

PATTERNS OF INTENTION

On the Historical Explanation of Pictures

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INTRODUCTION: LANGUAGE AND EXPLANATION

1. *The objects of explanation: pictures considered under descriptions*

WE DO NOT explain pictures: we explain remarks about pictures — or rather, we explain pictures only in so far as we have considered them under some verbal description or specification. For instance, if I think or say about Piero della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ* (Pl. IV) something quite primitive like 'The firm design of this picture is partly due to Piero della Francesca's recent training in Florence', I am first proposing 'firm design' as a description of one aspect of the *Baptism of Christ*'s interest. Then, secondly, I am proposing a Florentine training as a cause of that kind of interest. The first phase can hardly be avoided. If I simply applied 'Florentine training' to the picture it would be unclear what I was proposing to explain; it might be attached to angels in high-waisted gowns or to tactile values or whatever you wished.

Every evolved explanation of a picture includes or implies an elaborate description of that picture. The explanation of the picture then in its turn becomes part of the larger description of the picture, a way of describing things about it that would be difficult to describe in another way. But though 'description' and 'explanation' interpenetrate each other, this should not distract us from the fact that description is the mediating object of explanation. The description consists of words and concepts in a relation with the picture, and this relation is complex and sometimes problematic. I shall limit myself to pointing — with a quite shaky finger, since this is intricate ground beyond my competence — to three kinds of problem explanatory art criticism seems to meet.

2. *Descriptions of pictures as representations of thought about having seen pictures*

There is a problem about quite what the description is of.

'Description' covers various kinds of verbal account of a thing, and while 'firm design' is a description in one sense — as, for that matter, is 'picture' — it may be considered untypically analytical and abstract. A more straightforward and very different sort of description of a picture might seem to be this:

There was a countryside and houses of a kind appropriate to peasant country-people — some larger, some smaller. Near the cottages were straight-standing cypress trees. It was not possible to see the whole of these trees, for the houses got in the way, but their tops could be seen rising above the roofs. These trees, I dare say, offered the peasant a resting-place, with the shade of their boughs and the voices of the birds joyfully perched in them. Four men were running out of the houses, one of them calling to a lad standing near — for his right hand showed this, as if giving some instructions. Another man was turned towards the first one, as if listening to the voice of a chief. A fourth, coming a little forward from the door, holding his tight hand out and carrying a stick in the other, appeared to shout something to other men toiling about a wagon. For just at that moment a wagon, fully-loaded, I cannot say whether with straw or some other burden, had left the field and was in the middle of a lane. It seemed the load had not been properly tied down. But two men were trying rather carelessly to keep it in place — one on this side, one on the other: the first was naked except for a cloth round his loins and was propping up the load with a staff; of the second one saw only the head and part of his chest, but it looked from his face as if he was holding on to the load with his hands, even though the rest of him was hidden by the cart. And as for the cart, it was not a four-wheeled one of the kind Homer spoke of, but had only two wheels: and for that reason the load was jolting about and the two dark red oxen, well-nourished and thick-necked, were much in need of helpers. A belt girded the drover's tunic to the knee and he grasped the reins in his right hand, pulling at them, and in his left hand he held a switch or stick. But he had no need to use it to make the oxen willing. He raised his voice, though, saying something encouraging to the oxen, something of a kind an ox would understand. The drover had a dog too, so as to be able to sleep himself and yet still have a sentinel. And there the dog was, running beside the oxen. This approaching wagon was near a temple: for columns indicated this, peeping over the trees . . .

This the greater part of a description written by the fourth-century Greek Libanius of a picture in the Council House at Antioch — works by retailing the subject-matter of the picture's representation as if it were real. It is a natural and unstrained way

of describing a representational picture, apparently less analytical and abstract than 'firm design', and one we still use. It seems calculated to enable us to visualize the picture clearly and vividly: that was the function of the literary genre of description, *ekphrasis*, in which it is a virtuoso essay. But what really is the description to be considered as representing?

