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Lucian's Imagines: A Student Reader, and Pro Imaginibus: a Translation

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LUCIAN’S IMAGINES: A STUDENT READER

and

PRO IMAGINIBUS: A TRANSLATION

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Preface

In the *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus* we have two tightly constructed and thought-provoking dialogues, by one of the cleverest writers in Greek. I trust they may be enjoyed, even today, in somewhat the manner their author intended, as an entertainment which “instead of affording just pure amusement based on wit and humour, also boasts a little food for thought that the Muses would not altogether spurn”: “μή μόνον ἐκ τοῦ ἀστείου τε καὶ χαρίεντος ψιλὴν παρέξει τὴν ψυχαγωγίαν, ἀλλὰ τινα καὶ θεωρίαν οὐκ ἀμοισὺν ἐπιδείξει” (*Verae Historiae* 1.1).¹ I hope that I have produced a volume which can be read accordingly, which allows readers to be stimulated both by Lucian’s wit and by his intellect, and which leaves them room to exercise their own. My commentary upon the *Imagines* ought to allow students of Greek to experience the humor of Lucianic prose less laboriously than they might otherwise, and my translation of the *Pro Imaginibus*, written in a spirit of fun, should make a compelling companion.

Only this preface has been given over to a more scholarly motive: its purpose is to introduce and organize the resources which a reader of this volume might consult to enter more deeply into the history and problems of Lucian’s work.

For a history of Lucian’s manuscripts, I advise the reader to consult the *Opera Luciani*, in its Oxford edition by Macleod.² Though this work was vigorously censured in the review by Nesselrath,³ Macleod’s defence may be found among the sections of his “Lucianic Studies since 1930,” and is quite compelling. Macleod’s work in the *Opera

builds upon the foundation laid out by Nilén in the introduction to his edition of Lucian, which readers of German may find enlightening. The *Liste des Manuscrites de Lucien* of Wittek, a catalogue of manuscripts, provides relevant material though it is admittedly dense in its abbreviation. Unfortunately for the casual reader not interested in dusting off her Latin to explore the Macleod, there exists no English history of the manuscripts of Lucian, a lack which ought to be taken under consideration by the present generation of scholars.

On the slightly related question of the original ordering of Lucian’s dialogues, there is Croiset’s essay, valuable both for its conjectural biography, and for the ordering of texts which is its outgrowth. A condensation in English of the speculations of Croiset may be found in Fowler and Fowler’s introduction to their translation, the *Works of Lucian of Samosata*. Of special interest for us, Croiset alleges that “Les Portraits et la Défense des Portraits, ainsi qu’on l’a vu dans le chapitre biographique qui précède, ont dû être composés à Antioche vers la fin de 162 ou le commencement de 163” (46).

The question here arises of the historicity of the *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus*. It has been suggested by some scholars, not only that Pantheia was a real historical figure, but that she is identical with an anonymous mistress of the emperor Verus who is known only from the following line in the Historia Augusta: “fertur praeterea ad amicae vulgaris arbitrium in Syria posuisse barbam; unde in eum a Syria multa sunt dicta”: “It is

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said, furthermore, that he shaved off his beard while in Syria to humour the whim of a low-born mistress”⁸ (“Lucius Verus”, 7.10). This identity is certainly possible, even if unsubstantiated, and would add somewhat to the diegetic complexity of the *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus*.

The reader may also find some interest in the interpretive essays included in Croiset’s volume, to which I may recommend as a supplement Baldwin’s *Studies in Lucian*, with their dense historical deductions: the focus here is especially upon Lucian’s political and literary affiliations, and the setting of these within a reasonable timeline.⁹

Beyond these two works, a trove of scholarship from the period 1930-1990, may be discovered through Macleod’s *Lucianic Studies since 1930*.¹⁰ Among these works, Bompaire’s *Lucien Écrivain, Imitation et Création*¹¹ is singled out as the most monumental: “the 750 pages of closely argued text, supplemented by a wealth of accurate and detailed footnotes, are a treasure-house of Lucianic lore.” Bompaire’s argument is one about the character of mimesis, and his analysis is devoted to the specific character of Lucian’s borrowings, and of his original creations. No single secondary source is as valuable for the study of Lucian. However, the issue of mimesis is one which several scholars have taken up in the wake of Bompaire’s volume, and the appropriate references to this work, as well as to work in several other key areas, may be found in Macleod’s invaluable bibliography.

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I may add, however, to the listing which he provides, references to a few more recent essays concerning Lucianic issues of special relevance to the two dialogues of this volume. Works of book-length scholarship have not been as weighty or numerous since the period of Macleod’s review, and for all matters pertaining to the text, the reader is advised to look there. The following, however, may be of some use.

In *Roman Eyes*, Elsner takes pains to establish a characterization of various ancient “visualities,” that is, culturally conditioned ways of relating to visual art which may have only weak parallels in the modern experience. Ekphrasis, both as a site for art criticism and analysis, and as an artistic medium in its own right, is pivotal to his argument. He turns his attention occasionally, and at key moments, to the Lucianic corpus, and as the dialogues with which we are concerned are ekphrastic, the discussion will be of some interest. Elsner turns a more focused eye to the *Imagines* in his essay “Seeing and Saying.” Here the dialogue becomes an explanatory paradigm for Freud’s theory of “tendentious” jokes. The objectification of Pantheia as a work of art, for use in an ekphrasis, is here considered psychologically, and perhaps politically, important. The importance for feminism stems from the entrance of gender into a paradigm of ekphrasis which Elsner elucidates in psychoanalytic terms: there exist in every ekphrasis two chains of communication: from artwork to art-viewer, and from speaker to audience (or writer to reader). These two communications occur simultaneously, and create predictable distortions of some complexity.

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Two further essays, by Laird and Ni Mheallaigh, consider Lucian’s relation to Plato, an issue especially salient in our two dialogues, which deal with reification and the concept of the εἰκον. Laird discusses visuality and fictionality in the Cave, using Lucian to illuminate Plato.\(^{14}\) The ontological effect of extra-diegetic play becomes important; there is also a good, concise discussion (16-21) of the word εἰκον. Ni Mheallaigh discusses the play of extra-diegetic levels (a feature the *Imagines* shares with, for instance, the *Symposium*), that is, the use of multiple embedded narrators and framing devices.\(^{15}\) These may have had a philosophical purpose in Plato: here they are sufficiently disorienting and novel to provide amusement.

As to editions of the work itself: a well-edited text has already been mentioned, the *Luciani Opera* of Macleod, as has the elegant English translation of Fowler. There exists also the Loeb edition, the one used in the composition of this volume.\(^{16}\) The text of the first four volumes is well-edited by Harmon, with quite a good English translation on facing pages: and our two dialogues are included in the fourth volume (255-335). Additional volumes were edited by Kilburn and Macleod.

A few other Lucianic pieces which may interest the reader of the *Imagines* include the “Verae Historiae” (vol. 1, 175-207 in the Loeb edition), “De Domo” (vol. 1, 247-357) and “De Dea Syria” (vol. 4, 337-411), each of which presents a new, interesting take on the business of ekphrasis. For other examples of ancient ekphrasis,


the reader may consult Pausanias, the two Philostrati, or Callistratus.¹⁷ Lucian was not writing in a vacuum, and these works reflect the environment of art appreciation which influenced the composition of Lucian’s ekphrastic compositions. Thought about art in the Second Sophistic period in Greece bears considerable differences from that of classical Athens, though in other ways it revitalizes it: these works may bring into focus the characters of the following dialogues, who emerge not from a classical, but from a 2nd-century Roman-ruled milieu of Greek intellectualism.

Suggested Reading


ΕΙΚΟΝΕΣ (Imagines)

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Αλλ᾽ ἦ τοιοῦτόν τι ἔπασχον οἱ τὴν Γοργώ ἱδόντες οἶν ἐγὼ ἐναγχος ἔπαθον, ὦ Πολύστρατε, παγκάλην τινὰ γυναῖκα ἱδών. αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ τοῦ μύθου ἐκεῖνο, μικροὶ δὲ λίθος ἐξ ανθρώπου σοι γεγονέναι πεπηγὼς ὑπὸ τοῦ θαύματος.

ΕΙΚΟΝΕΣ

The following summary from Ní Mheallaigh of Lucian's practice of naming is quite correct: “...like Plato, Lucian adopts various masks, usually with transparent names, that are teasingly suggestive of identity with the author. The most artful of these is arguably Lycinus, a name which occurs across a spectrum of works, and whose homonymy with the author Loukianos is tantalizingly close. In the Pro Imaginibus, Lycinus is actually identified with Lucian as the author of the Imagines; however, given that the identities of Lucian’s personae are not monolithic, even when the names are repeated across different works, we should be careful not to assume that Lycinus always represents Lucian in this way” 98-9).

ἲ “My word!” A strengthening particle used as an oath (Smyth, §2786).

τοιοῦτόν τι...οἶν Three words working together much as in the English phrase “...such a thing as...”

ἐναγχος This adjective is best translated by an English adverb or adverbial phrase, “recently,” or “just now.”

παγκάλην “All beautiful,” “all good.” This first descriptor of Pantheia contains a slight echo of her name, “All-godly.”
αὕτῳ... τὸ τοῦ μύθου ἐκεῖνο lit. “that same thing from the story…” Best translated, “just as happened in the story…” i.e. the story of the Gorgons.

μικρὸς δέω Equivalent to the more common, impersonal ὀλίγου δεῖ, “there wants little.” Perhaps best translated “I almost,” with the perfect infinitive γεγονέναι.

σοι The “ethical dative” “may often be translated by I beg you, please, you see, let me tell you, etc.” (Smyth, §1486)

πεπηγώς From πήγνυμι, to freeze or harden. πέπηγα the perfect active, πεπηγώς the participle.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Ἡράκλεις, ὑπερφυές τι τὸ θέαμα φῆς καὶ δεινῶς βίαιον, εἰ γε καὶ Λυκίνον ἐξέπληξε γυνὴ τις οἶσα· σὺ γὰρ ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν μειρακίων καὶ πάνυ ῥαδίως αὑτὸ πάσχεις, ὡστε θάττον ἂν τὸν Σίπυλον μετακινήσεις ἡμῖν ἑστιν καὶ πόθεν, ὡς καὶ ἴμης ἰδομένως. οὐ γὰρ, οἶμαι, φθονήσεις ἤμιν τῆς θέας οἵδε ζηλοτυπήσεις, εἰ μέλλοιμεν πλησίον που καὶ αὐτοὶ παραπεπηγέναι σοι ἰδόντες.

Ἡράκλεις A common oath.

ὑπερφυές “Extraordinary.” From the same root as the verb ὑπερφυομαι, “to overgrow.”

The exuberant language used throughout these dialogues captures jocularly the conviviality of the two friends.
δεινός βιαίον  An oddly, and humorously forceful epithet, when translated literally.

γε  Ought usually to be translated before the preceding conjunction: “that is if...” “as long as...”

ἐξέπληξε  From ἐκπλήσσω, meaning to drive out (of one's senses), to astound. The subject of this verb is revealed with a sense of disbelief: γυνή τις οὐσα, “[a thing] being [only] some woman.”

ὑπὸ  “On account of” or “with regard to” rather than “by” (Smyth, §1679).

ὡστε θάττον ἄν τις  “So that one would faster...”

Σίπυλον  From Harmon: “A double allusion. The Niobe story has already been introduced by the mention of Mount Sipylus, where Niobe was turned into stone; and now, by styling her the daughter of Tantalus, Polystratus compares the plight of Lycinus to that of Tantalus also” (Lucian, vol. 4, 256).

μὴ οὖχι  The regular form of a negation after a verb of hindering (Smyth, §2759d). “So that you do not stand beside...” A natural result clause (Smyth, §2260) is here nestled within an actual result clause (Smyth, §2257).

κεχηνότα  From χάσκω, to gape, or in this case, ogle.

ἐκείνην αὐτήν τήν  “That same [daughter] of...”

ἡμίν  dat., “to us.” “Who is this Medusa of ours?”

ἡμεῖς  “So that I might see her” might sound more natural, but the reader will remember that she too is being invited to share this sight.

οἶμαι  From οἴομαι by syncope. “To suppose,” generally with a future infinitive.
φθονήσεις… ζηλοτυπήσεις  φθονέω, “to grudge,” takes two objects, the person
gruded a dative, and the thing grudged a genitive. The similar word ζηλοτυπέω, “to be
jealous,” appears here without any object.

πλησίον που… παρα…  Taken all together, “there beside you.”

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Και µήν εἶ διέναι χρή σε, ὡς κἂν ἐκ περιωπῆς µόνον ἀπίδης εἰς αὐτήν, ἀχανὴ σε
καὶ τῶν ἀνδριάντων ἀκινητῶτερον ἀποφανεῖ. καίτοι τοῦτο µὲν ἵσως εἱρηνικώτερόν ἐστιν
cαὶ τὸ τραύμα ἦτον καίριον, εἰ αὐτὸς ἱδοις· εἰ δὲ κάκεινη προσβλέψει ἐστί, τίς ἦσται
µηχανὴ ἀποστήναι αὐτῆς· ἀπάξει γάρ σε ἀναδησαμένη ἑνθα ἐν ἑθέλῃ, ὃπερ καὶ ἢ λίθος ἢ
Ἡρακλεία δρᾶ τὸν σίδηρον.

χρή  This impersonal construction works very much like the French “il faut…” or “it
behooves you to…” A “quasi-impersonal” construction (Smyth, §933). 18

κἂν… µόνον  From καὶ ἐὰν: “if only…”

ἐκ περιωπῆς  A Lucianic idiom (LSJ, “περιωπ-ῆ”), meaning “with a bird’s eye view,”
“from a distant vantage point.” 19

ἀπίδης  From εἰδος, aor. subj.

ἀποφανεῖ Liquid fut. “She will shine forth to you…” “You,” σε, is then modified by
descriptors apparently arising from this shining forth.

ἀνδριάντων  Gen. of comparison.

τούτο  “This effect.” ἵσως has the common idiomatic meaning “perhaps.”

メント καιρίου καιριος, “opportune,” when said of a wound, can mean “vital.” Thus we have “less serious.”

προσβλέπω  “To look towards,” to reciprocate the gaze. We are about to embark upon a slew of ekphrases, descriptions of a work of art. But this work has the exceptional character of being able to gaze back.

ἀποστήναι Here, to “tear oneself away.” The Medusa metaphor is echoed.

ἀπάξει ἀπαγω, fut.

ἐνθα ἄν ἑδήλη “Wherever she wishes.”

διπερ  “just what [the magnet does to the iron],” a neuter accusative object.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Παύου, ὦ Λυκίνε, τεράστιον τι κάλλος ἀναπλάττων, ἄλλ᾽ εἰπέ, τίς ἢ γυνὴ ἔστιν.

Παύου Mr. pres. imperat., with a present nominative participle.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Οἱ διε γὰρ μὲ ὑπερβαλέσθαι τῷ λόγῳ, ὃς δέδια μὴ σοὶ ἰδόντι ἰσθενής τις ἔπαινέσαι δόξω, παρὰ τοσοῦτον ἅμείνων φανεῖται; πλὴν ἄλλα ἤτις μὲν, οὐκ ἂν εἰπεῖν ἔχοιμι, θεραπεία δὲ πολλὴ καὶ ἄλλη περὶ αὐτὴν παρασκευὴ λαμπρὰ καὶ εὐνούχων τι πλῆθος καὶ ἄβραι πάνυ πολλαί, καὶ ὅλως μειζὸν γε ἧν κατὰ ἰδιωτικὴν τύχην ἐδοκεῖ τὸ πράγμα εἶναι.
Οἶει 2nd sg. pres. indicative mp.

ὑπερβαλέσθαι τῷ λόγῳ “To overshoot in word,” “to exaggerate.”

δέδια Perfect of δείδω, “to fear,” with a present sense. The concessive nature might be captured with “I who actually fear.” μή: “lest I…”

ἀσθενής nom. sg., with an adverbial sense.

παρὰ Sets up a comparison: “while, on the contrary…”

πλὴν ἄλλα Has the force of “anyway.”

θεραπεία Here, “attention.” παρασκευή, “equipage,” or “train.”

εὐνούχων A partitive genitive with a word of quantity.

δβρα A “favorite slave.” πάνυ strengthens πολλαί.

δλως “On the whole.”

μεῖζον γε ἢ A comparative phrase modifying τὸ πρᾶγμα.

κατὰ ἰδιωτικήν τύχην “[What accords with] a private fortune.”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Οὐδὲ τὸ ὅνομα ἐπίθετο σὺ γε ἦτις καλοῖτο;

τὸ ὅνομα τὸ ὅνομα, crasis.

