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Moses the Egyptian in the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch (London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius B.iv)

Herbert R. Broderick

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# MOSES THE EGYPTIAN

## in the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch

(London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius B.iv)

HERBERT R.  
BRODERICK





MOSES THE EGYPTIAN  
IN THE ILLUSTRATED  
OLD ENGLISH HEXATEUCH



# MOSES THE EGYPTIAN IN THE ILLUSTRATED OLD ENGLISH HEXATEUCH

(LONDON, BRITISH LIBRARY COTTON MS CLAUDIUS B.IV)

HERBERT R. BRODERICK

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To Camilla

“maior autem horum est caritas”  
—1 Corinthians 13:13





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*Vestigia Patrum Prosequendo*  
New York City, 2017

## Introduction

And the Lord said to Moses: Behold I have appointed thee the God of Pharaoh.

—Exodus 7:1

And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and in his deeds.

—Acts 7:22

For he also was called the god and king (*theos kai basileus*) of the whole nation.

—Philo of Alexandria

In his book *Moses the Egyptian*, the renowned Egyptologist Jan Assmann sets out to investigate the “history of Europe’s remembering Egypt” through the lens of what he calls mnemohistory, a methodology that is concerned “not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered.”<sup>1</sup> Assmann pursues this trajectory through analyses of various written texts, an essentially logocentric undertaking.<sup>2</sup> By taking into account a large body of visual imagery in an extraordinary Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the second quarter of the eleventh century known as the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch (London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius B.iv), I present here a body of evidence for a visual construct of Moses that preserves a Moses who has been largely forgotten, a Moses who was characterized in the works of Hellenistic Egyptian Jewish writers such as Philo, Artapanus, Ezekiel “the Tragedian,” and others with the attributes of a Hellenistic king,<sup>3</sup> military commander,<sup>4</sup> prophet, priest, and scribe. The illustrations in Claudius B.iv (as I refer to

the manuscript throughout this book), potentially based in part, I will argue, on a no longer extant Late Antique exemplar, preserve a *visual* memory of this Hellenistic Egyptian Jewish Moses, the original meaning of which may not have been fully understood by the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon artists who availed themselves of its contents.

Moses appears an astonishing 127 times in the illustrations accompanying the text of Claudius B.iv.<sup>5</sup> The artist, or artists,<sup>6</sup> who made these illustrations have given him nine distinctive visual attributes, seven of which are unique to this manuscript.<sup>7</sup>

The relationship of the illustrations to the text they accompany in Claudius B.iv, a translation into Old English of the first six books of the Bible with over three hundred illustrations, is complex and not subject to any one general principle. George Henderson has remarked on the iconography of Claudius B.iv in general that “some of the illustrations . . . seem to derive from a model or models of extreme antiquity, which has left no trace in Christian art.”<sup>8</sup> Henderson is in agreement here with M. R. James, Otto Pächt, and Francis Wormald, among others, who have studied the manuscript and its illustrations.<sup>9</sup> Francis Wormald, the renowned historian of Anglo-Saxon manuscript art, speculating on the nature of Claudius B.iv’s model (or models), concluded succinctly that “it was ancient and *it was exotic*.”<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to C. R. Dodwell’s opinion that the majority of its illustrations were inspired directly by its Old English text,<sup>11</sup> other studies of the manuscript have demonstrated that the illustrations of Claudius B.iv exhibit a not unfamiliar wide-ranging mix of motifs derived in part from various preexisting pictorial models,<sup>12</sup> some belonging to well-known traditions of Early Christian biblical illustration,<sup>13</sup> as well as images that were created *de novo* for Claudius B.iv, reflecting at times specific idiosyncrasies of the Old English text they accompany. In addition, some motifs in the manuscript’s illustrations were inspired by texts outside of Claudius B.iv itself, coming instead from extrabiblical, so-called apocryphal texts,<sup>14</sup> as well as theological commentaries. The depiction of Cain slaying Abel with an animal jawbone at the right on folio 8v (fig. 1), for example, the first extant illustration we have of this motif, which has a long afterlife in medieval and Renaissance art, a detail unspecified in either the Vulgate (Gen. 4:8)<sup>15</sup> or Old English texts, can now be shown, thanks to the work of Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, to have been derived possibly from a theological commentary composed in the late seventh century by Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury and his associate, Abbot Hadrian, specifying that Cain killed Abel with the jawbone of an ass,<sup>16</sup> thus further linking Claudius B.iv to a Canterbury milieu. Many of the illustrations in Claudius B.iv exhibit iconographic characteristics from the earliest period of Christian art, such as the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel at the left on folio 8v, which shows the two brothers standing at either side of a seated figure of the Creator, unlike the majority of later medieval representations of the same scene but very much like that to be seen



in the sixteenth-century drawings after the lost fifth-century C.E. mosaics on the dome of the church of Santa Costanza in Rome.<sup>17</sup>

