THE PARALLEL WORLDS OF CLASSICAL ART AND TEXT

The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text is the first study to consider the relationship between artists and texts throughout Classical Antiquity and to cover the entire range of illustrated text from traditional literary to technical works. By systematically applying new and objective criteria to judge the fidelity between picture and text, Jocelyn Penny Small makes it clear that artists illustrate stories, not texts. Small argues that artistic transmissions follow the model of oral, not textual, transmission, where the variant rules and there is no original. Pictures on vases, she demonstrates, should not be used to reconstruct lost literary works. Finally, Small offers an analysis of literary sources on pictures in texts to prove that the appearance of the first illustrated literary classical texts occurred at the end of the late Roman Republic.

Jocelyn Penny Small is a Professor II at Rutgers University in the Department of Art History. A recipient of Woodrow Wilson, Guggenheim, and other fellowships, she is the author of books and articles on various aspects of Classical art, most recently Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Literacy and Memory in Classical Antiquity.
THE PARALLEL WORLDS OF CLASSICAL ART AND TEXT

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The parallel worlds of classical art and text

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For Toby Jacoby, Leslie Fleck Newman, Constance Wiesman,
and Joanne Nelson
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"There is no phenomenon, however complex, which when examined carefully will not turn out to be even more complex."

Psychologist David Krech (in Gazzaniga 1988a, 175)

My research belongs among Zeno’s paradoxes. Twice now, when I thought I was going to write about time and space in classical pictorial narrative, I have written something else that I naively believed would merely be a chapter or two of introduction. For the previous book, I realized that one could not have a concept of time without memory, and then it ever so slowly became apparent that the issue of memory and its “obverse,” literacy, could not be dealt with briefly. And so I wrote Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Literacy and Memory in Classical Antiquity. This time I felt confident that the “preliminary” sections were done and that once I had discussed the issue of artists’ use of texts, I would be able – finally – to tackle time and space. I even was very fortunate to receive a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2000 expressly for that purpose. To no avail! After I sent off a draft of the first three “chapters” to colleagues, I did a word count and realized I already had a book. All that was lacking were an introduction and conclusion. Artists’ use of text for over a millennium is not a tiny topic. Nor have I by any means exhausted the subject. I do believe, however, that my next book has a good chance of being on time and space, if only because I am not intending to write about it.

The basic research for this book was completed in the summer of 2001, and references from publications after that date, with a few exceptions, could not be included. Abbreviations for citations follow the modern convention of last name of the author and year published with the exception of abbreviations long standard in the field, such as ABV, where citation by author and year is irksome. When known, authors’ names are given in full for ease of searching in library indices. Similarly, journal names are not abbreviated. I admit to a somewhat
idiosyncratic method for the date of publication. I add a letter of the alphabet after the year (e.g., Small 1997a), even if I cite only one something by that author. I developed that practice when working on an open-ended database where it was obvious that years later additional works by the same author would be added, and I thought it neither efficient nor wise to retroactively change all the existing references. I am redundant in giving the year published in both the abbreviation and the full citation, because I like having the year where I expect to see it. In the notes, I try to give the author’s name for citations of entries in encyclopedias. For references to the LIMC I give the author’s name if I refer to the commentary, but omit it for simple bibliographical citations of individual objects in the catalog sections.

I have given up on consistency in transliterating Greek. I use the forms I am most accustomed to. I find the recent habit of writing “Aiskhulos,” for instance, really strange and prefer “Aeschylus,” though I write “Telephos.” Then, in Chapter 6, when I discussed “Polyngotos,” I thought it jarring to the reader to have me use “-os,” when the translation from the Loeb Classical Library used “-us.” So I went with “Polyngotus.” Worse yet, as friends who read the manuscript pointed out, I am not always consistent. Please forgive me.

Acquiring photographs is always a long and arduous task, especially in this case, when nearly thirty collections are involved. I am very grateful to all the curators and staff who made the process easier. The collections are acknowledged in the captions. In addition, I try to cite in the notes at least one photograph for every object I mention. For those references, I emphasize basic handbooks, etc. that are readily available. I have made no attempt to give full bibliographies, which are quite large in some instances. I also give full information for each object’s current location, including inventory numbers.

Rutgers University during the course of my work on this book generously supported my research with grants and faculty leaves. In particular, I thank again Ryoko Toyama for her enthusiastic encouragement. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the graduate students in the Art History Department and my colleague, Professor Elizabeth MacLachlan, with whom I have twice taught a course on the rise of the illustrated text from Antiquity through the Middle Ages. Professor MacLachlan has also tirelessly answered my questions about medieval art.

The subject of this book has been gestating for a number of years, and I have enjoyed discussions with a number of colleagues. Some of them, whom I asked about specific points, are acknowledged at the appropriate places in the notes. Others have been of more general assistance: Dee Clayman, A. A. Donohue, Ingrid Edlund, and James Tatum. I very much appreciate the patience of the readers of the infamous first draft that seemed like a few
Preface

columns short of a building: A. A. Donohue, Carol Mattusch, Christine Perkell, Brunilde S. Ridgway, Barbara Tversky, and Susan Woodford. Comments from the readers for Cambridge University Press saved me from some really silly errors that I should have caught. One day I hope to be able to count quadrigas accurately. I also had the pleasure of giving a talk on the topic at Bryn Mawr College in the Fall of 2000. Claire Lyons kindly invited me to participate in a colloquium on “copies” that she organized for a joint session of the Archaeological Institute of America/American Philological Association in 2001; part of the last chapter formed the nub of that talk. This year I presented the section on the Vatican Vergil as part of a panel arranged by Maura Lafferty for the Medieval Latin Studies Group: *Literacy and Latinity in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia, PA, January 2002. Many thanks are also due to Beatrice Rehl, my editor at Cambridge University Press, for her exemplary and remarkably swift shepherding of the manuscript through the various stages of publication.

Finally, as is most appropriate, the dedication. In 1995 my elementary school class from PS 15 in Crestwood, New York, part of Yonkers, held an informal reunion in Crestwood to celebrate our fiftieth birthdays. The entire group had not been together since senior year in high school, but something like fourteen of the possible seventeen came from near – in my case – and far, like Mexico and California. It was a magical three days. This book is dedicated to the four, in addition to me, who still live in the “area.” We continue to meet for dinner for our individual birthdays and whenever there is a “suitable” occasion, such as another classmate visiting. They recognize the heavy responsibility that comes with being dedicatees, even if it is a shared duty. They have graciously agreed to accept full responsibility for any errors that remain in this book despite my best efforts.