It would not enable us to reproduce the picture. In spite of the lucidity with which Libanius progressively lays out its narrative elements, we could not reconstruct the picture from his description. Colour sequences, spatial relations, proportions, often left and right, and other things are lacking. What happens as we read it is surely that out of our memories, our past experience of nature and of pictures, we construct something — it is hard to say what — in our minds, and this something he stimulates us to produce feels a little like having seen a picture consistent with his description. If we all now drew our visualizations — if that is what they are — of what Libanius has described, they would differ according to our different prior experience, particularly according to which painters it made us think of, and according to our individual constructive dispositions. In fact, language is not very well equipped to offer a notation of a particular picture. It is a generalizing tool. Again, the repertory of concepts it offers for describing a plane surface bearing an array of subtly differentiated and ordered shapes and colours is rather crude and remote. Again, there is an awkwardness, at least, about dealing with a simultaneously available field — which is what a picture is — in a medium as temporally linear as language: for instance, it is difficult to avoid tendentious re-ordering of the picture simply by mentioning one thing before another.

But if a picture is simultaneously available in its entirety, *looking* at a picture is as temporally linear as language. Does or might a description of a picture reproduce the act of looking at a picture? The lack of fit here is formally obvious in an incompatibility between the gait of scanning a picture and the gait of ordered words and concepts. (It may help to be clear about how our optical act is paced. When addressing a picture we get a first general sense of a whole very quickly, but this is imprecise; and, since vision is clearest and sharpest on the foveal axis of vision, we move the eye over the picture, scanning it with a succession of rapid fixations. The gait of the eye, in fact, changes in the course of

inspecting an object. At first, while we are getting our bearings, it moves not only more quickly but more widely; presently it settles down to movements at a rate of something like four or five a second and shifts of something like three to five degrees – this offering the overlap of effective vision that enables coherence of registration.) Suppose the picture in Antioch were present to us as Libanius delivered his *ekphrasis*, how would the description and our optical act get along together? The description would surely be an elephantine nuisance, lumbering along at a rate of something less than a syllable an eye-movement, coming first, sometimes after half a minute, to things we had roughly registered in the first couple of seconds and made a number of more attentive visits to since. Obviously the optical act of scanning is not all there is to looking: we use our minds and our minds use concepts. But the fact remains that the progression involved in perceiving a picture is not like the progression involved in Libanius's verbal description. Within the first second or so of looking we have a sort of impression of the whole field of a picture. What follows is sharpening of detail, noting of relations, perception of orders, and so on, the sequence of optical scanning being influenced both by general scanning habits and by particular cues in the picture acting on our attention.

It would be tedious to go on in this fussy way to the other things the description cannot primarily be about, because it will be clear by now what I am trying to suggest this is best considered as representing. In fact, there are two peculiarities in Libanius's *ekphrasis* which sensitively register what I have in mind. The first is that it is written in the past tense – an acute critical move that has unfortunately fallen out of use. The second is that Libanius is freely and openly using his mind: 'These trees, *I dare say*, offered ...; 'It *seemed* the load had not been properly tied down ...'; 'only two wheels: and *for that reason* ...'; 'one saw only the head and part of the chest, but *it looked* from his face *as if* he was ...'; 'columns *indicated* this, peeping over the trees. ...' Past tense and cerebration: what a description will tend to represent best is thought after seeing a picture.

In fact, Libanius's description of subject-matter is not the sort of description one is typically involved with when explaining pictures: I used it partly to avoid a charge of taking 'description' in a tendentiously technical sense, partly to let a point or two

emerge. The sort of description I shall be concerned with is much more like 'The design is firm', and it too can be linearly quite long. Here is an excellent passage from Kenneth Clark's account of Piero della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ*, in which he develops an analysis of a quality which might be one constituent of 'firm design':

