Painting, Ethics, and Aesthetics in Rome

In the first centuries BCE and CE, Roman wall painters frequently placed representations of works of art, especially panel paintings, within their own mural compositions. Nathaniel B. Jones argues that the depiction of panel painting within mural ensembles functioned as a meta-pictorial reflection on the practice and status of painting itself. This phenomenon provides crucial visual evidence for both the reception of Greek culture and the interconnected ethical and aesthetic values of art in the Roman world. Roman meta-pictures, this book reveals, not only navigated social debates on the production and consumption of art, but also created space on the Roman wall for new modes of expression relating to pictorial genres, the role of medium in artistic practice, and the history of painting. Richly illustrated, the volume will be important for anyone interested in the social, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of artworks, in the ancient Mediterranean and beyond.

NATHANIEL B. JONES is Assistant Professor of Art History and Archaeology at Washington University in St. Louis. His research interests include painting, collecting practices, and art-historical thought in Greco-Roman antiquity.
GREEK CULTURE IN THE ROMAN WORLD

Editors

Susan E. Alcock
University of Michigan

Jaś Elsner
Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Simon Goldhill
University of Cambridge

Michael Squire
King's College London

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.

Recent titles in the series

Reading Fiction with Lucian: Fakes, Freaks and Hyperreality
Karen Ní Mheallaigh

Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire under the Severans:
Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian
Adam M. Kemezis

The End of Greek Athletics
Sophie Remijisen

Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era
Fritz Graf

Greek Myths in Roman Art and Culture: Imagery, Values and Identity in Italy, 50 BC–AD 250
Zahra Newby

Visual Style and Constructing Identity in the Hellenistic World:
Nemrud Dağ and Commagene under Antiochos I
Miguel John Versluys

Author and Audience in Vitruvius' De architectura
Marden

Fitzpatrick Nichols

Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Augustan Rome: Rhetoric, Criticism and Historiography
Richard Hunter and Casper C. de Jonge

Painting, Ethics, and Aesthetics in Rome
Nathaniel B. Jones
Painting, Ethics, and Aesthetics in Rome

NATHANIEL B. JONES
Washington University
To my family
Contents

List of Figures [page viii]
List of Plates [xv]
Acknowledgments [xvi]
List of Abbreviations [xviii]

Introduction: The Painting of Painting in Ancient Rome [1]
1 Winckelmann and the Cultural Dynamics of Painting [9]
2 Disrupting the Frame [47]
3 The Ethics and Politics of Art [93]
4 Transparent and Opaque: Medium and Materiality on the Roman Wall [137]
5 Paradigms, Ensembles, and Anachronisms [179]
Epilogue: Reflection and Reflexivity [230]

Bibliography [235]
Index [283]

The plate section can be found between pp. 142 and 143.
Figures


1.3 Engraving of the Actor King, after Antichità di Ercolano esposte, vol. 4, 195: pl. 51. [17]

1.4 Knucklebones Players, painting on marble signed by Alexandros the Athenian, first century BCE to first century CE. MANN 9562. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/ Getty Images. [23]

1.5 Atrium and Fauces, Samnite House, Herculaneum, late second to early first century BCE. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images. [41]

1.6 Red Room, Augustan Villa at Boscotrecase, late first century BCE. MANN 147501. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images. [43]

1.7 Ixion Room, House of the Vettii, Pompeii, late first century CE. Photo: Hulton Archive/Getty Images. [44]

2.1 Fresco from Room g, Villa of the Papyri, Herculaneum, mid-first century BCE. Drawing by Allison Méndez. [51]

2.2 Room 4, Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii, mid-first century BCE. Photo: Mario Laporta/AFP/Getty Images. [53]

List of Figures


2.5 Attic Black-Figure Amphora by Exekias, mid- to late sixth century BCE. Vatican Museums. Photo: DEA Picture Library/De Agostini/Getty Images. [58]

2.6 Attic Red-Figure Kylix attributed to the Foundry Painter, early fifth century BCE. Berlin Antikensammlungen F2294. Photo Johannes Laurentius, Staatliche Museen, Berlin/Art Resource, NY. [59]

2.7 Apulian Red-Figure Krater, mid-fourth century BCE. Metropolitan Museum of Art 50.11.4. Photo: metmuseum.org. [61]

2.8 Ikarios Relief, first century CE. British Museum 1805,0703.123. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum. [63]

