

# Imagines (the Younger)

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## PROOEMIUM

Let us not deprive the arts of their chance to be kept up for ever, on the ground that we think the earlier period hard to match; and let us not, just because we have been anticipated in any undertaking by some writer of former time, refrain from emulating his work to the best of our ability, using a specious pretext with which to gloss over our indolence; but let us rather challenge our predecessor for, if we attain our goal, we shall accomplish something worth while; but if at any point we fail, at least we shall do ourselves the credit of showing that we strive for the noble ends we praise.

Why have I made this prelude? A certain description of works in the field of painting was written with much learning by one whose name I bear, my mother's father, in very pure Attic Greek and with extreme beauty and force. Desiring to follow in his footsteps we felt obliged before setting out on the task to discourse somewhat on the art of painting, in order that our discussion may have its own matter in harmony with what is proposed.

Most noble is the art of painting and concerned with not insignificant matters. For he who is to be a true master of the art must have a good knowledge of human nature, he must be able to discern the signs of men's character even when they are silent, and what is revealed in the state of the cheeks and the expression of the eyes and the character of the eyebrows and, to put the matter briefly, whatever has to do with the mind. If proficient in these matters he will grasp every trait and his hand will successfully interpret the individual story of each person – that a man is insane, perhaps, or angry, or thoughtful, or happy, or impulsive, or in love, and, in a word, will paint in each case the appropriate traits. And the deception inherent in his work is pleasurable and involved no reproach; for to confront objects which do not exist as though they existed and to be influenced by them, to believe that they do exist, is not this, since no harm can come of it, a suitable and irreproachable means of providing entertainment?

Learned men of olden times have written much, I believe, about symmetry in painting, laying down laws, as it were, about the proper relation of each part of the figure to the other parts, as though it were impossible for an artist to express successfully the emotions of the mind, unless the body's harmony falls within the measurements prescribed by nature; for the figure that is abnormal

and that exceeds these measurements cannot, so they claim, express the emotions of a rightly constituted being. If one reflects upon the matter, however, one finds that the art of painting has a certain kinship with poetry, and that an element of imagination is common to both, their stage as actually present, and with them all the accessories that make for dignity and grandeur and power to charm the mind; and so in like manner does the art of painting, indicating in the lines of the figures what the poets are able to describe in words.

And yet why need I say what has been admirably said by many, or by saying more give the impression that I am undertaking an encomium of painting? For even these words, few indeed though they be, suffice to show that our present effort will not have been wasted. For when I have met with paintings not without refinement, I have not thought it right to pass them by in silence. But in order that our book may not proceed on one foot, let it be assumed that there is a person present to whom the details are to be described, that thus the discussion itself may have its proper form.

## ACHILLES ON SCYROS

The heroine crowned with reeds – for doubtless you see the female figure at the foot of the mountain, sturdy of form and dressed in blue – is the island of Scyros, my boy, which the divine Sophocles calls “wind-swept.” She has a branch of olive in her hands and a spray of vine. And the tower in the foot-hills of the mountain – that is the place where the daughters of Lycomedes follow their maidenly pursuits with the seeming daughter of Thetis. For when Thetis learned from her father Nereus the decree of the Fates about her son – that one of two things had been allotted to him, either to live ingloriously or becoming glorious to die very soon – her son was put away among the daughters of Lycomedes on Scyros and now lives hidden there; to the other girls he seems to be a girl, but one of them, the eldest, he has known in secret love, and her time is approaching when she will bring forth Pyrrhus. But this is not in the picture. There is a meadow before the tower, for this part of the island is a garden made to produce flowers in abundance for the maidens, and you see them scattered here and there plucking the flowers. All are surpassingly beautiful, but while the others incline to a strictly feminine beauty, proving indisputably their feminine nature by the frank glances of

their eyes and the bloom of their cheeks and their vivacity in all they do, yet yonder girl who is tossing back her tresses, grim of aspect along with delicate grace will soon have her sex betrayed, and slipping off the character she has been forced to assume will reveal Achilles. For as the rumour of Thetis' secret spreads among the Greeks, Diomedes in company with Odysseus sets forth to Scyros to ascertain the truth of this story.

You see them both, one keeping the glance of his eyes sunk low by reason, I think, of his craftiness and his habit of continual scheming, the other, Tydeus' son, prudent, ready in counsel and intent on the task before him. What does the man behind them mean, the one who blows the trumpet? And what is the significance of the painting? Odysseus, shrewd and an able tracker of secrets, devises the following plan to test what he is tracking out; when he throws down on the meadow wool-baskets and objects suited to girls for their play and a suit of armour, the daughters of Lycomedes turn to objects suitable to their sex, but the son of Peleus, though he claims to find pleasure in baskets and weaving-combs, forthwith leaves these things to the girls, and rushing to the suit of armour he divests himself of the feminine attire he has been wearing ...

