



A SECOND LOOK AT THE ILLUSTRATION OF MATTHEW 2:11 IN SELECTED GHANAIAN BIBLES

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ABSTRACT: *One of the ways to make the word of God become relevant in a new culture is through Bible translation and illustration. Some Ghanaian Bibles with illustrations enable local indigenes to understand the word of God in their language and give them a pictorial view of the written text. However, there seem to be some illustrations that do not give a precise description of the corresponding texts. One of such is the illustration of Matthew 2:11. Using exegesis and Erwin Panofsky's iconographic analysis approaches, it was identified that the illustration does not give an exact representation of the text. Hence, the Bible Society of Ghana must either drop the current illustration on Matthew 2:11 or come out with a new illustration that meets the religio-cultural settings and the text of the author. For illustrations to meet both the text of the author and the religio-cultural background of the local indigenes, proposals were outlined for consideration.*

KEYWORDS: Bible translation, Bible illustration, Mother-tongue, The Book of Matthew



ART OF ILLUSTRATION

Art of illustration (herein referred to as Illustration), which is also known as drawing, painting or printed work of art has been one of the effective ways of communication. It aids readers and students to get a clearer meaning of a written text. It also explains, clarifies, or visually represents a written text to enable a learner to understand the text. This is affirmed by Chu (2018) who asserts that “illustration is developed in parallel with writing, giving text a better interpretation through painting techniques so that readers can have a deeper impression and understanding of the writing.”

From history, humankind have relied on illustrations to convey thoughts, tell stories, convey ideas, and share messages among themselves. According to Sivewright (2021), ancient painting of caves, humans and hunting scenes with clay and charcoal are some forms of illustrations. These were used for communication purposes by promoting information of the past life and religious experiences, but not as a form of decoration only. During the early civilisation, illustrations were done on papyrus scrolls, burial chambers, and religious sites to share messages of their gods, wars, feasts, and famines. The period of the ancient Greece and Rome witnessed same. Illustrations were done in decorated art, mosaic tiles, and drinking vessels to tell stories of their gods, myths, and scenes of everyday life. The middle age and beyond engaged with illustrations, and it has continued through to our modern era.

There are times illustrations are used to elucidate ideas/concepts and tell stories (Pomerleau, 2021). Illustrations have the unique freedom to exist without words, but still have the power to communicate ideas through their vivid storytelling. As an auxiliary text in a word, illustration is intended to enhance their appeal to readers through visual effect, rather than to narrate. The widely used illustrations of late are drawings—in both black-and-white and coloured. Most illustrative drawings are done with pencil and ink. While pencil drawings allow both soft lines and sharp edges of the art work to be seen, ink drawings gorgeously showcase contrast. It must be noted that illustrations are found anywhere and everywhere, especially in periodicals, books, posters, fabrics, educational materials, leaflets, and in Bibles.

Some Ghanaian Bibles have illustrations in them which give users and readers of the Bible a better interpretation through painting so that readers can have a deeper impression and understanding of the writing (Chu, 2018). However, some illustrations seem not to provide such purpose, for they give a different interpretation of the written text. One of such is the illustration of Matthew 2:11 in some selected Ghanaian Bibles¹. This work seeks to have a second look at the illustration of Matthew 2:11 in these selected Ghanaian Bibles to find out whether the art of illustration agrees with the text as penned by the author.

METHODOLOGY

This work employs exegesis approach in finding the meaning of a biblical text taking into consideration the historical settings of the text (Fee, 1993). In other words, exegesis talks about undergoing a painstaking exercise to historically investigate into the Bible to come out with an

¹ Naawuni Kundi Kasi Din Mali Diuterokanonikal Litaafinima (2011), Asante-Twi Twere Kronkron (2012), Asante-Twi Twere Kronkron (2017), Ahyerele Krongron (2019), Baebor (2019), Akuapem Twi Kyerew Kronkron (2012), Biblia (2010)



exact and useful interpretation. It reveals the following: What the author(s) meant what they said, what led them to say what they said, and why did they say that then?