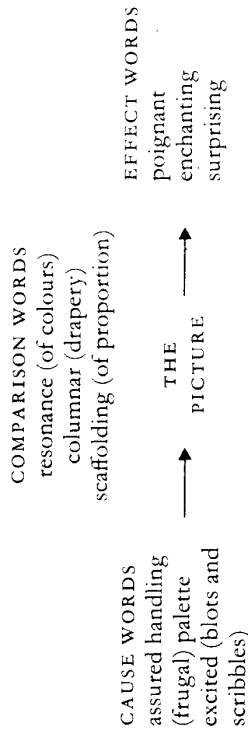
... we are at once conscious of a geometric framework; and a few seconds' analysis shows us that it is divided into thirds horizontally, and into quarters vertically. The horizontal divisions come, of course, on the line of the Dove's wings and the line of angels' hands, Christ's loin-cloth and the Baptist's left hand; the vertical divisions are the pink angel's columnar drapery, the central line of the Christ and the back of St. John. These divisions form a central square, which is again divided into thirds and quarters, and a triangle drawn within this square, having its apex at the Dove and its base at the lower horizontal, gives the central motive of the design.

Here it is clearer than with Libanius's description that the words are representing less the picture than thought after seeing the picture.

There is much to be said, if one wants to match words and concepts with the visual interest of pictures, for both being and making clear – as Libanius and Kenneth Clark make clear – that what one offers in a description is a representation of thinking about a picture more than a representation of a picture. And to say we 'explain a picture as covered by a description' can conveniently be seen as another way of saying that we explain, first, thoughts we have had about the picture, and only secondarily the picture.

3. *Three kinds of descriptive word*

'... about the picture' is the proper way to put it. The second area of problem is that so many of the thoughts we will want to explain are indirect, in the sense that they are not pointed quite directly at the picture – considered, at least, as a physical object (which is not how, in the end, we will consider it). Most of the better things we can think or say about pictures stand in a slightly peripheral relation to the picture itself. This can be illustrated by taking and sorting a few words from Kenneth Clark's pages on Piero's *Baptism of Christ*:



One type of term, those on the right, refers to the effect of the picture on the beholder: *poignant* and so on. And indeed it is usually precisely the effect of the picture we are really concerned with: it has to be. But terms of this type tend to be a little soft and we sometimes frame our sense of the effect in secondarily indirect ways. One way is by making a comparison, often by metaphor, as in the type at the top: *resonance* of colour and so on. (One especially bulky sort of comparison, which we tend to work very hard with representational paintings, is to refer to the colours and patterns on the picture surface as if they were the things they are representing, as in Libanius.) And then there is a third type, that on the left. Here we describe the effect of the picture on us by telling of inferences we have made about the action or process that might have led to the picture being as it is: assured *handling*, of a frugal *palette*, *excited* blots and scribbles. Awareness that the picture's having an effect on us is the product of human action seems to lie deep in our thinking and talking about pictures — so the arrows in the diagram — and what we are doing when we attempt a historical explanation of a picture is to try developing this kind of thought.

We have to use concepts of these indirect or peripheral kinds. If we confined ourselves to terms that referred directly or centrally to the physical object we would be confined to concepts like *large*, *flat*, *pigments on a panel*, *red and yellow and blue* (though there are complications about these), perhaps *image*. We would find it hard to locate the sort of interest the picture really has for us. We talk and think 'off' the object rather as an astronomer looks 'off' a star, because acuity or sharpness are greater away from the centre. And the three principal indirect moods of our language — speaking directly of the effect on us, making comparisons with things whose effect on us is of a similar quality, making inferences about

the process which would produce an object having such an effect on us — seem to correspond to three modes of thinking about a picture, which we treat as something more than a physical object. Implicitly we treat it as something with a history of making by a painter and a reality of reception by beholders.

