
This book has been so many years in preparation and writing that my debts are too numerous and longstanding for all of them to be singled out. I think of many stimulating students in seminars at Irvine and at the School of Criticism and Theory, who forced me to press my ideas beyond where I thought they might be allowed to rest. And I think of many colleagues over the years as well. But there are a few individuals—and I am thinking of those closest to the completed book—to whom special thanks are due: to Lisa Ness for devoted service to the project, to Anne Rosse Gokhale for valuable technical assistance, to Joanne Allen for very useful editorial help with the final version of the manuscript, to Paul Davis for suggestions concerning classical sources of *ekphrasis*, and to Theodore Brunner, of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, for furnishing source materials. Among my many helpful colleagues I should especially cite William Lillyman, who for many years as executive vice-chancellor and for many more as friend gave constant support to my work; Wolfgang Iser, who has always responded to my writings generously and with patience, and with whom I have continually discovered many common theoretical objectives; and Stephen Nichols, Michael Riffaterre, Frederick Burwick, and Marshall Brown, who encouraged this study at crucial moments in its later development.

About my collaborator in this work I need add nothing here except my deepest thanks, since the evidence of her remarkable contributions runs throughout this volume.
No single contribution to the completion of this work was greater than that made by the Bellagio Study and Conference Center at the Villa Serbelloni, where, during five marvelous weeks in the spring of 1990, the bulk of this work was brought close to its final form and most of the emblems were conceived and executed. I am very grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for providing that most productive residency.