Homer in Stone

The Tabulae Iliaceae are a group of carved stone plaques created in the context of early imperial Rome that use miniature images and text to retell stories from Greek myth and history – chief among them Homer's Iliad and the fall of Troy. In this book, Professor Petrain moves beyond the narrow focus on the literary and iconographic sources of the Tabulae that has characterized earlier scholarship. Drawing on ancient and modern theories of narrative, he explores instead how the tablets transfer the Troy saga across both medium and culture as they create a system of visual storytelling that relies on the values and viewing habits of Roman viewers. The book comprehensively situates the tablets in the urban fabric of Augustan Rome. New photographs of the tablets, together with re-editions and translations of key inscriptions, offer a new, clearer view of these remarkable documents of the Roman appropriation of Greek epic.

David Petrain received his Ph.D. in Classical Philology from the Department of Classics at Harvard University. He is a scholar of Greek and Latin language and literature with expertise in the art and material culture of ancient Rome. His articles about ancient poetry and other texts written on papyrus or inscribed in stone have appeared in the Transactions of the American Philological Association, Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik, and Mnemosyne. His co-edited volume, The muse at play: Riddles and wordplay in Greek and Latin poetry (with Jan Kwapisz and Mikołaj Szymański), was published in 2012.
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The Greek culture of the Roman Empire offers a rich field of study. Extraordinary insights can be gained into processes of multicultural contact and exchange, political and ideological conflict, and the creativity of a changing, polyglot empire. During this period, many fundamental elements of Western society were being set in place: from the rise of Christianity, to an influential system of education, to long-lived artistic canons. This series is the first to focus on the response of Greek culture to its Roman imperial setting as a significant phenomenon in its own right. To this end, it will publish original and innovative research in the art, archaeology, epigraphy, history, philosophy, religion, and literature of the empire, with an emphasis on Greek material.

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The *Tabulae Iliaceae* in their Roman context

DAVID PETRAIN
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Preface

I began studying the *Tabulae Iliacae* more than a decade ago, when I first encountered a black-and-white image of the *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina* and began poring over the version of Homer’s *Iliad* and the fall of Troy that it unfolded through an intricate configuration of image and text. My work is still animated by a sense of fascination with the tablets, and by a desire to vindicate the interest and complexity of the stories they have to offer. Gratifyingly enough, I am not the only one who in recent years has been taking a second look at the *Tabulae Iliacae*. As I finished my own dissertation on the tablets in 2006, I became aware of the monograph by Nina Valenzuela Montenegro, which sets the study of the images and social context of the tablets on a new footing. And when my manuscript for the present book was substantially complete, I learned that Michael Squire was about to put out a new treatment of the *Tabulae*, one that builds on his earlier work with image and text in the ancient world. Though Squire and I naturally cover some of the same ground, our books are independent and, I hope, complementary: objects as rich as the *Tabulae Iliacae* only benefit from having different types of questions asked of them and being observed from different points of view.

I have been helped along the way by many people and institutions. The American Academy in Rome with its community of scholars and artists provided an ideal environment in which to complete my dissertation. A stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a summer residency at the University of Cincinnati as a Tytus Fellow allowed me to develop the project further, and it was as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study that I revised the manuscript with the benefit of incomparable library resources, and a group of incredibly generous colleagues. A fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities helped to make that sabbatical possible.

I owe a considerable debt to the staff and directors of the museums where the tablets are held, for indulging my protracted viewing sessions and being willing to put up with repeat visits. I would like to thank Joan Mertens of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Mathilde Broustet of the
Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and Elena Bianca Di Gioia, Marina Mattei, and Daniela Velestino of the Capitoline Museum in Rome. My especial gratitude goes to Michel Amandry, director at the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale, for allowing me both to photograph the tablets there and to use the photos in this book.

Kathleen Coleman, Gloria Ferrari, and Richard Thomas guided my work at the dissertation stage, and thereafter. I have benefited from the support and advice of Rebecca Beneﬁel, Bettina Bergmann, Farouk Grewing, Peter Holliday, Franco Mondini-Ruiz, and too many others to mention. Michael Squire read the entire book in manuscript and oﬀered invaluable comments that have saved me from gaffes and never failed to be illuminating. I also thank Jaś Elsner and an anonymous reader for many helpful suggestions. The errors that remain after all this belong to me.

My sister Emily, my parents Ovila and Diane, and my grandmother Marguerite Vaillancourt encouraged me when I needed it: their support means the world to me. And without Leo Coleman, ﬁnally, I could never have ﬁnished. He’s not responsible for the errors that remain either, but whatever good there is in the following pages, he has a hand in it.
Acknowledgments


Abbreviations

A–B  Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia, C. Austin and G. Bastianini, eds. (Milan, 2002)

CIG  Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum (Berlin, 1828–1877)

CIL  Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum (Berlin, 1862–)


FGrH Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, F. Jacoby, ed. (Berlin, 1923–1958)

GVI  Griechische Vers-Inschriften I, Grab-Epigramme, W. Peek, ed. (Berlin, 1955)

IG   Inscriptiones Graecae (Berlin, 1903–)


J–M  Griechische Bilderchroniken, O. Jahn and A. Michaelis (Bonn, 1873)

Kaibel Inscriptiones Graecae, volumen xiv: Inscriptiones Italiae et Siciliae, G. Kaibel, ed. (Berlin, 1890)

LfrgrE Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos (Göttingen, 1955–)

LIMC Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (Zurich and Munich / Dusseldorf, 1981–2009)


NP   Der neue Pauly (Stuttgart, 1996–2003)


RE   Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft (Stuttgart, 1893–1978)

Sadurska Les Tables Iliacaues, A. Sadurska (Warsaw, 1964)

SB   Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten (Wiesbaden et al., 1915–1993)

SEG  Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum (Amsterdam, 1923–)
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Sp–A  Pompei alla luce degli scavi nuovi di Via dell’Abbondanza (anni 1910–1923), 2 vols., V. Spinazzola and S. Aurigemma, eds. (Rome, 1953)

TLL  Thesaurus linguae Latinae (Leipzig and Stuttgart, 1900– )