A notable feature of this extraordinary manuscript is that many of its illustrations exhibit distinctive “Egyptianizing” characteristics, for example, the representation of Noah’s Ark as a ship on folios 13v–15r (fig. 2).<sup>18</sup> The earliest extant representations of the ark of Noah as a *boat*, rather than as a rectangular chest (*kibotos*), are Egyptian and date from the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. in paintings found in the Christian necropolis of El-Bagawat (El-Kharga Oasis) in Egypt (fig. 3).<sup>19</sup> George Henderson, in his 1972 book, *Early Medieval*, made the intriguing observation that the shrouded body of the dead Joseph on folio 72v of Claudius B.iv resembles an ancient Egyptian mummy case.<sup>20</sup> Dodwell, in his introduction to the facsimile of the manuscript in 1974, attempted to minimize this resemblance by stating that all medieval corpses were wrapped in shrouds.<sup>21</sup> However, square and/or hexagonal multilayered, recessed, cofferlike designs, such as we see on the shrouded Joseph in the Claudius B.iv image, are seen frequently on actual Late Antique Egyptian wrapped mummies as well as in painted representations of wrapped mummies such as those from the second- through fourth-century C.E. Kom el-Shoqafa catacombs in Alexandria, which look very similar indeed to the Claudius B.iv image.<sup>22</sup> Henderson remarks, “It is impossible that the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon artist could have known how archeologically apt such a mode of burial would be for Joseph, ‘ruler over all the Land of Egypt.’ The Middle Ages had little or no antiquarian consciousness,”<sup>23</sup> suggesting that the artist(s) must have been relying on an older, perhaps much older, model or exemplar for this image. Interestingly, the greatest number of “Egyptianizing” traces in Claudius B.iv has to do with the representation of Moses.

Ælfric, the great Anglo-Saxon abbot and exegete responsible for a portion of the texts of Claudius B.iv, refers to Moses in his *Treatise on the Old and the New Testaments* as “se maere heretoga,” the Great Commander,<sup>24</sup> and while Moses is depicted many times leading the Jewish people in their exodus from Egypt in Claudius B.iv, he is also visualized in this extraordinary manuscript as prophet, priest, and scribe. In its illustrations, then, the persona and role of Moses are expanded through a kind of parallel visual “text” that adds extrabiblical, exegetical information in a Christian soteriological context to the “bare” narrative of the Hebrew Bible and its Old English translation.<sup>25</sup> Thus, through images, the role and persona of Moses have been expanded to include attributes and meanings not strictly specified either in the canonical text of the Bible itself or its Old English translation in Claudius B.iv.

What is even more remarkable is that, through the illustrations, Moses is not only presented in Claudius B.iv as a military leader, prophet, priest, and scribe, but he has also been assimilated visually to a number of pagan divine and semidivine beings, such as Apollo, Hermes/Thoth, and Asclepius. The illustrations, then, as a

kind of parallel, visual “text,” present Moses as a multifaceted Hellenistic hero in a manner well known to specialists in Jewish and early Christian apologetic literature of the period but not widely familiar to audiences outside these scholarly specializations.<sup>26</sup> In Claudius B.iv, a Christian Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the second quarter of the eleventh century, Moses is given visual attributes formerly known only in the theological and apologetic literature of the Jewish Hellenistic and early Christian periods.

