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**From War Hero to Slave to Love  
On the Reception of Achilles on Scyros in the Renaissance**

In this essay, the iconography of two panel paintings by Johannes Hispanus is discussed. The works, which appear to originate from a Florentine humanistic milieu, depict a few episodes from the childhood and youth of Achilles and are datable to the mid-1490s. The essay argues that the painter and his patron conceived the paintings' narrative by following the *Achilles* by Statius quite closely. In addition, they were inspired by a well-established iconographic tradition which can be reconstructed thanks to frescoes, sarcophagi and various items from the decorative arts in the period extending from the Roman Imperial age to Late Antiquity. However, the paintings by Hispanus seem to have relied also on one specific pictorial interpretation which was much more recent, namely a set of two *cassone* paintings by the Master of Charles III of Durazzo (c. 1390). In the second part of the essay, the question is addressed of why the portrayal of Achilles' early life was extremely rare in Italian art until the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. After presenting an overview of Achilles' *fortuna* in literature, ranging from ancient Greek and Roman works to a few vernacular ones, the argument is made that Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where the hero was placed in Hell, among its lecherous inhabitants, must have contributed enormously to the reception of Achilles as a despicable 'slave to love.' In fact, his reputation as a 'war hero' was not restored until the High Renaissance thanks to the rediscovery of the Homeric poems.