

Scholars continue to debate the question of the relationship between tragic texts and pictorial representations which might be thought to reflect them. Jocelyn Penny Small's recent book *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text* includes a strong statement of the independence of Attic and South Italian vase-paintings from texts (or performances) of tragedy, and consequently challenges the use of vase-painting evidence for the reconstruction of lost tragedies: "The artists are *not* depicting tragedy. They are depicting stories. Because the artists necessarily draw upon the same traditions...as the playwrights, they will often depict the same subjects. Since the artists are not portraying tragedies, they do not worry whether their renderings match the plays" (Small, 70). But it can also be noted that the tragic playwrights did not merely draw upon mythical traditions but often created them; vase-paintings depicting a distinctly tragic subject must reflect it in some way, directly or indirectly (cf. O. Taplin in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, 76–8, with reference to *Iphigenia in Tauris*). There are many instances amongst the lost (as well as extant) plays where Euripides seems to have invented entire plots (e.g. *Cresphontes*, *Hypsipyle*, *Archelaus*) or dramatized pre-existing stories in very distinctive ways (e.g. *Cretans*, *Telephus*, *Aeolus*, *Melanippe Sophe*, *Alcmene*, *Phaethon*). This of course does not mean that vase-paintings portraying such subjects will have reflected them exactly, nor that a pictorial tradition might not diverge increasingly from its textual origin over time; but it does suggest that the vase-paintings should not be regarded as wholly unreliable or irrelevant for the reconstruction of the lost plays. This paper will attempt to collect those cases where a distinctly Euripidean plot is reflected in one or more vase-paintings (especially vase-paintings relatively close in date to the original play-productions), and will discuss the possibilities and the limitations of inferring plot details from pictorial representations. Particular attention will be given to identifying details which suggest 'theatricality', developing on the suggestions of Taplin 80–1.