#### [PYRRHUS ON SCYROS]

... And Pyrrhus is no longer a country boor nor yet growing strong amid filth like brawling sons of herdsmen, but already he is a soldier. For he stands leaning on a spear and gazing towards the ship; and he wears a purple mantle brought up from the tip of the shoulder over to his left arm and a white tunic that does not reach the knee; and though his eye is flashing, it is not so much the eye of a man in full career as of one still holding back and vexed at the delay; and his mind images something of what will happen a little later in Ilium. His hair now, when he is at rest, hangs down his forehead, but when he rushed forward it will be in disorder, following, as it tosses to and fro, the emotions of his spirit. The goats skipping about unchecked, the straying herds, and the shepherd's staff with its crook lying among them where it has been thrown imply some such story as this, my boy: – Vexed with his mother and his grandfather for being kept on the island, since after the death of Achilles in fear for the boy they had sworn that Pyrrhus should not depart, he set himself over the goats and kine, subduing the bulls that scorned the herd – the bulls that may be seen on the mountain at the right. But when the oracle

came to the Greeks that Troy would be captured by none other than the descendants of Aeacus, Phoenix is sent to Scyros to fetch the boy, and putting ashore he encounters him, each unknown to the other except in so far as the boy's graceful and well-grown form suggested that he was Achilles' son. And as soon as Phoenix recognized who he was, he himself became known to Lycomedes and Deiodameia. All this is what art would teach us by means of this small picture, and it is so painted as to furnish to poets also a theme for song.

## MARSYAS

The Phrygian has been overcome; at any rate his glance is that of a man already perished, since he knows what he is to suffer, and he realizes that he has played the flute for the last time, inasmuch as inopportunely he acted with effrontery toward the son of Leto. His flute has been thrown away, condemned never to be played again, since just now it has been convicted of playing out of tune. And he stands near the pine tree from which he knows he will be suspended, he himself having named this penalty for himself – to be skinned for a wine-bottle. He glances furtively at the barbarian yonder who is whetting the edge of the knife to be applied to him; for you see, I am sure, that the man's hands are on the whetstone and the iron, but that he looks up at Marsyas with glaring eyes, his wild and squalid hair all bristling. The red on his cheek betokens, I think, a man thirsty for blood, and his eyebrow overhands the eye, all contracted as it faces the light and giving a certain stamp to his anger; nay, he grins, too, a savage grin in anticipation of what he is about to do – I am not sure whether because he is glad or because his mind swells in pride as he looks forward to the slaughter. But Apollo is painted as resting upon a rock; the lyre which lies on his left arm is still being struck by his left hand in gentle fashion, as though playing a tune. You see the relaxed form of the god and the smile lighting up his face; his right hand rests on his lap, gently grasping the plectrum, relaxed because of his joy in the victory. Here also is the river which is to change its name to that of Marsyas. And look, please, at the band of Satyrs, how they are represented as bewailing Marsyas, but as displaying, along with their grief, their playful spirit and their disposition to leap about.

## HUNTERS

Is there any praise you would withhold from these men whom the painting is bringing back from the hunt? And it causes a pure spring of sweet and pellucid water to gush for them from the earth. And no doubt you see the grove around the spring, the work of wise Nature, I believe; for Nature is sufficient for all she desires, and has no need of art; indeed it is she who is the origin of arts themselves. For what is lacking here to provide shade? Those wild vines climbing high up on the trees have brought clusters of shoots together, fastening them to one another; while the bryony yonder and the ivy, both together and separately provide for us over there a close-knit roof that is more pleasant than art could produce. The chorus of nightingales and the choirs of other birds bring clearly to our tongues the verses of Sophocles, sweetest of poets: "And within (the copse) a feathered choir makes music."

But the band of hunters, charming sturdy youths still breathing the excitement of the hunt but now variously engaged, are resting themselves. Ye gods! how wonderful and how charming is the clearness of the painter's art, and how well we may discern the story of each one! This improvised couch, made of nets, I think receives those whom we may rightly call "the leaders of the hunt." They are five in number. You see the midmost of them, how he has raised himself and has turned towards those who lie above him, to whom, it seems to me, he is relating the story of his contest and how he was first to bring down one of the two wild beasts which are suspended from the trees in nets, a deer apparently and a boar. For does he not seem to you to be elated and happy over what he has done? The others gaze on him intently as he tells his story; and the second of them as he leans back on the couch seems to be resting a while and planning soon to describe some exploit of his own in the hunt. As to the other wing of the company, the man next to the central figure, a cup half full in one hand and swinging his right hand above his head, seems to me to be singing the praises of Artemis Agrotera, while his neighbour, who is looking towards the servant, is bidding him hurry the cup along.

The painter is clever and exact in his craftsmanship; for if one examines the whole picture, nothing has been overlooked, not even as regards the attendants. The man yonder, having found a branch broken from a tree, sits on it, dressed just as he was in the chase after the quarry and making a meal from the pouch which hangs at his side. One of the two dogs, stretched out in front of him, is eating, while the other squats upon his hind legs and stretches

out his neck to catch the morsels that are being thrown to him. A second man kindles a fire, and putting over it some of the pots adapted to this use he makes ready for the hunters the abundant food, hurrying at his task; this wine-skin has been thrown down here at random for anyone that wishes to draw drink from it; of two other servants, one the carver I suppose, tells us that he is cutting portions with due care to make them equal, and the other holds out the platter that is to receive the meat, doubtless demanding that the portions be equal; for in this matter at least the management of a hunt leaves nothing to Fortune.

## HERACLES OR ACHELOÛS

Probably you are asking what these three figures have to do with each other – a serpent “ruddy of back” which rises there lifting its long form, a bead hanging beneath an erect serrated crest, its glare terrible and its glance one that cannot but work consternation; a bull that curves its neck beneath those mighty horns and, pawing the earth at its feet, rushes as for a charge; and here a man that is half animal, for he has the forehead of a bull and a spreading beard, while streams of water un in floods from his chin. The multitude that has gathered as for a spectacle; the girl in their midst, a bride, I suppose (for this must be inferred from the ornaments she wears); an old man yonder of sad countenance; a youth who is divesting himself of a lion’s skin and holding in his hands a club; and here a heroine of sturdy form who has been crowned with beech leaves in harmony with the story of her Arcadian nurture – all this, I think, is Calydon.

