# BELLARIA XLVI



Monument commemorating Lucian of Samosata from Nordkirchen, Germany

LUCIAN 2

## THE DREAM or LUCIAN'S CAREER

In this craftily composed 'memory', Lucian describes how his family prescribed for him a career in the family business as a sculptor and how that fell apart at his first attempt. The night after his failure and subsequent thrashing, he tells us that he had a dream of two women, fighting for his attention: one was Sculpture, the other Education. They each make their pitch for him, and Education wins.

There is much of interest and amusement in this beautifully crafted piece. The picture of the discussion about what career young Lucian should follow reads very persuasively: most boys, one assumes, would follow in their father's footsteps as a matter of course, and it is telling that the only other option appears to be (further) education which is assumed really to be a career for toffs wanting to make it in the world of politics and the law and therefore not for the likes of Lucian. His schooling with its thrashings, and his thrashing for breaking the slab at the first attempt, read all too like other accounts of the life of the young.

The dream amusingly stereotypes and satirises ancient assumptions about one's social status: the work of the mere technician, covered in muck and using nothing but his hands, comes a poor second (it appears) to the high value associated with using one's educated brain for the common good (cf. *logos* vs *ergon*). But the more Education exaggerates her benefits, the hollower the case appears to be. The magnificent final word of the piece makes the point superbly.



Stone carving on Trajan's column

### The debate begins

1 I had recently stopped going to school and was well on in my teens, when my father consulted with his friends what profession he should bring me up in. Most of them seemed to think that higher education needed hard work, much time, no little expense and conspicuous social standing; that my abilities were very moderate, and in need of immediate support; but if I learned some technical trade, first I would have enough to live off from it and not live idly at home at my age, and in a little time would delight my father by constantly bringing home what fell due [from it].

1 Ἄρτι μὲν ἐπεπαύμην εἰς τὰ διδασκαλεῖα φοιτῶν ἤδη τὴν ἡλικίαν πρόσηβος ὤν, ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐσκοπεῖτο μετὰ τῶν φίλων, ὅ τι καὶ διδάξαιτό με. τοῖς πλείστοις οὖν ἔδοξε παιδεία μὲν καὶ πόνου πολλοῦ καὶ χρόνου μακροῦ καὶ δαπάνης οὐ μικρᾶς καὶ τύχης δεῖσθαι λαμπρᾶς, τὰ δ' ἡμέτερα μικρά τε εἶναι καὶ ταχεῖάν τινα τὴν ἐπικουρίαν ἀπαιτεῖν· εἰ δέ τινα τέχνην τῶν βαναύσων τούτων ἐκμάθοιμι, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εὐθὺς ἂν αὐτὸς ἔχειν τὰ ἀρκοῦντα παρὰ τῆς τέχνης καὶ μηκέτ' οἰκόσιτος εἶναι τηλικοῦτος ὥν, οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν δὲ καὶ τὸν πατέρα εὐφρανεῖν ἀποφέρων ἀεὶ τὸ γιγνόμενον.



Minoan model swing (Aghia Triada)

### Lucian's father opts for the family business

**2** So the next question, therefore, began to be discussed about which trade was the best, the most easily learned, fitting for a free man, offering handy benefits and adequate pay. They each praised different trades, according to their judgment or experience, when my father, looking steadfastly on my uncle—who was then present, reputedly the best sculptor of his time—said 'While you are here, we ought not to give preference to any art above yours; so come, this lad here'—he pointed to me—'take him over and make a good stonecutter, mason and sculptor of him; he is very capable, having a good inborn talent for it'.

He took as evidence some childish things I made out of wax. Whenever I was free from school, scraping the wax [from my writing tablets] I modelled horses, oxen, and sometimes, by heavens, men, very lifelike, as they seemed to my father. For which I received beatings from my teachers, but then there was also praise for my skilful work, and they held out good hopes for me that I should soon learn the trade, as a result of that early modelling.