M. David Litwa, in his 2014 book, *Jesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God*,<sup>27</sup> explores the idea of the “construction” of the persona of Jesus in early Christian written sources that appropriate familiar verbal images and archetypes of Hellenistic, “pagan” divinities to express the Christ of faith. Thomas F. Matthews, in his controversial 1993 book, *The Clash of Gods*,<sup>28</sup> reassessed the traditional idea of the appropriation of Roman imperial iconography in the construction of the visualization of the persona of Jesus in Early Christian art, suggesting instead alternative visual models from a variety of Late Antique sources. Finn Damgaard, in his 2013 book, *Recasting Moses: The Memory of Moses in Biographical and Autobiographical Narrative in Ancient Judaism and 4th-Century Christianity*, makes the salient observation that “ancient culture was a culture of imitation” and provides the vivid example of Josephus in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*AJ* 2.347ff.) comparing Moses’s crossing of the Red Sea to Alexander’s crossing of the Pamphylian Sea.<sup>29</sup> Russell Gmirkin, in his 2006 study, *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus*, posits that the figure of Moses in the Hebrew Bible was modeled on that of the last Egyptian pharaoh, Nectanebos II of the fourth century B.C.E., as part of his radical thesis that the Hebrew Bible was written in Alexandria, Egypt, around 273–272 B.C.E.<sup>30</sup>

What I am presenting here is an equivalent assessment of a visual “construction” of Moses, originally to be found in a now no longer extant illustrated model, or exemplar, from which the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon artists of Claudius B.iv were deriving many of their specific motifs, as a Hellenistic general, prophet, priest, and scribe that has its ultimate origin in a number of originally Jewish Hellenistic exegetical and apologetic texts preserved in early Christian writings by authors such as Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea for their own Christian apologetic purposes, which are explored in detail in the chapters to come. I argue that the specific “Egyptianizing” details associated with the depiction of Moses in the original model on which the images in Claudius B.iv are based are no mere “antiquarian” flourishes but are instead meant to demonstrate *visually* the central thesis of a specific Hellenistic Jewish apologetic that asserted that Moses was indeed more ancient than all the gods and pharaohs of Egypt and, by extension, in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea, were meant to testify to the

antiquity and legitimacy of Christianity itself as no novelty but rather a legitimate descendant of this venerable and ancient Ur-Judaism.

It should be noted at the outset that the nine distinctive visual attributes of Moses in the illustrations of Claudius B.iv constitute the largest number of such attributes in the entire corpus of Hellenistic Jewish, Early Christian, Byzantine, medieval, and Renaissance art as a whole, manuscript or otherwise. With the possible exception, according to Erwin Goodenough, of Moses represented with the “knobby” club of Hercules in the third-century C.E. frescoes of the synagogue of Dura-Europos in Syria,<sup>31</sup> prior to Claudius B.iv, Moses had been presented in art, both Jewish and Christian, in generalized Greco-Roman attire with no distinctive attributes other than an occasional halo or simple diadem on his head, as can be seen in a number of ninth-century Carolingian manuscript examples.<sup>32</sup>

AFTER A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT HERE, I OUTLINE IN chapter 1 aspects of my methodology in exploring the iconographic origins of its illustrations in general. In chapter 2, I explore a number of images in the Genesis cycle, beginning with the Fall of Lucifer and ending with the story of Noah, tracing some of their origins to a putative Late Antique exemplar. I then give an overview in chapter 3 of the range of motifs associated with Moses from the Exodus cycle of the manuscript and focus in chapter 4 on the most distinctive of them: the two horns on Moses’s head beginning on folio 105v (fig. 10) and the different “horns” on Moses’s head beginning at the upper left on folio 136v (fig. 18) as the misunderstood feathers of an Egyptian Isis priest. In the same chapter I explore the representation of Moses as a scribe at the bottom left of folio 136v (fig. 11) with the priestly “frontlet” (*tzitz* = Vulg. *lamina aurea*) on his forehead as described in the Bible (Exod. 28:36–38). The peculiar rendering of the veil, shown being held by Moses with his left hand in the image on folio 105v (fig. 10), with which the Bible says (Exod. 34:33–35) Moses covered his face after having come down from the mountain a second time, is discussed in chapter 5. Chapter 6 examines the possibility that the horns of Pan (fig. 23) might have served as the principal visual source of the horns of Moses beginning on folio 105v of Claudius B.iv. In chapter 7, the remaining attributes are explored: Moses represented at the lower left on folio 136v (fig. 11) as Apollo Delphoi seated on a jeweled “mountain-throne” like the omphalos at Delphi (fig. 15); the serpent-headed staff of Moses on folio 78v (fig. 13), and elsewhere in the manuscript, represented like an Egyptian *was* scepter; the round-topped Tablets of the Law, like a round-topped Egyptian stele (fig. 35), held by Moses on folio 105v (fig. 10); Moses with a distinctive cloth diadem wrapped around the base of his horns like the *vittae* of ancient Roman priests (fol. 138v; fig. 12); Moses represented with the Brazen Serpent on folio 124r (fig. 16) like the

