

Lucian of Samosata : THE PASSING OF PEREGRINUS

An account of the life and death of a Cynic philosopher who for a time in his early life went over to Christianity, practicing it to the point of imprisonment under a very tolerant administration, and after returning to Cynicism became in his old age so enamoured of Indic ideas and precedents that he cremated himself at Olympia, just after the games of A.D. 165, even as Calanus had done at Susa in the presence of Alexander the Great and as Zarmarus had done at Athens, after initiation into the mysteries, in the presence of Augustus.

Writing soon after the event, of which he was a witness, Lucian makes his main theme the story of what went on at Olympia. The earlier life of Peregrinus is portrayed incidentally in a speech attributed by Lucian to someone whose name he did not know, but clearly made by Lucian himself.

Lucian believes himself to be exposing a sham, whose zeal was not at all for truth but only for applause and renown. Many notable modern critics, including Zeller, Bernays, Croiset, and Wilamowitz, dissent from his interpretation, discerning in the man an earnest seeker after truth; for to them thirst for glory is not an adequate explanation of his final act. This point of view hardly embodies sufficient recognition of the driving force of that motive with Greeks, and particularly Greeks of the second century (Nock, *Conversion*, p. 201). Greek writers recognised it as a possible explanation of the behaviour of Calanus and of Zarmarus. In this case, Lucian not only knew the man but knew others who knew him: for instance, Demonax. Assuredly, the interpretation that he gives is not his alone. Perhaps it is not so far wrong after all. Certainly there are authentic features in it, like the attempt of Proteus to get back the inheritance he had previously renounced and bestowed upon his native city, which make it impossible to see in him the “earnest and steadfast man” that Aulus Gellius thought him.

A.M. HARMON

Best wishes from Lucian to Cronius.

1. Unlucky Peregrinus,¹ or, as he delighted to style himself, Proteus,² has done exactly what Proteus in Homer did.³ After turning into everything for the sake of notoriety and achieving any number of transformations, here at last he has turned into fire; so great, it seems, was the love of notoriety that possessed him. And now your genial friend has got himself carbonified after the fashion of Empedocles, except that the latter at least tried to escape observation when he threw himself into the crater,⁴ while this gentleman waited for that one of the Greek festivals which draws the greatest crowds, heaped up a very large pyre, and leaped into it before all those witnesses; he even addressed the Greeks on the subject not many days before his venture.

2. I think I can see you laughing heartily at the old man's drivelling idiocy—indeed, I hear you give tongue as you, naturally would: "Oh, the stupidity! Oh, the vainglory! Oh"—everything else that we are in the habit of saying about it all. Well, you are doing this at a distance and

1. The greeting marks Cronius as a Platonist.

2. Cf. Aulus Gellius, XII, 11: philosophum nomine Peregrinum, cui postea cognomentum Proteus factum est, virum gravem et constantem, etc. Lucian calls him Peregrinus Proteus in *Demonax*, 21 (I., p.156), but simply Proteus the Cynic in *adu. Indoct.*, 14 (III, p.192), and he is Proteus to the Philostrati (of. *Vit. Sophi* II, 1, 33 and for the elder Philostratus the title of his lost work *Proteus the Cynic*; or, *the Sophist*), to Tatian

‘with far greater security, but I said it right by the fire and even earlier in a great crowd of listeners, angering some of them—as many as admired the old man’s fool-hardiness; but there were others beside myself who laughed at him. However, I narrowly missed getting torn limb from limb for you by the Cynics just as Actaeon was by his dogs or his cousin Pentheus by the Maenads.

3. The complete *mise en scène* of the affair was as follows. You know, of course, what the playwright was like and what spectacular performances he presented his whole life long, outdoing Sophocles and Aeschylus. As for my part in it, as soon as I came to Elis, in going up⁵ by way of the gymnasium I overheard a Cynic bawling out the usual street-corner invocations to Virtue in a loud, harsh voice, and abusing everyone without exception. Then his harangue wound up with Proteus, and to the best of my ability I shall try to quote for you the very words he said. You will find the style familiar, of course, as you have often stood near them while they were ranting.

4. “Does anyone dare,” he said, “to call Proteus vainglorious, O Earth, O sun, O rivers, O sea, O Heracles, god of Our fathers !—Proteus, who was imprisoned in Syria, who renounced five thousand talents in favour of his native land, who was banished from the city of Rome, who is more conspicuous than the sun, who is able to rival Olympian Zeus himself? Because he has resolved to depart from life by way of fire, are there people who attribute this to vainglory?’ Why, did not Heracles do so? Did not Asclepius and Dionysus,⁶ by grace of the thunderbolt? Did not Empedocles end by leaping into the crater?”