**2** δευτέρας οὖν σκέψεως ἀρχὴ προὐτέθη, τίς ἀρίστη τῶν τεχνῶν καὶ ῥάιστη ἐκμαθεῖν καὶ ἀνδρὶ ἐλευθέρωι πρέπουσα καὶ πρόχειρον ἔχουσα τὴν χορηγίαν καὶ διαρκῆ τὸν πόρον. ἄλλου τοίνυν ἄλλην ἐπαινοῦντος, ὡς ἕκαστος γνώμης ἢ ἐμπειρίας εἶχεν, ὁ πατὴρ εἰς τὸν θεῖον ἀπιδών—παρῆν γὰρ ὁ πρὸς μητρὸς θεῖος, ἄριστος ἑρμόγλυφος εἶναι δοκῶν—'Oὐ θέμις', εἶπεν, 'ἄλλην τέχνην ἐπικρατεῖν σοῦ παρόντος, ἀλλά τοῦτον ἄγε'—δείξας ἐμέ—'καὶ δίδασκε παραλαβὼν λίθων ἐργάτην ἀγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ συναρμοστὴν καὶ ἑρμογλυφέα· δύναται γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο φύσεώς γε, ὡς οἶσθα, ἔχων δεξιῶς'.

ἐτεκμαίρετο δὲ ταῖς ἐκ τοῦ κηροῦ παιδιαῖς· ὁπότε γὰρ ἀφεθείην ὑπὸ τῶν διδασκάλων, ἀποξέων ἂν τὸν κηρὸν ἢ βόας ἢ ἵππους ἢ καὶ νὴ Δί' ἀνθρώπους ἀνέπλαττον, ἐοικότας, ὡς ἐδόκουν τῶι πατρί· ἐφ' οἶς παρὰ μὲν τῶν διδασκάλων πληγὰς ἐλάμβανον, τότε δὲ ἔπαινος ἐς τὴν εὐφυΐαν καὶ ταῦτα ἦν, καὶ χρηστὰς εἶχον ἐπ' ἐμοὶ τὰς ἐλπίδας, ὡς ἐν βραχεῖ μαθήσομαι τὴν τέχνην, ἀπ' ἐκείνης γε τῆς πλαστικῆς.



Ancient Greek chisels

#### Lucian's first attempt is not a success

**3** So as soon as the time seemed right to start work in the trade, I was delivered over to my uncle, at which arrangement—by heaven—I was not displeased, but it seemed to me to offer agreeable amusement and the chance to show off to my friends if I should be seen to be carving images gods and fashioning little figures for myself and those I favoured.

Here at any rate was the first step, one quite normal for beginners: for my uncle, giving me a chisel, ordered me to apply a light blow to the slab lying at hand, repeating the old adage that 'Once begin, half done'. Since I hit the marble rather clumsily out of inexperience, it smashed in pieces. My infuriated uncle took up a nearby stick and neither gently, nor encouragingly, initiated me into the art, so that tears were my first introduction to it.

3 Ἄμα τε οὖν ἐπιτήδειος ἐδόκει ἡμέρα τέχνης ἐνάρχεσθαι, κἀγὼ περεδεδόμην τῶι θείω—μὰ τὸν Δί'—οὐ σφόδρα τῶι πράγματι ἀχθόμενος, ἀλλά μοι καὶ παιδιάν τινα οὐκ ἀτερπῆ ἐδόκει ἔχειν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἡλικιώτας ἐπίδειξιν, εἰ φαινόμην θεούς τε γλύφων καὶ ἀγαλμάτια μικρά τινα κατασκευάζων ἐμαυτῶι τε κἀκείνοις, οἶς προηιρούμην.

καὶ τό γε πρῶτον ἐκεῖνο καὶ σύνηθες τοῖς ἀρχομένοις ἐγίγνετο· ἐγκοπέα γάρ τινά μοι δοὺς ὁ θεῖος ἐκέλευσεν ἠρέμα καθικέσθαι πλακὸς ἐν μέσωι κειμένης, ἐπειπὼν τὸ κοινὸν 'ἀρχὴ δέ τοι ἥμισυ παντός'. σκληρότερον δὲ κατενεγκόντος ὑπ' ἀπειρίας κατεάγη μὲν ἡ πλὰξ, ὁ δὲ ἀγανακτήσας σκυτάλην τινὰ πλησίον λαβὼν οὐ πράιως, οὐδὲ προτρεπτικῶς, μου κατήρξατο, ὥστε δάκρυά μοι τὰ προοίμια τῆς τέχνης.