healing god Asclepius with his snake-entwined *bakteria* (fig. 17); and finally, Moses represented as a giant on folio 139v (fig. 14). Chapter 8 presents some general conclusions about the image of Moses in Claudius B.iv, proposing, in the end, that it is primarily as a scribe, as a writer of sacred text, an amanuensis to the Lord—“Write thee these words by which I have made a covenant both with thee and with Israel” (Exod. 34:27)—that Moses is represented in this extraordinary manuscript.

#### THE MANUSCRIPT: A (VERY) BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The so-called Illustrated Old English Hexateuch, once part of Sir Robert Cotton’s collection in the eighteenth century, now part of the Cotton legacy to the British Library, where its shelfmark is Cotton MS Claudius B.iv, is quite a large manuscript (approx. 328 x 217 mm).<sup>33</sup> As Benjamin Withers has observed, one could hold it on one’s lap, but “resting it on a table makes for more comfortable reading.”<sup>34</sup> Claudius B.iv, thought to have been produced some time in the second quarter of the eleventh century, probably at St. Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury,<sup>35</sup> contains an Old English “translation,” although some have referred to it as a “paraphrase,”<sup>36</sup> of the first six books of the Bible (Genesis through the Book of Joshua) accompanied by 394 framed illustrations of some five hundred individual narrative episodes in various states of completion. In the past, Claudius B.iv had been referred to as “Ælfric’s Pentateuch” or “Ælfric’s Paraphrase of the Pentateuch and Joshua,” due to the association of its Old English texts with the famous figure of Ælfric (ca. 955–ca. 1010), abbot of Eynsham,<sup>37</sup> who is indeed responsible for a significant portion of the text in the manuscript. Claudius B.iv has been described in great detail in two important studies in the twentieth century, C. R. Dodwell and Peter Clemoes’s introduction to the 1974 facsimile edition for the Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile Series (vol. 18)<sup>38</sup> and Benjamin Withers’s 2007 publication, *The Illustrated Old English Hexateuch, Cotton Claudius B.iv: The Frontier of Seeing and Reading in Anglo-Saxon England*.<sup>39</sup> Richard Marsden’s 2008 study, *The Old English Heptateuch: And Ælfric’s Libellus de Veteri Testamento et Novo*,<sup>40</sup> is the most recent and most succinct description of the manuscript to date. As my focus here is on the specific iconography of Moses in this extraordinary manuscript, I shall refrain from repeating the fundamental textual and codicological work of these three publications, but shall refer to them most gratefully throughout this present study. The differing terminology in the titles of these three works, *Hexateuch* versus *Heptateuch*, calls for some explanation. British Library Cotton MS Claudius B.iv (designated in the scholarly literature as *B*) contains most of the Old English translation of Genesis and lesser amounts of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua and thus is a *Hexateuch*, that is, the first six books of the Bible. A second, considerably

smaller version of the same texts without illustrations, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 509 (designated as *L*), with the addition of a version of the Book of Judges, is thus a *Heptateuch*, that is, the first seven books of the Bible. These two principal manuscripts are part of a group of nine manuscripts, and manuscript fragments, that Richard Marsden prefers to refer to as a whole (as he says, “for convenience”) as the *Heptateuch*, a “compilation of the work of at least three translators.” “One of these, Ælfric,” he continues, “is well known to us as the most important and prolific of writers in Old English.”<sup>41</sup> Claudius B.iv is the sole illustrated version of this larger endeavor that renders the sacred text in the vernacular and as such stands at the head of a long tradition of translating the Bible into English.

Withers has suggested that at least two scribes and one artist worked together on this monumental project.<sup>42</sup> Significant stylistic differences lead me to posit that two different artists worked on the original illustrations, and that, as has been noted before, later hands overdraw some of them or essentially “vandalized” others.

