



Introduction to Fresh Perspectives on Graeco-Roman Visual Culture

Katharina G. Lorenz – Christoph Klose

William Leveritt – Lukas C. Bossert

THE last decades have seen an increasing interest in the workings of ancient images across all branches of Classical studies. The terms *Bildwissenschaft* and Visual Culture Studies – indicating frameworks of overlapping analytical tools and practises of making sense of pictures – are now pervasive across the field. Meanwhile, the two terms are used to describe a variety of approaches and practices not always commensurate with the objective of getting closer to the images. The lack of clarity here can stand in the way of analytical success. It also encourages scholarly proliferations which adopt these (fashionable) banners whilst continuing to work within hermeneutic confines shaped primarily by textual and not visual evidence. The discipline still lacks a robust analytical framework for *Bildwissenschaft* and Visual Culture Studies grounded in the understanding of the workings of images themselves, the questions which should be on the agenda, and the sorts of answers it might elicit.

* * *

The Q-Kolleg initiative was set up in order to contribute to the shaping of such an analytical framework, and to do so by addressing the inter-dependencies of method and knowledge in the field of Classical archaeology with those about to enter the discipline, B.A. and M.A. students. Q-Kolleg is a collaboration between Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the University of Nottingham and operates by means of encouraging research-driven learning among its student fellows recruited from the two participating departments, the Winckelmann-Institut in Berlin and the Department of Classics at Nottingham. The programme aims to develop knowledge and a deeper understanding of the ways in which Greek and Roman art and imagery can be analysed and interpreted. It is designed to sensitise students to the ways in which different cultures of scholarship, and different languages of scholarship (here specifically English and German) impact the way scholarship is conducted and, in turn, elicits results. Each year, the Q-Kolleg programme combines a

Pictures in Classical
archaeology

Q-Kolleg setup

range of study elements. Collaborative research is conducted by international teams on overarching topics (in 2011/12 the Pergamum Altar in Berlin; in 2012/13 the Parthenon marbles in London; in 2013/14 Margarete Bieber and Eugenie Strong's contributions to the scholarship of ancient art; in 2014/15 the Ara Pacis in Rome). This is pursued through collaborative research in international teams on individual problems chosen by the students, independent research on topics relevant to the students' individual coursework and dissertations, autopsy of ancient monuments in museum collections, master classes and workshop discussions with academic experts in the UK and in Germany, and talks by visiting UK and German academics in Nottingham and Berlin. At the end of each Q-Kolleg year the students have the opportunity to present their research within the framework of a workshop at Humboldt-Universität; the papers presented in this volume were given at the workshop in September 2013. Although not all of the papers given at the conference could be included in these proceedings, an abstract for each paper has been attached at the end of this volume (pp. 117–122).

* * *

Papers in this proceedings

The papers in this collection cover a wide range of different topics, reflecting the diverse interests the Q-Kolleg participants bring to the study of ancient imagery. We have organised the approaches here under four broad headings: the content of images, the modes of their representation, their context, and modes and methods of their interpretation.

The effect and the use of images as a developing and changing mode of representation is discussed by Henriette Engel in her paper about the so-called Small Dedication of the Attalids of Pergamum in the Hellenistic period (pp. 35–57). In her paper she shows how power and triumphalism of the dominating rulers were implemented artistically, and how such a concept of an enemy was spread and shaped by later periods. Nicole Neuenfeld (pp. 67–75) follows a different mechanism of representation. Instead of analysing the visualisation of an concept she focuses on the consequences of modified visualisation through examining the use of colour on statues. By combining literary sources with recent analysis of coloured statues she dissects the meaning of colour to the monuments.

The papers of Victoria Kubale and Christoph Klose deal with methodological approaches. The latter examines the motif of the Imperial *adventus* through Roman Imperial coins (pp. 99–115). His procedure is to look at allegedly stereotyped numismatic designs and to combine these with the various instances labelled *adventus* by inscription. Victoria Kubale turns the tables by taking the statue of Laocoön as the focal point of research history (pp. 59–66). By discussing which version of the myth could be used as the literary template, she takes a closer look at the modern interpretations: what are the strategies researchers have followed, and what are the consequences for their interpretation of the statue?

Lydia Schallenberg and Jodie Martyndale-Howard discuss the differing and not always straightforward interpretation of statues with respect to the context of their ancient display. Lydia Schallenberg presents a group of partly unpublished statues from the Grotta Azzura at Capri (pp. 87–98). The standard interpretation labels them a marine *thiasos*; Schallenberg challenges this through closer examination of the statues. Jodie

Martyndale-Howard evaluates the portraiture of the first Roman Emperor Augustus in the province of Egypt (pp. 77–86). His image was visible in very different contexts, and Martyndale-Howard elucidates the reciprocal interaction between the image of the emperor and the location or type of depiction, teasing out the relationship between emperor, *basileus*, and Pharaoh.

Rolf F. Sporleder and Lukas C. Bossert devote their attention to details of problematic iconography and the significance of fine details. The frieze of the temple at Bassae, Greece, is well preserved but its interpretation is anything but certain. Rolf F. Sporleder reveals some problematic issues with the content of the frieze and through comparison with other architectural sculptures addresses wider questions regarding interpretation (23–33). Lukas C. Bossert scrutinises the Theseus-frieze on the famous Klitias-Krater from the 6th BC, and demonstrates that seemingly rather minor details can contribute distinct meaning towards our reading of the image's content (pp. 1–21). By dividing the frieze in single components he reveals the variant roles Theseus undertakes, from leader of the youth to lover of Ariadne. He shows how Klitias omits the major part visual of the myth – the slaying of the Minotaur – and examines the effect of alluding to it through a small detail on Ariadne's fingertips: the ball of thread.

These contributions address very different areas of the visual culture of classical antiquity; yet each article highlights the effect of the application of alternate methodological approaches, mutual dialogue between junior researchers from the UK and Germany, and above all the utility and importance of listening to fresh perspectives on Graeco-Roman visual culture.