[Lucian now reports falling tearfully asleep and having the dream of two women fighting over him]



Sculpturer at work

**6** One was a labouring woman, manly, with messy hair, calloused hands, clothes tucked up, covered in marble dust, as my uncle was whenever he was cutting stone. The other was very good-looking, dignified in appearance and neatly-dressed. Eventually they allowed me to decide which one to be with. First the hardened, manly one spoke:

6 ἦν δὲ ἡ μὲν ἐργατικὴ καὶ ἀνδρικὴ καὶ αὐχμηρὰ τὴν κόμην, τὼ χεῖρε τύλων ἀνάπλεως, διεζωσμένη τὴν ἐσθῆτα, τιτάνου καταγέμουσα, οἶος ἦν ὁ θεῖος, ὁπότε ξέοι τοὺς λίθους· ἡ ἑτέρα δὲ μάλα εὐπρόσωπος καὶ τὸ σχῆμα εὐπρεπὴς καὶ κόσμιος τὴν ἀναβολήν. τέλος δ' οὖν ἐφιᾶσί μοι δικάζειν, ὁποτέραι βουλοίμην συνεῖναι αὐτῶν. προτέρα δὲ ἡ σκληρὰ ἐκείνη καὶ ἀνδρώδης ἔλεξεν·



The sculptor Megistokles, son of Philomousos

## Sculpture makes her case

**7** 'I, dear child, am Sculpture—that art which you yesterday began to learn—familiar to you, and related by descent. For your grandfather'—and she named him—'was a sculptor and so also were both your uncles, men of fine reputation, thanks to me. If therefore you were to wish to keep your distance from the high-falutin' drivel you would get from her'—pointing to Education—'and to follow and live with me, first you will be nobly raised and develop strong shoulders, be free from all envy, will never go abroad (abandoning your fatherland and relatives) and it will not be just for words that everyone will praise you'.

**7** Έγώ, φίλε παῖ, Ἐρμογλυφικὴ τέχνη εἰμί, ἡν χθὲς ἤρξω μανθάνειν, οἰκεία τέ σοι καὶ συγγενὴς οἴκοθεν· ὅ τε γὰρ πάππος σου'—εἰποῦσα τοὔνομα τοῦ μητροπάτορος— 'λιθοξόος ἦν καὶ τὼ θείω ἀμφοτέρω καὶ μάλα εὐδοκιμεῖτον δι' ἡμᾶς. εἰ δ' ἐθέλοις λήρων μὲν καὶ φληνάφων τῶν παρὰ ταύτης ἀπέχεσθαι'—δείξασα τὴν ἑτέραν— 'ἕπεσθαι δὲ καὶ συνοικεῖν ἐμοί, πρῶτα μὲν θρέψηι γεννικῶς καὶ τοὺς ὤμους ἕξεις καρτερούς, φθόνου δὲ παντὸς ἀλλότριος ἔσηι, καὶ οὔποτε ἄπει ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλλοδαπήν (τὴν πατρίδα καὶ τοὺς οἰκείους καταλιπών) οὐδὲ ἐπὶ λόγοις ἐπαινέσονταί σε πάντες.'



Pheidias

**8** 'Do not be disgusted at the cheapness of my appearance and these dirty clothes. For from such beginnings did Pheidias set out and reveal Zeus, and Polycleitus made Hera, and Myron was praised and Praxiteles admired. Indeed these men were worshipped along with their gods; were you to become one of them, how would you yourself not have a glorious reputation among all men, proclaim your father envied and make your country famous?'