Over the years, Claudius B.iv has been celebrated as the locus of a number of iconographic “firsts” in its many illustrations: the first extant example of Cain killing Abel with an animal jawbone, the first extant example of Moses with two horns on his head, the first extant example of the depiction of the Tablets of the Law with their familiar rounded tops, and one of the first works of northern medieval art to depict Noah’s Ark as a boat rather than the traditional boxlike chest. In light of the widely acknowledged iconographic richness of late Anglo-Saxon manuscript art, these innovations have been largely credited to Anglo-Saxon ingenuity and creative invention.<sup>43</sup> Without detracting in the least from this general consensus, I hope to demonstrate that with respect to a number of these inventions precedents in ancient and earlier medieval art played an important role in their final adaptation and creation.

## WORD AND IMAGE

“And what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversation?”

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

It should be emphasized at the outset that all the writers on Moses in the Hellenistic era I refer to are writing about *texts*, interpretations of texts, and one another’s interpretations of texts. But in the case of something *visual*, an artist has to come up with an image himself, an image drawn either entirely from his own imagination or derived from some other source that can be adapted, or recycled, for a different purpose or meaning. So if Moses is said to have had his face become “horned” from

his conversation with the Lord, as in Jerome's Vulgate translation of the words of Exodus 34:29, what would this look like? Similarly, if Moses is said in the Bible to have received two Tablets of the Law from the Lord, but they are not described in the text, what should they look like? If Moses is said to be a great military commander of the Jewish people, what does this look like? If Moses is characterized as a great prophet, or the scribe of God, how does one represent this? If Moses is said to be a high priest, what should this look like? The answers to these questions are at the heart of this study. Again, and it cannot be emphasized enough, the results put before us by the artists of Claudius B.iv constitute the largest body of visual attributes of Moses in the entire corpus of Early Christian, medieval, and Renaissance art.

I should also say at this point that the focus of this study is the *image* of Moses in the illustrations of this early eleventh-century illustrated Anglo-Saxon manuscript, Claudius B.iv; it is not intended in any way either to support or to deny the idea that the *historical* Moses, if such a person indeed existed, was actually an ethnic Egyptian rather than the traditional idea that Moses was a Jew raised in the royal Egyptian court.<sup>44</sup>



## CHAPTER I

# Ways and Means

## Methodology

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.

—*Hamlet*, act 2, scene 2

If thou wilt, I will go into the field, and glean the ears of corn that escape  
the hands of the reapers.

—Ruth 2:2

Art history as a discipline could be said to be somewhat obsessed at this point in its evolution with methodology, how one goes about the task of explaining images.<sup>1</sup> It is incumbent on practitioners of the craft to be more transparent about what it is they are doing. At times this can take on an overly personal, confessional tone, but, be that as it may, I shall say a few things about how I have proceeded in this endeavor.

Two extensively illustrated Old Testament manuscripts other than psalters survive from late Anglo-Saxon England: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Junius 11 (formerly referred to as the Caedmon Manuscript), of about 1000 or slightly earlier,<sup>2</sup> and London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius B.iv, of about 1025, also known as the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch, formerly as the Hexateuch of Aelfric or as the Aelfric Paraphrase of the Pentateuch and Joshua. Differing in style, technique, format, and iconography, the manuscripts are similar in terms of the large number of illustrations they contain (48 in Junius 11, 394 in Claudius B.iv), as well as the fact that they both accompany Old English texts based on the Bible rather than the canonical Latin text of the Bible itself. Both manuscripts have been

generally attributed to the monastic scriptoria of Canterbury, either St. Augustine's, in the case of Claudius B.iv, or Christ Church, with respect to Junius 11, although various other locations have been suggested for Junius 11.<sup>3</sup> While my focus here is Claudius B.iv, it is useful to compare how the artists of both manuscripts deal with some of the same material.

