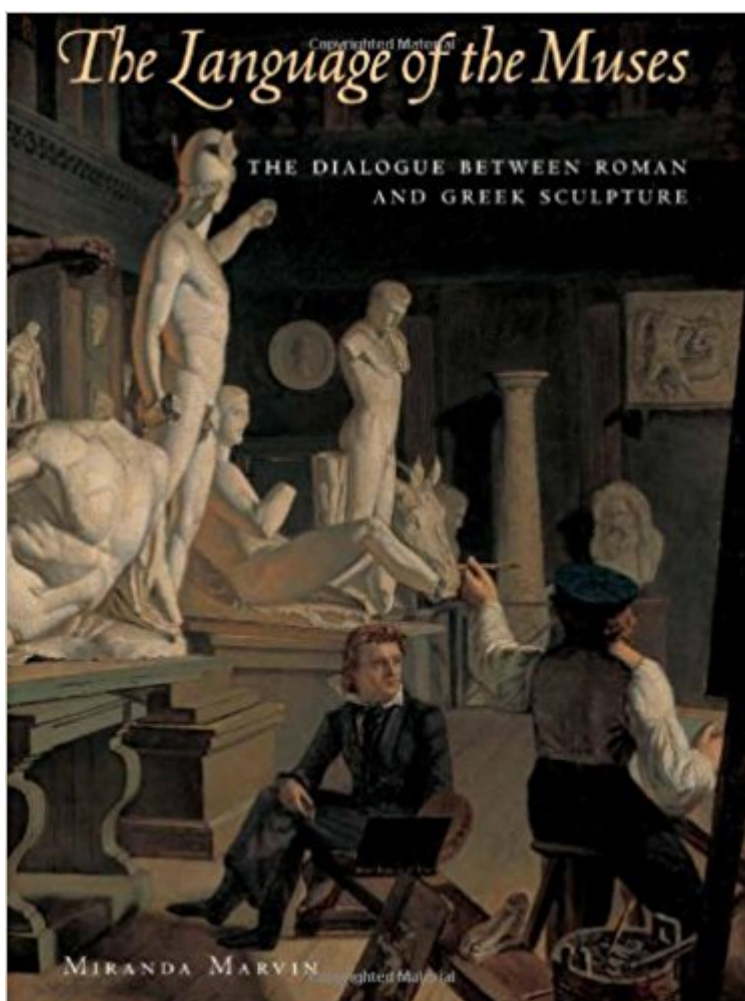


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The Language Of The Muses: The Dialogue Between Roman And Greek Sculpture



Synopsis

Since the Renaissance, it has been a generally accepted thesis that almost all Roman sculptures depicting ideal figures, such as gods, personifications, and figures from myth, were copies of Greek originals. This book traces the origin of that thesis to the academic belief in the mythical perfection of now-lost Greek art, which contrasted with the reality of the "imperfection" of Roman works. In a new take on long-held beliefs, Johann Joachim Winckelmann's role is found to be less important than those of Giorgio Vasari and Ennio Quirino Visconti. The author argues that, contrary to the accepted wisdom of the last three hundred years, Roman sculpture had very much its own style and ideals. This synthesis of the history of the study of Roman sculpture does away with the idea that the genre of ideal works consists of mechanical copies and argues that they are, rather, creative adaptations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Its excellence for the scholar is only tempered by a genuine and unavoidable envy at the Getty's quite superb level of production." **Bryn Mawr Classical Review** "Recommended." **Choice** "The combination of meticulous endnotes with so many full-colour illustrations means that the book will appeal not only to scholars, but also to students." **Journal of Roman Studies** "The book is beautifully produced, carefully organized, and richly detailed." **Minerva** Finalist/Honorable Mention in the Art & Art History category in the 2008 American Publishers Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE), awarded by the Professional and Scholarly Publishing division

of the Association of American Publishers

Professor Miranda Marvin teaches ancient art and classics at Wellesley College.

Marvin gives us a whole new perspective on Roman Sculpture. At last the Romans can be seen in light of their accomplishments rather as shadows of the Greeks. This brilliant book gives us all the evidence we need to convince us that the study of classical sculpture is entering a new realm. Now we need to re-label everything in the museums-- no more "Roman copy of unknown Greek original."

Professor Marvin makes a very welcomed case for Roman sculptors being more than copyists of Greek models, but she does not deny that the Romans saw themselves as heirs of Greek ideals, and not only in sculpture, but also in literature and mythology. "The Dialogue Between Roman and Greek Sculpture" of the subtitle turns out to have been more of a one-way conversation. Marvin's call to now find who the Roman sculptors were and what they made may prove as illusive as finding who sculpted the Riace bronzes. It is the feeling of this reviewer that Roman sculpture will never quite be brought out of the shadow of Greek achievement, but who can ever say what may still lie waiting discovery!

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