It also uses Erwin Panofsky's iconographic analysis, also known as *semiotics*, which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form (Willette, 2013). In other words, this method seeks to appreciate the meaning an art of illustration had at the time it was made. It often makes use of symbolism to generate narrative, which in turn develops a work's meaning. Because it conveys the idea that an image can tell a story, this method asks "What was this artwork for?" (Enger, 2017).

Other secondary materials in relation to the topic were consulted. They include journal articles, commentaries, and other materials that were relevant to the study.

BIBLE IN AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

The Bible is the English rendering of the Greek word *biblios* and *biblia* in Latin meaning "book". It is made up of a various literature, including law, letters, poems, hymns, prophecies, and stories. Christians accept the Bible as a book of faith with greater authority over our lives, and not just a literature book. In the Bible are records of who God is, his abilities and capabilities, and how his children should worship him. It gives adherents of the Christian faith directions as to how to live their lives on earth, both vertically—to God—and horizontally—to fellow individuals.

The Bible has two main divisions—the Old and New Testaments. While the Old Testament has thirty-nine books, the New Testament has twenty-seven. Books of the Old Testament also known as Hebrew Scriptures was written in Hebrew before the time of Jesus Christ. Hence, it became the Scriptures he knew and used. Old Testament book are further divided into three general categories—the Law, Pentateuch or Torah (the first five books), the Prophets, and the Writings. The New Testament books were written after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus in Greek with four main divisions—gospels, history, letters, and revelation.

Not all Christians (or users of the Bible) understand the original languages of the Bible. Hence, are unable to read and understand the content thereof. This makes it difficult for them to know who God is, and how he wants them to live. To curtail this challenge and unceasingly mediate the salvation of Jesus Christ from one culture to another is the enterprise of Bible translation which helps to make God's word easily understandable to the host or recipient culture such as the Ghanaian culture.

BIBLE TRANSLATION AND ILLUSTRATION

Bible translation is a difficult discipline; the "process involves a complex, multidisciplinary effort that is aimed at rendering what is in essence a library of diverse literary genres in the various world languages" (Wendland and Noss, 2013). Thus, in Bible translation, other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, intercultural communication, literary studies, and pragmatics are relied on to support a number of applied and theoretical fields of linguistics and biblical studies (Wendland and Noss, 2013). It involves making the word of God culturally



relevant, original, and appreciable to the indigenes while rendering it in a manner consistent with the concepts of the original languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

According to West (2015), Bible translation is the dominant form of African biblical hermeneutics, for many African translators are “a significant pool of biblical expertise”. The import of this shows that “the Bible is the most translated and retranslated book in the world [in general, and Africa in particular]” (Wendland and Noss, 2013). This enables local indigenes to understand the word of God in their language, which they are able to understand concepts and themes, and relate with. It even gets more interesting when biblical texts are illustrated to help readers get a clear understanding of the text, for what the text speaks is what is put into illustration. This is corroborated by McEwan (2021) who postulates that the ubiquity of New and Old Testaments images in art originate from the need to visually illustrate and spiritually inspire largely illiterate audiences in an emotional—rather than intellectual—manner.

The *NLT Art of Life Holy Bible*, an example of an illustrated Bible contains 450 pen-style illustrations. Haahr (2021) reveals that the essence of including illustrations in Bible is to exhibit and showcase God’s very tangible and instantly relatable creation. Aside catching the eyes of readers and inviting them to read, it also makes the Bible become informative and edifying, for readers are able to relate with accompanying arts. This helps them to relate God’s Word directly to God’s World; the biblical stories are stories that have taken place in our world (Haahr, 2021). For example, by drawing a sycamore tree which is uncommon in our environment (Africa), Bible readers are able to get a clearer picture of God’s creation, which gives them a clearer understanding. This makes the Bible a very physical, real and realistic book. Illustrations such as botanical plants and zoological species, non-mythical animals, and biblical characters like the Magi, and others are included in some mother-tongue Bibles such as the selected Ghanaian Bibles under study.

EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 2:11

Background to the text

According to tradition, the book of Matthew—the first Gospel—is generally ascribed to Matthew the Levi, a tax collector, whom Jesus called to be a member of his disciples (Mark 3:18; Matt 9:9; 10:3; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). Most scholars believe that this gospel was written from Antioch,² where there was a vibrant Jewish and Gentile Christian community, during the 80s AD, after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans in 70 AD (Vanlaningham, 2014). There are other internal evidences which suggests a pre-70 AD date.³ We can safely fix the date between 50 and 90 AD (NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, 2016).

Inferred from the text, the author was evidently an early Jewish Christian who was well-educated. He wrote the book with a strong Jewish flavour. With this, the book is unlikely to be

² Others also think it was written in the Holy Land. See: The NIV Study Bible (2011).

³ The mention of Sadducees in Matthew 3:7; 16:1-12 suggests their existence but fade from significance after AD 70. “Leave your offering there before the altar” as written by Matthew to have been said by Jesus could mean that the altar was in existence, for Jesus would probably not have done it if no altar remained after AD 70.



written to Gentiles, but Jewish believers who possibly disagreed amongst themselves about the import of the Law.⁴ The author's purpose is for his hearers to know that Jesus of Nazareth was the One who fulfilled the OT prophecies about the Messiah, the Son of David, King of the Jews, Immanuel, and the King of the world (Vanlaningham, 2014).

To give it an artistic touch, the author carefully arranged this masterpiece in fivefold division which gives the impression that Matthew modelled his book on the structure of the Pentateuch or as a new Torah. These divisions are around five great discourses, each of which is in relation to the Kingdom of Heaven: Sermon on the Mount (The Ethics of the Kingdom) in chapters 5-7; The Commissioning the Twelve (The Mission of the Kingdom) in chapter 10; The Parables (The Nature of the Kingdom) in chapter 13; Community Instructions (The Governance of the Kingdom) in chapter 18, and The Olivet Discourse (The Future of the Kingdom) in chapters 23-25. Each of the discourse ends with a similar refrain that "when Jesus has finished saying these things" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), clearly affirming the artistic touch of the author. Aside having a fitting prologue (chapters 1-2) which touch on the genealogy and birth of the Messiah, the material has a challenging epilogue (28:16-20) which calls disciples of Jesus to the Great Commission.

The Greek Text under Study

καὶ ἔλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν.

Transliteration

kai elthontes eis tēn oikian eidon to paidion meta Marias tēs mētros autou, kai pesontes prosekunēsan autō, kai anoixantes tous thēsauros autōn prosenenkan autō dōra, chruson kai libanon kai smurnan.

Delimitation of the Text

The text under study falls under the prologue in its remotest context sense. The story begins from chapter 2 where baby Jesus is born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod (2:1). Upon seeing Jesus' star rising, the wise men decided to come and worship him; hence, came to inquire from King Herod in Jerusalem (2:2). Being greatly disturbed of the news about Jesus' birth, he (King Herod) summoned an emergency meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked where the Messiah was supposed to be born (2:3-4). They gave Bethlehem in Judea as the answer (2:5-6). Calling the wise men for a private meeting, the king broke the news to them and told them to revert after finding him so that he can go on visit (2:7-8). Immediately after leaving the king's presence to search for baby Jesus, the star (Jesus' star) which had led them but disappeared on reaching Jerusalem re-appeared to them again, and led them to where baby Jesus was—in a house, not manger. They were filled with joy (2:9-

⁴ Unlike Mark who is not much concern with Jewish traditions, Matthew takes time to explain the Jewish customs. For example, in Matthew 5:1-9 (*c.f.* Mark 7:1-13), Matthew presents Jesus as a new Moses and the teachings of Jesus as a new Torah. Again, he mentions the Hebrew Scriptures and refers to Old Testament figures normally, to establish that Jesus fulfils Jewish prophecy. Matthew cites Hosea 11:1 in the birth narrative of Jesus (Matt 2:15) to prove that Jesus fulfils what was spoken by the LORD through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" (KJV).



