

The Headpiece of Cod. Vat. gr. 342 and the 'Traditio Legis' of the Sarcophagi of Ravenna⁽¹⁾

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Abstract

Cod. Vat. gr. 342 is an illustrated Byzantine Psalter completed in 1087/88. This study focuses on its unique headpiece and analyzes its iconographic scheme and functions. The beginning of Psalm 77, f.133v, depicts the Giving of the Law to Moses and the Giving of the Law by Moses to the people. The facing headpiece, f.134, shows Christ, the Apostles, and unnamed people. In this headpiece, Christ is depicted as handing the codex to Peter, while Paul is seen handing the scroll to the people. By comparing the headpiece's iconography with that of the Ravenna sarcophagi, this paper attempts to clarify the question of the left-right positioning of Peter and Paul in relation to Christ, as well as the function of this distinctive headpiece in the manuscript's spread. When analyzed in conjunction with the iconography of the Ravenna sarcophagi's "Traditio Legis," Cod. Vat. gr. 342 shows that typological contrasts between the Old and New Testaments are drawn on the facing pages, while still conforming to the Old Testament Psalm text.

Codex Vaticanus graecus 342 (hereafter Cod. Vat. gr. 342) is a Byzantine illustrated psalter containing 285 leaves.⁽²⁾ It is a small manuscript, measuring 17.6 x 13.0 cm, and is thought, on the basis of the Paschal Tables, to have been completed with the intention of starting to use it sometime between 1087/88.⁽³⁾ The quality of its parchment is good; it has a few sophisticated illustrations; and the pigments used are lavish. This article examines the unique headpiece appearing in this manuscript, discusses the program composed by the iconography, and explores the meaning entrusted to the illustrations. Although Cod. Vat. gr. 342 has been used in previous research as an illustration or a comparison to other works,⁽⁴⁾ no previous art historical study has discussed this manuscript's composition in an isolated context, perhaps because of the small number of illustrations and general iconography, except for the headpiece, which is explained in detail in the following sections.

Full list of the illustrations in Cod. Vat. gr. 342⁽⁵⁾

The psalter's text begins with a spread embracing ff.24v-25. A full-page illustration appears on the left-hand folio, an illustration of the headpiece appears on the opposite folio, while the text begins just below the headpiece,

(1) This paper is a revised English translation of "The Typological Interpretation of the Headpiece of Cod. Vat. gr. 342 and the Revival of 'Traditio Legis'," in *Regeneration and Innovation of European Culture*, Tokyo, 2016, pp. 334-351, originally published in Japanese.

(2) A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, Paris, 1984, pp. 78-79, 213-214; N. G. Wilson, "Scholarly Hands of the Middle Byzantine Period," *La paléographie grecque et byzantine*, Paris, 1977, p. 223. The psalter has a marginal commentary by Hesychius. See J. Lowden, "Observations on Illustrated Byzantine Psalters," *ArtB* 70 (1988), pp. 242-260.

(3) f.276v and several other places bear the name of Michael Attaleiates (1022–died after 1085), who is said to have transcribed the text. See Cutler, *op cit.*, p. 78.

(4) S. Der Nersessian, "A Psalter and New Testament Manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks," *DOP* 19 (1965), pp. 164,169; L. Nees, "An Illuminated Byzantine Psalter at Harvard University," *DOP* 29 (1975), pp. 207-224; R. S. Nelson, "The Discourse of Icons, Then and Now," *Art History* 12 (1989), pp. 144-157.

(5) For the illustrations of Cod. Vat. gr. 342, see the Vatican Library website with its high-resolution colour images: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.342

with scholia surrounding both the text and the illustration. In the centre of the full-page illustration on f.24v, David is seated in a quatrefoil frame, on all four sides of which are people raising their hands and gesturing in praise of David and people bearing musical instruments. The illustration is not inscribed in any way, with no indications of the identities of any of the figures depicted. The background is gold, decorated with botanical patterns of blue, green, red, and white pigments. The headpiece of f.25 has a botanical design as well, and is set against a rectangular gold background.