This, and yet more than this, with much stumbling and murdering of the language, did Sculpture address me, banging on at speed and trying to persuade me. Not that I remember it. Most of what she said escaped my memory. So when she had finished, the other began roughly in this vein:

8 μἡ μυσαχθῆις δὲ τοῦ σχήματος τὸ εὐτελὲς μηδὲ τῆς ἐσθῆτος τὸ πιναρόν· ἀπὸ γὰρ τοιούτων ὁρμώμενος καὶ Φειδίας ἐκεῖνος ἔδειξε τὸν Δία καὶ Πολύκλειτος τὴν Ἡραν εἰργάσατο καὶ Μύρων ἐπηινέθη καὶ Πραξιτέλης ἐθαυμάσθη· προσκυνοῦνται γοῦν οὗτοι μετὰ τῶν θεῶν. εἰ δὴ τούτων εἶς γένοιο, πῶς μὲν οὐ κλεινὸς αὐτὸς παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις δόξεις, ζηλωτὸν δὲ τὸν πατέρα ἀποδείξεις, περίβλεπτον δὲ ἀποφανεῖς καὶ τὴν πατρίδα;'

ταῦτα καὶ ἔτι τούτων πλείονα, διαπταίουσα καὶ βαρβαρίζουσα πάμπολλα, εἶπεν ἡ Τέχνη, μάλα δὴ σπουδῆι συνείρουσα καὶ πείθειν με πειρωμένη· ἀλλ' οὐκέτι μέμνημαι· τὰ πλεῖστα γὰρ ἤδη μου τὴν μνήμην διέφυγεν. ἐπεὶ δ' οὖν ἐπαύσατο, ἄρχεται ἡ ἑτέρα ὦδέ πως·



Education (actually, Artemis from Topkapi palace)

### Education make her case

**9** 'I, my son, am Education, already familiar and well-known to you, though you have not yet seen me through to the end. So then, what great advantages you will reap by becoming a stonemason she has already told you. You will be nothing but a labourer, toiling away physically, putting all your eggs in that one basket, personally obscure, getting mean and meagre returns, poor in spirit, valueless in public, neither sought by friends, nor a terror to enemies, nor envied by your fellow-citizens, but just a labourer, one of the multitude, cowering before a superior, fawning on the eloquent, living the life of a hare, a godsend to anyone stronger, and even if you became Pheidias or Polycleitus, producing many miraculous pieces, while everyone will praise your skill, there will be no one among those who saw you who, if they were in control of their senses, would pray to be like you. For whatever sort of person you might be, you will be *thought of* as an artisan, as a handy man, one who lives by his hands.'

**9** "Εγὼ δέ, ὥ τέκνον, Παιδεία εἰμί, ἤδη συνήθης σοι καὶ γνωρίμη, εἰ καὶ μηδέπω εἰς τέλος μου πεπείρασαι. ἡλίκα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποριῆι λιθοξόος γενόμενος, αὕτη προείρηκεν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὅτι μὴ ἐργάτης ἔσηι τῶι σώματι πονῶν κἀν τούτωι τὴν ἅπασαν ἐλπίδα τοῦ βίου τεθειμένος, ἀφανὴς μὲν αὐτὸς ὤν, ὀλίγα καὶ ἀγεννῆ λαμβάνων, ταπεινὸς τὴν γνώμην, εὐτελὴς δὲ τὴν πρόοδον, οὔτε φίλοις ἐπιδικάσιμος οὔτε ἐχθροῖς φοβερὸς οὔτε τοῖς πολίταις ζηλωτός, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μόνον ἐργάτης καὶ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ πολλοῦ δήμου εἶς, τὸν ἀεὶ προὔχοντα ὑποπτήσσων καὶ τὸν λέγειν δυνάμενον θεραπεύων, λαγὼ βίον ζῶν καὶ τοῦ κρείττονος ἕρμαιον ὤν, εἰ δὲ καὶ Φειδίας ἢ Πολύκλειτος γένοιο καὶ πολλὰ θαυμαστὰ ἐξεργάσοιο, τὴν μὲν τέχνην ἅπαντες ἐπαινέσονται, οὐκ ἔστι δὲ ὅστις τῶν ἰδόντων, εἰ νοῦν ἔχοι, εὔξαιτ' ἂν σοὶ ὅμοιος γενέσθαι· οἶος γὰρ ἄν ἦις, βάναυσος καὶ χειρῶναξ καὶ ἀποχειροβίωτος νομισθήσηι.'