Of course, as soon as such concepts become part of a larger pattern, sustained thinking or sustained discourse — over a couple of pages in a book in this case — things become more complicated and less crisp. One type of thinking is subordinated to another in the hierarchy of syntax. Ambiguities or conflations of type develop, between the inferential and the comparative, in particular. There are shifts in the actual reference of terms. All this can be seen happening in the passage from Kenneth Clark on p.5. But an indirectness of mood and thought remains in a complex weave. And when I applied the thought 'firm design' to the *Baptism of Christ* it was a thought that involved an inference about cause. It described the picture by speculating about the quality of the process that led to it being an object of a kind to make that impression on me that it does. 'Firm design' would go on the left-hand side of the diagram. In fact, I was deriving one cause of the picture, 'firm design', from another less proximate cause, 'Florentine training'.

But it may be objected that to say that a concept like 'design' involves an element of inference about cause begs various questions about the actual operation of words. In particular, is one perhaps confusing the sense of the word, the range of its possible meanings, with its reference or denotation in the particular case? 'Design' has a rich gamut of sense:

Mental plan; scheme of attack; purpose; end in view; adaptation of means to ends; preliminary sketch for picture etc.; delineation, pattern; artistic or literary groundwork, general idea, construction, plot, faculty of evolving these, invention.

If I use the concept 'design' I do not normally use it in all these senses at once. If I used it of a picture in a more unqualified way — as in 'I do like the design of this picture' — surely I would be shedding for the moment that part of its sense that lies in the process of making the picture and referring to a quality more intrinsic to the marks on the panel — 'pattern' rather than 'drawing' or 'purposing' or 'planning'? In its finished reference this may

be so: I would be entitled to expect you to take it, for the purpose of criticism, in that more limited sense. But in arriving at it, I and you and the word would have been coming from the left of the field, so to speak: there are leftist and centrist uses of 'design' in current and frequent use, but if we pick on the centrist denotation we have been active on the left at least to the extent of shelving its meanings. In semantics the colouring of a word used in one sense by other current senses is sometimes called 'reflected' meaning; in normal language it is not powerful. A better term for what happens with words and concepts matched with pictures — not at all a normal use of language — might be 'rejected' meaning, and one reason for its importance brings us to the third area of problem.

4. *The ostensivity of critical description*

Absolutely 'design' and indeed 'firm' are very broad concepts. I could plausibly say either of Piero della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ* (Pl. IV) or of Picasso's *Portrait of Kahnweiler* (Pl. I) — 'The design is firm'. The terms are general enough to embrace a quality in two very different objects; and, supposing you had no idea what the pictures looked like, they would tell you little that would enable you to visualize the pictures. 'Design' is not a geometrical entity like 'cube' or a precise chemical entity like 'water', and 'firm' is not a quantity expressible numerically. But in an artistic critical description one is using the terms not absolutely; one is using them in tandem with the object, the instance. Moreover one is using them not informatively but demonstratively. In fact, the words and concepts one may wish to handle as a mediating 'description' of the picture are not in any normal sense descriptive. What is determining for them is that, in art criticism or art history, the object is present or available — really, or in reproduction, or in memory, or (more remotely) as a rough visualization derived from knowledge of other objects of the same class.

This has not always been so to the degree it now is so: the history of art criticism in the last five hundred years has seen an accelerating shift from discourse designed to work with the object unavailable, to discourse assuming at least a reproduced presence of the object. In the sixteenth century Vasari assumes no more than a generic acquaintance with most of the pictures he deals

with; in particular, his celebrated and strange descriptions are often calculated to evoke the character of works not known to the reader. By the eighteenth century an almost disabling ambivalence had developed on this point. Lessing cannily worked with an object, the Laocoon group, that most of his readers would have known, as he only did himself, from engravings or replicas. Diderot, on the other hand, nominally writing for someone not in Paris, actually seems never to be clear whether or not his reader has been to the Salon he is discussing, and this is one reason for the difficulty of his criticism. By 1800 the great Fiorillo was adding footnotes to his books specifying the makers of the best engravings after the pictures he is discussing and he tends to concentrate on what can be seen in them. In the nineteenth century books were increasingly illustrated with engravings and eventually half-tones, and with Wölfflin, notoriously, art-critical discourse begins to be directed at a pair of black-and-white diapositive projections. We now assume the presence or availability of the object, and this has great consequences for the workings of our language.