The next illustrated section, namely, the opening section of the latter half of the psalter spread ff.133v-134, contains a scene from psalm 77. Psalm 77 is frequently illustrated in the other psalters in full-page illustrations.⁽⁶⁾ The Giving of the Law to Moses is depicted in f.133v as a two-tiered scene, and the headpiece is placed on f.134, precisely where the text begins. This section has the following characteristics.

On f.133v (fig. 1), the Giving of the Law to Moses, the rectangular frame is divided into upper and lower sections, and the episodes are arranged consecutively. The upper panel shows Moses removing his sandals to receive the stone tablets upon which the Law is written, while the lower panel shows Moses subsequently handing over the Law to the Israelites. In both scenes, Moses stands to the right of the illustrated section, close to the inner margin of the book. The iconography of the Giving of the Law is often placed at the beginning of psalm 77.⁽⁷⁾ Based on the content of 77:1, 'Pay attention, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth',⁽⁸⁾ at the beginning of the text, previous studies considered that the scene in which Moses receives the Law and gives it to the people was chosen by the painter. Moses' role is that of a mediator, bringing the Word of God to the people. Psalm 77 recounts an episode from the Exodus, and the reference appears in subsequent psalms, such as Ps. 80, 104 and 105. The illustrations in the second half of the psalter are prominently illustrated with narrative scenes of Moses.

On f.134 (fig. 2), a half-length figure of Christ is depicted in a rectangular frame with a botanical design on a

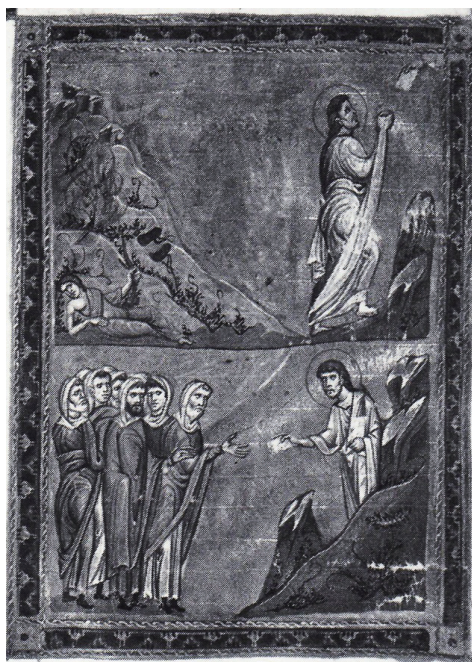


Fig.1 f.133v



Fig.2 f.134

(6) H. Belting, "Zum Palatina-Psalter des 13. Jahrhunderts. Aus der Werkstattpraxis eines byzantinischen Malers," *JÖB* 21 (1972), pp. 24-28; Cutler, *op cit.*, *passim*.

(7) See note 6. For example, the Paris Psalter (Cod. Paris. gr. 139) f.422v, a representative example of the aristocratic psalter, does not divide the frame and depicts Moses twice (Cutler, *op cit.*, p. 203). Only God's bestowal on Moses is pictorialized here, not the giving of the Law to the Israelites. Some illustrations, such as BL, Add. 11836 (f.267v), interpret 'my law' in the text of the Psalms as the Gospel of Christ, in which Christ speaks directly to the people (Cutler, *op cit.*, p. 175). Other interpretations may depict Asaph as the author of the second half of the psalm, as in BL, Add. 19352 (f.100). This is a common example in the Marginal Psalter manuscripts. See S. Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge II: Londres, add. 19.352*, Paris, 1970, pl. 57.