[Education now explains all the wonderful advantages she will offer, 'ornamenting your soul with temperance, justice, piety, kindliness, reasonableness, understanding, steadfastness, love of all that is beautiful, passion for all that is sublime ...you will even foresee the future with me. In a word, I shall quickly teach you everything that there is in relation to both gods and men'.]

# Education continues to emphasize what she will do for Lucian

11 'You who are now the poor son of a nobody, who has been making some plans around such an ignoble trade, will shortly be being admired and envied by all, honoured and praised, esteemed for your noble qualities, looked up to by those superior in birth and wealth, dressed in clothes like these'—pointing to her own, which she carried off dazzlingly—'thought fit for office and precedence. If ever you travel abroad, you will not be unknown or inconspicuous on foreign soil, because I shall clothe you with such marks of distinction that everyone who sees you will nudge his neighbour, point his finger at you and say "That's the man"'.

11 καὶ ὁ vũv πένης ὁ τοῦ δεῖνος, ὁ βουλευσάμενός τι περὶ ἀγεννοῦς οὕτω τέχνης μετ' ὀλίγον ἅπασι ζηλωτὸς καὶ ἐπίφθονος ἔσηι, τιμώμενος καὶ ἐπαινούμενος καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀρίστοις εὐδοκιμῶν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν γένει καὶ πλούτωι προὐχόντων ἀποβλεπόμενος, ἐσθῆτα μὲν τοιαύτην ἀμπεχόμενος'—δείξασα τὴν ἑαυτῆς· πάνυ δὲ λαμπρὰν ἐφόρει—'ἀρχῆς δὲ καὶ προεδρίας ἀξιούμενος· κἄν που ἀποδημῆις, οὐδ' ἐπὶ τῆς ἀλλοδαπῆς ἀγνὼς οὐδ' ἀφανὴς ἔσηι· τοιαῦτά σοι περιθήσω τὰ γνωρίσματα, ὥστε τῶν ὁρώντων ἕκαστος τὸν πλησίον κινήσας δείξει σε τῶι δακτύλωι 'οὕτος ἐκεῖνος' λέγων.



Demosthenes in full flow

**12** 'If anything of serious importance befalls your friends or the whole city, they will all look to you. Any time you happen to make a speech, the crowd, open-mouthed, will pay attention, regarding you with admiration and blessing you for the power of your words and your father for his good luck. What they say, that some men become immortal, I shall ensure happens to you.

'Moreover, if you depart from life, you will never stop being associated with the educated and a companion of the great and good. You see the famous Demosthenes, whose son I made so great; you see Aeschines, who was the son of tambourine girl, how Philip cultivated him because of me; Socrates, himself educated by this Sculpture here, when, the moment he understood a better way, he ran off from her and deserted to me—you have heard how he was revered by all.'

12 ἂν δέ τι σπουδῆς ἄξιον ἢ καὶ τοὺς φίλους ἢ καὶ τὴν πόλιν ὅλην καταλαμβάνηι, εἰς σὲ πάντες ἀποβλέψονται· κἄν πού τι λέγων τύχηις, κεχηνότες οἱ πολλοὶ ἀκούσονται, θαυμάζοντες καὶ εὐδαιμονίζοντες σὲ τῆς δυνάμεως τῶν λόγων καὶ τὸν πατέρα τῆς εὐποτμίας· ὃ δὲ λέγουσιν, ὡς ἄρα καὶ ἀθάνατοι γίγνονταί τινες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, τοῦτό σοι περιποιήσω·

καὶ γὰρ ἡν αὐτὸς ἐκ τοῦ βίου ἀπέλθηις, οὔποτε παύσηι συνὼν τοῖς πεπαιδευμένοις καὶ προσομιλῶν τοῖς ἀρίστοις. ὁρᾶις τὸν Δημοσθένην ἐκεῖνον, τίνος υἱὸν ὄντα ἐγὼ ἡλίκον ἐποίησα; ὁρᾶις τὸν Αἰσχίνην, ὃς τυμπανιστρίας υἱὸς ἦν, ὅπως αὐτὸν δι' ἐμὲ Φίλιππος ἐθεράπευσεν; ὁ δὲ Σωκράτης, καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπὸ τῆι ἑρμογλυφικῆι ταύτηι τραφεὶς, ἐπειδὴ τάχιστα συνῆκε τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ δραπετεύσας παρ' αὐτῆς ηὐτομόλησεν ὡς ἐμέ—ἀκούεις ὡς παρὰ πάντων ἄιδεται.