What is the meaning of the painting? The river Acheloüs, my boy, in love with Deianeira the daughter of Oeneus, presses for the marriage; and Persuasion has no part in what he does, but by assuming now one and now another of the shapes we see here, he thinks to frighten Oeneus. For you are to recognize the figure in the painting as Oeneus, despondent on account of his daughter Deianeira, who looks so dolefully at her suitor. For she is painted, not with cheek reddening through modesty, but as greatly terrified at the thought of what she will suffer in union with that unnatural husband. But the noble Heracles willingly assumes the task as an “incident of his journey,” to use a popular phrase.

So much by way of prelude; but now see how the contestants have already joined battle, and you must imagine for yourself all that has transpired in the first bouts of the struggle between god and irresistible hero. Finally, however, the river, assuming the form of a horned bull, rushes at Heracles, but he, grasping the right horn with his left hand, uproots the other horn from its forehead with the aid of his club; thereupon the river-god, now emitting streams of blood instead of water, gives up the struggle, while Heracles, full of joy at his deed, looks at Deianeira, and throwing his club on the ground holds out to her the horn of Acheloüs as his nuptial gift.

### HERACLES IN SWADDLING CLOTHES

You are playing, Heracles, playing, and already laughing at your labour, though you are still in swaddling clothes; and taking the serpents sent by Hera one in each hand you pay no heed to your mother, who stands near by crazed with fear. But the serpents, already exhausted, are stretching out their coils upon the ground and drooping their heads towards the babe's hands, showing withal a glimpse of their teeth; these are jagged and poisonous, and their crests sag to one side as death approaches, their eyes have no vision in them, their scales are no longer resplendent with golden and purple colours, nor do they gleam with the various movements of their bodies, but are pale and, where they were once blood-red, are livid.

Alcmene, if one looks carefully at her face, seems to be recovering from her first fright, but she now distrusts what she really sees, and her fright has not permitted her to remain in bed even though she has lately given birth to a child. For doubtless you see how, leaping from her bed, unsandalled and only in her shift, with disordered hair and throwing out her arms she utters a shout, while the maidservants that were attending her in her travail are in consternation, talking confusedly each to her neighbour. Here are men in armour, and one man who stands ready with drawn sword; the former are the chosen youth of the Thebans, come to the aid of Amphitryon; but Amphitryon has at the first tidings drawn his sword to ward off danger and has come with them to the scene of action; nor do I know whether he is overcome with fear or rejoices; for his hand is still ready to act, but the thoughtfulness revealed by his eyes sets a cru to his hand, since he finds no danger to ward off, and he sees that the situation before him needs the insight

of an oracle to interpret it. Here, in fact, is Teiresias near at hand, foretelling, I think, what a hero the babe in swaddling clothes will become; and he is represented as divinely inspired and breathing out prophecies. Night also, the time in which these events take place, is represented in human form she is shedding a light upon herself with a torch that the exploit of the child may not lack a witness.

## ORPHEUS

That Orpheus, the son of the Muse, charmed by his music even creatures that have not the intelligence of man, all the writers of myth agree, and the painter also so tells us. Accordingly, a lion and a boar near by Orpheus are listening to him, and also a deer and a hare who do not leap away from the lion's onrush, and all the wild creatures to whom the lion is a terror in the chase now herd with him, both they and he unconcerned. And pray do not fail to note carefully the birds also, not merely the sweet singers whose music is wont to fill the groves, but also note, please, the "chattering daw," the "cawing crow," and the eagle of Zeus. The eagle, poised aloft on both his wings, gazes intently at Orpheus and pays no heed to the hare near by, while the animals, keeping their jaws closed – both wolves yonder and the lambs are mingled together – are wholly under the spell of the enchanter, as though dazed. And the painter ventures a still more striking thing; for having torn trees up by the roots he is brining them yonder to be an audience for Orpheus and is stationing them about him. Accordingly, pine and cypress and alder and poplar and all the other trees stand about Orpheus with their branches joined like hands, and thus, without requiring the craft of man, they enclose for him a theatre, that therein the birds may sit on their branches and he may make music in the shade. Orpheus sits there, the down of a first beard spreading over his cheeks, a tiara bright with gold standing erect upon his head, his eye tender, yet alert, and divinely inspired as his mind ever reaches out to divine themes. Perhaps even now he is singing a song; indeed his eyebrow seems to indicate the sense of what he sings, his garment changes colour with his various motions, his left foot resting on the ground supports the lyre which rests upon his thigh, his right foot marks the time by beating the ground with its sandal, and, of the hands, the right one is firmly grasping the plectrum gives close heed to the notes, he elbow extended and the wrist bent inward, while he left with straight

fingers strikes the strings. But an amazing thing will happen to you, Orpheus: you now charm wild beasts and trees, but to women of Thrace you will seem to be sadly out of tune and they will tear your body in pieces, though even wild beasts had gladly listened to your voice.