Both Junius 11 and Claudius B.iv have been the subject of intense study since the late nineteenth century, and the bibliography on both manuscripts is extensive.<sup>4</sup> The most recent studies of the illustrations of both works, that of Catherine Karkov on Junius 11 and Benjamin Withers on Claudius B.iv,<sup>5</sup> have, for critical and ideological reasons, moved away from the focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century source study (*Quellenforschung*) and have chosen instead to explore the role played by the illustrations in both manuscripts as an integral factor in the construction of their meaning and to explicate, especially in Withers's study, the reader-viewer's experience by exploring in depth the phenomenology of the act of seeing and reading. Karkov and Withers have focused on the manuscripts and their illustrations as reflections of late Anglo-Saxon culture, its *Sitz im Leben*, as well as the manuscripts' role in shaping that culture. Some scholars may be of the opinion that the kind of detailed source study that dominated later twentieth-century investigations of these two manuscripts has exhausted the possibilities of what some might even consider an ill-advised undertaking in the first place. However, as I hope to demonstrate, there is still much to be learned about the origin of many of the most distinctive features of these complex and richly illustrated works. While the search for "sources" can seem to be an end in itself, my purpose here is to ascertain to the extent possible what it is that the artists of Claudius B.iv have done to alter and utilize their "sources" to create something entirely new, serving often quite different purposes.<sup>6</sup> It is an exaggeration to think of all utilization of sources, even in the highly tradition-minded culture of the European Middle Ages, as slavish "copying."<sup>7</sup> Often the most innovative creative work, even in modern and contemporary art, has "appropriated" and altered to different ends earlier motifs and compositions.

In his book *Bring Out Your Dead*, Anthony Grafton makes the observation that "in the fiercely competitive German universities and academies, in particular, those who could slaughter their intellectual ancestors stood a better chance of prospering than those who worshipped them"<sup>8</sup> While not lapsing into thoughtless idolatry, I hope, methodologically I am following in the footsteps of three very traditional and, at present, unpopular paradigms: the tripartite "iconological" schema of Erwin Panofsky, Kurt Weitzmann's much-criticized "picture criticism," and Franz Joseph Dölger's "Antike und Christentum" approach. While these methodologies are not without their shortcomings, important features of each for the art historical enterprise are perhaps being too quickly pushed aside. The importance of accuracy of observation in Panofsky's first, or "pre-iconographic," level of interpretation is still

essential even if there are epistemological issues with his second and third “levels.”<sup>9</sup> While Panofsky would no doubt agree with St. Paul that in the iconological enterprise we may be at best only able to “see through a glass darkly” (*per speculum in aenigmate*; 1 Cor. 13–12), the so-called new art history may run the risk of seeing only itself.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of “seeing through a glass darkly,” in the context of manuscript studies, it is worth recalling the perceptive remarks of Harvey Stahl relative to the question of the role played by earlier “exemplars” and “Weitzmannian” “models,” that “the utility of these manuscripts to any discussion of models depends upon one’s ability to read the contemporary style and to discount the artist’s updating or mannerisms or the impact of other models.”<sup>11</sup> This proves to be especially true in the case of Claudius B.iv’s model, or models. Particularly apropos of this study are the words of Massimo Bernabò about the relationship of the Byzantine Octateuchs to their original models: “Over the course of centuries the changes accumulated so considerably that it becomes impossible to get a clear picture of the archetype. One can perceive it only at a distance, as if through a veil.”<sup>12</sup>

Try as they may, none of Weitzmann’s critics has thus far presented a coherent, thoroughgoing methodological substitute for the major outlines of his approach developed in his magisterial *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, especially his concept of “migrating” imagery.<sup>13</sup>

In the pursuit of tracing sources for many of the specific peculiarities of individual images in Claudius B.iv, I have found Dölger’s *Antike und Christentum* approach of great assistance. The implications and meaning of this approach are many but might briefly be summed up by Edwin Judge’s assessment of Dölger’s methodology as stepping “beyond the traditional use of patristic writers as sources” and turning instead “to the vast fund of non-patristic sources that lay ready to hand in the apocryphal or Gnostic writings, in the inscriptions, papyri and monuments.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, the writings of the first-century C.E. Alexandrian Jewish exegete Philo have yielded important interpretive details especially relevant to a fuller understanding of some of the illustrations of Claudius B.iv, as I shall demonstrate in the case of the representation of the four Rivers of Paradise and Balaam’s dream in addition to specific details of the characterization of Moses. Jewish legendary material in midrash and haggadah has been helpful in a number of specific instances,<sup>15</sup> but it should be kept in mind that a good deal of this Jewish exegetical material was well known to Christian writers and exegetes. As untutored as I am in it formally, I have learned perhaps the most, on my own, from the work of scholars in the field of history of religions, from whom art historians in the fields of ancient and medieval art also have a good deal to learn.