10). On reaching there brought about the text under study: *kai elthontes eis tēn oikian eidon to paidion meta Marias tēs mētros autou, kai pesontes prosekunēsan autō, kai anoixantes tous thēsauros autōn prosenenkan autō dōra, chruson kai libanon kai smurnan.*

The Magi's visitation to baby Jesus in the house- Matthew 2:11

The sentence begins with the conjunction *kai*, clearly indicating a connection between the previous sentence and the text under discussion. The next words following are *elthontes eis*, which means “having come into”. This affirms that the magi really left the presence of the king and found themselves in *tēn oikian* “the house” baby Jesus was staying, not *phatnē* “manger”. The article *tēn* “the” places much emphasis to the place baby Jesus was staying, the house. Barnes (2002) is thorn between referring to the house as the place baby Jesus was born or the place where they [baby Jesus and Mary] lived at the time. But Matthew tells us that baby Jesus was found in the house which is not the same as a manger, which settles the case. This is affirmed by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (2002) who believe that baby Jesus was found in the house, not the stable. This is because, they [the Magi] came days, months, or possibly even years later to Jerusalem to look for Jesus, and not as early as the shepherds did (in Luke 2:8-20); they came from a far place—from eastern lands (Matt 2:1), a vague point of origin that left room for many subsequent hypotheses.

The subject to the verb *ela* in action is a masculine plural, testifying that the Magi were more than one. What happened afterwards when the Magi entered the house the star had rested on? They *eidon to paidion* “found the child” they had travelled on days to search for. They found the child *meta Marias tēs metros autou* “with Mary the mother of him” all in the house. Thus, the star which led the Magi from the East to disappear in Jerusalem, and later to re-appear, led them to the house baby Jesus and mother were staying, and rested on their house. On seeing baby Jesus in the house, they fell down with a lofty spiritual homage. The focus of falling down was to baby Jesus and not to the mother. *kai pesontes* “and having fallen down,” the Magi *prosekunēsan auto* “worshipped him,” clearly showing that their mission is accomplished; that is what brought them to Judah. Was that all that the Magi did? Matthew tells us that immediately after worshipping him [baby Jesus], they opened their treasure [boxes], clearly showing that the Magi had boxes with valuable objects costing a great deal of money. This is not far from the truth because they travelled from far east and would carry other materials for their upkeep, which were kept in their treasure boxes. According to Clarke (1998), the people of the east never appeared before kings and great personages, without a present in their hands. Thus, they would bring out from their treasure boxes gifts supposed to be given to people of reverence when they appear before them. Hence, the Magi recognised Jesus with reverence as a king, even from his infancy and gave him surprise. What surprise was that? *kai anoixantes tous thēsauros autōn* “And having opened the treasures of them” *prosenenkan autō dōra* “they offered to him gifts” which were *chruson* “gold” *kai libanon* “and frankincense” *kai smurnan* “and myrrh” as emblematic of the divinity, regal office, and manhood of Christ (Clarke, 1998). To Clarke (1998), the Magi [brought from their treasure boxes] and offered baby Jesus “incense as their God; gold as their king; and myrrh, as united to a human body, subject to suffering and death.” Adding on, he believes these gifts were emblematic of the divinity, regal office and manhood of Christ. In affirming Jesus’ kingship, Barnes (2002) adds that the gifts were presented to him [baby Jesus] as King of the Jews, because they [Magi] supposed he was to be a distinguished prince and conqueror; “it was customary at the birth of a prince to show respect for him by making him presents or offerings of this kind.” Missler (2006) holds that there were



more to the gifts presented by the Magi but only the three were mentioned by the evangelist because they are prophetic.

Reflection of the text

From the discussed text, the Magi found baby Jesus in a house which was not the same as the place he was born, manger. Baby Jesus was there with his mother. They recognised baby Jesus as a king immediately they entered the house, and gave him a lofty spiritual homage by falling down and worshipping him, not his mother, Mary. They afterwards brought from their treasure [boxes] and presented three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—to baby Jesus as a distinguished prince and conqueror.

The text did not mention the number of magi who presented the gifts to baby Jesus. However, there are assumptions that they were three based on the gifts they presented, which is made to be seen as fact based on its consistent repetition. This assertion is problematic, for two persons could have presented three gifts. In that case, one presented a gift and the other two gifts from the other. In another instance, more than three people could have also presented the three gifts, where one did not present anything. So, what number of magi visited Jesus now that we know that they were more than one, for their case is in plural?