5. When Theagenes⁷ —for that was the bawler’s name—said that, I asked a bystander, “What is the meaning of his talk about fire, and what have Heracles and Empedocles to do with Proteus?” “Before long,” he replied, Proteus is going to burn himself up at the Olympic festival.” “How,” said I, “and why?” Then he undertook to tell me, but the Cynic was bawling, so that it was impossible to hear anyone else. I listened, therefore, while he flooded us with the rest of his bilge-water and got off a lot of amazing hyperbole about - Proteus, for, not deigning to compare him with the man of Sinope,⁸ or his teacher Antisthenes, or even with Socrates himself, he summoned Zeus to the lists. Then, however, he decided to keep them about equal, and thus concluded his speech:

6. “These are the two noblest masterpieces that the world has seen—the Olympian Zeus, and Proteus; of the one, the creator and artist was Phidias, of the other, Nature. But now this holy image is about to depart from among men to gods, borne on the wings of fire, leaving us bereft.” After completing this discourse with copious perspiration, he shed tears in a highly ridiculous way and tore his hair, taking care not to pull very hard; and at length he was led away, sobbing as he went, by some of the Cynics, who strove to comfort him.

(*Orat. ad Graecos*, 25), and to Athena goras (*Legat. de Christian.*, 26). The name Peregrinus is used in Aulus Gellius, VIII, 3, Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIX, 1, 39, Tertullian *ad Martyres*, 4, and Eusebius, *Chron.*, Vol. II, p. 170, Schöne. From the passage in Gellius cited above we can infer only that he did not hear the sobriquet Proteus when he was in Athens. The manner of its employment by Lucian is sufficient evidence that it did not originate with Lucian or after the death of Peregrinus. It was probably applied to him towards the close of his career. That it bears a sense very like what Lucian attributes to it is clear from Maximus of Tyre, VIII, 1. In § 27 Lucian professes to have heard that he wanted to change it to Phoenix after his decision to immolate himself.

3. The transformations of the sea-god in his effort to escape from Menelaus, who wanted to consult him, are told in the *Odyssey*, IV, 454-459.

4. Of Aetna; it was said that the manner of his death remained unknown until the mountain cast up one of his golden sandals.

5. To Olympia.

6. Who achieved divinity after his mother had been so killed, rather than himself, as with Asclepius. An epigram

7. After him, another man went up at once,⁹ not permitting the throng to disperse, but pouring a libation on the previous sacrificial offerings while they were still ablaze. At first he laughed a long time, and obviously did it from the heart. Then he began somewhat after this fashion: “Since that accursed Theagenes terminated his pestilential remarks with the tears of Heraclitus, I, on the contrary, shall begin with the laughter of Democritus.” And again he went on laughing a long time, so that he drew most of us into doing likewise; Then, changing countenance, he said,

8. “Pray, what else, gentlemen, are we to do when we hear utterances so ridiculous, and see old men all but standing on their heads, in public for the sake of a little despicable notoriety? That you may know what manner of thing is this ‘holy image’ which is about to be burned up, give me your ears, for I have observed his character and kept an eye on his career from the beginning, and have ascertained various particulars from his fellow-citizens and people who cannot have helped knowing him thoroughly.

9. “This creation and masterpiece of nature, this Polyclitan canon,¹⁰ as soon as he came of age, was taken in adultery in Armenia and got a sound thrashing, but finally jumped down from the roof and made his escape, with a radish stopping his vent. Then he corrupted a handsome boy, and by paying three thousand drachmas to the boy’s parents, who were poor, bought himself off from being brought before the governor of the province of Asia.

10. “All this and the like of it I propose to pass over; for he was still unshapen clay, and our ‘holy image’ had not yet been consummated for us. What he did to his father, however, is very well worth hearing; but you all know it—you have heard how he strangled the aged man, unable to tolerate his living beyond sixty years. Then, when the affair had been noised abroad, he condemned himself to exile and roamed about, going to one country after another.

11. “It was then that he learned the wondrous lore of the Christians, by associating with their priests and scribes in Palestine. And—how else could it be?—in a trice he made them all look like children, for he was prophet, cult-leader, head of the synagogue, and everything, all by himself. He interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many, and they revered him as a god, made use of him as a lawgiver, and set him down as a protector, next after that other, to be sure, whom¹¹ they still worship, the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world.