gilded background, dividing the upper third of the rectangle. The pointed bell-shaped halo-like frame has an unusual shape. Dressed in a yellow robe and blue toga, Christ is shown as giving a blessing, with his right hand raised to his chest and holding a book in his left hand extended downwards. The lower compartment is divided down the middle by a botanical motif. The left and the right compartment each contains eight figures standing facing the centre; the figures on the right are recognisable as Apostles by their appearance and dress. Paul is in front, bent at the waist, and Peter is behind him, holding out his hands to receive the book from Christ. When the Apostles are depicted together, Peter is usually at the head of the group. However, here Paul is in this position, for reasons unknown. Although Cutler has described Paul as bowing to the figures facing him across the central decorative motif,⁽⁹⁾ upon a closer look, this author found that Paul is about to hand the white scroll to the figure facing him.⁽¹⁰⁾ The scrolls were barely discernible in the black-and-white illustrations. However, even in the original, it was difficult to discern the thinly painted white scrolls used for highlights because of the reflections of the botanical patterns and the gold background. Cutler wrote that the figure at the head of the crowd facing the Apostles was Moses, and that the Apostles and the Israelites, led by Moses, exchanged curtsies, emphasising the fusion of the Old and New Testaments.⁽¹¹⁾ However, based on the original manuscripts examined, no similarity between the figure depicted as Moses in this manuscript and the figure in question can be confirmed. Specific differences can be found after examining all the illustrations.

The last illustration of Cod. Vat. gr. 342 is the Crossing of the Red Sea, placed before the Odes (f.246v, fig.3). The Psalm is followed by several Odes, usually beginning with the Ode to Moses (Exodus 15); therefore, it is not unusual for the Crossing the Red Sea to occur here.⁽¹²⁾ The sea spreads below the frame, representing Moses and the Israelites, who have already crossed the sea. Moses, standing in the centre, plunges his staff into the sea and the path of the sea closes, swallowing up Pharaoh's army.



Fig.3 f.246v

'Moses' receiving the scroll from Paul?

Let us compare the figure in the headpiece identified as 'Moses' in previous studies with the Moses depicted in other illustrations. In the narrative scene, Moses is depicted on three occasions: twice on f.133v and once on f.246v. In each scene, Moses receives the Law from God, gives it to the people, and closes the Red Sea. Moses distinguishes himself from the surrounding figures by wearing a light purple toga over a white robe with light blue shading, which signifies an ancient style of dressing. He wears sandals on his bare feet, which distinguishes him from the other figures wearing black or brown boots. By contrast, the figures in the headpiece at f.134 are dressed in solid red tunics and black shoes, similar to the crowd behind them. In this headpiece, the people who fit into the left frame are clearly distinct from the Apostles, both in the way they are dressed and placed. Whereas the Apostles in the right frame are dressed in togas and wear sandals, the people in the left frame wear long tunics and black shoes. In terms of the colour of the garments, all the Apostles are painted in light colours, while the people on the left are clad in dark monochrome garments, with the leading figure in red and the rest in blue and green. Further, unlike Moses, who has high cheekbones and long hair, the 'Moses' figure in f.134 has smooth, round cheeks and short hair parted

(8) A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title*, Oxford, 2007, p. 585. This paper uses the latest translation.

(9) Cutler, *op cit.*, p. 79.

(10) Nelson, *op cit.*, p. 146.

(11) See notes 9 and 10. Nelson also wrote: 'Paul hands a scroll across to a youthful figure, who resembles the Moses of the facing miniature.'

(12) Cutler, *op cit.*, *passim*.

down the middle. It is difficult to say that this person is the same (Moses) in all three depictions simply because his cheekbones are pronounced. In addition, the depiction of his clothing is clearly different. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that the person in f.134 is not Moses.

Furthermore, even if we do not introduce the contrast between the Old and New Testaments into the headpiece by identifying this figure as Moses, the manuscripts, by their very form, are subject to the unit of the spread. In the spread of ff.133v-134, one has to simply open the manuscript to see the Giving of the Law of Moses on the left page and the Gospel of Christ in the headpiece on the right, side by side.⁽¹³⁾ The contrast between the Old and New Testaments, as found in the Gospel of John 1:17, 'Through Moses the law was given to us; through Jesus Christ grace came to us, and truth', is visible in the spread. It was not natural for Paul to hand a scroll to Moses, an Old Testament prophet, and it would be inappropriate to identify this round-cheeked, red-robed figure as Moses. In light of the evidence, two questions arise: who is the person who receives a scroll from Paul under Christ's blessing, and what is the significance of this unique headpiece?