## MEDEA AMONG THE COLCHIANS

Who is the woman with a grim frown above her eyes, her brow charged with deep thought, her hair bound in hieratic mode, her eye shining either already with love or with inspiration, I know not which, and with an ineffable radiance, when she permits her face to be seen? This in truth is the distinguishing mark of the descendants of Helios; I believe one must recognize Medea, the daughter of Aeëtes. For now that the expedition of Jason, on its quest of the golden fleece, has come ashore at the river Phasis and has arrived at the city of Aeëtes, the girl is in love with the stranger, and unwonted reflections enter her mind; and though she does not know what has happened to her, her thoughts are all confused and she is distraught of soul. She is not now dressed for her priestly functions, nor as if she were in the company of her superiors, but in a manner suitable for the eyes of many. The form of Jason is slender, but not at all lacking in strength; his flashing eye is overhung by a brow that is haughty and defiant of all opposition; the first beard creeping over his face grows luxuriantly, and his light-brown hair tumbles down upon his forehead; as for his dress, he wears a white tunic fastened by a girdle, over which a lion's skin is flung, and on his feet are laced boots; he stands leaning on his spear; and the character revealed by his face is that of one who is neither over-proud, since he is modest, nor meek since he is bold for his undertaking. Eros is claiming this situation as his own, and he stands leaning on his bow with his legs crossed, turning his torch towards the earth, inasmuch as the work of love is as yet hardly begun.

## BOYS AT PLAY

The boys who are playing the palace of Zeus are, I suppose, Eros and Ganymede, if the one may be known by his tiara and the other identified by his bow and his wings. They are playing with dice; and Eros is represented as taunting the other insolently and as shaking the fold of his garment, full as it is

of his winnings, while his companion is represented as having lost one of the two dice left to him and as throwing the other no better hope. His cheek is downcast and the glance of his eye, albeit a beautiful eye, indicates by its despondency his vexation. And these three goddesses standing near them – they need no interpreter to tell who they are; for Athena is recognized at a glance, clothed as she is in what the poets call the “panoply of her race,” casting a “bright glance” from under her helmet, and ruddy of face as well as masculine in general appearance; the second one even in the painting shows the “laughter-loving” disposition caused by the magic of her girdle; and that the third is Hera her dignity and queenliness of form declare.

What do the goddesses desire and what necessity brings them together? The Argo carrying its fifty heroes ahs anchored in the Phasis after passing through the Bosphorus and the Clashing Rocks. You see the river himself lying on this deep bed of rushes; his countenance is grim, for his hair is thick and stands upright, his beard bristles, and his eyes glare; and the abundant water of the stream, since it does not flow from a pitcher as is usually the case, but comes in flood from his whole figure, gives us to understand how large a stream is poured into the Pontus. You have heard, I am sure, about the prize which was the object of this voyage, since poets tell of “the golden fleece,” and the songs of Homer also describe the Argo as “known of all.” But while the sailors of the Argo are considering the situation, the goddesses have come as suppliants to be Eros that he assist them in saving the sailors by going to fetch Medea, the daughter of Aeëtes; and as pay for this service his mother shows him a ball which she says was once a plaything of Zeus. Do you see the clever art of the painting? The ball itself is of gold; the stitching on it is such as to be assumed by the mind rather than seen by the eye, and spirals of blue encircle it; and very likely, when it is tossed in the air, the radiance emanating from it will lead us to compare it with the twinkling of stars. As for Eros, he no longer even looks at the dice, but throwing them on the ground he clings to his mother’s dress, begging her to make good her promise to him; for, he says, he will not fail in the task.

## PELOPS

The man mounted on a four-horse chariot who is setting out to drive across the mainland, wearing an upright tiara and Lydian dress, is Pelops, I believe, a

“bold charioteer” it is fair to call him. For he once guided this chariot even across the sea, doubtless because it was the gift of Poseidon, speeding over the back of the clam sea on the very edge of the wheel and keeping the axle unwetted. His flashing eye and erect head attest his alertness of mind, and his haughty brow indicates that he youth despises Oenomaüs. For he is proud of his horses, since they hold their necks high, are broad of nostril, hollow of hoof, dark-eyed and alert, and they lift their abundant manes above their dark necks as is the manner of sea-horses. Near them stands Hippodameia; she colours her cheek with a modest blush, wears the raiment of a bride, and gazes with eyes that choose rather the stranger’s part. For she loved him and she loathes the parent who takes pride in such spoils as indeed you see – these heads which have been suspended one after another from the gateway, and the time which has elapsed since each of the men perished has given them each a distinctive appearance. For Oenomaüs slew those who came to sue for his daughter’s hand and he delights in the tokens of their death. But their shades hovering over the place lament each the contest in which it took part as they descant upon the covenant of marriage; for Pelops, they recount, has made a covenant, promising that henceforth the girl will be free from the curse. And Myrtilus is witness to the covenant of the twain. Oenomaüs is not far away; nay, his chariot is ready, and on the seat is laid the spear with which to slay the youth when he overtakes him; and he is hurriedly sacrificing to his father Ares, this man of savage aspect and with murder in his eye; and he urges Myrtilus on. But Eros, said of mien, is cutting the axle of the chariot, making clear two things: that the girl in love with her lover is conspiring against her father, and that the future which is in stores for the house of Pelops comes from the Fates.

## PYRRHUS OR THE MYSIANS

The story of Eurypylus and Neoptolemus is sung by a chorus of poets, who tell us how each resembles his father and is famous for the prowess of his arm; and this painting also relates this tale. For when fortune has gathered into one city the valour of every land, some go away not inglorious but able to say to the world, “children of wretched men are they who encounter my wrath,” and men of noble birth overcome men of noble birth.