12. “Then at length Proteus was apprehended for this and thrown into prison, which itself gave him no little reputation as an asset for his future career and the charlatanism and notoriety-seeking that he was enamoured of. Well, when he had been imprisoned, the Christians, regarding the

in the *Anthology* (XVI, 185) similarly links Dionysius with achieving immortality by fire.

7. We learn elsewhere in this piece that Theagenes lived in Patras and had property worth fifteen talents, obtained by lending money. Bernays (*Lucian und die Kyniker*, pp. 13-18) is very likely right in thinking this to be the man whose death in Rome is described by Galen (*Meth. Med.*, 13, 15: X, 909 Kühn), but he makes rather too much of that passage as an endorsement of Theagenes.

8. Diogenes.

9. Lucian himself, no doubt. Evidently the cynic had spoken from a high place (perhaps the portico of the gymnasium).

10. The proportions of the statue of a naked youth carrying a spear (the *doryphorus*), made by Polyclitus, were analysed by the sculptor himself in a book called the Canon, and universally accepted as canonical for the male figure.

11. The sense of the unemended text here is “protector; that great man, to be sure, they’ still worship,” etc.

12. From the wording of this sentence the allusion is so obviously to Christ himself that one is at a loss to under

incident as a calamity, left nothing undone in the effort to rescue him. Then, as this was impossible, every other form of attention was shown him, not in any casual way but with assiduity, and from the very break of day aged widows and orphan children could be seen waiting near the prison, while their officials even slept inside with him after bribing the guards. Then elaborate meals were brought in, and sacred books of theirs were read aloud, and excellent Peregrinus—for he still went by that name—was called by them 'the new Socrates.'

13. "Indeed, people came even from the cities in Asia, sent by the Christians at their common expense, to succour and defend and encourage the hero. They show incredible speed whenever any such public action is taken; for in no time they lavish their all. So it was then in the case of Peregrinus; much money came to him from them by reason of his imprisonment, and he procured not a little revenue from it. The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody; most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver¹² persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once, for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines traditionally without any definite evidence. So if any charlatan and trickster, able to profit by occasions, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing upon simple folk.

14. "However, Peregrinus was freed by the then governor of Syria, a man who was fond of philosophy.¹³ Aware of his recklessness and that he would gladly die in order that he might leave behind him a reputation for it, he freed him, not considering him worthy even of the usual chastisement.¹⁴ Upon returning to his home, he found that the matter of his father's murder was still at fever heat and that there were many who were for pressing the charge against him. Most of his possessions had been carried off during his absence, and only his farms remained, amounting to fifteen talents; for the entire property which the old man left had been worth perhaps thirty talents, not five thousand as that utterly ridiculous Theagenes asserted. Even the entire city of Parium,¹⁵ taking along with it the five that are its neighbours, would not fetch that much, including the men, the cattle, and all the rest of their belongings.

15. "However, the charge and complaint was still aglow, and it was probable that before long somebody would appear against him; above all, the people themselves were enraged, mourning over a good old man (as he was called by those who had seen him) so impiously slain. But observe what a plan our clever Proteus discovered to cope with all this, and, how he escaped the danger. Coming before the assembly of the Parians—he wore his hair long by now, dressed in a dirty mantle, had a

stand why Paul, let alone Moses, should have been suggested. For the doctrine of brotherly love cf. Matt. 23, 8.

13. The Roman governor of the province of Syria is meant. Identification is impossible because the date of the imprisonment of Peregrinus cannot be fixed.

14. "The usual chastisement" (Allinson's phrase) was Scourging.

15. A small (but not really so contemptible) Greek town on the Hellespont, site of a Roman colony since Augustus. See Sir W. Leaf, *Strabo on the Troad*, pp. 80—85.

16. Probably what Lucian has in mind is pagan sacrificial meats. This is just a guess from the way he puts it, but if so, it is highly plausible on account of the notorious indifference of the Cynics towards what they ate. Peregrinus may have signalled his relapse to Cynicism by sampling a "dinner of Hecate" at the cross-roads.

17. In *Demonax*, 3, Lucian alludes to Agathobulus as one of those with whom Demonax had studied. The teacher of Peregrinus was therefore reputable as well as famous.

18. The allusion is to that variety of "indifferent"

wallet slung at 'his side, the staff was in his hand, and in general he was very histrionic in his get-up—manifesting himself to them in this guise, he said that he relinquished to the state all the property which had been left him by his father of blessed memory. When the people, poor folk agape for largesses, heard that, they lifted their voices forthwith: 'The one and only philosopher! The one and only patriot! The one and only rival of Diogenes and Crates!' His enemies were muzzled, and anyone who tried to mention the murder was at once pelted with stones.