καλοῖτο Optative in an indirect question.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ
Οὐδαμῶς, ἢ τοῦτο μόνον, τῆς Ἰωνίας ἐστίν· τῶν θεατῶν γὰρ τις ἀπιδῶν εἰς τὸν πλησίον, ἐπεὶ παρῆλθεν, “Τοιαῦτα μέντοι,” ἔφη, “τὰ Σμυρναϊκὰ κάλλη· καὶ θαυμαστὸν οἶδέν, εἰ ἡ καλλίστη τῶν Ἰωνικῶν πόλεων τὴν καλλίστην γυναῖκα ἤνεγκεν.” ἐδόκει δὲ μοι Σμυρναῖος καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ λέγων εἶναι, οὕτως ἐσεμνύνετο ἐπ’ αὐτῇ.

Οὐδαμῶς May be taken as a simple negation.

θεατῶν An oddly ambiguous word, which could be the genitive plural of θεατός, the thing seen, rather than that of θεατής, the viewer (although this, possibly, would not have occurred to a native Greek speaker). The connection to the English “theater” should be obvious. This dialogue will present, largely, a politics of looking which is centered around a single conversation; two viewers and one viewed. But in this early digression we observe that the politics of looking, as the name suggests, involves the whole polis.

ἀπιδῶν A participle doing the work of a noun. “A certain one, looking to his neighbor.” Pay special note to all relations of looking, which are two-directional (among equal members of a polis) or one-directional (as is the case in art, or with the everyday objects of the world).

Σμυρναϊκὰ Smyrna, on the West coast of Asia Minor.


嬛εγκεν From φέρω, in the sense of bearing forth, producing.

ἐδόκει δοκέω can, as usual, be rendered as “to seem.”

οὕτως In context, “so much did he...”
ἐσεμνύνετο  "To exalt, magnify."

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Οὐκοίν ἐπεὶ λίθου τούτῳ γε ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐποίησας οἴτε παρακολουθήσας οἴτε τὸν Ἀμαράντον ἐκείνον ἐρόμενος, ὡστε ἢν, κἂν τὸ εἰδος ὡς οἴον τε ὑπόδειξον τῷ λόγῳ τάχα γὰρ ἂν οὕτως γνωρίσαμι.

ἐπεῖ  Here taken as "since."

tοῦτό γε  "In this matter at least."

tοῦτό... ἐποίησας  "You played the part (of)..." ὡς appears to mean "since," in conjunction with κἂν in the second half of the sentence.

δότις  Distinct from ἡτίς above, in gender and in sense: "whoever he was."

ὑπόδειξον  Aor. imperat. "Show!" The same word might be used of graphic art, but here specified as "in speech."

ὡς οἴον τε  "As best you can."

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Ἅρης ἦλικον τῷ θητήσας; οὐ κατὰ λόγων δύναμιν, καὶ μάλιστα γε τῶν ἐμῶν, ἐμφανίσαι θαυμασιάν οὕτως εἰκόνα, πρὸς ἢν μόλις ἢν ἢ Ἀπελλῆς ἢ Ζεύς ἢ Παρράσιος ἢκαν ξῆδον, ἢ εἴ τις Φειδίας ἢ Ἀλκαμένης· ἑγὼ δὲ λυμανοῦμαι τὸ ὕρχετυπον ἀσθενείᾳ τῆς τέχνης.
ἡλίκον “How much,” “how big a thing.”

ἡτησας Aor. ind. act. from αἰτέω, “to ask,” “to beg.”

κατὰ...δύναμιν “In accordance with the power of…”

ἐμφανίσαι Aor. inf. The subject of the clause, with an implied ἔστι. “It is not in my power to show forth/bring into being…”

εἰκών A word with a long Platonic history as an “image” (although not identical with εἰδός, “form”), here clearly has the sense of a “portrait.”

ἡ Ἀπελλῆς ἡ Ζεύξις ἡ Παρράσιος Painters of classical antiquity, known from the ekphrases of Pliny the Elder (Naturalis Historia 35.36). Phidias and Alcamenes, on the other hand, worked primarily in sculpture. Lucian will argue that both of these arts are, not only recreated through the artistry of the writer or speaker of ekphrases, as in the work of Pliny, but even transcended.

ξῦναν Aor., but in this clause with ὅν takes a subjunctive or conditional reading (Smyth, §1784-8). “They would hardly seem…”

εξ Best read here as “even.”

λυμανοῦμαι A liquid fut. “To outrage,” or “to ruin.”

ἀρχέτυπον “Archetype,” or “original.” The ekphrasis is always dependent upon such an original, though rarely is this a living (and historical) human being.

τέχνης Lycinus’ own skill, here dependent upon ἀσθενεῖς.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ
Ὅμως, ὦ Λυκίνε, ποία τις τὴν ὑψιν; οὐ γὰρ ἐπισφαλὲς τὸ τόλμημα, εἰ φίλῳ ἄνδρι ἐπιδείξαις τὴν εἰκόνα, ὅπως ἂν τῆς γραμμῆς ἔχῃ.

ποία τις τὴν ὑψιν; The accusative may be read as one of respect: “How was she as to her appearance?” ὑψις, like so many words of sight, is ambiguous; it may mean “vision,” the act or faculty of the subject, or, as here, “appearance,” the act or faculty of the object of sight.

ἐπισφαλὲς τὸ τόλμημα “Precarious the adventure.” Harmon has: “It would not be dangerously bold if…”

ἐπιδείξαις The prefix adds to the basic meaning of showing the sense of exhibiting as an example, in this case as an example of the speaker’s rhetorical flourish.

ὅπως ἂν τῆς γραμμῆς ἔχῃ Lit. “however little it should hold to the line.” Harmon has: “no matter how well or ill it may be drawn.”

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Καὶ μὴν ἀσφαλέστερον αὐτὸς ποιήσειν μοι δοκῶ τῶν παλαιῶν τινας ἔκεινων τεχνιῶν παρακαλέσας ἐπὶ τὸ ἔργον, ὡς ἀναπλάσειάν μοι τὴν γυναίκα.

ἀσφαλέστερον αὐτὸς ποιήσειν μοι δοκῶ The subject, “I myself,” is also the implied subject of the indirect statement, with a future infinitive, “to do [in the future] [something] less risky.”
Painters and sculptors, creators of physical art, share their name with the craftsmen of non-artistic objects. LSJ (entry for τεχνίτης) suggests artificer: craftsman, artist, even trickster; the unifying concept is skill in whatever production.

παρακαλέσας With the sense of the English “calling upon.”

ἐπι “For,” or “for the purposes of.”

ὡς ἀναπλάσειάν A purpose clause: “so they might model for me.” αναπλάσσω, here in the optative, has the sense of modeling, as in plaster. Πλάσσω is Plato’s word for the process of educating the guardians of his Republic, forming them through education, and it also seems to hold, for the Greeks, the non-explicit sense of “creating fiction” (LSJ, πλάσσω). Many of Lucian’s dialogues and stories, for instance, have, as fictions, been “formed” in this way.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Πῶς τούτο φῆς; ἢ πῶς ἐν ἀφίκοιντό σοι πρὸ τοσούτων ἐτῶν ἀποθανόντες;

Πῶς “How?” Here “why?” is a more natural translation.

ἀφίκοιντό Here the optative contains the sense of capability: “how can they come to you?”

πρὸ With a genitive time designation, “before,” or “ago.”

ἀποθανόντες Aor. part.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ
Ῥᾳ δίως, ἧνπερ σὺ μὴ ὀκνήσῃς ἀποκρίνασθαι τί μοι.

ἥνπερ ἔϊν + πέρ, "if only."

ὀκνήσῃς "To shrink from," "hesitate," aor. subj. act.

τί neut. acc. sg.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Ἑρώτα μόνον.

μόνον Often translated adverbially as "just" or "only."

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Ἑπεδήμησας ποτε, ὦ Πολύστρατε, τῇ Κνιδίων;

ποτε ποτέ, enclitic. "at some time," "ever."

τῇ Κνιδίων "The land of the Knidians," "land" implied, Knidos in Southwestern Asia Minor. The famous Aphrodite there was of the "modest" type, covering her groin with one hand (Pseudo-Lucian, Ἀμορες 13). The geographical range of the artistic references in this section alludes, and perhaps parodies, a kind of connoisseurship current among certain social classes of the second sophistic period. Pausanias and both Plinys may be considered to represent the practice of itinerant art criticism. Petronius, in the Ἁμορες, provides a savage satire of it from the first century. See
Elsner’s *Roman Eyes*, chapter 3, for a discussion of ancient connoisseurship and the development of the “eye for art.” Lucian, according to Elsner, typically approaches art with a more dilettantish eye, or at least with a different purpose in view than mastery (*Roman Eyes*, pp. 58, 62). His characters, on the other hand, seem to engage directly in the connoisseurial project.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Καὶ μάλα.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Ὀίκοιν καὶ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἶδες πάντως αὐτῶν;

Ὀίκοιν Expects the answer “yes” (Smyth, §2651).

αὐτῶν “Of theirs,” i.e. the Knidians’.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Νὴ Δία, τῶν Πραξιτέλους ποιημάτων τὸ κάλλιστον.

Νὴ Particle of strong affirmation, introducing an oath (“By Jove!” preserves the aristocratic feeling of the dialogue).

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ
Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν μὴν ἤκουσας, δὲν λέγουσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι περὶ αὐτῆς, ὡς ἐρασθεὶς
tis toû ἀγάλματος καὶ λαθὼν ὑπολειφθείς ἐν ἱερῷ συγγενοίτο, ὡς δυνατὸν ἀγάλματι.
toûto méntoû állos ἱστορεῖσθω. σὺ δὲ—ταύτην γὰρ, ὡς φής, εἶδες—ιθὶ μοι καὶ τὸ δὲ
ἀπόκριναι, εἰ καὶ τὴν ἐν κῆποις Ἀθήνησι τὴν Ἀλκαμένους ἐώρακας.

δὲν λέγουσιν This story is told in greater length in the Amores of Pseudo-Lucian (sec.
15-16, included in the Loeb edition of Lucian). It is reminiscent of that of Pygmalion; the
tragic effect of the latter story from folklore is in part achieved in making explicit the
sexual relationship of the art-appreciator to the artwork. The graphically sexual can of
course be presented in a comic mode, but this dialogue, a slightly more mannered work,
preserves the innocence of the viewers, and the modesty of the viewed; and thereby a
certain charm that might be lost.

ἐρασθεὶς Aor. opt. pass. 3rd sg. Aorist optative denotes a punctual action in secondary
sequence (as the content of the story). The passive form here has a middle sense.

ἐραμαι takes a genitive object.

λαθὼν Aor. part. From λανθάνω, which, with a participle, here the passive ὑπολειφθείς,
means “to escape the notice of [others] while…” Translate: “and left behind
unnoticed…”

ὡς δυνατὸν ἀγάλματι Slightly idiomatic, with an implied εἶ, “as well as was possible
with a statue” (LSJ, δύνατος).

ἱστορεῖσθω Imperat. 3rd sg. pres. mp. Lit. “But let this be told otherwise.” Harmon has
“But no matter about that.”
Ἅθι Imperat. 2nd sg. pres. act. from εἰμι. With the aorist participle, ἀπόκριναι, transfers to it its imperative sense (Smyth, §1836).

ἐι “whether.”

ἐώρακας 2nd sg. perf. act., though an optative might be expected here (Smyth, §2677). “Whether you saw.” For discussion of Lucian’s surprising use of the optative, see Sims.  

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Ἡ πάντων γ’ ἢν, ὦ Λυκίνε, ὁ ῥαθυμότατος ἢν, εἰ τὸ κάλλιστον τῶν Ἀλκαμένους πλασμάτων παρεὶδον.

γ’ ἢν… ἢν Two past tense indicative verbs in this sentence, with εἰ and ἢν make this the result clause of a contrary-to-fact conditional.

παρεϊδον “To observe,” with the contradictory secondary (and relevant) meaning, “to overlook.”

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Ἅκεινο μέν γε, ὦ Πολύστρατε, οὐκ ἐξερήσομαι σε, εἰ πολλάκις εἰς τὴν ἄκρωπολιν ἀνελθὼν καὶ τὴν Καλάμιδος Σωσάνδραν τεθέασαι.

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ἐξερήσομαι “To inquire into.” Fut. act., with two accusative objects, for the matter inquired into and the person inquired of. Lycinus implies that such a questioning would be an insult to his friend’s honor as a connoisseur. Of course, he implies the question in declining to answer it.

πολλάκις “Often,” with the secondary meaning here of “perhaps” (LSJ, πολλάκις).

Καλάμιδος Σωσάνδραν The fifth century sculptor Calamis is known, with a long list of accomplishments throughout the Aegean (Pausanias 9.16.1, Pliny the Elder 4.92, 34.39), but his works are lost, and Sosandra’s identity unknown.

tεθέσαι Indicative perf. 2nd sg. mp.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Εἶδον κἀκεῖνην πολλάκις.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Ἄλλα καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἰκανῶς. Τῶν δὲ Φειδίου ἔργων τί μάλιστα ἐπήνεσας;

τί μάλιστα ἐπήνεσας; “Which do you praise most highly?”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Τι δὴ άλλο ἢ τὴν Λημνίαν, ἢ καὶ ἐπηγράψαι τοὐνομα ὁ Φειδίας ἤξιωσε; καὶ νὴ Δία τὴν Ἀμαζόνα τὴν ἐπερειδομένην τῷ δορατίῳ.
Here translated “but,” rather than “or”: “What but…”

With the infinitive, “deigned to.” The usual translation “judged worthy to” cannot be fitted in seamlessly.

Usually “to drive against,” but in the passive “to lean upon.”

Τὰ κάλλιστα, ὥστε οἰκέτ᾽ οὖν τε συναρμόσας μίαν σοι ἔπιδείξω, τὸ ἔξαίρετον παρ᾽ ἑκάστης ἔχουσαν.

With an implied ἔστι, to make the first clause of a result construction.

“It shall want none.” Translate: “We shall not need another…”

An idiomatic use of the imperative: “come now.”

“As well as possible.”

Aor. participle, which here shares its object with the main verb, ἐπιδείξω, “to exhibit.” In harmony, one puts disparate elements together so as to form a whole.

“What is excellent in each.”

Here “holding” in the sense of an internal constituent, rather than an external object.

Καὶ τίνα ἃν τρόπον τούτι γένοιτο;
τίνα... τρόπον An accusative absolute: “how?”

ἂν... γένοιτο The optative in a hypothetical/interrogative phrase.

touti Neut. acc. sg. (LSJ, oὗτος).

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Οὐ χαλεπόν, ὦ Πολύστρατε, εἰ τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε παραδόντες τὰς εἰκόνας τῷ λόγῳ,
ἐπιτρέψαμεν αὐτῷ μετακοσμεῖν καὶ συντιθέναι καὶ ἁρμόζειν ὡς ὃς ὃν εὐρυθμότατα δύναιτο,
φυλάττων ἃμα τὸ συμμιγῆς ἐκεῖνο καὶ ποικίλον.

τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε “From now on.”

ἐπιτρέψαμεν “To yield,” “to entrust,” “to permit.” Aor. opt. act. in the protasis, making
this a future less vivid. Οὐ χαλεπόν forms the entire apodosis.

μετακοσμεῖν “To rearrange or change in aspect.” The other two verbs stress the
compositional nature of the project. H.P. L’Orange argues that under Roman rule,
Greek art underwent a transition from the Classical paradigm, under which each
element of a work was considered as a discrete unit, containing its own beauty, to a
medieval paradigm in which beauty was taken to arise from the arrangement of these
into a perfect (often symmetrical or symbolic) whole.21 Lucian seems to have
sympathies with both paradigms: he can achieve classical effects at will, while treating a
variety of particulars with little formal structure (for instance in “The True Stories”), but

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expresses amazement at the overwhelming power of holistic, symbolic art (for instance in “The Syrian Goddess,” another ekphrastic piece). Lucian is therefore situated on the very hinge of this transition, and here it is ὁ λόγος, which effects a harmonizing of the two.

ὡς ἄν εὐρυθμότατα δύναιτο “As rhythmically as it can.” We have changed subject here, but remain dependent upon the εἰ.

φυλάττων Used much like the English “to keep.” “Keeping it mixed,” or “maintaining the compositional quality” (which remains in harmony with, rather than precedence over, the variety, ποικίλον.)