2.9 a) Head of Octavian, b) Temple and Cult Statue of Divus Iulius, Denarius, 36 BCE (RRC 540/2). British Museum 2002,0102.4859. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum. [64]

2.10 Sardonyx Cameo of Livia with a bust of the deified Augustus, after 14 CE. Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum IXa95. Photo: KHM Museumsverband. [66]

2.11 Attack of the Laestrygonians, Odyssey Landscapes, Esquiline Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican Museums. Photo: De Agostini/Getty Images. [68]

2.12 Exedra Y, House of the Epigrams, Pompeii (V.1.18), mid- to late first century BCE. After Mau 1882: pl. 4. [70]


2.14 Portrait from the House of Terentius Neo, Pompeii (VII.2.6), mid- to late first century CE. MANN 9058. Photo: Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images. [76]

2.15 Pseudo-tablurnum, House of the Great Altar, Pompeii (VI.16.15), mid- to late first century CE. Photo: Peter Grunwald, D-DAI-Z 78.1239. [78]

2.16 Room 17, House of the Cryptoporticus, Pompeii (I.6.2), mid- to late first century BCE. After Spinazzola 1953: pl. 20. [79]
List of Figures

2.17 Oecus 3, left wall, House of Obellius Firmus, Pompeii (IX.14.4), mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: H. Koppermann, D-DAI-ROM 60.94. [80]

2.18 House of the Vestals, Pompeii (VI.1.7), mid- to late first century CE. Designed by Giuseppe Chiantarelli 1802, engraved by Carlo Cataneo. After Gli ornati delle pareti ed i pavimenti delle stanze dell’antica Pompei incisi in rame, 1838: pl. 5. [82]

2.19 Room of Achilles on Skyros, ceiling decoration, Domus Aurea, Rome, ca.64–68 CE. Photo: Stefano Montesi/Corbis via Getty Images. [83]

2.20 Room 20, floor mosaic, House of the Labyrinth, Pompeii (VI.11.10), mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: E. Pernice, D-DAI-ROM 40.332. [84]

2.21 Oecus 3, rear wall, House of Obellius Firmus, Pompeii (IX.14.4), mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: H. Koppermann, D-DAI-ROM 60.95. [86]

2.22 Decorated sarcophagus with a painter’s workshop, from Panticapaeum, first century CE. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage, Kerch Collection II.1899–81. Photo: Yuri Molodkovets/The State Hermitage Museum. [89]

2.23 Fresco from Room 19, House of the Surgeon, Pompeii (VI.1.10), mid- to late first century CE. MANN 9018. Photo: DEA/L. Pedicini/De Agostini/Getty Images. [90]

3.1 Tetrastyle Oecus, House of Augustus, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: Eric Vandeville/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images. [99]

3.2 Lower Cubiculum, House of Augustus, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: Eric Vandeville/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images. [100]

3.3 Frieze from the Columbarium of the Statilii, Esquiline Hill, Rome, late first century BCE to early first century CE. Museo Nazionale Romano Palazzo Massimo. Photo: Ann Ronan Pictures/Print Collector/Getty Images. [102]

3.4 Temple of Apollo, Pompeii (VII.7.32), mid-first century CE. After Mazois 1838: pl. 19. [104]

3.5 Painting from the portico of the Temple of Apollo, Pompeii (VII.7.32), mid-first century CE. Lithograph after Raoul-Rochette 1844–53: pl. 8. [105]

3.6 Room 4, House of Livia, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. DAIR Archivio VII-69–004. [107]
List of Figures

3.7 Palestrina Nile Mosaic, late second to early first century BCE. Photo: Nimatallah/Art Resource, NY. [111]


3.9 Tomb chamber, Pyramid of Gaius Cestius, Rome, late first century BCE. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images. [131]

3.10 Royal box, theater at Herodium, Judea, late first century BCE. Photo: Tal-rogovski, The Herodium Expedition, The Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. [134]

3.11 Detail, royal box, theater at Herodium, Judea, late first century BCE. Photo: G. Laron. The Herodium Expedition, The Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. [135]

4.1 Tablinum, House of Livia, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Lithograph of right wall by Gregorio Mariani, 1871. After Monumenti Inediti vol. 11, 1880: pl. 22. [139]

4.2 Room 22, House of the Cryptoporticus, Pompeii (I.6.2), mid- to late first century BCE. After Spinazzola 1953: pl. 21. [142]

