

to warn her brother; but already the aged herald has seized Clytaemnestra, and defeated her intent. Who is this old man, the herald, who interposes so opportunely? He appears along with Orestes in another work of art, earlier than these vases,—viz., a marble relief, in the developed archaic style, found at Melos¹. The scene there is as follows:—Electra sits in deep dejection at her father's tomb; the aged Nurse stands behind her. Three travellers have just arrived together; the foremost is the old man with the herald's hat and stave, who is accosting the Nurse; behind him a youth of noble mien (Orestes) stands beside a horse, his left hand resting on its back; a third person (Pylades, or a servant?) follows. The question is answered when it is observed that, according to a widely-spread legend, the person who saved Orestes from the murderers, by carrying him away from Mycenae, was Talthybius, the faithful herald of Agamemnon². Talthybius is here returning to Mycenae with the rightful heir, and preparing the way for the recognition by speaking to the old Nurse, who will remember him. He is the original of the Paedagogus in the *Electra* of Sophocles, and of the Old Man (πρέσβυς) in the *Electra* of Euripides; he also accounts for the prominence given to the herald in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus.

§ 6. The scene described above, in which Talthybius once more saves Orestes by foiling the armed Clytaemnestra, must have been taken from some familiar literary source. It was essential for a vase-painter's purpose that his version of a story should be popularly known. What, then, was this source? Certainly not Aeschylus. Vase A is assigned on grounds of style to an earlier date than 458 B.C., the year of the Aeschylean *Oresteia*³. But,

Literary evidence.

¹ Published by Conze in *Monum. dell' Instit.* vol. VI. pl. 57. Reproduced in Roscher's *Lexikon der gr. und rom. Mythologie*, art. Elektra, p. 1238.

² Nicolaüs Damascenus (*flor. circ. 20 B.C.*) fr. 34 (Müller, *Frag. Hist.* vol. III. p. 374) τοῦτον δὲ (Orestes) ἐρρύσατο Ταλθύβιος ἐξαργάσας, καὶ ἐκθέμενος εἰς τὴν Φωκίδα παρὰ Στρόφιον. The legend appears also in the so-called 'Dictys Cretensis,' bk. 6, c. 2, *Talthybius Oresten Agamemnonis filium manibus Aegisthi ereptum Idomeneo, qui apud Corinthum agebat, tradidit.* This work, written probably in the fourth cent. A.D. by one Septimius, purports to be translated from a history of the Trojan war by a Cretan contemporary with that war, named Dictys. See Teuffel, *Hist. Rom. Lit.*, vol. II. § 416.

³ Robert, *Bild und Lied*, p. 160.