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Εἴ λέγεις· καὶ διὶ παραλαβὼν δεικνύτω· ἐθέλω γὰρ εἰδέναι ὅ τι καὶ χρῆσται αὐταῖς, ἢ ὅπως ἐκ τοσοῦτων μίαν τινὰ συνθεῖς ὁ ἵκ ἄπτόδουσαν ἀπεργάσεται.

δεικνύτω Imperat. 3rd sg. pres. act. It is λόγος that is the subject of this command. παραλαβὼν is reciprocal to παραδόντες above.


ὅπως “How,” (perhaps best translated “whether”) in a clause parallel to that following ὅ τι. Introduces a worry of Polystratus, about the possible disharmony (or decomposition, though the metaphor remains acoustic) of the piece, under a condition articulated as μίαν τινὰ συνθεῖς. In Plato’s Phaedo, the compositional aspect of music is proposed as a metaphor for a soul dependent on the body (later rejected by Socrates). Lucian, in an
inversion, is here claiming the musical metaphor for the artistic description of the body. The same method, however, will be restored in the second half of the piece, to the description of the “soul,” or internal characteristics of a person.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Καὶ μὴν ἡδῆ σοι ὁρῶν παρέχει γιγνομένην τὴν εἰκόνα, ὅδε συναρμόζων, τῆς ἐκ Κνίδου ἤκουσης μόνον τὴν κεφαλὴν λαβῶν· οὐδὲν γὰρ τοῦ ἄλλου σώματος γυμνοῦ ὄντος δεῖσθαι· τὰ μὲν ὅμφι τὴν κόμην καὶ μέτωπον ὕφρων τε τὸ εὐγραμμὸν ἔσσει ἐχειν ὥσπερ ὁ Πραξιτέλης ἐποίησεν, καὶ τὸν ὄφθαλμον δὲ τὸ ὑγρὸν ὄμα τῷ φαιδρῷ καὶ κεχαρισμένῳ, καὶ τούτῳ διαφυλάξῃ κατὰ τὸ Πραξιτέλει δοκοῦν· τὰ μῆλα δὲ καὶ ὁσα τῆς ὅψεως ἀντωπὰ παρ’ Ἀλκαμένου καὶ τῆς ἐν κήποις λήψεται, καὶ προσέτι χειρὸς ἄκρα καὶ καρπῶν τὸ εὐρυθμὸν καὶ δακτύλῳ τὸ εὐάγρων εἰς λεπτὸν ἀπολήγον παρὰ τῆς ἐν κήποις καὶ ταῦτα. τὴν δὲ τοῦ παντὸς προσώπου περιγραφὴν καὶ παρεῖδω τὸ ἀπαλὸν καὶ ρίνα σύμμετρον ἢ Λημνία παρέξῃ καὶ Φείδιας· ἐπὶ καὶ στόματος ὄρμογήν αὐτὸς καὶ τὸν αἰχένα, παρὰ τῆς Ἀμαζόνος λαβῶν· ἢ Σωσάνδρα δὲ καὶ Κάλαμος αἴδοι κοσμήσουσιν αὐτὴν, καὶ τὸ μεθίαμα σεμνὸν καὶ λεληθὸς ὥσπερ τὸ ἐκείνης ἐσται· καὶ τὸ εὐσταλέξ δὲ καὶ κόσμιον τῆς ἀναβολῆς παρὰ τῆς Σωσάνδρας, πλὴν ὅτι ἱκανοκάλυπτος αὐτὴ ἐσται τῆς κεφαλῆς. τῆς ἰλικίας δὲ τὸ μέτρον ἱλίκων ἐν γένοιτο, κατὰ τὴν ἐν Κνίδῳ ἐκείνην μάλιστα. καὶ γὰρ καὶ τούτῳ κατὰ τὸν Πραξιτέλη μεμετρήσθων.

Τί σοι, ὁ Πολύστρατε, δοκεῖ; καλὴ γενήσεσθαι ἢ εἰκὼν;
παρέχει  "To allow," "to grant," with dat. for the receiver and acc. (in this case an
infinitive) for the thing given.

γιγνομένην  "As it comes into being."

συναρμόζων  English would likely put a colon here, as the next clause forms the first in
a list of steps which λόγος takes in the process described by συναρμόζων.

τῆς ἐκ Κνίδου ἡκούσης  (From ἥκω.) "The one having come from Knidos," i.e. the
Aphrodite of Praxiteles.

οὐδὲν... δεῖσται Note the future tense verb. The accusative object is not usual. It
belongs to the clause which comes between these two words, though this stands also
on its own as a genitive absolute.

τὰ μὲν ἀμφὶ τῇ κόμην  "The things around the hair." Harmon has: "the arrangement of
the hair."

μέτωπον  Separated from the third item in the list, ὀφρύων... εὔγραμμον, by the enclitic
τε.

ἐάσει ἔχειν  Another future verb, with acc. for the things allowed to act, and inf. for the
action permitted. Here ἔχειν means "to remain."

ὕγρῶν  The "melting or languishing quality" of the eyes. Praxiteles has allowed this to
co-exist with (therefore in dat.) a certain brightness (φαίδρῳ) and gracefulness
(κεχαρισμένῳ, a perf. pass. part.)

κατὰ τὸ Πραξιτέλει δοκοῦν  "As they appeared to Praxiteles," "as Praxiteles conceived
them." The notion that art appears autonomously through the medium of the artist is an
old one.
τὰ μῆλα “The apples,” a metaphor occasionally for the breasts, or as here, for the cheeks.

δᾶ τῆς δφεως ἀντωπα Lit. “As much as is front-facing of the face,” a more than slightly cumbersome phrase. Harmon has: “all the fore part of the face.”

λῆψεται From λαμβάνω, rather than λεῖπω.

προσέτι “Besides.”

χειρῶν ἀκρα “The tips of the hands,” i.e. the fingers or finger tips.

καρπός May mean “wrist” as well as “fruit.” Their εὔρυθμον may be taken to be a feature of their proportion or grace, rather than of their sound.

eὐάγων εἰς λεπτὸν ἀπολήγον “Ductility,” or “suppleness,” which “leaves off towards smallness” or “delicacy.” Harmon translates the whole phrase as “supple, tapering.”

καὶ ταῦτα Reinforces the elements recently added to the list.

ἀπαλὸν Taken as a noun, “delicacy.”

στόματος ἁρμόγην The “joining of the mouth,” perhaps the interior curvature of the lips.

αὐτὸς “The same Phidias”—recall that his Amazon as well as his Lemnian was praised.

αἰδοὶ From αἰδώς. “Shame” or “modesty” can in English only imply a non-physical characteristic; these translations are therefore only provisional, since αἰδώς is here considered an effect which a sculptor can achieve.

σεμνὸν καὶ λεληθός “Holy” or “solemn,” and, from λανθάνω, “unnoticed,” which Harmon renders “faint.” These may be the characteristics of the smile of a religious
icon, which would point out to us the near proximity in antiquity of “religious” to “secular” art. These modify μειδίαμα, using the copula that follows the comparative phrase.

eὐσταλές δὲ καὶ κόσμιον “Neatness and order.”

ἀναβολής “That which is thrown over the shoulder,” a cloak or dress.

πλὴν δτι “Except that.”

τὴν κεφαλὴν Acc. of respect.

ἡλίκον ἂν γένοιτο “However old she may be.”

tὸ μέτρον... κατὰ “The measure [of her years]... [shall be] according to...” “Her stature” is also a possible translation for ἡλικίας (LSJ, ἡλικίας).

κατὰ τὸν Πραξιτέλη μεμετρήσθω Imperat. 3rd sg. perf. mp. The verb’s subject is “this,” the matter of her age (or her stature), which will also be determined “according to Praxiteles,” i.e. in accord with his Sosandra.

γενήσεσθαι Fut. inf. with δοκεῖ.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Καὶ μάλιστα, ἐπειδὴ εἰς τὸ ἁριβέστατον ἄποτελεσθῇ ἐπὶ γάρ, ὃ πάντων γενναιότατε, καταλέλοιπας τι κάλλος ἐξω τοῦ ἁγάλματος οὕτως πάντα εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ συμπεφορηκώς.

ἄποτελεσθῇ Aor. subj. pass. “To be completed,” here “in the utmost detail.”
ὦ πάντων γενναιότατε  "Oh most incredibly noble one," probably seemed as over-the-top to the ancient reader as to us. Harmon takes it as referring to Lycinus’ zeal in his description thus far.

καταλέλοιπάς  Perf. ind.

τι κάλλος  "A certain perfection."

οὗτος  "While," with the participle.

tὸ αὐτὸ  Refers to the ἀγάλματος.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Τι τοῦτο;

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Οὐ τὸ μικρότατον, ὦ φιλότης, εἰ μὴ σοι δῷξει ὀλίγα πρὸς εὐμορφίαν συντελεῖν χρόα καὶ τὸ ἐκάστῳ πρέπον, ὥς μέλανα μὲν εἶναι ἀκριβῶς ὑπόσα μέλανα, λευκὰ δὲ ὅσα τοιαῦτα χρῆ, καὶ τὸ ἐρύθημα ἐπανθεῖν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα· κινδυνεύει τοῦ μεγίστου ἐπὶ ἤμιν προσδεῖν.

εἰ μὴ  “Unless.”

ὁλίγα  Adverbial, “a little.”

πρὸς εὐμορφίαν συντελεῖν χρόα  “To add [by way of completing] color to a beautiful figure.” χρώς may also mean “skin.”
καὶ τὸ ἐκάστῳ πρέπον  Further specifies the kind of color, that color which is appropriate for each part, as is further detailed in the next clauses.

μέλανα  In one instance refers to the black of the statue, and in the other to the black of its model; one black is prescriptive, and the other descriptive, and the two are meant to be aligned by ὁπόσα.

δάσα τοιαῦτα  “As much as the amount [which is necessary].”

ἔρυθημα  “Redness” or “blush.”

ἐπανθεῖν  Still in indirect discourse governed by δόξει, we now switch verbs.

τὰ τοιαῦτα  “And the rest [of the colors].”

κινδυνεύει  Impersonal: “it is possible,” with a dative and infinitive.

προσδεῖν  “To lack besides [all the features already described],” with a genitive object.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Πόθεν οὖν καὶ ταῦτα πορισαίμεθ’ ἂν; ἢ παρακαλέσαιμεν δηλαδή τούς γραφέας, καὶ μάλιστα ὅποσοι αὐτῶν ἀριστοὶ ἐγένοντο κεράσασθαι τὰ χρώματα καὶ εἰκαίρων ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἐπιβολὴν αὐτῶν; καὶ δὴ παρακεκλήσωμεν τὸν Ἑφράνωρ ἐκεῖνος καὶ Ἀπελλῆς καὶ Ἀετίων· οὗτοι δὲ διελόμενοι τὸ ἔργον ὁ μὲν Ἑφράνωρ χρωσάτω τὴν κόμην οἰαν τῆς Ἡρας ἐγραψεν, ὁ Πολύγνωτος δὲ ὀφρύων τὸ ἐπιπρεπές καὶ παρείρων τὸ ἐνερευθὲς οἰαν τῆν Κασάνδραν ἐν τῇ λέσχῃ ἐποίησεν τοῖς Δελφοῖς, καὶ ἐσθήτα δὲ οὗτος ποιησάτω εἰς τὸ λεπτότατον ἐξειργαμένην, ὡς συνεστάλθαι μὲν ὅσα χρή, διηνεκῶσθαι δὲ τὰ πολλά· τὸ δὲ ὄλο τῶν ὁμόν Ἀπελλῆς δειξάτω κατὰ τὴν Πακάτην μάλιστα, μὴ ἄγαν λευκὸν ἕναμον ἀπλῶς· τὰ χεῖλη δὲ οἷα Ῥωξάνης ὁ Ἀετίων
ποιησάτω. μάλλον δὲ τὸν ἄριστον τῶν γραφέων Ὄμηρον παρόντος Εὐφράνορος καὶ Απελλόν δεδεγμεθά: οἶον γὰρ τὸ τοῖς Μενελάου μηροῖς τὸ χρώμα ἐκεῖνος ἐπέβαλεν ἠλέφαντι εἰκάσας ἱρέμα πεφοινιγμένῳ, τοιόνδε ἔστω τὸ πᾶν· ὁ δὲ ἄιτος οἶτος καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς γραψάτω βοῶτιν πινα ποιήσας αὐτὴν. συνεπιλήμεται δὲ τῷ ἔργῳ αὕτῳ καὶ ὁ Θηβαῖος ποιητής, ὡς ιοβλέφαρον ἐξεργάσασθαι καὶ φιλομειδὴ δὲ Ὁμηρος ποιήσε φαι και λευκώλενον καὶ λευκώλενον καὶ ροδοδάκτυλον, καὶ ἅλως τῇ χρυσῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ εἰκάσει πολὺ δικαιότερον ἢ τὴν τοῦ Βρισέως.

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν πλαστῶν καὶ γραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν παιδές ἐργάσονται. ὁ δὲ πᾶσιν ἐπανθεῖ τοῦτοι, ἢ χάρις, μάλλον δὲ πᾶσι ἁμα ὀπόσαι Χάριτες καὶ ὑπόσιι Ἀρίωτος περιχορεύοντες, τὶς ἃν μιμήσασθαι δύνατο

πορισάιμεθ’ “To fetch,” aor. opt.

ἡ… δηλαδὴ “Or… of course,” sounds a little odd to our ears, but is indeed the sense.

μάλιστα “Especially.”

ὅποσοι “Such of them as…” returning us to an indicative verb.

κεράσασθαι… ποιεῖσθαι Both conditioned by ἄριστοι.

ἐπιβολὴν A “laying on.”

παρακελῆσθω Imperat. perf. mp. 3rd singular, although it takes multiple subjects.

Πολύγνωτος καὶ Εὐφράνωρ ἐκεῖνος καὶ Ἀπελλῆς καὶ Ἀετῶν A who’s who of renowned Greek sculptors.

διελόμενοι… χρωσάτω The plural subject of the first verb is split into several subjects of singular verbs.
χρωσάτω  Imperat. aor. act. 3rd sg. “To touch or stain,” in this case with dye.

τῆς Ἡρᾶς  “The hair of” implied. “Painted as one of the Twelve Gods in the portico of Zeus Eleutherius at Athens” (Harmon loc. cit., references to Pausanias 1.3.3; Pliny 35, 129).

δορύων τὸ επιπρεπὲς “The propriety of her brows” or their beauty or becomingness.

The two neuter accusative objects run parallel to the first clause, with χρωσάτω still acting as verb.

παρειῶν τὸ ἐνερευθὲς “The partial flush of her cheeks.”

τοῖς Δελφοῖς “At Delphi.” “Above the Cassotis is a building with paintings by Polygnotus; it was dedicated by the Cnidians, and is called by the Delphians the Club-room (Lesche, “place of talk”), because here they used of old to meet and talk over both mythological and more serious subjects. … Cassandra herself is seated on the ground and is holding the image of Athena, for she overturned the wooden image from its pedestal when Ajax dragged her out of the sanctuary” (Pausanias 10, 25, 1 and 26, 3, Frazer’s translation, quoted in Harmon loc. cit.).

ἐις τὸ λεπτότατον “In the most delicate texture.”

συνεστάλθαι Infinitive (perf. mp) in a result construction. “So that it is drawn together…”

δόσα χρή “As it should be.”

διηνεμῶσθαι “And so that it flutters.” Statues in the ancient Mediterranean were often adorned with jewellery and other ornaments; yet since this scene involves primarily mural painters, the fluttering here referred to is a trick of the artist’s skill.
τὸ δὲ ἄλλο “The rest of.”
δειξάτω “Let him show.”
Πακάτην One of several Greek names associated with the woman who is better known to later European tradition as “Campaspe,” the mistress of Alexander the Great.
According to the legend, Alexander gave her to his favorite painter, Apelles, when he realized that Apelles had fallen in love with her while painting her portrait. The best known source of the story is Pliny’s Natural History 35.86-87, where she is called (in Latin) Pancaspe(n). A shorter version of the story is found in Aelian, Varia Historia 12.34, where she is called Παγκαστη.\textsuperscript{22}
ἄγαν “Too,” “very much.”
ἐναιμον Lit. “bloody,” another word meaning flushed or red, whose etymology is pertinent to the upcoming Homeric simile.
γραφέων An ambiguous word. From γράμμα, lit. the lines or stroke upon writing surface, it may refer to a painter, but seems not disconnected from the business of writing. In one of the important sections of the book, the line between the various descriptive arts appears to be blurry. In fact, the superiority of the word over the image will be clarified later on.
παρόντος In a genitive absolute, “with Euphranor and Apelles present,” contemporaneous with the main verb: “we receive Homer (as a guest).”
oἷον… τοιόνδε ἔστω τὸ πᾶν “Just as… so let her [it] be throughout.”