16. "He left home, then, for the second time, to roam about, possessing an ample source of funds in the Christians, through whose ministrations he lived in unalloyed prosperity. For a time he battened himself thus; but then, after he had transgressed in some way even against them—he was seen, I think, eating some of the food that is forbidden them,¹⁶ they no longer accepted him, and so, being at a loss, he thought he must sing a palinode and demand his possessions back from his city. Submitting a petition, he expected to recover them by order of the Emperor. Then, as the city sent representatives to oppose the claim, he achieved nothing, but was directed to abide by what he had once for all determined, under no compulsion from anyone.

17. "Thereafter he went away a third time, to Egypt, to visit Agathobulus,¹⁷ where he took that wonderful course of training in asceticism, shaving one half of his head, daubing his face with mud, and demonstrating what they call 'indifference' by erecting his yard amid a thronging mob of bystanders,¹⁸ besides giving and, taking blows on the back-sides with a stalk of fennel, and playing the mountebank even more audaciously in many other ways.

18. "From there, thus equipped, he set sail for Italy and immediately after disembarking he fell to abusing everyone, and in particular the Emperor,¹⁹ knowing him to be mild and gentle, so that he was safe in making bold. The Emperor, as one would expect, cared little for his libels and did not think fit to punish for mere words a man who only used philosophy as a cloak, and above all, a man who had made a profession of abusiveness. But in our friend's case, even from this his reputation grew, among simple folk any how, and he was a cynosure for his recklessness, until finally the city prefect, a wise man, packed him off for immoderate indulgence in the thing, saying that the city had no need of any such philosopher. However, this too made for his renown, and he was on everybody's lips as the philosopher who had been banished for his frankness and excessive freedom, so that in this respect he approached Musonius, Dio, Epictetus, and anyone else who has been in a similar predicament.

19. "Coming at last to Greece under these circumstances, at one moment he abused the Eleans, at another he counselled the Greeks to take up arms against the Romans,²⁰ and at another he libelled a man

action (i.e. neither good nor bad) ascribed to Diogenes himself by Dio Chrysostom VI, 16-20 (pp. 203-204 r).

19. Antoninus Pius.

20. The life of Antoninus Pius (Script. Hist. Aug.), § 5, notes suppression of a rebellion in Achaia.

21. The man was the famous Herodes Atticus. For the aqueduct built by him at Olympia see Frazer's Pausanias, Vol. IV, pp. 72 ff. Philostratus (*Vit. Soph.* II, 1, 33) records that Herodes was often berated by Proteus, to whom on one occasion he hinted that it might at least be done in Greek.

outstanding in literary attainments and position because he had been a benefactor to Greece in many ways, and particularly because he had brought water to Olympia and prevented the visitors to the festival from dying of thirst, maintaining that he was making the Greeks effeminate, for the spectators of the Olympic games ought to endure their thirst—yes, by Heaven, and even to lose their lives, no doubt, many of them, through the frequent distempers which formerly ran riot in the vast crowd on account of the dryness of the place! ²¹ And he said this while he drank that same water!

20. “When they almost killed him with stones, mobbing him with one accord, he managed to escape death at the moment by fleeing to Zeus for sanctuary (stout fellow!), and afterwards, at the next Olympiad, he gave the Greeks a speech which he had composed during the four years that had intervened, praising the man who had brought in the water and defending himself for running away at that time.

“At last, he was disregarded by all and no longer so admired; for all his stuff was stale and he could not turn out any further novelty with which to surprise those who came in his way and make them marvel and stare at him—a thing for which he had a fierce craving from the first. So he devised this ultimate venture of the pyre, and spread a report among the Greeks immediately after the last Olympic games that he would burn himself up at the next festival. [21]. And now, they say, he is playing the mountebank over that very thing, digging a pit, collecting logs, and promising really awesome fortitude.²²

“What he should have done, I think, was first and foremost to await death and not to cut and run from life, but if he had determined to be off, at all costs not to use fire or any of these devices out of tragedy, but to choose for his departure some other form of death out of the myriads that there are. If, however, he is partial to fire as something connected with Heracles, why in the world did he not quietly select a well-wooded mountain and cremate himself upon it in solitude, taking along only one person such as Theagenes here for his Philoctetes? ²³ On the contrary, it is in Olympia, at the height of the festival, all but in the theatre, that he plans to roast himself— not undeservedly, by Heracles, if it is right for parricides and for atheists to suffer for their hardinesses.²⁴ And from that point of view he seems to be getting about it very late in the day, he ought long ago to have been flung into the bull of Phalaris²⁵ to pay the fitting penalty instead of opening his mouth to the flames once for all and expiring in a trice. For people tell me that no other form of death is quicker than that by fire, you have only to open your mouth, and die forthwith.

