

Xenophanes, Poem 13

ἀλλ' εἰ χεῖρας ἔχον βόες ἵπποι τ' ἠὲ λέοντες
ἢ γράψαι χεῖρεςσι καὶ ἔργα τελεῖν ἅπερ ἄνδρες,
ἵπποι μὲν θ' ἵπποισι, βόες δὲ τε βουσὶν ὁμοίας
καὶ κε θεῶν ιδέας ἔγραφον καὶ σώματ' ἐποίουν
τοιαῦθ' οἷόν περ καὶ οὗτοι δέμας εἶχον ἕκαστοι.

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VOCABULARY

βοῦς, βοός, ὄ: ox
γράφω: write; paint; draw
δέμας, τό: body
ἕκαστος, η, ον: severally; each
ἔργον, τό: work; (*here*) work of art
ἠέ (*poet.*) = ἦ: or
ιδέα, ἡ: appearance, form; way, nature; notion, idea

ἵππος, ὄ: horse
κε(v) = ἄν
λέων, -οντος, ὄ: lion
οἶος, οἶα, οἶον, such as, as
ὁμοῖος, -α, -ον: like, similar to (+ *dat.*)
σῶμα, -ατος, τό: body
τελέω: end, complete; fulfil; perform
χεῖρ, χεῖρος, ἡ: hand

COMMENTARY

Text: Diels-Kranz (1906) *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. I.49 (fr. B15 s.v. Xenophanes)

Metre: dactylic hexameter

1. ἔχον = εἶχον (*impf. indic. 3rd pl.* of ἔχω).
 2. γράψαι: complementary infinitive after ἔχον in v. 1 (i.e., '...were able to draw').
- τελεῖν: here, the verb may be translated as 'create'.

- ἅπερ: relative pronoun, emphatic (*i.e.*, 'of the very kind men <create>').
3. ὁμοίας: qualifies θεῶν ιδέας in v. 4 (i.e., 'images of the gods like to...'); it is construed with the datives ἵπποισι and βουσὶν.
 4. κε... ἔγραφον: '...they would paint...'
 5. τοιαῦθ' οἷόν περ: (lit.) 'of such a kind as...'.
καὶ οὗτοι (*crasis*) = καὶ αὐτοί (i.e., 'they themselves also...').

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