ἐπέβαλεν “He applied…” With acc. for the thing applied (color) and dat. for that to which it is applied (the thighs of Menelaus). Modified by εἰκάσας.

ἐλέφαντι… ἥρεμα πεφοινιγμένῳ “…as ivory, gently tinged with red.” Quite a martial reference in context. Menelaus, having been wounded near the groin, is described thus:

“ὡς δ᾽ ὁτε τίς τ᾽ ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοίνικι μιήνῃ… τοῖοι τοῖ Μενέλαις μιάνθην αἵματι μηροῖ/ εὔφυες κνῆμαί τε ἰδέ σφυρὰ κάλ᾽ ὑπένερθε.”

23 “Picture a woman dyeing ivory blood red…/ so now, Menelaus, the fresh blood went staining down/ your sturdy thighs, your shins and well-turned ankles.” Lucian, therefore, is cleverly exploiting the nature of the Homeric simile, which explains the martial by reference to the domestic. Lucian reverses it, explaining a scene from peacetime by an allusion which unites the auras of domesticity and martiality.

αὐτὸς An adjective, with the subject οὗτος.

ὁ Θηβαῖος ποιητής Pindar.

συνεπιλήψεται “Shall take part,” with the dat. referring to Homer for the person assisted, and the genitive for the project assisted in.


φιλομειδή… λευκώλενον… ροδοδάκτυλον A motley assortment of Homeric epithets: “laughter-loving,” “of the white wrists,” “rosy-fingered.” The last is especially applied to Dawn, and hardly seems complementary to a human woman, or to support the erotic tone of the work.


εἶκασει “Shall liken,” her the implied object, with a dative for her to whom Pantheia is compared.

δικαιότερον “With more reason [than he did].”

τὴν τοῦ “The daughter of…” The daughter of Briseus is thus likened at Iliad 19.282.

δ δὲ… ἡ χάρις Both characterize, in the nominative, the object of the verb μιμήσασθαι. “That which blooms forth in all this, its grace… who could reproduce this [in mimetic art]?”

ἐπανθεῖ “Blooms.” Calls ahead to the name of our heroine.

μᾶλλον “Or to speak more precisely… ”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Θεσπέσιον τι χρῆμα, ὦ Λυκίνε, φής καὶ διιπετές ὡς ἀληθῶς, οίδον τι τῶν ἔξ 
οίρανοὶ γένοιτο. τί δὲ πράσσουσαν εἴδες αἰτήν;

διιπετές From πίπτω, “fallen from Zeus,” “miraculous.”

ὡς ἀληθῶς “Truly.”

οίδον τι τῶν… γένοιτο “Such as one is, of those…”

τί An interrogative object for πράσσουσαν.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Βιβλίον ἐν ταῖν χεροῖν εἶχεν εἰς δύο συνειλημένον, καὶ ἐφ’ ἑκεῖ τὸ μὲν τι 
ἀναγιγνώκεσθαι αὐτοῖ, τὸ δὲ ἣδη ἀνεγνωκέναι. μεταξύ δὲ προϊοσά διελέγετο τῶν
παρομαρτούντων τινὶ οὐκ ὥδε ὁ τι· οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἑπτῆκον ἐφθέγγετο. πλὴν μειδιάσασα γε, ὁ Πολύστρατε, ὥδὸντας ἐξέφηνε πῶς ἐν εἴποιμί σοι ὡς μὲν λευκοὺς, ὡς δὲ συμμέτρους καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους συνηρμοσμένους; εἴ ποι κάλλιστον ὄρμον εἴδες ἐκ τῶν στιλπνοτάτων καὶ ἰσομεγεθῶν μαργαριτῶν, οὕτως ἐπὶ στίχου ἐπεφύκεσαν· ἐκοσμοῖντο δὲ μάλιστα τῷ τῶν χειλῶν ἐρυθήματι. ὑπεφαίνοντο γοῦν, αὐτὸ δὴ τὸ τοῦ Ὄμήρου, ἐλέφαντι τῷ πριστῷ ὁμοίοι, οὐχ οἱ μὲν πλατύτεροι αὐτῶν, οἱ δὲ γυροί, οἱ δὲ προέχοντες ἤ διεστηκότες οἴος ταῖς πλείσταις, ἔλλα τὰ πάντων ἰσοτιμία καὶ ὁμόχροι καὶ μέγεθος ἐν καὶ προσεχεῖς ὁμοίως, καὶ ὅλως μέγα τὶ θαῦμα καὶ θέαμα τᾶς τὴν ἄνθρωπινην εὐμορφίαν ὑπερπεπακός.

εἰς δύο συνειλημένον “Bound [i.e. rolled up] at both ends.” If a scroll were loose on one side, this would amount to its being open at the beginning; if it were loose at the bottom, the last sentences would be visible. As the second clause makes clear, Pantheia is halfway through her book.

τὸ μὲν τί... αὔτοῦ “This part of it.” τὸ δὲ indicates the remainder of the scroll.

ἄναγιγνώσκεσθαι Pres. inf. ἄνεγνωκέναι is the perfect.

μεταξὺ “Meanwhile.”

διελέγετο “She discussed,” with the indefinite accusative for the thing discussed, and the dative for those with whom she discusses it.

οὐκ οἶδα ὧ τι The object of the verb.

εἰς ἑπτῆκον “Within earshot.” The description of these two sentences is highly reminiscent of the symbolic practices of ancient sculpture. With her book and her
handmaidens, Pantheia might easily be a Muse. She is represented as speaking, and yet her words have no content; she is mute—these features are of course characteristic of statuary, and we are reaching the climax of a series of praises which have systematically dehumanized Pantheia, reduced her to her symbolic value by ignoring her “interior” traits.

πῶς ἄν εἴποιμί σοι δπως μὲν λευκούς A phrase which does not quite fit grammatically without a semicolon—our speaker is quite excited. “How can I tell you how white [they were]?”

ἐκ… μαργαριτῶν “Of pearls.” Pantheia’s objectification deepens. She is compared, not only to art, but artistically to an inanimate object. The pearl necklace, set behind her painted lips, is the completion of the Homeric simile “ivory tinged with red.” The comparison serves to detemporalize the gesture: a smile is charming as a movement, but stilted in a painting. For this reason portrait-artists generally avoid portraying the smile—does the medium of ekphrasis relieve some of the awkwardness? Lucian will argue, in the second half of the piece, that it is only by transcending such exterior description that one can transcend the visual media; and this, one imagines, would apply to the description of joy as well as to any other.

ἐπὶ στίχου “In a row.”

ἐπεφύκεσαν The pluperfect “They had been begotten,” might be better translated by some other verb in some other tense, e.g. “they were set.”

ἐκοσμοῖντο “They were embellished,” with a dat. of agent.

αὕτω δὴ τὸ τοῦ Ὑμήρου Lit. “The same as that of Homer,” translate, “just as Homer says.”

διμοιοῖ “Just like,” with dat.

οὐχ οἱ μὲν... οἱ δὲ “Nor were some of them…”

προέχοντες Metaphorical: “jutting out.”

οἶοι ταῖς πλείσταις “Like [those of] most women.”

μέγεθος ἐν “Of one size.” Clearly, Lucian is lingering over the teeth for comedic effect.

Yet we may derive some significance from the notion that it is homogeneity that is stressed in a beauty which τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην εὐμορφίαν ὑπερπεπακός, “has transcended all human beauty.”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

"Εχ᾽ ἀτρέμας. συνήμη γὰρ ἦδη πάνυ σαφῶς ἤντινα καὶ λέγεις τὴν γυναῖκα, τούτοις τε αὐτοῖς γνωρίσας καὶ τῇ πατρίδι. καὶ εὐνούχους δὲ τινας ἐπέσθαι αὐτῇ ἐφης.

"Εχ᾽ ἀτρέμας “Hold still,” or “wait just a minute!”

γνωρίσας “Recognizing her” by means of two markers, both in the dative—“these very things,” and “her country.” We now embark upon a “re-subjectification” of Pantheia, in which her “interior” traits are praised with as much vigor as her as her external ones.

This, however, is not a repudiation of Lycinus’ technique, since Polystratus agrees upon its merits.

ἐπεσθαί Inf. pres. deponent in indirect discourse.
ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Nē diá, kai στρατιώτας τινάς.

στρατιώτας Eunuchs and soldiers, the companions of emperors.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Τὴν βασιλεῖ συνοίσαν, ὦ μακάριε, τὴν ἀοίδιμον ταύτην λέγεις.

συνοίσαν His live-in mistress. Acc. in indirect discourse.

ἀοίδιμον “The famous one.” Lycinus is possessed of such excellent taste as to be in accord with both crowd and emperor.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Τί δέ ἐστιν αὐτῇ τοῦνομα;

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Πάνυ καὶ τοῖς γλαφφῶν, ὦ Λυκίνε, καὶ ἐπέραστον· ὁμψύχος γάρ ἐστιν τῇ τοῦ Ἀβραδάτῳ ἐκείνῃ τῇ καλῇ· οἴσθα πολλάκις ἄκούσας Ξενοφώντος ἐπαινοῦντος τινα σώφρονα καὶ καλὴν γυναῖκα.

ὁμώνυμος “Having the same name,” with someone else (dat.), in this case the wife of Abradatas. Pantheia is the name, familiar from Xenophon, though this information is reserved to the cultured readers of Xenophon. In this manner literacy and good taste are made a kind of code or game; and if we may extrapolate from the name itself, “All-divine,” the prize of this game is substantial indeed, being directly connected to religious truth.

οἶσθα… ἰκούσας In a causal relationship: “You know, since you have heard.” Gen. for the source of this knowledge, “praising Xenophon.” This author is said to be “heard,” from the ancient practice of reading aloud.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Νῆ δίᾳ, καὶ ὁσπερ γε ὀρῶν αἰτὴν οὔτω διατέθειμαι, ὀπόταν κατ᾽ ἐκεῖνό που ἄναγιγνώσκων γένωμαι, καὶ μονονουχὶ καὶ ἰκοὺς λεγούσης αἰτής ἄ πεποίηται λέγουσα, καὶ ὡς ὥπλιζε τὸν ἀνδρὰ καὶ οἷα ἢν παραπέμπουσα αἰτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν μάχην.

ὁσπερ… οὔτω διατέθειμαι “As if…, thus I am disposed [i.e. thus I feel].” Such is the power of the written word apparently: a single invocation, with a few brief descriptions, has more evocative power than a painting.

κατ’ ἐκεῖνό With γένωμαι, “I come to this place [in my reading].” ποῦ ἄναγιγνώσκων provides the setting for this action.
μονονουχι. That is, μονον ouchi, “almost.”

πεποίηται “Made” to say, or “described as” saying.

οῖα ἦν “What she was like while…”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Ἀλλ᾽, ὁ ἄριστε, σὺ μὲν ὁσπέρ τινὰ ὀστρατήθη παραδραμόσαν ἀπαξ εἴδες αὐτήν, καὶ ἔοικας τὰ πρόχειρα ταῦτα, λέγω δὲ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν μορφὴν, ἐπαινεῖν· τῶν δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ἁγαθῶν ἁθέατος εἶ, οὐδὲ οἴσθα ὅσον τὸ κάλλος ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν αὐτῆς, μακρῷ τινὶ ἤμεινον καὶ θεοεϊδέστερον τοῦ σώματος. ἐγὼ δὲ συνήθης γὰρ εἶμι καὶ λόγων ἐκοινώνησα πολλάκις ὑμοεἶνω. καὶ ἔσθη ἡ κούσας, τὰ δὲ ἀλλὰ αἰσχυνούσας τὸ κάλλος, ὡς καὶ μόνον φθεγξαμένων ἄπανθεν αὑτὸ καὶ ἀπομαραίνεσθαι ἐλεγχόμενον τε καὶ ἁσχημονοῦν καὶ παρ᾽ ἄξιαν συνὸν πονηρῇ τινὶ δεσποῖτι τῇ ψυχῇ. καὶ αἱ γε τοιαῦτα ὅμοια μοι δοκοῦσιν τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἱεροῖς· κἀκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς μὲν ὁ νεώς κάλλιστος τε καὶ μέγιστος, λίθοις τοῖς πολυτελέσιν ἡσκημένοις καὶ χρυσῷ καὶ γραφαῖς διηνθισμένοις, ἐνδον δὲ ἡν ἡτῆς τὸν θεόν, ἢ πίθηκος ἢστιν ἢ ἱβις ἢ τράγος ἢ αἴλουρος. τοιαύτας πολλὰς ἰδεῖν ἔνεστιν.
Οὐ τοίνυν ἀπόχρη τὸ κάλλος, εἰ μὴ κεκόσμηται τοῖς δικαίοις κοσμήμασι, λέγω δὴ
οὐκ ἔσθητι ἡλουργεῖ καὶ ὄρμοις, ὅλλοις προεῖπον ἐκεῖνος, ἀρετῇ, καὶ σωφροσύνῃ καὶ ἐπιεικείᾳ καὶ φιλανθρωπίᾳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅπόσα ταύτης ὡρος ἔστιν.

ὣστερ With the next three words, modifying the participle.

ἔστιν.“You seem to…” with the infinitive at the end of the sentence, taking an accusative object, “these obvious things.”

ἂθέατος Words of sight are often double-sided. This one can mean “invisible” or “blind to” (with gen.).

μακρῷ “By what measure…”

τινὶ θεοειδέστερον These comparatives (with comparative gen.) modify κάλλος.

συνήθης “Intimate” (see LSJ, συνήθης for the full semantic range).

ἐκοινώνησα 1st sg. aor. To “have a share in,” in this case a share in her conversation, λόγων.

ὁμοεθνῆς δὲ In a causal relationship. “Since I am of the same nationality.”

πρὸ “Rather than,” or “above,” with gen.

ἄξια… προκεκρίσθαι “These things ought to be preferred…” Polystratus here reveals himself as a student of Greek philosophy, which tends to embrace such a value-laden dualism.

ἐπεὶ… δὲ εἶ ἢ “Since it would be foolish if…”

ὥστερ εἰ τις Introduces a hypothetical with the optative.
εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ “In the same place [body].”

συνδράμη Aor. subj. 3rd sg. “Whenever there meet…”

ἀμέλει “Indeed,” when it comes before a clause with the optative, to indicate capability (LSJ, αμέλει).

εὖ ἡ κούσας Fem. acc. pl. participle of ἰκω. “Well off in,” or “well endowed with,” plus gen. (LSJ A.1.2.c).

τὰ δ’ ἄλλα Adverbial, “otherwise.”

αἰσχυνουσας Another participle to characterize πολλάς. “Who bring shame upon…”

ὡς “So that,” with infinitives. Sets up a slightly tricky construction, in which the participle refers to the hypothetical woman, as the cause of the infinitives, whose subject is αὐτὸ, the beauty (Smyth, §2260 and following).

ἀσχημονοῦν Neut. nom. part., further characterizing τὸ κάλλος, and having roughly the same meaning as ἐλεγχόμενόν.

παρ’ ἄχιαν “Unworthily.”

συνὸν “Living with” plus dat. The metaphor here is of a slave co-habitating with a mistress.

δοκοῦσιν “Seem to me…” With the maligned hypothetical women as subject, and a dat. for the thing to which they are compared. Egyptian religion was for Greece an object of fascination, subject to an oddly ambivalent view which either degraded it as sorcery or exalted it as having borne esoteric wisdom since long before the Greeks arrived at it.

ἡσκημένος “Built,” with dat. for the material.
διηνθισμένος  "Adorned," with dat. for the adornment.

ἡν  With the subjunctive, “if you seek…”

ἰδεῖν ἔνεστιν  An impersonal construction: “there are many… to see.”

απόχρη  Imperf. act., with a pres. meaning. “To suffice.”

κεκόσμηται  Perfect passive: the datives of the next phrase, except ἐκεῖνος, act upon it as datives of agent.

δλουργεῖ  Purple, the color of the emperor.

οίς προεῖπον ἐκεῖνοις  “Such as I mentioned before.”