22. “The spectacle is being planned, I suppose, as something awe-

22. Thanks to Paul Graindor, the date of the Olympiads mentioned in connection with Peregrinus can now be determined. He has deduced from the apparent ages of the children represented in the exedra erected by Herodes on the completion of his aqueduct that this took place in A.D. 153 (*Herode Atticus et Sa Famille*, pp. 87-88). His deduction finds support in the text of Lucian as soon as we recognise that Lucian is talking about four different Olympiads, not three. The first is that on which Peregrinus criticised the aqueduct, which will be the year of its completion, A. D. 153. At the next, A.D. 157, he withdrew his criticism. The Olympiad just after which he announced his intention of cremating himself need not and cannot be identical with the one of A. D. 157 it is called by the speaker the *last* or *previous*, and the text clearly implies a lapse of time. It must therefore be the one of A. D. 161. Then comes the fourth, on which the cremation took place, dated by Eusebius in

inspiring—a fellow getting burnt up in a holy place where it is impious even to bury the others who die. But you have heard, no doubt, that long ago a man who wished to become famous burned the temple of Ephesian Artemis, not being able to attain that end in any other way.²⁶ He himself has something similar in mind, so great is the craving for fame that has penetrated him to the core.

23. “He alleges, however, that he is doing it for the sake of his fellow men, that he may teach them to despise death and endure what is fearsome. For my part, I should like to ask, not him but you, whether you would wish malefactors to become his disciples in this fortitude of his, and to despise death and burning and similar terrors. No, you would not, I am very sure. How, then, is Proteus to draw distinctions in this matter, and to benefit the good without making the bad more adventurous and daring?

24. “Nevertheless, suppose it possible that only those will present themselves at this affair who will see it to their advantage. Once more I shall question you: would you desire your children to become imitators of such a man? You will not say so. But why did I ask that question, when even of his disciples themselves not one would imitate him? In fact, the thing for which one might blame Theagenes most of all is that although he copies the man in everything else, he does not follow his teacher and take the road with him, now that he is off, as he says, to join Heracles; why, he has the opportunity to attain absolute felicity instantaneously by plunging headlong into the fire with him!

“Emulation is not a matter of wallet, staff, and mantle; all this is safe and easy and within anyone’s power. One should emulate the consummation and culmination, build a pyre of fig-wood logs as green as can be, and stifle one’s self in the smoke of them. Fire itself belongs not only to Heracles and Asclepius, but to doers of sacrilege and murder, who can be seen enduring it by judicial sentence. Therefore it is better to employ smoke, which would be peculiar and belong only to you and your like.

25. “Besides, if Heracles really did venture any such act, he did it because he was ailing, because the blood of the Centaur, as the tragedy tells us, was preying upon him; but for what reason does this man throw himself bodily into the fire? Oh, yes! to demonstrate his fortitude, like the Brahmins, for Theagenes thought fit to compare him with them, just as if there could not be fools and notoriety-seekers even among the Indians. Well, then, let him at least imitate *them*. They do not leap into the fire (so Onesicritus says, Alexander’s navigator, who saw Calanus burning), but when they have built their pyre, they stand close beside it motionless and endure being toasted; then, mounting upon it, they cremate themselves decorously without the slightest alteration of the position in which they

A. D. 165.

23. Philoctetes had helped Heracles to cremate himself on Mt Oeta by kindling the pyre for him

24. As the cremation actually took place at Harpina, two miles away from Olympia and on the day after the festival closed, it may be that religious scruples (cf. § 26) caused Peregrinus to modify an original plan which involved its taking place at Olympia itself while the festival was in progress.

25. See *Phalaris* I, 11-12 (Vol. I, pp. 17 ff.)

26. Herostratus, in 356 B.C. The Ephesians sought to defeat his object by forbidding anyone for all time to mention his name (Valerius Maximus, VIII, 14, 5). The prohibition which very likely was accompanied by a curse, was far from ineffective, for nearly all ancient authors who mention the story, including Cicero and Plutarch, omit the name just as Lucian does.

are lying.