4.3 Black room, Villa of Agrippa Postumus at Boscotrecase, late first century BCE. Metropolitan Museum of Art 20.192.1. Photo: metmuseum.org. [149]

4.4 Tablinum 92, Praedia of Julia Felix, Pompeii (II.4.3), mid- to late first century CE. MANN 8598. Photo: Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images. [150]

4.5 Cubiculum 46, House of the Labyrinth. Pompeii (VI.11.10), mid-first century BCE. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images. [151]


4.7 Room 23, Villa A (Poppea) at Oplontis, mid-first century BCE. Photo: Scala/Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali/Art Resource, NY. [162]


4.9 Stele of Hegeso, late fifth century BCE. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 3624. Photo: Nimatallah/Art Resource, NY. [170]
List of Figures

4.10 Apulian Red-Figure Volute Krater, attributed the Iliupersis Painter, mid-fourth century BCE. London, British Museum 1849,0518.4. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum. [171]

4.11 Thetis receives the arms of Achilles, from Pompeii (IX.1.7), mid-first century CE. MANN 9529. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images. [174]

4.12 Narcissus, bicipinium, House of Octavius Quartio, Pompeii (II.2.2), mid-first century CE. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images. [176]

4.13 Diana and Actaeon, garden, House of Octavius Quartio, Pompeii (II.2.2), mid-first century CE. Drawing by Allison Méndez. [177]

5.1 Tablinum, House of Livia, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Drawing of Io and Argus panel by A. Sikkard. DAIR Archivio A-VII-69–009. [183]

5.2 Tablinum, House of Livia, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Drawing of Polyphemus and Galatea panel by A. Sikkard. DAIR Archivio A-VII-69–010. [184]

5.3 Io and Argus, House of Meleager, Pompeii (VI.9.2,13), mid- to late first century CE. MANN 9556. Photo Scala/Art Resource, NY. [186]


5.5 Io’s Arrival in Egypt, House of the Duke d’Aumale (VI.7.15), Pompeii, mid- to late first century CE. MANN 9555. Photo: DEA/G. Dagli Orti/De Agostini/Getty Images. [188]

5.6 Polyphemus and Galatea, Villa of Agrippa Postumus at Boscotrecase, late first century BCE. Metropolitan Museum of Art 20.192.17. Photo: metmuseum.org. [191]

5.7 Fall of Icarus, Room A, Villa Imperiale di Pompeii, early first century CE. Photo: Peter Grunwald, D-DAI-Z 83.3357. [199]

5.8 Theseus and the Minotaur, Room A, Villa Imperiale di Pompeii, early first century CE. Photo: Peter Grunwald, D-DAI-Z 83.3353. [200]
5.9 Phaedra and Nurse, Room E, House of Jason, Pompeii (IX.5.18), mid-first century CE. MANN 114322. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images. [202]

5.10 Helen and Paris, Room E, House of Jason, Pompeii (IX.5.18), mid-first century CE. MANN 114321. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images. [203]

5.11 Detail of white-ground panel with Zeus, Cubiculum D, Villa della Farnesina, Rome, late first century BCE. Museo Nazionale Romano Palazzo Massimo. Photo: C. Rossa, D-DAI-ROM 77.1297. [209]


5.13 Detail of fictive panel with musicians, Cubiculum B, Villa della Farnesina, Rome, late first century BCE. Museo Nazionale Romano Palazzo Massimo. Photo: C. Rossa, D-DAI-ROM 77.1380 [211]

5.14 White-ground lekythos, attributed to the Achilles Painter, mid-fifth century BCE. Munich Antikensammlung Schoen 80. [212]

5.15 Room 5, House of the Orchard, Pompeii (1.9.5), early to mid-first century CE. Photo: H. Koppermann, D-DAI-ROM 66.2262. [215]

5.16 Relief plaque with portico, from Capua, first century BCE. MANN 6759. Photo: C. Rossa, D-DAI-ROM 76.1093. [219]

5.17 Terracotta plaque with portico, first century CE. MFA Boston 03.885. Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. [220]

5.18 Hall of the Colossus, Forum of Augustus, Rome, late first century BCE. Photo: H. Schwanke, D-DAI-ROM 82.875. [225]


Plates


2  Room of the Mysteries, Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii, mid-first century BCE. Photo: Leisa Tyler/LightRocket via Getty Images.