ὁπόσα ταύτης δρος ἔστιν  “As much as is of this definition [of ἀρετῇ],” that is, the rest of its constituents, of which Polystratus has already named three.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Οὐκοῦν, ὦ Πολύστρατε, μὴθον ἀντὶ μύθου ἀμείψαι αὐτῷ τῷ μέτρῳ, φασίν, ἢ καὶ λώϊον, δύνασαι γάρ, καὶ πινα εἰκόνα γραψάμενος τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπίδειξον, ὡς μὴ ἐξ ἰμησείας θαυμάζοιμι αὐτήν.

μὴθον  “Description.”

ἀμείψαι  Imperat. aor. 2nd sg. “Exchange.”

αὐτῷ τῷ μέτρῳ, φασίν  Lit. “by its measure,” alternatively “as is fair.” φασίν acknowledges that this is an idiomatic usage.

γραψάμενος... ἐπίδειξον  “Having drawn a... show [it to me].”
ἐξ ἡμισείας “By halves.” Indicates that until now, Lycinus has been admiring only the exterior “half” of Pantheia.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Οὐ μικρὸν, ὦ ἑταύρε, τὸ ἀγόνισμα προστάτεις· οὐ γὰρ ὄμοιον τὸ πᾶσι προφανὲς ἐπανέσαι καὶ τὰ ἁδηλα ἐμφανίσαι τῷ λόγῳ. καὶ μοι δοκῶ συνεργῶν καὶ αὐτὸς δεήσεσθαι πρὸς τὴν εἰκόνα, οὐ πλαστῶν οἳ ἐδὲ γραφέων μόνον, ἄλλα καὶ φιλοσόφων, ὡς πρὸς τῶν ἐκείνων κανόνας ἀπευθύναι τὸ ἀγάλμα καὶ δείξαι κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν πλαστικὴν κατεσκευασμένον.

Καὶ δὴ πεποίησθω, αἰδήθεσα μὲν τὸ πρῶτον καὶ λίγεια, καὶ τὸ “γλυκίων μέλιτος ἀπὸ τῆς γλώττης” περὶ αὐτῆς μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ τοῦ Πυλίου γέροντος ἐκείνου ὁ Ὄμηρος εἰρηκεν. πάς δὲ ὁ τόνος τοῦ φθέγματος οἷος ἀπαλώτατος, οἵτως καὶ τῶν τῶν ἄγονων ἀπολύτατος τε εἶναι καὶ κομιδῇ ἐκλυτος, ἄλλ’ οἷος γένοιτ’ ἢ τὸν καθαροῦ ἤβασκοντι, ἤδος καὶ προσηνής καὶ πράως παραδυόμενος εἰς τὴν ἀκοήν, ὡς καὶ παυσαμένης ἐναυλον εἶναι τὴν βοήν καὶ τὸν κιθήματος ἀνδρείας ἀδιατρίβειν καὶ περιβομβεῖν τὰ ωτα, καθάπερ ἤχων τινα παρατείνουσαν τὴν ακρόασιν καὶ ἤχω τῶν λόγων μελιχρά ἀποκαθητοῦσαν. ὃς δὲ καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἐκείνο ἄδημθα, καὶ κόλαστα πρὸς τὴν κιθάραν, τότε δὴ τότε ἤρα μὲν σιωπᾶν τάχιστα ἀλκυόσι καὶ τέττιξι καὶ τοῖς κύκνοις· ἐμούσα γὰρ ὡς πρὸς ἐκείνην ἀπαντά· κἂν τὴν Πανδίωνος εἰπῆς, ἰδίως κάκεινα καὶ ἀτεχνὸς, εἰ καὶ πολυχέα τὴν φωνήν ἀφίησιν.

Ὅρφεὺς δὲ καὶ Ἀμφίων, οἵτε πεθαγωγότατοι ἐγένοντο τῶν ἀκροατῶν, ὡς καὶ τὰ ἄψωσα ἐπικαλέσασθαι πρὸς τὸ μέλος, αὐτοὶ ἄν, οἴμαι, εἰ γε ἢκουσαν, καταλιπόντες ἄν τὸς
κιθάρας παρεστήκεσαν σιωπή ἀκροώμενοι. τὸ γὰρ τῆς τε ἄρμονίας τὸ ἀκριβέστατον
diaφυλάττειν, ὡς μὴ παραβαίνειν τι τοῦ ῥυθμοῦ, ἀλλ’ εὐκαίρῳ τῇ ἄρσει καὶ θέσει
diaμεμετρήθαι τὸ ἱσμα καὶ συνωδὸν εἶναι τὴν κιθάραν καὶ ὑμοχρονεῖν τῇ γλώττῃ τὸ
πλήκτρον, καὶ τὸ εὐαφές τῶν δακτύλων καὶ τὸ εὐκαμπτὲς τῶν μελῶν, πόθεν ἃν ταῦτα
ὕπηρξε τῷ Θρακί ἐκεῖνῳ καὶ τῷ ἄνα τὸν Κιθαίρωνα μεταξὺ βουκολοῦντι καὶ κιθαρίζειν
μελετώντι;

Ὡςτε ἦν ποτε, ὁ Λυκίνη, καὶ ἄδουσης ἀκούς ἀυτῆς, οὐκέτι τὸ τῶν Γοργόνων
ἐκεῖνο ἔσιν μόνον πεπονθός, λίθος ἐξ ἀνθρώπου γενόμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ τῶν Σειρήνων
εἰσὶ ὑποίον τὴν παρεστηθῇ γὰρ εὖ οἶδα κεκηλημένον, πατρίδος καὶ οἰκείων
ἐπιλαθόμενος. καὶ ἦν κηρῷ ἐπιφράξῃ τὰ ὅπα, καὶ δία τοῦ κηροῦ διαδύσεται σοι τὸ μέλος.
τοιοῦτον τὴν ἁκουσμά ἔστι, Τερψιχόρης τινὸς ἤ Μελπομένης ἤ Καλλιόπης αὐτῆς παίδευμαα,
μυρία τὰ θέλγητα καὶ παντοίᾳ ἐν ἐαυτῷ ἔχον. ἐν τῇ ὕποις συνελθῶν φαίνην ἃν, τοιαύτης
μοι τῆς φῶδης ἀκούειν νόμιζε, οἵαν εἰκὸς εἶναι τὴν διὰ τοιούτων χειλῶν, δι’ ἐκείνων δὲ τῶν
οἴνοτων ἐξοίσαν. ἐώρακας δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν φημι, ὡς τε ἀκηκοέναι νόμιζε.

Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀκριβές τούτο τῆς φωνῆς καὶ καθαρῶς Ἰωνικὸν καὶ ὁπι ὀμιλῆσαι στωμὴν καὶ
πολὺ τῶν Ἀττικῶν χαρίτων ἤχουσα οἶδὲ ἐκεῖνο θαυμάζειν ἤξιον· πάτριον γὰρ αὐτῆς καὶ
προγονικὸν, οἶδὲ ἀλλως ἔχριν μετέχουσαν τῶν Ἀθηναίων κατὰ τὴν ἁποικίαν. οἶδὲ γὰρ
οἶδὲ ἐκεῖνο θαυμάσαι’ ἂν, εἰ καὶ ποιῆσει χαίρει καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ταύτῃ ὀμιλεῖ, τοῦ Ὀμήρου
πολιτῶς οἶσα. Μία μὲν δὴ σοι, ὁ Λυκίνη, καλλιφωνίας αὐτῆς καὶ φῶδης εἰκῶς, ως ἄν τις ἐπὶ
tὸ ἐλαττὸν εἰκάσειν. σκόπει δὲ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας· οὐ γὰρ μίαν ὀστρεπ ὡδὲ ἐκ πολλῶν
συνθείς ἐπιδείξαι διεγνώσκα—ἥττον γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ πολυειδές τι ἐκ πολλῶν ὄποτελεῖν αὐτὸ
αὐτῷ ἀνθαμμιλλώμενον—ὡλλ’ αἱ πάσαι τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρεταὶ καθ’ ἐκάστην εἰκὼν μία
gενράσαται πρὸς τὸ ἄρχετυπον μεμιμημένη.

τὸ πᾶσι προφανὲς “What is obvious to all,” the object of ἐπαινέσαι, which in turn is
treated as a neuter noun modified by οὐ… ὀμοιον.

τῷ λόγῳ Dat. of means.

δοκῶ “I seem [to myself],” with the infinitive.

πρὸς “For,” “in order to complete.”

πρὸς… κανόνας “According to the rules”

ἀποθεῖναι “Make straight,” to “correct” or “direct.” δεῖξαι is also an infinitive, in a
parallel phrase.

κατεσκευασμένον “[It (τὸ ἄγαλμα)] prepared,” in accord with the model of the ancients.

πεποιήσθω “Let it be made,” or “imagine it made.”

αὐδῆεσσα “Speaking with human voice” (Odyssey 10.136).26 It is significant that the
voice is the first thing restored to the mute Pantheia in the stage of the dialogue which
transforms her from icon to person.

λίγεια “Sweet-toned” (Odyssey 24.62). Pantheia’s voice not only bridges this gap, but
in the most mellifluous way.

τὸ… εἴρηκεν “The [phrase quoted] will speak…”

γλυκίων Comparative, with genitive of comparison.

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τοῦ Πυλίου γέροντος Nestor (Iliad 1.249). Homer has been implicitly included among “the philosophers,” a reading current since before Plato.

οἶς ἀπαλώτατος "As soft as possible."

εἰς τὸ ἀνδρεῖον ἥμισθαι "To be assimilated to the masculine."

λεπτὸς "Light."

κομιδῆ ἔκλυτος "Totally weak." Pantheia’s voice is slightly androgynous (and seductively so), as Plato held the soul to be.27

μήπω ἡβάσκοντι "Not yet pubescent."

καὶ παυσαμένης Gen. abs. “Even when she’s paused.”

ἔναυλον Lit. “abiding.” When said of the voice (or τὴν βοὴν), “ringing in the ears.”

These are accusative, as the subject in a construction after ὡς.

τι λείψανον “Some remnant,” the second subject after ὡς.

ἔνδιατρίβω "Linger."

ἡχῶ Fem. acc. with καθάπερ, continuing the previous construction.

παρατείνουσαν τὴν ακρόασιν “Which prolongs the act of hearing.” ἰπολιμπάνουσαν is a second participle used in parallel.

ἀπατα An atticized form: from ὡς, neut. acc. with ἵνη.

πειθοῦς μεστά “Full of persuasion.”

ἀδη Subj. from ἰείδω, “to sing.” Construe “the voice” as subject.

δὴ τότε Simply intensifies τότε.

ὅρα μὲν σιωπᾶν In apposition with τότε. “The hour for keeping silence,” with a dat. indicating who is to keep silence.

ὡς πρός “Compared with.”

εἶπης Aor. subj. 2nd sg. having a conditional sense with κἂν.

τὴν Πανδίονος The daughter of Pandion is Philomela, the nightingale.

κάκείνη “Even she.”

εἰ καὶ “Even if.”


Ὅρφεὺς δὲ καὶ Ἀμφίων Hero-gods of song.

οἷπερ “Who.”

τῶν ἄκροστῶν Partitive, “of hearers .”

ἐπικαλέσασθαι Inf. mid. with ὡς, τὰ ἄψυχα as object, and the two heroes as subject, though the meaning would be the same should the sense of the verb be passive and τὰ ἄψυχα the subject.

αὐτὸι ἄν Sets up the apodosis, to which we return after giving the protasis, of a contrary-to-fact conditional with the aorist and pluperfect (which acts as aorist): “even they, if they heard her .”

σιωπῆ The dat. noun, “in silence.”

τὸ… διαφυλάττειν An articular infinitive. Its object is transferred into the gen.

τὸ ἄκριβέστατον An accusative object of the articular infinitive.

παραβαίνειν “Overstep.”
Arsis and thesis,” the prosodic terms for the rise and fall of the poetic line.

A second verb with ὡς: “To be measured out.” Its subject is τὸ ᾿οσμα. “Harmonious.”

Further verbs with ὡς. The subject continues to be in the accusative.

“The pick.”

Stepping out of the ὡς construction, we have a further set of features which stand independently, in parallel to διαφυλάττειν. The nominalized adjectives here can be rendered “softness,” and “flexibility.”

“How?” In English there would likely be a semicolon before this word, since it takes the previous nominalized verb and adjectives as accusative objects (ταῖτα).

From ὑπάρχω, “to be available.” Imperf. with ἄν, indicating a question about possibility. The following datives indicate agency.

Orpheus and Amphion.

Perhaps indicating that cattle-tending and lyre-studying are done alternately.

“To the one studying lyre-playing.”

“If ever.”

Appealingly alliterative. “You should hear her sing.”

“Not only.”

“The power” of the Gorgons.
ἔσῃ From εἰμί, fut. ind. mid. 2nd sg. Here acts to link Lycinus to the participle: “you will be having learned,” i.e. “you will have learned.”

εἰσῃ fut. of οἶδα. “You will know.”

ὁποίον τι ἦν “What it was like,” that is, the power of the Sirens. Lucian has referred to two myths which exemplify a part of the ancient attitude toward women. Jaš Elsner has argued (“Seeing and Saying”) that the Imagines recreates the psychological situation which Freud claims occurs whenever two males joke about an absent woman, and that the dehumanizations of the piece are archetypical ones. What has been given to us in the dialogue thus far is the “ekphrasis” of a human being, a space created in which we can indulge in the “male gaze.” The mythical gorgon represents the possibility of this unidirectional gaze being shattered: if the gaze is reciprocated, the male viewer is killed; the myth may be taken as a representation of a male fear of a woman’s subjective capacity (Cixous, Le Rire de la Méduse). It has seemed to us that Polystratus has been undertaking to “rehumanize” Pantheia, by restoring to her first her voice, and soon her interior qualities: but Pantheia herself has not come to speak for us herself: she remains an object of ekphrasis, in a sense. The siren has come to us as the auditory equivalent of the Gorgon, representing the same male fears. The question with which I leave the reader is this: has Polystratus come to “rehumanize” Pantheia, or to further reduce even her interior traits to an art-object further demonstrating Lucian’s skill?

εὖ οἶδα An interjection: “I know well.”

ἐπιλαθόμενος “Forgetful,” with the genitive for the thing forgotten.

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ἐπιφράξῃ “Should you stop up.”

ἀκουσμά “Music,” In a construction which might be translated, “Such music it is, it must…”

παιδευμα “Lesson,” in apposition with ἀκουσμά.

ἐχον Further characterizes the song, in a clause that would likely be separated by a semicolon in English.

συνελὼν “To sum up…”

φαίην 1st sg. opt. act., indicating capability. What follows is a kind of direct discourse.

νόμιζε “Imagine.”

εἰκός εἶναι “To have verisimilitude or plausibility.” It is reported of the accusative subject in the τοιαύτης… οἷαν clause.

ἀκηκοέναι “You yourself” is the implied subject.

ἀκριβές A nominalized adjective, the “precision of her speech.”

καθαρός Ἰονικόν Another nominalized adjective: “its purely Ionic quality.”

δτι With its following clause, may also be taken as nominal: “the fact that…”

ὁμιλησαι “Converse with.”

χαρίτων Here take as “wit,” a notorious Athenian quality.

οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνο θαυμάζειν ἤξιον “That [our three nominalized subjects] is not worthy of wonderment.”

ἐχρῆν In context: “Nor was it (otherwise) fitting,” “was it to be expected (otherwise),” for one [in the accusative] who…
"On account of its being a colony," the medium for Pantheia’s participation in Attic blood.

Strengthens οὐδε.

1st sg. aor. opt. with a conditional sense.
The dat. object of χαίρει, “rejoices in.”

Adverbial.

Refers to the subject of χαίρει and ὁ μιλεῖ.

With ἐἰκών, the subject. The verbless construction with μὲν δὴ σοὶ has the same force as “There you have it.”

“As one might portray it…”

“Inadequately.”

“I have decided not to exhibit.”

“Like you.”

“This is inferior,” the main sense of the clause, the remainder of which characterizes “this.”

“To make one thing of many aspects.”

“That competes against itself.” Lycinus seems unwittingly to have entered into a Platonic debate, by positing that beauty may exist in the several features of several pieces of art, which are then haphazardly stitched together, rather than stemming from the unified form of beauty. Ultimately, for Plato, all beauty should be seen as the branches of a great ideal (a word having to do with ἐἰκών). Polystratus will take a third tack, neither explicating the “interior” virtues as they
stem from the form of the good, nor stitching them together, but allowing them to stand on their own terms, harmonized, without being “combined” by a dextrous use of λόγος.

καθ’ ἑκάστην “By itself, in its own right.” Effects a change from plural to singular subject.

γεγράφεται Fut. perf.

πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον “According to its own archetype,” or pattern. The meaning is that each virtue will show itself, in the description, as it is.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

’Εορτήν, ὁ Πολύστρατος, καὶ πανδαισίαν ἐπαγγέλλεις. ἐοικας γοῦν λώιον ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀποδώσειν μοι τὸ μέτρον. ἐπιμέτρει δ’ οὖν· ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ὦ τί ἂν ἄλλο ποιήσας μᾶλλον χαρίσαιό μοι.

’Εορτήν English sometimes similarly ranges the object of a verb out front in order to emphasize it: “It is a festival… which you promise.”

λώιον Agrees with μέτρον.

ὡς ἀληθῶς “Truly.”

ἀποδώσειν Fut. inf. with ἐοικας.

ἐπιμέτρει Imperat.

χαρίσαιό Opt. aor. 2nd sg. “To gratify by saying.”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ
Ούκοιν ἐπειδῆ πάντων καλῶν παιδείαν ἰγείσθαι ἄνάγκη, καὶ μάλιστα τούτων ὀπόσα μελετητά, φέρε καὶ ταύτην ἤδη συστησώμεθα, ποικίλην μέντοι καὶ πολύμορφον, ὡς μηδὲ κατὰ τοῦτο ἀπολιποίμεθα τῆς σῆς πλαστικῆς. καὶ δὴ γεγράφθη πάντα συλλῆβδην τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος ἄγαθα ἔχουσα, οἷς ὀστερ ἢ Κλειώ καὶ Ἡ Πολύμνια καὶ Ἡ Καλλιόπη καὶ Ἡ Ἐλπιδὴ πάντων καὶ πασῶν καὶ προσεταὶ τὰ Ἐρμοῦ καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος. ὀπόσα γὰρ ἢ ποιηταὶ μέτροις διακοσμήσαντες ἢ ρήτορες δεινότητι κρατύναντες ἐξενηνχασιν ἢ συγγραφεῖς ἰστορήκασιν ἢ φιλόσοφοι παρημέκασι, πᾶσι τούτοις ἢ εἰκὼν κεκοσμήσθων, οἷς ἄχρη τοῦ ἐπικεχρώσθαι μόνον, ἀλλ᾽ εἰς βάθος δευσοποιοῖς τισι φαρμάκοις εἰς κόρον καταβαφεῖσα. καὶ συγγνώμη, εἰ μὴ ἔθνες αὐτὴν ἐπιδεῖξαι ταύτης δυναῖμην τὴς γραφής· οὐ γὰρ ἐσθ᾽ ὅ τι τοιοῦτον ἐν τοῖς πάλαι παιδείας πέρι μνημονεύεται. πλὴν ἀλλὰ, εἰ γε δοκεῖ, ἀνακείσθω καὶ αὐτήν· οὐ μεμπτῇ γὰρ, ως ἐμοί φαίνεται. καὶ δὴ γεγράφθη πάντα συλλῆβδην τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος ἄγαθα ἔχουσα, οἷς ὀστερ ἢ Κλειώ καὶ Ἡ Πολύμνια καὶ Ἡ Καλλιόπη καὶ Ἡ Ἐλπιδὴ πάντων καὶ πασῶν καὶ προσεταὶ τὰ Ἐρμοῦ καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος. ὀπόσα γὰρ ἢ ποιηταὶ μέτροις διακοσμήσαντες ἢ ρήτορες δεινότητι κρατύναντες ἐξενηνχασιν ἢ συγγραφεῖς ἰστορήκασιν ἢ φιλόσοφοι παρημέκασι, πᾶσι τούτοις ἢ εἰκὼν κεκοσμήσθων, οἷς ἄχρη τοῦ ἐπικεχρώσθαι μόνον, ἀλλ᾽ εἰς βάθος δευσοποιοῖς τισι φαρμάκοις εἰς κόρον καταβαφεῖσα. καὶ συγγνώμη, εἰ μὴ δὲν αὐτὴν ἐπιδεῖξαι ταύτης δυναῖμην τὴς γραφής· οὐ γὰρ ἐσθ᾽ ὅ τι τοιοῦτον ἐν τοῖς πάλαι παιδείας πέρι μνημονεύεται. πλὴν ἀλλὰ, εἰ γε δοκεῖ, ἀνακείσθω καὶ αὐτήν· οὐ μεμπτῇ γὰρ, ως ἐμοί φαίνεται.

ἐπειδή “Seeing,” “considering.”
Necessity,” that a subject (acc.) “stand at the head of” (Harmon) an object (gen.). παιδείαν, culture or education. Autonomy, including Pantheia’s, appears to be bound up in the exercise of culture. Culture is, furthermore, precisely the tool which both protagonists have been using throughout the dialogue to describe Pantheia. Autonomy therefore stands in a relation to the process of description. Pantheia has gained the capacity to engage in Lucianic eloquence herself, as well as in the more general cultural project of ancient Greece; she might herself make a formidable portrait-artist.

μάλιστα “Especially.”

τούτων Agrees with καλῶν. The next two words modify it in the neut. nom. 

συστησώμεθα Aor. subj. mid. 1st sg. from συνίημι.

ὡς With the optative in a purpose clause (secondary sequence), and an identical subject.

ἀπολιποίμεθα “To disappoint” or “fall behind,” with the gen.

πλαστικῆς A nominalized adjective: “sculpture.”

γεγράφω Imperat. 3rd sg. perf. “Let her be written as…” with a nominative participle.

συλλήβδην Adverb: “all together.”

αἱ ἄλλαι “The other [muses].” We now switch to characterizing each of them with a singular participle.

ἐπισταμένη From ἐπιστέμω: “Having mastery [of a single discipline].”

ὅπωσα “All that…” The range of this object of κεκοσμήσθω is determined in several ways, in the four phrases with ἢ (either… or… or…)
διακοσμήσαντες “Regulating,” the function of meter. The main verb is shared with that of the next ἤ phrase.

ἐξενηνόχασιν Perf. 3rd pl., from ἐκφέρω, “have excelled.”

δεινότητι “in cleverness.”

ἱστορήκασιν The usual verb for the activity of historians.

παρηνέκασι Perf. from παραινέω, “to advise,” a major function of philosophers.

πᾶσι τούτοις Refers back to ὁπόσα, which constructed an object which our four groups of writers have modified.

ἄχρι τοῦ ἐπικεχρῶσθαι Until, with a genitive articular infinitive: “[not] until its being tinged…”

εἰς κόρον “To saturation.”

δευσοποιοῖς τισι φαρμάκοις “With indelible dyes.”

καταβαφεῖσα “Dipped down into.” A clever use of language, which gives a sonorous echo of εἰς βάθος while reinforcing its meaning.

συγγνώμη “Pardon” or “forgiveness,” the request for which is implied.

αρχέτυπον A “model” for this writing, here having the sense of an antique or authentic original which might serve as a firm basis for an artistic endeavor. Innovation, in Lucian’s day, is apologetic if it cannot disguise itself.

οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ’ ὅ τι τοιοῦτον “For there is nothing like this which…”

ἐν τοῖς πάλαι “Among [the men] of old.”

πέρι Περί always suffers a change in accentuation when it follows its substantive. Harmon has: “in point of culture.”
μνημονεύεται An impersonal construction, “nothing is remembered,” with the sense of a cultural memory.

ἀνακείσθω Imperat. mp. 3rd sg. “To dedicate,” as a votive.

καὶ αὕτη “This too,” along with the works thus far produced by Lycinus and Polystratus.

μεμπτή “Blameworthy.” ἔστι is implied.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Καλλίστη μὲν οὖν, ὦ Πολύστρατε, καὶ πάσαις ταῖς γραμμαῖς ἀπηκριβωμένη.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Μετὰ δὲ ταύτην ἢ τῆς σοφίας καὶ συνέσεως εἰκών γραπτέα. δεῖσει δὲ ἢμῖν ἑνταῦθα πολλῶν τῶν παράδειγμάτων, ἀρχαίων τῶν πλείστων, ἕνὸς μὲν καὶ αὐτοῦ Ἰωνικοῦ γραφεὶς δὲ καὶ δημιουργοί αὐτοῦ Αἰσχίνης Σωκράτους ἑταῖρος καὶ αὐτὸς Σωκράτης, μιμηλότατοι τεχνιτῶν ἀπάντων, ὡσὶ καὶ μετ᾽ ἔρωτος ἔγραφον. τὴν δὲ ἐκ τῆς Μιλήτου ἐκείνην Ἀσπασίαν, ᾧ καὶ ὁ Ὀλύμπιος θαυμασιώτατος αὐτὸς συνήν, οὐ φαίλον συνέσεως παράδειγμα προθέμενοι, ὑπόσον ἐμπειρίας πραγμάτων καὶ ὀξύτητος εἰς τὰ πολιτικὰ καὶ ἀγχινοίας καὶ δριμύτητος ἐκείνη προσῆ, τοῦτο πάν ἐπὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν εἰκόνα μεταγάγωμεν ἀκριβεῖ τῇ στάθμῃ πλὴν ὅσον ἐκείνη μὲν ἐν μικρῷ πινακίῳ ἐγέγραπτο, αὕτη δὲ κολοσσιαία τὸ μέγεθος ἔστιν.

συνέσεως “Intelligence.”
γραπτέα  A verbal adjective like the Latin gerundive: “to be written,” with an implied ἔστι.

ἀρχαίων τῶν πλείστων  “Most of them ancient.”

αὐτοῦ Ἰωνικοῦ  “Itself Ionian” (neut. gen.), Pantheia’s country.

γραφεῖς δὲ καὶ δημιουργοὶ  Masc. pl. “The painters and framers,” the latter being a Platonic word of long standing. “Shall be” is implied.

αὐτοῦ Ἀἰσχίνης Σωκράτους ἔταῖρος  “Aeschines, friend of Socrates himself,” known to us today mainly through Plato’s dialogues, composed seven dialogues, according to Diogenes Laërtius, none of them extant. The following references are to his Aspasia, a predecessor of the Imagines as an artistic flattery of a historical contemporary. It seems that Aeschines agreed with Plato in portraying Socrates as celebrating the equality of women in politics.

μιμηλότατοι  “Most skilled in imitation.”

δισφ  “Inasmuch as,” “because.”

ἡ… συνῆν  “With whom… co-habited.”

ὁ Ὀλύμπιος θαυμασιώτατος αὐτὸς  “The Olympian [Pericles], himself most wonderful.”

οὐ φαύλον… παράδειγμα  “No negligible model.” Acc., in apposition with Ἀσπασίαν as objects for the participle προθέμενοι, “setting forth.”

ὁ πόσον… προσῆν  Changing object: ὁπόσον is connected with τοῦτο as modifying its content. “Such as was present to her [i.e. such qualities as were hers].” With genitives for the qualities.

ἀγχινοίας καὶ δριμύτητος  “Sagacity and vehemence.”
μεταγάγωμεν Aor. subj.: “let us transfer.”

ἀκριβεῖ τῇ στάθμῃ “With an accurate measure.”

πλὴν δοσον A possible translation: “except for the fact that.”

πινακίφ “A small tablet.” The point is that Pantheia is a phenomenon of a scale far larger than Aspasia’s.

τὸ μέγεθὸς Acc. of respect.

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Πώς τοῦτο φῆς;

φῆς: “What do you mean?”

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

"Ὅτι, ὅ Λυκίνε, οὐκ ἰσομεγέθεις εἰναί φημὶ τὰς εἰκόνας ὠμοίας οὐσίας· οὐ γὰρ ἰσον οἶδὲ ἀγγές Ἀθηναίων ἢ τῶ ποιητή σι καὶ ἡ παροῦσα τῶν Ῥωμαίων δύναμις. ὡστε εἰ καὶ τῆ ὠμοιότητι ἢ αὐτῆ, ὀλλὰ τῷ μεγέθει γε ὠμείνων αὐτῆ ως ἢν ἐπὶ πλατυτάτου πίνακος καταγεγραμμένη.

Δεύτερον δὲ καὶ τρίτον παράδειγμα Θεανῶ τε ἐκεῖνη καὶ ἡ Λεσβία μελοποιός, καὶ Διοτίμα ἐπὶ ταύταις, ὡς μεν τὸ μεγαλόνων ἡ Θεανῶ συμβαλλόμενη εἰς τὸν γραφήν, ἢ Σαπρφῶ δὲ τὸ γλαφυρὸν τῆς προαιρέσεις· τῇ Διοτίμᾳ δὲ οὐχ ἢ Σωκράτης ἐπιήνεσεν αὐτὴν ἐοικυῖα ἔσται μόνον, ὀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σύνεσιν τε καὶ συμβουλίαν. τοιαύτη σοι καὶ αὐτῇ, Λυκίνε, ἀνακείσθω ἢ εἰκῶν.
οὐκ ἰσομεγέθεις... οὕσας  “To be unequal in size,” in indirect statement.

οὐδὲ ἐγγὺς  “Nor even close.”

παροῦσα  “Current.”

ὡς ἂν... καταγεγραμμένη  “As if having been written on the largest canvas.”

Θεανώ... Ἡ Λεσβία... Διοτίμα  Theano, wife of Pythagoras, herself a metaphysician, Sappho the great lyric poet, and Diotima, the likely fictitious priestess from whom Socrates (in Plato’s Symposium) claims to have learned his esoteric doctrine of love.

tὸ μεγαλόνουν  Theano’s contribution is her “high-mindedness,” a nominalized adjective.

γλαφυρὸν  “Niceness,” or “attractiveness,” of her “lifestyle.”

ἐπήνεσεν  From ἐπαινέω, “to applaud.”

ἡ Διοτίμα  “She shall be like Diotima…”

οὐχ ἂ... μόνον  “Not only those things which…” Acc. of respect.

σύνεσίν  “Sagacity.”

τοιαύτη σοι καὶ αὕτη  Modifying εἰκὼν, with a sense like “voilà.”

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Nὴ Δί’, ὦ Πολύστρατε, θαυμάσιος οὕσα, σὺ δὲ ἄλλας γράφου.

θαυμάσιος οὕσα  “A wonderful being!”
γράφου Pres. imperat. mp.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Τὰς τῆς χρηστότητος, ὦ ἐταίρε, καὶ φιλανθρωπίας, ἢ τὸ ἤμερον ἐμφανιεῖ τοῦ τρόπου καὶ πρὸς τοὺς δεομένους προσηνές; εἰκάσθω σὸν καὶ αὐτὴ Θεανοὶ τῇ ἑκεῖνῃ τῇ Αντήνορος καὶ Ἀρήτῃ καὶ τῇ θυγατρί αὐτῆς τῇ Ναυσικάᾳ, καὶ εἰ τις ἄλλῃ ἐν μεγέθει πραγμάτων ἐσωφρόνησε πρὸς τὴν τύχην.

Ἐξής δὲ μετὰ ταύτην ἢ τῆς σωφροσύνης αὐτῆς γεγράφθω καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν συνόντα εὐνοίας, ὡς κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἰκαρίου μάλιστα εἶναι τὴν σαφρόνα καὶ τὴν περίφρονα ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου γεγραμμένην—τοιαύτην γὰρ τὴν τῆς Πηνελόπης εἰκόνα ἐκείνος ἐγραμένην—ἡ καὶ νὴ Δία κατὰ τὴν ὁμώνυμον αὐτῆς τὴν τοῦ Ἀβραδάτα, ἢς μικρὸν ἐμπροσθεὶς ἐμνημονεύσαμεν.

ἡ May be taken as modifying only φιλανθρωπίας, or as conjoining χρηστότητος and φιλανθρωπίας as a unit.

ἐμφανιεῖ Liquid fut.

tρόπου “Manner” or “character.”

tοὺς δεομένους “Those who have need.”

εἰκάσθω “Let [her] be compared,” with the dative for the women to whom she is compared.

Θεανοὶ τῇ ἑκεῖνῃ τῇ Ἀντήνορος “Theano, the one who was [wife] of Antenor.”

Priestess of Athena at Troy (Ιliad 6, 208).
Ἀρήτη... Ναυσικάα The Phaenician queen and princess of the Odyssey, books 6-9.
καὶ εἰ τις ἄλλη Lit. “And if some other,” with the sense of “and anyone else who…”
ἐν μεγεθεὶ πραγμάτων “In doings of importance,” the implication being that
Polystratus means women of high station.
πρὸς “In the face of.” Good fortune, it seems, is the enemy of discretion.
ἡ τῆς σωφροσύνης “The [picture] of her modesty.”
ὡς A purpose clause with εἶναι and an accusative in apposition.
tὴν τοῦ Ἰκαρίου “The daughter of Icarius,” Penelope.
tὴν σαόφρονα καὶ τὴν περίφρονα The next two accusatives are of respect. “Modesty
and prudence,” the first with a Homeric spelling.
ὁμώνυμον αὐτῆς τὴν τοῦ Ἀβραδάτα “Her homonym, wife of Abradatas,” Pantheia,
who exemplified her modesty by killing herself upon the death of her husband.
μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν “A little while ago.”