“In this man's case, what great thing will it be if he tumbles in and dies in the sudden grip of the fire? It is not beyond expectation that he will jump out half consumed, unless, as they say, he is going to see to it that the pyre is deep down in a pit. [26] There are people who say that he has even changed his mind, and is telling certain dreams, to the effect that Zeus does not permit pollution of a holy place. But let him be assured on that score ; I would take my oath to it that no one of the gods would be angry if Per egrinus should die a rogue s death. Moreover, it is not easy for him to withdraw now, for his Cynic associates are urging him on and pushing him into the fire and inflaming his resolution; they will not let him shirk it. If he should pull a couple of them into the fire along with him when he jumps in, that would be the only nice thing about his performance.

27. “I have heard that he no longer deigns to be called Proteus but has changed his name to Phoenix, because the phoenix the Indian bird, is said to mount a pyre when it is very far advanced in age Indeed, he even manufactures myths and repeats certain oracles, ancient, of course, to the purport that he is to become a guardian spirit of the night; it is plain, too, that he already covets altars and expects to be imaged in gold.

27. Athenagoras reports that Parium, where Peregrinus was born, cherished a statue of him from which oracles were derived (*Leg. de Christ.*, 26).

28. “By Zeus, it would be nothing unnatural if, among all the dolts that there are, some should be found to assert that they were relieved of quartan fevers by him, and that in the dark they had encountered the guardian spirit of the night! Then too these accursed disciples of his will make an oracular shrine, I suppose, with a holy of holies, at the site of the pyre, because the famous Proteus, son of Zeus, the progenitor of his name, was given to soothsaying.²⁷ I pledge my word, too, that priests of his will be appointed, with whips or branding irons or some such flummy-diddle, or even that a nocturnal mystery will be got up in his honour, including a torch festival at the site of the pyre.

29. “Theagenes, as I have been told by one of my friends, recently said that the Sibyl had made a prediction about all this, in fact, he quoted the verses from memory:

But when the time shall come that Proteus, noblest of Cynics,
Kindleth fire in the precinct of Zeus, our Lord of the
Thunder,
Leapeth into the flame, and cometh to lofty Olympus,
Then do I bid all alike who eat the fruit of the ploughland
Honour to pay unto him that walketh abroad in the night-time,

Greatest of spirits, thronéd with Heracles and Hephaestus.

30. “That is what Theagenes alleges he heard from the Sibyl. But I will quote him one of the oracles of Bacis dealing with these matters.²⁸ Bacis expresses himself as follows, with a very excellent moral

Nay, when the time shall come that a Cynic with names that are many

Leaps into roaring flame, soul stirred by a passion for glory,

Then it is meet that the others, the jackals that follow his footsteps,

Mimic the latter end of the wolf that has taken departure. But if a dastard among them shall shun the might of Hephaestus,

Let him be pelted with stones forthwith by all the Achaeans,

Learning, the frigid fool, to abjure all fiery speeches,

He that has laden his wallet with gold by the taking of usance,

Thrice five talents he owns in the lovely city of Patras.

What do you think, gentlemen? That Bacis is a worse soothsayer than the Sibyl? It is high time, then, for these wondrous followers of Proteus to look about for a place in which to aerify themselves—for that is the name they give to cremation.²⁹

31. When he had said these words all the bystanders shouted: “Let them be burned right now; they deserve the flames!” And the man got down again laughing; but “Nestor failed not to mark the din:”³⁰ I mean Theagenes. When he heard the shouting he came at once, took the platform, and fell to ranting and telling countless malicious tales about the man who had just got down—I do not know what that excellent gentleman’s name was. For my part, I left him splitting his lungs and went off to see the athletes, as the Hellanodicae were said to be already in the Plethrium.³¹

32. Well, there you have what happened at Elis, and when we reached Olympia, the rear chamber^{3 2} was full of people criticising Proteus or praising his purpose, so that most of them even came to blows Finally,

28. Lucian gives the Cynic a Roland for his Oliver. Bacis was a title rather than a name, and in early Greece prophets who bore it were little less numerous than the Sibyls. Naturally it was a convenient tag for a spurious oracle, whether composed with fraudulent intention or, as often in Aristophanes, for fun.

29. Below (§29) Proteus speaks of being “commingled with the ether.”

30. *Iliad*, XIV, 1.

31. According to Pausanias (VI 23 2) a place in the Gymnasium of Elis where the officials of the games (Hellanodicae) determined by lot the matching of the athletes.

