

BOOK REVIEW

Image and Myth: A History of Pictorial Narration in Greek Art. By LUCA GIULIANI. Trans. Joseph O'Donnell. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Pp. xix + 335. Hardcover, \$65.00. ISBN 978-0-226-29765-1.

Understanding the connection between ancient Greek imagery and mythological text is not a new endeavor, and the translation of Luca Giuliani's *Bild und Mythos* (2003) only confirms the sustained interest in this area of inquiry.¹ Chronologically driven and thematically arranged, Giuliani adopts G.E. Lessing's *Laocoon* (1766) as an overarching methodological framework. Describing the inherent complexities of Greek iconography, the author considers the manifold challenges ancient artists experienced when rendering images from either memory or literature.

Since the entirety of Lessing's 18th century treatise is not wholly relevant, Chapter 1 explains four of its fundamental principles, selected and slightly altered by Giuliani. Such modified tenets include: painting is a natural (though culturally specific) semiotic system; information registered from an image is different from the way it is processed from text; regarding images as "snapshots" automatically negates the illusionary aspects of the picture; and, finally, representations of action need not refer to a narrative—there must be an obvious plot.

Beginning with eighth century BC motifs, like the "Shield of Achilles" and the "Siamese Twins," Chapter 2 relays the visually unspecific and sometimes temporally undefined nature of Geometric imagery. Specificity is achieved only as far as the *overall* theme or type of scene, but, as our author persuasively argues, such events could have been encountered by the "aristocratic everyman" (39). Therefore, these images are self-sufficient representations of stereotyped roles; they do not point to *nor* do they require a narrative.

¹ For studies on the relationship between Greek imagery, text, and myth, see: K. Scheffold (1966), K.F. Johansen (1967), S. Lowenstam (1992), H.A. Shapiro (1994), A.M. Snodgrass (1998), M. Stanbury-O'Donnell (1999), J.P. Small (2003). For those with a broader interest in this subject, visit the International Association of Word and Image Studies (IAWIS) (www.iawis.org).

The problems and limitations associated with developing narrative imagery are explored in Chapter 3 with the inception of illustrating recognizable heroes and stories in the seventh century. Upon analyzing the Mykonos relief amphora portraying the Trojan horse and several scenes displaying the blinding of Polyphemos, Giuliani reveals that images exhibit narrative and descriptive approaches. Additionally, they often combine chronologically incompatible items in order to relay specific events. While the author considers folktales as the source of these narrative representations, he concludes that the details in these scenes point to Homeric origins.

In Chapter 4, Giuliani discusses the use of inscriptions on vases during the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries, and he focuses on examples where both scenes and text work together to inform the viewer of a specific narrative. While the author presents an array of vessels from various Greek locales, the Chapter is mostly dedicated to the Kleitias and Ergotimos krater in Florence (François Vase).

Chapter 5 explores the creation of visual narration and the deliberate choices made by vase-painters. Images can either represent a singular moment from a story, risking incomprehension on the part of the viewer, or combine many elements into *one* scene. According to Giuliani, however, such polychronic depictions naturally inhibit visual drama. A more complex illustrative technique was to design various spheres of activity on one vase. To add further tension, vase-painters employed the handle zone as a (permeable) barrier separating distinct events and specific individuals.

Dramatic performances and their corresponding texts affected vase imagery during the fifth and fourth centuries and their connections are analyzed in Chapter 6. Despite the availability of written documents, Giuliani demonstrates that Athenian vase-painters in the fifth-century continued to work under the conditions of oraliture and memory. This is especially apparent when our author considers the fourth-century Apulian depictions that were clearly influenced by textual sources rather than performances.

By the early third century BC, the large pottery centers of Attica, Sicily and South Italy no longer produced painted wares. In Chapter 7, Giuliani analyzes mold relief decorations and their corresponding literary quotations. Such objects, no doubt, were created by an educated craftsman and appreciated by a sophisticated consumer. Although fourth century Apulian vessels exhibited literary illustrations, these relief bowls were the first of their kind to display image and text to-

gether. Further, since pottery was a medium closely associated with imagery, Giuliani brilliantly asserts that text accompanied pictures centuries before pictures complemented text.

Concluding with a summation of his main points in Chapter 8, Giuliani stresses that most pictures can suggest numerous narratives simultaneously. Images *require* stories only when they deviate from the norm and necessitate explanation. Following two appendices expounding upon specific vases, the book closes with a helpful name and subject index, as well as an index of the Greek artworks (predominantly vases). Although the German edition was published in 2003, there has been no attempt to update the bibliography or footnotes. According to Giuliani, such additions would have significantly modified the text without changing its overall arguments. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the author has ameliorated any passages that do not reflect his current thinking.²

Emphasizing the subtle distinctions between narrative and descriptive representations, *Image and Myth* recounts the development of and the relationship between Greek texts and art from the eighth to third centuries. Beautifully illustrated with high-quality black-and-white figures, Giuliani demonstrates a high sensitivity to detail and provides thought provoking iconographic analyses.

RENEE MARIE GONDEK

George Washington University, rmg8m@virginia.edu

² Changes from the German publication relate to the concept of depicting action (Chapter 1, 11–15) and the overall discussion of the Nestor cup from Pithekoussai (Chapter 4, 89–90).