Unique headpiece in f.134

Once again, we examine the headpiece of f.134. Christ, standing at the centre of the large composition, is giving a blessing with his right hand near his chest, pointing downwards, and, with his left hand, giving the codex to Peter in the frame below. In terms of hierarchy on either side of Christ, it is disconcerting to see that the Apostles gather to the left of Christ and the unnamed people assemble to the right of Christ, a more important position. Paul and the young man in red face each other across the central band of the decoration; Paul is about to hand over a scroll beyond the frame. We presume that Christ is blessing them with his right hand pointing downwards.

The text to which this iconography corresponds is Psalm 77:1, 'Pay attention, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth'. The depiction of Giving of the Law to Moses on the opposite page shows that the expression 'my law' found in the text is interpreted as God's law, not of the psalmist Asaph. It is not the Law of God of the Old Covenant that is passed on in this headpiece, but the evangelical law of Christ.⁽¹⁴⁾ Given the text and the iconography on the opposite page, it is reasonable to assume that the person identified in previous studies as Moses and the people behind him represent 'the people', the ordinary people of the congregation, who need not be specifically named. In f.133v, Moses receives the Law from God and hands it over to the people. However, in f.134, Peter, the first of the Apostles, receives the codex from Christ, and Paul hands the scroll to the people. The gesture of handing over the scroll can be partially explained if one considers the achievements of Paul as a missionary for the Gentiles. Peter is handed the codex directly from Christ and is by no means slighted. Nevertheless, several doubts remain: the depiction of the people to the right of Christ, namely in a position of supposed superiority; the strange arrangement of Peter standing behind Paul among the Apostles; and that Christ gives the codex to Peter and Paul gives the scroll to the people. To understand this iconography in depth, we examine similar examples from Western countries in the next section.

'Traditio Legis' and the Sarcophagi of Ravenna

We first consider the northern apse of the Basilica of Santa Costanza,⁽¹⁵⁾ Rome, 4th century (fig. 4). Although only few original parts remain as they have undergone extensive restoration, the general iconographic layout is said to have remained untouched. Christ stands in the centre and holds his right hand above Paul's head. With his left hand, he gives Peter an open scroll. Peter is to Christ's left, while Paul is to his right, palm trees on either side, sheep in the foreground, and rivers flowing at their feet. The open scroll that Peter receives is inscribed with the sentence 'Dominus pacem dat' (The Lord gives peace), but pre-restoration records and comparison with other iconography suggest that it was originally 'Dominus legem dat' (The Lord gives law). Based on this inscription, also found on

(13) See note 10.

(14) Der Nersessian, "A Psalter and New Testament," p. 173.

(15) H. Stern, "Les mosaïques de l'église de Sainte-Constance à Rome," *DOP* 12 (1958), pp. 157, 159-218; D. J. Stanley, "The Apse Mosaics at Santa Costanza," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 94 (1987), pp. 28-42, pls. 17-24; idem, "New Discoveries at Santa Costanza," *DOP* 48 (1994), pp. 257-261.

other examples, the figure is referred to as 'Traditio Legis'.⁽¹⁶⁾ As it is Peter who receives the scroll, it is strictly a representation of the Giving of the Law to Peter, an iconography that appeared mainly in Rome from the mid-4th to the mid-5th century. Note that the interpretation of the 'Traditio Legis' iconography itself falls beyond the scope of this paper.⁽¹⁷⁾

Next, a group of sarcophagi from Ravenna⁽¹⁸⁾ contains examples of Christ giving scrolls to Paul rather than to Peter⁽¹⁹⁾ (fig. 5: Twelve Apostles' sarcophagus⁽²⁰⁾). Christ is seated on the throne, handing a scroll to Paul with his right hand. What Christ is holding in his left hand is difficult to clearly discern, but appears to be an open book. Paul receives a closed scroll with no inscriptions. Some argue that this iconography emphasises Paul representing the Church of Constantinople, the new Rome, as opposed to Peter representing the Church of Rome.⁽²¹⁾ The scroll is given to Paul, not Peter, but the left and right placements of the two against Christ is no different from that in Giving the Law to Peter. In the Certosa sarcophagus, now located in Ferrara Cathedral, Christ is represented with his right hand pointing to an open book, his left hand gesturing a blessing, and Paul, standing on his right, having already received a closed scroll.⁽²²⁾ There are