The account of the victory is another tale, but the scene before you now has to do with the combatants. Here is the city of “beetling Ilium,” as Homer calls it;

and a wall runs round about it such as even the gods disdained not to claim as the work of their own hands. On the other side is the station of the ships and the narrow strait of the Hellespont that separates Asia from Europe. The plain between the city and the strait is divided by the river Xanthus, which is represented, not as “roaring with foam” nor yet as when it rose in flood against the son of Peleus, but its bed is lotus grass and rushes and foliage of tender reeds; it reclines instead of standing erect, and presses its foot on the sources to keep them within bounds, now moistening . . . the stream keeps within bounds. On either side is an army – of Mysians together with Trojans, and opposite them of Greeks; the Trojans are already exhausted, though the Mysians under Eurypylus are fresh. You see how the former sit down in their armour, no doubt at the command of Eurypylus, and how they enjoy the respite from fighting, whereas the Mysians, full of spirit and impetuous, rush forward; and how the Greeks are in the same state as the Trojans with the exception of the Myrmidons, who are active and ready for the fray under Pyrrhus.

As for the two youthful leaders, nothing can be made out regarding their beauty, since they are clad in armour at this time, but they are certainly tall and overtop their fellows; the age of the two is the same, and to judge by the glance of their eyes they are active and unhesitating. For the eyes of each flash beneath their helmets, they bend their heads with the waving of their plumes, and their spirit stands out conspicuous in them, resembling as they do men “who breathe out wrath in silence.” Both wear the armour of their fathers; but while Eurypylus is clad in armour bearing no device, which gives forth, like a rainbow, a light that varies with his position and movements, Pyrrhus wears the armour made by Hephaestus, which Odysseus, regretting his own victory, has yielded to him.

If one examines this armour he will find that none is missing of the representations in relief which Homer describes, but that the work of art reproduces all that Homer gives. For the representations of earth and sea and sky will not, I think, require anyone to explain them; for the sea is evident at once to the observer, since the craftsman has given it its proper colour; the land is designated by the cities and the other terrestrial things, and you will soon learn all about them; but here is the Sky. You see here, of course, the orb of the unwearying sun and the brightness of the full moon. But I believe you

want to hear about the stars in detail, for the differences between them provide a reason for your inquiry. Here are the Pleiades, signs for sowing and for reaping when they set or when they appear once more, as the changing seasons bring them; and opposite them are the Hyades. You see Orion also, but the story about him and the reason why he is one of the stars we must defer to another occasion, my boy, that we may not divert you from the object of your present desire. The stars next to Orion are the Bear, or the Wain if you prefer that name. Men say that this constellation alone does not sink into Oceanus, but revolves about itself as a guard over Orion.

Let us now make our way over the earth, leaving the upper regions, and let us examine the most beautiful of things on the earth, namely, the cities. As you see there are two of these. Which of the two do you wish explained to you first? Do the light of the torches, and the marriage hymn, the sound of the flutes and the twanging of the lyre and the rhythmic motion of the dancers attract your attention? You see also the women visible through the vestibules as they marvel and all but shout for joy. This is a marriage, my boy, the first gathering of the bridal party, and the bridegrooms are bringing their brides. I shall not attempt to describe how modesty and desire are clearly depicted in each, for the craftsman has suggested this with great skill. But look! Here is a court of justice and a general session, and dignified old men preside in a dignified manner over the gathering. As for the gold in the centre, the two talents here, I do not know what it is for, unless, by Zeus, one may conjecture that it is a reward to be paid to the judge who shall pronounce true judgment, in order that no judge may be influenced by gifts to give the wrong judgment. And what is the case? Here are two men in the centre, one of whom, I believe, is bringing a charge of bloodshed, and the other, as you see, is denying the charge; for he claims that he is not guilty of that which the accuser brings against him, but that, having paid the blood-money, he has come free of offence. You see also the adherents of each man, in two groups, who applaud according to their preference; but the presence of the heralds checks them and restores them to silence. This scene, accordingly, represents a state of affairs midway between war and peace in a city that is not at war.

The second city is walled, as you see, and those unfitted for war by reason of age guard the walls at intervals; for there are women at certain points on the battlements, and here are old men and even children. Where, pray, are their

fighting men? Yonder you may find them – the men who follow Ares and Athena. For this is what the work of art means, I believe, indicating by the use of gold and by great stature that the leaders are gods, and giving to the others their inferior rank by this device. They are issuing forth for battle, having refused the proposals of the enemy, namely, that the wealth of the city be apportioned among them, else, if it be not so apportioned, it shall be the prize of battle. Accordingly, they are devising an ambush on this side; for that, it seems to me, is suggested by the thicket along the banks of the river, where you see men under arms. But it will not prove possible for them to profit by the ambush; for the invading army, having stationed some scouts, is contriving how to drive off the booty. Indeed, we see here shepherds herding their flocks to the music of pipes. Does not the simple and ingenuous and truly highland strain of their music reach your ears? But they have made their music for the last time; and through ignorance of the plot devised against them they die, as you see, for the enemy has attacked them, and a portion of their flocks is being driven away as booty by the raiders. A report of what has occurred has reached the men in ambush, and they rise and go into battle on horseback; you can see the banks of the river covered with men who are fighting and hurling javelins at the foe. What shall we say of those beings who pass to and fro among the combatants and of that spirit whose person and clothing are reddened with gore? These are Strife and Tumult, and the third is Doom, to whom are subject all matters of war. For you see, surely, that she follows no one course, but thrusts one man, still unwounded, into the midst of hostile swords, a second is being dragged away a corpse beneath her, while a third she urges onward wounded though he is. As for the soldiers, they are so terrifying in their onrush and their fierce gaze that they seem to me to differ not at all from living men in the charge of battle.