THE MAGI

The word “Magi”, according to Missler (2006), is the Latinized form of *Magoi*, ancient Greek transliteration of the Persian original. It is the plural form for Magus, also called Wise Men, in Christian tradition (iLumina Gold: P&T edition, 2004). As a term, magi is used in both good and evil sense (Edersheim, 2012). It implies the practice of magical arts in the former case, and to those Eastern great, powerful men, who were priests and with much deep knowledge among the Medes, Persians, Zoroastrians and Babylonians, in the latter case. It is to these latter that the Magi spoken of by the evangelist must have belonged. Adding on to their description, Herodotus, together with Plutarch and Strabo suggest that the Magi were partly responsible for ritual and cultic life (supervising sacrifices and prayers) and partly responsible as royal advisers to the courts of the East (iLumina Gold: P&T edition, 2004). They [the Magi] also had a deep knowledge in the movement of the stars and other phenomena, so they were often utilised by the rulers of the East in matters of astrology and interpretation of dreams to determine affairs of state (Herodotus, 2013). Their roles made them very important, powerful people of their day. Matthew possibly captured them in his story as a way of getting the testimony of high ranked scientific authorities to verify the royal birth of Jesus.

Scholarly views on the number of Magi who visited Baby Jesus

Matthew never touched on the number of magi who visited Jesus for obvious reasons known best to himself. His silence has allowed individuals to suggest different numbers from two to 12, and even beyond. No wonder, it seems to be accepted generally as three magi visited baby Jesus because of the three gifts they presented and its consistent repetition. Were they really three? There are two main schools of thought on this issue—Eastern and Western traditions.

According to Landau (2012), the Eastern tradition gives “Shir,” an extreme place in the far east as where the Magi hail. It holds that the Magi are descendants of Adam’s son, Seth, who



received a prophecy from his father Adam about the coming of a star that would signify the birth of God in human form. This prophecy, according to holders of this view, was written down and transmitted through the generations by the Magi—Seth’s offspring—in expectation of the coming star. According to Landau (2022), it gives twelve or possibly more to be the number of magi who visited baby Jesus, and not three. However, their number did not correspond to the number of gifts they gave, possibly because they gave three gifts to fulfill biblical prophecy.⁵

The Western tradition on the other hand maintains that three magi visited baby Jesus, possibly based on the number of gifts they presented; representing the three sons of Noah and their progeny (Missler, 2006). Holders to this view give Bithisarea (Balthasar), Melichior (Melchior), and Gathaspa (Gasper) as names for the Magi.

In opposing view, Theophil (2012) quoting van Dyke asserts that the Magi were four, and not three. But the fourth, by name Artaban, did not see baby Jesus at his infancy; he met his absence after the other three had visited. After wandering for 33 years in search for Jesus, he finally found him at Golgotha, worn and wearied, ill and ready to die, with his priceless pearl in his hands as present to him. Artaban used the gift to exchange a girl’s freedom and this act was appreciated by Jesus as something done for him instead. In effect, the fourth magi visited Jesus and gave him gift, which was used to exchange a girl’s freedom, for and on behalf of Jesus, and he [Jesus] appreciated his [Artaban’s] kind gesture. According to this view, four magi visited baby Jesus, but the fourth one came in late.

Summary and Reflection

The discussion so far reveals that there is no concrete figure on the number of magi who visited baby Jesus. Their number ranges from three to 12, and even beyond. The consistent repetition of the Western tradition has made this view popular compared to the others. Even with the popular one, its basis is on the number of gifts presented, and not on the persons. So, the number of magi who visited baby Jesus is unknown and cannot be ascertained. This stand is corroborated by Edersheim (2012). For this reason, giving a particular number becomes problematic. To avoid this challenge and among other reasons, Matthew did not provide their number in his account.