Fig.4 Northern apse of Santa Costanza



Fig.5 Twelve Apostles' sarcophagus

examples of both Roll and Codex being represented at the conferment by Christ. However, the iconography of the giving of the scroll to Paul has not yet been established. No later examples survive in either the East or West, and

(16) F. Nikolasch, "Zur Deutung der 'Dominus-legem-dat' -Szene," *RQ* 64 (1969), pp. 35-73; K. Berger, "Der traditions-geschichtliche Ursprung der 'traditio legis'," *VigChr* 27 (1973), pp. 104-122; Y. Christe, "Apocalypse et Traditio legis," *RQ* 71 (1976), pp. 42-55; M. Rasmussen, "Traditio Legis?" *CahArch* 47 (1997), pp. 5-37; idem, "Traditio Legis – Bedeutung und Kontext," J. Flrischer (et. al.), *Late Antiquity Art in Context (Acta Hyperborea: Danish Studies in Classical Archaeology 8)*, Copenhagen, 2001, pp. 21-53; W. Binsfeld, "Dominus legem dat," *Tekmeria* 5 (2000), pp. 35-38; B. Snelders, "The Traditio Legis on Early Christian Sarcophagi," *Antiquité Tardive* 13 (2005), pp. 321-33; R. Hvalvik, "Christ Proclaiming His Law to the Apostles: The Traditio Legis-Motif in Early Christian Art and Literature," *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune*, Brill, 2006, pp. 403-435; M. Leone, "The Iconography of the Giving of the Law: A Semiotic Overview," *Law, Culture and Visual Studies*, A. Wagner, R. K. Sherwin (eds.), Dordrecht, 2014; pp. 395-419; R. Couzin, *The Traditio Legis: Anatomy of an Image*, Oxford, 2015.

(17) The lost apse of the former St Peter's Basilica may have been adorned with the figure of the 'Traditio Legis', while some suggest that the iconography represents the superiority of the Roman Church through the visual representation of the supremacy of Peter receiving the scroll. The debate continues. Interpretations of why Paul is on the right side of Christ, a position of supposed superiority, are divided as well. Hvalvik, *op cit.*, pp. 406-408; R. W. Sullivan, "Saints Peter and Paul: Some Ironic Aspects of their Imaging," *Art History* 17, vol.1 (1994), pp. 59-80, esp. 68-76; Couzin, *op cit.*, pp. 55-58. For the iconography of the apse in early churches, see below. J. M. Spieser, "The Representation of Christ in the Apse of Early Christian Churches," *Gesta* 37, n.1 (1998), pp. 63-73.

(18) J. Kollwitz, H. Herdejürgen, *Die ravennatischen Sarkophage*, Berlin, 1979.

(19) M. Lawrence, *The Sarcophagi of Ravenna*, Roma, 1970, figs.2, 3, 20, 25, 26.

(20) Lawrence, *op cit.*, pp. 6-10; fig.2.

(21) E. Kitzinger, "A Marble Relief of the Theodosian Period," *DOP* 14 (1960), pp. 34-35.

(22) Lawrence, *op cit.*, pp. 8-10, fig. 3. The author has not seen the original. In the sarcophagus of San Francesco, which also represents the presentation of the scroll to Paul, the head of each figure, flanked by columns, is covered by a niche. We simply note here its connection with the distinctive Christ halo on the headpiece of Cod. Vat. gr. 342. Lawrence, *op cit.*, fig.26.

there is no established theory explaining the meaning of the respective forms of Roll and Codex.

