrival at Nineveh and the prophet watching the city under the shade of gourds. Here again, the artist of the Paris manuscript introduced a large, gorgeous city-motif, as if inspired by the city of Knossos in the Icarus painting.

Beside the possible influence of Roman mythological paintings on the Jonah scene, there are various classicizing elements in this work of the early Macedonian period. Among them, we would like to call our readers' attention to the insertion motifs, - mostly promontories, rocks, and architectural motifs - which are represented in illusionistic manner and endowed with appropriate narrative functions. Regarding the latter aspect, , such mini-cycles as the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight of Elizabeth in fol.137[r],[140] or the Samson story in fol. 347[v],[141] are of special importance, since each of them contains two or three successive scenes in a row - a kind of miniature-frieze, the model of which may well have been much like those in Vat. 747.

Weitzmann admits, as we have noted above, that even in the early Septuagint illustrations some miniatures took a form of short frieze which contained plural scenes rather than a small independent picture with a single scene.[142] In our opinion, many of the miniature friezes in Paris, 510 must have followed directly such an early custom, and when the artist of the Joshua Rotulus found such 'frieze-like miniatrues' in his model like Vat. 747, they helped him a great deal to create a longer

frieze of narrative landscape after the Classical manner.

## 3. Narrative Icons

Among the groups of the Byzantine ivories which are catalogued and classified by Kurt Weitzmann in 1934, there is one which is called by the author 'the Frame Group."[143] The initial question concerned the place of origin of this particular group of ivory: while E. Modigliani and Andrews S. Keck respectively insisted on the Italian origins (the former on Ravenna and the latter on Venice), Weitzmann proposed the Byzantine origin, which, in our view, is more convincing than the other two.

The characteristics of this group of ivory - in both style and iconography - may be stipulated as following: stylistically the figures and the general compositions of the ivories in this group are by no means as much refined as those in the classicizing Romanos or Nicephoros group. The figures are neither elegantly proportioned nor well modelled. Compositions are either flat and parallel to picture surface or constructed in bird's eye view. In short, it is far removed from the Classical elegance of the earlier groups, and the group was appropriately dated to the late eleventh through the early twelfth century.

The iconography has also a few peculiarities: the group is probably the richest of all the Byzantine ivory groups in

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[140]Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens,* pl.XXII.

[141]*Ibid.,* pl.XLIX.

[142]Weitzmann, *Roll and Codex,* 106-107, 128.

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[143]A.Goldschmidt and K.Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbein-skulpturen des X. - XIII. Jahrhunderts,* II (Berlin 1934), 20ff *et seq.*

narrative detail. Also it seems that the group directly reflects the making process of the new type of iconography which began to emerge at the early Comnenian period.[144]

Another important iconographical feature has been pointed out by Weitzmann: most of the narrative scenes correspond to the so-called *dodekaorta* system of the Byzantine liturgy not only in the selection of the scenes but also in the compositions, as seen in the number of Nativity scenes. In short, the narrative details are combined uniquely with certain liturgical notions.[145]

As far as these iconographical characteristics are concerned, the group seems to have been produced in close connection with contemporaneous painters' workshops, especially those where the number of Gospel lectionaries were produced in the late Macedonian and the early Comnenian periods. In fact, the peculiar stylistic features of this group may be comparable with those of the illustrations of lectionary and Gospelbooks in the late Macedonian period, which has been discussed extensively by K. Weitzmann in 1966.[146] In this regard, it was once suggested to me by Weitzmann that a large Nativity icon in Mt.Sinai would offer a significant comparison with the

[144]Weitzmann, "Origin of the Threnos," in *De Artibus Opuscula. Essays in Honor of E. Panofsky* (New York, 1961), 476-490       .

[145]Weitzmann, *Elfenbein skulpturen*, 21-23.

[146]K. Weitzmann, "Byzantine Miniature and Icon Painting in the Eleventh Century," Originally a paper presented by the author at the XIIIth Int. Congress of Byz. Studies, Oxford, 1966. Now included in K. Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Ed. H. L. Kessler)(Chicago and London, 1971), 275-313.

in Mt.Sinai would offer a significant comparison with the narrative icons in the Frame Group (fig.28).[147] The general stylistic features of this large Nativity icon surely resemble those of the miniatures illustrating the Gospelbooks and Gospel lectionaries from the late Macedonian and early Comnenian period, such as Mount Athos, Dionysiu, Cod. 587[148] or Jerusalem, Taphou 14.[149]

As has been demonstrated by Weitzmann a number of calendar icons from the second half of the eleventh century share the same stylistic features as well as iconographical characteristics with those miniatures, and they both clearly reflect the same liturgical notions. There is no doubt that these underlie the Nativity icon in Mt. Sinai, and further, the ivory icons in the Frame Group with the Nativity scenes and the Descent from the Cross above all.

The most important iconographical feature of these icons is that they contain a number of scenes, mostly related to the Nativity and Passion episodes, within a single square panel. Hence, as we have observed in the case of the Roman mythological paintings, the syntax of the narratives is deliberately obscured. We see the journey of the three magi simultaneously together with the journey of the Holy Family to Bethlehem, the Massacre of the Innocents, and even with the

[147]G. and M. Sotiriou, ΕΙΚΟΝΕϹ ΤΗϹ ΜΟΝΗϹ ϹΙΝΑ , ( Athens, 1956), 59-62 , pl.43- 45.