PROBLEMATIC ILLUSTRATION OF MATTHEW 2:11 IN SELECTED GHANAIAN BIBLES

Ghana is a West African country with a total population of 30,832,019, in 16 regions per distribution, with Accra as the capital (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). The nation has 8 major ethnic groups which include the Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Gurma, Guan, Grusi, and Mande that break into more than sixty smaller ones (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022).⁶ All these ethnic groups have their dialect or mother-tongue that identifies them as

⁵ “Vast caravans of camels will converge on you, the camels of Midian and Ephah. The people of Sheba will bring gold and frankincense and will come worshipping the Lord” (Isaiah 60:6, NLT). Though myrrh was not mentioned in Isaiah’s prophecy because Jesus’ death was behind him. See; Missler (2006).

⁶ The following are the population for these major ethnic groups: Akan (45.7%), Mole-Dagbani (18.5%), Ewe (12.8%), Ga-Adangbe (7.1%), Gurma (6.4%), Guan (3.2%), Grusi (2.7%), and Mande (2.0%). The other ethnic groups is 1.6% of the population.

people belonging to a common ancestry. The Bible translation teams in Ghana have also contributed enormously for some of these ethnic groups, including the minors to the owning of mother-tongue Bibles. As of now, there are 43 Bibles—both Full and New Testament Bibles—in different Ghanaian dialects for 42 ethnic groups (Asamoah, 2022). These Bibles help Ghanaians to hear God speak to them in their dialect which help them to accept the gospel message as non-alien, for it comes from their own environment. Some of these Bibles have illustrations in them on some of the texts to help readers get a pictorial view of the written text. In addition is to help Bible users elucidate ideas from the text through illustration (Pomerleau, 2021).

However, there are some illustrations in selected Ghanaian Bibles that give a different interpretation to the written text and tend to mislead the Bible users. One of such is the illustration of Matthew 2:11 in the following selected Ghanaian Bibles: Naawuni Kundi Kasi Din Mali Diuterokanɔnikal Litaafinima (2011), Asante-Twi Twere Kronkron (2012), Asante-Twi Twere Kronkron (2017), Ahyerele Krongron (2019), Baebor (2019), Akuapem Twi Kyerew Kronkron (2012), and Biblia (2010).

The illustration of Matthew 2:11 in the Selected Ghanaian Bibles

These selected Ghanaian Bibles have a common picture for the visit of the Magi to baby Jesus, which the illustrator wants it to give a vivid description of what actually transpired in their [Magi] meeting with baby Jesus who was with his mother, Mary. It is also to aid users of the Bible to get a picture view of the incidence, for illustrations have the power to communicate ideas through vivid storytelling, and enhance their appeal to readers through visual effect.