But look again at the works of peace. This is clearly fallow land, to be thrice-ploughed, I think, if one may judge at all by the number of the ploughmen; and in the field the ploughman frequently turns the yoke of oxen back, since a wine-cup awaits the ploughman at the end of the furrow; and the plough's seem to make the gold turn black as it cleaves the soil. In the next scene you perceive a domain – a king's, as I think you may infer – and the king who attests the gladness of his spirit by the radiance of his eyes. The cause of his delight is not far to seek; for that the crop greatly exceeds the sowing is

proved by the workers who busily cut the grain and by those who bind the bunches of cut stalks into sheaves, while others very zealously bring them more grain to find. The oak tree stands here not unfittingly nor without good reason, for there is abundant shade beneath it for the refreshment of such as grow weary with their labour; and yonder fat ox, that has been consecrated by the heralds whom you see, is appointed as a meal beneath the oak for those who labour at harvesting the wheat. And what do you say of the women? Do they not seem to you to be full of excitement and to be encouraging each other to knead plenty of barley meal as a dinner for the harvesters? If there should be need of fruit as well, here you have a vineyard, golden for the vines and black for the grapes. The dark blue inlay of the ditch is the device, methinks, of the artificer to indicate its depth; and you have no difficulty in recognizing in the tin inlay the barrier surrounding the vines. As for the silver in the vineyards, these are props, to keep the vines which are laden with fruit from being bent to the earth. And what would you say of the men gathering the grapes? Making their way through this narrow passage they pile the fruit in baskets, charming persons of an age adapted to their task. For young men and maidens move forward in rhythm, with Evian and Bacchic step, while another gives them the rhythm, one whom you doubtless recognize, not only from his lyre, but also from the fact that he seems to be singing softly to the lyre's notes. And if you should also notice the herd of cattle which press forward to their pasture, followed by the herdsmen, you might not, indeed, marvel at the colour, although the whole scene is made of gold and tin, but the fact that you can almost hear the cows lowing in the painting and that the river along the banks of which are the cows seems to be making a splashing sound, - is not that the height of vividness? As for the lions, no one, it seems to me, could in a description do justice to them or to the bull beneath them; for the bull, that seems to bellow and quiver, is being torn to pieces, the lions having already laid hold upon its entrails. The dogs here, I believe there are nine of them, follow the herd and at the command of the herdsmen who set them on they rush close up to the lions, wishing to frighten them by barking, but the dare not come to close quarters though the herdsmen urge them even to that. And you also see sheep leaping on the mountain, and sheep-folds, and huts and pens; you are to recognize herein the home of the flocks.

One more scene remains, I think – a troupe of dancers here, like the chorus which Daedalus is said to have given to Ariadne, the daughter of Minos. What does the art represent? Young men and maidens with joined hands are dancing. But apparently you will not be content unless I go on and give you an accurate account of their garments also. Well, the girls here are clothed in fine linen and wear golden crowns on their heads; while the young men wear delicate thin chitons, and golden swords hang at their sides held by silver and golden swords hang at their sides held by silver belts. But as they move in a circle, behold the result – you see in imagination the whirling of a wheel, the work of a potter making trial of his wheel to see whether or not it turns with difficulty. And as they advance again in rows, a great crowd of men approaches, who show how merry they are; for some who here in the centre are turning somersaults and exhibiting sundry kinds of dancing seem to me evidently to fill the dancers with wonder. The image of the sea on the circle of the rim is not the sea, my boy, but you are to imagine that Oceanus is designed by the artist to represent the boundary of the land depicted upon the shield. Enough has been told you of the scenes in relief.

Now turn your glance to the youths themselves and not with which of them the victory lies. For behold, Eurypylos has been laid low, Pyrrhus having given him a fatal wound in the armpit, his blood pours forth in streams, and he lies without a groan, stretched at full length upon the ground, having fallen almost before the blow was struck, so deadly was the wound. Pyrrhus still stands in the attitude of striking, his hand all covered with the copious blood which drops from his sword, when the Mysians, thinking this unendurable, advance against the youth. But he, looking at them grimly, smiles and takes his stand against their ranks; and doubtless he will soon bury the body of Eurypylos by heaping over it a mound of dead bodies.

## THE ARGO OR AEËTES

The ship, which forces its way along the river with much splashing of the oars, a maiden yonder at the stern who stands near a man in armour, the man with erect tiara who sings in tune with the notes of his lyre, and the serpent which sprawls over the sacred oak tree over here with many a coil and bows to the earth its head all heavy with sleep – in these you should recognize the river as the Phasis, the woman here as Medea, the armed man at the stern would be

Jason, and when we see the lyre it is Orpheus, son of Calliope, who comes to our mind. For after the contest with the bulls Medea has charmed this serpent to sleep, the “ram’s fleece of golden wool” has been seized as booty, and the crew of the Argo have now set forth in hasty flight, inasmuch as the maiden’s deeds have become known to the Colchians and Aeëtes. As for the crew of the Argo, what need that I should describe them to you? For you see that the muscles of their arms are swollen with the strain of their rowing, and that their faces have the look of men who are urging one another to haste, and the wave of the river which foams about the beak of the ship betokens that it is rushing forward with great speed. The maiden shows in her face a certain desperation of mind, for while her eyes filled with tears gaze towards the land, she is frightened at the thought of what she has done and is preoccupied in planning for the future, and she seems to me to be turning over her thoughts all to herself as she beholds in her mind each detail and has the gaze of her eyes steadfastly fixed upon the hidden secrets of her heart. Jason, who stands near her fully armed, is ready to defend her. Yon singer gives the rhythm to the oarsmen, striking up hymns to the gods, I should say, partly of thanksgiving for the success they have so far had and partly by way of supplication with reference to the fears they cherish. You also see Aeëtes on a four-horse chariot, tall and overtopping other men, wearing the war-armour of some giant, methinks – for the fact that he exceeds human stature leads to this impression – and his countenance is filled with wrath and he all but darts fire from his eyes, and he lifts a torch aloft in his right hand, for he intends to burn the Argo, sailors and all, and his spear lies ready to hand on the chariot-rail.