Much, of course, has changed in the past three decades in the art historical enterprise, as it must. There are now a number of new methodological “strategies” and

trajectories: intensified interest in the “social” history of art and questions of gender, race, and class. Some may see a study such as the present one of iconographic sources as a bit old-fashioned, yet there is much to be learned about works of art by looking for sources of imagery where justified in order better to understand just what is unique and creative about how later artists transformed these sources to serve different expressive ends and purposes.

The whole question of the relationship of the medieval manuscript artist to “models,” “copies,” and “exemplars” is hampered by an essentially nineteenth-century Romantic view of artistic creativity and individualism.<sup>16</sup> We can no more imagine a medieval artist sitting down to illustrate a text,<sup>17</sup> especially that of the Bible itself or something based on the Bible such as Claudius B.iv, and simply using whatever images come to mind any more than we can imagine a medieval theologian or exegete setting out to explain a biblical text by using whatever he thinks of at the moment. That does not rule out that both individuals, the artist and the theologian, might have a storehouse in memory of images and interpretations absorbed from preexisting paradigms.<sup>18</sup> But “sources” can be dealt with creatively, just as a “source” can be misunderstood or consciously contravened. In the end, what matters most for us is what the medieval artist has *done* with these sources, as no one is suggesting, I should think, that the artist is merely copying.<sup>19</sup> The operative term in contemporary artspeak is *appropriation*,<sup>20</sup> whether it is our eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon monk or a twentieth-century Picasso.

Working within a biblical concept of the fullness of time (*kairos*), this study of the illustrations of Claudius B.iv, and specifically the representation of Moses, has benefited greatly from important previous studies, and study aids, that have appeared in the intervening period. Paramount among a number of outstanding publications are Weitzmann and Kessler’s study/reconstruction of the Cotton Genesis (1986),<sup>21</sup> Weitzmann and Bernabò’s publication of the Byzantine Octateuchs (1999),<sup>22</sup> Bernabò’s important study of the fundamental role played by pseudepigrapha as a source for extrabiblical details in Early Christian and later medieval manuscript illustration,<sup>23</sup> Kessler’s study of the Carolingian Bibles from Tours (1977),<sup>24</sup> the immensely useful *Ikonomie der Genesis* (1989–95) of Hans Martin von Erffa,<sup>25</sup> Richard Gameson’s *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (1995),<sup>26</sup> Catherine Karkov’s 2001 study of Junius 11,<sup>27</sup> and Benjamin Withers’s 2007 study of Claudius B.iv,<sup>28</sup> to name but some of the most salient works that have appeared over the past three decades. Michelle Brown’s *The Book and the Transformation of Britain, c. 550–1050* has done much to clarify a number of larger issues concerning the interaction of word and image.<sup>29</sup> In terms of conceptualizing how such a “radical” and “appropriated” visual construction of Moses such as I have discerned in the illustrations of Claudius B.iv could have been possible, I have found particularly enlightening M. David Litwa’s 2014 study, *Jesus Deus: The Early Christian De-*

*piction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God.* Thanks to the outstanding work of Bernard J. Muir,<sup>30</sup> whose digital version of Junius 11 has made full-color images of the manuscript with commentary and scholarly apparatus available on CD-ROM, in addition to the Bodleian Library having made available the entire manuscript in color on its website, the full-color CD complete facsimile of Claudius B.iv published by the British Library, and the latter's publication of the complete full-color manuscript on its website,<sup>31</sup> these two extraordinary manuscripts are now available to a potentially global audience. The time seems ripe for a broad-based, detailed, additional look at what the artists of Claudius B.iv have accomplished in terms of how they have contrived to provide suitable images for the manuscript set before them, with specific emphasis on the representation of Moses.

The literature on both Junius 11 and Claudius B.iv is quite extensive as they have been the focus of scholarly attention, at least in the case of Junius 11, since the seventeenth century. I am especially appreciative that I have the benefit of hindsight and have been able to construct my work here on a foundation of important and careful work. I am especially indebted to the pioneering work of George Henderson,<sup>32</sup> whose studies of these two manuscripts have been a constant source of enlightenment even when, from time to time, I may disagree with some of his findings.

And finally, I have attempted throughout to adhere to Aby Warburg's famous guiding principle, "God is in the details" (*Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail*),<sup>33</sup> while keeping in mind that it has also been said that the devil is in the details.