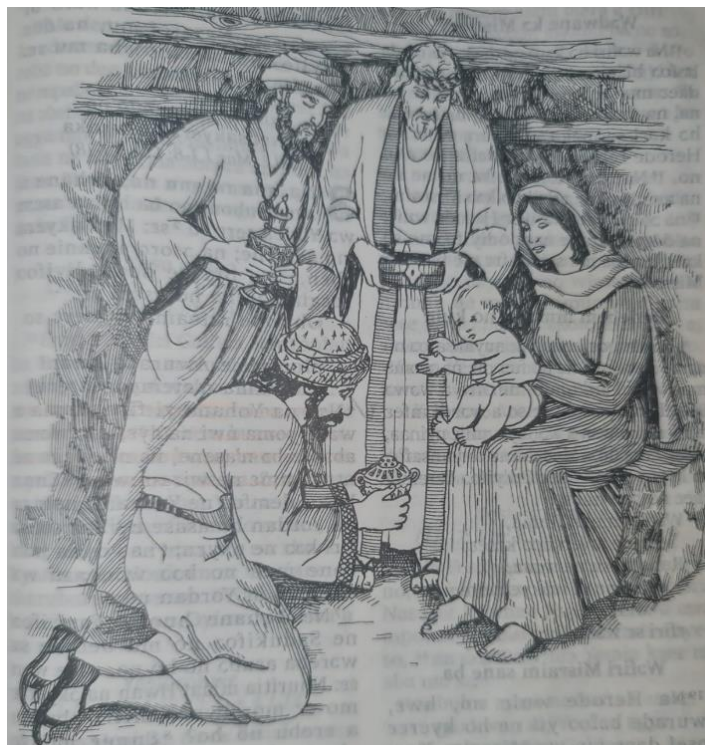


Figure 1: *The Magi's visit to Baby Jesus by Horrace Knowles*



Pre-Iconographical Description

The illustration of Matthew 2:11 in selected Ghanaian Bibles was penned by Horace Knowles in 1994. The diagram depicts five main characters—four males and one female in a house that looks like a traditional African (or Ghanaian) one. The four males consist of three adults and a baby, sitting on the lap of a woman—possibly his mother, and held in her hands. The men are in elaborate robes with cloak and sandals, clearly depicting who they are as priests responsible for ritual and cultic life and partly responsible as royal advisers with deep knowledge in the movement of the stars, and where they come from—far distant land. Two are with turbans and the third with a rope around his head. While two of them are standing, one is kneeling. They are in front of the woman [Mary] and her baby [Jesus], all holding items. While one makes the attempt of presenting an item, the others are looking on. The woman is also in a straight dress with cloth around her head descending to the waist, and sitting. She is sitting on a wood or stone and without sandals, a clear practice of an African woman at home. The baby on the lap of the woman stretches his hand as if he wants to receive the gifts by himself from one of the Magi who is kneeling. This gives a pictorial description that the gifts were indeed for the baby, and he likes them. The Magi are about presenting the items in turns to the baby, though Mary would take it on her son's behalf at last. Two of the gifts are in cups or jars and the other in a small box, giving a hint of what each will carry. All these happened in a room.

Iconographical Analysis & Interpretation

From the picture, the story tells that three people (wise men) visited baby Jesus (and his mother, Mary) in a room with three gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh, each carrying one. By then, Jesus had grown to the point that he could sit on the lap of his mother. This is to say that the Magi did not visit baby Jesus immediately he was born in the manger, but waited for some time. They presented their items in turns, with the first giving his while kneeling, and the others looking on.

Relationship between the written text and illustration

From the text, there are a number of information from the illustration which relate exactly with the text, which according to McEwan (2021), visually illustrates and spiritually inspires Ghanaian illiterate audiences to a large extent in an emotional—rather than intellectual—manner.

The Magi found baby Jesus in a house which was not the same as the place he was born, manger. This is perfectly illustrated in the diagram, for is nothing to think that the Magi visited Jesus in a manger. Secondly, when the Magi entered the house, they saw baby Jesus and his mother. This is clearly captured in the illustration to the extent that as a baby, Jesus is seen sitting on the lap of his mother, one of the practical ways mothers hold their babies. Again, the Magi recognised baby Jesus as a king immediately they entered the house, and gave him a lofty spiritual homage by falling down in worship, not to his mother, Mary. The illustration again shows this in their demeanour and deportment. In the diagram, their outward behaviour and the way some of them are standing in relation to etiquette tells the mood they find themselves—a reverence one. And lastly, the Magi presented three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—to baby Jesus as a distinguished prince and conqueror. This is also illustrated clearly in the diagram; three gifts are in the hands of the Magi to be presented in turns to baby Jesus, which will be possibly carried by the mother.



On the other hand, there seem to be some discrepancies comparing the illustration with the text as penned by Matthew. The major challenge is with the number of magi who visited baby Jesus. From the text, the evangelist did not provide a number for obvious reasons best known to himself. But the illustration gives three which is not the same as the author said. This misleads users of the Bible who are unable to access the original source (Greek) to take it as though the exact number of magi who visited baby Jesus. But this was not stated by the author. Or is it that the illustrator used the three to represent the number of magi who visited baby Jesus to assist readers to get a pictorial view of how baby Jesus was visited? Even if that is the illustrator's goal, they did not add any explanation which defeats Blackburn (1896) assertion that "there should be a clearer distinction between fact and fiction, between news and pictures" when information of such is being used. Another challenge with the illustration is on how the Magi paid lofty homage to baby Jesus in the form of worship. From the text, it is identified that the Magi fell down and worshipped baby Jesus. But in the illustration, only one person is seen to be kneeling, not even lying down. This does not bring out the true reflection of how the Magi expressed their worship to the king. Another thing the illustration did not capture was the treasure boxes the Magi carried from which their gifts came from. From the text, the Magi brought out the presents from their treasure boxes after they entered the house. Thus, they possibly carried the treasure boxes into the house where baby Jesus was and brought from them the gifts, and presented to him. These were not captured possibly because of their less relevance to the story or due to space. But it would not have been bad if they were captured to bring the full view of what transpired in the text, for illustrations are intended to appeal to readers through visual effect, rather than to narrate. Chu (2018) is of the opinion that these shortcomings to a large extent do not give the text a better interpretation by way of illustration for Ghanaian Bible readers to have a deeper impression and understanding of the writing. Hence, Haahr (2021) believes that this raises concern for Ghanaian Bible readers and users to relate with the accompanying arts.