[148] S. M. Pelekanidis *et. al., Treasures of Mount Athos*, I (Athens, 1973), fig.189-277.

[149]W. H. P. Hatch, *Greek and Syrian Miniatures in Jerusalem* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 58-75, pl.I-XVIII.

Gospel, the primary function of these icon paintings is not to narrate the Gospel episodes faithfully in the order of the Gospel text but to invite the viewer to the realm of the spiritual contemplation, where nothing occurs, but everything occurs perpetually, according to the cycle of the liturgical calendar.[150]

It is probably Anton Baumstark who first pointed out the relation of liturgical hymns, specifically *kontakia* by Romanos the Melodist, to these liturgical illustrations. The idea became developed by G. Millet, especially in relation to the Nativity and the Descent from the Cross.[151] Later, the case was again discussed by Weitzmann regarding the representation of *Xerete* in an early icon from Mt. Sinai.[152] I myself discussed another instance of the possible influence of Romanos' *kontakia* in 1968 concerning the iconography of the first dream of Joseph in Paris, 74.[153]

Apart from various iconographical details which find their textual counterpart in the poetical works of Romanos the Melodist, we must stress here that such a particular treatment of the Gospel narratives in the form of icon was very likely

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[150] As for the time-concept underlying Byzantine liturgy, cf. Sh. Tsuji, "Byzantine Lectionary Illustration," *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections* (Ed. by G. Vikan) (Princeton, 1973), 34-39.

[151] G.Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Evangile* (Paris, 1916), 150, 397, 398, *et passim*.

[152] K.Weitzmann, "Eine vorikonoklastische Ikone des Sinai mit der Darstellung des Chairete," *Tortulae* (*RQ*, supplement 30.) (1967), 317-325.

[153] Sh.Tsuji, "The Study of the Byzatine Gospel Illustrations in Florence, Laur. Plut. VI 23 and Paris, Bibl. Nat. Cod. gr. 74," (Doctoral Dissertation, Princeton University) (Princeton, 1968), 34-35.

instigated by the poetical transformation of the textual syntax of the original Gospel text by the Byzantine poet. In the opening stroph of the famous *First Hymn of the Nativity*, the poet sings:[154]

"Today the Virgin gives the world the supersubstantial being, and the earth offers a grotto for the Inaccessible. The angels together with the shepherds sing his glory, the magi follow their route guided by the star. These are all due to the little infant who is born for us, the god of preexistence."

Thus, the poet sums up together the events relevant to the Nativity regardless of their chronological or textual sequence. The liturgical representations of the Gospel narratives in the late Macedonian and early Comnenian periods, whether icons, manuscript illustrations, or mosaics decorating the church wall, are thus based on the new syntax rearranged by the poet of liturgical hymns.

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In concluding our discussion on various types of Roman and Byzantine narrative structure, we find ourselves on the verge of stepping out from the realm of time and coming into that of eternity. Surely, these narrative icons in the Frame Group and their related works have double functions: on the one hand,

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[154] Romanos le Melode, *Hymnes*, II (*Sources chrétiennes*, 110) (Paris, 1965), 50ff.

they tell the viewer the history - the story of how Christ was born and finally died on the cross - as vividly as possible with multiple scenes. On the other hand, however, the ultimate purpose of these narratives are to tell the viewer the eternal truth of the salvation by Christ - God of preexistence and eternal presence. In other words, the term 'narrative icon' itself has twofold meaning: while it narrates the Biblical stories in temporal sequence, it must be venerated as the essence of the eternal being dwelling in the image - as an icon.

This is the reason why these narrative icons were to be composed in a special manner, clearly distinguishable from the compositions of purely narrative representation of the same Gospel narratives. By various visual means, the Byzantine artists attempted to manifest the double functions of narrative icons. Among the variety of methods which have been carefully analyzed by K. Weitzmann,[155] one principle undertaking is to emphasize the axiality of composition and establish its symmetry and balance. Hence, the Nativity scenes on the narrative icons are composed without exception with the manger of Christ and the seated Virgin on the upper part of the axis of the composition. In the case of the Descent from the Cross, the three crosses automatically decide the symmetry of the composition.

Looking back into those Roman mythological paintings, such an emphasis on the axiality and symmetry of composition occured simultaneously with the transfer of narrative frieze into panel painting. Thereby, the protagonists of the narrative,

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[155]K. Weitzmann, "Narrative and Liturgical Illustrations," esp.

Daedalus, Polyphemus, Andromeda, *et al.* are placed more often than not on the axis of the compositions, which is appropriately stressed by placing a high and steep crag or promontory in the center. The result is that now the viewer can not only read and interpret the narrative, but also receive a strong impression about the decisive roles, or often fates, of these heroic or tragic characters. This is when the viewer is reminded of the remote cause of the tragedy - *anamnesis* - , or of the inevitable fates which wait for the protagonists in future - *prolepsis*. The symmetry and balance of the compositions themselves serve to invite the viewer not so much to follow the sequence of the events depicted there as to contemplate the essential morals intrinsic in the pictures.

When viewed in this respect, some of the Roman Mythological landscape paintings are indeed the forerunners of the Byzantine narrative icons in both form and function. Perhaps, it may not be accidental that one of the major subjects of the Roman mythological landscape paintings is the origin of Rome, i. e., the birth of Romulus and Remus. Is it our fancy or a mere conjecture that the composition of the Nativity icons such as the one in Sinai has its remote origin in the composition of this mythological narrative landscape?