3  *Tablinum*, House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto, Pompeii (V.4.a), early to mid-first century CE. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images.

4  Room of the Masks, House of Augustus, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images.


7  *Tablinum*, House of Livia, Palatine Hill, Rome, mid- to late first century BCE. Photo: Giorgio Cosulich/Getty Images.


9  Painting from a villa near Portici, late first century BCE. MANN 8593, 9194, 9413, 9864. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images.

10  Garden Room, Villa of Livia at Primaporta, late first century BCE. Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo. Photo: Vanni Archive/Art Resource, NY


xiv
List of Plates

13 Painting from Pompeii VI.17.41, mid- to late first century BCE. MANN 8594. Photo: Luigi Spina/Electa/Mondadori Portfolio/Getty Images.
Acknowledgments

More people have contributed to this project than I can enumerate. It began as a PhD dissertation at Yale University, and my sincere thanks are due to my committee members, Diana E.E. Kleiner, Milette Gaifman, and Christopher S. Wood, whose early encouragement and guidance were indispensable, and whose patient advice I am just now beginning to fully appreciate.

Material from this project was presented to audiences in Baltimore, Carbondale, Florence, Leicester, New York, Palo Alto, Rome, St. Louis, and Washington, DC, and I am grateful to the audiences at those venues for their questions, comments, and corrections. Conversations with Mont Allen, Margaret Andrews, Fabio Barry, Seth Bernard, Doug Boin, Lisa Çakmak, Robert Coates-Stephens, Martin Devecka, John Fisher, Adrian Ossi, Jess Paga, Maggie Popkin, Andrew Riggsby, Christopher Simon, Jelle Stoop, Yasuko Taoka, Trevor Verrot, and Michael Waters improved the book in substantial ways, revealing unknown facts and pushing me to explore new directions. Richard Teverson’s generosity has been exceptional since the beginning.

Thanks are due to my students and colleagues at Washington University in St. Louis who have discussed various aspects of the project with me and offered guidance both practical and theoretical, general and specific, especially Karen Acton, Marisa Bass, Will Bubelis, Elizabeth Childs, Cathy Keane, Tom Keeline, John Klein, Kristina Kleutghen, Kristin Mann, Angela Miller, Tim Moore, Philip Purchase, Luis Salas, Susan Rotroff, Zoe Stamatopoulou, Ila Sheren, William Wallace, and Kathryn Wilson. Nancy Rubin has helped in myriad ways, big and small. I am particularly grateful to Jaś Elsner, Michael Squire, and the external reader for Cambridge University Press, whose sustained engagement with the project and thoughtful suggestions for improvement were of invaluable help.

I also owe thanks to the individuals and institutions who provided access to sites and museums, especially the Soprintendenze of Rome and Pompeii. For help with acquiring photographs and drawings my thanks are due to Ashley Ray and Betha Whitlow of Washington University, Daria Lanzuolo of the German Archaeological Institute in Rome, Sally Jennings of Eton
Acknowledgments

College, Domenico Esposito, Hans Ruprecht Goette, Allison Méndez, Roi Porat, and Jonathan Stitelman.

Research for this book was largely conducted at libraries at Yale University, the American Academy in Rome, the National Gallery of Art, and Washington University. I am indebted to the staff of those institutions, especially Denise Gavio, Kristine Iara, and Paolo Imperatori. The project has been supported by Yale University, the Center for the Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, and the Department of Art History and Archaeology and the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Washington University. My sincere thanks to these institutions and to Michael Sharp, Sophie Taylor, and Marianne Nield at Cambridge University Press. An earlier version of the material that forms the final part of Chapter 5 was published as “Temple Inventory and Fictive Picture Gallery: Ancient Painting between Votive Offering and Artwork” in M. Gahtan and D. Pegazzano (eds.), Museum Archetypes and Collecting in the Ancient World. Leiden, 118–128.

My biggest debt of gratitude is due to those to whom the book is dedicated: my family. My parents, Jay and Thalia Jones, have been a constant source of love and support. My sister, Ashley Jones, has provided advice and expertise and has been an ideal companion on research trips and interlocutor during the writing process. And without the insight, acumen, and support of Sara Ryu, this project simply would not have been possible.
Abbreviations


ABV Beazley, J.D. (1956). Attic Black Figure Vase Painters. Oxford.

TLL (1900–) Thesaurus Linguae Latinae. Leipzig.