In everyday life if I offer a remark like 'The dog is big', the intention and effect will depend a great deal on whether or not that dog is present or known to my hearers. If it is not, the 'big' — which, in the context of dogs, has a limited range of meaning — is likely to be primarily a matter of information about the dog; it is big, they learn, rather than small or middle-sized. But if it is present — if it is standing before us as I talk — then 'big' is more a matter of my proposing a kind of interest to be found in the dog: it is *interestingly* big, I am suggesting. I have used 'dog' to point verbally to an object and 'big' to characterize the interest I find in it.

If I say of a picture, present or reproduced or remembered, 'The design is firm', the remark's force is rather specialized. What I am doing is not to inform, but to point to an aspect of its interest, as I see it. The act is one of demonstration: with 'design' I direct attention to one element in the picture and with 'firm' I propose a characterization of it. I am suggesting that the concept 'firm design' be matched with the interest of the picture. You may follow my prompting or not; and if you do follow my prompting you may agree or disagree.

So I am making two points here. As a verbalized proxy for the quality in Piero's *Baptism of Christ*, 'firm design' would mean little; but by its reference to the instance it takes on more precise

meaning. Since my remark about Piero's picture is an act not of information but of demonstration in its presence, its meaning is largely ostensive: that is, it depends on both myself and my hearers supplying precision to it by reciprocal reference between the word and the object. And this is the texture of the verbal 'description' that is the mediating object of any explanation we may attempt. It is an alarmingly mobile and fragile object of explanation.

However it is also excitingly flexible and alive, and our disposition to move around in the space offered by the words is an energetic and muscular one. Suppose I use of the *Baptism of Christ* this sentence: 'The design is firm because the design is firm.' This is circular nonsense, in a way, but to a surprising extent we have the will to get meaning out of people's statements. In fact, if you leave people for a minute with this sentence *and the picture*, some of them will begin to find a meaning in it — working from an assumption that if someone says something he intends a meaning, from the space within the words, and from the structural cue offered by the word 'because'. And what some of them move towards is a meaning that could be caricatured as: 'The [pattern] is firm because the [planning/drawing] is firm.' Within the gamut of senses of 'design' they find references differentiated enough to set against each other: and, working from 'because', they derive the less causally suggestive from the more causally suggestive — the more centred from the more left. At the same time they must have shaded the two appearances of 'firm' differently too.

But the present point is that the ostensive working of our terms is going to make the object of explanation odd. We explain the picture as pointed up by a selective verbal description which is primarily a representation of our thoughts about it. This description is made up of words, generalizing instruments, that are not only often indirect — inferring causes, characterizing effects, making various kinds of comparison — but take on the meaning we shall actually use only in their reciprocal relation with the picture itself, a particular. And behind this lies a will to remark on an interest in the picture.

5. Summary

If we wish to explain pictures, in the sense of expounding them in terms of their historical causes, what we actually explain seems

likely to be not the unmediated picture but the picture as considered under a partially interpretative description. This description is an untidy and lively affair.

Firstly, the nature of language or serial conceptualization means that the description is less a representation of the picture, or even a representation of seeing the picture, than a representation of thinking about having seen the picture. To put it in another way, we address a relationship between picture and concepts.

Secondly, many of the more powerful terms in the description will be a little indirect, in that they refer first not to the physical picture itself but to the effect the picture has on us, or to other things that would have a comparable effect on us, or to inferred causes of an object that would have such an effect on us as the picture does. The last of these is particularly to the point. On the one hand, that such a process penetrates our language so deeply does suggest that causal explanation cannot be avoided and so bears thinking about. On the other, one may want to be alert to the fact that the description which, seen schematically, will be part of the object of explanation already embodies preemptively explanatory elements — such as the concept of 'design'.