32. Of the temple of Zeus as it was open at the end it formed a sort of portico Cf

Proteus himself appeared, escorted by a countless multitude, after the contest of the heralds, and had somewhat to say about himself, telling of the life that he had led and the risks that he had run, and of all the troubles that he had endured for philosophy's sake. His speech was protracted, though I heard but little on account of the number of bystanders. Afterwards, fearing to be crushed in such a throng, because I saw this happening to many, I went away, bidding a long farewell to the sophist enamoured of death who was pronouncing his own funeral oration before his demise.

33. This much however I overheard, he said that he wanted to put a tip of gold on a golden bow;³³ for one who had lived as Heracles should die like Heracles and be commingled with the ether. And I wish, said he, to benefit mankind by showing them the way in which one should despise death; wherefore all men ought to play Philoctetes to me." The more witless among the people began to shed tears and call out: "Preserve your life for the Greeks!" but the more virile part bawled "Carry out your purpose!" by which the old man was immoderately upset, because he hoped that all would cling to him and not give him over to the fire, but retain him in life—against his will, naturally! That "Carry out your purpose" assailing him quite unexpectedly caused him to turn still paler, although his colour was already deathly, and even to tremble slightly, so that he brought his speech to an end.

34. You can imagine, I expect, how I laughed; for it was not fitting to pity a man so desperately in love with glory beyond all others who are driven by the same Fury. Anyhow, he was being escorted by crowds and getting his fill of glory as he gazed at the number of his admirers, not knowing, poor wretch, that men on their way to the cross or in the grip of the executioner have many more at their heels.

35. Soon the Olympic games were ended, the most splendid Olympics that I have seen, though it was then the fourth time that I had been a spectator. As it was not easy to secure a carriage, since many were leaving at the same time, I lingered on against my will, and Peregrinus kept making postponements, but at last had announced a night on which he would stage his cremation; so, as one of my friends had invited me to go along, I arose at midnight and took the road to Harpina, where the pyre was. This is quite twenty furlongs from Olympia as one goes past the hippodrome towards the east. As soon as we arrived, we found a pyre built in a pit about six feet deep. It was composed mostly of torchwood, and the interstices filled with brush, that it might take fire quickly. When

Runaways 7 Herodotus 1.

33. Pandarus the Trojan (*Iliad*, IV, 111) put a tip of gold on the bow he had fashioned of horn. The golden bow (bio) of Peregrinus is his life (bio).

33. Part of the Hindu element was the idea that the souls after death were conducted to the South, the region of the Manes See *Atharvaveda* 18, 3, 13; 4, 40,

the moon was rising—for she too had to witness this glorious deed—he came forward, dressed in his usual fashion, and with him the leaders of the Cynics, in particular, the gentleman from Patras, with a torch—no bad understudy. Proteus too was bearing a torch. Men, approaching from this side and that, kindled the fire into a very great flame, since it came from torchwood and brush. Per egrinus—and give me your close attention now!—laying aside the wallet, the cloak, and that notable Heracles-club, stood there in a shirt that was downright filthy. Then he requested incense to throw on the fire, when someone had proffered it, he threw it on, and gazing towards the south—even the south, too, had to do with the show³³—he said, "Spirits of my mother and my father, receive me with favour." With that he leaped into the fire, he was not visible, however, but was encompassed by the flames, which had risen to a great height.

37. Once more I see you laughing, Cronius, my urbane friend, at the *denouement* of the play. For my own part, when he called upon the guardian spirits of his mother, I did not criticise him very strongly, but when he invoked those of his father as well, I recalled the tales that had been told about his murder, and I could not control my laughter. The Cynics stood about the pyre, not weeping, to be sure, but silently evincing a certain amount of grief as they gazed into the fire, until my gorge rose at them, and I said, "Let us go away, you simpletons. It is not an agreeable spectacle to look at an old man who has been roasted, getting our nostrils filled with a villanous reek. Or are you waiting for a painter to come and picture you as the companions of Socrates in prison are portrayed beside him?" They were indignant and reviled me, and several even took to their sticks. Then, when I threatened to gather up a few of them and throw them into the fire, so that they might follow their master, they checked themselves and kept the peace.

38. As I returned, I was thinking busily, my friend, reflecting what a strange thing love of glory is! how this passion alone is unescapeable even by those who are considered wholly admirable, let alone that man who in other respects had led a life that was insane and reckless, and not undeserving of the fire. Then I encountered many people coming out to see the show themselves, for they expected to find him still alive. You see, on the day before it had been given out that he would greet the rising sun, as in fact they say the Brahmans do, before mounting the pyre. Well, I turned back most of them by saying the deed had been done already, those to whom it was not in itself highly desirable to see the actual spot, anyhow, and gather up some relic of the fire.