Facing pages of ff.133v-134

Let us now return to the main subject of the headpiece of Cod. Vat. gr. 342. Surviving examples from the Byzantine world are rare and limited, and none show a direct relationship of influence. Yet, the presence of the Ravenna sarcophagi clearly indicates a genealogy of the accepted ‘Traditio Legis’ figure in Byzantium. It is well known that Byzantine painters were more inventive in altering, shifting, and interpreting iconography than they were in creating novel iconography. Moreover, there are examples of sarcophagi with ‘Traditio Legis’ as the central motif in which the Giving of the Law to Moses is also depicted. As such, these facts may provide clues as to the origins of this iconography of the headpiece. Even in the early Christian period, marking a distinction between the Giving of the law to Moses and the law given by Christ seems to have been intentional.⁽²³⁾ Recalling the iconography of the ‘Traditio Legis’ may answer some of the questions raised by this unique headpiece. Peter was depicted to the left of Christ and Paul to his right in the ‘Traditio Legis’. In the headpiece of f.134, Christ gives the book to Peter with his left hand and blesses the people with his right hand. If we assume Paul was deliberately placed in front of Peter, so that the people receiving the Law from Paul could be placed in the left compartment, it would explain the unnatural placement of the two and the discrepancy in the hierarchy related to the positioning in relation to Christ. In the sarcophagus of Ravenna, Christ was about to hand Paul a closed scroll, or Paul had already received it; here, however, Paul is in the process of handing the scroll to the people. The headpiece speaks not only of the reception of the Law from God, but also of its transmission and spread among the people.

In the headpiece, the combination depicts Peter receiving the codex and Paul receiving the scroll, unlike in the ‘Traditio Legis’ where the scroll was exchanged with Christ regardless of whether Peter or Paul received it. Christ’s codex was considered a Gospel. The question arises: what is the scroll that Paul is about to hand over? The most appropriate scroll for him to give to people, not to mention the examples of him holding a scroll in a single image,⁽²⁴⁾ was an epistle. In particular, the context of teaching law to the people was emphasised in this spread, both in the Old and New Testaments.

Further, note that Psalm 77:2, ‘I will open my mouth in a parable,’⁽²⁵⁾ I will utter problems from of old’ (underlined by the author, same below), is quoted in Matthew 13:34-35, ‘All these things spoke Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spoke He not unto them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ‘I will open My mouth in parables,’⁽²⁶⁾ I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world’. Eusebius and Pseudo-Athanasios interpreted the same verse as Psalm in relation to the passage quoted in Matthew’s Gospel.⁽²⁷⁾ Psalm 77 begins the second half of the Book of Psalms, and in the manuscripts of Psalters this is frequently the place where Moses is depicted in the Giving of the Law, creating a typological link with the New Testament. God, or Christ, is said to have been revealed in the form of a parable mystery that has remained hidden since the beginning of the world.

The entire spread of ff.133v-134 should be examined in light of the above. Cutler’s interpretation is that only the headpiece on the right-hand page is a ‘fusion of the Old and New Testaments’; however, as noted above, this should be interpreted as a statement of contrast in the whole spread. The invisible God of the Old Testament, who gives the Law to Moses in f.133v, and Christ, the incarnate God who hands the Codex to Peter in f.134, face each

⁽²³⁾ Snelders, *op cit.*, 327; Hvalvik, *op cit.*, pp. 415-417; Couzin, *op cit.*, pp. 36, 47-51.

⁽²⁴⁾ For example, the single figure of Paul in the east doorway of the narthex of the Panagia Peribleptos in Ohrid, Macedonia (1294/95) holds a bundle of scrolls, each bearing the initials of the recipient of the epistles. The single images of Peter and Paul as a pair in the chancel decorations can be classified into two patterns: both holding scroll books, or Peter holding a codex and Paul holding a scroll.

⁽²⁵⁾ ἀνοίξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου, φθέγγομαι προβλήματα ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς·

⁽²⁶⁾ ἀνοίξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου, ἐρεῦζομαι κεκρυμμένα ἀπο καταβολῆς· The first half of Jesus’ speech quotes the Septuaginta exactly, but the second half is worded differently. The use of ἐρεῦζομαι (Mt: usage in Ps 18:3, etc.) instead of φθέγγομαι (LXX: uttering the word), κεκρυμμένα (Mt: < κρύπτω conceal, hidden, secret) instead of προβλήματα (LXX: mystery, also usage in Ps 48:5), and καταβολή [κόσμου] (Mt: to lay the foundation [of the world]) instead of ἀρχή (LXX: the beginning) seems to be an overall expression of a New Testament worldview.