CONCLUSION

Without iota of doubt, art of illustration in Bibles aids readers and students of the Bible, with Ghanaian Bible users and readers not an exempt, to get a clearer meaning of a written text. Aside using it to elucidate ideas/concepts and tell stories (Pomerleau, 2021), these illustrations explain, clarify, and or visually represent a written text which enable Africa Bible users and reading community, in general, and Ghanaians, in particular, to understand the text.

It is realised from the study that Bible translation and Bible illustrations complement each other, for while the former enables local indigenes to understand the word of God in their language, which they are able to understand concepts and themes, and relate with, the latter gives a pictorial view of the written text. Both enable the word of God to be relevant to the host culture, for they see the gospel message and illustrations relating to their environment and originating from their culture. Aside helping Ghanaians to understand the text within their cultural settings, and catching their eyes and inviting them to read, Haahr (2012) believes it also makes their mother-tongue Bible become informative and edifying, for they are able to relate with accompanying arts. This makes the Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles become very physical, real and realistic book easy to relate with.



However, the illustration under study is making Ghanaians to have conflicting views with regards to the text and illustration. This makes them to either rely on the text (especially those with original language background) or the illustration (on the part of the illiterates). Or worse of all, to disregard the two as they are not in tandem, an example of the illustration under study. The Bible Society of Ghana and other Bible translation groups must drop the current illustration on Matthew 2:11 or come out with a new illustration that meet the religio-cultural settings and the text of the author.

Going forward, the following are proposals for consideration by Bible translation groups in Africa in general and Ghana in particular for Bible illustrations that would meet both the text of the author and the religio-cultural background of the local indigenes.

1. Existing illustrations in African/Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles must be given a second look like the illustration under study. Where there is conflicting information from the two—the Biblical text and illustration, the illustration should either be dropped or re-designed to meet the intended meaning of the text.
2. Where an illustrator would persist to use an illustration to represent something which the author did not say, the illustrator must make it known to the readers and users of the Bible to avoid misunderstanding. For example, the 3 Magi used by the illustrator which was not mentioned by Matthew should have been made known.
3. Bible illustrations used by others in different context say, United States of America or United Kingdom, must not be transported for use in African/Ghanaian environment; they have different religio-cultural settings. Africans/Ghanaians must design their own Bible illustrations.
4. To give a precise or faithful illustration, an exegesis of the text under study must be conducted to know what the author meant. This will help the illustrator to know what the author said and what they did not say. Materials such as Bible commentaries, dictionaries, concordances etc. could be consulted for further information to a text.
5. The surrounding environment of a text is always found in the context or pericope. Illustrators must take the context or pericope within which the text is located into consideration to make illustration of the said text real.
6. The actions of the characters in the text must correspond to the illustration to make the text meaningful to the readers.
7. Bible illustration must come from African/Ghanaian culture, for it must be culturally relevant, original, and appreciable to the indigenes while rendering it in a manner consistent with the concepts of the original languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. For this reason, African/Ghanaian Bible illustrations must be done by illustrators who are abreast with African/Ghanaian traditions and culture.
8. In matters where the text is not clear, and there seems to be division on the subject, the illustrator must not take a stand with a design. This can mislead readers and users of the Bible to believe in what is illustrated.
9. Bible illustrators must know that not all text would need illustrations.



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