What, now, do you still wish to hear about the painting? Shall I describe the horses? Their nostrils are dilated, their heads erect, the glance of their eyes alert and particularly now when they are excited – for the painting makes you infer this – and the panting of the horses which are being lashed to full speed by Apsyrtus till they are reddened with blood – for it is he, they say, who is charioteer for Aeëtes – the drawing of their breath from the entire chest, and the whirling of the wheels that almost brings to your ears the rumble of the chariot, all this makes you realize the swiftness of the motion. Indeed, the spreading cloud of dust that sprinkles the sweating horses makes it difficult to determine their colour.

## HESIONE

It is not, I think, at anyone's command that the noble Heracles is undertaking this labour, nor is it possible to say this time that Eurystheus is causing him travail; rather we must say that, having made valour his master, he is submitting to tasks of his own choosing. Else why is he confronting so terrible a monster? For you see what big eyes it has, that turn about their encircling glance and glare so terribly, and that pull down over themselves the overhanging brow all savage and covered with spines; and how sharp is the projecting snout that reveals jagged "teeth in triple row," some of which are barbed and bent back to hold what they have caught, while others are sharp-pointed and rise to a great height; and you see how huge a head emerges from its crooked and supple neck. The size of it is indeed incredible, when briefly described, but the sight of it convinces the incredulous. For as the monster's body is bent not at one point along but at many points, the parts which are under the sea are indeed visible, though in a way to deceive the accuracy of vision because of their depth, while the other parts rise from the water and would look like islands to those unacquainted with the sea. The monster was at rest when we first encountered it; but now it is in motion with a most violent onrush and raises a great noise of splashing even though the weather is calm, and yonder wave which is raised by the force of its charge surges, on the one hand, around its exposed parts as it flows over them and makes them show white beneath, and, on the other, dashes against the shore; and the bending of its tail, which tosses the sea far aloft, might be compared to the sails of a ship shining with many colours.

This wonderful man, however, has no far of these things, but the lion's skin and the club are at his feet ready for use if he should need them; and he stands naked in the attitude of attack, thrusting forward his left leg so that it can carry the whole weight of his body as he shifts it to secure swiftness of movement, and while his left side and left hand are brought forward to stretch the bow, his right side is drawn back as his right hand draws the string to his breast. We need not seek the reason for all this, my boy, for the maiden who is fastened to the rocks is exposed as prey for the monster, and we must believe her to be Hesione, the daughter of Laomedon. And where is her father? Within the walls of the city, it seems to me, in a look-out where he can see what is going on. For you see the circuit of the city and the battlements full of men, and how

they stretch out their arms towards heaven in prayer, overcome no doubt with prodigious fear lest the monster even attack the city wall, since it rushes forward as if it meant to go ashore. As for the beauty of the maiden, the occasion precludes my describing it in detail, for her fear for her life and the agony occasioned by the sight she sees are withering the flower of her beauty; but nevertheless those who see her may conjecture from her present state what its full perfection is.

## SOPHOCLES

Why do you delay, O divine Sophocles, to accept the gifts of Melpomene? Why do you fix your eyes upon the ground? Since I for one do not know whether it is because you are now collecting your thoughts, or because you are awe-stricken at the presence of the goddess. But be of good heart, good sir, and accept her gifts; for the gifts of the gods are not to be rejected, as you no doubt know, since you have heard it from one of the devotees of Calliope. Indeed you see how the bees fly above you, and how they buzz with a pleasant and divine sound as they anoint you with mystic drops of their own dew, since this more than anything else is to be infused into your poesy. Surely someone will before long cry out, naming you the “honeycomb of kindly Muses,” and will exhort everyone to beware lest a bee fly unnoticed from your lips and insert its sting unawares. You can doubtless see the goddess herself imparting to you now sublimity of speech and loftiness of thought, and measuring out her gift with gracious smile. This is Asclepius near by, I think, doubtless urging you to write a paean, and though “famed for his skill” he does not disdain to listen to you; and his gaze that is fixed upon you, suffused as it is with joy, dimly foreshadows his visit to you a little later as your guest.

## HYACINTHUS

Let us ask the youth, my boy, who he is and what is the reason for Apollo’s presence with him, for he will not be afraid to have us, at least, look at him. Well, he says that he is Hyacinthus, the son of Oebalus; and now that we have learned this we must also know the reason for the god’s presence. The son of Leto for love of the youth promises to give him all he possesses for permission to associate with him; for he will teach him the use of the bow, and music, and

understanding of the art of prophecy, and not to be unskillful with the lyre, and to preside over the contest of the palaestra, and he will grant to him that, riding on a chariot drawn by swans, he should visit all the lands dear to Apollo. Here is the god, painted as usual with unshorn locks; he lifts a radiant forehead above eyes that shine like rays of light, and with a sweet smile he encourages Hyacinthus, extending his right hand with the same purpose. The youth keeps his eyes steadfastly on the ground, and they are thoughtful, for he rejoices at what he hears and tempers with modesty the confidence that is yet to come. He stands there, covering with a purple mantle the left side of his body, which is also drawn back, and he supports his right hand on a spear, the hip being thrown forward and the right side exposed to view, and this bare arm permits us to describe what is visible. He has a slender ankle below the straight lower leg, and above the latter this supple knee-joint; then some thighs not unduly developed and hip-joints which support the rest of the body; his side rounds out a full-lunged chest, his arm swells in a delicate curve, his neck is moderately erect, while the hair is not unkempt nor stiff from grime, but falls over his forehead and blends with the first down of his beard. The discus at his feet . . . about himself, and Eros, who is both radiant and at the same time downcast, and Zephyrus, who just shows his savage eye from his place of look-out – by all this the painter suggests the death of the youth, and as Apollo makes his cast, Zephyrus, by breathing athwart its course, will cause the discus to strike Hyacinthus.