⁽²⁷⁾ Migne, *PG*, XXIII, col. 901 C; XXVII, cols. 349-357.

other. While both are handing over the Law in similar gestures of “giving” to the people, the contrast lies in how they appear: the Old Testament God, that is, God the Father, was invisible. The New Testament God, that is, Christ, appeared on earth in a visible form to human eyes. The contrast in the Gospel of John 1:17, ‘Through Moses the law was given to us; through Jesus Christ grace came to us, and truth’, is thus presented visually. Throughout this spread, other correspondences exist between the illustrations on the left and the right. Moses and Peter received the Law on opposite sides. Once again, the Law and the Gospel are paired. Those who cannot receive the Law directly from God, receive it through the hands of the prophet and the Apostle, like Moses in the lower part of f.133v and Paul in f.134, who are giving it to the people. Note that, among the Apostles, only Paul wears a light purple toga over a white robe with light blue shading, matching Moses’ colour scheme. The intent to emphasise the resemblance between the two is clear. If we recall the arrangement of the ‘Traditio Legis’ in the Western world, there is no need to forcefully read Paul’s superiority into the composition of Paul standing before Peter; however, if we add the reference to Moses on the facing page, we cannot deny the possibility that this manuscript seems to celebrate Paul’s achievements. Like Moses in the Old Testament, Paul is responsible for bringing God’s word to the people – this may signify an implication that has not been understood yet.

Conclusion

In Cod. Vat. gr. 342, the focus tends to be exclusively on the headpiece, which has no precedent, or on trivial points such as comparing decorative patterns,⁽²⁸⁾ while the analysis of the manuscript is usually neglected. However, this illustration should be read in the context of a spread that takes advantage of the nature of the Codex, rather than fusing everything together from the Old and the New Testaments. As this article has shown, the invisible God and the incarnate God, the Law and the Gospel, and the act of receiving the Law from God and giving it to the people are juxtaposed on opposite pages and recomposed according to the content of the Psalms’ text, with reference to old iconography. The figure identified in the previous study as ‘Moses’ represents the people to whom the Gospel has been given. Paul, who hands him the scroll, is dressed in the same garb as Moses, who also gives the Law to the people on the opposite page. This arrangement and gesture are reminiscent of the ‘Traditio Legis’ in Ravenna. As the contrast repeated in the spread is realised in the illustration of the book with the Old Testament Psalms, the meaning behind the emphasis on the contrast between the typological Old and New Testaments is clear. The text is part of the Old Testament and the illustrations are consistent with the story. Figures from the New Testament have been inserted as the headpiece of the manuscript, suggesting a connection between the Old Testament’s text and iconography. If it was a Marginal Psalter, it would have been possible to use the margins to draw illustrations based on other sources, including the New Testament for the text and the Old Testament, as well as give a typological function to the relationship between the illustrations and the text. However, it was very difficult to illustrate the typological function of the Psalter manuscript with full-page illustrations, where only a limited number of illustrations could be made because of the variety of subjects available and, primarily, layout constraints. The headpiece of Cod. Vat. gr. 342 did not adopt the narrative iconography of the New Testament, and hence achieved a contrast between the Old and New Testaments on an abstract level with the Giving of the Law to Moses, an Old Testament narrative iconography used in other full-page illustrated Psalters as well. It also suggests a link with older iconography now preserved only in the sculptures of the sarcophagi of Ravenna. It is possible that the ‘Traditio Legis’ in the form of Christ handing a scroll to Paul, similarly to the sarcophagi that survive in Ravenna, was produced in Constantinople; however, there is no physical evidence that they continued or ceased to be in vogue. This article shows that these miniscule illustrations in a manuscript, small enough to fit in the palm of one’s hand, secretly herald a lost connection with old iconography, separated by time and place.

(28) Nees, *op cit.*, pp. 208, 220-221, 224.

[Photo Credit] Figs.1-3: A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, Paris, 1984; Figs.4, 5: Photograph by the author.

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