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Παγκάλην καὶ ταύτην, ὃ Πολύστρατε, ἀπειράγασω, καὶ σχεδὸν ἦδη τέλος σοι
ἐχοσιν αἰ εἰκόνες· ἀπασαν γὰρ ἐπελήλυθας τὴν ψυχὴν κατὰ μέρη ἔπαινών.

ἄπειραγάσω Aor. ind. mp. 2nd sg.
ἐπεληλυθας From ἐπέρχομαι. Perf. ind. act.
κατὰ μέρη “Piece by piece.”
ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Οὐχ ἔσπασαν· ἐπὶ γὰρ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἐπαίνων περιλεῖπτεται. λέγω δὲ τὸ ἐν τηλικοῦτῳ ὄν ἡχάπας ἔτι τὴ εὔπραξία περιβαλέσθαι μήτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἄνθρωπινον μέτρον ἐπαρθήναι πιστεύσασαν τῇ τύχῃ, φυλάττειν δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἱσοπέδου ἐαυτὴν μηδὲν ἀπειροκαλὸν ἢ φορτικὸν φρονοῦσαν καὶ τοῖς προσιοίσιν δημοτικῶς τε καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὑμίου προσφέρεσθαι καὶ δεξιώσεις καὶ φιλοφροσύνας φιλοφρονεῖσθαι τοσοῦτῳ ἡδίους τοις προσιοίσιν, ὁς καὶ παρὰ μεῖζονος ἠμοίως γινόμεναι οὐδὲν τραγικὸν ἐμφαίνουσιν. ὡς ὁ πόσοι τῷ μέγα δύνασθαι μὴ πρὸς ὑπερωθῆναι, ἄλλα καὶ πρὸς εὐποιίαν ἐχρήσαντο, οὗτοι καὶ ξιοὶ μᾶλλα τῶν παρὰ τῆς τύχης δοθέντων ἀγαθῶν ὄφθησαν, καὶ μόνοι ὁ οὗτος δικαίως τὸ ἐπίφθονον διαφύγοιεν· οὐδὲς γὰρ ἂν φθονήσει τῷ ὑπερέχοντι, ἣν μετριάζοντα ἐπὶ τοῖς εὔπραξίμασιν αὐτὸν ὄρῳ καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Ὁμήρου Ἀτην ἐκείνην ἐπὶ ἄνδρῶν κράσα βεβηκότα καὶ τὸ ὑποδέστερον πατοῦντα· ὅπερ οἱ ταπεινοὶ τῶς γνώμας πάσχουσιν ἀπειροκαλίς τῆς ψυχῆς· ἐπειδὴν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἢ τῆς μηδὲν τοιοῦτον ἑλπίσαντας ἄφνῳ ἀναβιβάση εἰς πτηνὸν τι καὶ μετάρσιον ὁχήμα, οὔ μένουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων οἶδ᾿ ἀφορώσιν κάτω, ἄλλα ὧς πρὸς τὸ ἄναντες βιάζονται. τοιἀροῦ ὡσπερ ὁ Ἰκαρος, τακέντος αὐτοῖς τάχιστα τοῦ κηροῦ καὶ τῶν πτερῶν περιρρυέντων, γέλωτα ὀφλισάκουσιν ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς εἰς πελάγη καὶ κλύδωνα ἐμπίπτοντες· ὧσιὶ δὲ κατὰ τὸν Δαίδαλον ἐχρήσαντο τοῖς πτεροῖς καὶ μὴ πάνυ ἐπήρθησαν, εἰδότες ὅτι ἢ κηροῦ ἢν αὐτοῖς πεποιημένα, ἐταμιεύσατο δὲ ψηλότεροι μόνον τῶν κυμάτων ἐνεχθέντες, ὡσπερ μέντοι νοτίζεσθαι αὐτοῖς ὧς τὸ πτερό καὶ μὴ παρέχειν αὐτὰ μόνω τῷ ὕλῳ, οὗτοι δὲ ἄσφαλῶς τε ὄμα καὶ σωφρόνως διεπτήσεν· ὅπερ καὶ ταύτην ὧν τὶς
μάλιστα ἐπαινέσειε. τοιγαροῖν καὶ ἄξιον παρὰ πάντων ἀπολαμβάνει τὸν καρπὸν, εὐχῳμένων ταῦτα τε αὐτῇ παραμεῖναι τὰ πτερὰ καὶ ἔπι πλεῖω ἐπιρρεῖν τὰ γαθά.

τὸ Nominalizes two verbs as objects of λέγω. περιβαλέσθαι means something like “her shrouding herself [in pride],” and ἐπαρθῆναι “to exalt.” These both have the same object, αὐτήν, who has “come into such great station,” to which the phrase with ἐπαρθῆναι adds “believing in her good fortune.”

φυλάττειν A third verb, without μήτε, and therefore a positive action which Pantheia really does take.

μηδὲν… φρονοῦσαν Modifies ἑαυτὴν: “not thinking [any vulgar thoughts].”

προσίουσιν “Her visitors.” Her conduct towards them exemplifies a certain virtue of the princeps, the early Roman ruler who was simply a little more equal than his fellows.

δημοτικῶς “Affably.”

προσφέρεσθαι “Conducts herself.” Remember that we are still in indirect discourse with λέγω.

φιλοφρονεῖσθαι With its objects, “greetings,” and “affection,” the verb may be translated as “to give.” She gives these things, such that they are ἠδίους, “sweeter” to those who receive them.

ὅσῳ “Inasfar as…”

ὅμως γιγνόμεναι “Although they [the greetings and affections] come” from someone who is better.
They [the greetings and affections] do not make a great show of it.”

A nominalized form meaning “great power.” μέγα is indeclinable. Dat. as the object of ἐχρήσαντο.

“[Only these] are considered [worthy of the goods]...” Lucian introduces here the paradox of goodness which he takes up at greater length and with the same relish in the Pro Imaginibus, which can possibly be taken as an actual response to the complaint of the historical Pantheia. One cannot be good while professing it, for vainglory is not good. To outrageously praise someone’s modesty is to destroy it, or at least embarrass it. Pantheia seems especially to have taken offense at the comparison of her person to goddesses.

“The person of higher station.”

Modifies αὐτὸν, which refers back to ὑπερέχοντι.

With the same hypothetical subject as φθονήσειε. “As in the phrase of Homer,” taking the acc.

The goddess of folly, whom Zeus cast out of heaven to tread upon the heads of men.

“Upon the heads of men.”

“Crushing the weaker.”

“Thus.”

“What the lowly suffer with respect to their opinions.”

Dat. of agent.
μηδὲν τοιοῦτον ἔλπίσαντας “Without their expecting such a thing.”

δχῆμα A winged “chariot.”

ὕπαρχόντων “The existing circumstances.” They do not “wait where they are.”

τὸ ἄναντες βιάζονται “They force their way to the highest point.”

τακέντος A gen. absolute. αὐτοῖς indicates possession.

περιρρυέντων “Mouling.”

ὁφλισκάνουσιν “They bring upon themselves.”

δςοι δὲ κατὰ τὸν Δαίδαλον “But those who like Daedalus…”

ἐπήρθησαν “To rise [too high].” Has the metaphorical meaning, “to be conceited.”

αὐτοῖς πεποιημένα “Their [wings] were made.”

ἐταμιεύσαντο “They manage, regulate.”

ὑψηλότεροι μόνον “Barely higher than,” with gen. of comparison.

νοτίζεσθαι “They moisten,” inf. with ὤστε.

μόνῳ Idiomatric, may be taken as “direct.”

τις μάλιστα ἐπαινέσειε An impersonal construction with τις, much as the French might say on loue (“one might praise”). μάλιστα denotes that this is the most praiseworthy thing about Pantheia.

ἄξιον… καρπόν The “deserved return [of praise]” which Pantheia takes from all and sundry.

εὐχομένων A gen. absolute, with πάντων as its subject. We now begin an indirect discourse, with the acc. wings and inf. verbs.

ξτὶ πλείω Harmon has: “with still greater fulness.”
 ἐπιρρεῖν “Flow [to her].”

ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ

Καὶ οἶνως, ὃς Πολύστρατη, γιγνέσθω· ἅξια γὰρ οὐ τὸ σῶμα μόνον ὦστερ ἢ Ἑλένη καλῆ οἶσα, καλλίω δὲ καὶ ἐφασμιωτέραν ὑπ᾽ αὐτῷ τὴν ψυχῆν σκέπουσα. ἔπρεπε δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖ τῷ μεγάλῳ χρηστῷ καὶ ἤμέρῳ ὅντι καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν ἁλλων ἁγαθῶν, ὁπόσα ἐστίν αὐτῷ, εὐδαιμονίησαι, ὡς ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ φῦναι γυναῖκα τοιαύτην καὶ συνοίσαν αὐτῷ ποθεῖν αὐτόν· οὐ γὰρ μικρόν τοῦτο εὐδαιμόνιμη, γυνὴ περὶ ἥς ἢν τις εὐλόγως τὸ Ὄμηρικὸν ἐκεῖνο εἴποι, χρυσείᾳ μὲν αὐτὴν Ἀφροδίτη ἐρίζειν τὸ κάλλος, ἔργα δὲ αὐτῇ Ἀθηναίῃ ἵσοφαρίζειν. γυναικῶν γὰρ συνόλως ὢν τις παραβληθείη αὐτῇ “οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν,” φησιν Ὄμηρος, “οὕτ᾽ ὃν φρένας οὔπε τι ἔργα.”

ἅξια “[She is] worthy.”

τὸ σῶμα The first object of σκέπουσα, “since she harbors.”

ὑπ᾽ αὐτῷ “Beneath this [façade].”

ἔπρεπε An impersonal construction with dat. and inf. “It was fitting that for [our emperor] to…”

καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ… εὐδαιμονήσαι “Be blessed with this along with…”

ὅπως ἐστὶν αὐτῷ “Such as there are for him,” modifying ἁγαθῶν.

ὡς The emperor is so blessed “that…” with acc. and inf.

ἔπ᾽ αὐτοῦ “In his time.”

φῦναι… ποθεῖν Verbs for γυναῖκα: “is born and (dwelling with him) yearns.”
εὐδαιμόνημα Neut. nom., with an implied ἔστι.

περὶ ἦς ἐν τῖς εὐλόγως... εἴποι “About whom one can aptly cite…”


παραβληθεὶ ἄ Aor. opt. pass. None “could be compared” to her.

οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν Acc. of respect. “Neither in growth nor in stature.” Iliad 1.115.

ΠΟΛΥΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ

Ἀληθῆ φής, ὦ Λυκίνε: ὡστε εἰ δοκεῖ, ἀναμίξαντες ἂδη τὸς εἰκόνας, ἢν τε σὺ ἀνέπλασας τὴν τοῦ σῶματος καὶ ἂς ἔγω τῆς ψυχῆς ἐγραψάμην, μίαν εἰ ἀπασίων συνθέντες εἰς βιβλίον καταθέμενοι παρέχωμεν ἀπασί θαυμάζειν τοῖς τῇ νῦν οὖσι καὶ τοῖς ἐν ὑστέρῳ ἐσομένοις. μονιμωτέρα γοῦν τῶν Απελλοῦ καὶ Παρρασίου καὶ Πολυγνώτου γέοντ᾿ ἂν, καὶ αὐτῇ ἐκείνῃ παρὰ πολὺ τῶν τοιούτων κεχαρισμένη, ὡς μη ἴδου καὶ κηροῦ καὶ χρωμάτων πεποίηται, ἀλλὰ ταῖς παρὰ Μουσῶν ἐπιπνοίαις εἰκάσται, ἦπερ ἀκριβεστάτη εἰκὼν γέοντ᾿ ἂν σῶματος κάλλος καὶ ψυχῆς ἀρετὴν ὧμα ἐμφανίζουσα.

εἰ δοκεῖ “If it seems [good to you].”

εἰς βιβλίον καταθέμενοι “Setting it in book form.”

παρέχωμεν “Let us publish it.”

ἀπασὶ θαυμάζειν “For all… to wonder.”

ἐσομένοις Part. fut. mid. masc. dat. pl.
μονιμώτερα “More stable,” with gen. of comparison. A prophetic joke, to suggest that this piece of apparently light comedy should outlast the great works of the ancient masters of sculpture.

γένοιτ’ ἄν “It would be.”

πολὺ... κεχαρισμένη “Much more pleasing.”

ἐπιπνοίας “The breath [of the Muses].” The word, in contrast to the plastic arts, has something divine about it.

ἐμφανίζουσα “Since it exhibits” the excellence of both body and soul. Here is the great punch-line of the dialogue. The text becomes self-referential, since Polystratus’ proposed publication would presumably approximate the very text of the Imagines. It is not coincidental that this occurs directly after we have considered Pantheia’s capacity for introspection and her self-image. The process of subjectification, if we can construe it that way, that takes place in the second half of the dialogue should be considered as part of a dialectic. Pantheia is fully objectified. There is then a question posed about the possibility of subjectivity in the context of objectifying artistic representation: how can we artistically discuss the non-physical? This question comes to the fore in the question of self-consciousness and self-representation, and Lucian humorously fails to resolve the paradox in any expected way, suggesting, however, a deeper resolution: the work of art itself becomes self-conscious, taking on the subjectivity that its object was struggling to contain.

Pro Imaginibus (ΥΠΕΡ ΤΩΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΩΝ)
POLYSTRATUS

“My dear Lycinus,” said My Lady, “I have noticed, in your recent publication, the great good will you bear me, and the honor you bestow. You would not praise me so generously, I suppose, if you held me in low esteem. However, you will please observe my feelings, which are as follows: I do not approve of those whose habit it is to flatter; they seem to me to be illusionists, and little to demonstrate the character of free-born men. Above all in the matter of giving compliments: whenever I am praised with vulgar and fantastic extravagance, I blush, and practically cover my ears; such praise affects me almost as a kind of ridicule. For a eulogy is only tolerable to her who recognizes in every line, that it is really applicable to herself; if this bound is overstepped, a false and foreign note is introduced: acclaim becomes mere adulation.

“Certainly,” she said, “I know many who delight if one lauds in them qualities not their own; one who announces to old men, that they are blossoming with youthfulness, or to the unsightly, that their beauty is that of Nireus or Phaon. They expect their very figures to be transformed by compliments, and themselves to be rejuvenated: Pelias, you will recall, nurtured the same expectation.

“An expectation not quite in touch with the facts: praise would be a worthy thing indeed, if one could derive, from the most hyperbolic use of it, such a material effect. A person laboring under such an expectation seems to me to suffer much the same fate as a hideous man, upon whom someone places a gorgeous mask, and who thereafter basks in his own beauty, although it is a removable one, and like to be destroyed by some passerby, which would leave him all the more laughable, standing there in his
own face, which had merited such a covering. My lord, it is as if a little fellow, having done up his big buskins, should compete in height with men who, if they stood both on even ground, would overtop him by a full cubit.”

And she recalled an instance of just such a thing. There was a woman, she said, one of society’s lights, and pretty and well-bred, but small, somewhat less than statuesque; and some poet complimented her in his odes for being, among other things, tall, and likened her to a black-poplar for her stature and posture. And she took heart at this, perhaps expecting she’d grow into the poem, and raised her hand in applause. The poet saw that she liked to be praised, and sang the song several times over, until someone in the audience leaned over to him and whispered in his ear: “stop, man, before you make her stand up for an ovation.”

And Stratonice, the wife of Seleucus, she said, did something similar and even more ridiculous: she created a competition for poets, for a talent, to see who could best praise her curls; just so happens, though, that she was totally bald, not a hair on her head. And with her head in such a state, and with everybody knowing it (since the long illness which resulted in this condition was a matter of common knowledge), she listened to these abominable poets holding forth upon her hyacinthine tresses, and braiding lush braids for her, and comparing the wholly non-existent to a wreath of tender parsley.

My Lady laughed at such people, who make themselves so amenable to flatterers; and she added that there are certain flatterers who prefer to work, not with verbal obsequy, but with insincere inveiglements of a painted form. “Some women are
most fond,” she said, “of those painters who render them most lovely.” There are even
those, apparently, who ask their artists to remove a bit of nose, or paint their eyes
blacker, or add to them some other thing they want; and, quite unaware of course, these
women shower in garlands the image of some other person, really not much like them
at all.