# Education again attacks Sculpture

'Abandoning such great men of this sort, together with shining deeds and noble words and dignified appearance and honour and reputation and praise and precedence and powers and offices and all the glory of eloquence and blessings of quick wit, will you put on sordid clothes and take on an appearance fit for slaves, to handle bars and carving tools and hammers and chisels, and stoop to labouring, grovelling on the ground, and equally low in ambition and in every way insignificant, bent low and never thinking any manly or free thoughts, but merely thinking how your work can be well-balanced and shaped, but to how you could be well-balanced and well-ordered paying no attention at all, but making yourself worth less than your blocks of stone?'

13 ἀφεὶς δὲ σὺ τοὺς τηλικούτους καὶ τοιούτους ἄνδρας καὶ πράξεις λαμπρὰς καὶ λόγους σεμνοὺς καὶ σχήμα εὐπρεπὲς καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον καὶ προεδρίας καὶ δυνάμεις καὶ ἀρχὰς καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ λόγοις εὐδοκιμεῖν καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ συνέσει εὐδαιμονίζεσθαι, χιτώνιόν τι πιναρὸν ἐνδύσηι καὶ σχῆμα δουλοπρεπὲς ἀναλήψηι καὶ μοχλία καὶ γλυφεῖα καὶ κοπέας καὶ κολαπτῆρας ἐν ταῖν χεροῖν ἕξεις κάτω νενευκὼς εἰς τὸ ἔργον, χαμαιπετὴς καὶ χαμαίζηλος καὶ πάντα τρόπον ταπεινός, ἀνακύπτων δὲ οὐδέποτε οὐδὲ ἀνδρῶδες οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερον οὐδὲν ἐπινοῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἔργα ὅπως εὔρυθμα καὶ εὐσχήμονα ἔσται σοι προνοῶν, ὅπως δὲ αὐτὸς εὔρυθμος τε καὶ κόσμιος ἔσηι, ἥκιστα πεφροντικώς, ἀλλὶ ἀτιμότερον ποιῶν

[Lucian chooses Education, the indignant Sculpture turns Niobe-like to stone, and Education takes Lucian on a world-tour, during which everyone applauds him, and returns him, dressed in purple, to his father. He describes his dream and his listeners rather mock him.]

# Lucian's concluding analysis

18 Well then, I have told you of this dream to explain how the young may take the better course and embrace education, especially if one of them, driven by poverty to take the coward's way out and turn to crime, is not to destroy a not ignoble nature. He will be encouraged, I am sure, in hearing these words, and taking me as a sufficient example, while he reflects on both what I was when I made my target the finest way of life and set my heart on education, not even flinching at my poverty at the time, and what I am now on my return to you as, if nothing else, at least no more disreputable than a sculptor.

18 καί τοίνυν κάγὼ τοῦτον τὸν ὄνειρον ὑμῖν διηγησάμην ἐκείνου ἕνεκα, ὅπως οἱ νέοι πρὸς τὰ βελτίω τρέπωνται καὶ παιδείας ἔχωνται, καὶ μάλιστα, εἴ τις αὐτῶν ὑπὸ πενίας ἐθελοκακεῖ καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἥττω ἀποκλίνει, φύσιν οὐκ ἀγεννῆ διαφθείρων ἐπιρρωσθήσεται, εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι, κἀκεῖνος ἀκούσας τοῦ μύθου, ἱκανὸν ἑαυτῶι παράδειγμα ἐμὲ προστησάμενος, ἐννοῶν, οἶος μὲν ὢν πρὸς τὰ κάλλιστα ὥρμησα καὶ παιδείας ἐπεθύμησα, μηδὲν ἀποδειλιάσας πρὸς τὴν πενίαν τὴν τότε, οἶος δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐπανελήλυθα, εἰ καὶ μηδὲν ἄλλο, οὐδενὸς γοῦν τῶν λιθογλύφων ἀδοξότερος.