## MELEAGER

Are you surprised to see a girl entering into so great a contest and withstanding the attack of so savage and so huge a boar? For you see how bloodshot is his eye, how his crest bristles, and how abundant is the foam that drips from his long upright tusks, which are unblunted at the point; and you see how the beast's bulk is proportional to his stride, which indeed is indicated by these tracks that are as large as those of a bull. For the painter has not failed to embody any of these points in his painting. But the scene before us is already terrible. For the boar has attacked Ancaeus here in the thigh, and the youth lies pouring out his blood in streams and with along gaping wound in his thigh; therefore now that the contest is already under way, Atalanta – for we must recognize that the girl is she – having put to the bowstring the arrow she has

ready, is about to let it fly. She wears a garment that does not reach the knee and boots fastened on her feet; her arms are bare to the shoulders for freedom of movement, and the garment is fastened there by brooches; her beauty, which is naturally of the masculine type, is made more so by the occasion, since her glance is not alluring, but she strains her eyes to observe what is going on. The youths here are Meleager and Peleus, for the painting tells us that it is they who have slain the boar; Meleager in an attitude of defence throws his weight upon his left foot, and watching closely the boar's advance, awaits his onset securely with couched spear.

Come, let us describe him in detail. The youth is sturdy and well developed all over; his legs below the knee are firmly knit and straight, well able to carry him in the foot-race, and also good guardians for him when he fights in the hand-to-hand contest; the upper and lower parts of the thigh are in harmony with the lower leg, and the hip is the kind to make us confident that the youth will not be overthrown by the boar's attack; his flanks are broad, his stomach lean, his breast protrudes a little, his arms are well articulated and his shoulders join in a strong neck, providing it with a firm foundation; his hair is ruddy, and at this time stands erect because of the vehemence of his attack; the flash of his eye is very bright, and his forehead is not relaxed but all instinct with passion; the expression of his face does not permit a word to be said of its beauty because it is so tense; he wears a white garment that does not reach to the knee, and his high boot that reaches above the ankle gives him secure support in walking; and letting his scarlet mantle hang in a fold from his neck he awaits the beast.

So much for the son of Oeneus; but Peleus here holds his purple mantle out before him; and he holds in his hand the sword given him by Hephaestus, as he awaits the rush of the boar; his eye is unswerving and keen of glance, and he looks as if he did not fear even to cross the borders and go with Jason on the adventure to Colchis.

## NESSUS

Do not fear the river Evenus, my boy, though it rises in great waves and the water overflows its banks, for it is a painting; rather let us examine its details, to see how and in what manner they are represented in art. Does not the divine

Heracles attract your attention as he advances thus into the middle of the river, his yes flashing fire and measuring off the distance to the mark, while he holds the bow in his outstretched left hand and still keeps his right hand in the attitude of one who has let fly the arrow? for he holds it close to his breast. And what would you say of the bowstring? Do you not seem to hear it sing as it lets fly the arrow? Whither is it aimed? Do you see the centaur giving his last leap? This is Nessus, I think, who alone escaped the hand of Heracles at Pholoë, when none but he escaped of those who wickedly attacked the hero. And he too is dead, caught in a manifest wrong to Heracles. For Nessus ferried across any who called for this service, and Heracles arrived, together with his wife and his son Hyllus; and since the river seemed unfordable, he entrusted his wife to Nessus to carry over, while he himself mounted his chariot along with his son and proceeded to cross the river. Thereupon the centaur when he reached the bank cast wanton eyes on the woman and dared a monstrous deed: and Heracles hearing her cry shot an arrow at Nessus. Deianeira is painted in the attitude of one in danger, in the extremity of her fear stretching out her arms to Heracles, while Nessus, who has just been hit by the arrow and is in convulsions, apparently has not yet given his own blood to Deianeira to be put aside for use on Heracles. The boy Hyllus stands on his father's chariot, to the rail of which the reins are fastened so that the horses will not run away, and he claps his hands in glee and laughs at what he has not yet the strength to do.

## PHILOCTETES

The man who but recently was in command of an army and led the men of Meliboea against Troy to avenge Menelaus on the Phrygian, is Philoctetes the son of Poeas, noble of birth, no doubt, and one who owes his upbringing to Heracles – for Philoctetes became the servant of Heracles from early youth and was the bearer of his bow and arrows, the bow which later he received from his master as a reward for his services in lighting the funeral pyre; but now with face haggard because of his malady and with clouded brow above lowered eyes, hollow eyes with sickly glare, showing hair that is full of filth and grime, his beard unkempt, shivering, himself clothed in rags and with rags concealing his heel, my boy, he supplies the following story:- The Achaeans, when they sailed for Troy and put in at the islands, were earnestly seeking the

altar of Chryse, which Jason had formerly erected when he made his voyage to Colchis; and Philoctetes, remembering the altar from his visit to it with Heracles, pointed it out to the searchers, whereupon a water-serpent drove its poison onto one of his feet. Then the Achaeans sail for Troy, but he was left here in Lemnos, "his foot dripping with devouring poison," as Sophocles says . . . [the rest of this text is no longer extant]