And so forth. She liked the piece, for the most part, but there was a particular
point where she took offense; that is, where you compared her to goddesses, Hera and
Aphrodite. “Such praise surpasses my frame,” quoth she, “as it would any finite
person’s. Really, I thought it hardly tasteful in you to look to me as to a heroine, a
Penelope, Arete, or Theano; but as to the best of the goddesses! More materially, I am
a religious woman, timid and respectful before the divine. Briefly: I fear deserving the
reputation of a Cassiopeia, should I welcome such respects as yours. Cassiopeia, in
fact, contended only with Nereids, and paid to Hera and Aphrodite their due honor.”

Verily Lycinus, she bids you, perform rewrites! Else shall she call the gods to
witness—that you have written contrary to her wishes, that you write in full knowledge of
the distress the book will cause her, circulating in its present form, which is nor dutiful
nor pious! She also considered that it would be rather irreligious if she claimed a
likeness with the Aphrodite of the gardens in Cnidus. And she wishes to remind you of
your last few comments about her in the book, that you called her modest, moderate,
not big with vanity above the condition of man, flying close to the ground, etc. etc. And
now you go trotting her around above the heavens themselves and comparing her to
goddesses.
She wished you would not think her more foolish than Alexander who, when a certain architect proposed to transform the entirety of Mt. Athos into a great stone icon of the king, holding two cities in his hands, did not assent to this monstrous undertaking; but thinking it an act of daring presumption, he stopped the man from building less-than-convincing colossi, and bade him leave Athos alone and in general stop reducing such great mountains to the likeness of puny humans. She patted Alexander on the back for his great soul, and said that he had raised to himself a monument on a scale grander even than Mt. Athos in the minds of those who shall always remember him: for it was by no little wisdom that he discerned the vexations of such an honor.

So, while she commended the craft and inventiveness you displayed in making your little figurines, she didn’t notice any resemblance in them to her. She was not worthy of them, she said, nor even close, and nor was any woman alive. Paying all due reverence to your models, she discharges you from the duty of honoring her with them. Praise her in human terms, if you must, but let the sandal fit her foot, “lest it hinder me when I walk in it.”

There was more she bade me tell you: “I hear people say, and you men will know if it’s true, that it is not permitted the Olympian victors to erect statues of greater than life-size, and that the Hellanodicae are at pains that none shall overstep his own proportions; that their examination, on this point, is more stringent even than their scrutiny of the athletes. So look,” said she, “lest we deserve a reputation for falsifying our statue’s proportions, and the Hellanodicae come and knock it down.”
And that’s all she wrote. Now Lycinus, see to it that you amend your ways, and edit your book, lest you sin against the light. Because she took it pretty badly, and shivered reading it, and when she finished besought the goddesses’ mercy; and excusably so, these being the most perfectly natural feelings for a woman.

Actually, truth be told, I felt much the same myself. I know, I know, when I first read it, I saw nothing wrong with what you had written, but when she pointed these things out, I began to think she was right. I experienced what most people experience upon peering too closely at things: with the thing too close, right there in our faces, we discern nothing accurately, but only standing back, looking from the proper distance, do we really see; then everything in it appears clearly, both the good qualities and the not-so-good.

Likening a human woman to Hera and Aphrodite, isn’t this just straightforwardly abasing the goddesses? In such cases the lesser does not gain by the juxtaposition, while the greater loses by being drawn down into proximity with it. Look, if two men are walking along, one a big strapping fellow, the other rather dwarfish, and for some reason we have to even them out so the one doesn’t tower over the other, it’s never going to happen with the little guy stretching upwards, no matter how much he strains on his tiptoes. No, if they’re going to appear the same, the big one will have to stoop and make himself look smaller. And in a comparison like yours, it’s not like a man becomes greater, because someone compares him to a god. Rather the divine is necessarily diminished, bent double towards the deficient. If someone only extended his metaphors into heaven because he couldn’t find any earthly parallels, we might not
blame him too much for impiety. But you, with so many beautiful women at your disposal, compared her to Hera and Aphrodite, with all the courage to do what wasn’t necessary.

Dispense with all this awkward effrontery, Lycinus, it’s not like you. You’ve never been easy when it comes to praise, and now this great change, this lavishness; from your habitual thriftiness you’ve become a profligate of praise. Now, don’t feel bad if you have to revise something you’ve already published: they say even Phidias did that, when he was working on his Zeus for the Eleans. He stood behind a door, when the statue was first uncovered for the public, and listened to whatever compliments or censure they levied: one said, “oh, the nose is too thick,” another said “what an oblong face,” and so forth. Then when the crowd was gone, he shut himself in again and revised and rearranged the idol to fit the opinion of the majority. He didn’t belittle the counsel of the people, because he thought that the many must, necessarily and always, see better than the individual, even if that individual were Phidias.

Well, that’s the opinion I convey from My Lady, and it’s what I myself advise, as your friend who loves you.

LYCINUS

Polystratus, you sneak! A rhetor all this time! You have levied such charges against my piece, and in such a long speech, that I have no hope of defending it!

But you two haven’t done it in a very legal manner, especially you, Polystratus: you tried my book alone without its attorney present! It’s easy to win a race if you race
alone, as the proverb runs. Is it surprising that I should lose, when no water has been measured out for a defense? And strangest of all, you two have been both jury and prosecution!

Well, what would you have me do? Shall I hold my peace and accept the decision, shall I write a recantation, or will you allow me to defend myself according to the right of appeal?

POLYSTRATUS

By God, yes, if you have anything righteous to say. You're not pleading among adversaries, as you suppose, but among friends; I'm even prepared to take up the case as co-counsel.

LYCINUS

But it's very troubling, Polystratus, that I won't be able to plead in her hearing: that would be much more to the point. Alas, it seems I must give my defense through an interlocutor. But: if you'll be such a good messenger for me, to her, as you were from her to me, I think I'll have the fortitude to throw the dice.

POLYSTRATUS

Confidence, Lycinus, you won't find me a flimsy vessel for your defense; do try and keep it short though, since I'll have to remember it all.
LYCINUS

Indeed, it seems to me I'll need a great heap of words, to defend against such a vigorous accusation. But for your sake, I shall give the abridged version. All right: here is the message, from me to her.

POLYSTRATUS

Just a moment, Lycinus: speak your speech as if she were here listening, and I'll do an imitation of you for her.

LYCINUS

Since that's how you want it, Polystratus: here she is, and first she says everything you've just relayed to me. And now it falls on us to make our reply.

However—and I won't shrink from telling you how I feel—I'm not sure how, but you've made the matter much more frightening to me. Look, I'm sweaty, I'm afraid, I feel like she's right here, and the whole thing's got me generally aflutter. But I digress: here goes, since I can't very well retreat with her already here.

POLYSTRATUS

But, my God, look at her! Her face all full of goodwill, and radiant with kindness, as you see. So confidence!, and get on with it.

LYCINUS
My Lady:

Though I have, as you say, praised you highly, intemperately; I do not see that I have produced any encomium so fine as the one you have passed upon yourself in demonstrating your superlative respect for the gods. This is commendation loftier than all I wrote of you, and I beg your pardon, if I have not recorded in your portrait this perfection which eluded me only because I did not know you; there is none I should have preferred to note. So that in this, at least, far from hyperbolizing, I seem to have praised you far less than you deserve. See what I’ve left out? What a fabulous evidence of your worthy nature and genuine, upright character: of course, a person who leaves out no duty of piety will be also outstanding in her relations with mankind. If I absolutely must edit my speech, must amend my statue, I shall not be so bold as to remove a hair: but will rather add this piety as its crowning jewel.

Upon one point, however, I must thank you for your correspondence: as soon as I had celebrated your moderate character, and extolled the fact that the present exaltation of your fortunes had not filled you with overblown conceit; promptly you confirmed every word of my eulogy with your objections. Not snatching at flattery, but being ashamed at it, saying that it’s too high for oneself, this is the proof of a democratic, measured sort of mind. But! The more you raise these objections to praise, the more you show yourself worthy of the highest praise! Actually, your case calls to mind an anecdote of Diogenes, who was asked “how may one become famous?” and replied, “by shunning fame!” If I myself were asked, “who most deserves praise?” I would reply, “those who shun it!”
But this is rather beside the point. The charge on which I’m supposed to defend myself is that I produced this fiction comparing you to the great works of Cnidus and the garden, and to Hera and Aphrodite, which you thought immoderate and presumptuous. To this point I will speak.

It is an ancient maxim, that poets and painters are not to be held accountable; and even less are eulogists, I think, even ones who go humbly afoot, like myself, and are not born aloft by meter. For praise is free, it may be as grand or as subtle as it wills; and it has only one object, to generate admiration and make its subject enviable. Now, I need not pursue this course exclusively, and I fear you would think I had no other.

But I must say that the nature of a eulogy is such that we must make use of metaphors and figurative language: the pinnacle of the form is really a well-made comparison. And the eulogist will have made his comparisons best if they assimilate his subject, not to something inferior or equal, but, as far as possible, to something exalted. If someone, in a fit of appreciation for dogs, told you that a dog was larger than a fox or a cat, would you say he knew how to praise? You wouldn’t. But even if he said it was as big as a wolf, you wouldn’t consider this a proper commendation. So when is the aim of praise achieved? Only when you say the dog is equal in size and power to a lion. Thus the poet says that Orion’s dog was a bully of lions: this is the apogee of dog-praising. Or, if someone wanted to praise Milo of Croton, or Glaucus of Carystus, or Polydamas, and said of any of them “he’s stronger than a woman!”—wouldn’t we all laugh at such a pathetic compliment? If someone said, “he’s stronger than one man!”—you would hardly even call it praise. But what did a certain famous poet say, to praise Glaucus? “Not
even mighty Polydeuces," “not even the iron son of Alcmene,” could have raised a hand against him—you see what gods the poet compared him with? Or, actually, favorably contrasted him? And Glaucus didn’t take offense, at being identified with the gods who patronize athletes, nor did the gods chastise Glaucus and his poet for an impious commendation: they both became famous, and were honored among the Greeks, the one, Glaucus, for his strength, and the poet for all his songs (but especially this one). So don’t fret, if when I want to metaphorize I use an exalted object for comparison: the metaphorizer is bound to, and my subject required it.

Now, since you mention flattery: I praise you for hating flatterers, and wouldn’t have you any other way. But I want to make a distinction for you, between the achievements of praise and the hyperboles of flattery. Because the flatterer praises only to support himself, and doesn’t know what to make of truth, he thinks it’s necessary to overpraise everything: he lies and adds bits he fancies: he wouldn’t shrink from saying that Thersites was more beautiful than Achilles, or that Nestor was the youngest of the Greek soldiers before Troy. He would swear that the son of Croesus heard more acutely than Melampus, and that Phineus was sharper-sighted than Lynceus, if he expected to profit by the lie. But the honest eulogist doesn’t lie, or add anything made up of whole cloth. Rather he augments a good feature he really finds in his subject, even if it’s there rather meager, and displays it from a better angle. If he wished to praise a horse he would say that it’s the nimblest, fastest animal, of all the animals we know, and that “over the tops of the flowers it runs, without bending them.” Nor would he hesitate to mention “the alacrity of storm-footed horses.” And if he praised a beautiful,
well-furnished villa, he would say, “just so, the inner court of Olympian Zeus.” The flatterer, of course, would bestow such blessings on a swineherd’s hovel, if he hoped to get anything from the swineherd. For instance, it is said of Cynaethus, the flunky of Demetrius Poliorcetes, that when he had used up his whole legion of compliments, he praised Demetrius, who had a cold, for clearing his throat mellifluously.

The flatterers dare to lie, to please the subjects of their flattery, while eulogists exalt what they find already there, but this is not the only mark of their dissimilarity: they further differ—and this is not an insignificant difference—in that flatterers hyperbolize as extravagantly as they can, while eulogists exaggerate only prudently, and remain within their bounds. These are just a few of the many features which distinguish flatterers from those who praise, by using which, in the future, I hope you will not look with suspicion upon every compliment you receive, but truly discriminate true from false praise, and grade them by the appropriate metrics.

Come, please, apply both canons to what I’ve written, and see whether it accords with this one or that. Now, if I had compared some poor ugly wretch to the Cnidian statue, then I would own myself a liar, and a worse flatterer than Cynaethus. But if her good looks are a fact, universally acknowledged, then my daring was not so lawless as it seems. You may say then, actually you’ve said already, that I may be permitted to praise your beauty, but that to make my work unexceptionable, I ought to have left out any comparisons of a mortal woman with goddesses. But I—and now you compel me to the truth!—I never compared you to goddesses, but only to the works, in stone, bronze, and ivory, of the great master craftsmen. I don’t believe it’s any impiety to liken humans
to the works of humans. Were you under the impression that the work of Phidias was Athena, or that that which Praxiteles constructed at Cnidus many years ago was Aphrodite? Don’t you think it a little disrespectful to hold such a view of the gods, whose real image, if you ask me, excels all powers of human replication?

Even if I did compare you to goddesses, as you construe it, it wasn’t my affair alone; I wasn’t the first to take this road. My precedents were countless great poets, including your countryman Homer, whom I now summon in my defense: and if he fails, we shall be convicted together. So I shall ask him—or rather I’ll ask you as a surrogate, since, to your credit, you know him by heart—how do you read him when he says of captured Briseis that, like unto Aphrodite, she mourned Patroclus? And when he says, a bit later, as if her likeness unto Aphrodite weren’t enough, “then spake she in tears, this woman like to goddesses.” When he says so, do you resent him, do you fling away the book? Or do you let him praise in peace? Well, whether you let him or no, time has authorized the practice: no one has censured him on this score, not even the fellow who disfigured his statue, or the one who marked off certain lines as spurious with daggers. If he’s allowed to compare some foreign female, a weepy one at that, to golden Aphrodite, then mayn’t I—not even mentioning your beauty, since on that subject you don’t appear to be listening—mayn’t I at least project an image divine upon a beaming, radiant woman, a woman who smiles the better part of the time, a feature which we mortals may share with the gods?

Then there’s Agamemnon: how sparing was Homer towards the gods, how moderate in his comparisons, when he said that in eyes and head, Agamemnon was
like unto Zeus, in his flanks to Ares, and in his chest a very Poseidon! He disjoints the man the better to liken him to gods! And someone else is like man-plaguing Ares. The Phrygian son of Priam is godly in his beauty, and the son of Peleus is always godlike. But to return to the similes involving women: you will have heard someone say "like Artemis she is, or golden Aphrodite," or "just so does Artemis descend the slopes."

And it’s not only humans he assimilates with gods: Homer compares the hair of Euphorbus, even drenched in blood, to the Graces’. This is so common, in fact, that no part of his oeuvre is uncontaminated with deifying similes. So censor all that, if you will, or else leave us, too, a little space for invention. Metaphoric imagery is in fact so exempt from the usual rules of accountability, that Homer does not hesitate to praise the goddesses by reference to lesser things. The eyes of Hera are like those of cattle, and the eyes of Aphrodite like violets. And who can forget the epithet “rosy-fingered,” who knows even slightly the poems of Homer?

Furthermore: what does it matter if one’s appearance is compared to gods’, when so many have taken their very names, and go by Dionysus, Hephaestus, Zeus, Poseidon, Hermes? The wife of Evagoras, king of Cyprus, was called Leto, and the goddess didn’t seem too upset about it, though she could have turned her to stone, as she did Niobe. I needn’t mention the Egyptians, a properly religious people who, even so, use the gods’ names to their heart’s content (most of their names, in fact, they pull down from heaven).

So may we have no more fear from you, when you are receiving praise? If some line of my essay offends the gods, you are not responsible, unless you think it a sin to
listen. If the gods chastise anyone, it’ll be me, and Homer and the rest along with me.

But so far they haven’t chastised the best of the philosophers, who says that men are in the divine image.

Well, I could go on and on, but I desist, for the sake of Polystratus here, who’ll have to remember every word.

POLYSTRATUS

I’m not sure that’s going to happen, Lycinus; you’ve made a very long speech, and exceeded your ration of water. But I’ll try to remember it all, and, as you see, I’m already off to find her, my ears stopped up, so that nothing else sneaks in and disturbs the order, in which case my audience might hiss at me.

LYCINUS

Well, Polystratus, take care to play your part well. I’ve transmitted the play, and for now I leave it to your care: when the decisions of the judges are published, I’ll return, to learn the issue of the competition.