Thirdly, the description has only the most general independent meaning and depends for such precision as it has on the presence of the picture. It works demonstratively — we are pointing to interest — and ostensively, taking its meaning from reciprocal reference, a sharpening to-and-fro, between itself and the particular.

These are general facts of language that become prominent in art criticism, a heroically exposed use of language, and they have (it seems to me) radical implications for how one can explain pictures — or, rather, for what it is we are doing when we follow our instinct to attempt to explain pictures.

criticism in M. Baxandall, 'The Language of Art History', *New Literary History*, X, 1979, pp. 453-65.

Senses of 'design' extracted from the entry in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

4. This section is obviously coloured by speech act philosophy of the general kind surveyed in, for instance, J. R. Searle (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language*, Oxford, 1971. This would, I think, point to the 'performative' or 'perlocutionary' character of art criticism, but I do not want to claim consistency with this style of analysis and so do not use its terminology.

I

1. The distinction between teleological and nomological traditions of explanation is clearly laid out in Georg Henrik von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, London, 1971, especially Pt. I, but also in many other books. The issue is the main feature of most collections of readings on the philosophy of history and can be conveniently pursued in, for example, Patrick Gardiner (ed.), *Theories of History*, London/New York, 1959, Pt. II; William H. Dray (ed.), *Philosophical Analysis and History*, New York, 1966; Patrick Gardiner (ed.), *The Philosophy of History*, Oxford, 1974.

For Collingwood's conception of 're-enactment', R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford, 1946, Part V, especially pp. 282-302. It should be said that Collingwood's idealist theory of art led him (pp. 313-14) to exclude art from the subject-matters open to historical explanation. For Collingwood's idea of art, his *The Principles of Art*, Oxford, 1938, and for its position within aesthetics Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1980, Sections 21-3. Collingwood's philosophy of history is the subject of a growing literature. A thorough recent study with good bibliography is Rex Martin, *Historical Explanation: Re-enactment and Practical Inference*, Ithaca, 1977. The most convenient statement of Popper's position is in Karl R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford, 1972, Ch. 4, especially pp. 166-90. This includes both an example - an explanation of Galileo's erroneous theory of tides - and Popper's own account of how his position differs from that of Collingwood.

2. The best general book on the Forth Bridge is still W. Westhofen, *The Forth Bridge*, London, 1890 (reprinted from the periodical *Engineering*, 28 February 1890). Also useful is Thomas Mackay, *The Life of Sir John Fowler, Engineer, Bart.*, K.C.M.G., London, 1900, Ch. XI ('The Forth Bridge'), with the comments of Morris and Waterhouse and the extract from Baker's address to the Edinburgh Literary Institute, pp. 314-15. The general technological context of the Bridge is well sketched by L. T. C. Rolt, *Victorian Engineering*. Harmondsworth, 1970. The best technical account of the construction of the Bridge is, significantly, G. Barkhausen, *Die Forth-Brücke*, Berlin, 1889. A fine series of photographs of its construction was published as Philip Phillips, *The Forth Bridge and its various stages of construction* . . ., Edinburgh, n.d.

3. Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge*, Baltimore, 1977, both touches on the sorts of cause-sorting mentioned here and elaborates on the

TEXTS AND REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

1. The point that it is only phenomena as covered by description that are susceptible of explanation is one learned from Arthur C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History*, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 218-20, though I have pressed it in a simpler sense than his.

2. Libanius's description - my version of which is free - in *Libanii Opera*, VIII, ed. R. Foerster, Leipzig, 1915, pp. 465-8:

Ἄγρὸς ἦν καὶ οἰκήματα ἀγροικοῖς πρόποντα, τὰ μὲν μείζω, τὰ δὲ ἐλάττω. πλησίον δὲ τῶν οἰκημάτων ἀνατρέχουσαι ἐορῶντο κυπαρίττοι. ὁλας μὲν οὐκ ἦν ἰδεῖν, ἐκώλυε γὰρ τὰ οἰκήματα, τὰ δὲ ἄκρα τῶν δένδρων ἔβαινετο τὸ τέγος ὑπεραίροντα. ταῦτα, ὡς εἰκός, ἀνὰ πάλαν παρῆγε τοῖς ἀγροικοῖς σκιά τε τῇ ἀπὸ τῆς κόμης καὶ ὀνίθων φωναῖς, οἱ χαιρούσιν ἐπὶ τῶν δένδρων ἱζάνοντες. ἐκδραμόντες δὲ τινες ἐκ τῶν οἰκημάτων τέταρες, ὁ μὲν παρεκάλειντο τὴν μερακυλλίαν πλησίον ἐστώτι, τοῦτο γὰρ ἐμνήσκειν ἡ δέξια, ὡς ἅρα τὴν ἐπιτάττει, ὁ δὲ ἐπιστρέφειτο πρὸς τοὺς οἴα φωνῆς ἀκούων τοῦ ἐπιτάττοντος. ὁ δὲ δὴ τέταρτος ὀλίγον προελθὼν τῶν θυρῶν τὴν δέξιαν ἐκτετακὼς ῥάβδον τῇ ἐτέρᾳ φέρον ἔφαινετο τὴν βοᾶν πρὸς τοὺς πονούντας ἀγυρὰ ἦν εἶπε ἄλλοι τὸ φορτίον, τὸν ἄγρον ἀφῆσα μέσην εἶχε τὴν δόδον. ἅτε οὐκ ἀκριβὼς καταδήσαντες τὸ φορτίον, ἀλλὰ ῥαθυμῶς βοηθεῖν ἐπειρώοντο, ὁ μὲν ἔθεν, ὁ δὲ ἔθεν, ὁ μὲν γυμνὸς πλὴν διαζώματος βακτηρίᾳ τὸ φορτίον ἀνέχων, τοῦ δὲ ἔβαινετο μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ μέρος τὶ τοῦ στήθους, ὅσα δὲ εἰκὸς ἐκ τοῦ πρόσωπου, ταῖν χερσὶν καὶ αὐτὸς ἤμυνε, τὰ δ' ἄλλα ὑπὸ τῆς ἀμάξης ἐκρύπτετο. ἡ δὲ ἀμάξα οὐ τετρακύκλος, ὡς ἔφησεν Ὀμήρος, ἀλλὰ δισὶν τροχοῖν, ἡ καὶ τὸ φορτίον περιέρρει καὶ ἐδέοντο τῶν ἁμυνόντων οἱ βόες ἅμφοι τὸ χρώμα φοινίκας καὶ εὐ τεθραμμένοι καὶ τοὺς αὐχένας πλατεῖς. τῷ βοηλάτῃ δὲ τὸν χιτωνίσκον ἀνέστειλεν εἰς γόνυ ζώστην. τῇ μὲν οὖν δεξιᾷ λαβόμενος τῶν χαλινῶν εἴλεκε, ῥάβδον δὲ ἔχων ἐν θατέρᾳ οὐδὲν αὐτῆς ἐδέετο εἰς τὸ προθύμους ποιῆσαι τοὺς βόεις, ἀλλ' ἤρκετο τῇ φωνῇ. καὶ γὰρ ἥδ' οὐ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἔλεγεν οἴα δὴ τὴν φεγγομένην ὧν ἂν ζυγίῃ βόεις, ἔτρεφεν ὁ βοηλάτης καὶ κύνα, ὡς ἂν ἔχοι καθεύδειν ἔχων τὸν φύλακα. καὶ παρὴν ὁ κύων τοῖς βουσι παραθέων. χωροῦσα δὲ ἡ ἀμάξα πλησίον ἦν ἱεροῦ. τοῦτο γὰρ ἔσημαινον οἱ κίονες καὶ τὰ ὑπερκύπτοντα δένδρα.

Kenneth Clark on the *Baptism of Christ* in his *Piero della Francesca*, London, 1951, pp. 11-14, the cited passage on p. 13.

3. A more exasperated version of this account of the indirect lexicon of art