In that business I assure you, my friend, I had no end of trouble, telling the story to all while they asked questions and sought exact information.

34. At the death of Plato and of Augustus it was an eagle; in the case of Polycarp, a dove.

Whenever I noticed a man of taste, I would tell him the facts without embellishment, as I have to you, but for the benefit of the dullards, agog to listen, I would thicken the plot a bit on my own account, saying that when the pyre was kindled and Proteus flung himself bodily in, a great earthquake first took place, accompanied by a bellowing of the ground, and then a vulture, flying up out of the midst of the flames, went off to Heaven,³⁴ saying, in human speech, with a loud voice:

“I am through with the earth; to Olympus I fare.”

They were wonder-struck and blessed themselves with a shudder, and asked me whether the vulture sped eastwards or westwards; I made them whatever reply occurred to me.

40. On my return to the festival, I came upon a grey-haired man whose face, I assure you, inspired confidence in addition to his beard and his general air of consequence, telling all about Proteus, and how, since his cremation, he had beheld him in white raiment a little while ago, and had just now left him walking about cheerfully in the Portico of the Seven Voices,³⁵ wearing a garland of wild olive. Then on top of it all, he put the vulture, swearing that he himself had seen it flying up out of the pyre, when I myself had just previously let it fly to ridicule fools and dullards.

41. Imagine what is likely to happen in his honour hereafter, how many bees will not settle on the place, what cicadas will not sing upon it, what crows will not fly to it, as they did to the tomb of Hesiod³⁶ and so forth! As to statues, I know that many will be set up right soon by the Eleans themselves and also by the other Greeks, to whom he said he had sent letters. The story is that he despatched missives to almost all the famous cities—testamentary dispositions, so to speak, and exhortations and prescriptions—and he appointed a number of ambassadors for this purpose from among his comrades, styling them "messengers from the dead" and "underworld couriers."³⁷

42. So ended that poor wretch Proteus, a man who (to put it briefly) never fixed his gaze on the verities, but always did and said everything with a view to glory and the praise of the multitude, even to the extent of leaping into fire, when he was sure not to enjoy the praise because he could not hear it.

43. I shall add one thing more to my story before I stop, in order that you may be able to have a good laugh. For of course you have long known that other tale of mine, as you heard it from me at once, when on my return from Syria I recounted how I sailed from the Troad in his company,

35. This was a portico on the east side of the Altis which had a sevenfold echo (Pausan., V, 21, 17; Pliny, XXXVI, 100).

36. See Pausanias (IX 38 3) when Orchomenus was afflicted by a plague the Delphic priestess told its people that their only salvation was to bring there from Naupactus the bones of Hesiod, and that a crow would show them the tomb. Her words were borne out by the event.

37. In the letters of Ignatius he recommends to the Church of Smyrna the election of a special messenger, styled "ambassador of God" ([Greek omitted]: *ad Smyrn.*, 11) or "courier of God" ([Greek omitted] *ad Polyc.* 7) to be

and about his self-indulgence on the voyage, and the handsome boy whom he had persuaded to turn Cynic that he too might have an Alcibiades, and how, when we were disturbed during the night in mid-Aegean by a tempest that descended and raised an enormous sea, this wondrous person who was thought to be superior to death fell to wailing along with the women! Well, a short time before his end, about nine days, it may be, having eaten more than enough, I suppose, he was sick during the night and was taken with a very violent fever. This was told me by Alexander the physician, who had been called in to see him. He said that he found him rolling on the ground, unable to stand the burning, pleading very passionately for a drink of cold water, but that he would not give it to him. Moreover, he told him, he said, that Death, if he absolutely wanted him, had come to his door spontaneously, so that it would be well to go along, without asking any favour from the fire; and Proteus replied: "But that way would not be so notable, being common to all men."

45. That is Alexander's story. And I myself not many days previously saw him smeared with ointment in order that the sharp salve might relieve his vision by making him shed tears. Do you get the idea? Aeacus is reluctant to receive people with weak eyes! It is as if a man about to go up to the cross should nurse the bruise on his finger. What do you think Democritus would have done, had he seen this? Would not he have laughed at the man as roundly as he deserved? And yet, where could he have got that much laughter? Well, my friend, you may have your laugh also, particularly when you hear the rest of them admiring him.

sent to Syria. The verbal coincidence is notable (cf. Lightfoot), and seems to indicate a knowledge of these letters, but on the part of Peregrinus, not Lucian.